

Language Difficulties in *kyosei* ('living together') of Japanese and Foreigners

Liang Morita¹

¹ Faculty of Communication, Nagoya University of Commerce and Business, 4-4 Sagamine, Komenoki-cho, Nisshin-shi, Aichi, Japan 470-0193

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Abstract

This paper focuses on language difficulties in the co-existence of the Japanese and foreigners in Japan. Language is without doubt one of the most important factors in how successfully locals and foreigners live together. The author demonstrates the difficulty of co-existence when foreigners lack Japanese language competence in two areas, housing and medical services. Most publications on co-existence base their arguments on how the Japanese view the issues or how they behave in this area. This paper takes up foreigners' views, thus examining the issues from an outsider's perspective.

Keywords: Japan, foreigners, discrimination, human rights

1. Introduction

The number of foreigners is increasing in Japan. The number of foreign residents has doubled to 2.2 million over the past 20 years (Kingston, 2013). Researchers such as Castles and Miller (2003) explain the movement of people internationally in terms of push-pull dynamics in which domestic economic conditions push people into more developed economies while labour shortages and development levels in other countries such as Japan pull migrants there. In addition to the foreigners who are in Japan to fill the labour shortage, signs of transformation are evident in rising numbers of international marriages, foreigners gaining permanent residency and foreign wives (many from low-income countries) playing a key role in rural areas. In some sectors facing a shortage of skilled workers such as information technology, the government has initiated a new fast-track permanent residency programme that targets the relevant foreigners.

While much research on migration into Japan has been conducted, many researchers (such as Japanologist Gabriele Vogt) tend to focus on policy. Migration is taking place on a large scale and we need to study it from the standpoint of policy makers and policy as well as from the perspective of migrants themselves (Castles and Miller, 2003). The current paper focuses on language difficulties in the co-existence of the Japanese and foreigners in Japan. Language is without doubt one of the most important factors in how successfully locals and foreigners live together. This paper demonstrates the difficulty of co-existence when foreigners lack Japanese language competence. This point seems to be taken for granted and not discussed much in most of the literature on co-existence in Japan. In addition, most publications on co-existence base their arguments on how the Japanese view the issues or how they behave in this area. The current paper takes up foreigners' views, thus examining the issues from an outsider's perspective.

The term *kyosei shakai* ('a symbiotic society in which people live together harmoniously') was first created by the elites in Japan to describe the country's relations with other nations (Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008). It was a buzzword in the early 1990s and began to be widely used by the beginning of the 21st century. As the number of foreigners rose, the concept of a symbiotic society in which the Japanese and foreigners coexist became increasingly relevant. A related term, *tabunka kyosei*, has come to be used extensively in the area of immigrant integration. It literally means 'multi-culture-together-living' and is generally understood as a process or condition in which people of different nationalities or ethnic backgrounds live together as fellow members in a community (Kashiwazaki 2011). *Tabunka kyosei* also refers to many cultures coexisting in harmony within a Japanese cultural context (Nagy, 2012).

Many NGOs which provide support for foreign workers in Japan also speak of *kyosei* ('living together' or 'co-existence'). Befu Harumi, the eminent Japanese-American anthropologist, claims that *kyosei* has not been

achieved because foreigners do not yet enjoy the rights and privileges of the ordinary Japanese and experience discrimination (Befu, 2006). He addresses seven such areas: human rights, housing, employment, education, medical services, citizenship and relationship with the majority society.

Racial Discrimination

When United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Doudou Diene visited Japan in 2005, he reported the existence of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. In his report (UNHCHR, 2006) he called upon the Japanese government to acknowledge the existence of racial discrimination and show the political will to combat it. He also recommended that a national anti-discrimination law should be passed and implemented, which to this day, has not.

The Japanese Constitution prohibits discrimination, but the degree to which this can be enforced in practice is unclear. According to Article 14, 'All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.' The traditional view of a constitution is that it protects an individual from the government but it does not necessarily extend to discrimination by private individuals. There is also a lack of sound legislation to ensure these protections are upheld. This is in sharp contrast to countries such as the US in which it is spelled out explicitly in legislation that discrimination is illegal. The lack of a statutory regime to enforce constitutional principles means that Japan takes a soft line when it comes to discouraging discrimination. It may be possible to challenge a particular incident through the courts or by bringing a complaint to a human rights committee, but neither may lead to a concrete result in terms of remedies (Scott, 2013).

