

Kanbun-kundoku – Translation Procedure of Classical Chinese Text in Contemporary Japanese

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The aim of this paper is to present and explain main features of partially automated Japanese translation procedure called *kanbun-kundoku*.

Translation procedures developed in East Asia languages, in which ideographic Chinese scripture is used, work in a different way than those of alphabetic scripture. The main difference is that text written with ideograms can be recoded independently of its original phonic substance which allows establishing strict rules of translation process, and facilitates the whole operation.

The Japanese *kanbun-kundoku*, which has its counterparts in other languages of Sinitic cultural sphere¹ (e.g. Korean *hanmun* 한문, Vietnamese *Hán văn*), dates back to the 9th century, when additional reading marks facilitating the procedure were invented, but earlier written evidences and artefacts suggest that it was in use even in the second half of 6th and in 7th century. Although *kanbun-kundoku* is now just an auxiliary translation tool, it is even now commonly used by editors of classical Chinese texts to present as simplest as possible and closest to original rendition of the ideographical source text.

The structure of this paper is as follows:

- section 1 describes basics of *kanbun-kundoku* and shows its mechanics on an example taken from Meijishoin edition of *Mencius*,
- section 2 presents translation procedures and example of a text rendered by the means of *kanbun-kundoku*,

¹ Cf. *kanji-bunkaken* 漢字文化圏 'Chinese characters cultural sphere', the term coined by Akiyasu Tōdō. See A. Tōdō, *Kanji to sono bunkaken*, Tokyo 1971, and R. Huszcza, *Gramatykalizacje japońszczyzny*, Warsaw 2012.

– section 3 aims to highlight the features of *kanbun-kundoku* by analysing two approaches to translation procedures: 1) Zabrocki's codematics originally developed in 1970's to show dynamic aspects of translation, and 2) Boguśławski's remarks on effability and limits of translation that can be applied to *kanbun-kundoku*,

– section 4 contains the conclusion.

1. *Kanbun-kundoku*: definition and historical background

Let us imagine the following situation: a reader is holding a book with a text written in classical Chinese and begins to read it aloud; but what he pronounces is a text consisting of Japanese sentences. This is an example of practical use of *kanbun-kundoku* that has been exercised in this shape since at least the 9th century AC. An external observer may think that the text is being *read*, but if he knew the difference between language of written text and the text being pronounced, the observer would rather say that the reader is *translating* it. This might be an accurate conclusion if the text had been written in Latin and read in English, and we would undoubtedly praise the skills of the reader or, rather say, the translator. However, in the case of classical Chinese text, written with ideograms, there is some unique mechanism involved. This mechanism allows a reader to ease the effort of conducting the procedure, while its rules explicitly indicate how to transform syntactical structure of Chinese sentences into Japanese and how to substitute each lexical item with its Japanese or Sino-Japanese equivalent. Moreover, usually there is no need of correction of deviant phrases nor polishing of the output of *kanbun-kundoku* operation; it is rather the case, when the user follows the instructions of translation tool. Clearly, *kanbun-kundoku* is something different from reading, and if we decide to call it simply 'a translation', we must make reservations that this seems to be its special case.

The term *kanbun-kundoku* consists of two words. The first one, *kanbun* 漢文, literally means 'Chinese text'², and indicates whole range of phenomena associated with Chinese texts' translation procedure: a corpus consisting of classical Chinese texts, a text written in classical Chinese, classical Chinese grammar system (as an opposition to the Japanese one), pure ideographical text as an opposition to text written with *kana* syllabary ('Japanese text', *wabun* 和文), etc.³ The second part of the term, the word *kundoku* 訓読, means 'reading and explana-

² While the word *kan* 漢 means 'Chinese' or 'of Han dynasty', the second one, *bun* 文, has many connotations, but we understand it here as 'text'. For further discussion, see D. Gluch and J. Wiślicki, "U źródeł grafemiki chińskiej. Pismo ideograficzne i jego analiza w *Posłowie* do słownika *Shuowenjiezi*", Warsaw 2017, p. 84.

³ For detailed discussion see D. Gluch, *Kanbun – tekst klasyczo-chiński w środowisku językowym japońszczyzny* [*Kanbun in Japanese language environment*], (Krakow, 2015), pp. 32-33.

tion', and it specifically indicates a recoding procedure being the subject of the examination in this paper⁴.

Historically, we can distinguish several stages of perception of classical Chinese texts. Firstly, at the beginning of assimilation of Chinese literary culture exchange, which began about 5th century AC⁵, original Chinese texts were being treated as texts written in foreign language, so there was no other way for Japanese but to learn Chinese as a foreign language. However, with assimilation and adaptation of Chinese writing system into Japanese and development of Japanese syllabic alphabet *kana*, the status of Chinese language has changed, and the reading procedures to ease the lecture of Chinese texts, based on those developed on the Korean Peninsula⁶, have been adopted and developed. In effect, in 9th century Japanese readers were able to recode Chinese texts without learning Chinese as a foreign language – and since that time no abilities in spoken Chinese were needed to understand classical texts. This was possible because one of the features of Chinese scripture, namely ideographicity, which allows to keep the reading and the meaning of a character separate. This feature enabled the users of Japanese to write down words and sentences in their language, and to assimilate – mainly by the means of *kundoku* translation procedure – the abundant Chinese lexicon.

