Found in Translation:
International Residents' Use of Setagaya Ward's Online Multilingual Information

Gregory L. Friedman

ABSTRACT

The importance of e-governance in Japan has grown parallel with the need for municipalities to provide multilingual services and translation for newcomer immigrants. Few studies have examined the content of official translated online materials in the context of immigrants' actual experiences using such materials. The present study seeks to discover how international residents of Setagaya Ward in Tokyo access and navigate the foreign language information on the ward's official website, in particular looking at issues of comprehension of both human and machine-translated content. Results of a survey of self-selected respondents (n＝52) indicate that such content is viewed as important and useful by international residents, though difficulties in locating and comprehending needed information were common. Implications of these results for official translation policy are considered in the context of notions of domestic internationalization and multicultural coexistence.

INTRODUCTION

From outward-looking notions of *sotonaru kokusaika* (outward internationalization) to a more pragmatic focus on *uchinaru kokusaika* (domestic internationalization) and acceptance of *tabunka kyosei* (multicultural coexistence), Japan has begun to acknowledge the diversity that exists within its borders, and to take measures to assist in the integration of various ethnic and language groups into its society. One of the ways such integration has been facilitated is through the publication by government agencies of informational material in the languages of certain immigrant communities (Carroll, 2010; Nagy, 2009). As Gottlieb (2018) notes, public foreign language initiatives in Japan have been spurred by the wave of newcomer immigrants that began in the 1990s, rather than by the established communities of pre- and postwar immigrants who possess Japanese language skills. Though print materials still play an important role in such initiatives, the ever-increasing public reliance on web-based information means that governments must include foreign language provision within their e-government portals, as well.

The use of e-government has grown in importance since the late 1990s in Japan (Carroll, 2010; Koga, 2003; Jain, 2002), and citizens may make use of local governmental web resources at a higher rate than they do national level resources. Carroll refers to data from a 2001 NTT study which found that, "in the Tokyo region, 23 percent of respondents had accessed their municipal government home pages, while only 10 percent had visited the home pages of ministries" (373). While, as Carroll points out, it is possible that this ratio has changed since

that time, the statistic perhaps indicates the centrality of local government in the daily lives of citizens. This key role that towns and cities play in providing basic services to their inhabitants has naturally led to an equally important role for language as a medium for delivery and explanation of these services. As Carroll notes,

> [I]t has been local authorities, rather than central government, that have taken the lead in focusing on the language that they use in written and spoken communications with the public, striving to make it more user-friendly. Local administrations are better placed, and more likely to be motivated, to examine and improve their language. Their employees are more closely and directly involved with the general public, and are themselves part of the local communities they serve. They are more likely to be aware of problems and to place importance on building good relations with the local community. (374)

Moreover, it is local governments that need to consider and address the concrete needs of foreigners residing there, since they are "primarily responsible for providing social services and administering those policies that have a direct bearing on the lives" of such residents (Kashiwazaki, 2003: 2). It is not surprising, therefore, that it is at the local level that the most active development of multilingual web resources has taken place, where, as Gottlieb (2009) notes, "there are instrumental benefits to facilitating integration of non-Japanese residents into the community" (70). By informing such residents of their "rights and responsibilities", they will be less likely to "cause intercultural friction or be a burden on the…local community" (Nagy, 2009: 170). To these ends, Japan's Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), which has been involved for many years in both *sotonaru* and *uchinaru kokusaika* initiatives, has published several guides for the benefit of municipal governments, including a detailed best-practices guide for multilingual translation (CLAIR, 2004a), as well as an extensive multilingual glossary of topics and terms commonly used in local government information (CLAIR, 2004b). Naturally, such publications presume that translation is carried out by municipal staff, rather than by professional third-party translators.

Translation: Tool or crutch?

