

Is Japanese really related to Marathi?

RIDHI DUBAL

T.Y.B.Com. Student

R. A. Podar College of Commerce & Economics

L. N. Road, Matunga (CR), Mumbai 400 019

Tel.: 76661 88896

ridhi.dubal@gmail.com

Abstract

Language is a medium of communication, a medium that connects not only people, but also cultures and countries. The paper explains how Japanese is related to Marathi. As a student of both these languages, I have found some similarities that exist between these two. These similarities make it much more easy and interesting to understand and speak the language.

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Introduction

After studying foreign languages for almost 5 years, I have come to realize that, no matter in how many different languages we speak, indifferent of one another's culture, there are some things that make you connect to that particular language and the country. We may not all speak the same language, but our minds do. This is of common knowledge to today's integrated world. But in what really lies the beauty of learning a new language, is according to me, when you start finding it closely related to a language you already speak.

I have been learning German since 5 years and Japanese since 2 years now. In these 5 years, I have found that translating any foreign language into English or for that matter any other language is not so easy. Care has to be taken that the language doesn't lose its beauty and originality in the process of translation. While translating, many new words are added and some other are skipped, in order to make sense in the translated language. It is very difficult to translate each and every word, especially into English.

Another important aspect about languages is the essence of that particular language. For someone who wants to master the above mentioned languages, it is utmost important for me to understand the core of the language. When should I use a particular word? How and where do I use a particular phrase? How must I react to something the other person just said? We naturally begin to find these answers in our own language and culture. That is the first mistake towards learning a new language. A language is a medium through which people communicate. In order to connect to the native speakers, the emotions and feelings behind words is to be taken into consideration. And what better way to connect other than getting immersed into the culture of the land where the language is spoken.

I know that it takes a lot to learn a new language. Getting acquainted to the culture is the second step. Getting to the roots of grammar and constantly learning new vocabulary is the first step. That in itself is a great task to be accomplished. But what if you found out that a foreign language that you are learning is

closely related to a language you already know and speak? A little less grammar to be learnt anew. Moreover it makes you even more interested to learn that language.

Having said this, Japanese is one such language which is closely related to Marathi and Hindi. Imagine finding out similarities between a language that you are eager to learn and a language that you already speak every single day of your life. The fun is never ending and the curiosity seems to have no limits.

The Japanese Writing System

The Japanese writing system consists of three different character sets- Kanji (several thousands of Chinese characters), and a pair of kana- Hiragana and Katakana. Hiragana is primarily used for native or naturalized Japanese words and grammatical elements. On the other hand, katakana is used for foreign words and names, loanwords (words borrowed from other languages with little or no changes), and sometimes for emphasis. Almost all written Japanese sentences contain a mixture of kanji and kana. Because of this mixture and the adoption of the kanji characters, Japanese writing system is considered to be one of the most complicated writing system. When Japanese script is transliterated into Romanized spelling, it is called as Romaji.

Examples

Kanji	Hiragana	Romaji	Meaning
川	かわ	Kawa	River
勉強	べんきょう	Benkyou	Study
石	いし	Ishi	Stone

Katakana	Romaji	Meaning
スポーツ	Supoutsu	Sports
サンダル	Sandaru	Sandals
バナナ	Banana	Banana

Below I have tried to explain the similarities in the grammar patterns by illustrating examples in English, Marathi and Japanese followed by Romaji.

1. Sentence Structure

The sentence structure in English, like in many other languages, is- Subject + Verb + Object. In Japanese, like in Marathi and Hindi, the sentence structure is Subject + Object + Verb

Example

I eat an apple.

私は	りんごが	食べます
Watashiwa	ringoga	tabemasu
मी	सफरचंद	खातो

2. Genitive Case

The Genitive case is called as the possessive case which marks a noun as being the possessor of another noun. English doesn't have a proper genitive case, but a possessive ending, 's, is added to the noun or "of" is used.

Example

Types of sentences

文	の	方
Bun	no	Kata
वाक्यां	चे	प्रकार

3. Patterns where literal translation into Marathi is possible

i. Thank you for helping me.

あなたは	私に	手伝って	くれて、	ありがとう
Anatawa	watashini	tetsudatte	urete,	arigatou
तू	मला	मदत	केल्याबद्दल	धन्यवाद

ii. I have written the letter.

私は	手紙を	書いて	置きます
Watashiwa	tegamiwo	Kaite	Okimasu
मी	पत्र	लिहून	ठेवली आहे

iii. Try this dish.

この	料理ガ	食べて	みよう
Kono	ryouriga	Tabete	Miyou
हे	भोजन	खाऊन	बघा

iv. Will you write this letter for me?

あなたは	私に	この	手紙を	書いて	くれますか?
Anatawa	watashini	kono	tegamiwo	kaite	kuremasuka?
तू	मला	हे	पत्र	लिहून	देणार का?

Conclusion

There are innumerable examples available where translating a Japanese sentence into Marathi makes it easy to understand the meaning of the sentence and the usage of some particular words. This is one of the many reasons why learning Japanese is so much more fun. This not only makes it easy to understand, but also very easy to remember such sentences and the grammar. Hence using such expressions can never be a hurdle, even while conversing. The feelings and emotions behind using a particular phrase and expression is so clear, that you enjoy speaking and are always motivated to learn something new. And that, according to me, is very essential while learning a new language.