

A PRAGMA-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOLAR'S LANGUAGE IN *MANGA BLEACH*

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ABSTRACT. *A Pragma-Linguistic Analysis of the Scholar's Language in Manga BLEACH.* This study delves into the pragma-linguistic characteristics of the 'scholar's language' as portrayed in the Japanese comics, known as *manga*, specifically through the character Kurotsuchi Mayuri from *Bleach* (BLEACH ブリーチ). It examines how technical knowledge, verbal authority, and rhetorical sophistication converge to create a complex and memorable character. The analysis identifies several key traits: the use of specialized terms, uncommon verbal forms and particles, blending of formal or beautified language with overt mockery, rhetorical questions, a literary style, and Sino-Japanese vocabulary. These elements underscore Mayuri's intellectual superiority and distinct personality. Additionally, the research highlights the strategic use of *kanji* for parts of speech typically written in *hiragana*, enhancing the formality and erudition of the discourse. This preliminary study suggests that while the identified linguistic features may be specific to Mayuri's character, they also contribute to the broader stereotype of the scholar in *manga*, included under the concept of *yakuwarigo* (role language). The findings pave the way for more extensive research on the scholar's language across a diverse range of *manga* characters, aiming to establish a comprehensive understanding of how linguistic stereotypes are used to represent scholars in this pop culture context.

Keywords: *yakuwarigo, stereotypical speech, scholar's language, pragma-linguistic analysis, multimodal text, manga*

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REZUMAT. O analiză pragma-lingvistică a limbajului savantului în manga BLEACH. Acest studiu explorează caracteristicile pragma-lingvistice ale ,limbajului savantului' așa cum este prezentat în benzile desenate japoneze, numite *manga*, prin intermediul personajului Kurotsuchi Mayuri din *Bleach* (BLEACH ブリーチ). Analiza evidențiază felul în care competențele tehnice, capacitatea de a se impune prin discurs și rafinamentul expresiv contribuie împreună la conturarea unui personaj profund și distinctiv. Au fost identificate mai multe trăsături cheie: utilizarea termenilor specializați, forme verbale și particule neobișnuite, amestecul unui limbaj formal sau înfrumusețat cu batjocură evidentă, întrebările retorice, un stil literar și vocabularul sino-japonez. Aceste elemente subliniază superioritatea intelectuală și personalitatea distinctă a lui Mayuri. În plus, cercetarea evidențiază utilizarea strategică a caracterelor chinezești *kanji* pentru părți de vorbire de obicei scrise în *hiragana*, sporind formalitatea și erudiția discursului. Acest studiu preliminar sugerează că, deși trăsăturile lingvistice identificate pot fi specifice personajului Mayuri, ele contribuie și la consolidarea noțiunii de ,limbaj al savantului' în *manga*, care intră sub umbrela conceptului de *yakuwarigo* (,stereotipuri de limbaj'). Această analiză pavează calea pentru cercetări mai extinse asupra ,limbajului savantului' la o varietate mai mare de personaje din *manga*, având ca scop stabilirea unei înțelegeri cuprinzătoare a modului în care stereotipurile lingvistice sunt folosite pentru a reprezenta savanții în acest context al culturii pop.

Cuvinte cheie: *yakuwarigo*, limbaj stereotipizat, limbajul savantului, analiză pragma-lingvistică, text multimodal, manga

Introduction to Japanese Pop Culture

From music and fashion to films, television shows, memes, and even viral trends, pop culture serves as a dynamic mirror reflecting the attitudes, values, and aspirations of a particular era. As an ever-evolving phenomenon that constantly adapts to social changes, it plays a crucial role both in shaping and responding to the cultural landscape. Until recently, the exploration of pop culture's components has not been a prioritized field of research, often considered peripheral.

Comic strips have emerged as a commercial artistic expression, serving as a significant form of entertainment for both youth and adults, and solidifying their role as a preferred leisure activity. The public's attraction to Japanese pop culture is partly due to the positive image and favourable stereotypes associated with Japan and its people, bolstered by Japan's cultural diplomacy strategies since the early post-war decades. After the defeat suffered in the World War II, the Japanese felt the need to redefine their national identity and international

image. Betting on a cultural reinvention, they adopted a form of cultural diplomacy, promoting peace, harmony, and “cuteness”. Known as “Cool Japan”, a term coined by American journalist McGray in 2002, the Japanese government begins promoting cultural exports such as music, *anime*, *manga*, video games, and fashion.

In Japan, *manga* serves as both a source of pleasure and a means of escapism for both young people and adults. Often, driven by the need for emotional release or the desire for catharsis, individuals find solace in the fictional worlds of comics. Long commutes to school or work, waiting in lines to enter shops or restaurants, and lunch breaks all become opportune moments for engaging in this type of reading (Ito 2000, 5).

Nevertheless, the influence of pop culture elements on language, communication, and social interaction within society holds substantial significance. In the contemporary context, pop culture is frequently characterized in terms that suggest a close connection with consumerism, often attributed a lower value compared to what is typically classified as “high culture” (O’Brien, Szeman 2017, 7). Researchers classify *manga* as a component of pop culture, which they regard as less valuable than “high culture”.

