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From Global to Glocal: How Gillette's SensorExcel Accommodates to Japan

by Michael L. MAYNARD*

Introduction

This study challenges the all-encompassing claim that global marketing integration has created a cultural homogeneity (e.g., Barber, 1995; Ritzer, 1998). The study closely analyzes cross-cultural differences between two advertisements, offering empirical data to show how local identity negotiates a cultural accommodation with the global Other. The perspective taken in this research is that global advertising as “one sight, one sound, one sell” (O’Barr, 2000) rarely succeeds as a standardized communication strategy. Contrary to Levitt’s (1983) call for global marketers to ignore cultural differences, transnationals inevitably make adjustments to the wording of the claims, the pictures used, even the naming of the product, to accommodate to the various cultures where the product is marketed.

Whereas “globalization” suggests a monolithic sameness as a result of convergent worldwide economic, financial and cultural flows, the coined word “glocalization,” at the very least, suggests some sort of accommodation. Glocalization challenges notions of cultural imperialism because the term suggests a negotiation process that appears to start from the inside out, i.e., a process that begins with a high regard for the local. The term “glocalization” connotes a successive development, as well as a challenge, to the top-down hegemony implicit in the term “globalization.”

After situating the study within the purview of advertising and globalization, I discuss the glocalization thesis in more detail, Gillette’s position in the global marketplace, and then I present the method of analysis, the findings, and conclude with thoughts about what image-making means across cultures in this current age of global communication.

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Advertising and Globalization

The globalization process is seen to include cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization, universalism and particularism, modernization and postmodernization (Friedman, 1994; King, 1990, Robertson, 1992). Globalization signifies the intensification of transsocietal flows or “global flows” of finance, communication and culture (Appadurai, 1990) to which the marketing imperative contributes, fostering a borderless economically integrated world. It may be argued that in terms of transnational flows of information such as global advertising and global marketing moves, Japan today is experiencing “the simultaneity of universalism and particularism” (Wallerstein, 1974).

Advertising, with its images of the Other juxtaposed with images of the Japanese would seem to reflect the degree to which globalization has penetrated Japanese culture. Prompted by Levitt’s (1983) provocative thesis that marketers ought to think globally because, in fact, that is the direction world economies are moving toward, much discussion of a standardized advertising product has ensued. Levitt suggests that products can be marketed globally with little change to the marketing message. Levitt views consumption communities as global in nature and implies that local community has little relevance in the larger framework of a global economy.

Global advertisers, concerned with “branding” products every way possible, are faced with questions about how much of their products’ identity (logo, spokes character, theme line, copy points) translates readily into the meaning systems of other cultures. The standardized approach of advertising the product as “one sight, one sound, one sell” offers efficiencies in creation and production. For example, the wordless Nike ad featuring Michael Jordan flying high over a basketball net and simply displaying the Nike swoosh logo at the bottom of the ad is “one sight, one sound, one sell” global advertising.

By the 1990s when the Nike swoosh logo was worn by top athletic endorsers such as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods and Pete Sampras, it became the most recognizable commercial logo in global sports (LaFeber, 1999). Another example, the Esso Exxon tiger, symbol of speed, power and leadership, has been the global “one sight, one sound, one sell” image for the oil corporation since 1927 (Link, 1988). Thus when possible, transmitting only an image, not words, offers the most efficient communication technique for sending the identical branding message across cultures. Beyond the obvious hurdle of language differences, iconic images such as logos promise superior connection with cultures of the world because people process visual information more efficiently than other types of information (Elinder, 1965).

Beyond the logo, the product image also may be standardized so its theme is recognizably identical everywhere in the world where it is sold. A global strategy combined with a local execution offers worldwide consistency in brand

image while tailoring the message to local cultures. The 1970s “Mean Joe Green” television spot featuring Pittsburgh Steelers’ tackle Joe Green drinking Coca-Cola and befriending a young fan, for example, was translated into many cultures using a variety of local sports heroes (Fisher, 1984). The form and structure supporting the theme (hero shows kindness to fan) was universalized while the actors were localized. Following this same substitution strategy, the American Express “Do you know me?” campaign was translated into many cultures, incorporating local celebrities from each nation (Domzal & Unger, 1987).

