

English Advertisements in Osaka

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I. Introduction

Nowadays it is not too much to say that the Japanese language is more or less “eroded by English” in many realms such as its mass media and even its everyday conversation among Japanese people. In fact, English is firmly rooted in our daily lives, able to be found everywhere, and seems to be linguistically increasing in power so radically that more often than not original Japanese expressions can be placed with their English equivalence. However, this kind of phenomenon fundamentally occurs just by the word-unit —as loan words. Moreover, from a phonological point of view, the words of English origin which appear ordinarily in our conversation, may be usually pronounced with Japanese tone and accent, that is to say, “Japanized words” which are frequently quite different or far from their original sounds. As for descriptive methods, the English loan words may be mostly described not with the English alphabet but with Japanese letters, commonly *KATAKANA* letters, in Japanese written forms. Furthermore, many of the loan words can not be often recognized any more especially by the young generation no only that they are borrowed from English but that they can possibly be replaced with their Japanese originals.

Now, when we think about “*Janglish*” (Japanized English stated above) not by the word-unit but by the phrase-unit, *Janglish* phrases can not be seen as common expressions in our daily lives from the viewpoints of both spoken and written forms. Sometimes, though we find these kinds only in the titles of movies and TV shows, or the headlines of magazines for the young, they

are rather rare cases. Needless to say, as the Janglish expressions by the sentence-unit are still more rare cases, we can not find any of them but in such word-sentences as short greetings.

To be brief, as the above-mentioned Japanized English expressions have been more or less naturalized to Japanese and recognized as in the Japanese vocabulary, it is unnecessary for us to be overconscious of them.

Moreover, when we think of the Janglish expressions by the paragraph-unit in the spoken and written forms, we can be sure that none of them appear in the spoken forms by any means. On the other hand, we can not be certain that there appear none in the written form. We occasionally find ones in the special media like signboards and commercial devices. Therefore, while walking around in the thriving city-quarters, we can come across a great number of such advertisements. Additionally, there are, however, no Janglish expressions by the paragraph-unit which are described all with Japanese letters.

All things considered, I decided to collect English expressions by the sentence- or paragraph-unit mainly in signboards and public notices for commercial use, to analyze in this research paper what kinds of roles they would make and what they could mean to us in our Japanese society. At the same time, I also wanted to consider if they were helpful enough to convey what they would really mean as a means of communication to English native speakers.

II. Preparation for Researchwork

I collected more than 80 samples for this research at the commercial zones in Osaka, and here, down below, are 23 samples which were practically used as research materials.

1) BEER IS BREWED FROM QUALITY INGREDIENTS BY USING OUR PURE BREWER'S YEAST AND OUR ADVANCED BREWING TECHNIQUES.

BEER HAS EXCELLENT RICHNESS, TRULY REFRESHING DRINKABILITY AND SATIN SMOOTHNESS.

ALL YEAR ROUND YOU CAN ENJOY THE GREAT TASTE OF BEER!

2) BEER BREWED TO HIGH-QUALITY STANDARD OF THE FINE BEER, FULLY CAPTURES THE TRUST TASTE OF ALL NATURAL INGREDIENTS. DISTINGUISHED BY ITS GENUINE RICHNESS, THIS BEER NOW ADDS MORE TO YOUR SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND ENJOYMENT.

LIVE FOR LIVE PEOPLE.

3) is always pursuing the best quality to each one's taste. We hope you find your favorite beer among the great variety of beer.

4) contains the following positively-charged ions:
 Na^+ (sodium), K^+ (potassium), Ca^{++} (calcium), Mg^{++} (magnasium).

contains the following negatively-charged ions:
 Cl^- (chlorine), citrate⁻⁻⁻, and lactate⁻.

5) contains the following positively-charged ions:
 Na^+ (sodium), K^+ (potassium), Ca^{2+} (calcium), Mg^{2+} (magnasium).

contains the following negatively-charged ions:
 Cl^- (chloride), citrate³⁻, and lactate⁻.

