

# Yakuwarigo Used in “Nagasarete Airantou” Manga

Hardianto Rahardjo

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**Hardianto Rahardjo**, Prodi Bahasa Jepang Universitas Widyatama  
 Email: [hardianto.rahardjo@widyatama.ac.id](mailto:hardianto.rahardjo@widyatama.ac.id)  
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## Abstract

*The use of Yakuwarigo, a term created by Kinsui Satoshi to describe a “virtual Japanese language” used in fictional works to accentuate certain character’s personality, gender, age or even birthplaces through the way they speak. This article is written in a descriptive analysis manner to provide one among many examples on the importance of Yakuwarigo in a story that consists of many characters, each with their own names, backgrounds, personalities and role in the big story. The data of this article are characters, or specifically their way they are talking, which indicates the use of yakuwarigo and an example of linguistic stereotypes being used in a manga titled “Nagasarete Airantou” written by Fujishiro Takeshi. The story is about a boy whose ships he is on is sunken and h got stranded on a secluded island filled completely with female residents. Many of the female characters are the descendants of many survivors who got stranded on the island as well from various places in Japan and other countries. Some of the “heroines” speaks in each of their own distinctive styles, which will be identified as a Yakuwarigo or not and whether this has any connections to their backgrounds and stereotypical personalities.*

**Keywords:** Yakuwarigo, Manga, Japanese, Fictional Characters.

## 1. Preface

In a story that consists of many characters, in which they all have their own names, backgrounds and roles in said story, each of them need to have certain characteristics that would made them unique and easily identifiable from one another. This is one of the most common role of Yakuwarigo. Fujishiro Takeshi’s “Nagasarete Airantou” manga’s main story is about a 14 years old boy named Ikuto who got stranded on an unknown island after the ship he’s on got hit by a storm. The island is inhabited by a population of all women residents. The first island dweller Ikuto met is Suzu, and from there as the story grows, Ikuto met with more female characters who inhabited the island, each with their own background stories and unique trait and personalities. But among one of their unique traits is the way they speak. While these female characters have been living together in a group of closed, secluded society for years and consist of three different generations, indicating that they have been inhabiting the island for many years, each of the heroines in the story have their own unique way of talking, which is closely related to their personality. This is one of the characteristic of yakuwarigo. This article is written in order to find out, what types of *yakuwarigo* is being used in the manga “Nagasarete Airantou”, and what kind of characters uses them, what their personality is like, and their beckground story.

## 2. Research Methodology

The data and samples are taken from dialogues found in the manga that indicates the use of *yakuwarigo*, or hereafter will be called as “role language”. When a dialogue which is not in accordance to a standard Japanese is found, it would be determined whether it is a role language or a language style based on the personality of the utterer. If the utterer’s personality fits those of the stereotypes connected to their way of talking, then it is a role language, but if it is not, then it is just a language style.

Analyzed dialogue will be presented following the order of appearance of the dialogue in the manga itself. The role language found within the manga dialogue will be described by its own unique characteristics and type of fictional character commonly found uttering these types.

## 3. Data Presentation

### 3.1 *Roujingo*

Also known as old man’s language or professor’s language, role language’s *roujingo* is different than daily life’s *roujingo* used by elder people in real life. The role language version of *roujingo* came from *Kamigata* dialect used by elder and educated people in Edo. On the other hand, the younger people who lived in Edo who speaks using Edo dialects started to associated the old *Kamigata* dialects used by the elders and teachers as the “old man’s dialect”, and thus, in the novels published later, elder people in the stories are always depicted as talking using the same dialect. [1]



One of the most common characteristics in role language *roujingo* is the use of copula *ja* ( じゃ ) to replace “*desu*” and “*da*”, and the use of first person pronoun *washi* ( わし ) in place of “*watashi*” and “*ore*”, or of negative *-n* ( ん ) instead of *-nai* ( ない ).

In “*Nagasarete Airantou*”, one such character who speaks using role language *roujingo* is Koto, but more famously known as “*Obaba*”, the oldest woman in *Airantou*. “*Obaba*” also means “Granny” or “Old lady” in English. Typical to the characteristic of

role language's roujingo, "Obaba" speaks using roujingo which simply indicates how old she is.



### 3,2 Onna otoba / Otoko Kotoba

In real life, *onna otoba* or *joseigo* and *otoko kotoba* or *danseigo* refers to a language style used by certain gender, which would indicate the gender of the utterer. But in role language, *onna otoba* is being used to emphasize the femininity of the utterer, while *otoko kotoba* makes the utterer sounds more “manly”.

[2] categorizing the copula *わ*, *ですの* and *かしら* as not simply a language style for women, but more specifically, as a *奥様ことば*, or language styles of married women and middle age ladies.