According to an *Asahi Shinbun* (2008) article, Japan is unique in that there are no laws protecting the livelihoods or rights of non-Japanese. 126 cases of discrimination towards foreigners were reported to the Bureau of Human Rights in 2007, which include refusal of service by estate agents, hot springs and hotels. The Bureau only has the power to issue *setsuji* ('explanation' or 'warning'), not redress measures.

The Japanese government ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in 1995, which is one of the most widely ratified human rights conventions in the world. Despite ICERD's recommendation to the Japanese government in 2001 to adopt specific legislation to outlaw racial discrimination, the Japanese Civil or Criminal Code still has no law specifically outlawing racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is unconstitutional and unlawful under the ICERD, yet not illegal (Arudou, 2010).

Language Difficulties

Migrants who do not learn the language of the host country are unable to integrate successfully into the host society (Gottlieb, 2012). Although the national government has been slow to act, local governments and civil society organisations have responded well to the needs of foreigners by providing Japanese language lessons. They are aware of the importance of the role language plays in integration and provide a variety of services such as Japanese language classes and labour consultation services to foreigners (Yamanaka, 2011).

The local governments of Adachi and Shinjuku wards in Tokyo have been exemplary in accommodating the linguistic needs of their foreign residents. They have invested heavily in multilingual information and services, language and culture courses and foreign advisory services. Through the removal of language and cultural hurdles to accessing services and participating in the local community, they facilitate acculturation and help to meet pressing needs. The support for Japanese language classes, multilingual advisory services, multicultural awareness education and intercultural and human rights education all contribute to language proficiency, self-reliance and acculturation. Language and cultural tools are being provided so that Japanese and foreign residents can alter their behaviour and engage in relationships that are marked by communication, cooperation and awareness instead of intercultural friction and misunderstanding (Nagy, 2012).

This paper draws attention to the challenges and difficulties and faced by foreigners who do not speak Japanese well enough to function in Japanese society. They cannot enjoy the rights and privileges of the ordinary Japanese. These challenges and difficulties stand in the way of *kyosei* ('living together') with the Japanese. The author uses three areas from Befu's (2006) seven areas mentioned above, namely human rights, housing and medical services, to illustrate her point. If the Japanese want to move towards the goal of *kyosei*, the language issues need to be addressed.

The data is discussed in the following section (Section 2). Section 3 presents the findings in three parts: discrimination and rights and privileges, finding housing and medical services. Concluding remarks in Section 4 bring the paper to an end.

2. The Data

The quotes in this paper come from a preliminary and exploratory study of discrimination against foreigners based on a convenience sample (n=17) of English-teaching foreign lecturers at a private university (n=13) and a public university (n=4) in the Nagoya area the author has worked with. The sample consists of seven Americans, four Britons, two Canadians, one Australian, one Filipino, one Romanian and one Singaporean. Their length of residence in Japan range from five months to 26 years.

The author developed the Likert-type questionnaire based on three of the seven areas (human rights, housing and medical services) discussed in Befu, 2006, in which Befu claims foreigners do not yet enjoy the rights and privileges of the ordinary Japanese and experience discrimination. These three areas were chosen because they seemed more relevant to the lecturers in the sample than the other four areas (employment, education, citizenship and relationship with the majority society). Education and citizenship were not chosen because most of the lecturers did not have school-age children, and citizenship was irrelevant because many of them saw themselves as short-term migrants in Japan (personal communication). Due to this perception of themselves as temporary residents, relationship with the majority society was not a priority to them. As for employment, all the lecturers had secured positions at universities, which meant that discrimination in the hiring process was probably not a pressing concern. However we will see later in Section 3.1 that discrimination at the workplace is a concern for some lecturers, and it certainly deserves further study.

In the questionnaire, in addition to the choices *Strongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Agree* and *Strongly agree*, there was space for comments for each statement. The statements were:

1. It was easy for me to find housing in Japan.
2. It is easy for me to go about my daily life in Japan.
3. It is easy for me to use public transport in Japan.
4. It is easy for me to use the medical services in Japan.
5. I have experienced racial discrimination in Japan.
6. I enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Japanese do in Japan.

