

〈論 文〉

The Linguistic Landscapes of Multicultural Living Areas in Japan

日本の多文化集住都市の言語景観

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Summary

This Linguistic Language that this paper refers to is mainly comprised of all the language displays that are visible outdoors. This is written language including city signs, traffic signs, building names, and handwritten paper postings, of which some are public and others private. I examined the state of displays on street corners and event venue signs focusing on Japanese cities with a large concentration of foreign residents. The results were consolidated based on (1) languages (2) methods of notation, and (3) types of characters. Regarding the event venues, the study demonstrated in what way the events that used the name “international exchange festival” or “international” were “international” based on the display of original languages. I attempted to analyze street signs, separating into two groups’ cities with a high number of Asian foreign residents including Chinese, Korean, and Filipinos and those with a high number of South American residents. The result was that most displays were monolingual, and not appropriate for international exchange. It showed that the use of the Roman alphabet was not for reasons of style or aesthetic but rather close to people’s everyday lives.

要旨

日本の多文化集住都市の言語景観の実態を明らかにし、どのような傾向が見られるのか、どんな問題があるかについて考察する。本稿で扱う言語景観は、屋外に出たときに見える全ての言語表示を意味する。それらは書き言葉であって、街の看板、交通標識、ビルの名前、手書きの貼り紙などが含まれ、公的なものもあれば、私的なものもある。日本国内の外国人集住都市を中心にイベント会場の表記と街角の表記の実態を調査した。結果は (1) 言語種、(2) 表記法、(3) 文字種の組み合わせによって集計した。イベント

会場については、「国際交流フェスティバル」など「国際」と名のつくイベントがどのように「国際」的であるかを言語表示から明らかにした。また、街角については、南米系の外国人と中国、韓国、フィリピンなどアジア系の外国人が多い街に分けて分析を試みた。その結果、(1)国際交流フェスティバルについては、モノリンガルが高い割合を占め、在日外国人への配慮が希薄であること、(2)アルファベットの使用は、商品等のイメージアップが目的というより日常生活の需要に関係が深いこと、(3)全市民の5%から10%近くを外国人が占めるようになると言語景観に顕著な変化が現れること、(4)南米系の外国人が多く住む地域では、南米の食品を売るスーパーマーケットなどができ、街角ではスペイン語やポルトガル語の2言語表示が見受けられ、日本人にはわかりにくい表示になっている。一方、アジア系の外国人が多い街は、日英の表示が多く見られた。

1. Purpose of Research

It has been thought that the advancement of the use of the Roman alphabet in Japan shows the degree of orientation toward European and American cultures after the Meiji era. In recent times, this situation has changed. The number of foreigners working in Japan has increased rapidly, to the point that a Council for Cities of Non-Japanese Residents has been established. Non-Japanese residents and the so-called Nikkei (descendants of immigrants) have an easier time finding work, especially since the Immigration Act was revised in 1990. Most of these workers are concentrated along the central Pacific Coast of the Japanese mainland, forming a Latin & Asian megalopolis (Figure 1). The cities that are the focus of our investigation are shown on the map.

Figure 1: Research map



When viewed on a nationwide scale, the number of registered foreigners in Japan reaches about 2.15 million. About 28.2% of these are from China, which is the most common nationality, 27.6% from South and North Korea, and 24% from Brazil. The average stay in Japan for the Nikkei is between 15 to 17 years. The 320,000 Nikkei-Brazilians have come to Japan for the purpose of work (Ministry of Justice, 2007).

Among the Council for Cities of Non-Japanese Residents, Brazilians hold the top ranks in 27 cities (including Ooizumi town), and these areas extend over 10 prefectures.

With these circumstances in mind, it is no longer appropriate to think of Roman alphabet markings as being necessarily intended for Europeans and Americans. I will clarify the current situation and point out issues from the perspective of multilingual symbiosis.

First, let me summarize the results of our investigation. We found that the Roman alphabet is currently being used for daily life and necessities. While the Roman alphabet was once used in Japanese, English, and French for decorative purposes, it is now being used to display Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian in the Cities of Non-Japanese Residents, and no longer merely used for fashion, jewelry, image-making, and denoting superior rankings.