In the manga, Chikage always end her sentence with copula *ですの*, which is a form of *onna otoba*, meant to make her seem more feminine and elegant.



Chizuru, a 33 years old “miko” (shrine maiden) of the island, often uses *かしら* whenever she's in doubt or wondering. Her daughter, Machi and Akane always talk



using *onna otoba* as well. This made the 3 mother-daughter characters sounds more feminine when they talk, as opposed to Rin, the carpenter of the Island.



As mentioned above, Rin, an apprentice carpenter of the island, always refer to herself with the first person *あたい*. *あたい*, which means “me”, according [3] is a word usually uttered by a woman that act and have some characteristics of those of men. In other words, it’s usually being uttered by a “tomboy” girl.



### 3.3 *Ijin no Kotoba*

In her article, [4] categorized Japanese manga characters into 2 groups based on where they are from or WHAT they are. In her categorization, all real Japanese people who were born and lives in present time Japan from real Japanese parents and speak Japanese as their native language is categorized as “*私たち*” or “us”, while other than that who are a foreigner (non-Japanese), people from another planet (aliens) and other non-human characters are categorized as “*異人*” which may means “outsiders”.



Since “異人” refers not only to humans from this age but also refers to past-time characters (Japanese and non-Japanese), talking animals and even non-terrestrial life forms, there are wide area of language style to be explored surrounding these “outsiders’ language” or “異人語”. In the manga, there are several 異人 characters whose appeared and took part in the story as well. To start from the human one, there is MeiMei, a girl from a Chinese travelling circus who also got drifted onto Airantou just like Ikuto. While in other manga it is common to apply the “アルヨことば”, a unique Japanese language style born out of the pidgins between Japanese and Chinese language (Kinsui, 2003), in this story MeiMei instead speaks using partially normal Japanese, with an exception of her tendency to end a sentence with デスヨ, or a verb with ータネ. She also uses ワタシ to refer to herself in first person. All of these unique words are always written in katakana, which may indicate that she has been pronounced it in the wrong intonation, grammatical order or context.



And then, there’s Shinobu, a samurai girl who speaks using what [4]categorized as 武士ことば (bushi kotoba, or samurai language). Since [5] categorizing old time Japanese language as 異人語, and based on Kinsui, Shinobu’s uses of the first person せっしゃ to refer to herself, and copula ーでござる to end her sentence.



Other than MeiMei and Shinobu, the rest of 異人語 using characters are non-human. One among them is Shima Tora, a Nekomata who is also Suzu's teacher and the ruler of the southern part of Airantou. Shima Tora's form is that of a two-tailed cat who walks on his hind legs and speaks like a human being, except that he always ends his sentence with *—にゃ*, much like cats' noise.

### 3.4 Dialect

Based on the background story of “Nagasarete Airantou”, most of the resident of Airantou came from Japan, in which it will make sense if the residents came from different part of Japan, carrying each of their regional dialect with them. But according to [6], dialect as a role language roots from social stereotypes usually connected to the utterer of said dialects. [6] said that in general, in the eyes (and ears) of dialect user, Japanese standard dialect user (in this case, the dialect used in daily life at Tokyo) gave the utterer the image of “relaxed”, “simple”, “” and “”, while on the other hand, some dialects have their own images in the ears of the listener. The Tohoku is “patients”, Kyoto is “elegant” but “meanie”, Osaka is “cheerful/full of spirit”, “a chatterbox” and “cheap”, Kyuushuu is “excited” and “manly”, Okinawa is “happy”, “the men are lazy” while “the women are strict”. This is a clear indication how dialects are closely associated with the utterers image and personality, such as the characteristic of role language. In the manga, one such example is Mikoto, a ninja girl, sister of Shinobu, who often acts like a perverted girl, especially toward Rin, of whom is her love interest. Mikoto speaks in Kansai dialect, indicated by her use of *うち* to refer to herself, saying *ええ* in place of *いい* (good), and the use of copula *や* in place of *だ* or *です*. Mikoto gives the stereotyped image of Osaka dialect user, which is “energetic”, “passionate” and “hilarious”. On the other hand, her oldest sister Kunai, speaks using Kyoto dialect, and her personality really depicts the stereotype related to Kyoto dialect user, which is “relaxed” and “elegant” but “a meanie” or “insincere”.





#### 4. Conclusion

Based on data analysis described above, the following conclusions can be made:

a. Some of the dialogues clearly indicates that the style of speaking of some of the heroines and support characters in this manga used is indeed a form of *yakuwarigo*. In which they speak in a style that really indicates their personalities.

b. Even though all of the island of Airan's residents are female, besides Ikuto, there are also male, albeit non-human, characters who lives on the island side by sides with the female residents, bringing even more of language style and role language into the manga.

Further analysis using more data is required in order to describe how deep the world of role language and manga's dialogue and how colorful Japanese language really is.

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