Multilingual assistance and translation initiatives, Nagy (2009) states, "liberate foreign residents from linguistic obstacles to realising their limited civic rights and obligations." However, he notes that, "[p]aradoxically, by providing multilingual guides, signage and multilingual advisory services, local governments are removing the need for foreign residents to learn Japanese and thus fully integrate into Japanese society" (182). In other words, initiatives ostensibly aimed at inclusion and empowerment may be empty if they ultimately result in linguistic exclusion and a decreased ability to participate in one's community. Yet Nagy's devil's advocacy (which stands somewhat in contrast to the benefits of translated materials discussed in his article) may not take into account certain realities on the ground for immigrants to Japan. Even while learning Japanese, newcomers still need to understand and access city services and facilities (Kashiwazaki, 2003). Kanji characters may also present an obstacle to people from countries with different writing systems. Perhaps most importantly, official documents and

procedures by nature often contain specialized vocabulary — an issue with which expert translation may be particularly helpful (Taibi and Ozolins, 2016). Finally, as Baba and Fukuda (2009) point out, foreign residents may have need of particular information that may not be originally provided in Japanese, or need to deal with certain procedures that "proceed automatically" for Japanese, but which "foreign residents need to process by themselves", such as enrolling children in elementary schools (Baba, personal communication).

Community translation: Ideals and motives

Translation of official information for international residents belongs to a field that is growing in recognition, that of *community translation* (Gouadec, 2007; Taibi, 2011; Taibi and Ozolins, 2016). This form of translation is distinct from the more prevalent forms of business and literary translation, in that it is aimed not at residents of an L2 country, but rather at residents of the L1 country—in other words at people living and working in the same geographic community as the producers of the original content. Community translation thus seeks to support or empower certain groups within the L1 country who may lack full participation and access to information and services due to language barriers. Taibi and Ozolins (2016) describe this branch of translation as

> characterized, arguably more than any other type of translation, by its social mission. …[I]t bridges the gap between public services and those citizens or residents who do not speak the mainstream language, and thereby improves the relations and cohabitation between different social groups; facilitates information flow between mainstream/established groups and less powerful minority or newcomer members; and provides opportunities for the latter to improve their socioeconomic position and participate more effectively in their (new) community. (11)

Indeed, writing on Shinjuku Ward's efforts at foreign inclusion, Nagy (2009) notes that "Previously, most information on everything from education to vaccinations was only available in Japanese, inadvertently creating an insurmountable hurdle for foreign residents without Japanese language proficiency" (168). Shinjuku's new "information-centred" initiatives

> aim to increase the flow of information, access to that information and increase the independence of minority foreign resident groups living in the Shinjuku in order to maximise the ability of non-Japanese residents to fully realise their rights but also fulfill their obligations as Shinjuku residents. (169)

Taking these laudable aims at face value, it might be expected that Japanese municipal governments would take care to ensure that translation of official information is maximally clear for the target L2 readers. Yet a cursory examination of translated content on governmental websites reveals that this is not the case. The presence of numerous grammar, syntax, and word choice errors indicates that, quite often, translation is carried out either by non-professionals or by software. This may, of course, lead to poor comprehension by the target readers, negating much of the purported benefit of community translation initiatives. It may also lead to a lack of trust in both the accuracy of the information and of the entity producing

the content (Friedman, 2018). This gap between intent and implementation may be explained by the presence of various motives for displaying official content in a foreign language. As has been pointed out by various researchers, such displays may have as much to do with strategic positioning as with pragmatic or altruistic provision of assistance to international residents (Carroll, 2010; Ertl, 2008). As Carroll notes, policies promoting official foreign language content "have both symbolic and practical value in presenting a progressive and outward-looking image of a prefecture or municipality as part of the wider strategies of internationalisation (*kokusaika*) that have been adopted since the early 1980s" (375). Ertl's study examines how a confluence of factors, including economic cooperation with Asian countries and the need to impress foreign dignitaries, led to various initiatives involving the use of English in Ishikawa prefecture.