6)

Drink Up!

Enjoy Refreshing Time.

7) Enjoy

TRADE MARK REGD.

SOFT DRINKS

Enjoy refreshing taste while having a good time chatting.

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8) CORP.

SOFT DRINKS

Enjoy refreshing taste while having a good time chatting.

9)

A delicious drink born from a blend of know-how acquired over many years and advanced production technology, ...a drink you are sure to enjoy.

10)

drink paradise

Every satisfying sip a flavour experience, delicious refreshment is a tradition. Relax and enjoy thirst quenching beverages at their best. is your ticket to drink paradise. There's a gallon of deliciousness in every drop. Reach for the taste of good taste, reach for . Your assurance of superb flavour is the trademark.

11)

SOFT DRINKS

Good tasty that a variety abundant for refreshing softdrinks

12) Food and beverage service specialist certified by the Ministry of Labor on duty in this restaurant.

13) Sri Lanka

produces

THE WORLDS

BEST TEA

SHINSAIBASHI COFFEEIN MEMBER'S in 1980

100%

pure

Sri Lanka

Tea

, served

here

HRS

This is a sign of Best coffee and it taste is a fully guaranteed

SHINSAIBASHI COFFEEIN

COFFEE

14) Sandwich House

"Be Healthy" and "Be Beautiful" has been the eternal goal of mankind.

, We have always tried to contribute to make with foresightendness

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and creativity, that timeless dream a reality for the people.

15) CIGARETTES

Wait, don't go. Stop a minute. Take a break from your busy day, and pause to enjoy the world around you.

There it is, wherever you look.

Rich and rewarding, constantly changing, consistent only in it's variety.

So relax, and pay attention.

The show's just starting.

16) CIGARETTES (B)

¥1000 Note in use.

Vendable two packs or more...

Acceptable applicable notes/coins at a time.

Retainable up to five packs in cigarette outlet.

When "Do not use Note" lamp blinks, use coin instead of note.

Minor's smoking is prohibited by law.

Equipped with a leakable breaker.

17) C

WE WILL HUNT A DEVIL OF THE FASHION TRADE AND WE PROMISE YOU TO PRESENT HIGH SENSITIVE AND HIGH QUALITY GOODS IN CHEAP...

America Mura Hero!!

C STAFF

C. CO, LTD,

18) A SHIRTS CO., LTD.

C The key to clothing is fitting together the well-dressed look House 516 and the person to actually wear the clothes.

19) C

makes happen for you.

20) C

— GENTLEMEN'S CLOTHING —

FAMOUS MITSUMINE LABEL, SELDOM RIVALLED

ESTABLISHED

1949

21) Hello!

Check in on the folks back home with 001.

001-P CARD PHONES are specially equipped for 001 international calls, with instructions posted in English.

001-P CARDS PHONES are specially equipped to accept 001-P CARDS.

With 001, you can phone over 190 areas all over the world.

Directions for use are posted in English.

To obtain 001-P CARDS, go to your nearest 001-P CARD office. If you have questions, simply dial (toll-free) 0057.

A

A

Hello Spot

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE SERVICE

22) PLEASE PLACE SHOWER CURTAIN INSIDE WHILE USING SHOWER.

WATER IS DRINKABLE.

PLEASE USE ONLY ATTACHED TOILET PAPERS.

In the case of an emergency our trained staff will guide you safely out.

23) A mild shampoo with polypeptide and cationic polymer. Conditions your hair beautifully.

A refreshing rinse with polypeptide and cationic polymer.

Conditions your hair beautifully.

In this paper, all the real names which appear in these advertisements are eliminated and shown with (company), (goods), and (shop), although in the actual questionnaire, they appeared as they are written.

III. A Pre-Analysis of Research Samples from a Non-Native' Viewpoint

Here are my comments on each one of the 23 samples as a non-native speaker.