Advertising follows distribution, and no brand is a candidate for a global campaign unless it sustains a presence in many countries. World brands such as Nike, Coca-Cola, British Airways, McDonald’s, American Express and Kodak are global in the sense of presenting consistent product and promotion strategies everywhere they are advertised. The global brand combines consistent name, standardized product image and similar features (Domzal & Unger, 1987).

Yet the idea of globalization is complex, to say the least. Notions of global markets and global products which penetrate and crisscross cultural and national borders, raise conceptual and operational issues about how and where to apply a definition of “global.” Does global, for instance, mean the product is advertised identically everywhere in the world? Does global in fact simply mean that the product is advertised in several countries? Following Hassan and Katsanis (1991), it is reasonable to claim that global segments exist for certain categories of products. Fashion, for example, can be advertised globally in the sense that the same advertisement can be placed simultaneously in media outlets in many countries. An ad for Levi’s jeans represents a uniform message to cultural audiences as divergent as Germany, Argentina and Korea. In this regard, global advertising has what Domzal and Kernan (1993) call “culturally-transcendent meaning.”

The term “globalization,” with the “ization” denoting a process of “becoming,” may not suffice as an explanation for what is happening today. The world today may have indeed reached a critical point where globalization as a unifying principle in financial and marketing flows, particularly as they operate in Japan, already exists in full force. Accordingly, the dichotomized either/or oppositions of cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization, universalism and particularism and so forth mentioned above seem inadequate as explanatory concepts for what has transpired as a result of rapid innovations in communication technologies. Even the notion of cultural hybridity (Garcia-Canclini, 1995), seemingly a middle ground answer to the consequences of the clash of cultures, does not suffice. “Hybridity” assumes a fixed state of cultural identity which then is altered through contact with other cultures, resulting in a hybrid mix. Another way of approaching this is to assume cultures, being pliable, are now, and always have been, in a perpetual state of change, and that essentially our cultures, now and always, have been what Garcia-Canclini calls “border cultures.” By this he means we should see culture as an anti-essentialist and fluid category.

Yet “border culture” does not adequately describe Japan’s geographic position, or its relational position with other cultures. Instead, Japan is an island culture, both in the geographic and world societal senses. The Japanese themselves, aware of their position with respect to the world, refer to their way of thinking as *shimaguni-konjoo*, or, “island-country thinking/spirit.” Therefore, Garcia-Canclini’s admonition to see culture as anti-essentialist does not sufficiently apply to Japan. Rather, although Japan’s culture is fluid in that it is dynamic, in this study, particularly since its purpose is to contrast the local with the global, Japan, Japanese culture, and Japanese identity are viewed as being essentialist constructs.

Glocalization and the Japanese Market

Originally developed by Japanese business circles in the 1980s (Ohmae, 1990, Robertson, 1995), “glocalization” refers to the process whereby global corporations tailor products and marketing to particular local circumstances to meet variations in consumer demand. Glocalization has been described as a process: “the creation of products or services intended for the global market, but customized to suit the local culture” (The Word Spy, 2002). According to John Stanley, IBM-Europe’s director of marketing and services, as quoted in Peak (1991), “glocalization” is not where you do business, but how you do business. And the “how” is often thought to be a meshing between the guest multinational firm and the host local company. Glocalization is sometimes reported to be a reaction to globalization, or a reinforcement of cultural identity at the local community level. In terms of what the word means in the marketing sense, glocalization means that companies have to deal not only with worldwide considerations, but also, very expressly, with the specific rules and conditions of each country in which they operate. Glocalization represents the need for multinationals to be global and local at the same time. Put simply, whereas globalization is a move toward centralization, glocalization is a move toward decentralization.

Robertson (1995) sees glocalization or the interpenetration of the global and the local, as a defining feature of global society. The concept of glocalization offers ways of connecting large-scale (macro) and small scale (micro) aspects of the social world. Approaching the interpenetration of cultures from the glocalization perspective facilitates connections that have often been obscured by the association of globalization solely with macro-processes, such as the world market and the multinational enterprise.

Interestingly, the term “glocalization” applies most appropriately to Japan because the neologism, itself, in its synthetic combination of two words captures the proportionality of local to global. Its root form, “localization,” is the

foundation for the word. So, too, Japan is the foundation, the dominant actor in the process of the interpenetration of global and local as it applies to images presented in Japanese media. Everything starts with the local. The local forms the basis of interaction.

