

Linguistic Landscapes in Nikko and Kobe

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December 14th, 2019

JWLLP-28 (2019/12) @ Waseda University

Nikko is an old Japanese township near Tokyo, with relatively traditional atmosphere.
Kobe is a city located near Osaka, with 19th and 20th century European style influences.



NIKKO

-Beyond Culture and Tradition-

Question

How do we convey significance of cultural elements in a local traditional township?

They defy literal and interpretive translations.

Contents (Nikko)

1 Road to the
World Heritage
Site in Nikko

2 Our research
and the results

3 Name of
Japanese
sweets

4 Ryu and
Dragon

5 Uniqueness
and
Standardization

6 Conclusion

1 Road to the World Heritage Site in Nikko



1 Road to the World Heritage Site in Nikko



Increasing Number of Inbound Tourists to Nikko

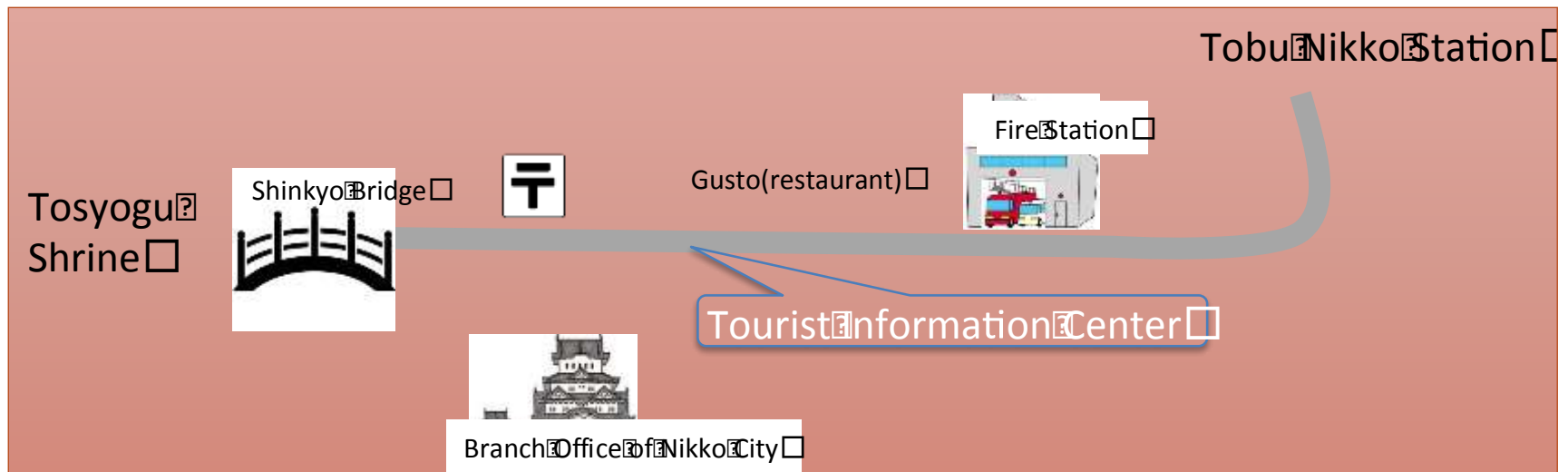
Shimotsuke News "SOON", 3/24/2018

1 Road to the World Heritage Site in Nikko

Our researches

Area : Nikko Station- Shinkyo Bridge (Main street in Nikko)