2. The mechanics of *kanbun-kundoku* recoding procedure

Let us see some example of *kanbun-kundoku* in use. In contemporary Japanese editions of classical Chinese texts, the reader is provided with more than one version of the text. (1) is a classical Chinese text in its original shape. It is a string of 155 characters without any additional hints for reader. However, in contemporary Japanese editions, punctuation marks are normally added and thus arranged as in (1a).

(2) – (4) is a presentation of the layout of Chinese original text and texts being products of its recoding in a Meijishoin edition⁷: (2) is a text in original ideographic form with reading marks added, (3) is the recoded text which shows the exact transposition⁸ of (2) into the shape of a Japanese text, and (4) is a contemporary Japanese translation of (2) with additional commentaries and explanations provided for the reader. One of the texts can be chosen as the main object of a lecture while other versions may serve as a reference.

⁴ Note that there is also the second meaning of the term *kundoku*, namely 'Japanese (vernacular) reading of a word written in Chinese characters', e.g. vernacular reading *mizu* of the character 水.

⁵ The famous records about those facts in *Kojiki* [Record of Ancient Matters] (2nd scroll, Emperor Ōjin) and *Nihon shoki* [Chronicles of Japan] (10th scroll, Emperor Ōjin, year 16).

⁶ See B. Kim, *Kanbun to Higashi Ajia – kundoku no bunkaken*, (Tokyo: 2010), pp. 31-77.

⁷ K. Uchino (ed.), *Mōshi* [Mencius], Shinshaku kanbun taikai, vol. 4, (Tokyo, 1962), Meijishoin.

⁸ This term and phenomenon will be discussed in next paragraphs.

(1)

是以惟仁者宜在高位不仁而在高位是播其惡於衆也上無道揆也下無法守也朝不信道工不信度君子犯義小人犯刑國之所存者幸也故曰城郭不完兵甲不多非國之災也田野不辟貨財不聚非國之害也上無禮下無學賊民興喪無日矣詩曰天之方蹶無然泄泄泄泄猶沓沓也事君無義進退無禮言則非先王之道者猶沓沓也故曰責難於君謂之恭陳善閉邪謂之敬吾君不能謂之賊

(1a)

是以惟仁者宜在高位。不仁而在高位、是播其惡於眾也。上無道揆也、下無法守也、朝不信道、工不信度、君子犯義、小人犯刑、國之所存者幸也。故曰、城郭不完、兵甲不多、非國之災也。田野不辟、貨財不聚、非國之害也。上無禮、下無學、賊民興、喪無日矣。詩曰、天之方蹶、無然泄泄。泄泄、猶沓沓也。事君無義、進退無禮。言則非先王之道者、猶沓沓也。故曰、責難於君、謂之恭。陳善閉邪、謂之敬。吾君不能、謂之賊。

Therefore only the benevolent ought to be in high stations. When a man destitute of benevolence is in a high station, he thereby disseminates his wickedness among the multitudes [below him].

When the ruler has not principles by which he examines [his administration], and his ministers have no laws by which they keep themselves [in the discharge of their duties], then in the court obedience is not paid to principle, and in the office obedience is not paid to rule. Superiors violate [the laws of] righteousness, and inferiors violate the penal laws. It is only by a fortunate chance that a State in such a case is preserved.

Therefore it is said, "It is not the interior and exterior walls being incomplete, nor the supply of weapons offensive and defensive not being large, which constitutes the calamity of a State. It is not the non-extension of the cultivable, nor the non-accumulation of stores and wealth, which is injurious to a State." When superiors do not observe the rules of propriety, and inferiors do not learn, then seditious people spring up, and [that State] will perish in no time.

It is said in the Book of Poetry, "Heaven is now producing such movements; - Do not be so indifferent".

⁹ Ibid., p. 240.

“Indifferent” – that is, careless and dilatory.

And so may [those officers] be deemed, who serve their ruler without righteousness, who take office and retire from office without regard to propriety, and in their words disown the ways of the ancient kings.

Therefore it is said, “To urge one’s ruler to difficult achievements should be called showing respect for him; to set before him what is good and repress his perversities should be called showing reverence for him. [He who does not do these things, saying to himself], ‘My sovereign is incompetent to this’, should be said to play the thief with him.”¹⁰

Let us take a closer look on each of the texts. In (2) we can see further marks added to the original ideographic text. They are of no use for Chinese reader, as they have been provided to facilitate Japanese *kanbun-kundoku* recoding procedure. These marks, called *kunten* 訓点 (‘interpretation marks’), are nowadays unified, but historically they came in numerous varieties depending on the time and society (religious or courtly) in which they were developed and used¹¹.

In (2) reading marks have been provided in their contemporary common-used shape. Their set consists of two types: 1) Chinese numbers which indicate order of recoding of units they are attached into Japanese, and 2) inversion mark (of shape similar to katakana letter *re* レ, and therefore often called *re-ten* レ点, lit. ‘mark [in the shape of] *re* [letter]’) which indicates inversion of neighbouring characters in recoding. An experienced reader can make use of those hints and recode the ideographic text (2) by transforming classical Chinese grammatical structures into Japanese and assigning appropriate lexical equivalents with their readings.