Manga as a Medium for Linguistic Analysis of Yakuwarigo

Japanese comic books, known as *manga*, play a significant role in the contemporary cultural landscape, serving as a means of artistic expression and communication that transcends national boundaries. In today’s context, the concepts of “consumerism”, “globalization”, “individualism”, and “pop culture” manifest in a complex, interdependent relationship, mutually influencing the evolution of *manga* and its global reception and interpretation. *Manga* has evolved into not only an artistic product but also a consumer commodity, reflecting the pervasive consumerism in modern society. This entails the production and commercialization in a manner aimed at satisfying the demands and desires of consumers, thereby reinforcing the connection between art and cultural industry. The proliferation of the *manga* genre in post-industrial Japanese society can be attributed to its adaptability to the social environment. Initially a form of humorous entertainment aimed at young people, *manga* has evolved into a recognized cultural industry with a significant impact on the mass audience and public opinion. In contemporary Japan, *manga* are regarded as a symbol of cultural imperialism and an effective means of shaping public opinion, playing a crucial role in understanding modern Japan and increasingly influencing serious literature and art (Frențiu 2023, 245-46).

In recent years, *manga* has garnered significant interest from a diverse range of researchers, including psychologists, sociologists, linguists, and translators. This attention is attributed to the genre's growing popularity, the diversity of themes it explores, and its ability to reflect social issues. Comics express contemporary societal concerns, although they often present a distorted view of reality, focusing instead on the realm of imagination (Manolescu 2011: 16). *Manga* magazines are read and interpreted in various ways depending on the reader's specific cultural context, similar to how they are differently evaluated and utilized according to the reader's professional sphere of interest (Pasfield-Neofitou et al. 2016, 14).

Etymologically, the term *manga* derives from two Sino-Japanese characters, 漫 (*man*) meaning “unrestrained” or “free-flowing”, and 画 (*ga*), meaning “drawing” or “picture”. In English, scholars have translated it as “whimsical pictures” or “improvised pictures” (Hernandez 2019, 7), while in Romanian, Dimitrescu (2004-2005, 164) proposes the phrase “imagini întâmplătoare”. Although in Japan the term *manga* is used broadly to refer to comics regardless of their country of origin, in international contexts it is typically understood to denote comic art and narrative forms that are distinctly Japanese.

From the perspective of applied linguistics, *manga* constitutes a complex multimodal medium that integrates visual and textual semiotic resources to construct rich communicative environments. The interplay between written language and visual representation facilitates the emergence of context-dependent meanings, positioning *manga* as a fruitful site for discourse-pragmatic analysis. The dialog is typically rendered through hybrid textual forms, where graphic conventions – such as font variation, spatial arrangement, and symbolic imagery – visually encode phonological features including intonation, stress, and vocal intensity. These elements function not only to simulate speech prosody but also to mediate interpersonal stance and emotional nuance. Additionally, the narrative framework provides essential contextual scaffolding, offering insights into the situational triggers, character interactions, and socio-relational dynamics that shape the progression of communicative events (Pasfield-Neofitou et al. 2016, 211).

A noticeable surge in scholarly attention to the linguistic features of fictional discourse can be traced back to the early 2000s, particularly with the work of Kinsui Satoshi, who introduced the concept of *yakuwarigo* (role language). In his volume *Vācharu Nihongo: Yakuwarigo no nazo* (“Virtual Japanese: The Enigmas of Role Language”), Kinsui defines *yakuwarigo* as a patterned set of linguistic expressions associated with specific character types in fictional narratives. This framework elucidates how particular lexical, grammatical, and phonological choices signal stereotypical roles – such as the elderly professor, samurai, or

schoolgirl – thus shaping the reader's or viewer's mental image of the character. Rather than merely reflecting real-life speech, *yakuwarigo* functions as a stylized register that establishes social and cultural cues within the fictional world:

When hearing a particular way of speaking (vocabulary, usage, phrasing, intonation, etc.), if it evokes a specific character image (age, gender, occupation, class, era, appearance, personality, etc.), or if, when directed to a specific character image, it brings to mind the way of speaking that the character would likely use, this way of speaking is called “*yakuwarigo*” (role language).²

(Kinsui 2003, 205)

The term *yakuwarigo* has been variously rendered in English as “role language”, “character language”, or “stereotypical speech”, each translation capturing the notion that fictional characters' speech styles are systematically aligned with their narrative roles and symbolic functions. This theoretical lens underscores the communicative efficiency with which linguistic features – such as specific lexical items, sentence-final particles, honorifics, and phonological stylization – can index socially and culturally recognizable attributes, including age, gender, social hierarchy, and personality traits. In this sense, *yakuwarigo* operates as a semiotic shorthand, enabling readers to infer character identity and social positioning with minimal contextual elaboration. Within the medium of Japanese *manga*, *yakuwarigo* offers a compelling framework for analysing how language shapes character construction and contributes to narrative coherence. Importantly, the concept extends beyond fixed linguistic stereotypes, encompassing a broader spectrum of pragmatic and interactional cues that support character differentiation and deepen the reader's engagement with fictional worlds.

Methodological Approach: Pragmatic Equivalence in Translation

As part of a broader research project on role language (*yakuwarigo*) across various Japanese *manga*, this article examines the speech patterns of a single character selected as representative of the scholar archetype, with the aim of identifying the linguistic features that define this type of role language

² My translation from the source text: ある特定の言葉づかい（語彙・語法・言い回し・イントネーション等）を聞くと特定の人物像（年齢、性別、職業、階層、時代、容姿・風貌、性格等）を思い浮かべることができる、あるいはある特定の人物像を指示されると、その人物がいかにも使用しそうな言葉づかいを思い浮かべることができる、その言葉づかいを「役割後」と呼ぶ。

and exploring the most appropriate pragmatic correspondences in Romanian. Given the vast number of *manga* characters that could be analysed, the present study offers a concise and preliminary exploration of this linguistic pattern. While the analysis may appear limited in scope, it serves as an initial step in outlining and systematizing the defining features of this particular speech style, paving the way for further, more comprehensive investigations.

