

Translating English Metaphor to Japanese: An Analysis of the Methods Used in One Text

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1. Introduction

Whilst the central problem of translation is the overall choice of a translation method for a text, the most important particular problem is the translation of metaphor. Newmark (1988: 104)

We know that translation involves far more than the replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages; if something resembling equivalence is to be achieved between a text and its translation, equivalence is usually going to have to be made above word level.

The purpose of this paper is to examine an English text and its Japanese translation, analyzing and discussing the methods the translator used in translating English collocations, fixed expressions, metaphors and idioms to Japanese. Special attention will be paid to metaphor as the selected text and its translation illustrate similarities and differences between English and Japanese metaphorical systems, both literary and conceptual.

The first section of this assignment will concern itself with identifying and detailing the potential problems the various forms of figurative speech present a translator. The next section will detail the strategies available to the translator for dealing with these potential pitfalls. This will be followed by an introduction of the text being analyzed for this paper, followed by the analysis itself. Finally, conclusions will be drawn as to the effectiveness and accuracy of the Japanese translation.

2. Potential Problems in the Translation

2.1 Collocation

Bahns (1993) notes that the term “collocation” is used and understood in many ways. For the purposes of this assignment, it shall simply be considered as the tendency for words to co-occur in a given language. A further distinction, as made by Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986), will be between grammatical collocations and lexical collocations. While lexical collocations are made up of a combination of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs (for example, *a close friend* or *news travels quickly*), grammatical collocations usually consist of

a noun, verb or adjective along with a preposition, infinitive or clause (for example, *account for* or *by accident*) (Bahns: 1993).

Baker (1992) lists five collocation related problems in translation:

- 1) *The engrossing effect of source text patterning*: A translator may at times become so engrossed in the source text, they may carry over collocations to the target language that appear marked.
- 2) *Misinterpreting the meaning of a source-language collocation*: Interference from the translator's native tongue can sometimes cause a translator to mistranslate what appears to be a familiar collocation.
- 3) *The tension between accuracy and naturalness*: A translator must often make a choice between what is typical and what is accurate.
- 4) *Culture-specific collocations*: Like culture-specific words, collocations in the source language may be unknown to a target language reader, and may express ideas previously unexpressed in the target language.
- 5) *Marked collocation in the source text*: Unusual combinations of words are sometimes used in order to create new images. Ideally, the translation of a marked collocation will be similarly marked in the target language.

2.2 Metaphor

Metaphor does not seem to be easily defined, as categories of figurative speech often have blurred edges. *Metonymy*, *simile*, *personification* and *synecdoche* are often contrasted with metaphor, but perhaps fall within the parameters of what constitutes metaphor as they are in possession of a *topic* (a thing being described), a *vehicle* (an expression used to communicate the metaphor), and *grounds* (similarities between the topic and vehicle).

For the purposes of this assignment, Lakoff and Johnson's assertion "*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*" (1980: 5) will be considered a working definition of the term *metaphor*. This definition could be seen to not only encompass the aforementioned subgroups of figurative speech, but also include what Lakoff and Johnson term literary (or linguistic) metaphors and conceptual metaphors. As in Lakoff and Johnson's work, conceptual metaphors are represented throughout this assignment in block capital letters. Thus, ARGUMENT IS WAR is the conceptual metaphor that influences literary metaphors such as "He attacked every weak point in my argument".

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor is not just a matter of language, but is an integral part of the human conceptual system. People do not only speak in metaphors, they live by them. The case is made that a language or culture's conceptual metaphors are behind the literary metaphors pervasive in language such as "I planted the seeds of doubt in their mind" and "She nipped it in the bud". This view is supported when considering the conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE PLANTS. Similar examples can demonstrate how TIME

IS MONEY (it can be expended, bought or wasted), RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS (they have foundations and cornerstones), and LIFE IS A JOURNEY (with a destination, crossroads, etc.).

Lakoff and Johnson go on to suggest that cultures that have different conceptual systems in place will produce different literary metaphors. Hiraga (1991) and Deignan, Gabryś and Solska (1997) go further in citing four possible combinations when comparing two cultures' metaphors. The two cultures can have:

- 1) similar concepts, portrayed by similar expressions
- 2) similar concepts, portrayed by different expressions
- 3) similar expressions which convey different metaphorical concepts
- 4) different metaphorical concepts *and* different expressions

2.3 Idioms

Idioms differ from metaphors in that they are usually found to have a conventional meaning that cannot be predicted from the meaning of the individual words they contain. When we say someone has “a chip on his/her shoulder”, native English speakers immediately realize we are speaking of that person's attitude.

