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ILLUSTRATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

POSTER ANALYSIS FOR MANGA, ANIME AND JAPANESE FESTIVALS.
CASES: SPAIN 2020 TO 2024

Carmen González Díaz⁽¹⁾

Abstract. This project presents an analytical proposal in the field of illustration with the aim of studying the posters of manga fairs in Spain, which promote Japanese culture and sell Japanese products. This study examines how illustrations are adapted for the Spanish audience by analyzing the posters of the 40 most recent fairs held in Spain about Japanese and manga culture. This allows us to determine the presence of the identifying elements of Spanish culture, such as the use of flags or monuments, among others, and to affirm that despite globalisation, the characteristic features of each region continue to be extolled in advertising. The methodology applied is known as content analysis based on a quantitative approach.

Keywords: Cultural identities, graphic design, content analysis, Illustration, anime, globalisation, posters.

Resumen. Este proyecto presenta una propuesta de análisis en el campo de la ilustración con el objetivo de estudiar los carteles de las ferias del manga en España, que promocionan la cultura japonesa y venden productos japoneses. Observaremos cómo se adaptan las ilustraciones al público español analizando los carteles de las 40 últimas ferias celebradas en España sobre cultura japonesa y manga. Esto nos permite determinar la presencia de los elementos identificativos de la cultura española, como el uso de banderas o monumentos, entre otros, y afirmar que, a pesar de la globalización, se siguen ensalzando en la publicidad los rasgos característicos de cada región. La metodología aplicada es la denominada análisis de contenido basada en un enfoque cuantitativo.

Palabras clave: Identidades culturales, diseño gráfico, análisis de contenidos, ilustración, anime, globalización, carteles.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Manga and its aesthetics are widely consumed and the cultural identities of Japan can be clearly seen in them. The success of this phenomenon is reflected in the number of anime and manga events held in Spain.

Cultural globalisation can lead to the loss of cultural identities, however, posters dedicated to manga and Japanese culture have been observed which, when being dedicated to a Spanish audience, presented specific elements to the Spanish city where the event was to be held.

This work is dedicated to determining the presence of these features in Japanese-centered posters dedicated to a Spanish audience.

The main objective of this proposal is

- To analyse the presence of Spanish cultural identity through visual language in the posters of manga and Japanese culture festivals.

The secondary objectives are:

- To study how the value of cultural identity is transmitted through design in a context of globalisation.
- To make a proposal for a quantitative analysis of the presence of cultural identities in graphic design, specifically, posters.

1.1. HYPOTHESIS

- Despite globalisation, the cultural identities of Spain and Japan can be seen in the posters.
- The posters of manga festivals held in Spain feature Spanish elements despite selling and promoting Japanese. The elements of the host country/city are used as an advertising gimmick.
- The elements used to convey a culture are monuments and landscapes.

2. METHODOLOGY

There is no established methodology for the analysis of posters; traditionally, in this type of study, procedures adapted to the objectives of each research project have been used (Tabuenca Bengoa González, Díez and Puebla Martínez, 2020).

In order to respond to the objectives set out in our study, Krippendorff's (1990) content analysis technique was used, which is defined as a method designed to formulate repro-



Image 1: Poster Manga Fair 27 Barcelona, Dalmau (2021)

cible and valid inferences from specific data, applicable to their context. It is useful for testing the validity of hypotheses.

On the other hand, Hernández Sampieri (2004) mentions two different aspects for a correct content analysis: quantitative and qualitative. In our case, the quantitative approach is chosen, as this method involves the collection and analysis of data to answer the research questions, in addition to establishing a count and the use of statistics to accurately identify patterns of behavior in a population.

He adds that quantification is done by assigning numbers to the variables to code the different possibilities. For this purpose, the following phases are generated in the research process:

1. Observation of a given phenomenon.
2. Formulation of hypotheses as a starting point.
3. Hypothesis testing by analysis of a justified sample.
4. Assessment of the veracity of the hypotheses through the study of the results.