- 12.2017
- 11.2018
- 8.2019



2 Our research and the results

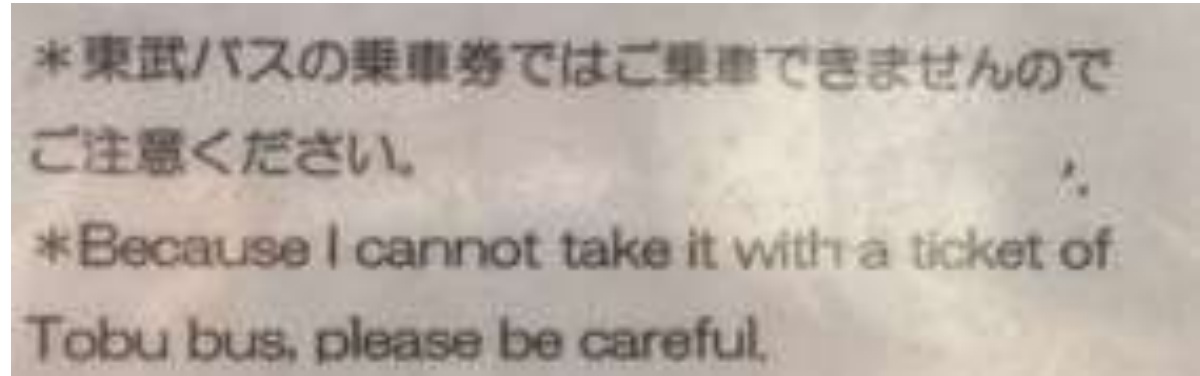
- Linguistic Landscape

“The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the LL of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (Landry and Bourhis 1997).

Our research More than 220 points

Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. (1997): Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: an empirical study, pp25 , *Journal of language and Social Psychology*, 16

2 Our research and the results



2 Our research and the results



2 Our research and the results



2 Our research and the results

This shop owner seems to have given up trying to explain about his/her goods.



2 Our research and the results

From the research in 2018

Fusion and GAP

Linguistic landscape changes over time

“Akiya Bank,” or a vacant house depository, is a new approach in the Nikko area, with which a vacant house is renovated and put to new use.

With this system, some of the old houses in Nikko have new owners.

- Sep 2017 日光ふりん亭
- June 2018 murmur biiru stand

3 Name of Japanese sweets



TENTO homepage

New shop

- Chocolate by a Japanese traditional sweets shop

What's in a name? That
which we call chocolates

By any other name would
taste as sweet.

Or do they?

3 Name of Japanese sweets

AKEBONO

曙

STRAWBERRY

“AKEBONO” means “Dawn” in Japanese.

Evening?
Dusk?
No!

Dawn in Traditional Japanese literature

- Dawn is the time of parting for lovers in ancient Japanese society.
- “Dawn is (the best time in) Spring”

The opening paragraph of MAKURANOSOSHI,
the old famous essay in Japan



"What's in a name? That
which we call a rose
By any other name would
smell as sweet." (Romeo and
Juliet)

Name symbolizes something.

3 Name of Japanese sweets

- How makers of WAGASHI name their sweets?

Mitate (見立て) imagination from the object

The famous old waka (Japanese poetry) gives the name to their sweets.

- (1) Look at the objects.
- (2) Imagine something which is in the shared knowledge among people.
- (3) That something would evoke some imagery among people.
- (4) Then they bring the sweet closer to their sensory imagination.

3 Name of Japanese sweets

- Old Japanese way to establish some common grounds among people

Ex) an elaborate adaptation of a Japanese poem, called 'honkadori'

Specific objects are triggers to imagination.

ex) The Tale of Genji (源氏物語)

Wild wind and dark night ・ ・ ・ That reflects the feeling of the character.

It is a kind of psychological description in Japanese literary tradition.

3 Name of Japanese sweets

- Blue Dragon
- Blue?
- Dragon ?



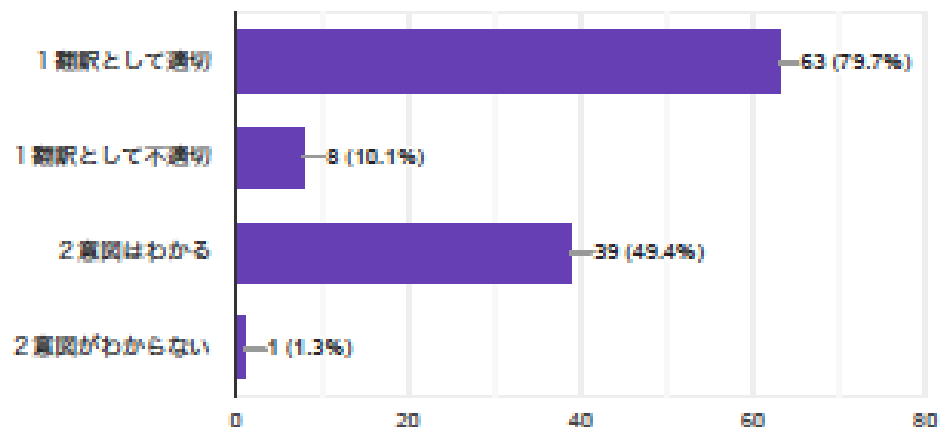
4 Ryu and Dragon

N=79 2018 in Japan

79.7% people answered “Ryu” could translate into “Dragon”