My research will commence with a close examination of the original Japanese text, focusing on the intended pragmatic meaning embedded in the linguistic and contextual choices. The objective is to provide a translation that faithfully preserves the semantic integrity of the source while simultaneously identifying and applying appropriate pragmatic equivalences between the source language and culture (Japanese) and the target language and culture (Romanian). The degree of relevance of the translated text (target text) will be examined in relation to the interaction between the character and the reader, analysing how the translation influences the reader's reception and interpretation within the target culture. This evaluation will provide a valuable perspective on the effectiveness of the translation in conveying the pragmatic message and its impact on the reader's experience.

The translations included in this study are my own and are not intended to verify or test existing theories in translation studies. Instead, the primary objective is to assess to what extent the pragmatic equivalences achieved in the transposition of the Japanese text into Romanian are both relevant and effective.

The Scholar's Language: Premises

This study begins with the premise of the existence of a 'scholar's language', a distinct subtype of role language that, although closely related to previously defined categories, warrants a more nuanced examination. While this linguistic variety shares several traits with *hakasego* (博士語), the "doctor/professor language" defined by Kinsui (2003), it exhibits features that extend beyond the parameters of that category. Although Kinsui (2003) and Teshigawara & Kinsui (2011) do reference *hakasego*, the specific speech style observed in the character of Kurotsuchi Mayuri is not analysed in detail within those frameworks, nor has it been extensively discussed in other scholarly works published in Romanian, English, or Japanese.

Consequently, this analysis does not begin from a rigid, predefined set of characteristics but builds upon a detailed pragma-linguistic investigation. Through this approach, I aim to identify the linguistic features that serve as *yakuwarigo* markers and contribute to a refined understanding of what I refer to as 'scholar's language'.

The category of role languages defined by Kinsui (2003) that most closely approximates what I call the 'scholar's language' is the one specific to doctors/professors (*hakasego* 博士語). However, this language often intersects with that attributed to the elderly (*rōjingo* 老人語), and their characteristics do not fully align with the features I attribute to the scholar's language. In other words, characters who employ *hakasego* are typically depicted as elderly male professors/doctors, reflecting entrenched sociolinguistic stereotypes in fictional representation. The character examined in this study, Kurotsuchi Mayuri, diverges from this archetype both in age and in demeanour, thus challenging the conventional association between *hakasego* and the elder scholar figure. While Mayuri's speech draws from *hakasego*, its idiosyncratic elements and exaggerated stylistic markers suggest a fusion between role language and unique character language, as outlined by Kinsui and Yamakido (2015).

The doctor's language is also characterized by the use of technical terms and a formal discursive structure, thus indicating a high level of education and specialization (Kinsui 2003, 2-8). These traits are common to the scholar's language, which also involves profound erudition and attention to technical details. On the other hand, the language of the elderly male, although it may contain elements of wisdom and formality, does not necessarily reflect the level of technicality and specialization characteristic of the scholar's language. This language is often marked by a paternal tone and the use of archaic or regional expressions, which are not necessarily indicative of scientific or academic discourse (Kinsui 2003, 9-11).

Thus, it can be observed that although there are overlaps between the scholar's language and the doctor's language, as well as certain similarities with the language of the elderly, the scholar's language is distinguished by a unique combination of technicality, erudition, and precision, which gives it a distinct linguistic identity. This not only highlights the advanced knowledge of the scholar but also their ability to navigate and manipulate linguistic conventions to communicate complex ideas in a clear and authoritative manner.

In this context, the pragma-linguistic analysis will highlight the distinctive features of the scholar's language, contributing to understanding how these linguistic traits reinforce cultural stereotypes. The use of specialized terms, elaborate grammatical structures, and stylistic elements that give this type of discourse its distinctive character will be examined. Defining and analysing the scholar's language as a stereotyped language not only enriches the linguistic and cultural repertoire but also provides valuable insight into the intersection of language, professional identity, and social perception.

The Scholar's Language: The Case of Kurotsuchi Mayuri

The character that inspired this analysis is Kurotsuchi Mayuri, from the *manga* universe of *Bleach* (BLEACH ブリーチ). Written and illustrated by Kubo Tite (久保帯人), it follows the adventures of a teenager named Kurosaki Ichigo (黒崎一護), who acquires the powers of a death god (*shinigami* 死神) from Kuchiki Rukia (朽木ルキア) following unfortunate events. His new abilities allow him to perform various tasks, such as protecting humans from malevolent spirits and guiding deceased souls to the afterlife, leading him to multiple ghostly realms. *Bleach* (BLEACH ブリーチ) was published in Shueisha's Weekly Shōnen Jump magazine from 2001 to 2016, with its chapters republished in 74 individual volumes (*tankōbon* 単行本).

Kurotsuchi Mayuri (涅マヨリ) is the captain of the 12th Division (*gyūni bantai taichō* 十二番隊隊長) in the Gotei 13 (*gotē jyūsan tai* 護廷十三隊) and the head of the Department of Technological Development (*gijyutsu kaihatsu kyoku* 技術開発局). As described by Kubo Tite in *Bleach Official Character Book Volume 2: Masked* (2010, 122-25), Mayuri is an eccentric scholar and scientist with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, renowned for his extraordinary intelligence but also for his cold and unscrupulous nature, driven by his desire to explore the unknown and satisfy his intellectual curiosity (Kubo 2010, 123). As Camilleri (2022, 488) observes, characters who speak *hakasego* typically fulfil one of three narrative roles: the wise mentor, the embodiment of evil, or the confused and senile elder. Kurotsuchi Mayuri represents a complex fusion of the first two, combining intellectual authority with a sinister, unsettling presence. While Kinsui (2003, 7) frames the doctor figure as a symbol of wisdom, Mayuri subverts this archetype by embodying a form of malignant intellect – a calculated, morally detached pursuit of knowledge. This duality, along with his role as a scientist and scholar, makes his speech an especially rich case for analysis within the theoretical framework of *yakuwarigo*.