If it is the case that the use of foreign languages in official displays in Japan is sometimes driven by *kokusaika* image-making rather than by *tabunka kyosei* pragmatism, it may lead to a somewhat cosmetic approach to translation, at odds with stated aims of informing and empowering international residents. This fits with what has been termed the "dilettante" approach to e-governance by Andersen (2004), who admonishes that "dilettantes in the public sector are in need of upgrading, rethinking, and refocusing their use of [information systems]" (viii). If public entities are to improve these systems, then feedback from those who use these services would be a key part of any evaluation of existing offerings. Yet Koga (2003) has noted that "for a long time, the Japanese government rarely provided policy plans with measures for retrospective evaluations, and the policies concerning IT use for ⋯ administrative information provision has been no exception" (60). This view is echoed by Hernon and Cullen (2006), who state that "[t]he development of egovernment in Japan is hampered by the failure to include citizen needs in planning improved access to government information" (18).

STUDY RATIONALE

Very few studies have been carried out that have attempted to empirically examine the informational needs of non-Japanese residents, and whether those needs are met by the materials available to them. Baba (2010) compared ICT usage habits of foreign residents to those of native residents, asking foreign residents how they obtained "local information that [they] need for living," in other words which source they relied on. Her results showed that respondents' friends and, to a lesser extent, standard web search were the most common sources, with very few respondents using the web resources of local governments. Baba and Fukuda (2009) evaluated governmental ICT resources for foreign residents and emphasized their importance in a multicultural society, though it did not include the views of residents themselves on these resources.

This study is an attempt to shed light on how foreign residents of Setagaya Ward in Tokyo may view, literally and figuratively, the foreign language content available on the ward's official website, as well as to gather data on their needs vis-a-vis such content. For this purpose, a survey was designed and distributed to international residents of the ward. The survey included questions on:
- How respondents have previously used the city's website

- The relative ease or difficulty of finding information on the site
- The relative ease or difficulty of comprehending the information
- Types of information currently unavailable that would be desirable

The survey was thus intended to probe gaps between the city's provision of informational materials and the perceptions of the people for whom those materials were created, and by doing so provide feedback for retrospective evaluation of the ward's foreign language e-government policies.

Setagaya Ward

As of June, 2018, the registered foreign population of Setagaya Ward was 20,785, comprising roughly 2% of the total population and thus commensurate with the ratio for the nation as a whole. Table 1 shows the top ten countries of origin for Setagaya Ward, and the change from 2017 to 2018. The preponderance of residents of East Asian background underscores the need for the ward to provide language assistance in Chinese and Korean, in addition to English.

Table 1. **Foreign population of Setagaya Ward (top ten countries of origin)**

Country	Population as of 4/2018	Population as of 4/2017
China	5,420	4,771
Korea	4,296	4,125
United States	1,565	1,480
Taiwan	944	854
Philippines	861	818
U.K.	744	709
Vietnam	704	580
France	547	515
Nepal	475	436
India	467	445

(Source: *Joi 10-kakoku kokuseki betsu gaikoku ninzu - Heisei 30 nen 4 gatsu genzai,* Setagaya Ward Department of International Affairs)

In terms of official policy, the Setagaya Ward Basic Plan includes a stated policy to "promote multiculturalism" within a broader policy of "respect for diversity" (Setagaya City Policy Management Department, 2014). In addition, "information disclosure" is seen as a key component in realizing the ward's goal of promoting "civic participation" by residents. However, the ward does "not have specific policy or statements of multilingual information", according to a representative of the ward's Public Relations department, which is responsible for translation and publication of such information (personal communication).

The Setagaya Ward website

In addition to notices on civic and cultural events, updates regarding city programs, and tips on local attractions, the Setagaya Ward website offers information on a wide range of city services

and programs. In the Life Guide (くらしのガイド) section alone, there are over sixty links to pages covering specific topics under seven categories. Table 2 shows some examples translated by the author. Each of these links takes users to further pages and links. As an example, under the final subcategory of "Online services" under "District information", the user may access over forty different e-applications for a multitude of city services.

