

Researchers want to 'correct' Japanese English

21st November, 2020



There are many types of English around the world. Some well-known varieties in Asia include Chinglish in China, Singlish in Singapore and Japanese English. A group of language experts in Japan is troubled by how the government uses

English. In particular, it says the government uses computer or online translation too much. Researchers say many translations create strange and confusing words and expressions. Many of these are confusing to English speakers. The researchers worry this could have a negative impact on Japan's tourist industry. They even say the increasing amount of unsuitable words is becoming a "national embarrassment" in Japan.

The researcher team says computer software gives odd or incorrect translations for individual *kanji* - the Chinese characters used in Japanese writing. There are many examples of this, including "Hello Work" - the name for job centres, and "Go To Travel" a plan to help tourism in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team says software creates, "unintentionally funny translations that could easily be corrected if they were just checked by an English speaker". Businesses also create this English. The Christmas message being used by the Seibu Sogo department store has raised eyebrows. It says "Stay Positive." Many people believe this is the wrong thing to say during coronavirus and "Stay Happy" would be better.

Sources: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [mainichi.jp](https://www.mainichi.jp) / [japantoday.com](https://www.japantoday.com)

Writing

British English should be used all over the world. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

types / varieties / English / government / translation / words / expressions / tourist / software / translations / characters / job centres / pandemic / businesses / eyebrows

True / False

- a) The article says there are 27 types of English around the world. T / F
- b) A group of language experts in England is troubled by Japanese English. T / F
- c) Researchers say translation software creates strange words. T / F
- d) Japanese English could have a bad effect on Japan's tourism industry. T / F
- e) There is a job centre in Japan called 'Hello Work'. T / F
- f) There is a plan called 'Go To Travel' to help Japan's tourism industry. T / F
- g) A department store wants people to raise their eyebrows. T / F
- h) A store's Christmas message might not be so good during the COVID-19 crisis. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. types | a. make |
| 2. experts | b. effect |
| 3. in particular | c. letters |
| 4. impact | d. specialists |
| 5. industry | e. strange |
| 6. odd | f. especially |
| 7. characters | g. strategy |
| 8. plan | h. kinds |
| 9. create | i. think |
| 10. believe | j. business |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Have you ever made a big or funny mistake translating English?
- c) What do you think of the name 'Hello Work' for a job centre?
- d) What do you think of the tourism slogan 'Go To Travel'?
- e) What was the last thing to happen that raised your eyebrows?
- f) What do you think of the 'Stay Positive' Christmas message?
- g) What advice do you have for Japan's translators?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. There are many types of English | a. words and expressions |
| 2. A group of language experts in | b. say |
| 3. translations create strange and confusing | c. in Japan |
| 4. have a negative impact on Japan's | d. in Japanese writing |
| 5. a national embarrassment | e. incorrect translations |
| 6. computer software gives odd or | f. be corrected |
| 7. the Chinese characters used | g. around the world |
| 8. translations that could easily | h. eyebrows |
| 9. raised | i. Japan is troubled |
| 10. people believe this is the wrong thing to | j. tourist industry |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of English?
- What variety of English do people speak in your country?
- What are your favourite English words?
- What do you think of translation software?
- Are there any funny translations from your language into English?
- What English words do you think are strange?
- Are many English words used in your language?
- Should English become the world language?

Spelling

- Some well-known vriitaees
- A group of language xperets
- strange and nufoscniq words
- this could have a gntaeive impact
- the increasing amount of nsiuatuble words
- becoming a national baresasrmemnt in Japan
- odd or incorrect anttnsiaslro
- Chinese crtcshraae
- a plan to help itruosm
- during the COVID-19 ecampndi
- easily be ecorrtedc
- raised eworbsey

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. b	5. j
6. e	7. c	8. g	9. a	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Grammar

You think grammar is the most interesting thing about language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as interesting. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): pronunciation, writing or vocabulary.

Role B – Pronunciation

You think pronunciation is the most interesting thing about language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as interesting. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): grammar, writing or vocabulary.

Role C – Writing

You think writing is the most interesting thing about language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as interesting. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary.

Role D – Vocabulary

You think vocabulary is the most interesting thing about language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as interesting. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): pronunciation, writing or grammar.

Speaking – Language

Rank these with your partner. Put the most interesting things about language at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • Alphabets | • Idioms |
| • Conversation | • Grammar |
| • Reading | • Punctuation |
| • Poetry | • Pronunciation |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.