

# A Style Language for Enjoying Japan

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The number of inbound tourists in Japan is expected to rise to 40 million as of 2020. However, valid measures for these inbound tourists are not launched yet since there is a large gap between the sensitivities of Japanese people who are the service providers and the inbound tourists who visit Japan. Given such current situation, we created "A Style Language for Enjoying Japan" which verbalized how to enjoy Japan with Odakyu Electric Railway Co.,Ltd. Odakyu Electric Railway Co.,Ltd is a Japanese company that runs a railway operation and real estate businesses mainly in Tokyo and Kanagawa prefectures. The Style Language was created based on interviews to 52 people, in order to comprehend what kind of contents let the inbound tourists feel attractive in the terms of Japanese tourism.

Style language is a method for sharing various styles of doing in a specific theme or discipline which was developed through inspiration from Pattern Language. Currently, "A Style Language for Enjoying Japan" includes 196 styles categorized into three themes. In addition, we held some workshops using "A Style Language for Enjoying Japan". Through the workshop, it was suggested that "Style Language for Enjoying Japan" is not only a tool for designing sightseeing in Japan, but also could be a tool to have communication by giving some new ideas for enjoying countries and areas other than Japan. More than anything, it became clear that this style language becomes a tool grasping to what contents inbound tourists find attractive and filling a gap between the tourism which Japanese people provide and tourism which inbound tourist find attractive. In this paper, we are going to discuss the methodology of style language, the process of creating "A style language for enjoying Japan", some examples of usage, and the expected usage in the future.

Categories and Subject Descriptors: Style Language

General Terms: Tourism, Japan, enjoyment

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Tourists, Japanese tourism, Style cards, Pattern Language

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the number of tourists visiting Japan is gradually increasing. According to the estimates by the Tourism Authority of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, it is estimated that the number of tourists will reach 40 million in 2020, and the tourism is already becoming one of the most important components in the Japanese economy. Under such circumstances, there is a present state that contents which inbound tourists find attractive in Japan are not grasped clearly. Of course, numerous world-renowned contents such as 'Japanese foods' and 'shrines and temples' exist and some find them attractive. However, at the same time, there are many tourists who do not feel attractive to such contents (David Atkinson 2015), according to a questionnaire in a book "New Tourism Nationalism" written by David Atkinson, an expert on Japanese cultural properties from the UK.

In the current situation, the contents of experiences which inbound tourists have in Japan are unclear. Therefore, we eliminated prejudice and preconceptions about the expected spots inbound people find attractive and built up a hypothesis on numerous contents that may be buried and are still not recognized. The importance of 'diversity in terms of contents' in Japanese tourism business is strongly emphasized in 'New Tourism Nationalism', the book mentioned above (David Atkinson 2015.)

Given such situation, we created 'Style Language for enjoying Japan' focusing on the "Diversity" of ways for enjoying Japan such as ways of enjoying Japan for inbound tourists visiting Japan which they did not know before and the ways of enjoying Japan for Japanese people which make them feel nostalgic. Style Language is a

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method for sharing various styles of doing in a specific theme or discipline (Ryohei, S 2018). In "Style Language for Enjoying Japan", each style describes how and what kind of experience is available to enjoy Japan in certain facilities. As a result, a tool for designing tours in Japan which is completely different from the conventional guidebooks has been created. In this paper, we will discuss the methodology of style language, the process of creating "style language for enjoying Japan", some examples of usage, and the expected usage in the future.

## 2. WHAT IS STYLE LANGUAGE?

Style Language" is a new method for sharing various styles of doing in a specific theme or discipline and supporting designing own styles (Iba, 2018). As Pattern Language consists of several patterns and each pattern is called with a 'Pattern Name', Style Language consists of several styles and each style is given a 'Style Word'. This 'Style Word' makes the styles able to be recognized, remembered and discussed.

Both Pattern Language and Style Language support creative acts, but their functions are quite different. Pattern languages share practical knowledge and enhance the quality of the creative act, whereas style languages support giving recognition to the diverse possibilities (Figure 1). In other words, a style language is a language which expresses and provides insights into the diversity of approaches (Ryohei, S 2018). In this way, Style Language has some similarities with Pattern Language. However, their function and goals are quite different and the Style Language should be captured as a different concept from Pattern Language.