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- 1) Good English. No Comment.
- 2) The word "TRUST" must be corrected to "TRUSTFUL" in terms of part of speech.
- 3) Grammatically "you find" must be "you will find".
- 4) & 5) Too much scientific to recognize in detail even from a linguistic point of view.
- 6) Good English. No Comment.
- 7) Good English. No Comment.
- 8) Good English. No Comment.
- 9) Just No Comment.
- 10) "Drink Paradise" sounds odd. The first sentence is not analyzable from a syntactical standpoint.
- 11) The word "tasty" must be "taste" in terms of part of speech. A variety abundant...soft drink" is quite wrong as to its grammar and syntax.
- 12) The last part "...on duty in this restaurant" is not understandable both semantically and syntactically.
- 13) The word "COFFEEIN" must be misspelled (!?) A definite article must be put before "BEST COFFEE". "It taste" must be "its taste" as to a part of speech.
- 14) Grammatically speaking. "Be Healthy" and "Be Beautiful" must be "Being Healthy" and "Being Beautiful". The auxiliary verb "has" must be "have", because of the agreement of a plural form, and also "to contribute to make" must be "contribute to making". The last part "...that timeless dream a reality for the people" is too odd in every sense to understand what it means.
- 15) Grammatically, the word "it's" must be "its" at least. Every sentence sounds too strangely elaborate.

16) The word "low" is a big mistake and must be spelled "law". As a whole, what this notice wants to say is understandable but every sentence does not seem tight and precise in terms of word choice.

17) & 18) Grammatically and Syntactically NOT Precise.

19) Syntactically Odd. Semantically NOT Very Understandable.

20) No Comment.

21) Good English. No Comment.

22) Good English. No Comment.

23) Good English. No Comment.

Summarizing the analyses or impressions above, we can find some factors in common.

1. Grammatical Defects
2. Defects Related to Parts of Speech
3. Syntactical Defects
4. Spelling Mistakes
5. Unanalyzable Defects

Of course, it is not correct that each one of the 23 samples has only one type of defect mentioned above, but often each has more than one or complexly combined defects.

Furthermore, we also find that some words favorably appear again and again.

Refreshing;
Quality (High Quality);
Best;
Tasty;
Advanced;
etc.

These words, which have been already naturalized to Japanese, are well-known to us and used a great deal in our daily conversation. In another sense, they are some of so-called our "recognition words" that usually have positive and favorable connotations. However, we can not call them defects, but sometimes we feel something of semantic uncertainty in the choices of words, related to these recognition words in some samples. We may put it in the sixth defect of the list above.

IV. Analyses of Research Samples by English Native Speakers

On the next stage, I asked 17 English native speakers to evaluate the 23 samples on their impression level, and also to comment to each one of them, if any. Then, their evaluation was decided with three-grade points:

A=Understandable, Good or OK;

B=Partially Understandable; and

C=Not Understandable.

* The Number of People who Answered with A, B, and C

SAMPLE NO.	(A) understandable	(B) partially understandable	(C) not understandable
1)	15	2	0
2)	5	9	3
3)	8	8	1
4)	10	5	2
5)	11	4	2
6)	8	8	1
7)	10	6	1
8)	8	9	0
9)	10	5	2
10)	9	5	3
11)	0	4	13
12)	10	6	1
13)	4	11	2

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14)	4	9	4
15)	11	6	0
16)	2	10	5
17)	0	3	14
18)	1	8	8
19)	0	4	13
20)	8	8	1
21)	16	1	0
22)	11	6	0
23)	8	8	1

* People who Answered the Questionnaire.

NATIONALITY	AMERICAN	CANADIAN	AUSTRALIAN
MALE	10	2	1
FEMALE	2	2	0

Now, here are their comments to each sample.

- 1) * "Drinkability" sounds a little strange.
 - * 1st sentence, a little odd but understandable. 2nd——drinkability??
 - 3rd is great.
 - * A: 1st sentence, B: 2nd sentence, & A: 3rd sentence.
 - * Natural.
 - * "Our" not needed!