Another feature of idioms is that they normally allow no variation of form. With the exception of stylistic reasons, writers cannot change the order of words in an idiom, delete a word from it, add a word to it, replace a word in it with another, or change its grammatical structure (Baker: 1992).

Irujo (1986) notes that idioms and metaphors are sometimes difficult to differentiate as many idioms are dead or frozen metaphors that have acquired their own conventional meanings over time.

Baker (1992) compiles the following difficulties involved in translating idioms. Where appropriate, I have provided examples between this assignment's source language (SL) (English) and target language (TL) (Japanese):

- 1) An idiom may have no equivalent in the target language.
- 2) An idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different. In English, to *pull one's leg* means to play a joke on someone, usually by making them believe something that is not true; when translated directly into Japanese *ashi wo hipparu*, it means to prevent another person from achieving a goal (similar to the English *drag someone down*).
- 3) An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time, and if the TL idiom does not correspond to the SL idiom in both form and meaning, this play on the idiom may not be successfully reproduced in the target text.

- 4) The very customs of idiom usage and the context within which they appear may differ from the SL and the TL.

2.4 Fixed Expressions

Baker (1992) likens fixed expressions to idioms in that they allow little or no variation in form. She notes however, that fixed expressions retain fairly transparent meanings. Even so, like the other lexical items being analyzed in this assignment, a fixed expression must be taken as one lexical unit to establish meaning.

3. Available Strategies of Translation

3.1 Collocation

Bassnett contends that rather than always aiming for accuracy of meaning, translators may have to “discard the basic linguistic elements of the SL text so as to achieve [the] goal of ‘expressive identity’ between the SL and TL texts” (1980: 32). While Bassnett was writing specifically about idiom and metaphor, this could be said of collocation as well, especially when the cultural settings of the source language and target language are significantly different (Baker, 1992).

Baker adds “the use of established patterns of collocation...helps to distinguish between a smooth translation, one that reads like an original, and a clumsy translation which sounds ‘foreign’” (1992: 57).

As a final note on the translation of collocation, Baker suggests that in order to ensure the use of appropriate collocation in the target language, it is advised that translators occasionally detach themselves from the source text from time to time in order to inadvertently avoid carrying over collocational patterns from the source language to the target language.

3.2 Metaphors

Newmark (1988) distinguishes six types of metaphor and offers strategies for translating each:

Dead metaphors are ones in which the metaphor has become so conventionalized, it is not normally recognized as a metaphor at all. An example would be *to grasp an idea*. Newmark maintains that dead metaphors are not difficult to translate, but notes that they are often resistant to literal translation.

Cliché metaphors are ones that have become commonplace in the language and are often used emotively, such as the term *golden years*. In the translation of such metaphors, Newmark believes that using a cultural equivalent in the target language is more effective than a functional equivalent.

Stock metaphors (also referred to as *standard metaphors*) are established metaphors in a

language that have not yet been deadened by overuse. They are seen as an efficient way to describe a physical or mental situation both referentially and pragmatically (as in *frozen stiff with fear*). Newmark points out that such metaphors can sometimes pose difficulties in translation as their apparent equivalents can be affected by time, social classes and age groups.

Adapted metaphors, as the name suggests, are stock metaphors that have been personalized in some way. Newmark believes that such metaphors should, where possible, be translated by an equivalent adapted metaphor in the target language.

Recent metaphors are metaphorical neologisms that have spread rapidly through the source language. These metaphors would seem to account for much of the slang coined by young people in both English and Japanese. Newmark states that this kind of metaphor needs to be treated as other neologisms during translation, with particular attention paid to the exportability of the referent and the level of language of the metaphor.

Original metaphors can be seen to be a reflection of a writer's personality and views, and a source of enrichment to the language. Newmark writes that such metaphors are open to a variety of translation methods, depending on whether the translator wants to emphasize the sense or image of the source text.