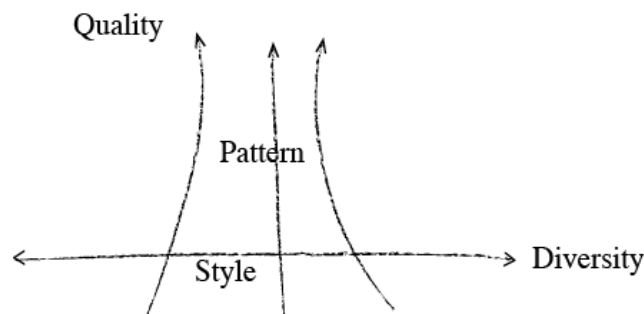


Fig 1: The relationship between Style Language and Pattern Language

"A Style Language for Enjoying Japan" describes various ways of enjoying Japan. For instance, there are many ways of enjoying Japanese foods since each person has own way to enjoy it, as some people enjoy Japanese foods in a quiet and calm atmosphere at high-end restaurants and conversely some enjoy it in a lively atmosphere with some alcohols at local restaurants.

Under such a situation, we chose the method "Style Language" as it would be the best approach for collecting and expressing the diversity of 'how to enjoying Japan.' "A Style Language for Enjoying Japan" is expected becoming not only a tool which gives recognition about own ways of enjoying Japan but also a tool for creating Tour Plans in Japan.

## 3. THE PROCESS OF CREATING

After explaining the flow of the process, we will talk about points that we were particularly aware while creating "A Style Language for Enjoying Japan".

The interviews were conducted to 52 people with various backgrounds for the search of ways to enjoy Japan that have not been unearthed (Figure 2). On conducting the interview, we used a method called "mining dialogue". "Mining dialogue" is an interactive interview methodology to elicit individual experience in certain fields. The interview was started by asking "What do you like about Japan?" and continue asking questions to uncover individuals' ways to enjoy Japan through the dialogue.

During the interview, the ways of enjoying Japan that was found through the mining dialogue were written down on sticky notes. As a result, using the method of mining dialogue, we were able to elicit seeds for styles from various perspective. From ideas that Japanese cannot realize easily like "on the Odakyu Line from

Shinjuku to Enoshima you can enjoy the rapidly changing views from the train.” to classical ideas like “at karaokes it is fun singing as much as you like and letting out the stress”.



Fig 2: Mining Dialogue

Each style was given a style name and sentences describing the style. As this style language was aimed for tourist, each style was written both in Japanese and English. Therefore we started by writing the styles in Japanese and translated it into English afterward. To make the sentences more attractive, we refined the styles at least 5 times keeping the essential parts(Figure 3).



Fig3: Select and refine the styles

Regarding the flow, dialogue mining/ writing the styles/ refining, as 1 cycle, totally we did 7 cycles and created 196 styles. The 196 styles are categorized into 3 themes, “enjoying looking、enjoying eating、enjoying feeling”, grouping them according to the similarities(Figure 4). By doing so, it makes it easier for people to have access to styles they would like to practice.