The Cities of Non-Japanese Residents selected here are cities with many residents from Brazil and from Asian countries such as China and South Korea.

As for languages displayed at citizens' festivals, foreign residents tended to use their native languages while the Japanese used Japanese language. Most of the displays were monolingual. Simply put, there were foreign residents' displays for the foreigners and Japanese for the Japanese. We came to understand that this type of language display is not suitable for an international exchange festival.

2. Earlier research

In earlier studies, it was reported by Someya (2002), Obata Lyman (2005), Masai (1969) and others that the wave of Roman alphabet markings in Japan has surged. These reports stated that signs and displays using the Roman alphabet were chiefly useful in image-making for towns and streets and in conveying a sense of exoticism. The research of Inoue (2007) clarified the relationship between economics and language using language displays. Kim (2005/2007) observed that language displays are primarily for information exchange among the non-Japanese community. Kawahara (2004) considered multilingual displays of traffic signs, town signboards, and guides in subways as a means of language services for non-Japanese.

3. Characters in daily Japanese life

Four kinds of characters are used in daily life in Japanese society: Chinese characters (kanji), hiragana, katakana, and the Roman alphabet. General Japanese notation uses a mixture of Chinese characters and hiragana and katakana, which are Japanese phonetic characters. Chinese characters show substantial meaning, and hiragana is used for particles, conjugative suffixes, adverbs, and other such purposes. Chinese characters were imported from China in the 1st or 2nd century. A total of 1850 Chinese characters are designated for daily use in Japanese. Each syllable in Chinese characters conveys one meaning, while the letters of the Roman alphabet are phoneme characters. There are five main types of Chinese characters, which I will not cover here. Hiragana is a syllabic character first written in the 8th century, and there are 46 characters in its alphabet.

These are the characters first learned by Japanese students. As for katakana, it is mainly used for loan words from other languages. It was first written in the 9th century and is used to denote names of foreign countries and places, names of non-Japanese, scientific terms, onomatopoeia, and others. The use of katakana serves as a barometer showing internationalization as with the Roman alphabet. The Roman alphabet is used for various purposes in Japan.

4. Research method

The cities included in this survey are ones with large populations from Asian countries, such as China and South and North Korea, and the Cities of Non-Japanese Residents with large populations of Brazilians.

1) We will look at the language displays at festivals in Cities of Non-Japanese Residents that have the largest populations of Brazilians: Kikugawa (Kikugawa Dance), Minokamo (Industrial Festival), and Tsu (International Exchange Day). Afterwards, I will take a general view of the results in the form of simple totals, including (1) languages, (2) methods of notation, and (3) types of characters. (red stars in Figure 1)

2) For regions with the highest populations of Chinese, South Koreans, North Koreans, and Filipinos, we will look at language displays at event sites for festivals whose names include the characters for "International", as well as Yokohama (Yokohama International Exchange Festival), Urayasu (International Exchange Festival), and Shizuoka (International Exchange

Festival) and compare these with the results in part 1. (blue points in Figure 1)

The data for the six cities in these two parts are for festivals held by the local residents of the cities, with non-Japanese resident groups participating. We can consider these events to be models of “handmade” places for international exchange made by the local citizens. Festivals planned by the non-Japanese resident groups included many bazaars, homemade cooking, dance, and language lessons.

Figures 2 and 3 show the city names and ratios of non-Japanese residents.

Figure 2: International exchange festivals

	City name	Total population	Number of registered non-Japanese	Ratio of non-Japanese
1	Kikugawa	49,770	4,150	8.3%
2	Urayasu	161,745	4,719	2.9
3	Yokohama	3,654,326	77,777	2.1
4	Minokamo	55,083	5,927	10.8
5	Shizuoka	476,286	8,481	1.8
6	Tsu	291,673	8,708	3.0

Figure 3: Cities of research

	City name	Total population	Number of registered non-Japanese	Ratio of non-Japanese
1	Yokkaichi	313,495	9,693	3.1%
2	Shizuoka	476,286	8,481	1.8
3	Kawasaki	1,373,630	30,592	2.2
4	Ooizumi (town)	42,113	6,878	16.3
5	Mimokamo	55,083	5,927	10.8
6	Toyohashi	383,945	20,428	5.3
7	Hamamatsu	823,628	33,326	4.0
8	Iwata	176,912	9,885	5.6

Note: Council for Cities of Non-Japanese Residents, April 1, 2008(Shizuoka city and Kawasaki city figures are from each city's data because neither is a member of the Council.)