5. Proposal of observations and formulation of conclusions.

In order to develop our research we applied this methodology to a representative sample or set of elements. This corpus was made up of posters from manga fairs and other events re-

lated to Japanese culture. Specifically, they are the forty most recent posters of these events held in Spain up to February 2024. To obtain the posters, we went to the website Listado-manga.es.

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE



XVIII Japan Weekend Bilbao
24 Febrero 2024



Winter Freak! 2024 Murcia
24-25 Febrero 2024



MangaFest Mérida 2024
24-25 Febrero 2024



27 Salón Manga de Jerez
24-25 Febrero 2024



XXVIII Japand Weekend Madrid
17-18 Febrero 2024



ExpOtake Logroño 2024
9-11 Febrero 2024

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE



Japan Tour - Zafra
27 - 28 Diciembre 2023



MangaFest Sevilla
8 - 10 Diciembre 2023



29 Manga Barcelona
7 - 10 Diciembre 2023



XXXI Japan Weekend Valencia
18 - 19 Noviembre 2023



IX Salón del Cómic, Manga y Juegos de Estrategia de Pizarra



Japan Tour Espartinas
11 - 12 Noviembre 2023



XV Edición del Salón del Manga y cultura Japonesa de Murcia
10 - 12 Nov. 2023



XIX Japan Weekend Barcelona
4 - 5 Noviembre 2023



Mangafest Jaén
4 - 5 Noviembre 2023



Japón en Granada
3 - 12 Noviembre 2023



ExpOtaku Granada
27 - 29 Octubre 2023



V Japan Weekend A Coruña
21 Octubre 2023

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE



Albanime 4Players
21 - 22 Octubre 2023



Girocòmic
14 - 15 Octubre 2023



XVII Japan Weekend Bilbao
7 Octubre 2023



MangaFest Jerez
7 - 8 Octubre 2023



XXVII Japan Weekend Madrid
23 - 24 Septiembre 2023



Mangafest Almeria
23 - 24 Septiembre 2023

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE



Ultimate Manga
15 - 17 Septiembre 2023



BubblePop Festival
1 - 2 Julio 2023



MangaFest Sevilla Summer Edition
24 - 25 Junio 2023



Madrid Otaku
10 - 11 Junio 2023



26 Salòn Manga de Jerez
3 - 4 Junio 2023



XXX Japan Weekend Valencia
6 - 7 Mayo 2023

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE



Salón Manga de Chiclana
29 - 30 Abril 2023



Toledo Matsuri
22 - 23 Abril 2023



IX Salón del Manga y la Cultura Japonesa de Cartagena
22 - 23 Abril 2023



II Sakura Alfarnate
16 Abril 2023



11º Salón del Manga y la Cultura Japonesa de Alicante



VII Festival Manga de Cádiz
14 - 16 Abril 2023

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE



Salón del Manga Algeciras
14 - 16 Abril 2023



Albanime 2023 Albacete
1 - 2 Abril 2023



IV Japan Weekend A Coruña
25 - 26 Marzo 2023



Japan Tour - Alcalá de Guadaíra
24 - 26 Marzo 2023

2.1. ANALYSIS SHEET

When selecting the items for the analysis sheet, we found the framework used by Ripoll (2022) to be helpful. In particular, we used as a model

his way of organising the represented themes (narrative axes), aesthetic styles, and represented objects. The following shows the final analysis sheet matrix.

ANALYSIS SHEET

Name of the event:

Illustrator:

Place:

Date:

Organising company:

IDENTIFYING SYMBOLS



Element of the Spanish city



Element of Japanese culture



Element of another culture
(South Korea, Taiwan...)



