
【研究論文】

Literature Review of the World Englishes: Japanese English

ワールドイングリッシュに関する文献レビュー：ジャパニーズイングリッシュ

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Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to investigate the ways that the English language has been locally adapted in Japan from a World English perspective. The relevant literature has shown that Japan's rapid modernization has resulted in the adoption of English language loanwords, many of which have gone through linguistic changes; (1) orthographical changes allow loanwords to be transcribed into the *katakana* syllabary so that they can function in the Japanese lexicon; (2) phonological changes, such as syllable expansions and phonemic additions and substitutions, occur because many English sounds are unavailable in Japanese; (3) morphological changes include the abbreviation of long loanwords and combinations of abbreviated words to create completely new words; (4) semantic changes refer to the alteration of the original meaning of English words in a Japanese cultural context; and (5) syntactical changes occur when Japanese grammatical elements are affixed to loanwords to grammatically fit Japanese sentence structures. These linguistic changes could indicate that English-derived words in Japanese are significantly different from the original English.

Keywords: Janglish, Japanese English, *katakana* English, *wasei eigo*, World English

本文献レビューの目的は、日本で適応した特有の英語について、ワールドイングリッシュの観点から調査するものである。関連文献によれば、急速な近代化によって日本では英語由来の外来語が広がり、それらの多くが言語学的変化を遂げたとされる。(1) orthographical changeとは、カタカナで書き表すことにより、外来語が日本の語彙として機能できることを指す。(2) phonological changeは、syllable expansionやphonemic addition、phonemic substitutionのように、多くの英語の音が日本語に存在しないことから生じる。(3) morphological changeとは、長い外来語が省略されたり、省略語が組み合わせられて別の言葉を成したりすることを指す。(4) semantic changeとは、日本の文化的脈絡において、外来語の意味が本来の英語の意味から逸脱することである。(5) syntactical changeは、日本語の構文に文法的に適合するよう、外来語に日本語の文法的要素が付け加わることで生じる。これらの言語学的変化により、英語由来の外来語が本来の英語からかけ離れていることが示されたといえる。

キーワード: ジャングリッシュ、ジャパニーズイングリッシュ、カタカナ英語、和製英語、ワールドイングリッシュ

The term World Englishes is defined as varieties of English, including not only American and British English, but also other varieties of English spoken in different parts of the world, which have naturally arisen from colonialization or as languages for global communication (“World Englishes,” n.d.). Honna (2016) and Saraceni (2010) explained that the way that the English language spreads and functions is significantly different from country to country because when English was first introduced, the language was indigenized, which resulted in regional or local varieties. In some Asian countries where the interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers is very limited, English has developed unique linguistic features over time to fit specific cultural contexts (Honna, 2016). In particular, Japan is a prominent example of a monolingual society with a low foreign-born population (roughly 2%) (Backhaus, 2006; West, 2016). However, modern Japanese now has many words that are derived from the English lexicon and are widely used in the media, advertising, products, Japanese songs, computers, information technologies, and academia (Hogan, 2003; Huynh, 2013; Ikeshima, 2005; Kjeldgaard, 2014). There are also many English words and phrases in Japanese daily speech and writing that have grammatical and lexical errors (Ikeshima, 2005; “Japlish,” n.d.); these words and phrases are informally known as Janglish (“Japlish,” n.d.). Considering that Standard English generally refers to the English language widely accepted and understood within an English-speaking country or throughout the English-speaking world, free of regional, class, and other shibboleths (“Standard English,” n.d.), English words and phrases used in Japan now have little relationship with Standard English.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine the way the English language has become localized in Japan from a World English perspective by first examining the historical background for the adaptation of the English language in Japan and then reviewing the linguistic English language features that have been adapted into Japanese.