This said, however, the global reality of an increasingly integrated world of communications cannot be ignored. Thus, particularly in terms of marketing, the “g,” what is global, enjoins the “local” to create a “glocal” entity, such as an advertisement. The “g” fused onto the word “localization” graphically captures the melding process of interpenetration. While firmly rooted within the discursive space of what is local, the advertisement also includes the Other (what is global).

Given that the term glocalization is reported to have been coined by Japanese marketing professionals (Ohmae, 1990; Robertson, 1995), a closer look at how it is translated into Japanese is instructive. Glocalization is translated as *dochakuka* in Japanese (Robertson, 1996). English translations of the three ideographs *do*, *chaku*, and *ka* are “land,” “arrive at,” and “process of.” Thus a most literal translation of *dochakuka* (glocalization) conceptualizes the relationship between the multinational marketer and the host country as one of agency, i.e., the outsider arrives and acts upon the host culture, attempting to be perceived as native.

Gillette's Ads and the Global Marketplace

Among the top 100 global brands, Gillette is ranked 18 (*Business Week*, 2001). This ranking was determined by Interbrand's two stipulations that the brand be global, deriving 20% or more of sales from outside the home country, and that the corporation's financial information be publicly available. Gillette qualifies on both counts in that it has sales in 200 countries, serving some 1.2 billion consumers each day (Gillette Corporation, 2002), and because it is publicly owned, making its financial status open to scrutiny.

Razors and razor blades have been a staple for Gillette throughout its 100 year history. The Sensor shaving system debuted in 1989. Three years later, in 1992, Gillette introduced the Sensor for women. The Gillette SensorExcel for women, a line extension of the Sensor system, was then introduced in the U.S. in 1996, and later in Japan.

The data for this study consist of the above mentioned introductions. First, the July 1996 issue of *Seventeen*, page 35, features a one-page ad for the Gillette SensorExcel (Figure 1). This ad is targeted toward the American market.

Figure 1

Introducing The New
SensorExcel For Women.

Feel the difference.
You've never felt anything like *SensorExcel* for Women. It starts with a specially shaped handle, that makes it easier to shave even tricky areas like knees and ankles.

Feel the no-slip rubber grip for total control.
The handle has a soft, textured rubber grip on both sides, so it won't slip when wet. That means more control in the shower or bath.

Feel the soft microfins protect your skin.
They're positioned ahead of the blades to protect your skin from nicks and cuts while gently lifting stubborn hairs, so our spring-mounted twin blades can shave you closer yet with incredible safety.

Feel the moisturizing strip for extra smoothness.
There's even a unique strip with aloe and extra moisturizers for more comfort and smoothness.

It all adds up to our closest, smoothest, safest shave ever! There's no feeling in the world like the new *Gillette SensorExcel* for Women.

And try *Gillette Sartin Care* Shave Gel with rich moisturizers for silky smooth legs.

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Second, the June 1997 issue of *SEVENTEEN*, page 173, features a one-page ad for the Gillette Lady SensorExcel (Figure 2). This ad is targeted toward the Japanese market.

Figure 2

きれいが違う、いい感じ。
ジレット レディースセンサー エクセル




いい感じ1 ぬれ手に安全、ゴム製になったすべり止め。スノーケルなテクニクが好評のハンドルに、ゴム製の波型すべり止めが付きました。さらに、持ちやすくぬれた手にもすべりにくくなって、安全性がアップ。バスキームでも、コントロール自在です。



いい感じ2 肌にやさしく、しっかりシェーブのソフトなマイクロフィン。刃の間に付いたマイクロフィンが、肌をやさしくガードしながらムダ毛を立ち上げます。あとは安心して、しっかりきれいにシェービング。肌への新しい思いやりです。

ほかにもこんな、いい感じ

- アロエ入りスーマーで、なめらかシェービング
- ボディーのカーブに沿って動く、百練リンスラム
- 肌にスームス、数立サスペンション付き2枚刃
- 交換リントップ、ずっと使える替刃式
- さあいなフォルムの使いやすさ