龍 Dragon

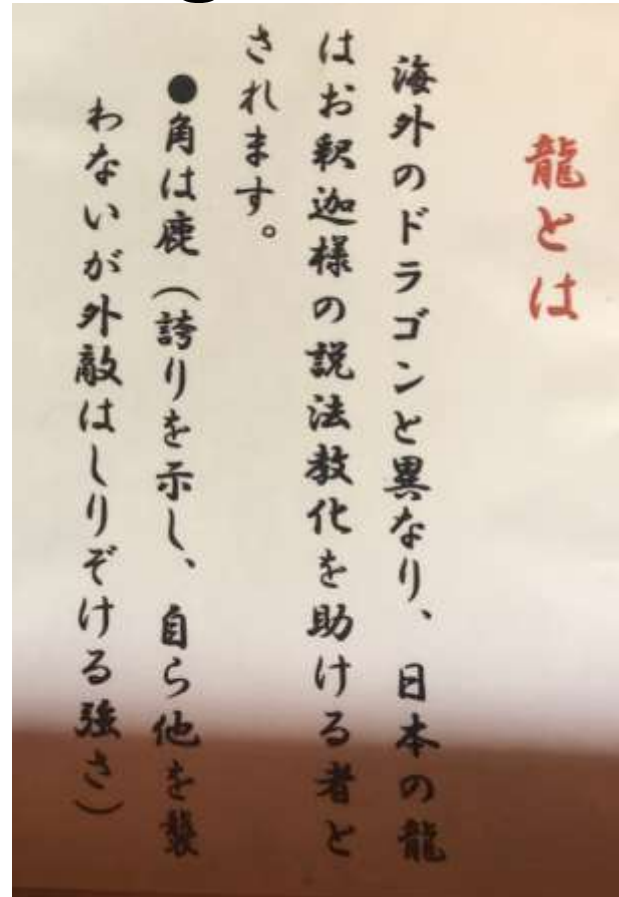
79 件の回答



- ? 「龍(Ryu)」 = “Dragon” ?

4 Ryu and Dragon

However . . .



“龍（Ryu）” is an animal considered to be a messenger of Buddha. It is different from Easton Dragon.

- A message at a temple in Kyoto -

4 Ryu and Dragon

Impression of Ryu /Dragon(Multiple answers)