Figure 6: Codes of languages

Code	Language
1	Japanese
2	English
3	French
4	Portuguese, Spanish, Italian
5	Chinese
6	Korean
7	German
8	E, F
9	E, C
10	E, F, C
11	E, C, K
12	E, F, P, S, I, C, K, G

Figure 7: Codes of representation style

Code	Representation style
1	Top to bottom
2	Left to right
3	Both

Figure 8: Combinations of letters

Code	Combination of letters	
I	1	Chinese character
	2	Hiragana
	3	Katakana
	4	Roman alphabet
II	5	Chi + hi
	6	Chi + ka
	7	Chi + R
	8	Hi + ka
	9	Hi + R
	10	Ka + R
III	11	Chi + hi + ka
	12	Chi + hi + R
	13	Chi + ka + R
	14	Hi + ka + R
IV	15	Chi + hi + ka + R

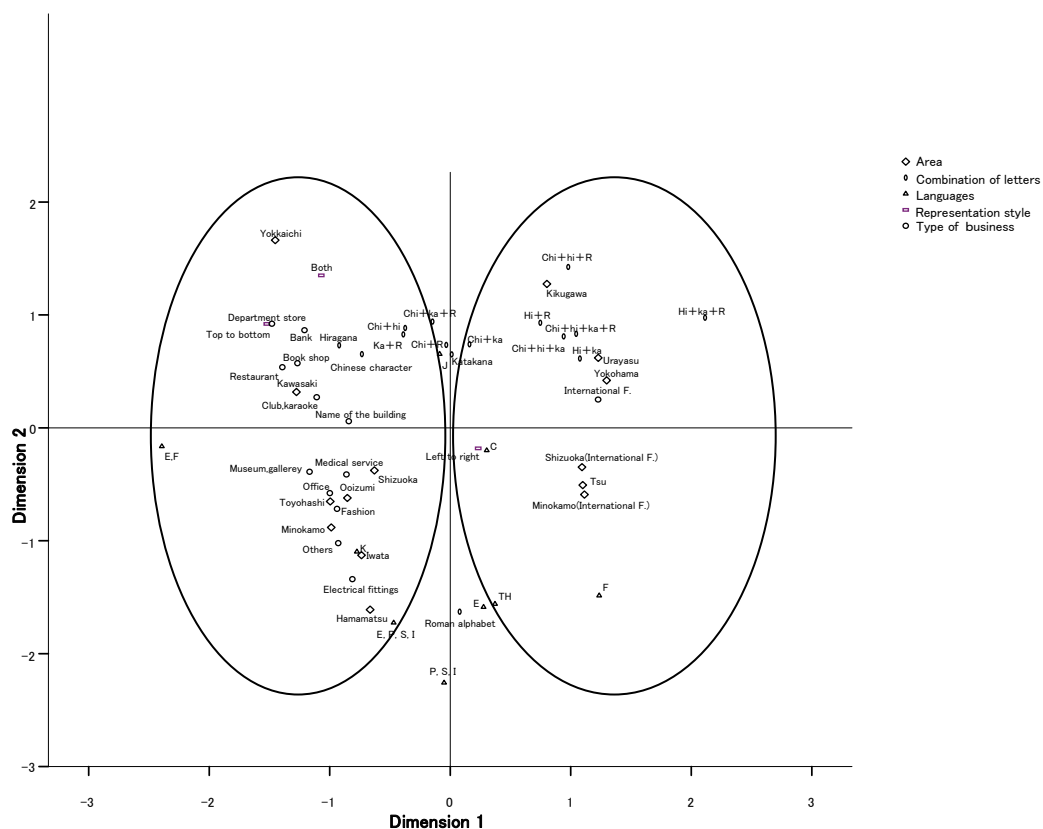
Figure 9: Numbers of photographs & samples

City code	Name of city	Photographs	Samples
25	Kikugawa	33	51
1	Urayasu	58	122
2	Yokohama	126	431
27	Minokamo 1	85	233
28	Minokamo 2	14	48
11	Shizuoka 1	46	133
12	Shizuoka 2	13	36
4	Tsu	29	88
7	Yokkaichi	11	25
3	Kawasaki	146	511
18	Ooizumi (town)	29	61
15	Toyohashi	43	85
23	Hamamatsu	30	59
24	Iwata	17	21
	Total	680	1904

5.Results

First, we will take a general view of the areas around train stations and international exchange festivals using multivariate analysis (Figure 10) .