¹⁰ Trans. J. Legge, *The Life and Works of Mencius*, (Philadelphia, 1875), p. 234. <https://archive.org/details/lifeworksofmenci00mencuoft/page/234> [date of access 3.01.2019]

¹¹ The research on historical types of *kunten* reading marks is conducted by scholars of *kokugo* ‘Japanese language’ studies. For further reading, see D. Gluch, *Kanbun – tekst klasyczny japoński* w *środowisku językowym japońszczyzny*, (Krakow, 2015), pp. 210-215.

As shown in the above example, in the case of *kanbun-kundoku* the transposition process is similar to executing lines of computer program rather than translation that we are used to. A reader conducting *kanbun-kundoku* recoding must follow the rules of the process and be able to 1) discriminate words (verbs, proper names, nouns, and so on), and in their functions in the actual sentence, 2) substitute Japanese and Sino-Japanese equivalents for each unit to be transposed. Due to the properties of Japanese syntax, there is a need to change an order of words (as indicated in M2) and provide case particles (ACC *wo*, LOC *ni*) and a topic particle (*wa*). The important thing is there is almost no room for applying changes according to translator's preferences: no additions or abbreviations are allowed, and each Chinese lexical item must be substituted by its equivalent (except for the few of them which have no equivalent, as for example final particles). The closer the translator follows the rules and sticks to the original, the better.

Note, that (M1) is taken without its original phonic substance, as a 'mute' ideographic text. Japanese language user pronounces only (M3) reading it as in (M4). It is possible, however, to assign reading to (M1) – e.g. in the shape of Sino-Japanese readings of each of the characters, but it is almost never practised.

After this explanation, let us now return to the main example, texts (1)-(4). As a common user of Japanese language (native speaker) may find interpretation of (2) challenging, the exact reading (3) is usually provided. However, although (3) is a text of Japanese code, its meaning still may not be completely clear for a contemporary reader, for what we can see here is an effect of partially *mechanical*, as we have shown, transformation of classical Chinese structures into a kind of classical Japanese structures, which standard differs not only from contemporary Japanese, but it is also slightly different from classical Japanese from which it stems. Moreover, due to the properties of source Chinese text, which is often terse and lacks in context, the meaning of (3) is still obscure. To make it understandable, contemporary editors provide yet another text, but now in modern Japanese (4). This text is, however, different from what we call *a translation*, because of the abundance of additional information in shape of glosses and further commentaries or lexical explanation provided by an editor. We can understand this phenomenon just by comparing the length of texts (3) and (4). In the case of the first sentence, which has served as a previous example analysed before (M1-M4), the following contemporary translation (M5) has been provided (additional commentaries underlined):

(M1) 是以惟仁者宜_レ在高位。

(M3) 是を以て惟仁者は宜しく高位に在るべし。

(M5) 以上のようなわけだから、仁心仁聞があり、そしてよく先王の道に由るところの、ただ仁者だけが、高い位についておるべきである。

The underlined phrase in (M5) says: 'the one who has heart full of compassion and follows humanitarian ideals, and who follows the path of the old kings/sages', and it is added by the Japanese editor to enrich the context and facilitate lecture for the reader.

As we can see from the above-presented example (Pic. 1), the present-day perception of a classical Chinese text involves the perception of more than one text at the same time. This tripartite layout of classical Chinese text has been adopted as a standard in edition by contemporary Japanese publishers. A reader provided with these texts can compare and confront them simultaneously: the lecture of the ideographical text (2) allows him to learn its shape closest to the original; text (3) provides exact and coherent transposition of original text into Japanese; the text (4) supplies the reader with contemporary translation of the original, provides additional context and further explanations which are often introduced by the translator without any additional remarks.

Depending on purpose and interest of the reader, he can choose the main object of his perception. The Chinese ideographical text (2), often located on the centre of a page, is usually presented in larger fonts than those of Japanese transposition and translation. However, the study the original ideographic text may not necessarily be the main goal of a reader, as he may be interested in using it only as a reference for the text (3) or (4), for example in case when he wants to quote a sentence in Japanese.

There are also other variants of layout arrangement, and the Shōgakukan edition of *Kojiki* may serve here as a good example (Pic. 2). The main text (K1) is not an ideographic original, but the *kanbun-kundoku* transposition followed by the classical Chinese original in smaller fonts (K2), and the translation into contemporary Japanese below (K3). The reason of applying this layout is that the *Kojiki*, as the oldest collection of Japanese mythology, is considered to be a native Japanese text which has been presented in a shape of Chinese, because at the beginning of the 8th Century, when *Kojiki* was finished, the vernacular *kana* scripture had not been developed yet. And in fact, the Chinese language of *Kojiki* is not in its pure classical variant, but in Japanese classical Chinese (so-called *washū kanbun* 和臭漢文 or *waka kanbun* 和化漢文, lit. 'Japanized classical Chinese text'). For this reason, the *Kojiki* is being studied mainly as a Japanese text.