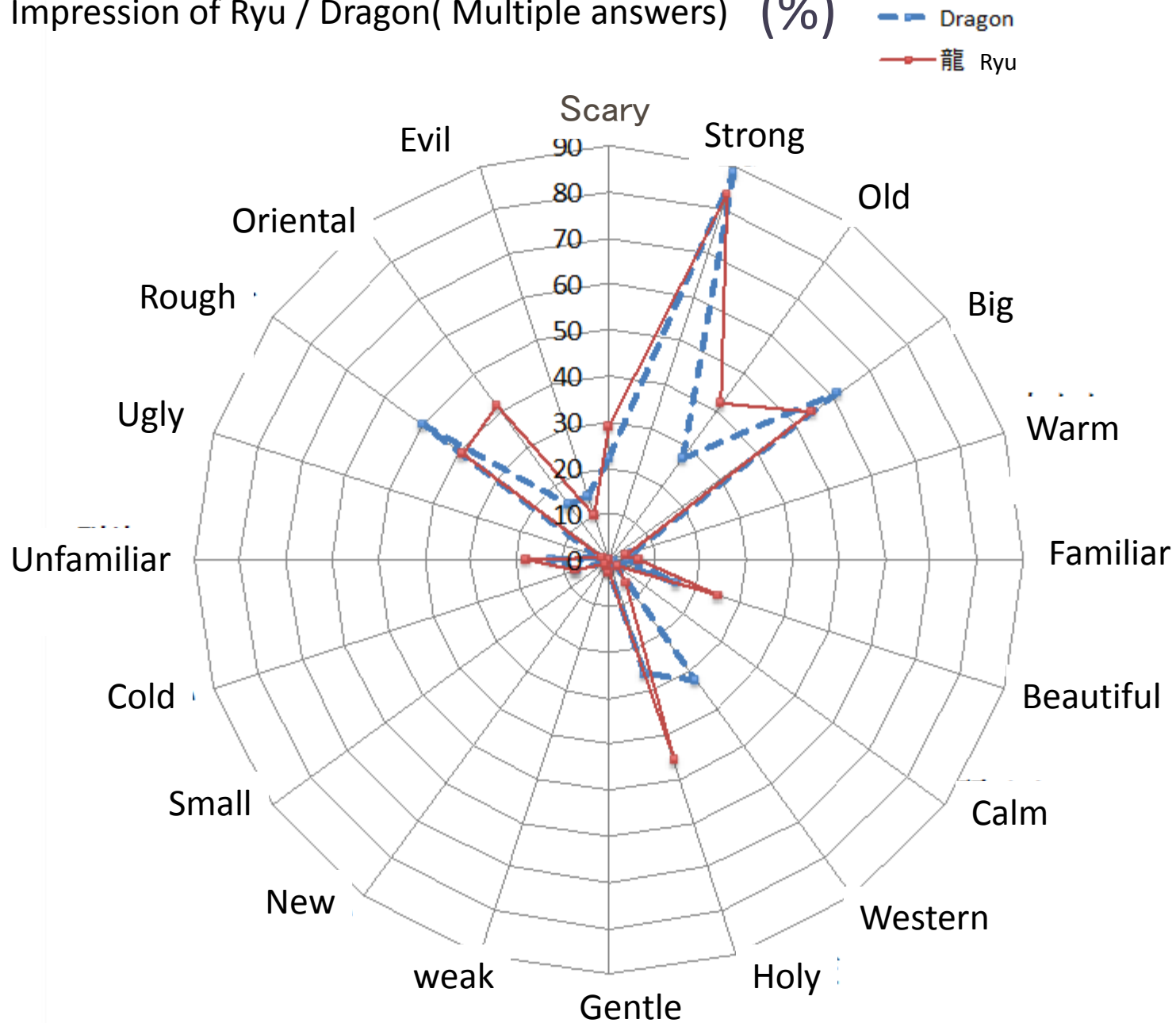
Dragon n=96 Japanese in 2018

- Holy (神聖だ) ・ Oriental (東洋だ) ・ ・ ・ 5
- Holy (神聖だ) ・ Western (西洋的だ) ・ ・ 14
- Evil (邪悪だ) ・ Oriental (東洋的だ) ・ ・ ・ 5
- Evil (邪悪だ) ・ Western (西洋的だ) ・ ・ ・ 9

Ryu n= 79 Japanese in 2018

- Holy (神聖だ) ・ Oriental (東洋的だ) ・ ・ 22
- Holy (神聖だ) ・ Western (西洋的だ) ・ ・ ・ 1
- Evil (邪悪だ) ・ Oriental (東洋的だ) ・ ・ ・ 2
- Evil (邪悪だ) ・ Western (西洋的だ) ・ ・ ・ 2

Impression of Ryu / Dragon(Multiple answers) (%)



5 Uniqueness and Standardization

Q : Is it possible to translate cultural objects into other language?

No ? Ryu≠Dragon

On the other hand,

Standardization is proceeding in the world.

Ex, “Dragon ball Shenron (神龍)”

Dragon Ball Super(Movie) 2019.2

“Dragon Ball Super Brolly,” the world famous animation film broke through the 100 million dollar! (Movie Today)

5 Uniqueness and Standardization

Total :2007

The screenshot shows the weblio website interface. The search bar contains the word "dragon". Below the search bar, the word "collocation" is displayed. There are five buttons for selecting the range of words to display: "2語左で並び替え", "1語左で並び替え", "隣合う単語の集計結果を見る" (which is highlighted), "1語右で並び替え", and "2語右で並び替え". Below these buttons, the word "Left" is centered under the first two buttons, and "Right" is centered under the last two buttons. A note states: "※単語をクリックすると、その単語と隣合っている例文のみ表示します。". Below the note, there are two tables. The first table shows collocations to the left of "dragon", and the second table shows collocations to the right of "dragon".