Universal or generic element

VISUAL LANGUAGE

PRESENCE OF MONUMENTS

Type of monument

Especifications

Temple-Cathedral

Castle

Exhibition
and events pavilion

Tower

Flats

Bridge

Arc

Square

Park

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Landscape Elements

Especifications

Sky

Mountain

Sea

Lake

River

Urban landscape

Home environment

Fireworks

Market stalls

BOTANICS

Elementos Vegetales Especificaciones

Tree

Log

Flower

Petal

Leaf

VEXILOLOGY

Type Especificaciones

Flag

Coat of arms

Heraldic

Symbology

Standard

GASTRONOMY

Type of food Especificaciones

Meals

Drinks

ANIMALS

Type Especificaciones

Cat

Dog

Bear

Horse

Crane

Turtle

Butterfly

Fish

Octopus

Snail

Jellyfish

Coral

Others

CHARACTERS

Origin	Especifications
Manga	
Anime (serie)	
Videogame	
Film	
Artist´s original characters	
Event´s original characters	
Legendary character	
Historical figure	
Pet	
Others	

JAPANESE TECHNOLOGY

	Especifications
Robot	
Android	
Cyborg	

VIDEOGAMES OR SERIES ELEMENTS

Origin	Especifications
Manga	
Anime (serie)	
Videogame	
Film	
Book	
Other	

CLOTHING

Clothing	Especifications
Kimono	
Cosplay	
Futuristic robot-mecha suit	
School uniform	
Spanish regional costume	
Karate suit	
Accesories	
Other	

