

Using Linguistic Landscapes for Linguistic and Cultural Comparisons

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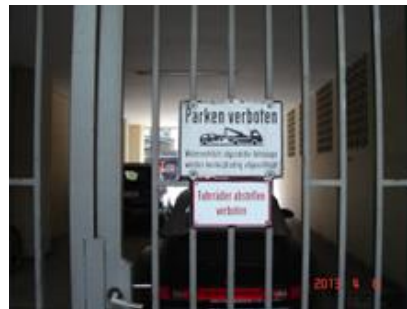


Backgrounds

- **When walking through Japanese cities, one can see a variety of *linguistic landscapes*, such as public signs and commercial signs on roads and buildings. It can be said that the cities are filled with a variety of written information.**
- **Definition of *Linguistic Landscape*:**
“Linguistic landscape refers to the visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region.” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, 23)

≡ Signs as Linguistic Landscapes

- The study of *linguistic landscapes* is limited, as the above definition indicates, to fixed and printed signs in specific locations, such as:





Types of Public Signs

TYPE 1
Japanese
(with
furigana)



TYPE 2
Japanese &
English
(with
pictogram)



TYPE 3
Japanese,
English,
Chinese &
Korean
(with
pictogram)





Linguistic landscapes as objects of Sociolinguistics

- Such public signs have recently been studied as *linguistic landscapes* in the field of *Sociolinguistics*.
- *Linguistic landscape* studies, particularly, those of public signs, reveal the characteristics of the areas and districts in which the signs are located for different target readers.

Objectives

- **The aim of this presentation is twofold:**
 - (1) to test whether multilingual public signs can be used as a tool for contrastive studies on linguistic expressions, and**
 - (2) to propose the use of functionally equivalent public signs between different languages as a tool for comparing the two languages, for example, Japanese and German.**



Outline

- (1) Use of translation in contrastive studies**
 - Problematic in terms of comparability**
- (2) Requirements for fairer and more objective comparisons**
- (3) The requirements are fulfilled by functionally equivalent sign expressions**
- (4) Framework for comparison**
- (5) Corresponding sign expressions**
 - a) functionally and semantically equivalent sign expressions**
 - b) Sign expressions that correspond functionally but are not semantically equivalent**
 - c) Sign expressions that do not correspond functionally**
- (6) What these comparisons reveal**



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- 2. Use of functionally equivalent sign expressions**
 - 2.1. Framework for Comparison**
 - 2.2. Comparison of non-corresponding signs**
- 3. Results of Comparison and Discussion**
- 4. Concluding remarks**

1. Translation and Comparability

Problems with comparisons using translations (especially of literary works):

- 1) Structural influence of a source language (unnaturalness)**
 - natural expression of the target language
(naturalness)
- 2) Influence of the translator's interpretation and personal preferences**
 - Possibility of personal style (bias)
- 3) Mistranslation**
 - Difficulty of fair comparison (accuracy)

☰ 1.1. Translations of a literary text

The opening sentence of Kawabata Yasunari's novel *Snow Country*, as exemplified in Ikegami (2000), and its English and German translations:

(1) *Kokkyo-no nagai tonneru-o nukeru-to yukiguni deatta*

border of long tunnel OBJ pass when snow-country was [COP-PST]

(2) **The train came out of the long tunnel into the snow country.** (translated by Seidensticker)

→ “unity of subject and object” (intra-situational perspective)

and “opposition of subject and object” (extra-situational perspective)

(3) *Als der Zug aus dem langen Grenztunnel herauskroch,*
as the train out.of the long border.tunnel out.crawl-PST

lag das »Schneeland« vor ihm weit ausgebreitet.
lie-PST the snow.country before it widely spread-PP

(translated by O. Benl. In Ikegami (2000) Words after "vor ihm" are missing.