2語左の単語		1語左の単語		検索キーワード dragon	1語右の単語		2語右の単語	
<u>of</u>	171	<u>the</u>	446		<u>and</u>	95	<u>the</u>	94
<u>the</u>	166	<u>a</u>	103		Ball	88	<u>a</u>	63
<u>and</u>	76	<u>The</u>	89		Quest	71	<u>and</u>	63
<u>The</u>	67	<u>in</u>	71		is	56	<u>by</u>	61

2019.8.9

5 Uniqueness and Standardization

Ryu is similar to Dragon.

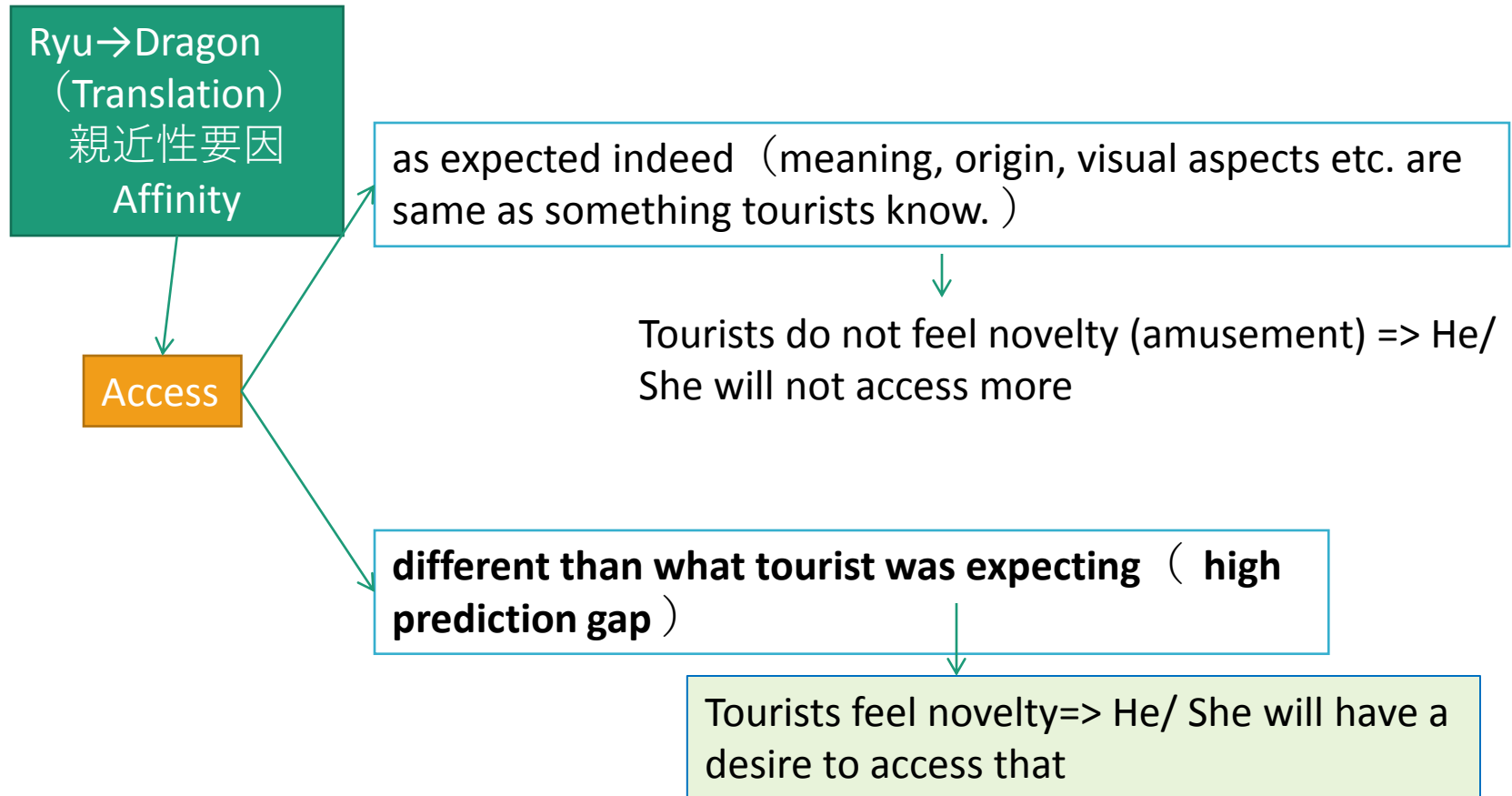
Standardization is proceeding.