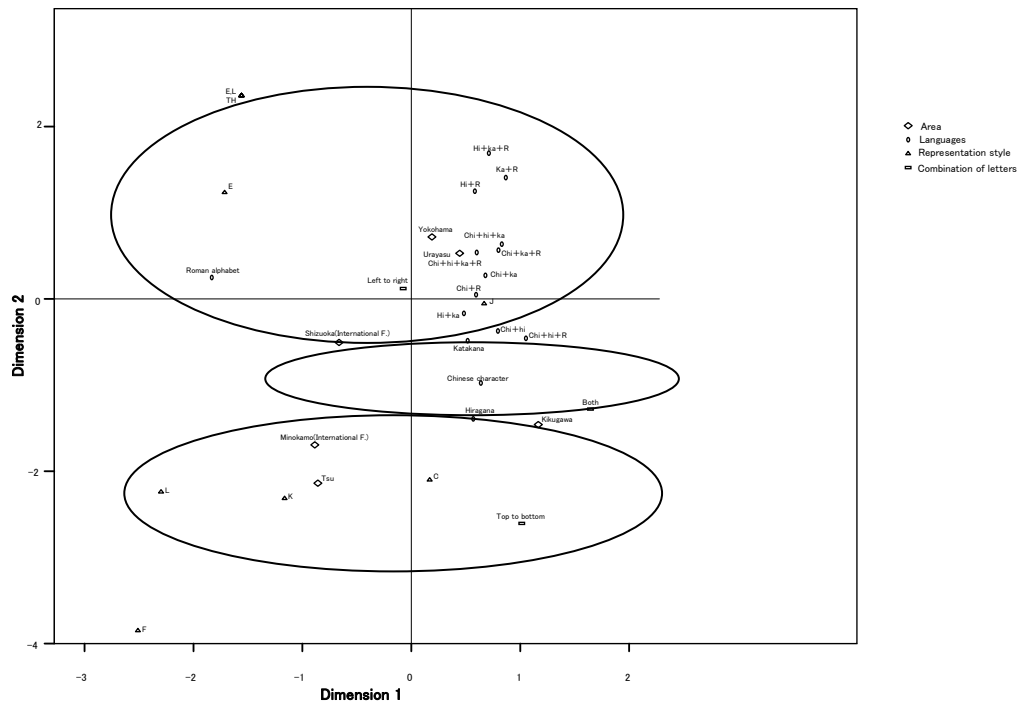
Figure 10: Multivariate analysis (all)



Here we see the station area on the right and an international exchange festival on the left. The language use differs in each area. The station area includes banks, bookstores and fashion boutiques, and hiragana and Chinese characters are primarily used. Roman alphabet letters and Latin languages can be seen at the international exchange festival. Shizuoka City has been working hard for a long time to improve international exchange, but recently with the increase in Brazilian residents, the effort continues.

