

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

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- *From:* "Ray" <raymondaliasapollyon@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 5 May 2006 20:01:23 -0700
-

muchan wrote:

(posting from Google group. (with gmail address))

Ray wrote:

In retrospect, I've just found that muchan's supposed willingness to help me was highly questionable. You guys can take a look at his very first post in the thread as follows:

=====
Probably this Ray is a linguist, who needs Japanese translation only to

compare the syntax with other languages. Having read the first post,
I thouth why should we translate into Japanese for one, who doesn't
understand (even won't study) Japanese, and so I ignored.
If he was linguist, I think he should have present a more realistic
example with clear meaning. (and so I'd keep ignoring the request...)
=====

When you posted the first post, you didn't made clear that you were asking this for linguistic study. I just guessed it. B.Ito and Cindy

I didn't. But why didn't you ask for clarification and simply ask me about the purpose?
You didn't at that time. And that really made me doubt your sincerity. I am not being demanding, but I think if someone wants to know the purpose for a certain question, he should openly ask so. (if the purpose is so important to the understanding of a question and he has the bona fide willingness to help.)

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

didn't realised it, and started to "help" you, without understanding the nature of question (I neither didn't understand why on earth you would asking such question) and I saw they were having trouble, so I wrote this post.

And I wrote in Japanese, I was addressing to those two. Then, I thought it may be fair that you could read this, as a critic for your first post, and as confirmation, that if my guess was correct or not. So I translated it into English.

I appreciated your translation of that post into English.

So, it seems that he didn't address my question in the beginning not because my question was unclear to him, but because I don't understand and won't study Japanese.

It's not so. My first reaction "why should we?" was because you didn't state the purpose of the question. Still, your question to write the analysis of sentence seemed me too demanding.

I am sorry, but you didn't ask about the purpose in your very post. You could have done that.

Could you tell me why my question is too demanding? In what way? If you mean it is difficult, again, you could have asked for clarification at that time.

For example, you could have asked "Is this for your research? Or do you

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

merely want to know how to express the meaning, which cannot be correctly expressed in one whole sentence in English, in flawless Japanese?)

You only said that for a questioner, knowing how to ask is important. Now I have some advice for you too in return: For an answerer, knowing how to decipher a question is just as important.

Every request to translate English sentence to Japanese, we approach with the same attitude to help. I have some principle, like I won't do it for a tattoo, I won't do it for student homework, etc. Your query was not such, so I tried to translate,

but seeing the original sentence like "Where do you think he was unhappy..." I abandoned. It's impossible to translate a sentence without understanding the meaning.

Again, you didn't ask about the purpose of the question first.

Instead, you automatically thought I needed a translation, while I stated in the very first post of the thread that I wanted to know whether it is possible to form a corresponding Japanese sentence, which is correct unlike the English counterpart.

Does this "is it possible to..." question indicate I was asking for a translation?

And it was this morning (here in Europe) I read your reply to Sean, that "Meaning is irrelevant". You may think so for the "technical" nature of linguistic discussion. But ask any professional linguist or professor, if they publish a book with example sentences not meaningful to the native speakers. His work would be discredited.

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

Although I said meaning is irrelevant to my inquiry, my example is meaningful, though perhaps multiply.

Please examine it again:

*Where do you think he was unhappy because he saw his enemy t?
(Note that this example is preceded by an explanation as the background; I told you "because" is moved out of the because–clause.)

Now, if you insist on the exact meaning that the sentence conveys, there are two possibility, given the structural requirement I mentioned;

1. The "because–clause" is construed on the level of the matrix clause.
2. It is construed on the level of the complement clause, i.e. the clause beginning with "he was unhappy..."

In either case, "where" cannot be extracted out in English. That shows meaning is not that important here. What matters is that "where" is inside the "because–clause".

Meaning is not irrelevant, if you want to be serious about any translation.

But I am not asking for translation.

(And if it's not so, why you have asked "from native speakers" from the first place?)

I told you I thought native speakers could be of much help when I started the thread,
But I've found that not every native speaker can be very helpful. There are further *requirements* (oh God, I am so afraid of this word now) on them. One is the ability to ask for clarification and read English

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

well, for example.

If he had been willing to help me in the beginning and thought my question to be unclear, he should have asked for clarification, rather than saying things like "...doesn't understand (even won't study) Japanese" as an excuse for delaying his help.

Why "I should have", and why I needed such excuse? You are not my employer.

"should" here doesn't mean obligation; take it as a suggestion.

You see English modals can cause misunderstanding here.

This is the begin of your problem. You were asking help in the thread,. but you never behaved as asking for help. Demanding or in your later phrasing, giving "instruction" how should reply be written, was already showing your

"I never behaved as asking for help"? I am sorry, but I did. I said "I'd appreciate your help" and stuff like that in some exchanges. I didn't need to repeat them every time I had an exchange with someone on the same topic, so it might appear to you that "I never behaved like I was asking for help."

Also, "instructions" simply means the steps that need to be taken before you can understand the question. It is therefore like the "instructions" on a recipe.

attitude. For me, this your attitude itself was the theme of this entire thread.

Yours as well. You know, you could have offered help without patronizing remarks.

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

If you could learn from critics, and wrote well thought, well behaved question, we on this newsgroups are enough good to help you further. You didn't see this point. That's what I said you were 16-years-old-esque.

You insulted me before that. Dont you see?

Was his help, which came much later than Bart's, really sincere? I doubt it.

He replied to Bart, you didn't see? He thought you were asking to native speakers (from the subject) so he was reluctant. Then he wrote some sentence he assumed acceptable to native speakers, then its our routine to say yes, or correct it.

You could have only replied to his post. But no patronizing remarks.

I was still criticizing your original question, and still by replying to Bart, wished you could learn some lessons (not linguistic lesson, for sure, but something you would need one day.) And so put some 'messages' to you in the form of replying to Bart. This attitude was sincer.

The reply to Bart was my first reply to his message. So I said polite stuff.

As I said, I don't think I need to repeat the stuff every time I have a bona fide exchange with someone. You can see I said "thank you" after the first exchange with Cindy and B. Ito.

I just regret that you didn't understood none of them. I had enough.

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

Re: I need some help from native speakers of Japanese

...and you didn't even noticed the smiley here and there and taking bite to them...

One thing you would agree, is that you should have written the Subject: " I need some help from (patient) Japanese linguists" , then we wouldn't have bothered with it from the first place.

The fact that I didn't write the subject that way doesn't mean you had to reply, did it?

Alright, it is undeniable that the subject invited native speakers who have no adequate background. But even without explicitly mentioning this *requirement* (again, please don't take the word at its connotation value), there are things that have been taken for granted, e.g. asking for clarification if one is willing to help.

Ray

muchan

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