Table 2. Examples of information available on Life Guide page (translated from Japanese)

- Living/Procedure
  - Family and resident registration
  - Tax/Insurance/Pension
  - Garbage/Recycling
  - Town development
  - Gender equality

- Housing/Town Development/Traffic
  - City planning
  - Housing・Building・District maintenance
  - Urban design
  - Universal design
  - Bicycle / Motorcycle

- Children/Education
  - Pregnancy / Childbirth
  - Childcare・Child rearing
  - Kindergarten
  - Children / Young people / Youth support
  - Elementary and junior high school

- Emergency/Crime/Disaster
  - Emergency medical institution
  - Crisis management・Crime prevention
  - Disaster prevention

- Welfare/Health
  - Aged / Nursing care
  - Persons with disabilities
  - Community health welfare
  - Dementia support

- Fun/Learning
  - Lifelong learning
  - Library
  - Tokyo 2020 Games in Setagaya
  - Recreation Facilities
  - International exchange

- District information
  - Elections
  - Board of education
  - Contract / Bid information
  - Online services

Foreign language provision

On the homepage of the ward's website (Fig. 1), there is a clickable area (circled by the author) at the top that reads, "Translate to English・中文・한국어". Carroll (2010) has noted that this first step on official homepages indicates much about the way foreign languages are conceptualized in Japan generally and by the authorities responsible for producing official web content. In this case, the three languages are each indicated in their own script, rather than in roman letters (as can occur on some websites), yet English alone is used for "Translate". When clicked, the button directs users to a special foreign language portal page (Fig. 2), with sections for English, Chinese, and Korean, comprising selected information translated by staff of the ward office. (Notably, rather than simply having labels indicating the language, the page displays the phrase "For foreigners" in each language, as shown in Figure 2.) In addition to the selection of pre-translated information, each language section features a button that initiates machine translation of the entire site for that language (Fig. 3). (When clicked, all pages visited subsequently are automatically translated.) Thus, the site offers both human-translated information as well as machine translation.

Figure 1. Homepage of site with link to dedicated foreign language portal[1]

Figure 2. Top of foreign language landing page[2]

Figure 3. English section[3]

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1 Retrieved June 10, 2018, from http://www.city.setagaya.lg.jp/
2 Retrieved June 10, 2018, from http://www.city.setagaya.lg.jp/foreign/1703/d00127673.html
3 Retrieved June 10, 2018, from http://www.city.setagaya.lg.jp/foreign/1703/d00127673.html

At the time of the study, the pre-translated information was quite limited in scope. This included information on counseling services for foreign residents, information on the various departments and district branches of city hall, and directions for reaching city offices. No automated services, such as reservations for oversized refuse collection, were available in any of the three foreign languages. (Since the study was carried out, the Public Relations department of the city office has broadened the range of pre-translated information available on this page. New resources include information on the national government's My Number registration system, an earthquake survival manual (in the form of an 8-page pdf file), and information on Japanese language classes.) It is worth noting that, within the dedicated foreign language section with pre-translated material, there are still parts that appear to have been translated by machine, including some section headings, as well as some of the content itself.

Study design and implementation

The survey used for the present study was divided into three sections. The first section queried respondents on their prior experience in using the ward website. Questions in this section covered the type of information they had sought, whether they were able to find the information, and whether they were able to understand it. The second section directed the survey takers to the ward website through links, in order to evaluate their opinion of the design of the site, the usefulness of the foreign language content, and the comprehensibility of the machine translations. Questions in this section were based on actual search tasks given to the respondents to carry out. The first of these tasks was simply to navigate from the home page of the ward website to the foreign language section. Once on the foreign language landing page, respondents were asked to examine the contents of the dedicated foreign language files available there and to state whether this information appeared useful to them. The second task required survey takers to use the automated machine translation feature of the ward website in order to locate a specific set of information: the documents needed for carrying out an address change procedure at City Hall. Respondents were queried on ease of search and comprehensibility of the list of documents. The final section of the survey solicited respondents' input on the types of information and services they would like to have available on the site in their native language.

Since the ward website's foreign language content was aimed at three different language groups, the survey was translated into Korean and Chinese (simplified) in order to gather opinions from members of all three groups. A member of the Chinese community in Setagaya-ku and a Korean university student carried out these translations, using a Japanese language version of the survey as the source document.