3. The Findings

3.1 Discrimination and Rights and Privileges

There is a lack of awareness among the Japanese that foreigners in Japan do not enjoy the rights and privileges of the Japanese (Willis, 2006). In a Cabinet survey in 2011, 59.3% of the respondents answered 'yes' to the question 'Should foreigners have the same human rights protections as Japanese?' (Arudou, 2011) According to Saga Prefecture public prosecutor, Hiroshi Ichikawa, he was taught foreigners had no human rights. Even the Japanese Constitution speaks of defining equality and fundamental human rights as being conditioned on nationality rather than being human. A 2008 Supreme Court decision made it clear that citizenship is essential to enjoying constitutional and human rights in Japan. There are different standards in civil and criminal courts for citizens and non-citizens. The government has repeatedly claimed through explicit exceptions and caveats made when signing treaties that non-citizens do not qualify for protection against racial discrimination or for equal civil and political rights (Arudou, 2011).

A Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) report admits that previous efforts to tackle the inequalities faced by foreign residents have been insufficient: 'it is hard to say that the corresponding actions of the ministries and government offices have been adequate, nor can it be denied that there has been a lack of comprehensive, cross-cutting measures' (MIC, 2006:2).

Ana Bortz, A Brazilian journalist living in Japan, took to court the owner of a jewelry shop who refused to serve her because of her nationality. She won the case on the basis of the ICERD. In 1999, the judge ruled that she had suffered discrimination and ordered compensation. Refusal of service to foreigners is fairly common in Japan. In the high-profile Otaru *onsen* ('hot spring') case (1993-2005), 'Japanese only' signs barred entry to foreigners in Otaru, Hokkaido. In March 2014, the 'Japanese only' banner displayed at the Urawa Reds football match received negative publicity all over the world.

Most of the respondents in the present study have experienced racial discrimination and they do not think they enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Japanese do:

Table 1. Racial discrimination and rights and privileges

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>I have experienced racial discrimination in Japan.</i>	0	3 (17.6%)	9 (52.9%)	4 (23.5%)	1 (5.9%)
<i>I enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Japanese do in Japan.</i>	6 (35.3%)	10 (58.8%)	0	1 (5.9%)	0

Similar to the reports made to the Bureau of Human Rights of discrimination against foreigners due to refusal of service by estate agents, hot springs and hotels (Section 1), three respondents in the present study were refused at bars, hot springs and a video rental shop:

‘Once or twice I haven’t been allowed into a Japanese *onsen* (‘hot spring’) or a Japanese *bar/izakaya* because I wasn’t Japanese.’

Sakanaka’s (2005) prediction, that ‘there will likely be many who would prefer to deal only with other Japanese people rather than foreigners with different customs and ideas’, has come true, particularly in customer service. Businesses would rather forgo the profit they could potentially make from foreign customers than to serve foreigners.

Refusal of service comes in more subtle forms too:

‘I have popped into a few small Japanese women’s clothing stores where they used one English word to insult me and chase me off ‘*laaah-gie janai*’ (No large – I presume) they said this 3 syllable phrase over and over tittering with their friends who were in the shop. It was very absurd. In another similar case the woman followed me around and pointed out all the clothes to insist they were not large – I presume they didn’t want me to try their clothes on, nor to frequent their shop!’¹

The respondent above is a medium-built Caucasian who would be considered a Japanese size *Large*. It is possible that the shops she visited stocked clothes up to *Medium* only. In any case it is clear that the shops wanted her to leave and the way they conveyed their message is unacceptable. The same method would never be used with Japanese customers.

Other forms of discrimination reported by the respondents include Japanese passengers on underground trains moving away or not wanting to sit next to them (2 respondents), being finger-printed and photographed at immigration checkpoints (1 respondent), not having the right to vote (1 respondent), being refused the installment payment plan when making expensive purchases (1 respondent), being stared at (1 respondent) and the Japanese not wanting to make friends with them (1 respondent).

There were a total of six reports of discrimination at the workplace among the respondents, four from the private university and two from the public university. Some of the comments from the respondents at the private university were quite strongly-worded, and may be true of the particular institution they were referring to only. Three respondents (two from the private university and one from the public university) commented on the practice of the Japanese being offered tenure while foreigners were put on fixed-term contracts, which is a common practice in Japan.