さちみと朝らから、きれいが長持ち。
Gillette Lady Sensor Excel

NEW
シェーバー&ジェルで、もっといい感じ。
レディースセンサーエクセルとサテンケアがセットになりました。サテンケアを肌、顔にのびしてから、レディースセンサーエクセルでシェービング。なめらかに、剃り残しなく、すべアペに、しかも、肌の乾燥を防ぎしっとりとなごります。レディースセンサーエクセルが、毎日サテンケアが191200
ジレット ボディーシェーブキット

NEW
女性用ではじめての独立ワッフル。シェービングをなめらかにし、肌をいたわるアロエ成分が、肌荒れや乾燥を防ぎ、剃り残しをしっかりと取り除いて、シェービングの後に、さらさら肌を仕上げます。
サテンケア シェーブジェル 20g 100%
サテンケア

Although the two magazines share the same title, and same audience of young females, they are independent of each other and are separate entities. Translation of the Japanese text is available in the Appendix.

Method of Analysis

Within the aforementioned top-down conceptualization of *dochakuka* (glocalization) this study applies textual analysis to a matched pair of magazine advertisements for Gillette (one in the U.S. and one in Japan). Both advertisements share the same communication objective of introducing Gillette's SensorExcel shaver. In addition to the ads sharing the same objective, the magazines share the same title, *Seventeen* in the U.S. and *SEVENTEEN* in Japan; the same target, female teens from 14 to 17 years old; and essentially the same time of publication, the July, 1996, issue of the U.S. *Seventeen*, and the June, 1997, issue of the Japanese *SEVENTEEN*.

By holding constant as much as can be expected in cross-cultural analysis the (dependent) variables of purpose, product, publication, timing, and target, this study compares the (independent) variable of cultural accommodation (glocalization) to the Japanese advertisement. Line by line and image by image interpretative comparisons between the U.S. *Seventeen* ad and the Japanese *SEVENTEEN* ad are made in light of their differences. The purpose is to locate and make sense of the specific set of cultural accommodations Gillette (a global brand) makes to a local culture (Japan).

Textual Analysis

Headline

The U.S. headline, "Introducing The New SensorExcel For Women" overtly offers the sales message: Now there is a new razor for women, and it is called SensorExcel. The initial capital letters for each word in the headline add punch to the message, giving the headline the quality of an announcement. In terms of the manner in which the information is structured, the headline reads as hard news. The brevity of the six-word headline follows the well-known advertising principle of keeping the message short. Inclusion of the word "new" in the headline is thought to increase attention (Levinson, 1984; Vanden Berg & Katz, 1999).

The Japanese headline, literally translates into "(It's a) different prettiness, good feeling. Gillette Lady SensorExcel." Note that in contrast to the U.S. headline, the Japanese headline de-emphasizes an introductory tone. Instead, by placing the descriptors "prettiness" and "good feeling" first, the Japanese headline foregrounds the end benefits. By grammatically separating the presentation of these two benefits from the name of the product, the Japanese headline understates the product's newness. Note also the change in the name of the product, from SensorExcel for women to Gillette Lady SensorExcel (more about this later).

In addition, the word "*kiree*" (prettiness) in Japanese is the kind of word that establishes intimate rapport with the readers, i.e., teenage girls. Note that

the U.S. headline, however, does not contain such target-identity words, and instead maintains a more neutral “introductory” tone.

Rhetorical Style for Copy

The U.S. copy is structured around an open-ended call to action. The copy invites the reader to “feel, “ i.e., “feel the difference,” “feel the no-slip rubber grip for total control,” “feel the soft microfins protect your skin,” and “feel the moisturizing strip for extra smoothness.” Each of the four copy blocks is subsumed under these “feel” headers. The emphasis is on agency, and the ad implores the reader to “do” something. This rhetorical structure mirrors the penchant in U.S. advertising for employing the imperative.

The Japanese copy, on the other hand, asks the reader to do nothing. The information about the product is merely presented in a structured numerical set, “good feeling one,” and “good feeling two,” followed by “other good feelings.” Unlike the U.S. advertisement, the tone in the Japanese advertisement is indirect. This indirectness derives, it seems, from the Japanese cultural preference for leaving unsaid (i.e., you will feel the difference) what is obvious given the context (i.e., you are reading an advertisement). The Japanese language is known for organizing sentences in such a way to advance a state of “becoming” (Ikegami, 1991). This “stative” condition, and not a “do” condition, is certainly at play here in the design of the Japanese copy.

