

The Real World Today

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Asahi Press

はしがき

この教科書は、まとまった量の英文を読んで内容を理解する訓練をすることを目的としています。

現代では、何か情報を知りたいとき、まずネットを調べるようになってきたと思います。それに対応して、この教科書は、すべてネットに掲載された英文を素材にしています。もっぱらロイターと CNN のサイトから転載しています。

あえて内容が多岐にわたるよう心がけました。英語が日本の会社で公用語とされる話題、iPod と長寿、ブログと就職、スマイリーの起源、インターネットの創始者、元 FBI 諜報員が語るボディ・ランゲージ、ブラインドデートのメリット、アメリカの大学が禁止を提言した言葉、女性の経営スタイル、男性的な名前の女性が出世する話題、豊かになった中国でマスティフがブランド犬になっている話題、アフガニスタンやシンガポールのファッション業界、ドイツのマンガ事情、インドネシアの部族とハンゲル、韓国の予備校、医療ドラマ、などなどです。各章の冒頭につけてある短い導入の説明を読めば、全体のイメージを一気につかむことができます。

近年の授業時間数の増加に応じて、全部で 30 章としてありますが、すべて 1 章あるいは 2 章で読み切りになっています。実際に授業で使う順序は、この掲載順である必要はありません。各クラス毎に、ご自由な順序で読み進めてください。

いつもどおり忍耐強く的確に編集をしていただいた佐藤治彦さんに感謝します。

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"No English, No Job" for Some Japanese Office Workers

Benjamin Shatil

社内の「公用語」を英語に変更する会社があります。日本の会社の話です。

Disc
1

2

TOKYO — In a bid to plug dwindling domestic consumption by tapping into overseas markets, some of Japan's big-name retailers are telling their employees to start speaking English — or find another job. As Japan's population shrinks, the country's retailers are increasingly looking to boost sales by expanding abroad and some firms are waking up to the necessity of being able to speak the global language of business in order to succeed overseas.

Rakuten, Japan's biggest online retailer, plans to make English the firm's official language, while Fast Retailing, operator of the Uniqlo apparel chain, wants to make English more common in its offices by 2012 and plans to test its employees for proficiency. "It's about stopping being a Japanese company. We will become a world company," Rakuten CEO Hiroshi Mikitani said last week at a news conference in Tokyo — conducted almost entirely in English. Employees at Rakuten, which hopes overseas sales will eventually account for 70 percent of all transactions made through its websites, will need to master English by 2012 to avoid facing the sack. "No English, no job," Mikitani told the Asahi newspaper.

Other high-profile Japanese companies, including automakers Toyota Motor and Nissan Motor, have announced moves to make the use of English more common in the workplace.

Some experts say the switch to English is healthy but just one of the changes companies need to make to go global. "What's interesting is that these companies really stand out as pioneers," Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University's Japan

bid 「試み」
plug 「(穴などを) ふさぐ」
dwindle 「減少する」
domestic 「国内の」
tap into 「活用する」
retailer 「小売業者」

boost 「押し上げる」

wake up to 「気づく」

→ global language of business とは何ですか。

proficiency 「堪能」

account for 「占める」

sack 「クビ」

→ high-profile とは何ですか。

campus. "They have a relatively new outlook. They realize that Japan is going to need to strike into foreign markets given the dormant state of its economy," he said.

3 Facing dwindling domestic demand, Fast Retailing plans to broaden its consumer base by expanding into Malaysia and Taiwan later this year. To keep up with the company's internationalization, employees at Uniqlo's head office will need to score at least 700 out of a maximum 990 on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), a measure of English proficiency. Many Japanese employees may struggle to make the grade. On average, Japanese candidates perform worse than those from almost any other Asian country in English aptitude tests, according to a report published by the Educational Testing Service, which administers more than 50 million exams including TOEIC each year. Japanese tied with those from Tajikistan to finish joint 29th out of the 30 Asian countries surveyed in 2009. But Fast Retailing has no plans as yet to provide extra training to help staff meet new English-language expectations.

20 "How (employees) choose to meet these expectations is a personal choice," Daisuke Hase, a spokesman for Fast Retailing, told Reuters, speaking in English. Temple University's Kingston said, however, that the trend toward using English in office life was hardly likely to sweep the nation: "Will English become Japan's business lingua franca? I doubt it." In fact, Yoichi Wada, president of videogame creator Square Enix, tweeted an alternative suggestion this week. "Rather than make English the office language, let's use 'C'," he wrote — a reference not to Chinese, but to a computer programing language.

outlook 「見通し」

given 「…を考えれば」

dormant 「眠っている」

keep up with 「ついていく」

candidate 「受験生」

administer 「運営する」

joint 「共有の」

sweep 「広まる」

lingua franca 「リンガ・フランカ」 混成共通語

— Reuters —

EXERCISE

A. True or false?

1. Some Japan's retailers request their employees to speak English. (T / F)
2. Some Japan's retailers want to boost sales by expanding abroad. (T / F)
3. At a news conference Rakuten CEO Mikitani almost entirely spoke English. (T / F)
4. Japan's automakers are not likely to make the use of English more common. (T / F)
5. Employees at Uniqlo's head office will need to score over 800. (T / F)
6. On TOEIC the Japanese perform better than other Asians. (T / F)
7. Kingston thinks English will become business lingua franca. (T / F)
8. Yoich Wada suggests a computer programming language is more important than English. (T / F)

B. 次の質問に日本語で答えてください。

1. いくつかの日本の会社が決断したことは何ですか。

2. そのように決断した理由は何ですか。

3. 楽天についてどのように説明されていますか。

4. TOEIC についてどのように説明されていますか。

5. 社内で英語を使うことについて、そういった会社の外にいる者たちの反応を説明してください。

C. 全体の内容を 200 字前後の日本語で要約してください。