The Scholar's Language: A Pragma-Linguistic Analysis

Kurotsuchi Mayuri makes his debut in the *manga Bleach* (BLEACH ブリーチ) in chapter 81, with his initial interactions occurring in chapter 82. The selected frame below captures an act of communication characterized by formality, technicality, irony, and a sense of superiority.



Figure 1. *Bleach*, 2001-2016, vol. 10, cap. 82, p. 49
(Source: Kubo, Tite. 2001-2016. *Bleach*, Japan: Shueisha)

Source language: 猿芝居はやめたまえヨ。我々隊長クラスが相手の魄動が消えたかどうか察知できないわけないだろ。それともそれができないほど君は油断してたとしても言うのかネ!?

Transliteration: *Sarushibai wa yametamae yo. Wareware taichō kurasu ga aite no hakudō ga kieta kadōka sacchi dekinai wake nai daro. Soretomo sore ga dekinai hodo kimi wa yudan shiteta to demo iu no ka ne!?*

Translation: „Încetează cu acest teatru ieftin! Crezi că noi, cei din clasa căpitanilor, nu putem detecta dacă pulsația spirituală a inamicului a dispărut? Sau poate vrei să spui că ai fost atât de neglijent încât nu ai putut face asta?!”

猿芝居 (*saru shibai*): literally ‘monkey theater’, refers to an unconvincing action or a farce.

やめたまえ (*yametamae*): imperative form of the verb *yameru* (やめる), meaning ‘to stop’ or ‘to cease’. Derived from the verb *tamau* (給う), an honorific form meaning ‘to give’ or ‘to bestow’, the imperative form *tamae* (たまえ) can be attached to verb stems to create a mild command, often translated simply as ‘please’. However, *tamae* (たまえ) is used exclusively in addressing someone of lower status than the speaker and is predominantly used by men. This lower status relationship is usually evident to both the speaker and the listener, such as the relationship between a boss and a subordinate. According to Kinsui (2003, 108-109), in contemporary times, the imperative form *tamae* (たまえ) is perceived as a term used by older men of certain social standing towards subordinates, fitting into what he calls the “boss language” (*kyōshigo* 上司語). Although it is rarely used in real life today, during the interwar period, its usage was broader and seemed to be common practice. In other words, its use as a *yakuwarigo* element has imperceptibly increased. In conclusion, in the context I analysed, it reveals the character’s attitude of superiority, masked by a veil of politeness.

ヨ (*yo*): sentence-final particle adding emphasis or authority to the statement. Written in *katakana*, it also serves as a pragmatic marker indicative of the speaker’s linguistic repertoire.

我々 (*wareware*): first-person plural ‘we’ (singular form *ware* 我), used to include the speaker in an elite group (NKD Vol. 20 1972-1976, 702).

隊長クラス (*taichō kurasu*): ‘captain class’, indicating a high rank in the Gotei 13 hierarchy.

相手 (*aite*): noun meaning ‘opponent’.

魄動 (*hakudō*): technical term composed of the *kanji* for ‘soul’ 魄 (*tama*) and for movement 動 (*dō*), referring to ‘spiritual pulse’ or ‘spiritual resonance’. The use of this term demonstrates his advanced knowledge and linguistic specificity in the context of a *shinigami* (‘death god’ 死神).

消えた (*kieta*): past form of the verb *kieru* (消える), used in this context to mean ‘disappeared’ or ‘dissipated’.

かどうか (*kadōka*): compound particle expressing uncertainty, ‘whether or not’.

察知できない (*sacchi dekinai*): compound verb formed from the noun *sacchi* (察知), meaning ‘sense’ or ‘perception’, and the auxiliary verb *dekiru* (できる), conjugated in the negative, non-past form, meaning ‘cannot do’. The phrase translates as ‘cannot detect’.

わけない (*wake nai*): contraction of the phrase *wake ga nai* (わけがない), which expresses the idea of impossibility.

だろ (*daro*): conjugated form of the copula *da* (だ), meaning 'probably' or 'possibly', adding a nuance of certainty. It is a shortened form of *darō* (だらう).

できないほど (*dekinai hodo*): phrase composed of the negative form of the verb *dekiru* (できる), meaning 'to be able to', and *hodo* (ほど), a particle expressing degree or extent. It translates as 'to the point where you cannot' or 'so much that you cannot'.

君 (*kimi*): one of the variants for expressing the second-person singular in Japanese, similar to the personal pronoun 'you'. Japanese offers a wide variety of second-person appellations, such as *anata*, *kimi*, *omae*, *temē*, *kisama*, *onushi*. Therefore, the choice of *kimi* (君) is not accidental and is interpreted as emphasizing familiarity and superiority over the interlocutor. While it originally designated a person of noble lineage, added as a suffix of politeness after the name of a person of higher rank, in contemporary times it is used by men to address people of equal or lower rank (NKD Vol. 6 1972-1976, 39).

油断してた (*yudan shiteta*): compound verb formed from the noun *yudan* (油断), meaning 'negligence' or 'indolence', and the auxiliary *suru* (する), conjugated in the affirmative, past continuous form, meaning 'to do'. The phrase translates as 'you were negligent'.