3.3 Idioms and Fixed Expressions

Both Baker (1992) and Toury (1995) cite the following strategies for the translation of idioms and fixed expressions:

- 1) Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

While the use of an idiom with virtually the same meaning and form might seem ideal, Baker reminds us that questions of style, register and rhetorical effect sometimes make such translation inappropriate.

- 2) Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

In cases in which an idiom with similar form cannot be found, often another idiomatic expression with a similar meaning can be substituted. Again, substituting an idiom in the source language for one in the target language is not always the best option. Translators must fight "the strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor language, however inappropriate it may be" (Fernando and Flavell, 1981 as cited in Baker 1992: 72).

- 3) Translation by paraphrase

When an idiom in the target language is either non-existent or inappropriate, paraphrasing the source language is the most common strategy employed by translators.

- 4) Translation by omission

If an idiom has no close match in the target language, and its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, it may be omitted altogether. A translator may also wish to omit an

idiom for stylistic reasons.

Baker offers another, less frequently used strategy, a translation by “compensation”, in which metaphoric expressions cannot be translated satisfactorily into the target language, so other metaphoric language is inserted elsewhere in the text to maintain the stylistic features of the source text.

4. The Texts

The text being analyzed for this paper is a 501-word magazine article that consists of a transcribed dialogue between two native English speakers. The speakers are discussing the relationships they have with their Japanese spouses. Both the original English transcript and its Japanese translation appeared in an issue of *English Journal* (Alc Press Inc, 2002), a bilingual magazine published in Japan. The English and Japanese (in its original script) texts are included in this paper as Appendix 1 and 2, respectively.

Back-translation is the process in which a translated or original work is translated as literally as possible back into English. As back-translations can sometimes provide insights into aspects of the structure of a text (Baker, 1992), back-translations of the translated Japanese text have been included by this author. These back-translations appear in parentheses after the romanized Japanese translations.

A noticeable feature of this text is that it is a written transcript of conversation; an exchange that has crossed from the realm of spoken discourse to written text. Elements of the discipline of transcription have undoubtedly influenced the original source text, and it is impossible to know that the English text is an accurate account of the speakers’ conversation. If the translated transcript is to be a faithful written record of the original conversation, “every single utterance must be accounted for, no matter how repetitive or apparently meaningless” (Palma, 2004: 1). However, this analysis is concerned with the completed transcript of the conversation, and not the conversation itself; the transcription of an interpretation of the conversation would differ from the translated text being analyzed here.

The text includes the normal turn-taking that one would expect of a transcribed conversation between two people. In the transcript one speaker, Eda has six speaking turns, the transcribed passages representing these turns are referred to in the analysis as segments E1 to E6. The other speaker, Brian, has five turns, which are referred to as segments B1 to B5.

As a final note on the text and its translation, no information is available about the translator. It is not known if the translator was a man or a woman, or if they were translating into or out of their mother tongue.

5. The Analysis

While the Japanese language does not have an explicit plural noun form, for the purposes of back-translation, the English nouns have retained their plurality where contextually appropriate.

Problems in Relationships: Discuss or not?

The title of the text contains the grammatical collocation *in relationships*, a collocation that occurs repeatedly throughout the source text. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) would distinguish this collocation as a container metaphor, in that an intangible thing (such as a relationship) can be seen to have well-defined physical boundaries, which one can be inside or outside of. While this collocation can, and later is, translated almost directly into *renaikankei niokeru* (*in romantic relationships*), the translator has chosen to use the English loanword *patonaa to* (*with partners*) in the title of the target language text. It is unknown why the translator has decided on this particular substitution, but it should be noted that this kind of word borrowing is widespread in the Japanese language, to the point it is considered a problem by some linguistics and translators (Nae, 1999). The loanword *partner* (*patonaa*) in Japanese is associated with the realm of marriage more than business and would not create any confusion for native Japanese readers.

E1 Eda: So, what's the next topic?

B1 Brian: The next topic is problems in relationships - should they be discussed, or not?
I say they should.

The grammatical collocation in the title is repeated in segment B1, but on this occasion the translator has adopted the more direct translation of *renaikankei niokeru* (*in romantic relationships*). Passages E3 and E4 also include the same collocation and have been translated the same way. This would seem a truer translation of the original text than the translation that takes place in the title. The addition of the adjective-noun *renai* (*romantic*) to *kankei* (*relationship*) could be seen as necessary in order to avoid confusion by Japanese readers; *kankei* has a much wider range of everyday use than English's *relationship*.