(K1)

(一)五柱の別天
つ神

天地初めて発けし時、高天原に成れる神の

名は、天之御中主神、次に高御産巢日神、

次に神産巢日神。此の三柱の神は並独神

と成り坐して、身を隠したまひき。

次に国稚く浮べる脂の如くして、くらげなすただよへる時、

葦牙の如く萌え騰る物に因りて成れる神の名は、宇摩志阿斯

訶備比古遲神、次に天之常立神。此の二柱の神も亦並独神と

成り坐して、身を隠したまひき。

上の件の五柱の神は別天つ神。

天地初発之時、於高天原一成神名、天之御中主神(訓高下天云)

阿麻(下効此)、次高御産巢日神、次神産巢日神。此三柱神者並独
神成坐而、隠身也。

次国稚如三浮脂二而、久羅下那州多陀用弊流之時(流字以上十字以、
首)、如三葦牙二因三萌騰之物二而成神名、宇摩志阿斯訶備比古遲神

(此神名以首)、次天之常立神(訓常云登許。訓立云多知)。此二柱神
亦並独神成坐而、隠身也。

(2)

(二)宇宙の初め、混沌としたものの中から
天と地が初めて分かれた時、高い天上の聖
なる世界、高天原に成り出でた神の名は、
天地を主宰する天之御中主神、次に万物を
生成する靈力をもった高御産巢日神、次に
同じ靈力をもった神産巢日神である。この
三柱の造化神は、みな配偶をもたない単独
の神としてお成りになって、お姿を見せる
ことはなかった。

次に、国土がまだ形を整えていず、水に
浮かんでいる脂のようで、水母のようにふ
わふわと漂っていた時、春の光さす水辺の
葦がすくすくと芽を吹くように、混沌の中
からきざし伸びる生命体によって成った神
の名は、葦牙の生命力をもった宇摩志阿斯
訶備比古遲神、次に天上が恒久に存立する
ようにと予祝する心をこめた天之常立神で
ある。この二柱の神もまた、ともに単独神
としてお成りになって、お姿を見せること
はなかった。

以上の五柱の神は、天つ神の中でも特別
に扱われる神である。

(K3)

Fig. 2. The layout of the *Kojiki* text, *Shōgakukan* edition. *Kojiki. Jōdai kayō*, (1973)
A. Ogihara, H. Kōnosu (eds.). *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 1. Tokyo: Shōgakukan, p. 50.

2.1. Summary of Section 2: The features of *kanbun-kundoku* transposition

To sum up Section 2, let us list three observations to characterize main features of *kanbun-kundoku* procedure and its mechanism:

1) *kanbun-kundoku* is a method based on ideographic features of classical Chinese scripture. In consequence, while recoding a text, the reader omits Chinese phonic substance and recodes the text directly into the target language. This practice has developed in languages of Sinitic cultural sphere, but survived up to present primarily in Korean and Japanese;

2) the output of the *kanbun-kundoku* recoding method is a text of Japanese code based on classical variants of the language, but it does differ from both the historical variants of Japanese and contemporary Japanese being a separate and peculiar language tool with specific grammar and pronounced influence of Sino-Japanese lexicon used in the source text;

3) presently, the recoded text is often accompanied by its contemporary equivalent. There are only scarce exemptions, e.g. specialized dictionaries, as for example famous *The Great Classical Chinese-Japanese Dictionary*¹³, where classical Chinese texts are provided only with some transposition marks. It seems therefore that the use of ideographic original text is limited due to the lack of interpretative skills of contemporary Japanese users, and so the addition of transposition text is presently a common practice.

3. What kind of translation is *kanbun-kundoku*?

As explained in the previous section, *kanbun-kundoku* is a procedure that differs from standard translation. Catford claims that “translation is something done with languages, a process of substituting a text (written or spoken) in one language for a text in another”¹⁴. But while standard translation is a process that requires the translator to maintain balance between adequacy in preserving syntactic structures and functions from the source text, and to consider correctness and situational accurateness of the text in target language at the same time, *kanbun-kundoku* transposition works in quite mechanical and standardized way, and interference of translator tends to be minimised.

¹³ T. Morohashi (ed.), *Dai kanwa jiten* [Great Chinese-Japanese dictionary], 13 vols, (Tokyo, 1955), the largest Japanese dictionary of Chinese characters, encompassing over 50,000 entries.

¹⁴ J.C. Catford, “Translation,” in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, eds. R.E. Asher and J.M.Y. Simpson, (Oxford–New York: 1994), p. 4738.

3.1. Translation in works of Ludwik Zabrocki. Code. Encoding, recoding and decoding procedures

To understand what kind of translation procedure the *kanbun-kundoku* is, we shall firstly take a look at some works of Ludwik Zabrocki (1907-1977), a Polish linguist who discussed code mechanics underlying the basis of translation procedures.

Code is an object of investigation of semioticians, anthropologists, and linguists, etc. who try to understand how some portion of information is translated from one system to another. A code is often defined as conventionally fixed usage of sets of semiotic symbols (language signs, in the case of natural language), which are understood by sender and receiver. In this approach language is treated as an instance of code which serves humans to communicate. Moreover, code bounds signs (language units) with meaning. A code is therefore a system that allows encoding and decoding meaning into strings of code (information)¹⁵.