Literature Review

Historical Background

Tomoda (1999) observed that the Japanese language has had a long history of borrowing words from other languages. The Japanese vocabulary is made up of four main lexical words: Japanese native, Sino-Japanese, foreign loan, and hybrids (I. Taylor & M. Taylor, 1995). Japanese native words are known as *wago* (Japanese words) and are derived from ancient Japanese (Shibatani, 1990; Sugito, 1989; Tomoda, 1999); sino-Japanese words are known as *kango* (Chinese words) and were borrowed from ancient Chinese (I. Taylor & M. Taylor, 1995; Shibatani, 1990); other loanwords are known as *gairaigo* (foreign words) (Abe, n.d.-a; Akamatsu, 2016; Sugito, 1989), which means ‘the language that came from the outside,’

whereby outside mainly refers to English and other European languages (Sugito, 1989; Tomoda, 1999); and hybrid words are known as *konshugo* (mixed words), which are word combinations from the three previous types (Akamatsu, 2016; Sugito, 1989; Tomoda, 1999).¹ Therefore, the Japanese language has many loanwords from Chinese, English, and other Western languages (Blair, 1997; Shibatani, 1990); however, many of the Chinese loanwords have been part of the Japanese language for so long that they are no longer recognized as loanwords (Abe, n.d.-a); for example, Chinese characters had already been integrated into the Japanese language and thus they were not regarded as foreign words by the end of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) (S. Tanaka & H. Tanaka, 1995).²

By contrast, Japan's contact with the West was more limited because of its geographical location (Morrow, 1987); Japan is separated from America by the Pacific Ocean and from Europe by the continent of Asia (Morrow, 1987). However, between the 14th and 16th centuries, when European languages and cultures entered Japan as part of the Christian missions (Morrow, 1987; Tomoda, 1999), new loanwords were introduced (Tomoda, 1999).³ Because of these influences, the Tokugawa regime believed that these Western influences would threaten Japan's internal stability, and consequently imposed a period of national isolation, known as *sakoku*, from 1640 to 1853 and cut off ties with most Western nations except for some limited trading with the Dutch (Garvin, 2015; "Tokugawa Period," 2009; Morrow, 1987). At that time, therefore, the Japanese people learned about the West primarily through *Rangaku*, which was the name given to the concerted effort by Japanese scholars to learn the Dutch language and Western technology from this period up to the mid-19th century (Atsumi & Bernhofen, 2011; "Rangaku," n.d.).⁴

Linguistically speaking, the crucial turning point was possibly the arrival of American Commodore Matthew Perry's so-called black ships in 1853, which forced Japan to establish diplomatic and trade relations with the U.S. (Morrow, 1987; Schneider, 2011; Smits, 2006). Perry's arrival forced the Japanese people to end the closed country policy and open the country to foreign influences (Dower, 2010; Hayashi, 2008), which led to significant changes in the political, economic, and education systems (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006; Kubota, 1998). As a result, English replaced Dutch as the major Western language studied in Japan (Kubota, 1998). When the so-called Meiji (Enlightened Rule) Restoration began in Japan in 1868, the Japanese people tried to achieve rapid modernization by introducing Western cultures and technology (Daulton, 2008; Hino, 1988; Kay, 1995). The adoption of the Western customs and aspects of its culture was accompanied by an influx of foreign words (Kay, 1995); this is because native equivalents were insufficient or simply did not exist when describing novel ideas and concepts brought from Western countries in many cases (Ishikawa & Rubrecht, 2008). Consequently, these lexical

adoptions allowed the Japanese people to overcome communication obstacles that occurred during the modernization (Ishikawa & Rubrecht, 2008). During this period, Anglo-American cultures, in particular, were venerated in an attempt to rapidly modernize (Hino, 1988).

However, it began a period of extreme appreciation of its own culture and thus, English language instruction was discouraged during World War II (Hino, 1988; Kay, 1995; Kubota, 1998). Nevertheless, during the post-war period of US occupation of Japan, political, social, and economic reforms were strongly influenced by the American system, which once again encouraged an appreciation of Anglo-American values, culture, and language (Hino, 1988; Kay, 1995; Kubota, 1998; Olah, 2007). For these historical reasons, most lexical items in *gairaigo* were derived from the English language (Ishikawa & Rubrecht, 2008; Olah, 2007) and other European languages have tended to be restricted to specific purposes, such as medicine, art, music, and food (Abe, n.d.-a; Stanlaw, 2004).

