

Cross-Cultural Humor: English Speakers' Gaffes in Japanese

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From personal acquaintances and experience:

- Ordering “circumcision” (*katsurei*) in a restaurant instead of the intended breaded deep-fried pork and egg on rice (*katsudon*).
- Pregnant (*ninshin*) woman in hospital: “I’m a carrot” (*ninjin*).
- Next-door neighbor (in Nagoya) politely inquires, “Is your wife at home (*miemasu ka*)?” Answer: “Yes, she can see (*miemasu kedo*), but why do you ask?”
- Confusing chopsticks (*hashi*) and bridges (*hashi*).
- Misunderstanding polite refusals (*ii desu*) as enthusiastic acceptances (*ii desu*).

From “[50+ Funny and Embarrassing Japanese Language Mistakes](#)”:

- Calling babies and children “scary” (*kowai*) instead of “cute” (*kawaii*).
- Calling people carrots (*ninjin*) instead of “human beings” (*ningen*).
- Preacher commends “sexual” (*seiteki*) experience, not “spiritual” (*reiteki*) experience.
- Saying, “My stomach is a watermelon” (*onaka suika*) instead of “I’m hungry” (*onaka suita*).
- Actually discussing “earthquakes” (*jishin*) while assuming the topic was “confidence” (*jishin*).
- When making a cold-call visit, misunderstanding “Go home!” (*Kaere*) as “Come on in!” (*Haire*).
- Asking a woman to marry you (*Oyome ni narimasu ka*) while intending to ask her to read something (*Oyomi ni narimasu ka*).
- Asking, “How are the eggs?” (*Tamago-tachi wa dou desu ka*) instead of the intended “How are your grandchildren?” (*Omagotachi wa dou desu ka*).



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