- 2) * long-winded?
 - * "trust taste"?
 - * Should "trust" be "truest"?
 - * If A is for "Live People", what beer is for dead people?
 - * "Live beer" should be "Draft beer".
 - * Live A to live people——should be "Alive". Poor choice of wording.

- 3) * 1st sentence unclear.
 - * Poor choice of wording.

- 4) & 5) * Even in America you might see this, but probably only on the car.

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- * What are “ions” and what have they got to do with “Sweat”?
 - * #4 is better than #5.
- 6) * Enjoy A Refreshing Time. (Still easy to understand)
 - * Should be Refreshment Time.
 - * Poor choice of wording.
 - 7) * “Chatting” isn’t common in the U.S.
 - * Poor choice of wording.
 - 8) * Same as above. (“Chatting” isn’t common in the U.S.)
 - * If it was A Drink, then it would be more understandable.
 - * I would drop word “chatting”.
 - * Poor choice of wording.
 - 9) [No Comment Given]
 - 10) * Too long, too much to read but it’s understandable.
 - 11) * Perhaps I can figure it out, but it’s not worth the effort!
 - * “taste” not tasts, that has not “a” variety.
 - 12) * Is “HRS” supposed to be “hours”?
 - 13) * “it taste” isn’t good.
 - 14) * 2nd sentence is odd.
 - * Should be “that timeless dream—a reality”.
 - * Poor choice of wording.
 - 15) * If the word “cigarettes” was not present, this would not be understandable.
 - 16) * Can be figured out, but not very clear.
 - * What is a “leakable breaker”?
 - * Poor choice of wording. Poor grammar.
 - 17) * “Hunt a devil of the fashion trade” —what does this mean?
 - * 1st sentence not understandable. 2nd, partially O. K.

- 18) * House 516 is a bit confusing. Address?
* What is "House 516"?
- 19) * "makes it happen for you" — "it" is missing.
- 20) [No Comment Given]
- 21) * "Hello Spot"? Is somebody calling their dog?
* Just don't know what a "Hello Spot" is. Weird.
- 22) [No Comment Given]
- 23) * Often seen on expensive shampoo or conditioner.
* I think I need a dictionary!
* The grammar seems O.K., but don't understand.
* "polypeptide and cationic polymer" — they are probably correct, but very technical.

V. An Analysis of Questionnaire Results

The evaluation and comments on the 23 samples by 17 English native speakers are all up here. As a matter of fact, these are not so much absolute evaluation as the 17 people's relative impression. We can, however, find some interesting matters in common among them. For example, to Sample No. 21, 16 out of 17 native people gave grade A and I found no problem at all as a non-native person. Consequently, all of our evaluation is quite agreed. It is also true of Sample No. 1. Namely, 15 out of 17 people gave grade A to it, only the other 2 grade B, and no one gave it the lowest grade C. I could naturally set a high value on the sample. In the eyes of researcher, however, these two samples offer no linguistic issues, that is to say, they count for nothing in this sense. On the contrary, as for Samples No. 11, No. 17 and No. 19, both English native and non-native people are agreed to the opinion that they can not be evaluated high. That is why they offer issues to be analyzed from some standpoints.

Now, I would like to consider what the native speakers' criteria to the 23 English samples and also English in general consist in.

In Samples No. 11 and No. 17, which are valued quite high, and Samples No. 5, No. 7 and No. 9, which are valued relatively high, there appear the issues on the Japanese people's recognition words that have already stated above. That is why all of them may possess some necessity to be controverted on the choice of wording in their contexts. Putting it aside for a while, we may see them as defectless or almost perfect paragraphs and sentences from a syntactical, semantic or grammatical viewpoint. Assumedly, there at the point we can find a reason why they were given not grade A but grade B or C. A problem which they include would be the mischoice of wording.

