

LANGUAGE PROBLEM OF PROLIFERATING INTERNET AND BLOG IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

Japan made e-Japan policy to promote broadband for increasing internet populations after 2001. The performance of the e-Japan policy was satisfactory, the government has promoting confidence. However, there appeared another domestic problems, those are contents business problems and language problems. The Technorati statistics shows increased Japanese language blogs and the reasons. This paper tries to make new Japanese language problems by indicating hybrid blog prototype. The prototype has tentative 4 track languages.

00. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the internet, Japan seemed to be one of the internet leading countries. They were too optimistic to find big lag of ICT environment as of 2000. Japan was ranked the world 14th by the reports of several worldwide research companies. It was an unexpected result for the Japanese government. After the research companies report, Japanese government had to fix the new ICT environment towards next 10 years. They made “e-Japan policy” from 2001 to 2005. In addition to the e-Japan policy they succeeded another “u-Japan policy” towards 2010 to the ubiquitous society. The e-Japan policy targets the increase of internet populations, mainly by the new introduction of the broadbands.

01. BROADBAND IN JAPAN

The e-Japan policy was started from 2001. The target is to increase the top level of high speed broadbands network over Japan within 1.5 years. By the data of johotsushin hakusho 2006 p18 of the Gyosei, the broadbands include DSL, CATV, FTTH, FWA (fixed wireless access). Any countries are trying to introduce the broadbands but are not so successful. Broadband services for home or technology selection and evolution problem for broad band access network are reported and analyzed by the paper of “Technology Evolution Model for Broadband Multimedia Networks”. (1) The largest

telecommunication company in Japan is the NTT. The NTT east and west rejected the unbundled DSL, so the government made deregulation to fix the unbundled DSL legally in Japan. By the mitigation several new entries of companies into the communication market were accomplished. The market became more competitive by the new business. Accordingly, the internet population increased as follows in Japan.

Figure-1 internet populations & ratio to populations in Japan

	populations	ratio to populations %
1997	11,550	9.20
1998	16,940	13.40
1999	27,060	21.40
2000	47,080	37.10
2001	55,930	44.00
2002	69,420	54.50
2003	77,300	60.60
2004	79,480	62.30
2005	85,290	66.80

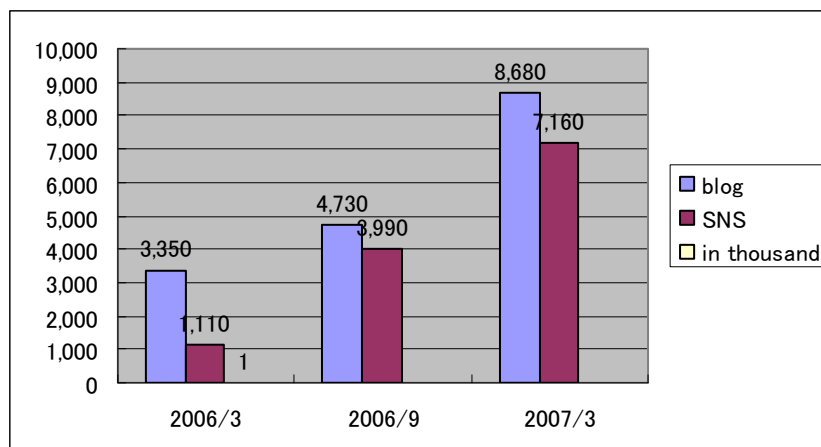
2006johotsushin hakusho p17

The increase trend is clear from 11.5 millions populations and 9.20% ratio to populations in 1997 to 85.2 millions and 66.80% in 2005 respectively. Especially, after 2001 the populations went over 50 millions or 70 millions or 80 millions out of the total populations approximately 126 millions. The internet DSL communication cost reduced 1/3 (¥7,800 □ ¥2,600) from 2001 to 2005. Apparently, this cost reduction was a major reason of the internet populations increase.

02. PROLIFERATING BLOGS AND SNSs

After the increase of internet populations in Japan, they increased individual new style of blogs or SNSs.