Successful implementation of a community survey naturally depends on effective dissemination of information about it to the target language communities themselves. Since the ward was aware of the survey and its intent, and was essentially supportive of it, assistance from the ward for dissemination had been hoped for. However, the survey was viewed as a private research project, rather than being an official project originating within the ward government. For this reason, staff of the International Affairs section of city hall instead

offered contact information for local Japanese language schools and other local NGOs that have frequent contact with foreign residents. These schools and NGOs were seen as potentially important vectors for dissemination. To this end, flyers in three languages were produced that contained scannable QR codes linked to each language's online survey. Unfortunately, the largest of the language schools, though initially supportive, ultimately declined to distribute information to its students about the survey. The reasons cited for this were that it was not directly related to school business, and that it would confuse or burden their students. One smaller language school agreed to distribute the flyers, and the researcher was able to distribute flyers personally to local foreign residents, as well as through a foreign residents' group on Facebook. Since the researcher's contacts were largely, though not exclusively, English speakers, this inevitably had an impact on the number of Chinese and Korean respondents. As a result, the combined number of respondents in these two languages (n＝9) was not sufficient to be included in any meaningful data analysis. The present study thus makes use of responses from those who took the English language survey only (n＝52).

RESULTS

Over half of respondents had lived in Japan over ten years. However, the data also show that most of them moved to Setagaya Ward after having already spent a number of years in Japan, as over half of respondents have lived in the ward for three years or less.

The section on prior use of the ward website revealed that just under half of respondents had never visited the ward site before, while a little over half had visited it (Table 3). Among those who had used the site, the most commonly cited types of information sought were garbage disposal/recycling (44%) and childcare/schools (30%). (Hereafter, numerical values in the text are rounded.) Other reasons mentioned included resident registration and locations of city offices. Notably, as shown in Table 4, fully one-third of respondents who had sought information on the site were unable to find it. Of those who were able to find the information, the process of finding it was "somewhat easy" for 29%, while 64% felt it was "somewhat difficult" (Table 5). In terms of comprehensibility, 57% of these respondents stated that the information itself was "somewhat easy to understand", with 29% stating that it was "somewhat difficult to understand", and 14% finding it "very difficult to understand" (Table 6).

Table 3
Have you visited the official Setagaya Ward website before?

Never	47.06%
Once	7.84%
A few times	35.29%
Many times	9.80%

Table 4
Did you find what you were looking for?

Yes	66.67%
No	33.33%

Table 5
How easy or difficult was it to find the information?

Very easy to find	0.00%
Somewhat easy to find	28.57%
Somewhat difficult to find	64.29%
Very difficult to find	7.14%

Table 6
How easy or difficult was it to understand the information?

Very easy to understand	0.00%
Somewhat easy to understand	57.14%
Somewhat difficult to understand	28.57%
Very difficult to understand	14.29%

In the main section of the survey, respondents were given specific navigation tasks within the website, then asked to give their impressions regarding content and ease of use. The first of these tasks was simply to navigate from the home page of the ward website to the foreign language section. 48% found this "fairly easy" to do, while 39% found it "a little difficult" and 13% "very difficult" (Table 7). The number experiencing difficulty therefore exceeded the number who had little difficulty. Once on the foreign language landing page, respondents were asked to examine the contents of the dedicated foreign language files available there and to state whether this information appeared useful to them. As mentioned above, these files were fairly limited in scope; nevertheless over 70% of respondents answered that they found the offerings useful (Table 8). However, as will be discussed in the next section comments from respondents regarding the content painted a somewhat different picture.

Table 7
Can you easily navigate to the English language information on the website?

Yes, very easily	0.00%
Yes, fairly easily	47.83%
No, it was a little difficult	39.13%
No, it was very difficult	13.04%

Table 8
How useful to you is the information in these sections?