E2 Eda: Whew! This is a hard one, but I'll say they shouldn't.

Segment E2 sees the use of the metaphorically motivated *hard one* (*problem*). As the meaning of *hard* as *difficult* has become quite conventionalized in English, it is a simple matter for the translator to translate *hard* as *muzukashii* (*difficult*).

B2 Brian: Uh, it's hard for you because it's very simple. If you never discuss a problem, it'll probably never get fixed. In fact, your partner may not even know that there is a

problem if you don't bring it up.

Segment B2 again contains the metaphorized use of *hard*, and is translated using the same language in segment E2, however this time the translator seemed to feel it was necessary to preserve the cohesiveness of the passage by inserting the originally elided noun *giron* (*argument*) in parentheses into the sentence. The use of parentheses is accepted at times in translation, but perhaps seem out of place in the translation of a transcribed dialogue.

The conceptual metaphor PROBLEMS ARE MACHINES is realized in segment B2 through the slightly unlikely collocation of *problem* and *get fixed*. Cohesion does exist between *problem* and *get fixed* in the text, and a native reader of English should not have any difficulty deciphering the relationship between the two words, but *solve* collocates much more commonly with *problem*. This utterance might not be seen as a marked collocation because the collocation was probably unintentional and only involves a slight extension of *problem*'s normal collocation range. The utterance does however illustrate a difference between spoken and written discourse. The speaker, involved in a debate and presumably speaking hastily, uttered a collocation that he would have unlikely used if given the time to write his argument in a thought-out, linear fashion. The conceptual metaphor PROBLEMS ARE MACHINES is a shared one in English and Japanese, but the translator has chosen to replace *get fixed* with the conjugated form of *kaiketsu sareru* (*be solved*) over a direct translation *naoseru* (*be fixed*). The translator appears to have chosen a common collocation that sounds more natural in the target language, but in doing so seems to have fallen into the accuracy/naturalness trap described by Baker (1992). The result is that a certain feeling of hastiness on the part of the speaker fails to carry over into the translated text.

In English, people can bring up or raise problems, suggesting the conceptual metaphor PROBLEMS ARE CHILDREN. The phrasal verb *bring up* translates quite easily to *mochi dasu*, which literally means *take out* but correlates with *mondai* (*problem*) to mean *bring up a problem*.

E3 Eda: Wait a minute. Before we start on this, I think we have to define what we're talking about. I mean, naturally, this depends on what kind of problems you have. Perspective is the most important thing in a relationship. We have to be careful to differentiate between the small problems and the major ones.

Segment E3 includes the English fixed expression *wait a minute*. It has been translated to the Japanese fixed expression *chotto matte* (*wait a little*). Both the casualness and the sense of urgency of the original text are preserved.

B3 Brian: Well, okay, of course. You don't want to go harping on every niggles. You have to choose your battles and you have to recognize what's worth discussing and what isn't.

Just as PROBLEMS ARE CHILDREN, the case could be made for the conceptual metaphor PROBLEMS ARE PEOPLE in English, as problems can be recognized, addressed and dealt with. In segment B3's *recognize what's worth discussing*, the verb *recognize*, which has no equivalent polysemy in Japanese, has been rendered as *kashikoku ninshiki suru (wisely realize)*. It is unknown why the translator decided on the addition of an adverb to the clause.

The colorful, if rather obscure, expression *harp on every niggles* has been replaced by *chisana ketten wo ich-ichi kudo-kudo iu (pick at small faults one by one)*. The intransitive verb *harp*, a hyponym of *talk*, is substituted with *kudo-kudo iu*, a Japanese idiomatic expression closely meaning to *pick at*. *Niggles* has been replaced with *chisana ketten (small fault)*.

Also in segment B3, the oft-cited English conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is introduced to the text. The militaristic metaphor *choose your battles* has been translated into *arasoigoto wo yoriwakete (divide your fights)*. The conceptual metaphor of ARGUMENT IS A PHYSICAL CONFLICT remains intact, but the translation loses the war reference, and perhaps some of the intensity of the original text.

