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JAPAN

HAARMANN, HARALD. *Symbolic Values of Foreign Language Use: From the Japanese Case to a General Sociolinguistic Perspective*. Contributions to the Sociology of Language 51. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989. xi+291 pages. Bibliography, index of subjects, index of names. Cloth DM128.—; ISBN 3-11-011712-6.

Harald Haarmann's informative study presents a sociolinguistic analysis of foreign language use in the Japanese mass media, particularly in commercials. The author stayed in Japan for several years in order to collect data and carry out questionnaires concerning foreign influences in commercials, and Japanese attitudes toward them.

The main contributions of the book are the vast quantity of statistical data, the numerous illustrations of actual advertising, and the analysis of the Japanese language phenomena (through the eyes of a non-Japanese linguist) in comparison with the languages of other countries. Haarmann's assertion is that the Japanese personal monolingualism combined with impersonal multilingualism in the mass media is quite unique.

The phenomenon of so many foreign words in contemporary Japanese society is reflected in the number of dictionaries and books concerning borrowed or foreign words that have been published in the past decade. The author concludes that Japanese multilingualism in the mass media is related to the history of polygraphy. The Japanese have absorbed words from other languages throughout their long history. Japanese *kanji*, for example, was originally borrowed from China.

The typical features of commercials are ethnocultural stereotypes and a complex network of setting and language. Though ethnocultural stereotypes exist in other cultures as well, they vary according to the cultural values of the countries. The Japanese tend to relate the English language to modernity, French to elegance, and Italian to speed (fast cars). Among foreign languages, English is used more than others because it is viewed as modern and prestigious.

The author goes on to define types of communication: monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism. He then investigates foreign elements in TV commercials by presenting actual data. Most of the commercials with foreign elements are made by Japanese companies to give consumers a positive image of the given language's culture, to raise viewers' curiosity, to attract them to the products, and to give them the feeling that they are members of a cosmopolitan community.

Subsequently, he presents the results of a questionnaire given to young Japanese viewers regarding foreign language use. The results show that many of these young people recognize foreign elements in TV commercials, even though they do not fully understand them. They prefer the use of a foreign language for luxury products such

as cosmetics, cars, and alcoholic drinks.

Analysis of the usage of foreign words and product preferences in commercials shows that viewers have their stereotypes of foreign languages and cultures. They have an exclusively positive image of English, but both positive and negative images of French and Japanese.

The author also discusses the uniqueness of the Japanese use of foreign languages in terms of the acculturation of both the languages themselves and their corresponding lifestyles. Focussing on English words for numbers and colors, he discusses how they are incorporated into the Japanese lexicon, in particular, colloquialisms. For example, there is a brand of *sake* called "One Cup," and a toothpaste called "White and White." Haarmann goes on to explain that *katakana* (the characters for foreign words in Japanese) serve as the linkage between the *external*, public use of English and the *internal*, personal use. In other words, the Japanese use *katakana* to pronounce foreign words. Moreover, according to him, the mass media is a source of semiotic pressure on the lifestyle of the Japanese people.

In the last chapter the author discusses similarities and contrasts between these Japanese language phenomena and those of Malta and the Scandinavian countries. In Malta, for example, as in Japan, apartment houses are given fanciful foreign names to attract tenants. In contrast to Japan, however, single-family dwellings are also often given foreign names.

This book, then, is noteworthy for its wide presentation of data and the analysis thereof. The only error this reviewer found was in the Japanese title of the movie, "The Seven Samurai"; Haarmann uses *nananin*, but actually *shichinin* is correct. In sum, he seems to eschew a theoretical orientation in favor of a more straightforward approach to presenting certain linguistic phenomena in support of his thesis. Herein lies the value of this book.

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MORIOKA, HEINZ and MIYOKO SASAKI. *Rakugo, the Popular Narrative Art of Japan*. Harvard East Asian Monograph 138. Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990. xii+470 pages. Appendixes, bibliography, glossary, index. Cloth US\$35.00; ISBN 0-674-74725-9.

This is a fascinating and inspiring piece of work whose interest goes beyond rakugo; it should be read by anyone interested in Japanese people. The authors present the material in three parts, each consisting of three chapters: part one explains what rakugo is, the techniques used and conventions followed by the storytellers, and the devices used to evoke laughter; part two discusses the types of stories that are told, based on the topics they treat; and part three deals with the history of rakugo, from its roots in Buddhist tradition through to the present day. Translations of rakugo stories appear in nearly every chapter, and numerous summaries of other stories are used to illustrate the authors' explanations.

In discussing the storytellers, the authors point out that they now come from all over Japan, whereas before World War II they came mainly from downtown Tokyo or Osaka; that they have to master the speech mannerisms typical of samurai, mer-