とでも言うのかネ (*to demo iu no ka ne*): phrase translating as 'do you mean to say that', with the sentence-final particles *no ka ne* (のかネ) adding a nuance of questioning or confirmation. Together with the punctuation marks used, "!", this is considered a rhetorical question, which in the given context, enhances the sarcasm and superior attitude of the character. The *to demo* (とでも) structure is often used when dismissing an idea as absurd, while *ne* (ネ) at the end is a nonchalant, almost whimsical rhetorical flourish that makes his mockery more theatrical.

The following characteristics of the scholar's language are derived from a preliminary analysis of Kurotsuchi Mayuri and may be further refined or expanded as additional characters are examined in future studies:

→ The character uses specialized terms such as *hakudō* (魄動), which are not common in everyday Japanese language. This suggests not only advanced knowledge but also a concern for technical details, reflecting a high level of erudition and expertise in their field.

→ The use of verb forms such as *yametamae* (やめたまえ) and particles like *wake nai* (わけない) indicates a level of education and a position of authority. For instance, the phrase *Sarushibai wa yametamae yo.* (猿芝居はやめたまえヨ。), ‘Încetează cu acest teatru ieftin!’, (“Cease this monkey show.”) employs *tamae* (たまえ), a command form that is formally polite yet often used in a condescending manner by superiors addressing inferiors. This choice of wording is not meant to show respect but rather to highlight his dominance while ridiculing the opponent.

→ Mayuri Kurotsuchi’s speech style is defined by a deliberate blend of exaggerated formality and overt derision, creating a uniquely unsettling and provocative tone. He strategically employs linguistic refinements akin to *bikago* (美化語, beautification language), not to convey politeness, but as a tool of mockery and intellectual superiority. Rather than using elevated language to show respect, he manipulates it to sound condescending, theatrical, and psychologically domineering, turning formality into a weapon of ridicule. While *bikago* is traditionally used to refine speech or create a sense of distance, Mayuri does not employ it in a conventional manner. Instead, he distorts its function, using refined language not to show respect, but to enhance his condescension. His speech is highly calculated, seamlessly weaving formal linguistic structures with biting sarcasm to underscore his intellectual and moral superiority. Even when he does not explicitly use *bikago*, the combination of formal phrasing and theatrical disdain replicates its effect, reinforcing his distinctive brand of mockery and psychological dominance. This synthetic politeness – where he maintains a superficially polite register while lacing his words with unmistakable derision – reinforces his character as someone who derives pleasure from psychological manipulation and verbal humiliation. His speech is not merely a display of intelligence but an assertion of dominance, turning verbal exchanges into another arena for his experimentation and control.

→ The use of rhetorical questions carries significant strategic potential in discourse. In the case of Kurotsuchi Mayuri, such questions reflect a critical and self-assured stance, consistent with the persona of a scholar exhibiting heightened intellectual authority. Rather than seeking genuine responses, these interrogatives are employed to underscore the presumed ignorance or naïveté of the interlocutor. They often imply that the speaker already possesses the answer or is merely articulating a personal stance, with the rhetorical aim of influencing or persuading the listener to adopt a similar viewpoint (Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu 2018, 51–52).

→ The character's literary style of expression is evidenced by what appears to be a colloquial style of politeness. Mayuri prefers short conjugation forms, which I interpret as an application of the economy of expression characteristic of written language (*kaki kotoba* 書き言葉) in speech. This further reinforces the scholarly trait I consider specific to the scholar's language, suggesting familiarity with a sophisticated and academic linguistic register.

Writing sentence-final particles, such as *yo* (ヨ) and *ne* (ネ), in the *katakana* syllabary, which is primarily used for rendering loanwords (*gairaigo* 外来語), highlights them as *yakuwarigo* markers that add a particular tone to each statement, emphasizing the speaker's authority and certainty. They are thus part of Mayuri's specific language, but I do not consider them representative of the scholar's language in general, serving rather as complementary elements.

In translating into Romanian, maintaining the authoritative tone, sarcasm, and technical specificity of the language is imperative. The proposed translation, 'Încetează cu acest teatru ieftin! Crezi că noi, cei din clasa căpitanilor, nu putem detecta dacă pulsația spirituală a inamicului a dispărut? Sau poate vrei să spui că ai fost atât de neglijent încât nu ai putut face asta?!', successfully conveys the note of arrogance and sarcasm, even retaining terms that are not part of common vocabulary. However, the translation falls short in preserving the other characteristics mentioned above, such as elements of *faux-bikago* (美化語, beautification language) and the economy of expression characteristic of written language (*kaki kotoba* 書き言葉), which cannot be faithfully reproduced in Romanian. These aspects are vital for fully conveying the nuances and depth of Kurotsuchi Mayuri's communication style, which combines an elevated linguistic register with a disdainful and critical attitude, typical of a scholar with a high opinion of their own intellectual superiority.

It is essential to extend this analysis to include additional contexts and situations where Mayuri's discourse stands out. This approach will allow me to observe the consistency and linguistic variations of the character depending on the situational context and interlocutors. Thus, the following frame captures the interaction between our scholar and characters of lower social status, in his attempt to turn them into subjects for his experiments.



Figure 2. *Bleach*, 2001-2016, vol. 14, cap. 121, p. 151
(Source: Kubo, Tite. 2001-2016. *Bleach*, Japan: Shueisha)

Source language: 薬物投与は一日八回！機械実験も一日五時間までにしよう！食事も経口で与えるし睡眠時には衣服もやろう！改造だって死ぬようなものは極力控えるようにするヨ！！どうだネ！？研究体としては破格の待遇だと思いがネ...