On the other hand, in Sample No. 18, which is valued the lowest of all the samples, and Samples No.13, No.14 and No.16, which are valued relatively low, we can find defects of word-choice and respectively some other syntactical defects commented above on each of them. Sample No. 16 has even a basic mistake of incredible misspelling. After all, as far as there is no big defect of word-choice, it may safely be said that the syntactical criterion is the most influential in English-evaluation. In another sense, misusing parts of speech, which is related to grammatical mistake may be not crucial but rather acceptable on their criteria to language communication.

Moreover, the more closely the contents of an advertisement are related to English native speakers staying in Japan than to the Japanese public, and, the more significant value in offering information an advertisement has, the higher evaluation English of the advertisement has. It is a natural matter, because it must have written originally to convey necessary information chiefly for English native speakers. Its examples are Sample No. 21 and the English instruction of using a cashing machine at a bank that would be often used by non-Japanese as well.¹⁾

On the contrary, the contents of the low-evaluated advertisements are the objects not for English native speakers staying in Japan but for the Japanese public. Samples No. 13, No. 14 and No. 18 written on signboards are made up to mostly basic words some of which are Japanese recognition words. To our surprise, we can hardly find any communicative value in their information to be conveyed. In the last analysis, they are originally never willing to convey any information as a linguistically basic function. Their letters seem to be used only to function for ornamental use. Their English is not so much a linguistic issue as a fundamental factor of art or design. In another way, they have nothing to do with literate ability related to intellectual brain-function but something to do with fashion related to direct sight. They should not be analyzed from a linguistic standpoint, but should just feel their radiating sensation if any. In this sense, judging from the fact that the frequent use of Japanese recognition words, which include semantic problems, works only to appeal to our sight or any other sense, it is just a variation of fashion-function.

VI. Conclusion

Now what has been clarified all through the analyses so far can be briefed as follows:

1. The 5 defect-oriented concepts; that is to say, the evaluation criteria to English offered from the eyes of a non-native person are agreed to the English native speakers' ones. Then, it may safely be said that there is the order of priority among the 5 criteria. At least, the syntactical issue is attached greater importance on than any other one.

2. Roughly speaking, all the English in advertisements can be classified into two types according to their main viewers: (A) the one devised to convey information as accurately as possible, conscious of English native speakers; and (B) the one having not a linguistic role to convey information

but an ornamental role related to the Japanese viewers' intuition like in signboards. Moreover, we can think that Japanese recognition words work in the same way as the intuitional ornament-like words.

At any rate, in our society "globalization" is always an attention-getter, and, "international men" and "international society", which sound awkward to English native speakers, are both keenly appealing phrases. However, from a linguistic point of view, the English advertisements in our society, Osaka, have a greater tendency to be used as ornamental purposes than a communicative medium. Recently English as this kind of medium seems to have paid attention to at last and started some positive devices even for street sign boards, partly or mainly because of a surging topic of opening Kansai International Airport.²⁾

Lastly, I would like to say at least that from an educational standpoint, it will surely be more and more necessary to learn practical English from now. We, teachers, have to reconsider the concept of teaching English as a second language.

NOTES

1) Many cashing machines have both Japanese and English instructions; for example: ① PRESS START KEY, ② INSERT YOUR CARD, ③ PRESS YOUR PIN AND ENTER KEY, ④ PRESS THE NUMBER OF ¥10,000 NOTES AND ENTER KEY, ⑤ PRESS CONFIRM KEY, ⑥ PLEASE WAIT FOR A MOMENT, ⑦ PLEASE REMOVE YOUR CARD, and ⑧ PLEASE REMOVE RECORD.

2) The Asahi (Evening Issue), June 1, 1994.

An article says: Sonezaki Police Branch decides to post as many English signs as possible and to place foreign-language-speaking officers at some police boxes of its division — English, Chinese, Korean and so on.

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I started this research with Ms. Chiyomi Amino, associate professor at Chubu Women's College. We collected research materials in Osaka and made up the questionnaire. After our many times of discussions, however, it turned out that we could not proceed in the same direction while analyzing the results. Finally each of us made up our mind to write a paper respectively using the same materials.