E4 Eda: Yeah. If we fuss and fight about little things, the relationship becomes way too controlled. Okay, for example, maybe I don't like the way my husband brushes his teeth. I think I should force myself not to care, because it isn't important. If I pester him to change, I become, at best, a nag, and at worst, a control freak. No relationship can survive that.

The perception of argument as a physical conflict is again present in segment E4. The alliteration *fuss and fight* has been modified slightly to the conjugated *butsukusa itte arasotteitara (grunt and fight)*. As verbs, *grunt* suggests a guttural sound that could be viewed as a bit harsher than *fuss*. The Japanese text may be evoking a more severe sentiment in order to compensate for the lack of a militaristic metaphor in the previous segment.

The English conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE PATIENTS is again realized in segment E4, with the phrase *no relationship can survive that*, which the translator replaces with *donna kankei datte kowareteshimau (any relationship, even, will be completely broken)*. With this, the Japanese conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE MACHINES is introduced to the text.

In English, *brush* collocates with *teeth*. Segments E4 and B4 both contain the expression *brushes his teeth*. In Japanese *ha (teeth)* collocates better with *migaku (to polish)*, and in both instances the translator has simply translated the verb *brush* into *migaku*.

In segment B4 the dead metaphor *good point* has been reduced to sense with *ii shiteki (good indication)*. The lexical collocation *make an issue* has been rendered to *mondai ni suru (do a problem)*, and the fixed expression *for the sake of argument* has been replaced with *koko de wa giron no tame ni (for the argument here)*.

B4 Brian: Okay. Good point. I would not recommend making an issue out of the way somebody brushes their teeth, unless they're using their toothbrush to clean their shoes before they brush their teeth every day. That would bother me, I think. But, for the sake of argument, let's just say that you simply don't like the way he brushes his teeth. Now, the rule in the relationship is to be honest if something bugs you, then if he thinks you're being too petty and being a nag, he can just say so, and maybe he's right. And it would be good to give you the opportunity to think about it and maybe recognize it and maybe change it.

The rule in the relationship is translated as *renaikankei no ruru* (*the romantic relationship's rule*). As earlier in the text, relationship has been rendered as *romantic relationship* in the translation in order to preserve cohesion for Japanese readers. The use of *ruru* (*rule*) is another example of an English loanword being used when a Japanese word, *kisoku*, was available. Also in B4, the metaphorical use of the word *bug* as a verb has been translated as a conjugated form of *ki ni naru*, a Japanese idiom meaning *to be bothered*.

The metaphorically motivated lexical collocation of *give an opportunity* has been replaced with *chansu wo ataeru* (*give a chance*). Although *opportunity* could have been translated directly to *kikai*, the translator has once again opted to use an English loanword *chansu* (*chance*), perhaps as this particular loanword is now commonly used in Japanese spoken discourse.

E5 Eda: You know, this is particularly interesting for us, because we're both married to Japanese people, and Japanese people tend to discuss and argue less than Americans do. I think there's a lot of value in that non-verbal communication I've learned since living here.

The fact that an intangible entity such as communication can have a monetary "value" is the result of a metaphor present in both English and Japanese conceptual systems. Segment E5 sees the translation of *value* to *kachi* (*value*), a Baker type 1 strategy.

B5 Brian: Oh, yes. The non-verbal communication. If looks could kill. Silence too. I don't know. Sometimes there's more criticism in silence than a whole tirade. But you know, I think you're right. Japanese couples tend to let a lot more things slide. But is that really healthy for the relationship? Sometimes you have to wonder if that just means it's going to be a slow death.

Segment B5 is a highly metaphorical passage. The idiom *if looks could kill* has been translated to *shisen de hito wo itametsukeru koto ga dekirunara ne* (*If an eye could hurt a person, eh*). A Baker type 1 strategy has again been employed here, with a target language idiom of similar meaning and form replacing the source language idiom. However, with the

substitution of the word *hurt* for *kill*, it seems likely that some of the severity of the source text's message is lost. The exclamation *ne (eh)* has been added perhaps to compensate for the exclamation *oh* present at the beginning of segment B5.