3. RESULTS

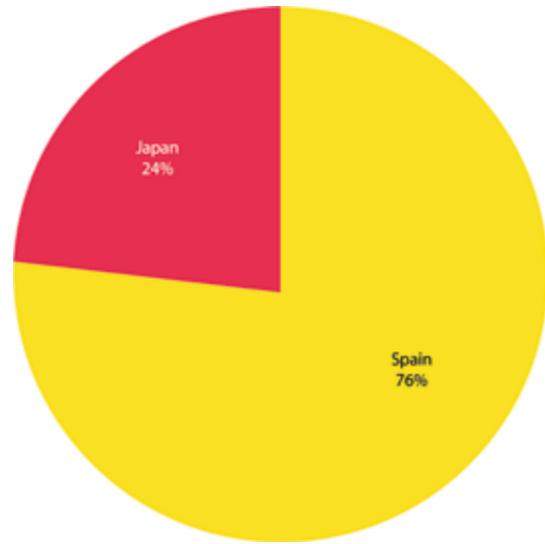


Image 2: Monuments by Country. Own Elaboration

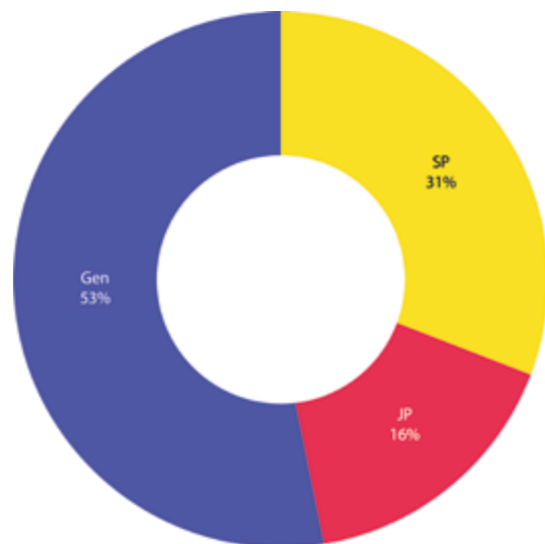


Image 3: Landscape elements by country. Own Elaboration

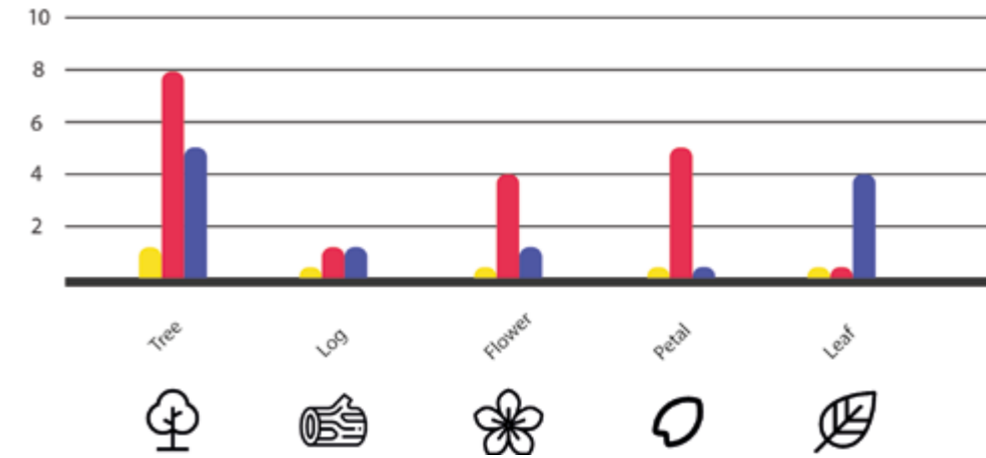


Image 4: Botanical Elements. Own Elaboration



Image 5: Gastronomy. Own Elaboration

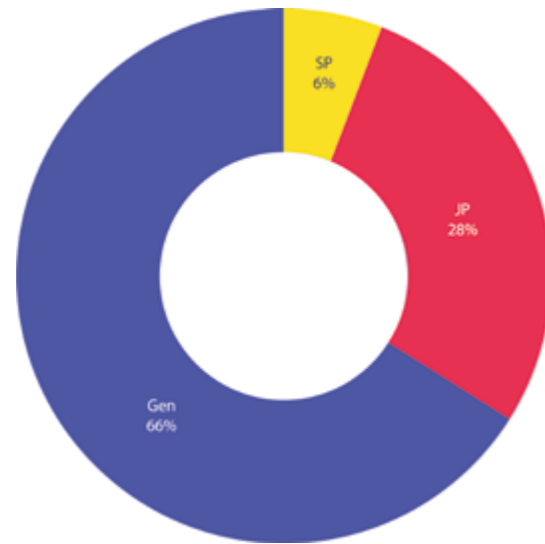


Image 6: Animals by country. Own Elaboration

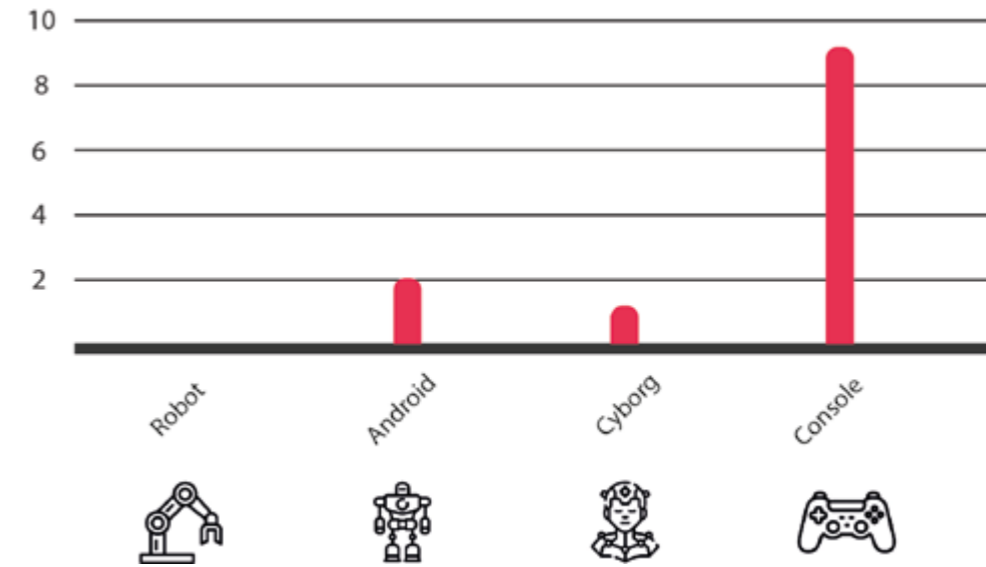


Image 8: Japanese technology. Own Elaboration

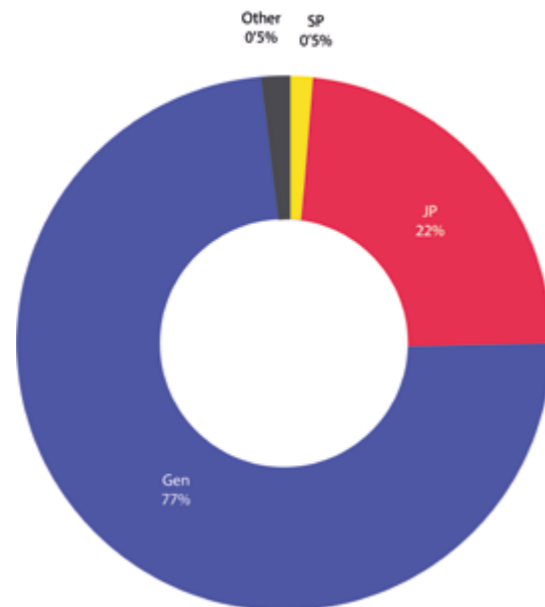


Image 7: Characters by country. Own Elaboration

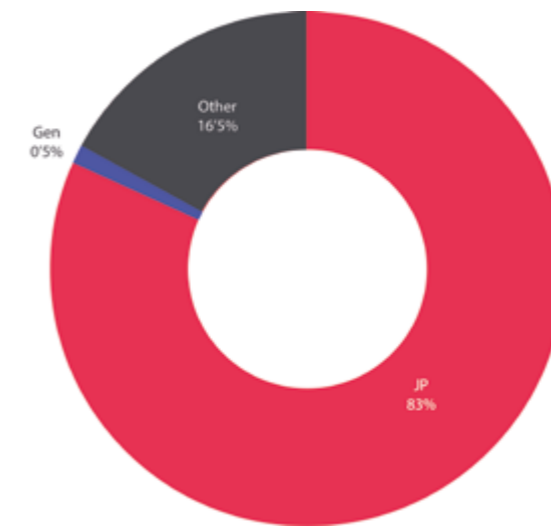


Image 9: Elements of video games or series by country. Own Elaboration

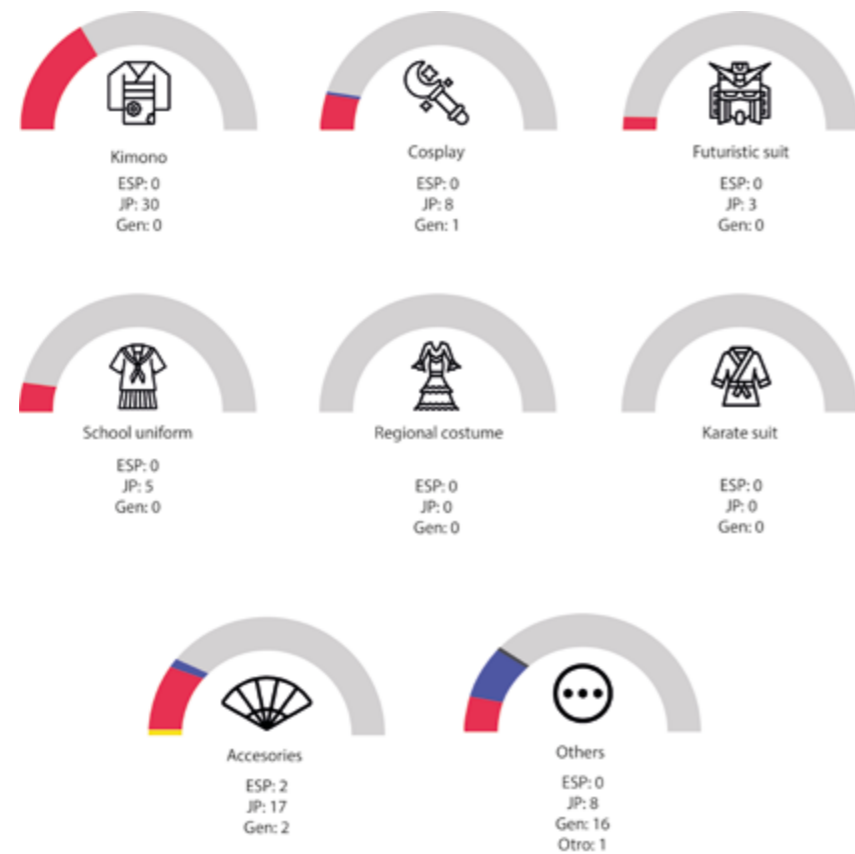


Image 10: Clothing. Own Elaboration

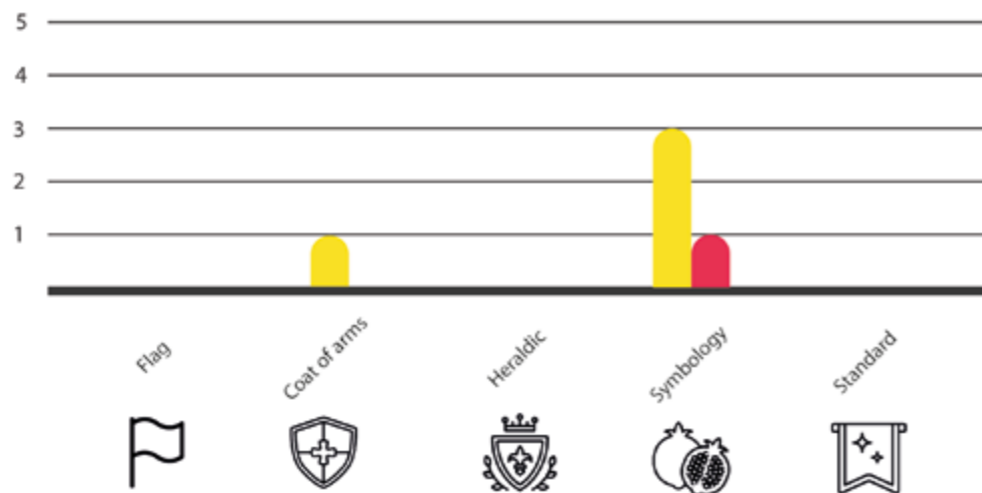


Image 11: Vexillology. Own Elaboration

4. CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained have enabled us to formulate the following conclusions. When it came to observing whether the hypotheses were fulfilled, we were able to verify that:

- Regarding the first hypothesis: Despite globalisation, the cultural identities of Spain and Japan can be observed in the posters. We have confirmed that this is true.