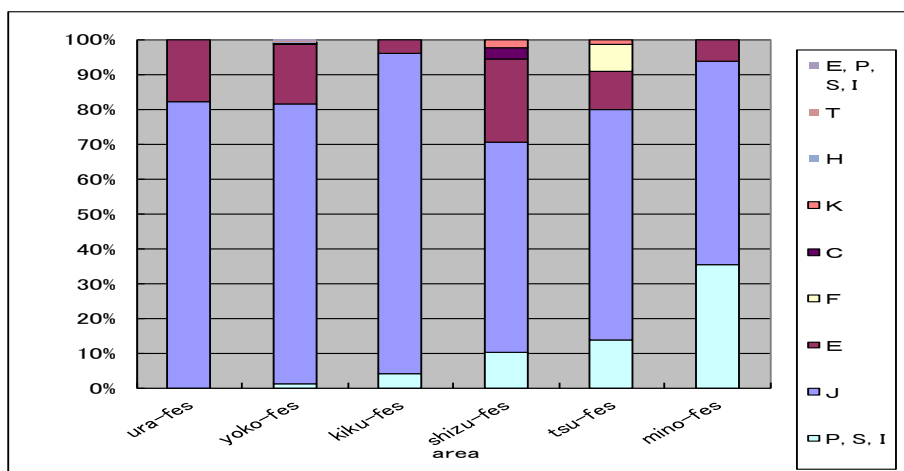
Figure 11 is a graph of international exchange festivals. Yokohama and Urayasu are considered international cities and they are regions in which English and the Roman alphabet are used. They are in Kanto (East Japan). Below, you see the cities in which many new Portuguese and Spanish-speaking residents live, such as Minokamo, Kikugawa, and Tsu. Latin languages exist along with Korean and Chinese languages. These cities are in the middle of the mainland along the Pacific Ocean. Shizuoka City is situated in the middle. It became internationalized before newcomers arrived, and it still welcomes new residents from Brazil, Peru and other countries. Katakana exists in the middle also.

Figure 11: Multivariate analysis (International exchange festivals)



1) Regarding the proportions of languages in international exchange festivals and event sites, the number of Japanese displays was greatest overall (Figure 12). Latin languages are used in festivals in Kikugawa, Shizuoka, Tsu, and Minokamo. The cities of Urayasu, Yokohama, and Shizuoka have in the past aimed at becoming open, cosmopolitan cities and made efforts toward international exchange. This most likely accounts for the comparatively large number of English displays. The activities of international exchange festivals were most likely led by older residents who have confidence in English. This generation has acted in ways that mistook English ability for international exchange.

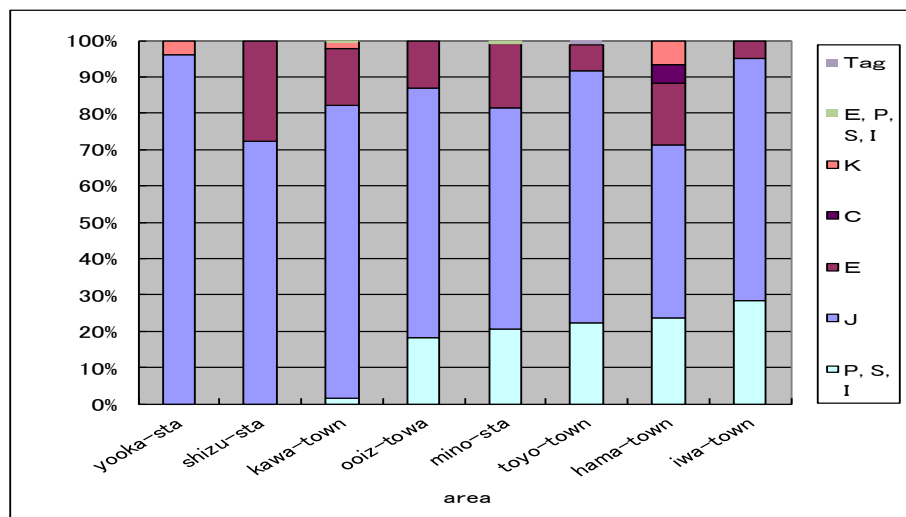
Figure 12: Proportions of languages (international exchange festivals)



※ura(Urayasu city),yoko(Yokohama city),kiku(Kikugawa city),shizu(Shizuoka city),tsu(Tsu-city),
mino(Minokamo city)

As for the scenery of the towns, many uses of Latin languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese were seen in Ooizumi, Minokamo, Toyota, Hamamatsu, and Iwata city. Use of Latin languages increased in the cities where higher ratios of Nikkei-Brazilian residents live (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Proportion of language (town)



※yooka(Yookaichi-city), shizu(Shizuoka-city), kawa(Kawasaki-city),ooiz(Ooizumi-town),
mino(Minokamo-city), toyo(Toyota-city),hama(Hamamatsu-city),iwa(Iwata-city)

The attempt to become international cities is reflected by the English displays in Kawasaki and Shizuoka city. However, almost the same ratio of English displays can be seen in cities with large Brazilian populations such as Hamamatsu, Minokamo, and Ooizumi.