Unlike the other scholars, Zabrocki did not investigate a code as a system of usage of semiotic symbols that bounds meaning to signs, but rather as a system of relations and operations between signs, and in his later works the term *code* boils down to the concept of function in the mathematical sense¹⁶. Those functions transform units of lower level into units of higher level (synthetic functions) or units of higher level into units of lower level (analytic functions)¹⁷. The purpose of Zabrocki's investigations was to "capture the dynamic aspect of language"¹⁸ instead of describing its static aspects, and thus we recall it here hoping that it could shed a light on problem of *kanbun-kundoku*.

In Zabrocki's linguistic framework, there are many codes that work on different levels of language: they arrange structures of phonemes, words, sentences, text, etc. The arrangement of linearly ordered language objects, taken as a whole, is called *code chain*. An arrangement of phonemes can serve here as an example of code chain, e.g. three phonemes c-a-t combined together becomes a *code unit* of higher level, namely the noun *cat*¹⁹. Higher level code units (at word level in this case), in turn, may become an objects and components of a code chain of higher level and yield a sentence, like 'the cat is black'. The sentences can be then synthesized into yet higher, textual level. As Zabrocki explains, the user of a lan-

¹⁵ Cf. P. Copley (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, (Routledge, 2005), pp. 170–172.

¹⁶ J. Bańcerowski, "Ludwik Zabrocki as a theorist of language", in *L. Zabrocki. U podstaw struktury i rozwoju języka*, ed. J. Bańcerowski, (Poznań, 1980), p. 10.

¹⁷ Zabrocki even proposed establishing a scientific discipline and called it *codematics*, "the science of codes operating in language". See J. Bańcerowski, "Aspects of Ludwik Zabrocki's Linguistic World", *Towards a History of Linguistics in Poland. From the Early Beginnings to the End of the 20th Century*, eds. E.F.K. Koerner and A. Szwedek, (Amsterdam: 2001), p. 276.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Example from *ibid*.

guage knows all the codes and therefore is able to conduct synthesis and analysis of language objects, and so he can divide texts into sentences, sentences into words, words into phonemes, and so on.

In this paper, however, we are interested rather in the concept of codes that allow transformation of code chains between different languages. Zabrocki calls this kind of codes *interlingual* and states that they work in the same way as the *intra-lingual codes* explained in the previous paragraph.

According to Zabrocki's concept, interlingual translation is conducted by means of a *transposition-transformation code*, which consists of two subtypes of code: *transposition* and *transformation*; both of them require further explanations.

Transposition code is a code that allows replacing objects of the former code by other equivalent objects. This assumes more or less regular or even automatic replacement, what can be seen in an example given by Bańcerowski: in German the *-ei* diphthong – is regularly substituted by *-î* in Low German, as in the following pairs: *heiss* → *hît* 'hot', *weiss* → *wît* 'white'. Bańcerowski claims that the *transposition* is equivalent to *automated procedure* and this kind of codes (procedures) are applicable, e.g. for sounds and morphemes in, as he called it, "neighbouring code" where more or less regular equivalents are observed (e.g. in dialects or closely related languages)²⁰. Differences, like categorical differences, may occur, as for example in cases (genitive in one language replaced by accusative in the other), but as far as the substitution is regular, it falls under category of transposition²¹.

It seems also that transposition code is typical for *kanbun-kundoku* recoding procedure. The 'neighbouring code' is here a set consisting of Chinese ideograms, which has been assimilated into Japanese and the possibility of its interpretation within Japanese language system is caused by the fact that we can easily apply transposition codes which 1) change syntactic structure of source text and 2) assigns readings (Japanese or Sino-Japanese) from target language system. It turns out that the type of codes that are in use only occasionally in standard translation procedures, may play the main role in *kanbun-kundoku* translation. This is the reason why we decided to call this translation tool 'transposition' at the beginning of section 2.

Thus, transposition code, which normally yields deviant sentences in target language, can be seen in its pure form just occasionally, e.g. as a literal translation, an auxiliary tool used for explanatory purposes. Take the following example:

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 278-279.

(5) (a) *Sumisu san wa dokusho ga suki desu.* (Japanese)

(b) Smith mr TOP book reading NOM like COP

(c) 'Mr Smith likes reading books.'

In (5) the output of the first stage of recoding, namely transposition (b) becomes a base for application of yet another translation code that yields sentence (c) in target language.²² And if we now take a look back at (M1)-(M4), it becomes clear, that this recoding is similar to (5).

In case transposition code fails in translation, a *translative transformation code* (also referred to as *interlingual paraphrasis* by Bańcerowski) must be used – “this is often the case if two languages differ in the signification of the same content which has (i) a word-significator in one language, and (ii) a phrasal or sentential significator in the other”.²³ *Transformation code* seems therefore to be useful in case there is no regular equivalent of recoded language unit of the same code level, and thus we have to choose it from a set of synonymic equivalents or units from higher level. These are the cases when there is no automatism in recoding, and that seems to be the most cases of translation practice.

Zabrocki (and also Bańcerowski who refers his work), do not explain details of the use of the two kind of codes nor give examples of translation practice in use. We assume however, that it is conducted by means of transposition and transformation codes being applied to each unit of a code chain²⁴, and that the transformation code is prevailing in most cases.

