

## INTRODUCTION

- What are the sociolinguistic differences between Japanese and English? How will it impact native English learners of Japanese?
- Manga is one of many popular culture items that students use to learn Japanese from. It is an authentic text from which to learn Japanese culture and language (Spindler 2010).
- Using a dictionary (which provides a word-for-word translation) or reading the Japanese and English versions together (side-by-side comparison) may not reveal subtle nuances in the Japanese language.
- The Japanese language encodes a lot of societal expectations and relationships into it. For example, the verb “to give” has two words in Japanese, and which one is used depends on how one feels about the receiver and the giver. There is also the usage of honorifics, particles, and polite language to indicate power structures and societal relationships.
- Japanese is also unique because of the three writing systems. Kanji, hiragana, and katakana all play different roles: that of content, of function, or of foreign words (Azuma 2001).
- English does not have as extensive an alphabet nor as many encodings as Japanese, which proves a challenge to those using manga to supplement Japanese language learning.

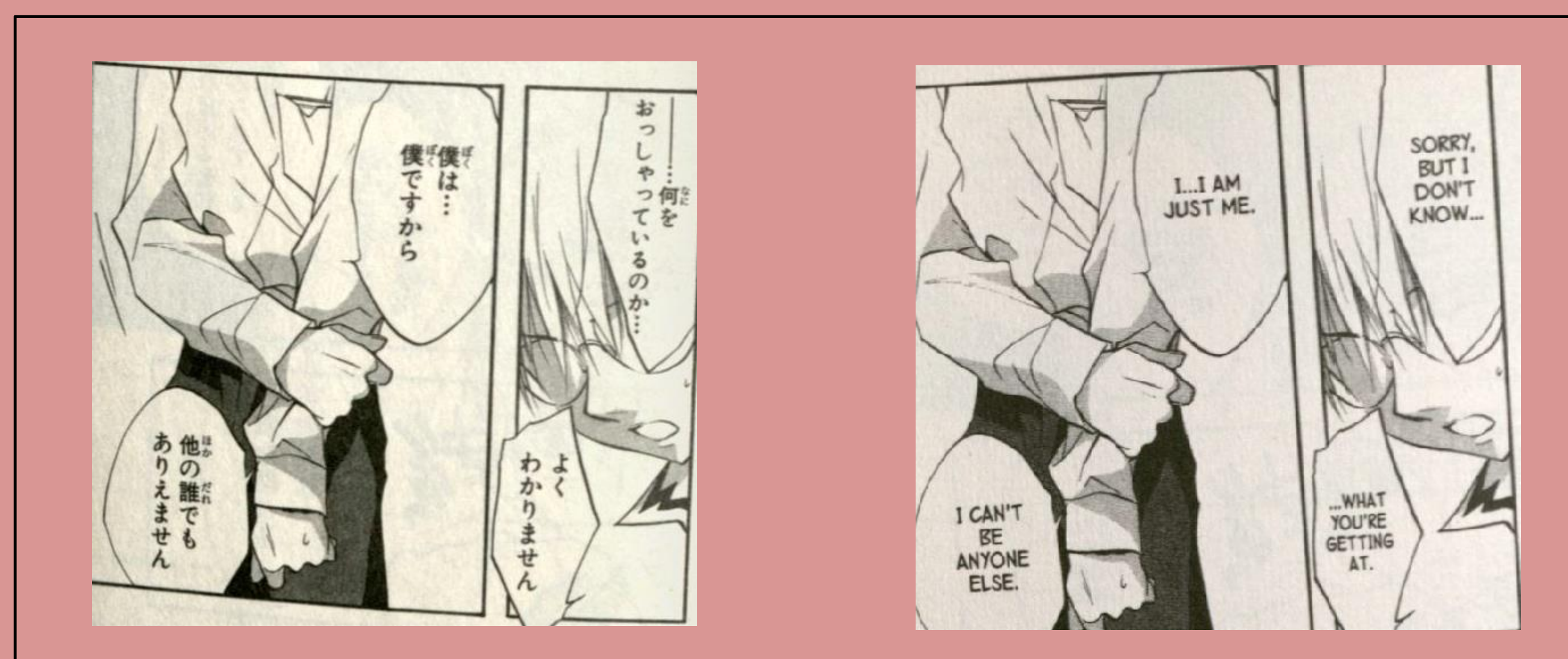
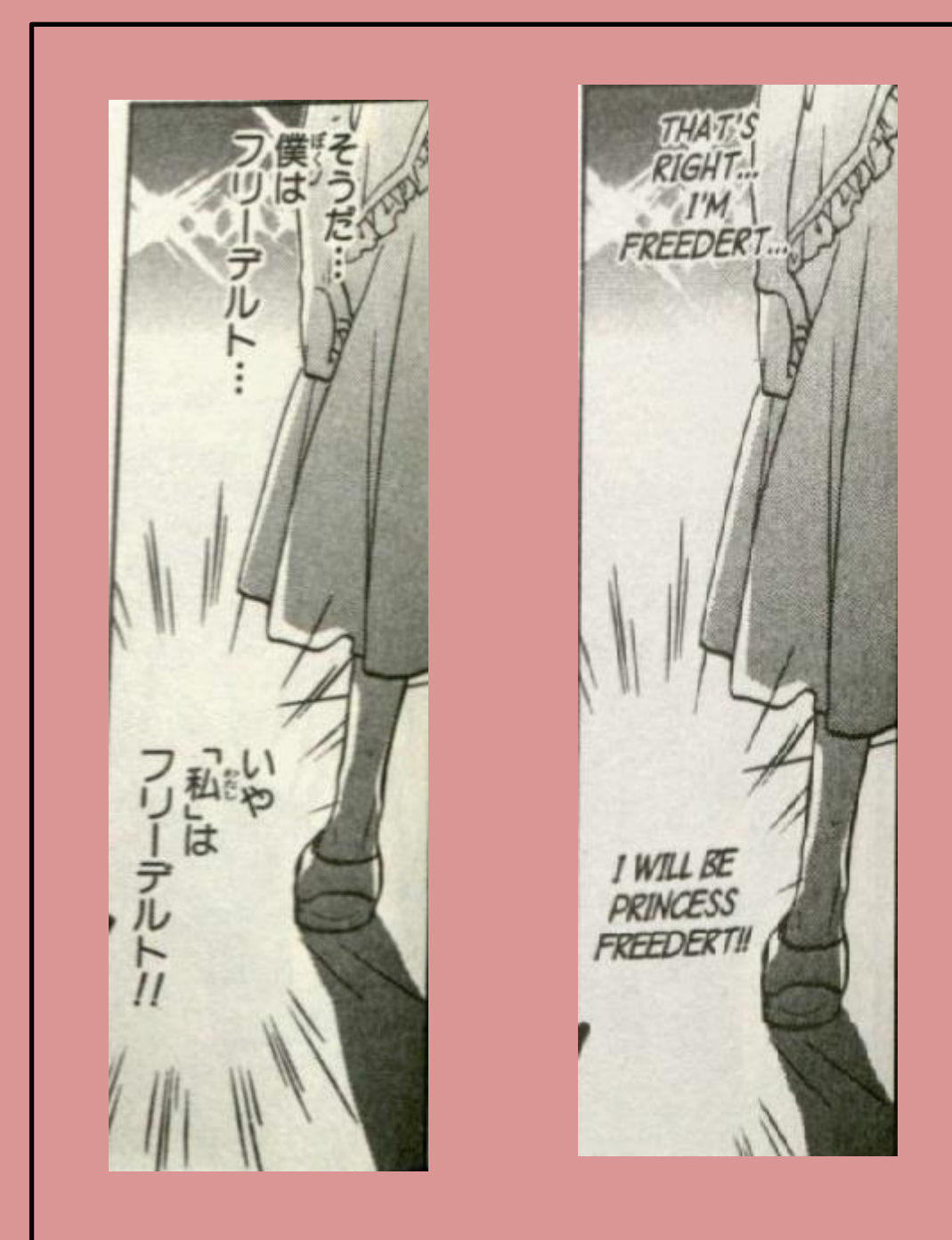
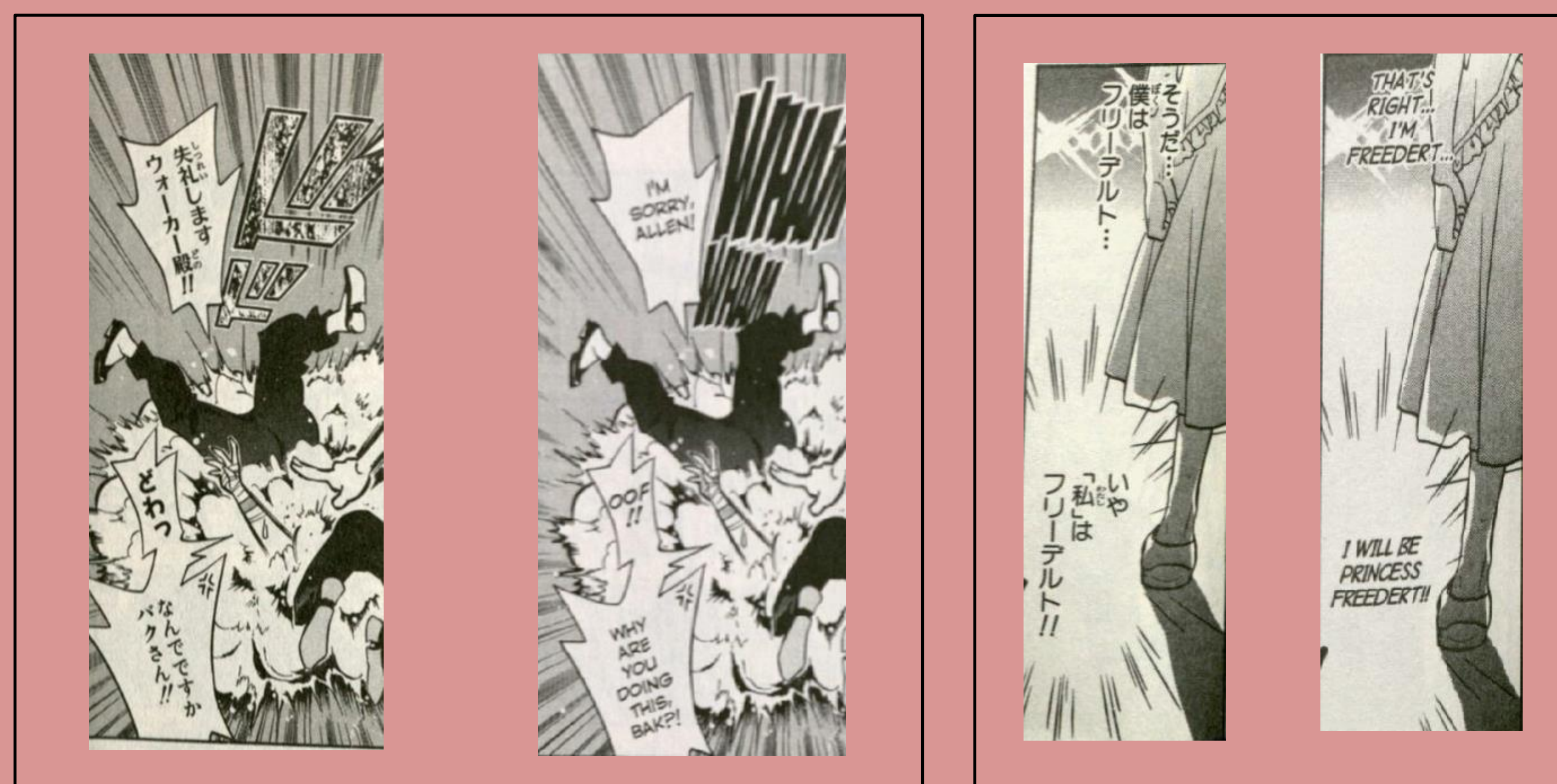
## METHODS