This implies that English use has advanced in both areas. Latin languages in this case means mainly Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian. In the Cities of Non-Japanese Residents, multilingual communities and internationalization are relatively advanced. However, other cities that were thought to be have long been internationalized are lagging behind in the multilingual aspect, and the “English only” style continues.

2) As for styles of representation, there are many cases of horizontal writing, which is the same style as in English. This is common regardless of whether it is used in town scenery or in a festival, and a decline in the traditional vertical manner of writing can be seen. (Figures 14 and 15).

Figure14: Representation styles (international exchange festivals)

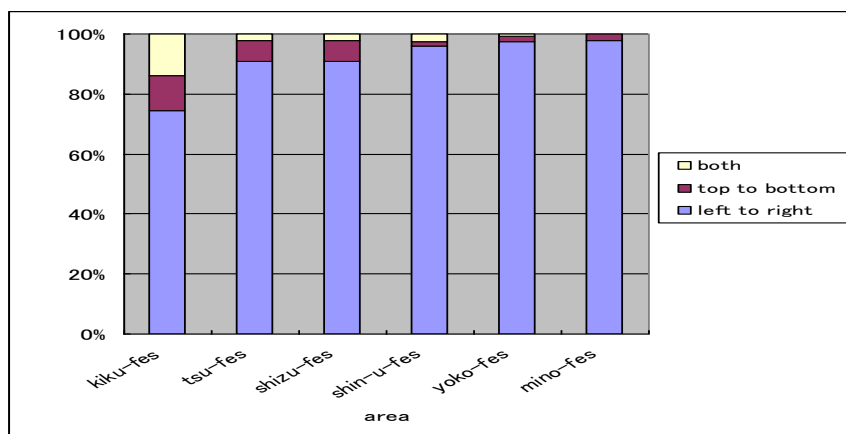
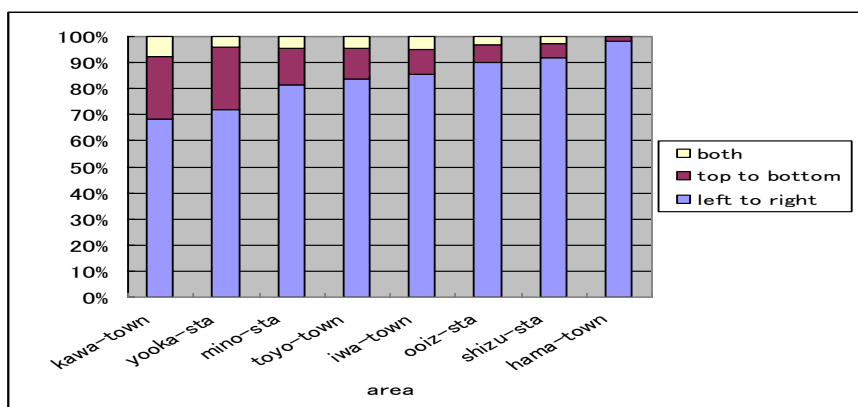


Figure 15: Representation styles (town)



Vertical writing in Japanese was more common in the age when signboards were written with brushes. This style of writing makes Roman alphabet letters more difficult to read, and is therefore rare. It seems that this change is in sync with the increase of loan words and Roman alphabet signs and displays. It is also reflected by the “shutter town” around Yokkaichi station, in which old signboards have been left. Brazilian residents live far from Yokkaichi station and use another train line for transportation.

3) Even if the use of Latin languages increases, it can be seen that in venues for international exchange festivals, Japanese signs are for Japanese guests, Spanish is displayed for Peruvian and Argentine guests, and Portuguese is for Brazilian guests. (Figures 16 and 17)

Figure16: Proportion of letter (international exchange festivals)