Transliteration: *Yakubutsutōyo wa ichinichi hakkai! Kikai jikken mo ichinichi gojikan made ni shiyō! Shokuji mo kēkō de ataeru shi, suiminji ni wa ifuku mo yarō! Kaizō datte shinu yōna mono wa kyokuryoku hikaeru yōni suru yo!! Dō da ne!? Kenkyūtai toshite wa hakaku no taigū da to omou ga ne...*

Translation: „Administrarea medicamentelor va avea loc de opt ori pe zi! Experimentele mecanice sunt limitate la cinci ore pe zi! Hrana va fi administrată pe cale orală, iar în timpul somnului vei avea haine! Modificările periculoase vor fi evitate pe cât posibil! Cum ți se pare?! Cred că este un tratament excepțional pentru un subiect de cercetare, nu-i așa...?”

Since the selected fragment is considerably long, I will limit myself to a detailed analysis of elements that are of interest for identifying the characteristics of the scholar's language, with connective terms being ignored or analysed within phrases.

薬物投与 (*yakubutsutōyo*): technical term for the administration of drugs. The use of this term suggests a deep knowledge of medical terminology.

一日八回 (*ichinichi hakkai*): a compound noun that can be translated as 'eight times a day'. This specific and precise expression indicates an exact frequency, reflecting a level of rigor and detail characteristic of a scientist.

機械実験 (*kikai jikken*): a technical term for 'mechanical experiments', indicating a field of scientific expertise.

一日五時間までにしよう (*ichinichi gojikan made ni shiyō*): indicates a limitation and suggests rigorous planning, typical of an organized scientist.

食事 (*shokuji*): term for 'meal' or 'food'. Notable is the choice of a Sino-Japanese noun to express objective formality, lending an elegant, elevated tone to the discourse.

経口で与える (*keikō de ataeru*): technical expression for 'oral administration'.

睡眠 (*suimin*): term for 'sleep'. The use of a Sino-Japanese noun is notable for expressing objective formality, giving an elegant, elevated tone to the discourse.

衣服 (*ifuku*): a Sino-Japanese noun meaning 'clothes', expresses objective formality, offering an elegant, elevated tone to the discourse.

やろう (*yarō*): the volitional form of the verb *yaru* (やる), meaning 'to give' or 'to offer', and can only be used towards an interlocutor of equal or lower status. Using it towards someone of equal status presupposes a close, intimate relationship.

改造 (*kaizō*): technical term for 'modification'.

死ぬようなもの (*shinu yō na mono*): expression suggesting a danger of death.

極力 (*kyokuryoku*): adverb meaning 'as much as possible' or 'to do everything in one's power'. Once again, a preference for a Sino-Japanese term, expressing objective formality, which offers an elegant, elevated tone to the discourse.

控える (*hikaeru*): verb expressing the idea of being temperate, 'to refrain'.

ヨ (*yo*): sentence-final particle emphasizing the statement, adding a firm tone.

どうだ (*dō da*): rhetorical, provocative question: 'How does it seem to you?!'

ネ (*ne*): particle adding a tone of insistence and seeking the interlocutor's agreement.

研究体 (*kenkyūtai*): technical term for ‘research subject’ or ‘guinea pig’.

破格 (*hakaku*): Sino-Japanese noun serving as an attribute, suggesting the idea of ‘exceptional’, ‘remarkable’, or ‘special’.

待遇 (*taigū*): Sino-Japanese noun meaning ‘treatment’.

The analyzed example reveals that the language used by Mayuri is imbued with technical terms and complex structures, reflecting not only his vast knowledge but also an authoritative and sarcastic attitude. This manner of expression denotes an elevated discursive style, characterized by a linguistic sophistication specific to scientists. In addition to the previously mentioned characteristics, there is a noticeable preference for the use of Sino-Japanese vocabulary, which conveys objective formality, thereby imparting an elegant and elevated tone to the discourse.

Furthermore, the use of particles written in *katakana*, such as *yo* (ヨ) and *ne* (ネ), accentuates the speaker’s certainty and authority while adding a distinctive and specific note to the character. These elements of *yakuwarigo* contribute to constructing a unique linguistic identity for Mayuri, thereby emphasizing his traits of intellectual superiority and subtle irony. Additionally, it is essential to mention that these particles, alongside the technical nature of his discourse, serve to create an atmosphere of intimidation and control, amplifying the reader’s perception of Mayuri as both an erudite and menacing character. This style of speech not only distinguishes him from other characters in the *manga* but also consolidates the image of a scholar who asserts his authority through knowledge and sarcasm.

Comparing the original with the translation, we observe that the translation manages to retain most of the pragmatic messages and the intended tone of the *mangaka* (the author of the *manga*), although some nuances specific to Japanese culture and language may be lost in the adaptation process. The Romanian translation preserves the clarity and authority of Mayuri’s discourse, yet certain subtleties of the technical and formal language, as well as the subtle ironies, may be more challenging to convey in full.

To further illustrate the complexity of the scholar’s language, I analyze the following scene from the same *manga*, where Mayuri shows complete disinterest in a subject he has extensively researched in the past.