<p><b>Fresh Out of the Shell</b></p> <p>In Japan, eggs are largely enjoyed raw. The mild flavor and pleasant texture unique to raw eggs matches amazingly with various dishes. From “sukiyaki” where you can dip meat in raw eggs, to “tamago-kake-gohan,” a meal where raw egg is placed on top of steaming white rice, there are an abundant variety of meals you can enjoy with raw eggs.</p> <p><small>*“Sukiyaki”: soy-sauce based hot pot *“Tamago-Kake-Gohan”: raw egg and soy sauce on rice</small></p> 	<p><b>Blossoming in the Rain</b></p> <p>“Ajisai” bloom beautifully along with the rain. People tend to inevitably be in not as bright of a mood on rainy days, but it is only on these days that you can see the beautiful view of these brilliantly blossoming flowers covered in drops of water. Taking a walk with a cute umbrella and relishing the magnificent sight, you can enjoy rainy days with the feelings of a happy, sunny day.</p> <p><small>*“Ajisai”: hydrangeas, a type of flower</small></p> 	<p><b>Warm Winter Refuge</b></p> <p>As the seasons grow cold in Japan, everybody yearns to sit in a “kotatsu.” If there is a kotatsu in your hotel room, you can relax and sit in it to warm your chilled body after a long day of travelling. The time while you sit in a warm kotatsu and have a fun conversation with loved ones, eating “mikan” and enjoying a nice drink, is irreplaceable.</p> <p><small>*“Kotatsu”: a type of heated table with a blanket included to keep the heat in *“Mikan”: a Japanese type of mandarin orange</small></p> 
Enjoy with your taste buds	Enjoy with your eyes	Enjoy through experiences

Fig4: Three categories of styles

During the process of creating the style, we focused on visualizing how to enjoy. People can find books and other tools with information on how to enjoy Japan. Guidebooks are a good example. However, these tools are

only written with concrete sentences about specific facilities and sightseeing spots are and detailed information on what you can experience there. There is no description of what you can enjoy at places. Therefore, we aimed to create a tool that enables people to design their own tour wherever in Japan they are by visualizing ways to enjoy Japan. We created a whole new tool to support touring. In addition, we were conscious of not writing about services based on 'Japanese Hospitality'. We went through the interview, negative voices towards the Japanese hospitality was heard such as 'I feel like the Japanese services are being forced' and 'I feel a distance between the service provider and the tourists..' Since there are differences in cultural background, the thoughtfulness makes inbound people feel some uncomfortableness, although it is regarded as a virtue in Japan. Given such a situation, we concluded that 'Japanese hospitality' is just an unfamiliar culture of Japan and not a 'way of enjoying Japan'. Therefore, we decided not to include 'Japanese hospitality' in "Style Language for Enjoying Japan"

On creating the styles, we tried various measures. When we wrote the styles, we kept framing the sentences according to "What it is →What it has → What you get out of it". During the refining of styles, for the readers to easily percept the enjoyment from the styles, we tried many ways. As a result, we realized using "What it is →What it has → What you get out of it" made the style more attractive. We will explain in detail using an example of a style, "Priceless Rice"(Figure 5).

## Priceless Rice

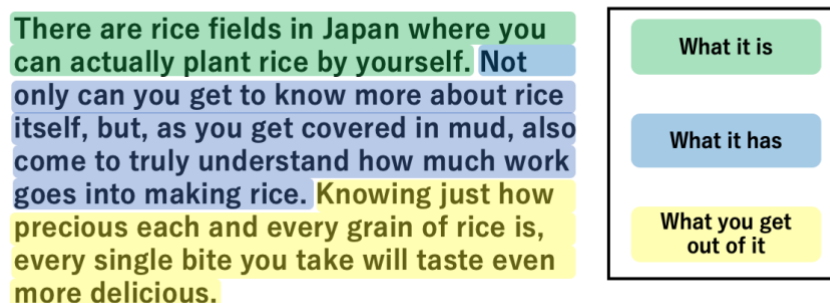


Fig5: One Example of Style

In this style, the rice planting is regarded as what it is. By actually doing rice planting, you will learn how hard it is to make rice. This is what rice planting has. Finally, by actually knowing and understanding the difficulty of making rice, the taste of rice will become more delicious. This is what you can get out of this experience. Given the word limit, the three elements "What it is →What it has → What you get out of it" is crucial to the description of "ways to enjoy".