Use of Call-outs

Call-outs are captions or descriptive words connected by straight lines to illustrations or diagrams. Both ads show a cutout illustration of the shaving mechanism which features the soft microfins. The U.S. ad employs two callouts, “Moisturizing strip,” and “Protective Microfins.” The latter also shows a microscopic blowup of the fins, with a projectile depressing them to illustrate their softness.

The Japanese ad, however, features no callouts at all. Although illustrations of the shaving head and a close-up of the microfins are included in the advertisement, they are not captioned. This reflects the tendency in Japanese advertising for emphasizing mood, tone, and pleasantness as opposed to a hard sell that includes logical reasons-why. Information, and reasons-why are provided in the ad, of course, but the manner in which they are presented differs from how they are presented in the U.S. ad.

Use of English and Globalized *Katakana* words

Gillette is an American brand, and its heritage evident in its product names are quite expectedly provided in the English language. The U.S. ad, representative of the global condition, is presented entirely in English.

The Japanese ad is another case. English words in Japan appear virtually everywhere: on neon marquees, knapsacks, shopping bags, menus, transit signage, etc. From the perspective of the non-Japanese, Japanese advertising can be, and often is a bewildering hodgepodge of the Roman alphabet (English), Chinese characters and Japanese orthography.

The appeal of English may well be that it is not simply associated with America, but that the symbolic exchange value of English is cosmopolitanism (Fields, 1991; Takashi, 1990). As a symbol for prestige and cosmopolitanism, English more so than French or any other language, is favored among the Japanese because it is thought as the dominant, universal language (Burton, 1983; Tsuda, 1994). Tsuda, in fact, echoes Phillipson's (1992) warning against the diffusion of English throughout the world because it imposes the English lexicon upon other cultures. But in the case of Japan, English is welcomed. Accordingly, "Gillette Lady Sensor Excel," "Satin Care", and the word "new" are included in the otherwise all Japanese language advertisement.

Katakana words in Japanese are native English words which are represented in the syllabary designated for foreign words. Words such as "handle," "bathroom," "control," "shave," "microfin" and "smooth," for example, are included in the Japanese ad, and are presented in the *katakana* syllabary. These words (and many more), may be thought of as globalized in that they are both global (handle, for example) and local (*handoru*, for example).

Gender Markers in Product Name

The different product names point to a key distinction between the two cultures. In the Japanese ad the razor is called Gillette *Lady* SensorExcel. The following discussion attempts to explain why this is so.

One of the archaic dictionary meanings for "lady" is "an attribute or abstraction personified as a woman; a designation of an allegorical figure as feminine" (Random House, 1966: 801). Examples include Lady Luck, Lady Fortune, Lady Liberty. Marketers have co-opted this prefixing marker of what is feminine, using it in a shorthand way of telling customers that when "Lady" appears in a name, it means the product is for women (e.g., Lady Sunbeam Shavemaster, Lady Foot Locker).

Since the start of the Women's Movement in the early 1970s, however, heightened sensitivities in American culture toward words used in describing females have largely precluded the usage of "lady" as a gender marker. Cur-

rently in American culture, the attributive use of lady, as in “lady doctor,” is widely regarded as condescending and inappropriate (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). When gender is relevant, the words “woman” or “female” are preferred. Thus, for example, in public discourse concerning the designation of gendered sports, “Women’s Basketball” and “Women’s Tennis” have largely replaced the terms “Lady’s Basketball,” and “Lady’s Tennis.”

So it comes as no surprise that for the American market Gillette chose to name its new model “the SensorExcel *for women.*” Although “ladies” is still used commercially, yet seemingly in a restricted sense such as in the headline for a flyer “20% off all ladies dresses” (K-Mart, 2002), “women’s” appears to be the preferred, non-controversial female gender designation. This is so particularly when the apparel ties in to a more androgynous lifestyle. Running shoes marketed to females, for example, are designed thus: Nike Women’s Air Burst, New Balance Women’s 555, and Jordan Women’s Retro 6.