The last interesting remark from Zabrocki's work we would like to mention here is that “code structures are the basis of existence of both sounds and phonemes”, and that it is the code structure that provides us with sounds that are “determined by code systems”²⁵. Language code structures can be represented by different media: scripture, sound (phonic substance), but also by the gesture, as it is in case of sign language. These remarks support our observations of the properties of ideographic text: while recoding ideographic text into Japanese by the means of *kanbun-kundoku* procedure, the meaning is conveyed only by the means of ideographic scripture. Japanese phonic representation of each ideogram is chosen without connection with Chinese original reading (although Sino-Japanese reading may be assigned) or even neglected in case there is no equivalent in Japanese (as in the case of some final particles, e.g. 焉, Sino-Japanese *en* or 哉, Sino-Japanese *sa*).

²² Zabrocki and Bańcerowski do not explain how (b) becomes (c); there is no explanation on how the meaning is derived from the codal structures.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

²⁴ “In translation practice the word is the minimal unit with which the translation code operates”, *ibid.*, p. 279.

²⁵ J. Bańcerowski, “Ludwik Zabrocki as a theorist of language”, p. 12.

3.2. Translation procedure as a *cross-language repetition*

After we have considered codal aspects of *kanbun-kundoku* mechanism, we shall now investigate other approach to translation proposed by Bogusławski²⁶. Bogusławski does not stress the dynamic aspect of translation as Zabrocki does, but explains translation in the terms of *cross-language repetition* based on procedures of *material repetition* and *recoding*. He focuses on how the material properties and functions of language units are being preserved in translation process.

3.2.1. Material repetition and *kanbun-kundoku*

The first phenomenon, *material repetition*, occurs when two expressions e_i and e_j of two languages L_i and L_j share some material features that “are or not (cf. rhymes) accompanied by identical functional features in both languages. For example, there are two meanings M_1 and M_2 , which are both attached to the same expression e_i in the source language and to the same expression e_j in the target language”²⁷

In the practice of translation, the occurrence of *material repetition* is rare, as normally a material copied in the same shape to target language is not compatible with it, so usability of this process is limited, e.g. to the case of quotation²⁸. However, it seems that *kanbun-kundoku* is such a type of recoding in which material repetition functions as one of the most important principle of its mechanics. This phenomenon is caused by the fact that it makes use of the largest set of lexical items in contemporary Japanese, the Sino-Japanese ideographic lexicon. Substantial features of its units comprise of two components: graphemic and phonic²⁹. Moreover, the ideographic shape of each lexical item is tightly bound and stored together with meaning and functions attached to it. Thus the phonic component of the lexicon plays a secondary role (it is, in a sense, an additional and facultative feature of the lexemes, as we noticed in the previous section) and could be changed if needed. Moreover, the phonic substance does not affect conveyed functions (semantic or syntactic), unless they are not directly connected with phonic features (as for example rhymes).

The phonic value assigned to the Japanese side can be a reading of the Chinese origin, or Japanese vernacular as well. To see how this works, let us take elements of the previously analysed sentence from *Mencius* (M1) (the symbol ‘ \Rightarrow ’ stands

²⁶ A. Bogusławski, “Traitors or Victims? Remarks on Effability and Translatability”, in, *The Mission of the Translator Today and Tomorrow. Proceedings of the IXth World Congress of the International Federation of Translators*, (Warsaw, 1984).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ The case of alphabetic scripture is quite different, as the graphemic shape of the lexical item is tightly bound to its phonic substance.

for the *recoding* operation, on the right side a graphemic output and its reading is given: *J* stands for Japanese, and *S-J* for Sino-Japanese reading):

是	⇒	是	[<i>koko;J</i>]
以	⇒	を以て	[<i>wo motsute;J</i>]
惟	⇒	惟	[<i>tada;J</i>]
仁者	⇒	仁者	[<i>jinsha;S-J</i>]
宜	⇒	宜しく ____ べし	[<i>yoroshiku ___ beshi;J</i>]
在	⇒	在る	[<i>aru;J</i>]
高位	⇒	高位	[<i>koui;S-J</i>]

The source Chinese text, originally with a phonic representation, in case of *kanbun-kundoku* is taken as a ‘mute’ material. After segmentation into lexical items, phonic values are assigned. Nouns are usually maintained without additions and the reading assigned to them is of a Sino-Japanese type³⁰. To units that fulfil grammar function (case markers, verbs, adverbs, causative exponent, etc.) vernacular readings are usually assigned. In the above example, graphemic substance has been preserved almost intact with only minor additions of *kana* letters.

Note that the *material repetition* applies to the graphemic substance of the text, the phonic substance seems to be transformed by the means of different rule, namely *recoding* (see the next section 3.2.2). It is also worth stressing that *material repetition* differs substantially from Zabrocki’s *transposition*. While the first one assumes some relation between language units, namely reoccurrence in T_1 and T_2 of the same material properties of correspondent language units, the second one, transposition, is rather a function that transforms in a regular way a unit of source code to a unit of the target code.

3.2.2. Recoding in *kanbun-kundoku*

The second procedure of cross-language repetition, namely recoding, is defined as follows:

³⁰ It means they are assigned phonic values based on classical Chinese originals, but because this process was not consequent and chronologically inconsistent, they cannot be described as a whole as a record of some specific time and reading of Chinese original. Moreover, this phonetic import does not come without some distortions, as exact record of phonemes by the means of ideographic scripture is quite a challenge.