The conceptual metaphor of SILENCE IS A CONTAINER is realized in the grammatical collocation *in silence*. The grammatical collocation has been translated as a lexical collocation, *silence has*. The stock metaphor *slide* conjures images of smooth, unobtrusive movement. It has been flattened to *makaseru (leave)* in the Japanese translation.

The question *But is that really healthy for a relationship?*, reintroducing the relationship as patient metaphor, has been paraphrased as *demo, sore wa hontouni (futari no) kankei ni totte kenzen na koto darouka (But, is that really sound for (two people's) relationship?)*. The translation fails to either carry over the SL metaphor or to reuse the RELATIONSHIPS ARE MACHINES metaphor employed in an earlier translation of the original English conceptual metaphor. Furthermore, the question *Is that really healthy for the relationship?* offers an example of metonymy, in which an institution (the relationship) takes the place of individuals (the people in the relationship). The translator perhaps felt that this metonymy could not be successfully translated into the target text and has added *futari no (two people's)* in parentheses to preserve cohesiveness.

A slow death has been translated as a conjugated form of *jyojyo ni kankei ga kowareteiku (gradually the relationship breaks)*. The third and final example of the English RELATIONSHIPS ARE PATIENTS metaphor is once again translated with a Japanese RELATIONSHIPS ARE MACHINES metaphor.

E6 Eda: I think really, what it comes down to is, we have to respect each other's individuality. We're all different, and especially in this kind of situation, we can appreciate that it's the differences that make a relationship interesting.

Finally, E6, the last segment of the text, includes the phrasal verb *come down to*. It has been demetaphorized to *hontouni kekkyoku (really eventually)*.

6. Conclusion

It is, perhaps, appropriate to end by saying that the selection of a translation is not just lexical or semantic, but evaluative and ideological too: switching one metaphor for another may change the reading of the original in significant ways. This means that translators need to be aware of the discourse function of the original metaphor – how it evaluates, and whether it is being used to explain something more clearly, or perhaps to conceal or ‘code’ the real meaning.

Knowles and Moon (2006: 94)

An analysis of this particular English text and its Japanese translation suggests that the meaning of the original was largely transferred intact to the source text. Collocations, idioms and fixed expressions were mostly translated appropriately using a variety of methods. The most interesting aspect of the translation for this author however, was the transfer of metaphors, both literary and conceptual.

The original English text has two conceptual metaphors running throughout it; RELATIONSHIPS ARE PATIENTS and ARGUMENT IS WAR/PHYSICAL CONFLICT. These conceptual metaphors are realized through six literal metaphors in the text and could be considered cohesive chains which make processing of the text easier for native English readers/speakers. The ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor has not been transferred completely intact into the target language, but the translated text does maintain that ARGUMENT IS PHYSICAL CONFLICT, using equivalents of the words *fight* and *hurt*. The RELATIONSHIPS ARE PATIENTS metaphor has been replaced with the common Japanese conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE MACHINES, though this metaphor is realized through only two lexical metaphors.

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Appendix 1

Problems in Relationships: Discuss or not?

Eda: So, what's the next topic?

Brian: The next topic is problems in relationships - should they be discussed, or not? I say they should.

Eda: Whew! This is a hard one, but I'll say they shouldn't.

Brian: Uh, it's hard for you because it's very simple. If you never discuss a problem, it'll probably never get fixed. In fact, your partner may not even know that there is a problem if you don't bring it up.

Eda: Wait a minute. Before we start on this, I think we have to define what we're talking about. I mean, naturally, this depends on what kind of problems you have. Perspective is the most important thing in a relationship. We have to be careful to differentiate between the small problems and the major ones.

Brian: Well, okay, of course. You don't want to go harping on every niggles. You have to choose your battles and you have to recognize what's worth discussing and what isn't.

Eda: Yeah. If we fuss and fight about little things, the relationship becomes way too controlled. Okay, for example, maybe I don't like the way my husband brushes his teeth. I think I should force myself not to care, because it isn't important. If I pester him to change, I become, at best, a nag, and at worst, a control freak. No relationship can survive that.

Brian: Okay. Good point. I would not recommend making an issue out of the way somebody brushes their teeth, unless they're using their toothbrush to clean their shoes before they brush their teeth every day. That would bother me, I think. But, for the sake of argument, let's just say that you simply don't like the way he brushes his teeth. Now, the rule in the relationship is to be honest if something bugs you, then if he thinks you're being too petty and being a nag, he can just say so, and maybe he's right. And it would be good to give you the opportunity to think about it and maybe recognize it and maybe change it.