In Japan, however, the word “lady” carries positive connotations. The meaning of “lady” to the Japanese, even when appearing in a commercial context, may resonate somewhat with this *Oxford Dictionary* (1990: 661) definition, “a woman regarded as being of superior social status or as having the refined manners associated with this.” Assuming that through words and visuals advertising adds values to what are otherwise merely functional products, attaching “Lady” to the SensorExcel in the Japanese culture would seem to elevate the value and the status of the shaver. The name communicates the value equation that positions the Gillette *Lady* SensorExcel as the appropriate shaver for ladies (i.e., women who see themselves as well-groomed and who aspire to holding high social status).

The use of “lady” is not unusual in Japanese advertising for personal grooming products, at least not for foreign manufacturers of shavers. Even in the same *SEVENTEEN* issue, on page 100, for example, the Schick Corporation makes use of “lady” in its advertisement for its shaver, the Lady Protector. It seems that “lady” is double valenced in that it carries meanings of both refined manner and, because the word is presented in English, Western higher social status.

It should be noted also that Gillette *Lady* SensorExcel is presented both in English and in Japanese (*katakana*) in the advertisement. As mentioned earlier, prominent displays of English words and product names in Japanese advertisements add a sense of cosmopolitanism, thus contributing further to a message that suggests value.

Visual Analysis

The U.S. ad depicts a Western model in the shower, applying the shaver to the lower part of her leg. She is standing, as would be expected for one who washes one’s body in the shower. Although another disembodied visual shows

a woman's grip on the product, the vertical photograph of the model in the shower is the dominant visual.

The Japanese ad, on the other hand, shows the same Western model sitting next to what appears to be a bath tub. Here she would have been washing her body while sitting down. A smaller inset photograph shows her shaving under her arm. An even smaller inset shows a woman's grip on the product.

Using one model for both advertisements intended for the two different markets is economies of scale. Gillette saves by not having to hire a second model for Japan. At the one photography shoot, most likely a variety of shots were taken of the Western model, including those where she appears to have taken a shower and those where she appears to have taken a bath.

It should be noted that Western models in Japanese advertising is not unusual. Ramaprasad and Hasegawa (1990) found that roughly 16% of television commercials in Japan featured non-Japanese, Western models. Similarly, Miller (1994) found that roughly 17% of the actors appearing in his study of 285 commercials were non-Japanese. Inclusion of Western models in Japanese advertising is thought to increase the "spectacle" of the ad (Creighton, 1997), thus contributing to the advertisement's ability to attract attention. In particular, the synergy of Western models featured in ads for Western products would seem to enhance the image of foreign-ness and add to the product's appeal.

Although the model is the same in both ads, her environment is different. Clearly, the shower represents the more common environment for Americans, whereas the bathtub (even though not the traditional Japanese *ofuro*), represents the more common environment for the Japanese. Each ad reflects the culturally preferred posture a woman would assume in washing. Also, in the U.S. ad the woman appears to be nude, whereas in the Japanese ad, the woman is wearing a bath robe. In these differences, Gillette the global brand, is accommodating to the local, and positioning the SensorExcel as compatible with Japanese sensibilities.

The visual configuration of the text in the Japanese ad is horizontal, running as it does in the West, from left to right. Although traditional Japanese text runs vertically, down the page, this horizontal style of textual presentation is a common occurrence in Japanese, and is used frequently in advertisements.

The headline, however, is presented in the traditional vertical style. And the headline is thought to be the most important message, if not the most intimate message in the advertisement. Moreover, the headline is positioned to the far right of the ad, the position from which traditional Japanese text begins.

Thus, although the information in the two ads is essentially identical, and the purpose of the two ads is to introduce the new Gillette product, the manner in which the information is presented differs considerably. The Japanese ad shows an accommodation to Japanese sensibilities.

Reflections

Given the definition of “glocalization” as meaning the simultaneity, the co-presence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies (Robertson, 1995), the Gillette ad for the Japanese market is a representation of glocalization. The global, such as universalizing aspects of English and the worldwide branding of Gillette, are meshed with the local, the particularizing aspects of the Japanese culture.

From the broader marketing perspective, glocalization also entails developments in communication and computerization which have made it possible for subsidiaries located in disparate parts of the world to coordinate product lines and markets. The Gillette subsidiary in Japan, along with the advertising professionals who service the account, have no doubt worked together in coordinating the introductory advertisement of the SensorExcel to the Japanese market. Such close coordination is evident in the universalizing tendencies toward a “one-sign, one sell” image for Gillette.