I chose to compare volume 9 of two manga- *D. Gray-Man* by Katsura Hoshino and *D.N. Angel* by Yukiru Sugisaki. These two were chosen because the age and gender of the protagonists were similar to each other. This would hopefully elicit the similar reactions to and responses from the protagonist.

Then, the following lexical items were searched for in the Japanese versions:

- Particle usage
- Honorific usage
- Instances of all three alphabets being used
- Word choice
- Polite language usage

A tally was kept in a notebook to keep track of all of these instances. Additional notes were taken to track who said what to whom and what words were used. Then, equivalents to the above lexical items were searched for in the English versions.



## REFERENCES

- Azuma, Shoji, et al. *Business Japanese*. Washington, DC: Georgetown UP, 2001. Print.
- Spindler, William Jay. *University of California, Davis, 2010*. Ann Arbor: ProQuest. Web.

## RESULTS

- Using only manga to supplement language learning is not enough. There are too many items lost in translation when the translator adapts the content to the readership.
- English translations overwhelmingly dropped many of the lexical items that were encoded into Japanese, and they do not reappear elsewhere in the volumes studied.
- Honorifics are lost completely and replaced with titles that give the interactions a business-like feel to them.
- The lack of polite and casual language in the translation do not give readers enough information about when or where to use both.
- The importance of using different words is lost in the English version.
- There is no good way to show what the manipulation of Japanese’s three alphabets does.
- Word for word translation will not work- concepts need to be adapted to an American readership.

Particle	Japanese	English
Na	15	13
tte	12	2
sa	14	2
yo	70	24
ne	20	7
daro(u)	11	4
zo	19	7
no	6	3
ze	2	0
wa	9	0
Total	178	62

Particle	Japanese	English
na	17	11
tte	8	0
sa	1	0
yo	120	50
ne	49	17
daro(u)	14	5
zo	7	3
no	31	4
ze	27	3
wa	9	3
Total	283	96

Fig. 1: Particle usage in Japanese and particle replacement in English for *D. Gray-Man* and *D.N. Angel*

## DISCUSSION

- Using just manga as a method of studying Japanese will not provide enough information about encoding.
- It is better used as a supplement to what is being taught in Japanese language courses.
- Translations eliminate many of the sociolinguistic differences due to differences in culture. It’s important to be aware that the translation will not always be direct.

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