There is something different • • •

Why foreigners buy pictures of Ryu in Nikko?

Different parts and common parts

6 Conclusion



6 Conclusion

- Perfect descriptive texts are not always necessary.
Something that fails to explain enough makes new feeling.

ex)The names of New shops in Nikko at traditional Japanese style house

日光ぷりん亭

Murmur "biiru" stand

- • • • intentional use cases



Western food or meals are sold at traditional Japanese style house.

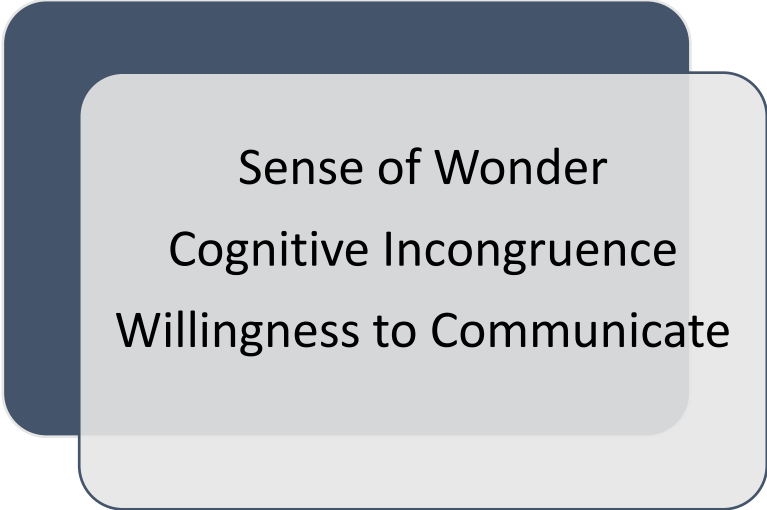
Fusion of two different images makes a new feeling.

6 Conclusion

Language and culture

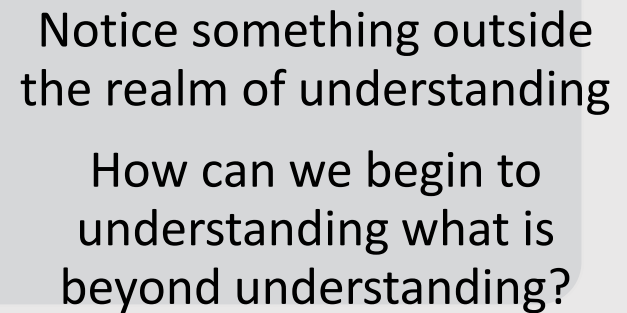
- “Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen” by Joan Huizinga
(The Autumn of the Middle Ages) uitgeverij (1919).
- 「間」の日本文化, (MA(Interval) in Japanese Culture)、 by
Takehiko Kenmochi Kodansya(1978)

6 Conclusion



A diagram consisting of two overlapping rounded rectangles. The background rectangle is dark blue, and the foreground rectangle is light gray. The text is centered within the light gray rectangle.

Sense of Wonder
Cognitive Incongruence
Willingness to Communicate



A diagram consisting of two overlapping rounded rectangles. The background rectangle is dark blue, and the foreground rectangle is light gray. The text is centered within the light gray rectangle.

Notice something outside
the realm of understanding

How can we begin to
understanding what is
beyond understanding?



► Kobe

Historic Background of Kobe

- Since opening up its port internationally in 1868, the City of Kobe has developed itself as an “international city” in Japan.
- A foreign settlement formed near the port and became the doorway to foreign cultures, bringing a stylish and modern atmosphere to Kobe (Kobe City, 2017).