(Supplemented by the commentator)

(4) *Jenseits des langen Tunnels erschien das Schneeland*
beyond of.the long tunnel appear-PST the snow.country

(translated by T. Cheung)

→ translated in different ways by different translators

1.2. Multilingual Signs

From the analysis of the correspondence between Japanese and English, at least, the following three perspectives can be identified as examples of inappropriate translation:

1. Simple Grammatical Mistranslations

2. Mistranslations

Based on Difference in Construals

3. Mistranslations

Based on Difference in Relevance

☰ 1.3. Examples of mistranslations

1.3.1. Simple Grammatical Mistranslations: Shoseien (Kyoto)



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「蜂に ご注意 下さい。」
hachi-ni gochuui kudasai
bee to HON-pay.attention please
“Be careful of the bee”

≡ 1.3. Examples of mistranslations

1.3.1. Simple Grammatical Mistranlation: Jakarta Airport (Indonesia)



“Baggage claim” 「品物損害クラーム」?

shinamono songai kurāmu
goods damage claim

→ Functionally equivalent sign wording: 「手荷物受取所」

tenimotsu uketorisho
baggage receive place

≡ 1.3. Examples of mistranslations

1.3.2. Mistranslation based on Construals: Unzen Jigokudani onsen (Japan)



≡ 1.3. Examples of Mistranslations

1.3.2.1. Mistranslations based on Difference in Construals

(5a) Keep *within* the boundary fences

Translated possibly from the following Japanese sentence:

(5b) 「柵の 内側に いてください」

saku-no uchigawa-ni ite-kudasai

fence-of within keep.POL

(6a) 「白線の 内側まで さがって お待ちください。」

hakusen-no uichigawa-made sagatte o-machi-kudasai

white line.of within.to back HON.wait.POL

[inside]

(6b) Wait *within[inside]* the white line.

Where is the place which the preposition *within* refers to?

(6c) Wait *behind* the white line.



1.3. Examples of Mistranslations

1.3.2.2. Influence of mother tongue?

「歩道外 立入禁止」

hodoo-gai

tachiiri kinshi

walkway outside entrance forbidden

“*Keep **within** the boundary fences.”

cf. “Keep out”

The problem of the perspective of expression formation

Cf.: 「白線 の **内側に** さがってお待ちください」

Hakusen-no uchigawa-ni sagatte omachi kudasai

white.line of inside stay back and wait please

(誤) “*Wait **within / inside** the white line.”

(正) “Wait **behind** the white line.” cf. ハンドルの手前に座る

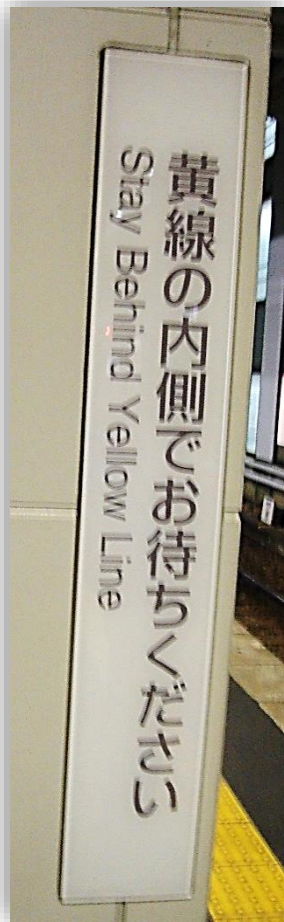
handoru no temae-ni suwaru

wheel of in.front.of sit

= to sit **behind** the steering wheel

≡ 1.3. Examples of Mistranslations

1.3.2.3. Correct English Translation



「黄線の 内側で お待ちください」

kiiroisen no uchigawa-de o-machi kudasai

yellow line of inside

HON-wait please

“Stay Behind Yellow Line”

≡ 1.3. Examples of Mistranslation

1.3.3. Mistranslation based on Difference in Relevance

(7a)

「指はさみ注意

yubihasamichūi

finger.get.caught caution door.of space.DAT

手や指を

te-ya-yubi-o

hand.or.finger-ACC

ドアのすきまに

doa-no sukima-ni

入れないでください。」

irenai-de-kudasai

insert.not.POL

(7b) *Watch your fingers.*

≡ 1.3. Examples of Mistranslations

1.3.3. Mistranslations based on Difference in Relevance (continued)

(8a)

「電車は 事故防止のため 急停車することが

Densha-wa jikoboshi-notame Kyuuteishasurukoto-ga

Train-TOP accident.protect.for sudden.stop-NML-NOM

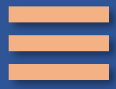
ありますので ご注意ください」

arimasunode Go-chui-kudasai

occur because HON.beware.POL

(8b)

Caution, train may stop suddenly in case of emergency.