During the phase of translating, we also tried some measures. We struggled finding the best way to keep each style "lively(Alexander, C 2003)" when translating into English. The term 'Lively' here is a quality which is able to be understood by actually experiencing and looking and it is difficult to be understood by just listening to an explanation. Most of the Japanese words with such 'Lively' are difficult to be translated into English. Giving an example, there is a word "Hygge" in Denmark and this word is expressed as 'a comfortable time and space' in Japanese. However, this is just a similar expression and not the exact explanation of the word "Hygge". Similar to this example of "Hygge" in Denmark, some measures for expressing the 'quality' existing in only in Japanese words for non-Japanese speakers were necessary. Under such circumstance, to make the English version also attractive and lead readers to practice the style, we decided to try 2 ways. One is to intentionally not to translate some words into English that were very Japanese, the other is to capture the essential meaning of the Japanese word and rephrase it into English. An example of the former is "Kinkin Beer"(Figure 6).



Fig6: One Example of Style

In this style, the Japanese word “kinkin” is also used in the English version. In this way, the texture the word “kinkin” has did not diminish and people can feel the liveliness from the sentences. An example of the latter is the style “Another Green”(Figure 7). In Japanese, deep green is expressed using the color blue. However, in this style, the essential part was not the “blue” but the deep green color the greenery has. Therefore, we chose to use “vividly deep” which is easier for the reader to have an image.



Fig7: One Example of Style

Trying such measures, we focused on taking up the way of thinking ‘Storytelling’ has. Storytelling is a method that gives readers a stronger impression by writing the facts in narrative style instead of directly presenting what happened. The liveliness in styles is kept by expressing what interviewees talked about in narrative style, not as a simple fact.

By taking these measures, the style became a tool that can deliver “ways of enjoying Japan” to various people both in Japanese and English.

#### 4. EXAMPLE OF UTILIZATION

##### 4.1 EXAMPLE OF UTILIZATION 1

February 15<sup>th</sup>,2019 Tour Making Workshop using “A Style Language for Enjoying Japan”

Candidate: Japanese Language: Japanese

On February 15th 2019, we held a chatting/idea workshop using “A Style Language for Enjoying Japan”(Figure 8).

The workshop was consisted by 2 parts. The chatting workshop and the tour making workshop.

First, the chatting workshop was held. Groups of 4 were made and each person in the group chose 6 styles. The breakdown of the 6 styles are, styles that you like, styles that you would like to try, styles that you do not prefer to do and styles you would like to introduce to the group. After choosing the 6 styles, the member of the table had the time to talk about their experiences, episodes and recommended ways of enjoying Japan associated to the styles they chose.

Then using the styles which the member chose during the chatting workshop the tour making workshop was held. Making a pair, and using three types of card, a style you like/ a style you would like to try/ a style you do not prefer to do, each person made a tour for the other. By doing so we were provided with some benefits. By choosing the style they like, they can add their preferable experience into his/her tour plan. The style you would like to try is a style that the individual has not tried but would like to do in the future, therefore, the participants can newly know what they can experience and enjoy. Lastly, the style you would prefer not to do, by choosing a style one does not like, they have a chance to look at it with a different perspective by having a partner. It may be an opportunity to change the perspective of the style and change one's mind. Additionally to the chosen 3 cards, the participants were able to add styles freely to the tour. As an inspiration, route maps were given out to each table. At the end, the participants had the time to give comments on other pair's tour and shared it within the group.



Fig8: Chatting workshop using “A Style Language for Enjoying Japan” in Japanese

Feedback from the participants.

I felt that this was the kind of tool the society needs right now.

The words that are used in the style were good. Both Japanese and English.

There were some mind opening styles about how tourists enjoy Japan.

200 styles were a lot and I was not able to go through everything. However, not being able to get a look at everything made me more curious about this style language.

#### 4.2 EXAMPLE OF UTILIZATION 2

March 19<sup>th</sup>,2019 Asian PLoP Idea Mining Workshop Using “A Style Language for Enjoying Japan”

Candidate: Japanese/ foreigners Language: English

On March 21st 2019, at Asian PLoP held in Japan, we conducted a workshop using “A Style Language for Enjoying Japan”(Figure 9). In the example of utilization 1, the participants were only Japanese, however in this workshop, both Japanese and people from other countries participated.