Treating the U.S. ad as the global representation for the introduction of the Gillette SensorExcel, its “glocal” accommodations as evident in the Japanese ad can be isolated and delineated. The specific accommodations, aside from the basic change from English to Japanese are changes in 1) headline wording, 2) rhetorical structure, 3) copy emphasis, 4) product name, 5) visualization of product in use, 6) configuration of headline, and 7) use of call-outs.

Of course, these accommodations are communicational concessions to the host culture, part of what it means to be “glocal.” The differences in the localities where Gillette products are sold must be taken into account when messages about this global brand are re-constructed into its local forms. Ad makers strive to create an image for the home (outside) brand that is as close as possible to being perceived as a host (inside) brand.

Returning then, full circle, to the notion of *dochakuka*, where one “arrives at the land,” the Gillette Lady SensorExcel, by its essentially Japanese-like presentation, announces itself as native, or as near-native as one can expect. Given that many originated-in-Japan products have English names (e.g., Success, Brother, Panasonic, Sony), it is quite possible that *SEVENTEEN* readers may wrongly assume Gillette to be Japanese. More importantly, it may not even matter.

The ultimate outcome of the glocalization phenomenon in terms of marketing and advertising, may well be a blurring of the country-of-origin tag. The borderless economies, and the transnational flows of communication which are seemingly transpiring even more rapidly, conspire toward a convergence of product types and similar life styles. After all, personal grooming products such as the razor and razor blade are equally at home in America as they are in Japan.

Yet as this study has shown, despite the overriding imperative for more of the highly industrialized civilizations to look and to act alike, deeply held cultural cues cannot be ignored. In the advertising of a global brand such as Gillette, the introduction of its product extension, the SensorExcel for Women, accommodations will be made, transforming the message from global, to the glocal.

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APPENDIX

Translation of Japanese ad for Gillette Lady Sensor Excel, in the 1997 issue of *SEVENTEEN*, p. 173.

Kiree ga chigau, ii kanji.

(It's a) different prettiness, good feeling.

Jiretto redii sensaa ekuseru

Gillette Lady Sensor Excel

Ii kanji 1 *Nurete ni anzen, gomusei ni natta suberidome.*

Good feeling 1 Safe to wet hands, slip-stop now made of rubber.

*Yuniikuna katachi ga koohyoo no handoru ni, gomusei no namigata suberidome
ga tsukimashita.*

To the uniquely shaped handle, praised by many, attached is the wave-patterned slip-stop.

Sarani, mochiyasuku nureta te nimo suberi nikuku natte, anzensei ga appu.

In addition, it has improved safety: it's easy to grip and won't slip even when your hands are wet.

Basuruumu demo, kontorooru jizai desu.

Even in the bathroom, control is easy.

Ii kanji 2

Good feeling 2

Hada ni yasashiku, shikkari sheebu no sofutona maikurofin.

Tender to the skin, close shaving, that's (possible with) soft microfins.

*Ha no maeni tsuita maikurofin ga, hada o yasashiku gaadoshinagara mudage o
tachiagemasu.*

Microfins placed in front of the blades, while guarding the skin, gently lift the hair.

Ato wa anshinshite, shikkari kireini sheebingu.

Leaves you feeling secure, having shaved closely and beautifully.

Hada e no atarashii omoiari desu.

It's a new caring and consideration for your skin.

Hokanimo konna, ii kanji

Other good feelings

Aroe iri sumuusaa de, nameraka sheebingu.

With an aloe-containing smoother, (you get a) smooth shave.

Bodii no kaabu ni sotto ugoku, kubifuri sisutemu.

The spring-mounted blade system moves (smoothly) along the curve of the body.

Hada ni sumuusuu, dokuritsu sasupenshon tsuki nimaiba.

Smooth to the skin, twin blades with independent suspension.

Kookan wan tatchi, zutto tsukaeru kaebashiki.

With the one-touch blade-changing system, you can use the shaver for a long time.

Kireina forumu no benrina sen'yoo toree tsuki.

Comes in a special convenient tray with a pretty shape.