Numerous cases have been observed of posters focusing on the Spanish cities where the event is organized. In addition to incorporating monuments characteristic of each city, Spanish symbolism has also been included, as is evident in the Malaga poster of Pizarra with its municipal coat of arms. Likewise, elements referring to aspects of Spanish culture have been added, such as the churros with chocolate in the poster for Japan Weekend in Madrid.

On the other hand, in relation to Japan, elements of anime and video games can often be seen, as well as texts in Japanese. Most of the posters use a style typical of manga and anime. In addition, other typical elements of Japanese culture have been identified, such as supernatural creatures called yokai, traditional Japanese clothing such as the kimono, and even typical Japanese cuisine.

In short, the signage at the manga fairs clearly demonstrates how the cultural identities of both countries are maintained and highlighted, showing that globalisation has not erased or blurred them, and that they have not lost their distinct appearance.

- The second hypothesis: The posters of manga festivals held in Spain present Spanish elements despite selling and promoting Japanese. The elements typical of the host country/city are used as advertising claims. It is true that, although the main objective of these events is to sell and promote Japanese culture, Spanish elements are also used as a marketing strategy to attract local audiences. Although this hypothesis has not been fulfilled in all cases, as generic landscapes have also been used, in most of them it is true.

As mentioned above, both monuments and characteristic landscapes and elements of Spanish culture are included, which can

make the Spanish public feel a connection with these posters. In addition to being attractive, they show a sense of familiarity. We have also observed that some of these festivals have specific themes that celebrate cultural collaboration, as in the case of the Japan in Granada poster or the Japan in Alfarate poster, where Japanese culture is integrated into Spanish culture.

In short, the Spanish elements in the posters act as a hook that attracts the local audience, creating a bridge between the promoted Japanese culture and the Spanish culture of the audience.