Starting by making a group of 5 and spread the 200 cards on the table, the member randomly picked up some cards that were interesting and had a chat with the members in the group. Then, by using the cards that the members picked up, the group made a tour plan that can be used in Japan. In the workshop, a paper with an empty time table from 6 am to 12 pm was passed out for each group. Participants of each group created a tour for one day by using the styles that the participants chose and fill that plan on that paper. The following is one example of the tours that participants created using “Fish of the season”, “The sounds of Japan”, “Discover Japan's past”, “Drink the ambiance” etc (Figure 9).

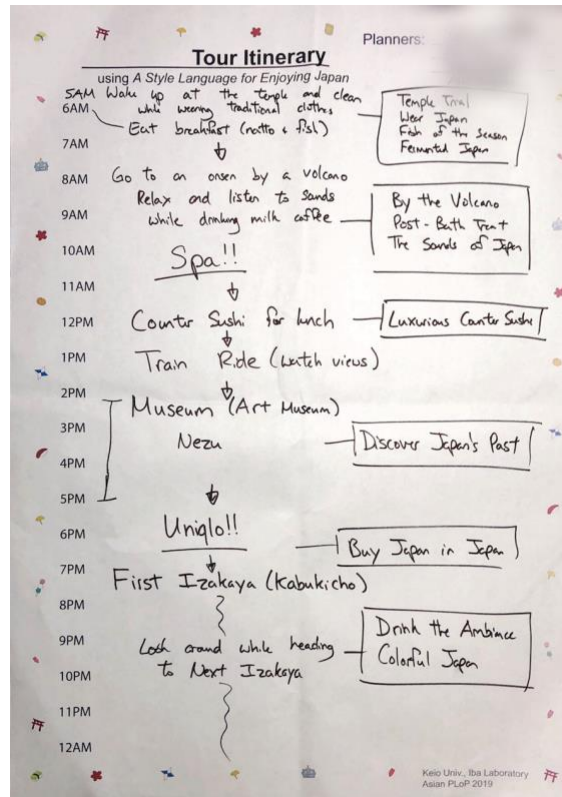


Fig9: Tour example

It was recognized that plenty of unique tours would be created by combining 195 styles innumably and that there were various ways of enjoying Japan. Furthermore, People from Japan had the opportunity to feel more attached to Japan by knowing what people from around the world like about Japan. At the same time, people from oversea were able to know the attractive part of Japan that people who lives in Japan only know.



Fig10: Tour planning workshop using “A Style Language for Enjoying Japan” in Japanese

#### Comments on the workshop

There were no questions regarding the styles from participants who have traveled Japan several times. The group had fun talking about what they had already experienced in the past and styles they liked. There were participants who came up with a new style. One of the participants also said, that this style language is a new and one of a kind tool.

On the other hand, there were feedback about some styles that were hard to think of places that they can actually practice. We felt the necessity of creating an application for users.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Through the workshops held in both Japanese and English, it was shown that both Japanese and non-Japanese could know new ways and could get many ideas for enjoying Japan by using cards of “Style Language for enjoying Japan.” Also, it became clear that this style language functions not only for grasping to what kind of contents the inbound tourists feel attractive and let them know ‘how to enjoy Japan’, but also to create opportunities for Japanese people to recognize ‘how to enjoy’ Japan since the styles were gathered through non-Japanese people’s point of view. In other words, ‘ways of enjoying Japan’ being buried under usual life were unearthed. Furthermore, it became clear that by having a conversation on each experience about ways of enjoying Japan, the “Style Language for Enjoying Japan” becomes a communication tool. In addition, it turned out that the style language can also be a tool for recalling ways of enjoying in countries other than Japan.

Moreover, as participants in workshops experienced, it was proved that this “Style Language for Enjoying Japan” could be used as a tool for creating tours. However, these tours created in the workshops has not been actually practiced. Therefore, how this style language could be utilized in the tourism industry is still unclear yet and this represent the necessity of further examples of utilization to find out further possibilities of the style language. Additionally, there is some possibility that this “Style Language for Enjoying Japan” is becoming a main tool for supporting tourism in Japan for inbound tourist since Olympic will be held in Japan in 2020. Further development of this style language’s usage can be expected, such as application development providing the styles, in order to let more people know about and experience this style language.

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