Eda: You know, this is particularly interesting for us, because we're both married to Japanese people, and Japanese people tend to discuss and argue less than Americans do. I think there's a lot of value in that non-verbal communication I've learned since living here.

Brian: Oh, yes. The non-verbal communication. If looks could kill. Silence too. I don't know. Sometimes there's more criticism in silence than a whole tirade. But you know, I think you're right. Japanese couples tend to let a lot more things slide. But is that really healthy for the relationship? Sometimes you have to wonder if that just means it's going to be a slow death.

Eda: I think really, what it comes down to is, we have to respect each other's individuality. We're all different, and especially in this kind of situation, we can appreciate that it's the differences that make a relationship interesting.

パートナーとの問題は話し合う？ 放っておく？

イーダ: さて、次の問題は？

ブライアン: 次の話題は恋愛関係における問題だ——（問題について）話し合うべきか否か？ 僕は話し合うべきだと思うね。

イーダ: まあ！ これは難しいわね。でも、私は話し合うべきではないことにするわ。

ブライアン: これは君には厳しい（議論）だよ。だって、この問題はとても単純だからね。もし、問題をまったく議論しなければ、おそらく全然解決されないだろう。実際、もしそれを持ち出さなければ、問題があることをパートナーは知りもしないかもしれない。

イーダ: ちょっと待って。この討論を始める前に、何について話しているのか定義しなければいけないと思うの。つまり、当然、どんな問題があるのかによって違ってくるわ。恋愛関係にはバランスのとれた見方が最も重要よ。小さな問題と重大な問題を慎重に区別しなくてはならないわ。

ブライアン: そうだね。もちろんいいよ。小さな欠点をいちいちくどくどいうのは嫌だよ。争い事をより分けて、何が議論する価値があって何がそうでないかを賢く認識しなくてはいいよ。

イーダ: そうね。細かいことでぶつくさいって争っていたら、恋愛関係はきゅうくつになりすぎてしまうわ。わかった。たとえば、私は夫の歯の磨き方が気に入らないかもしれない。（でも）私は気にしないように自分にいい聞かせるべきだと思うわ。それは重要なことではないから。もし夫に（歯の磨き方）を変えるよううるさくいったら、私は、よくて小言屋、悪くすれば支配魔になってしまう。そんなことをしたら、どんな関係だって壊れてしまうわ。

ブライアン: いい指摘だ。歯の磨き方を問題にするのはお勧めしないね。毎日歯を磨く前に自分の歯ブラシを使って靴を磨いているんじゃない限りはね。それは僕だって嫌だと思うよ。でも、ここでは議論のために、単に彼の歯の磨き方が気に入らないとしよう。さて、もし何か気がなったときに、正直に伝えることが恋愛関係のルールなら、もし君が狭量すぎて小言屋だと彼が思ったときに、彼はただそういえばいいんだし、彼のほうが正しいかもしれない。そして君に、考え、もしかしたらそれを認めて、ことによるとそれ（いままでの考え方）を変えるチャンスを与えてくれるというのはいいことだよ。

イーダ: ねえ、この話題は私たちにとって特に興味深いわね。なぜかって、私たちはふたりとも日本人と結婚していて、日本人はアメリカ人と比べて議論や論争をしない傾向があるから。ここに住んで以来学んだ非言語的コミュニケーションには大きな価値があると思うわ。

ブライアン: そう、非言語コミュニケーションだね。視線で人を痛めつけることができるならね。沈黙もそう。わからないけど、長広舌より沈黙のほうがより多くの非難を含んでいることがある。でも、君は正しいと思うよ。日本人カップルは、より多くのものを成り行きに任せる傾向がある。でも、それは本当に（ふたりの）関係にとって健全なことだろうか。時にはそれがただ、徐々に関係が壊れていくことを意味しているのではないかと疑問に思わなくてはならないよ。

イーダ: 本当に結局はお互いの個性を尊重しなくてはいけないということだと思うわ。私たちはみんな違うし、そして特にこういう状況では、恋愛関係がおもしろいのは違いがあるからだということを理解することができるのよ。