1.4. Requirements for a more Objective language comparison

- **Independence**

No influence of one of the languages to the other

- **Naturalness**

The expression is natural in the language concerned

- **Correspondence**

Correspondence exists and is used in the corresponding situations

- **Equivalence**

Functional and semantic information is equivalent



2. Use of functionally equivalent sign expressions

The above four requirements are fulfilled by functionally equivalent signs



Sign expressions displayed near elevator doors

German: (9) *Aufzug im Brandfall nicht benutzen*
lift in fire.case not use-INF

Japanese: (10) *kasai/jishin ji no hinan-niwa erebeeta-o*
fire/quake case of evacuation for elevator OBJ
tsukawanai-de kudasai
use not please

→ Preferred phrases in different languages and cultures
(information presentation methods)



2.1. Framework for Comparison

When comparing sign expressions:

Classifying expressions in terms of function, meaning and form

1) Functionally equivalent expressions

- a) Functionally, semantically and formally equivalent
- b) Functionally and semantically equivalent
- c) Only functionally equivalent

2) Expressions that are not functionally equivalent

- a) In corresponding situations but not functionally equivalent
- b) No corresponding expression in the corresponding scene

≡ 2.1.1. Functionally equivalent expressions

1-a) Functional and semantic (and formal) equivalents

「立入禁止」 - “Zutritt verboten”

tachiiri kinshi

to.step

prohibit-PP

entrance forbidden

(cf. “Keep out”)

1-b) Functionally and semantically equivalent

「飲めません」 - “Kein Trinkwasser”

nomemasen

no

drink.water

drink-POL-not

(cf. “No drinking water”)

1-c) Functionally equivalent

「手荷物受取所」 - “Gepäckausgabe”

tenimotsu uketorisho

baggage.out.give-NMLZ

baggage receive place

(cf. “Baggage claim”)



2.1.2. Expressions that are not functionally equivalent

2-a) Expressions with a different function

in corresponding situations (near escalator)

“onorino sai-wa kiroi waku no naka ni otachi kudasai.

HON-get.on when yellow frame of inside in HON-stand please

tesuri ni otsukamari kudasai”

hand.rail on HON-grasp please

“Benutzung auf eigene Gefahr”

use-NMLZ at own risk

2-b) No corresponding expressions in corresponding situations (no corresponding situations)

“oriru okyakusama ga saki ni narimasu”

get.off HON-passenger-HON SUB first become-POL-

“yubitsume chuui”

finger caught.in caution

“Eingang nur mit gültigem Fahrausweis”

entrance only with valid ticket

“Hunde müssen draußen bleiben”

dogs must outside stay-INF

2.2. To compare semantic information equivalence

2-b) No corresponding expression in the corresponding situation (no corresponding situation) → out of scope

It does not fall into the category of comparing methods of presenting semantic information in that it does not have a corresponding scene in Japan and Germany

However, it is a factor in determining what is communicative and engaging in communication in the society concerned.

(11) 「*oriru okyakusama ga saki ni narimasu*」 (railroad station)

get.off HON-passenger SUB first become-POL

(12) 「*doa kaiheiji niwa ashi o hasamarenaiyou juubun oki o tsuke kudasai*」 (JR)

door open close when foot OBJ not to get.caught enough HON-caution please

(13) 「*oorino sai waki kara kuru kuruma ni gochuui kudasai*」 (bus)

HON-get.off when side from come car to attention please

→ References to 'self-evident things', manifestations of care (protection and care).

(14) “*Einstieg nur mit gültiger Fahrkarte*”
entrance only with valid ticket

(15) “*Rutschgefahr! Begehen auf eigene Gefahr*”
slide.danger walk-NMLZ at own risk

→ Fines, alert to danger to life (self-determination), respect for autonomy

3.1. Perspectives (unity and opposition) (Subjective and objective construal)

(16) 「*tsugi tomarimasu*」
next (we) stop-POL

(18) 「*nomemasen*」
drink .able-POL

「*nomemasu*」
drink-POL

「*hairemasen*」
enter-POL.not

「*toorinuke dekimasen*」
go-through able-POL not

「*zujoo chuui*」
head.above attention

(17) “*Wagen hält*”
vehicle stops

(19) “*Kein Trinkwasser*”
no drink.water

“*Trinkwasser*”
drink.water

“*Kein Eingang*”
no entrance

“*Kein Durchgang*”
no passage

“*Durchgangshöhe beachten*”
passage.height pay.attention-INF

Japanese: subject-object congruence (subjective construal), I-Mode

German: subject-object opposition (objective construal), D-Mode

cf. Ikegami (2000); Nakamura (2004); Nishijima (2013; 2014)