Recoding of text T_1 means recoding from source code C_1 into target code C_2 , so that we obtain T_2 .

Assumptions: T_1 and T_2 cannot be identical. T_2 preserves some functions of T_1 . Material features are of an arbitrary character.³¹

In the case of recoding, material features of source and target language may differ in many aspects, but at last “a) some minimal amount of possible identical reference. (b) non-contradictoriness of T_2 vis-a-vis T_1 ” are assumed.³²

In this respect, *kanbun-kundoku*, maintaining graphemic substance of source text is not a typical recoding. Take the following example:

(M6) 不仁而在 高位 是播 其悪於衆 也

(M7) 不仁 にして 高位 に 在る は

fujin ni shite kauwi ni aru ha

non benevolent AND high station LOC be TOP

是れ其の 悪 を 衆 に 播 する なり

kore sono aku wo shiyū ni ha suru nari

he this wickedness ACC people DAT disseminate do COP

‘When a man destitute of benevolence is in a high station, he thereby disseminates his wickedness among the multitudes’

In the above passage, the following ideograms have been recoded without graphemic material repetition:

而 ⇒ にして *ni shite* conexive

於 ⇒ に *ni* DAT

也 ⇒ なり *nari* COP

The reason for removing ideograms is that the function of these units was purely syntactical, they were not proper names, nouns or verbs. This kind of language units were a subject of description in Chinese and Japanese grammars³³.

³¹ See *ibid.*, p. 292.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Cf. D. Głuch, *Kanbun – tekst klasyczoński w środowisku językowym japońszczyzny*, (Kraków, 2015), pp. 81-84.

In the effect of recoding procedure (M7), the addition of the following units can also be observed:

LOC *ni*

TOP *ha*

ACC *wo*

(auxiliary) *do suru*

These additions are required by Japanese code which marks grammatical object (NOM *ni aru* 'be [SOMEWHERE]', NOM *wo hasuru* 'disseminate [SOMETHING]'), locative adverbial or thematic relations; in Chinese these functions are fulfilled by fixed word order.

It seems that recoding in *kanbun-kundoku* pertains mainly to the phonic substance and by the means of this procedure variety of code units can be added. These additions, however, are introduced to maintain functions from source text.

3.2.3. Limits of translation procedures

Due to incompatibility of material features and functions of language units between source and target language, translation never becomes a perfect rendition of original text. In this section we will follow Bogusławski's observations on translation and its limits: adequacy, deviancy, and situational normality, and check what are the differences between standard translation and *kanbun-kundoku* procedure.

3.2.3.1. Translation: adequate and inadequate recoding

In his paper, Bogusławski denies the idea of "universal adequate recodability"³⁴, and presents "down-to-the-earth notion of translation" and formulates a rule of *adequate recoding* which says:

all the functions of T_1 except what follows from the very material difference between C_1 and C_2 are preserved and no functions extraneous to T_1 are added in T_2 ³⁵

However, the scale of translation accuracy (correctness) is wide and we observe more or less adequate and inadequate examples of recoded texts. Moreover,

³⁴ Which says, "There are no expressions such that these or other FUNCTIONAL features conventionally attached to them do NOT reappear in ANY expressions of some other language", A. Bogusławski, "Traitors or Victims? Remarks on Effability and Translatability", in *The Mission of the Translator Today and Tomorrow*, (Warsaw: 1984), p. 292.

³⁵ Ibid.

inadequacy (i.e. when some cognitive functions of expressions are not present or added) is a feature of translation which is often taken as normal, e.g. in the translation of a sentence:

(6) I bought a book yesterday

into Polish:

(7) Kupiłem wczoraj książkę³⁶

- the information about the speaker's sex in the verb must be added because it is required by the target language; likewise, the function of English indefinite article from source text is lost in translation to Polish, where these functions are normally not encoded. Although the missing functions could be added in target sentence, this is not a common practice, as it often results in deviant sentence. Thus, omission of some functions from source language is considered to be fine. In the case of *kanbun-kundoku*, however, the ideographic material is kept and preserved, and so are the functions (often by means of addition of their material exponents, as it was presented in 3.2.2), excluding those which are conveyed by the phonic substance, are copied as well. It seems that preserving the functions from source text as adequately as possible is the feature of *kanbun-kundoku*.

3.2.3.2. Non-deviant recoding

Non-deviancy is another property of recoding that is considered while performing translation procedure. Bogusławski defines it as follows³⁷:

I shall define "non-deviance of T_2 relative to T_1 " as lack of expressions in T_2 which would strike the native speaker of C_2 as obviously corrigible but which are not corrigible in the way the corresponding expressions in T_1 are (provided there are such expressions in T_1)

Non-deviancy is a parameter that is often incompatible with adequacy of recoding, as these features seem to be in opposition to each other: there are many examples of exact and adequate recoding that are deviant in target code (e.g. in case of encoding a number of noun into the target language where nouns has no number).