Figure-2 Numbers of blogs and SNSs



Source: 2006 johotsushin hakusho p42

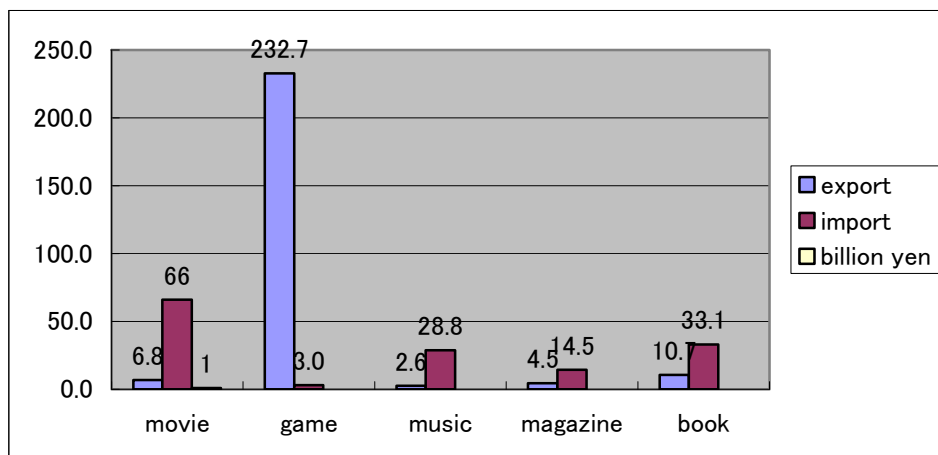
Blogs are the internet users commentary or news on particular subjects such as news, politics, or local news, and some other functions as more personal online diaries. SNS (Social Networking Service) is similar to blog with the users purposes are limited and some are members only closed.

Figure-2 shows the rapid increase of numbers of blogs and SNSs from 2006/3 to 2007/3 within 1 years increase. This shows the success of the e-Japan broadband policy from 2001.

03. THE LIMIT OF CONTENTS GROWTH IN JAPAN

There is an interesting data about contents business in Japan. In the internet world, business is extended or spread out to cross-border over countries. They can handle contents business by the web internationally. They are successful in the manufacturing industry to make export balance in Japan like automobiles, machines, electric appliances and so on. How about the contents business in Japan? Figure-3 shows the cross-border trade about contents business 2004 in Japan.

Figure-3 Cross-border contents business in Japan



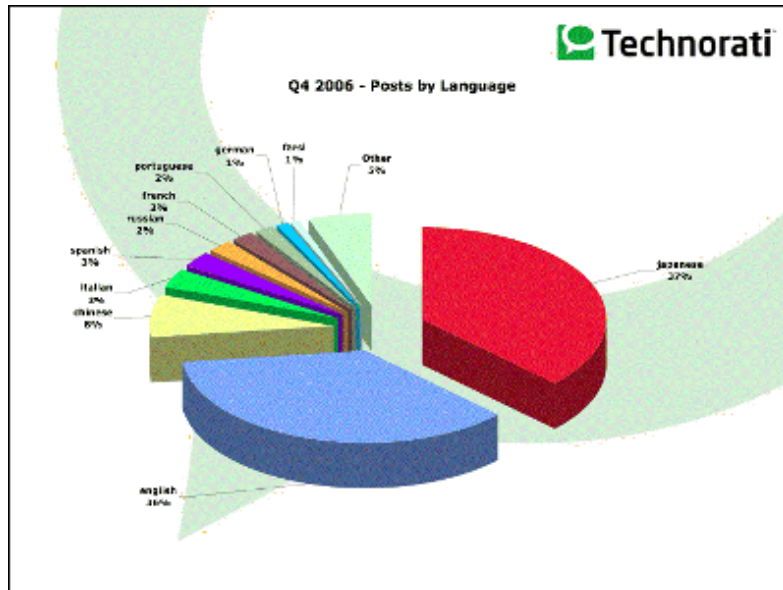
Source: 2006 johotsushin hakusho gyosei p69

Only game business has big win but another movie, music, magazine, book businesses were lost. What does this figure mean? (2)

Game and animation were good at Japan. Why are they good at them? The Japanese do not have to get into language problem. The Japanese are not so good at English. Japan originated the game business or animation business and extended to foreign business by lower involvement into foreign languages. Other businesses are restricted by the word problem, that is the English. Japanese contents business is subject to foreign language problem because of the Japanese peculiarity.

Another interesting language data is from the technorati.com. The total blog posts numbers are traced by the technorati.com. Worldwide their search engine counts the outstanding blogs 70 millions. The technorati.com announces the count data of acting blogs periodically. The data of the 4th quarter of 2006, the top posted language was the Japanese of 37%. The second was the English of 36%, the 3rd was the Chinese of 8%.