Figure 3. *Bleach*, 2001-2016, vol. 14, cap. 121, p. 153
(Source: Kubo, Tite. 2001-2016. *Bleach*, Japan: Shueisha)

Source language: だがネ悪いが私はもう君等の研究は終えたんだヨ。もう君等には興味が無いんだ。そこを退き給えヨ。...ホウ...何だ、旅禍ってやつは敵の調査もロクにしないまま敵の本拠地に乗り込んでくるのかネ? せめて頂点の十三人ぐらいは頭に入れておくべきだと思うがネ.....!

Transliteration: *Da ga ne, warui ga watashi wa mō kimira no kenkyū wa oetanda yo. Mō kimira ni wa kyōmi ga nain da. Soko wo noki tamae yo. ...Hō... Nan da, ryokatte yatsu wa teki no chōsa mo roku ni shinai mama teki no honkyochi ni norikonde kuru no ka ne? Semete chōten no jyūsan nin gurai wa atama ni irete oku beki da to omō ka ne.....!*

Translation: 'Îmi pare rău, dar am terminat cercetarea asupra voastră, neînsemnaților. Nu mai am niciun interes față de voi. Dă-te la o parte! ...Oh... ce e asta? Așa-zișii intruși aducători de ghinion vin în baza inamicului fără să se documenteze corespunzător despre adversar? Măcar cei treisprezece lideri ar trebui să fie cunoscuți, nu crezi?'

だが (*da ga ne*): the phrase *da ga* (だが) means ‘however’ or ‘but’, and is used to introduce a statement that contrasts with previous expectations. *Ne* (ね) is a sentence-ending particle used to seek agreement or confirm what has been said. In this context, *ne* (ね) adds a tone of familiarity and can suggest a superior or condescending attitude.

悪いが (*warui ga*): *Warui* (悪い) means ‘bad’ and is used here as a polite form to express regret, though condescendingly. *Ga* (が) is a particle that connects two contrasting clauses. The equivalent in English would be ‘I’m sorry, but...’, displaying a false sense of regret, emphasizing the speaker’s sarcasm or irony. Although Mayuri states that he is sorry, the context suggests he is not sincere.

私 (*watashi*): A noun that expresses the first-person singular, and is the most common term for self-reference. In contemporary usage, *watashi* (私) is predominantly used by female speakers in situations requiring neutral politeness (NKD Vol. 20 1972-1976, 655). Considering the male speaker, choosing *watashi* (私) over more common male variants like *boku* (僕) or *ore* (俺) conveys multiple pragmatic messages. Mayuri is known for his eccentric and often sadistic personality. Using *watashi* (私), a formal and polite pronoun, starkly contrasts with his often condescending tone and authoritarian behavior. This creates a dissonance effect, highlighting the character’s eccentricity and complexity. In many cases, Mayuri uses formalities to emphasize his sarcasm. While *watashi* (私) is usually employed to show respect, in the context of Mayuri’s interactions with those of lower status, it can underline the irony of the situation. He uses exaggerated politeness to underscore his superiority and disdain. In conclusion, Mayuri’s use of *watashi* (私) towards an inferior is a strategic choice that underscores his complexity as a character, balancing surface formality with deep sarcasm or contempt. This not only reflects his knowledge and authority but also contributes to his characterization as an eccentric and often malevolent scholar.

君等 (*kimira*): *Kimi* (君) is one of the variants for expressing the second-person singular in Japanese, similar to the personal pronoun ‘you’. *Kimira* (君等) is a plural form that can be considered colloquial and somewhat informal. Adding the suffix *-ra* (等) introduces a pejorative sense, denoting disdain and disregard for the people being referred to. Mayuri uses this form to emphasize the inferiority and lack of respect towards his interlocutors, treating them as an unimportant or insignificant group. By using this form, Mayuri amplifies the stereotyping and irony in his language. This not only highlights his intellectual and professional superiority but also his intention to diminish the status of his interlocutors, often with a note of sarcasm. From a pragmatic perspective, this use of the pronoun indicates a clearly defined power relationship. Mayuri deliberately

positions himself in a dominant role, and his choice of language reflects not only his contempt for inferiors but also a method of keeping them at a distance and constantly reaffirming his superiority.

終えたんだ (*oetan da*): the past form of the verb 'to finish', with *n da* (んだ) adding an explanatory or emphatic note. It confirms the action of completing the research, adding a note of finality and certainty.

退き給え (*doki tamae*): the imperative form of the verb *doku* (退く), meaning 'to step aside' or 'to make way'. Derived from the verb *tamau* (給う), an honorific form meaning 'to offer' or 'to give', the imperative form *tamae* (たまえ) can be attached to verb stems to create a mild command. This is often simply translated as 'please'.

ホウ (*hō*): an interjection expressing surprise or interest. Writing this interjection in katakana emphasizes the character's dramatic tone and irony.

何だ (*nan da*): a rhetorical question meaning 'What is this?'. Pragmatically, it indicates a mix of surprise and contempt.

旅禍 (*ryōka*): a term specific to the *Bleach* (BLEACH ブリーチ) universe, referring to those who have illegally entered the Soul Society (ソウル・ソサエティ). This includes any intruder who enters without the permission of the death gods (*shinigami* 死神), whether they are a soul or a human. According to common belief, strangers are said to bring misfortune to the Soul Society, which is why they are eliminated without discrimination.

ってやつ (*tte yatsu*): a colloquial expression that can be translated as 'this so-called'. Its use adds a tone of disdain and belittlement.

口にしな (い) (*roku ni shinai*): a colloquial expression meaning 'without even doing'. It adds a depreciative tone.

本拠地 (*honkyochi*): a technical term meaning 'main base'. It suggests knowledge of the military context.

のかネ (*no ka ne*): a rhetorical structure that adds a tone of irony and surprise. The sentence-ending particle *ne* (ネ), written in katakana, emphasizes the speaker's insistence and certainty.