Very useful	17.39%
Somewhat useful	56.52%
Not very useful	26.09%
Not at all useful	0.00%

The second task required survey takers to use the automated machine translation feature of the ward website and to locate a given item of information: the documents needed for carrying out an address change procedure. One-third of respondents stated that it was "somewhat easy" to find this information, while over fifty percent had at least some level of difficulty, and 14% were unable to find it at all (Table 9). Once they located the information, however, two-thirds of respondents stated that it was "somewhat difficult" to understand the machine translation, as compared to one-third who found it "somewhat easy" (Table 10). Furthermore, 93% of respondents found it necessary to guess the meaning of the translation (Table 11).

Table 9
How easy or difficult was it to find the address change information?

Very easy	0.00%
Somewhat easy	33.33%
Somewhat difficult	42.86%
Very difficult	9.52%
I couldn't find it	14.29%

Table 10
How easy or difficult was it to understand the address change information?

Very easy	0.00%
Somewhat easy	33.33%
Somewhat difficult	66.67%
Very difficult	0.00%

Table 11
Did you find it necessary to guess the meaning of some of the items required
for the address change procedure?
Yes, I had to guess the meaning of some items.   93.33%
No, the translation was clear, so I did not have to guess.   6.67%

    The final part of the survey invited respondents to say what categories of information they desired to have available on the ward site in their native language. Figure 4 presents the categories selected by respondents. Most respondents indicated that they wished to have medical, education, and childcare information available. This included information on prenatal, childbirth and maternity information, and information on Japanese language schools. In terms of automated services, most respondents indicated that they wished to have the ability to make appointments for pickup of oversized refuse (*sodai gomi*), reserving event space, or making reservations for ward-sponsored medical services — all three of which are currently offered only in Japanese. Figure 5 shows the types of automated services respondents wished to have available on the website.
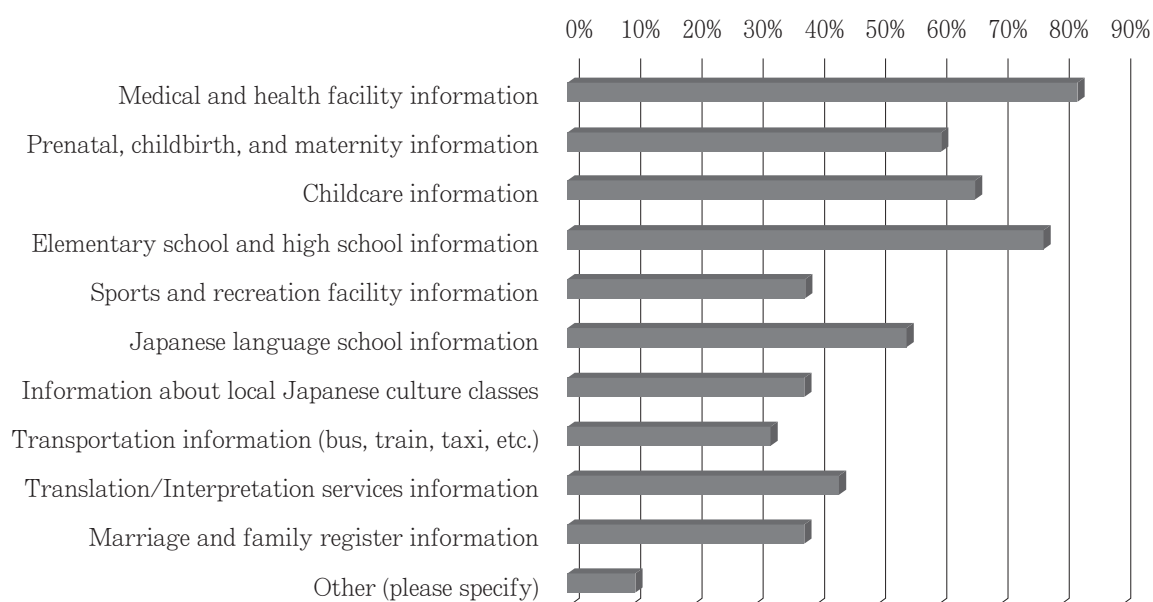
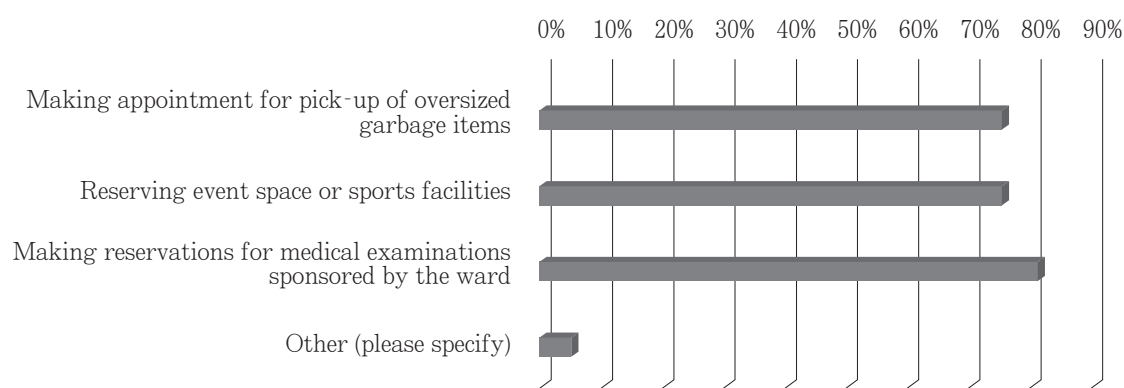**Figure 4. Which of these categories of information would be of interest to you?**