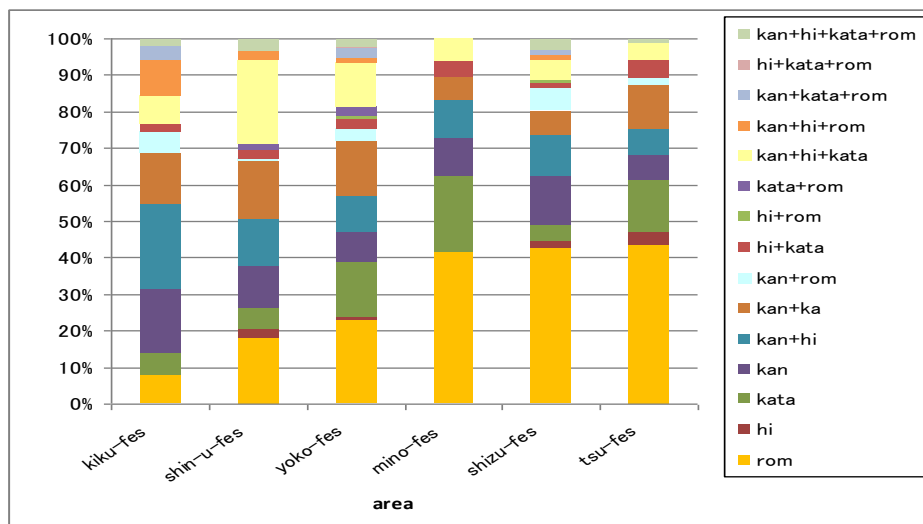
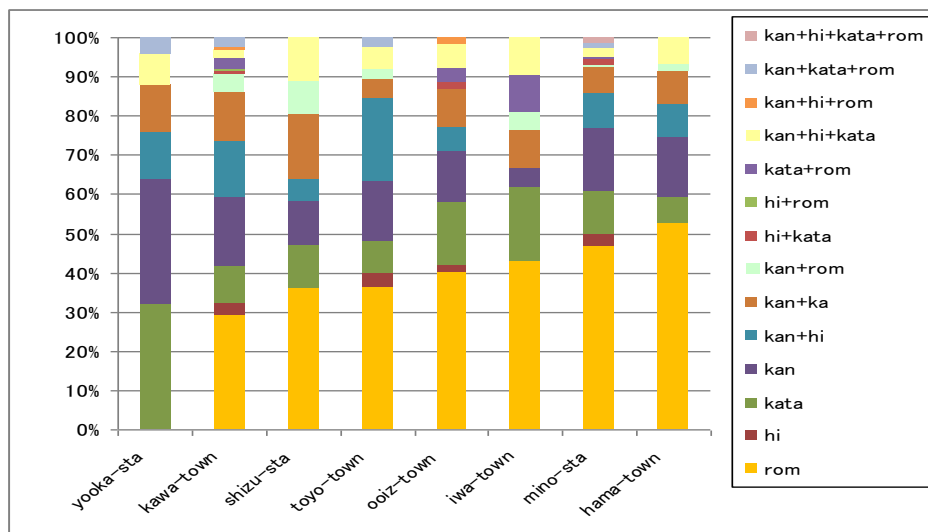


Figure17: Proportion of letter (town)



At festivals, Japanese residents may buy bread or cakes from non-Japanese without knowing exactly what kind of bread or cake they are buying. Brazilian shops may be seen by Japanese residents as strange and unfamiliar places, as signboards are written in characters that cannot be read or understood. They often appear to be shops that sell food and clothes.

Not even the name of the shop itself can be pronounced by Japanese residents. From the Brazilian perspective, price tags are clearly visible and prices are easy to understand, but Brazilians also have trouble telling the name of a Japanese shop to a neighbor to tell them where they found a good deal. It is more convenient if displays are understood by both Japanese and Brazilians or other non-Japanese. The conditions today are unsuitable for the purpose of international exchange and multi-cultural symbiosis.

6. Future tasks

In my time today, I was not able to give an overview of the relations of signboards and businesses. And I did not have time to analyze multilingual displays on single signboards. Not all data of Cities of Non-Japanese Residents was surveyed. And I was able to classify Portuguese, Spanish and Italian but not other Latin languages.

Foreign residents in Japan may greatly influence their places of residence through major economic changes in the autumn of 2008. I want to observe the movement of working people in Japan and changes in language displays through time. As for the large city of Yokohama, this would likely require a new comparative analysis with Tokyo.

The survey of the linguistic landscape has done in 2008. This manuscript is a revised version of a paper presented in the International Conference of Linguistic Landscape in Sienna in 2009.

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