A respondent from the private university raised the point that foreigners in Japan had nowhere to go to report abuses by employers. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website has comprehensive information on labour standards for foreign workers in six foreign languages, although most foreigners are not aware of this. The existence of labour standards for foreigners is not well-publicised. It was a long-term American resident in Japan with near-native competency in Japanese who brought to the attention of the author the labour standards information. Reporting malpractice by employers would seem a challenge to most foreigners, since most telephone lines at government offices are manned by Japanese-speaking operators. Callers could ask for an English speaker, but many would feel it is not worth the hassle. This shows how important Japanese language skills are for foreigners who want to protect their rights.

3.2 Housing

'Open and blatant housing discrimination against foreigners is common in Japan' (Befu, 2006:3). Refusal of service by estate agents is widely reported in the literature. Most estate agents refuse to rent out their properties to foreigners. A recent case of a Belgian student in Kyoto who was told he could not rent a flat because he was a foreigner was reported in *The Japan Times* (Scott, 2013). Recently, a colleague of the author who was looking for housing was turned down by nine out of 10 estate agents, citing 'Japanese only' as the reason.

Ruru mamoranai ('to disobey rule(s)') is often cited by estate agents as the reason for refusing to rent out properties to foreigners. The rules in question can be the correct days for putting out the correct rubbish or minimising noise. Estate agents sometimes simply state that foreigners do not understand the Japanese language or do not know Japanese culture and therefore they do not want to rent out properties to foreigners. Befu (2006) points out that most Japanese regard these as reasonable excuses for not renting to foreigners, regardless of the foreigner's actual grasp of the Japanese language or culture.

After having found estate agents who are willing to serve them, foreigners are still not out of the woods. Guarantor or co-signers are usually required of renters in Japan. Guarantors pay the rent if tenants fall behind or cause damage to the property. Landlords prefer relatives as guarantors, especially parents who are still working. One option is to have employers serve as guarantors, but this only applies to those with jobs lined up and companies willing to commit. Even then, using an employer as guarantor is potentially problematic. Changing jobs can be difficult. If the tenant loses his/her job, he/she could have nowhere to live. Another option is shared houses or dormitories for foreigners, but group living has its drawbacks. Some companies specialise in short-term rentals for foreigners with no guarantors, but these properties are often not centrally located. There are companies that offer to act as guarantors for a fee, but some of them require their clients to provide guarantors before they agree to provide the service (Lewis, 2013).

The guarantor system has existed in Japan in various forms since feudal times. In the Edo Period, tenants needed caretakers who managed properties for landlords to act as guarantors for them if they wanted to rent, marry or travel through official checkpoints. The current law concerning guarantors dates back to the Meiji Era, when the Civil Code was written in 1896. Some aspects of the Civil Code are currently being reviewed but the guarantor requirement for renters is not one of them. This requirement and the vertical relationship between landlord and renter persist to this day (Lewis, 2013).

Table 2. Housing

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>No response</i>
<i>It was easy for me to find housing in Japan.</i>	2 (11.8%)	4 (23.5%)	5 (29.4%)	6 (35.3%)	1 (5.9%)

At first glance the numbers in Table 2 give the impression that most of the respondents in the present study found it easy to secure housing. However the figures are unreliable because of inconsistencies in how the respondents responded to the statement *It was easy for me to find housing in Japan*. Among the respondents who received Japanese language assistance, some of them took into account the assistance and indicated *Agree* while others disregarded the help and indicated *Disagree or Strongly disagree*. The respondents' comments below present a more accurate picture of their experience.

Many foreigners do not know anyone in Japan when they first arrive, making it almost impossible to find a guarantor. Three respondents in the present study found the guarantor requirement challenging:

'(I strongly disagree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) It was very difficult to find housing in Japan. Based on my experience, it took me more than 3 months to finally find an apartment. The guarantor issue was the biggest hurdle for me. I had to wait for my application for guarantor to be approved by the university. So for 3 months, I stayed at Freebell apartments which do not require guarantor or deposit. It was a bit expensive staying there, though.'