≡ 3.2. Denial or affirmation

- (20) 「*suteppu ni tatanaide kudasai*」 (21) “*Auftritte freihalten*”
step on stand not please entrance free.keep-INF
- (22) 「*deiriguchi nitsuki chuusha kinshi*」 (23) “*Ein- und Ausfahrt freihalten*”
out.in.way regarding parking forbidden in- and out.way free.keep-INF
- 「*jookyaku igai hairemasen*」 “*Zugang nur für Fluggäste*”
passenger except enter-POL not entrance only for flight.guests

Japanese: prefers negative expressions

German: preference for positive expressions



3.3. Subject (agent) and Object

(24) 「*ishitsubutsu kakari*」
lost.item bureau

(26) 「*tenimotsu uketorisho*」
baggage.receive place

「*kaisoo*」
send

「*shushuu jikan*」
collect time

(25) “*Fundbüro*”
found.item.bureau

(27) “*Gepäckausgabe*”
baggage.out.give-NMLZ

“*Außer Betrieb*”
out.of service

“*Leerungszeit*”
empty-NMLZ.time

Japanese: position of the person involved

German: description as object



3.4. Concreteness and explicitness

- (28) 「ashimoto chuui」 - (29) “Vorsicht! Stufe”
foot around caution caution step
- (30) 「rakusetsu chuui」 - (31) “Vorsicht! Dachlawine”
falling snow caution caution roof.snowslide
- 「zujoo chuui」 - “Durchgangshöhe beachten”
head.above caution passage.height pay.attention-INF

Japanese: abstract

German: concrete

3.5. Politeness

(32) 「kikendesunode kono ue ni noboranaide kudasai」

dangerous.be-POL because this top on climb.not please

(33) “Das Gepäckband nicht betreten”

the baggage.belt not step.on-INF

(34) 「berutokonbea no ue ni noboruto abunaiyo」 -

conveyor belt of top on climb when dangerous

Japanese: differentiation between for-general and for-children.

Differences in politeness.

Use of honorific and regular forms. Addition of “please”

German: no distinction between for-general and for-children.

Use of infinitive phrases in which the person does not appear.

cf. (35) “Betreten der Baustelle verboten.

entry of.the building.site prohibit-PP

Eltern haften für ihre Kinder.”

parents be.liable for their children

3.6. Responsibility (controlled / self-responsibility)

(36a) 「*onorino sai wa tesuri ni otsukamari kudasai*」

HON-get.on when handrails OBJ HON-grip please

(36b) 「*kiiroi sen no uchigawa ni otachi kudasai*」

yellow line of inside on HON-stand please

(36c) 「*oriru sai wa oashimoto ni gochuui kudasai*」

get.off when TOP HON-foot.around OBJ HON-caution please

(36d) 「*okosama zureno kata wa okosama no*

Hon-child-HON with people TOP HON-child-HON of

te o totte onori kudasai」

hand OBJ take HON-get.on please

3.6. Responsibility (controlled / self-responsibility)

(37) “*Benutzung auf eigene Gefahr*”
use-NMLZ at own risk

Japan: attention from management (specific instructions, care)

Germany: reminders, not instructions (self-determination)

cf. Nishijima (2021)

4. Concluding Remarks

- This presentation attempts to clarify how the information provided in Japan and Germany differs by comparing linguistic landscapes, i.e., the formulaic sign expressions that are considered to perform basically equivalent functions in corresponding situations in Japan and Germany.
- As results, it was confirmed that in corresponding situations in Japan and Germany, there seems to be a preferred way of presenting semantic information (wording) in each society.
- By taking up signs without a corresponding scene, it was also possible to provide clues for analysing what information is expected to be provided in which situations in each society.

4. Concluding Remarks

- Linguistic landscapes are not restricted to fixed, installed signs and the like found in towns and cities.
- Moving vehicles and moving persons can also display the linguistic equivalents of language landscapes.
- These include stickers on the back of cars, for example, “akachan ga notteimasu” (Baby on board) and tags worn on the chests of supermarket and convenience store staff, for example, “kenshūchū” (in-training). What functions do these have?
- These are currently under study, see for example the following papers for more information:

Nishijima (2022a; 2022b; 2022c)



Thank you for your attention.

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