頂点の十三人 (*chōten no jūsan nin*): a compound noun referring to the thirteen leaders of the Soul Society (ソウル・ソサエティ). It indicates detailed knowledge of the hierarchy.

The analysis of this paragraph from Mayuri's discourse confirms the linguistic characteristics of the scholar's language identified earlier, adding the novelty of *kanji* usage for parts of speech that, in contemporary everyday Japanese, are usually rendered using the *hiragana* syllabary. Examples include the lexical suffix *-ra* (等) and the negative, non-past form *nai* (無い) of the verb *aru* (ある).

In the context of modern Japanese, using *kanji* instead of *hiragana* for such grammatical elements not only intensifies the formality of the discourse but also imparts a note of erudition and sophistication. This can be interpreted as a way for Mayuri to assert his authority and deep knowledge in a specialized field. Additionally, this stylistic choice may reflect a deliberate intention to create a contrast between his elevated language and common speech, thereby highlighting his superior position both intellectually and hierarchically. This adds a dimension of sarcasm and superiority to his interactions with interlocutors, accentuating his distinctive traits as an eccentric scholar.

From a pragmatic perspective, the linguistic peculiarities attributed by the *mangaka* to Kurotsuchi Mayuri are intended to convey an authoritative and disdainful tone. He expresses his intellectual superiority and lack of interest in his interlocutors by using sophisticated and formal language combined with sarcasm. Mayuri employs particles such as *ne* (ネ) and *yo* (ヨ) to add a tone of superiority and sarcasm. While the translation manages to retain the authoritative and disdainful tone, the inability to fully convey these particles in Romanian results in a diminished degree of expressed sarcasm. The plural noun *kimira* (君等) could be equated with the deictic 'voi' (you), but this only captures the essence without conveying the pejorative nuances implied by the suffix *-ra* (〜等). My solution was to enhance the meaning by adding a pejorative term in Romanian, specifically 'neînsemnaților' (insignificant ones). I chose this term because Mayuri has no further interest in a group he has already studied, and therefore they hold no significance for him.

The Scholar's Language: Conclusions

This analysis highlights the pragmatic and linguistic intricacies of Mayuri Kurotsuchi's speech, demonstrating how his language constructs an authoritative, erudite, and condescending persona. His scholar's language is marked by a highly technical lexicon, synthetic politeness, and linguistic manipulation, all of which serve to emphasize his intellectual superiority and disdain for others. Key linguistic features include:

The use of specialized terminology (e.g., 魄動 *hakudō*, 'pulsăția spirituală'; 研究体 *kenkyūtai*, 'subiect de cercetare'), which not only signals advanced knowledge but also establishes a detached, analytical tone, characteristic of a scientist.

Formal yet condescending imperative forms (e.g., やめたまえ *yametamae*), reinforcing his authority while subtly ridiculing his interlocutors.

A preference for Sino-Japanese vocabulary, adding formality and precision, creating a linguistic register that feels both refined and intimidating.

Rhetorical questions and sarcastic structures, which frame his interlocutors as ignorant, further reinforcing his self-perceived superiority.

The use of particles written in *katakana* (e.g., ヱ *yo*, ネ *ne*), which function as *yakuwarigo* markers, enhancing his theatricality and condescending tone.

Given the culturally bound nature of *yakuwarigo*, its translation poses a challenge: the associations triggered in a Japanese reader may not carry over to a Romanian audience, thus requiring strategic choices to preserve the character's pragmatic authority and intellectual eccentricity. From a pragma-linguistic perspective, the Romanian translation successfully preserves the authoritative and sarcastic tone of the original. However, certain nuances – such as Mayuri's faux-politeness, lexical refinement, and subtle pejorative connotations – prove difficult to fully replicate. For instance:

The economy of expression found in the Japanese text is lost in the Romanian translation, as Japanese written language tends to be more concise and syntactically flexible.

Particles like *yo* (ヨ) and *ne* (ネ), which add certainty, sarcasm, and theatrical emphasis, have no direct Romanian equivalent, slightly diminishing the expressive force of the translation.

The plural second-person pronoun *kimira* (君等), which carries both familiarity and disdain, was adapted using a pejorative descriptor ('neînsemnaților' insignificant ones) to retain its dismissive tone.

Overall, this study concludes that Mayuri's scholar language is a refined yet calculated register, blending formal structures with overt mockery. His linguistic strategy is not merely a reflection of intelligence but a tool of psychological manipulation, positioning him as a superior intellectual force within the narrative. While the Romanian translation captures the core pragmatic intent, further research is needed to explore alternative linguistic strategies that might better convey the full spectrum of Mayuri's linguistic arrogance.

This preliminary study is subject to several limitations that must be acknowledged. The analysis focused on a single character, Kurotsuchi Mayuri, as a representative of the scholar's language, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Examining a broader range of characters associated with similar roles would allow for a clearer distinction between linguistic features specific to the role and idiosyncratic traits unique to individual characters. Moreover, the pragmatic interpretation proposed in this study is inherently subjective and may vary depending on the researcher's perspective, potentially leading to conclusions that are not universally applicable. Future studies should aim to incorporate comparative analyses across multiple texts and genres to strengthen the theoretical grounding of this category and to account for variation in representation and reception. However, this initial study provides a solid foundation for further research, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and

systematic examination of the various linguistic manifestations attributed to scholars in *manga* literature. This would significantly contribute to understanding how the scholar's language is perceived and used within the specific cultural and narrative context of this form of pop culture.

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