Figure 5. What automated services would you like to have available in English on the site?

DISCUSSION

The survey revealed that foreign residents of the ward do indeed make use of the ward's website, but that they may have trouble finding and understanding the information they need. Data showed that navigation may be a particular trouble for foreign users. Among respondents who had previously sought information, a clear majority (71%) experienced difficulty finding it, though over half (57%) found the information comprehensible.

Navigating to and within the section dedicated for pre-translated material proved challenging for a majority of respondents. Comments (Fig. 6) indicate that improvements to layout and design may be necessary. Several respondents mentioned machine translation as an issue, as well. Respondents evidently believed that at least some of the human-translated material had been translated by machine. Use of non-professional translation on webpages may cause difficulty even if the files available there contain well-translated material, if users find trouble locating what they seek.

- *The translations are awkward on account of their having been generated by automated software.*
- *It seemed to take a few different links to get the actual info I was looking for.*
- *Link hard to find, words cut in the middle, lots of other languages on the page.*
- *Visually, it is too overwhelming and outdated. Links should open in new windows.*
- *When navigating to English, could not find the same information as was on the Japanese pages.*
- *Machine translation.*
- *The machine translation doesn't make sense a lot of the time.*
- *Can't see any English language links other than the automatic translation button.*

Figure 6. If the navigation was difficult, can you briefly explain the difficulty?

As mentioned earlier most respondents found the limited offerings of pre-translated material to be at least somewhat helpful; yet comments by respondents here (Fig. 7) indicate that a broader range of offerings would serve the foreign community well. (Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the ward has expanded this section.)

- *The English in this section is more natural and feels like it's been translated (or at least corrected) by a human. Unfortunately, the information itself is quite brief. Fine and clear English. It just lacks detail.*
- *Some of that I already know (how to get there, and the advisory desk), and most of the rest does not seem very useful.*
- *A site like this would have been very useful to me in my early years in Japan, but it's less necessary now that I'm settled here.*
- *I mean, there's nothing there that I don't know already...*
- *Already knew all of the above.*
- *This is very basic info, for people who want more than this it's lacking.*
- *The Information there is limited.*

Figure 7. Comments on dedicated English language content

The address change procedure task proved the most challenging for respondents, both in terms of locating and understanding the information. As this task required the use of the machine translation function of the site, both for navigation and for comprehension, the results point strongly to inherent problems in using this function for important materials related to official procedures. This is shown perhaps most strongly by the fact that over 90% of respondents needed to guess the meaning of the items needed for the address-change procedure. Such results raise the question of whether machine translation should be relied upon for e-government provision of information. Comments by respondents in the previous section regarding confusion caused by machine translation indicate that this can be a significant issue even when some of the text is human-translated. If users must depend on machine translation for all functions, the difficulty will necessarily be much greater.