Let us mention again that in case of the *kanbun-kundoku* translation procedure the code of the output text is of special status; it is in fact a kind of an auxiliary code created from classical Japanese forms, and used only for interpretation of ideographic text. It allows therefore rendering of some Chinese units into Jap-

³⁶ Ibid., p. 296.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 297.

anese system even if they would be considered as deviant in ‘standard’ contemporary Japanese. Take the following example, a well-known rhetorical question from Confucius’ *Analects*³⁸:

(8) 有朋自遠方來不亦樂乎

朋 有り、遠方 より 来たる、亦た 楽しから ず や!

Tomo ari, enpō yori kitaru, mata tanoshikara-zu ya!

Friend is, far from come, again happy NEG Q

‘Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?’³⁹

In this sentence the underlined *mata* ‘again’ is an item that should be corrected from the point of view of contemporary Japanese system, as normally it should be replaced for example by a word meaning ‘similarly’ (e.g. *mo dōyō ni*). But because *kanbun-kundoku* works like a word for word translation, and its aim is to render graphemic original as faithfully as it is possible, it is leaved uncorrected. Thus, the *kanbun-kundoku* allows literal and possibly adequate recoding at the expense of deviancy of Japanese code.

3.2.3.3. Situationally normal and abnormal recoding

The last parameter we would like to discuss is a situationally normal and abnormal recoding:

T_2 is situationally normal whenever T_2 would be used in the most natural fashion in place of T_1 by the native speaker of C_2 ⁴⁰

Although it is difficult to analyse pragmatic features of *kanbun-kundoku*, which is virtually an artificial auxiliary translation code, there are cases when some extra functions are added during the recoding process. These are primarily functions missing in classical Chinese code, as for example honorifics, or texts in which the context is unclear. In those cases, additions are common, even in such a strict and mechanical tool as a *kanbun-kundoku*. For example:

³⁸ A. Tōdō, *Rongo* [Analects]. Chūgoku no koten 1, (Tokyo, 1961), p. 65.

³⁹ Translation from J. Legge, *The Life and Teaching of Confucius, with Explanatory Notes*, (London, 1887), p. 116.

⁴⁰ A. Bogusławski, “Traitors or Victims? Remarks on Effability and Translatability”, p. 297.

(M8) 上無禮、下無學、賊民興、喪無日矣。

(M9) 上 禮 無く、 下 學 無ければ、

Kami rei naku, shimo gaku nakereba,

Superior rule there is no inferior learn there is no if-COND

賊民 興り、 喪ぶる こと 日 無け ん。

zokumin okori, horoburu koto hi nake n.

sedition people spring up perish fact time there is no MOD

‘When superiors do not observe the rules of propriety, and inferiors do not learn, then seditious people spring up, and [that State] will perish in no time.’

In (M9) a conditional form *-kereba* has been added, as well as *koto* fact ‘word’ which introduces factivity here. The first one makes clear the following part is a temporal result of the given events, and the *koto* ‘fact’ word implies factive interpretation of the verb *horoburu* ‘perish’. There is also modal suffix *-n* at the end of the sentence, which expresses possibility in future.

Note, that these additions are given in *kana* vernacular syllabary, and they do not affect material properties of ideographic original. They are also different in character from additions observed in (M7), where grammatical markers obligatory in Japanese have been filled in.

4. Conclusions

As we have presented in this paper, *kanbun-kundoku* is a procedure based on ideographicity of Chinese material and regular correspondence between Japanese vernacular and Sino-Japanese units. From the point of view of Zabrocki’s codematics, the procedure of recoding is based mainly on transposition (regular substitution of language units while recoding from source code to target code) rather than on transformation model, where source unit is substituted by a higher level unit.

While executing *kanbun-kundoku* procedure source text is treated as purely graphemic and lacking phonic values (Chinese phonemes are ignored), Japanese readings are assigned while recoding. Those readings can be Sino-Japanese or Japanese, with the prevalence of vernacular interpretation when substituting for a grammar construction.

From the point of view of translation taken as a cross-language repetition (in the terms of Bogusławski), *kanbun-kundoku* seems to be a procedure based on

material repetition, which is rare in standard translation. This fact is also caused by the ideographicity of Chinese scripture, which has been adapted to Japanese.

Following Bogusławski's parameters to describe translation procedure, *kanbun-kundoku* seems to be more *adequate* than other translation tools (it preserves most of features of source text, except the phonic substance, which is absent in the case of a written text anyway), but at the same time it allows more *deviant* material (from the point of view of classical or contemporary Japanese code).

Note also, that this kind of translation procedure, which yields text containing most of material substance of source text, is possible to be recoded back to the Chinese source code, and this in fact could be performed by a skilled user. This kind of re-recoding would be impossible in case of translation into modern Japanese, where the graphemic structure is distorted, grammar structures adjusted to be more non-deviant, and the context is considerably enriched without a notice.

We could ask if direct translation of classical Chinese into modern Japanese without *kanbun-kundoku* would not be more reasonable to use in contemporary editions, but it seems that there are many features of *kanbun-kundoku* that keep this translation tool alive. It is nowadays rather an auxiliary tool, but text being an effect of *kanbun-kundoku* procedure juxtaposed with source ideographic text and contemporary translation (which is a common practice of publishers) allows both amateurs and trained readers to access and thoroughly learn vast corpus of texts that has been used by Japanese for more than a thousand years since the very beginning of their written culture.

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