Tourism in Kobe

- Kobe is very popular among Japanese people with touristic appeals such as China town, foreign settlement, beautiful port, and Arima hot spring.
- However, the number of international tourists is rather limited compared to Osaka, Kyoto and other neighboring cities in the Kansai region in the past few years.

Similarities between Nikko and Kobe

- Both are Japan's most popular sightseeing spots and have a lot of historical buildings.
- There are several hub stations of national railway (Japan Railways; JR), private railways, and buses.
- Both have approx. 1km approach from the main station to the sightseeing spot; From JR Sannomiya Station to the Kitano area with former foreign residences in Kobe vs. from JR Nikko Station to Shinkyo in Nikko.
- The destinations are at the bottom of the mountains, and therefore, we walk uphill or take the bus to get there.

Similarities between Nikko and Kobe

- Both have famous hot spring resorts within 30 minutes by train.
- Both have famous waterfalls in the neighborhood.
- People can take a day trip to Kobe from Osaka as well as to Nikko from Tokyo. Accordingly, they tend not to stay there overnight.

Differences between Nikko and Kobe

- Kobe has 'XXX Avenue' or 'XXX Street' to show certain places, while Nikko only has 'XXX Cho,' meaning 'town.'
- Former foreign residences are renovated into cafes in Kobe, while old Japanese-style houses are renovated into cafes in Nikko.
- Restaurants or shops in Kobe are often owned by foreigners.
- Signages are usually only in alphabet in Kobe, while they tend to have katakana written beside alphabet in Nikko.

Differences between Nikko and Kobe



Starbucks Coffee Kobe Kitano Injinkan

日光珈琲 御用邸通



Differences between Nikko and Kobe

- Western confectionaries in Kobe are famous for souvenirs, while Nikko has special local products such as yuba (bean curd skin), yokan (adzuki-bean jelly), sansho (zanthoxyli fructus), which are difficult to explain in or translate into foreign languages.



Fieldwork in Kitano Area

- Conducted a fieldwork of language landscape from JR Sannomiya Station to the Kitano area in Nov. 2018 and Nov. 2019.
- Checked the contents and their translations of the sign boards, notices, and other textual information on the streets and took their pictures.

Inconsistency of English Signages

- Descriptions in English are different for Subway Sannomiya Station: *Subway Sannomiya Eki-mae* (meaning ‘in front of a station’) vs. *Chikatetsu* (meaning ‘subway’) *Sannomiya Eki-mae*.



Inconsistency of English Signages

- 通り: Avenue, Street, Road, Dori
- 中央区: Chuo-ku vs. Chuo Ward
- 生田神社: Ikuta Jinja vs. Ikuta-Jinja Shrine
- 北野町 (異人館街): Kitano-cho (Foreigners Settlement) vs. Ijinkan



⇒ Each word was translated from the same Japanese word without consideration, which might cause tourists confusion.

Restaurant Menu

- Simple words such as ‘Menu’ or ‘Lunch’ were in English, but the details of the menu are only in Japanese.
- There are many misspellings or incomplete translations such as Coffe, Salada, Ginger (meaning ginger ale).
- They were understandable unlike those found in Nikko, where mistranslation by ‘Google translate.’

Notice of Changes in the Operational Routes and the Location of Bus Stops



Luggage Storage at Internet Cafe



Conclusion

- The inconsistency of English signages is partly because these were created by different people in different period, but inconsistent translations possibly cause international tourists confusion.
- As repeat tourists tend not to join packaged tours and need more detailed information, easily comprehensible signages are a big benefit for international tourists to effectively use a limited time.

Future Research

- Conduct a questionnaire survey of international tourists to obtain opinions on the intelligibility of signages.
- Investigate which language - their native language, English, Japanese, or simple Japanese - are used in what way in foreign residential areas.

Acknowledgment

- This research is supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP17H02249 and JP18K11849
- Co-researchers:
Yasunari Harada (Waseda University)
Masashi Saraki (Meiji University)
Atsushi Ito (Utsunomiya University)
- Special thanks to Kazutaka Ueda (Tokyo University)

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- TENTO

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Thank you for your attention!