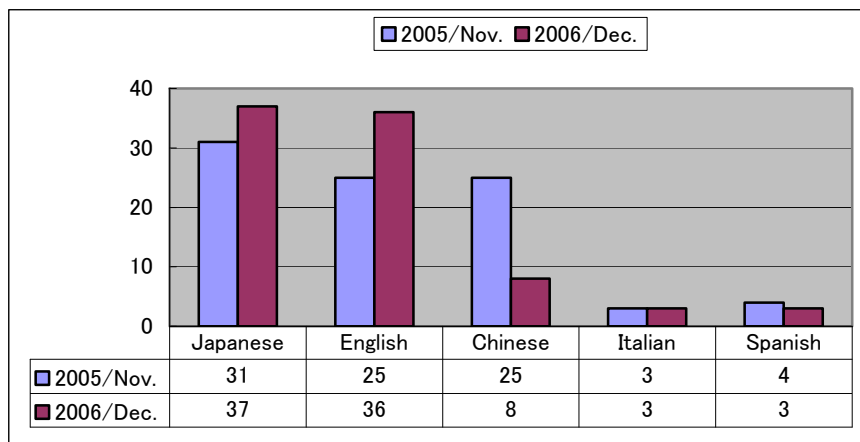
Figure-4 Posts by language



<http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000493.html>

November 2005 another report of the technorati.com showed the language rank, 1st the Japanese (31%), 2nd the English (31%), 3rd the Chinese (25%), 4th the Spanish (4%). The posts trend between 2005/11 and 2006/12 of the worldwide acting blogs by language shows the Japanese added 6%, the English added 11%, the Chinese decreased 17%, the Spanish increased 1%. Top 3 languages of the Japanese, the English and the Chinese make the total over 80%. Top 5 languages total is over 90% by their posts basis. The Sifry Report explains the language feature as both English and Spanish are more global languages, whereas Japanese, Chinese and Italian are more geographically correlated.(2)

Figure-5 Comparison of posts by language(%)



Source: <http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000493.html>

Sifry alerts explain that Japanese bloggers write shorter posts more often. The reason could be a result of blogging from mobile phones. This may be true, even the Japanese are surprised to know the Japanese language was top ranked twice in the world.

04. FINDINGS

They cannot understand posts of blogs in Japanese without the Japanese. Over 30% of blogs posts are in Japanese and are not read by the major global internet users. Not only the western people but also Asian people may be interested in blogs in Japan. Because the Japanese posts are the top written, the Japanese have to contrive and find any ways of Japanese posts to be understood globally. Some famous foreign blogs began to provide independent Japanese versions separately adding English versions. This may be one way but will not be a good way.

05. THE IDEA OF A HYBRID BLOG

There are many blogs written by several languages. But the majority of them are not mutually depend upon. Subjects are written independently or unrelatedly. Users are difficult to understand the relation among languages. The idea of hybrid blog is to translate the subjects or contents into another language. You can read by your favorite language of the subject. On the other hand, bloggers have to not only post but also translate into the English or the Chinese for example. Bloggers are required to write at least by dual languages.

Figure-6 a tentative trial page of a hybrid blog



Source: Co-work of Sahara student office and Seeds & Associates

If the Japanese are successful to post in Japanese and in English, 73% (Japanese=37%+English=36%) of the world posts will be available for ICT users. Outstanding blogs status means that the Japanese posts are locally used only for the Japanese and before long they will become null and void.

The above shows a tentative trial of a hybrid blogs portal site for 4 tracks by languages. You could choose languages by clicking one of the languages. Writers or readers have to select language. Then if you could cover English, Japanese, Chinese, you can understand over 80 percent of blogs in the world. Japanese has to solve the language problem for the foreigners. In the case of the hybrid blogs, the unicode system is a new helpful technology, together with a various accompanied new or strange problems.

06. COMMENTS

They promoted broadband policy from 2001 in Japan, after the policy they acquired a considerable nice ICT environment as a social infrastructure. They can enjoy broadband services by lower rates conveniently. The next step they have to step into the language problem. They enjoy the internet world within the Japanese world only because of their local Japanese language. They are expected to introduce Japanese way of living or health or the culture and so on to the overseas. This paper tries to start translations by exploring hybrid blogs explaining 1,2,3,4 languages including the Japanese word. They could adjust lesser or more of languages by cultivating hybrid

blogs. Outstanding the top language for blogs, it is important for the Japanese to acquire mutual understanding from foreign users. Without the global understandings of contents, the top language for posts is the only a nominal and temporary status and eventually lose attractions.

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