- The third hypothesis states that: The elements used to transmit a culture are monuments and landscapes. It is true that mainly monuments and landscapes have been used to represent Spanish culture. However, other elements, such as symbolism, have also been used. In the case of Japan, although monuments and landscapes have been represented on some occasions, they have not been the most prominent elements. The most relevant has been the use of elements from video games and anime series typical of Japanese pop culture, as this is what the public consumes most at these events.

The results obtained have allowed us to add further conclusions: In the signage of manga fairs and events related to Japanese culture, greater use is made of Spanish monuments and landscapes, highlighting characteristic elements of the host city. Some of the most repeated examples are the sculptures of Puppy and Maman in Bilbao, and the Tower of Hercules in A Coruña, each depicted twice. The cities represented include Bilbao, Madrid, Valencia, and Barcelona, among others. This may be due to the fact that by being aimed at a Spanish public, the aim is to make them feel more represented with these types of elements and attract more visitors.

In the field of botany, it is not surprising that there have been many cases of elements related to Japanese cherry trees, such as trees, flowers and cherry blossoms, as it is a tree that is highly associated internationally with Japan.

When it comes to food, ramen has stood out from other foods. This may be because ramen

is Japan's best-known food and the one most associated with manga and anime fans because of the famous instant noodle products such as Cup Noodles. There has only been one case of food from Spain and that is churros with chocolate. This is not surprising as they are commonly consumed at Spanish fairs, so the Spanish public is not excluded from this sweet moment to which they are accustomed. We are struck by the fact that there is only one case of a Japanese drink, the soft drink ramune, which is also well known and marketed outside Japan, so we came to think that Japan is more identified by its food, in particular ramen, than by its drinks, which are hardly represented at all.

In relation to the presentation of animals, there have been many cases of species common to both countries such as dogs or cats. However, in the case of Japanese fauna, numerous cases of goldfish and koi have been found, surpassing cats, which are also closely associated with Japanese culture and are a highly appreciated animal worldwide. In the case of Spain, only two cases of animals have been recorded: a horse referring to Jerez and an octopus representing A Coruña; these animals are cultural symbols of these two cities.

With regard to the characters and elements of series and video games, the characters representing each organisation stood out, especially those of Japan Weekend and Albanime. We have been struck by the fact that characters from famous anime series have hardly been included, although it is true that characters from Studio Ghibli films such as Chihiro or Totoro have appeared several times. This may have happened because many posters of the famous Japan Weekend manga fair organisation have been analysed and have their own characters.

Japanese technology is another characteristic Japanese element, so it is not surprising that products from this sector are represented. Within this sector, consoles are the elements that have stood out the most, with fewer cases of other elements. On one occasion, the appeal to the technologically advanced is achieved by turning Curro's mascot into a futuristic android.

In relation to series elements, there are also many instances of video games compared to

anime, such as Pokémon or Zelda. It could be because the target audience for such events tends to be fans of video games as well.

Costumes, regional costumes are other useful elements in signaling a culture. In the posters analysed, we have observed that the kimono has been the most represented garment, and curiously, no traditional Spanish garment has been included. However, two accessories have been used that refer to Spanish clothing.

Analyzing the vexillology, we have been able to observe that there have only been cases that refer to Spain, such as the use of pomegranates to represent the city of Granada, the municipal coat of arms of the Malaga town of Pizarra or the Indalo of Almería. No Japanese vexillology has been presented, possibly because the Spanish target audience might not understand it, as the events are held in Spain and not in Japan. Therefore, the message would not be effective.

4.1. PERSONAL APPRAISAL

As a final conclusion and by way of a critical assessment, we can say that the objectives set out from the beginning have been achieved. We have analysed the presence of Spanish and Japanese elements in the posters of manga fairs.

The methodology of content analysis with a quantitative approach has led us to design a matrix that has given rise to a useful and appropriate analysis sheet for the characteristics of this work. In this way, it has been proven that the content analysis methodology designed by Krippendorff and the quantitative approach proposed by Hernández Sampieri are suitable for this type of research that allows us to obtain rigorous results on graphic design. This dissertation aims to be a methodological proposal for analysis in the field of visual advertising language.

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