The respondent above had to wait for a period of time for his request for his employer to serve as his guarantor to be

processed. While he waited he paid a premium for accommodation which did have a guarantor requirement. When his application to his employer was finally approved, his employers took out two months' rent from his salary as collateral (personal communication). The two respondents below both used the word *costly* in relation to the guarantor requirement but were not explicit about what was costly. They could be referring to either having two months' rent deducted from their salary as collateral by their employers or the fee required by companies that offer to act as guarantors.

'...the whole guarantor ordeal was time consuming, costly and frustrating.'

'Getting a guarantor was difficult, and ultimately, costly.'

Refusal of service by estate agents were reported by three respondents in the present study:

'(Finding housing was) Somehow difficult at the beginning, since several homeowners were not very willing to rent to foreigners.'

To understand and follow what is happening at a Japanese estate agent's office requires Japanese competency. Clients need to know what **shikikin** ('deposit') and **reikin** ('key money') are and how much they are, as well as the other items on the estimate such as maintenance, transaction fee and tax. They also need to understand the role the guarantor plays and who they may approach. There is a large amount of paperwork involved which needs to be filled in in Japanese. When the estate agent goes through the contract with the client, the client should be able to keep up with the agent. Before moving into their new homes, clients are responsible for setting up the electricity, water and gas supplies. Japanese language skills are necessary for the entire process of finding somewhere to live. The respondent below suggests that these skills may even help clients circumvent the *shikikin* and *reikin*:

'(I disagree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) ...it is widely known that Japanese language ability helps one to find a place without a deposit or thank you (key) money. To avoid the expensive 'system' as it is given to foreigners is therefore very difficult and requires some cooperation from Japanese speakers at the workplace to make its hidden aspects visible.'

Out of the 17 respondents in the study, seven respondents went to English-speaking estate agents when they searched for their current housing, four were assisted by Japanese speakers, three had their employers arrange their accommodation, one lived with her boyfriend and two did not indicate how they found their housing. The three respondents who had their employers set up their housing consistently chose *Agree* or *Strongly agree* for the statement *It was easy for me to find housing in Japan*. This contrasts with the mixed responses from those who went to English-speaking agents or received help from Japanese speakers.

Among the four respondents who were assisted by Japanese speakers, one was helped by a colleague, one was helped by friends, one by his wife and one by his fiancée:

'(I disagree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) I was able to find housing with the help of a Japanese-speaking colleague – otherwise it would have been quite difficult, because few places spoke English.'

'(I strongly disagree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) Would not have been possible in my current location without help from Japanese fiancée.'

At English-speaking estate agents' offices, the whole process of securing a place to live would seem more transparent and intelligible. Seven respondents in the study went to English-speaking estate agents:

'(I strongly disagree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) It was challenging to find a flat. In the end I chose Leo Palace, because they spoke English.'

English-speaking service, although convenient, often comes at a price:

'(I agree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) But to qualify this I went with an English-speaking company called Interlink to get a place. Their service was very good. I may have paid more than others for this...'

'(I strongly disagree that it was easy for me to find housing in Japan.) Would not have been possible in my current location without help from Japanese fiancée. I would have had to go with Leo Palace (an English-speaking estate agent) – very expensive, not good housing.'

3.3 Medical Services

Japan practices nationalised health coverage. All Japanese, with their national health insurance card, are entitled to medical coverage whether they are employed or not. This typically means they pay 30% of the full cost of the treatment they receive. A disadvantage of this universal health coverage is that no one without the health insurance card is entitled to healthcare unless they pay the full cost. Many foreigners (especially illegal immigrants from low-income countries) have been turned away from clinics and hospitals and refused even the most basic medical care because they do not possess the insurance card (Befu, 2006).

The Nagoya International Center, which provides support for foreigners in the region, has a link on its website which connects to a list of medical professionals who speak foreign languages. Based on more than 10 years' experience of living in this area and serving as liaison officer for foreign lecturers, the author has found that while doctors who have a good command of English do exist, many are not able to express themselves well in it. A respondent from the present study agrees with this view:

‘...I look up English-speaking doctors on the “I love Nagoya” website. But some of these speak such poor English that I have no idea what I am being prescribed. There is a very good doctor in Sakae named Dr Hitano.’