Reactions of ward staff

The author presented the study's data and conclusions to representatives of the Public Relations office in June of 2018. The staff expressed interest in many of the findings, in particular data relating to prior use of the site, difficulties in finding information, and categories of desired information. They also noted the data showing most respondents needed to guess the meaning of machine translated items. The staff understood that machine translation may cause comprehension difficulties, yet appeared perhaps not to grasp quite how opaque the output can be. Staff showed the author a new mobile application being used by the city to automatically translate its monthly print newsletter. The application displays a scalable image of the newsletter that, when touched in a given area, is overlaid with a machine translation of the article in that section. One representative sampling in English:

> Everyone's activity which raises "charm in the town" is supported. Kitazawa PR strategy council. It's the place where utilization in ward facilities by everyone in an area and the activity that the upper part use facilities and its circumference raise "charm in the town" are being considered and it's being practiced with a change in the town by maintenance where it's for Odakyu Line upper part use facilities. I'll interchange through activity with various groups in an area and link feelings in an area.[4]

The staff's evident enthusiasm for this new offering reflects pride in having provided further material to Setagaya's foreign community. In this way, an image of internationalization is enhanced through an act that is symbolically meaningful to authorities yet which may provide very little in terms of value to the people at whom the act is ostensibly aimed. Tellingly, staff informed the author that they had never seen machine translation from the other side—in other words, machine translation into Japanese. Without this experience, it is perhaps understandable that they would place faith in automated translation without verifying its effectiveness with the target audience.

4　Machine-translated content by Catalog Pocket (Morisawa, 2018) from the June 25, 2018 issue of "Setagaya"

Obstacles and change

Taibi and Ozolins (2016) quote Lesch's (1999) description of community translation as

> an attempt to balance the power relationship between the sender and the receiver by prioritizing the needs of the community. Effective, empowering communication between the author and reader via the translated text implies that the translator needs to be on the side of⋯the reader. (93)

If the governmental entity itself is the translator, it may be difficult for them to be on the side of the reader, as they may lack either sufficient contact with the target community or a sufficient understanding of its needs to be a linguistic ally. This implies a need for outside third parties to carry out the translation, whether members of the target L2 community or professional translators versed in its language and culture. Yet bureaucrats in Japan may be chary of working with third parties, due to the need to utilize in-house staff. Notwithstanding their oft-stated desire to communicate with minority communities, government entities rarely step out of their own bubbles to work directly with people in those communities.

Given the sheer volume of material produced by governmental entities, as well as the frequency of additions and updates to this material, it would be unrealistic to expect authorities to provide professional, human translation of an entire website (Carroll, 2010), or a monthly newsletter, for that matter. This is due just as much to cost as to the time-consuming nature of translation and editing. If one accepts that community translation is a worthy and beneficial endeavor, then one is perforce stuck between the rock of machine translation and the hard place of providing decent human translation. New approaches need to be sought in which parties from both sides of the equation—content producers as well as content consumers—participate and collaborate. One such approach may lie in the use of international college students as unpaid interns who could assist with primary translation and/or checking. Interns would gain a valuable addition to their resumes, while the city and community would benefit from higher-quality materials. Key to the success of such an initiative would be acceptance by civil authorities of non-Japanese collaborators, as well as an understanding of its value.

Directions for further research

The present study undertook to examine a crosscultural locus wherein content creators and content consumers are engaged in a relatively unexamined relationship. Through an analysis of respondent data, it was hoped that gaps between the creators' intentions and consumers' perceptions might be revealed. Though the study yielded some insights, weaknesses in the data collection process compromised its validity. This is due not merely to the relatively low number of respondents, but to the monolingual respondent base. In order to improve the validity of this type of study, it will be necessary to ensure that all three foreign language groups represented on the city website are equally represented in the data. To achieve this, it may be necessary to secure more support from city authorities to broaden the channels of dissemination. It is nonetheless hoped that the present study may serve as a starting point for further conversation and collaboration between ward authorities and international residents.

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