Explaining Japanese Onomatopoeia in Chinese Using Translated Paraphrases

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Abstract

Japanese comic books have recently gained great popularity in China. However, one of the problems with translating Japanese comic books is translating Japanese onomatopoeia into Chinese. In most cases, Japanese onomatopoeia are either not translated at all, or Chinese characters are used to represent similar pronunciation to Japanese, which is often insufficient for Chinese readers to comprehend. This problem is caused by a deep cultural and historical gap between the two languages. Furthermore, meaning and grammar of onomatopoeia has changed reflecting the times, which suggests that updating onomatopoeia dictionaries is an important and challenging task. In this paper, to solve the abovementioned translation problem we propose a method to translate paraphrases of Japanese onomatopoeia to Chinese. In particular, we focus on nouns and verbs as key points to describe the meaning of onomatopoeia.

Introduction

Comparison of Onomatopoeia

Japanese | Chinese
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shito-shito (gentle rain is falling) | wangwang (a dog barks)
unu-uru (someone’s eyes are we with tears) |

Quantity

- About 4500 words
- About 174 words

Participant

- Residence
  - Guandong Province
  - Yunnan Province
  - Sichuan Province
  - Henan Province
- Language proficiency
  - Chinese and Japanese
  - Chinese and English

Problem

Not translated.
Using unrelated characters to translate.

Proposed Method

1. Extraction of query words
2. Generation of metaphor phrases
3. Search
4. Hint snippet extraction
5. Hint word extraction
6. Translation of hint words
7. Generation of translation

Output (translation of onomatopoeia)

Resources

1. Information about the video
2. Information about the participants
3. Related Onomatopoeia

Investigation

How to explain Onomatopoeia in Chinese Dictionary.

Goal


Results

- Translating Japanese onomatopoeia with Chinese words of similar pronunciation is not understandable.
- Focusing on the noun and verb patterns is sufficient.
- The meaning of onomatopoeia can also be briefly explained in Chinese with noun + verb + deshengyin.

Conclusions

- We investigated morphological patterns of onomatopoeia explanations in Chinese.
- We investigated morphological patterns of Japanese mnemonic words explanations in Chinese.
- Based on those investigations we developed BeiSen-word a system for automatic translation of onomatopoeia.