Language is an important factor in the negotiation of congruence between doctor and patient. ‘Talk is the fundamental instrument by which the doctor-patient relationship is crafted and by which therapeutic goals are achieved’ (Perloff et al., 2006:836). Difficulties in communication occur even when doctors and patients are from the same ethnic or socioeconomic background. When doctors and patients are from different backgrounds, the problems can be more severe. Communication can be hampered if doctor and patient come from different linguistic cultures (Perloff et al., 2006).

Table 3. Medical services

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly No agree response</i>
<i>It is easy for me to use the medical services in Japan.</i>	1 (5.9%)	5 (29.4%)	10 (58.8%)	1 (5.9%)

Although most of the respondents in the present study agree or strongly agree that it is easy to use the medical services in Japan in Table 3, 10 out of 17 respondents mentioned language issues in their responses. Language is a major concern. Despite the quality of medical services and efficiency of medical insurance, difficulties in communication can affect the perceived quality of care received:

‘(I agree that it is easy for me to use the medical services in Japan.) With the health insurance that we have, it is pretty much easy to use the medical services in Japan. It is cheap and staff and doctor are very accommodating. Though the language thing still hinders me from getting the best medical service in Japan, but generally it is okay for me.’

The language concerns the respondents have range from understanding specialised vocabulary to getting the message across:

‘(I agree that it is easy for me to use the medical services in Japan.) It is relatively easy for me to access medical providers, but it can be a challenge to talk about medical services. While I know the “household” words for body parts and functions, I usually don’t know technical vocabulary my doctors use. Likewise, there are many common diseases that I know about but which I cannot name in Japanese.’

‘(I disagree that it is easy for me to use the medical services in Japan.) This is an area I still feel uncomfortable with. My Japanese is OK for daily life, but specialized vocabulary that comes up at doctor or dentist visits can be challenging. I sought out a doctor and dentist that both speak some English, but there are still times when their diagnosis was off or I felt they didn’t help me as much as they could have due to me not being able to communicate what I wanted to say clearly. I have never had any serious ailments yet in Japan, but if I needed surgery, etc. I would be rather worried/concerned about clearly understanding the situation with my Japanese

ability.’

The second respondent above felt the treatment he received was sometimes compromised because he could not express himself well in Japanese.

In addition to the communication, language affects the empathy between medical providers and patients:

‘(I strongly disagree that it is easy for me to use the medical services in Japan.) This is very difficult I think. Doctors and nurses do not speak much English here in Nagoya, or so it seems. The doctor-patient relationship therefore does not exist, and aside from the practical issues of explaining and diagnosing I believe that it affects the emotional empathy of the doctor or the nurse and makes them feel less caring.’

The respondent above feels that language plays an important role in doctor-patient relationships. Since most medical providers in the area do not speak English well and many foreign patients do not speak Japanese, the doctor-patient relationship is non-existent. The respondent also pointed out that the lack of a common language compromises the emotional empathy of medical providers and makes them seem less caring.

4. Concluding Remarks

Globalisation, intensified internationalisation and the aging and declining Japanese population all point towards the presence of more foreigners in Japan. Foreigners need support when they set up life in Japan and afterwards in their daily life. The Japanese language classes and multilingual services provided by the local governments of Adachi and Shinjuku in Tokyo (Section 1) are absolutely necessary in other parts of the country.

Most of the research on migration into Japan adopt a policy approach. There is less research on what takes place at ground level. In this respect, the present paper makes contribution. Migration is taking place on a large scale and we need to study it from the standpoint of policy makers and policy as well as from the perspective of migrants themselves (Castles and Miller, 2003). This paper demonstrates the difficulty of co-existence when foreigners lack Japanese language competence. This point seems to be taken for granted and not discussed much in most of the literature on co-existence in Japan. In addition, most publications on co-existence base their arguments on how the Japanese view the issues or how they behave in this area. This paper takes up foreigners’ views, thus examining the issues from an outsider’s perspective.

The experiences of the respondents described in this paper (Section 3) only make up only one piece of the jigsaw puzzle. Different types of foreigners experience Japan differently. They encounter different discriminatory behaviour as the Japanese react differently to them. The author hopes that this is just the beginning of a series of studies on foreigners’ perspectives on co-existence in Japan.

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Note

1. This quote comes from data collected for a study on communication between the Japanese and foreigners. The sample is made up of 12 foreigners living in the Nagoya area and consists of four Americans, four Britons, one Australian, one Canadian, one Romanian and one Ukrainian.