In the last three decades, there has been a rapid increase in the number of *gairaigo* words being used in daily Japanese (Rebuck, 2002). It was estimated that approximately 5 to 10% of ordinary daily Japanese vocabulary was *gairaigo*, 80% to 95% of which originated from English (Abe, n.d.-a; Stanlaw, 2004); for example, the number of *gairaigo* entries in major Japanese dictionaries increased from 25,000 in 1967 to over 56,300 in 2010 (Huynh, 2013; Rebuck, 2002), which means that today, there are possibly even more *gairaigo* being used. Yamazaki (2002) observed that *gairaigo* was more likely to be regarded as technical vocabulary in medicine, beauty, fashion, and sports; and yet, people began using such technical words in their daily life because of the advancements in technology (Yamazaki, 2002). Hogan (2003) concluded that these loanwords filled gaps in the Japanese lexicon for previously unnamed objects or concepts. Consequently, the entry of *gairaigo* into mainstream Japanese became a discussion topic in the media, the government, and in the general public (Olah, 2007). Continued economic prosperity and the development of communication tools, such as the Internet, have also facilitated the adoption of English language words into Japanese (Nakagawa, 1996). As reported by Huynh (2013), more than 20,000 *gairaigo* words, mostly English loanwords, were added to Japanese in just two decades, from the 1990s to the 2010s, due to globalization and Internet communication.

Linguistic Features

Kay (1995) claimed that when English words enter the Japanese language, they undergo one or more of five linguistic changes: orthographical, phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactical.⁵

Rebuck (2002) suggested that a basic knowledge of the Japanese writing system can assist in understanding the way that English loanwords fit into the system. The Japanese language uses four writing scripts: *kanji*, *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *romaji* (Abe, n.d.-b; Akamatsu, 2016). *Wago*

is written in *kanji* or *hiragana*, *kango* is written in *kanji*, *gairaigo* is written in *katakana* (or *romaji* in some cases), and *koshugo* is written with a mixture of *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana* (Akamatsu, 2016; Sugito, 1989). The term *kanji* (Chinese characters) refers to the ideograms adapted from characters of the Chinese writing system, while syllabaries based on *kanji* are called *hiragana* and *katakana* (“Kana,” n.d.; “Kanji,” n.d.), and *romaji* (Roman letters) refers to the letters of the Roman alphabet (I. Taylor & M. Taylor, 1995), which is sometimes used for road signs, company names, acronyms, and English translations for foreigners, but overall is much less widespread than the other three scripts (Akamatsu, 2016). *Hiragana* and *katakana* are categorized as syllabic writing, or a syllabary writing system, in which a single symbol represents a syllable (Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Trask, 2007). *Gairaigo* words, therefore, are conventionally written in *katakana* (Tomoda, 1999) because the domestic Japanese phonetic syllabary enables foreign loanwords to be easily absorbed into the Japanese linguistic system (Huynh, 2013; Kay, 1995; Nakagawa, 1996). Kay (1995) explained that any words could be transcribed into *katakana* because the transcription is based on the sound of the English word. Kay (1995) and Stanlaw (2004) further explicated that the *katakana* script acts as a pronunciation guide and shows the approximate pronunciation of words directly borrowed from English, such as the transcription of foreigners’ names into Japanese. Even though *romaji* could also be used for *gairaigo*, the spelling would still reflect the sound of the *katakana* transcription (Huynh, 2013).

Further, as indicated by Kay (1995) and Olah (2007), English has 12 or more vowel sounds; however, apart from the five pure vowel sounds (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*) and the ‘n’ sound, all other Japanese sounds are based on consonant-vowel syllables (Kay, 1995). Therefore, aside from words that begin with ‘n’, consonant clusters in English are broken up with vowels in Japanese transliterations, such as *tekunosutoresu* (technostress), and words that end in a consonant other than ‘n’ must end in a vowel, as in *beddo* (bed) (Kay, 1995). Olah (2007) explained that this phonological change is called a syllable expansion, in which an English word with few syllables is expanded in Japanese to fit the pronunciation system. The English vowel and consonant sounds not available in Japanese are given the nearest Japanese equivalents to replace them, such as ‘th’ (replaced by ‘s’ or ‘z’) and the schwa sound (replaced by such Japanese vowels as ‘a’) (Kay, 1995). Patil (2006) also noted that phonemic addition and substitution are features of Japanese English, which sometimes result in misinterpretation, as in the case of *flied lice* (fried rice). Furthermore, two different English words may have the same transcription, such as *basu*, which refers to both bath and bus (Kay, 1995). English loanwords that are pronounced based on the *katakana* system are known as *katakana eigo* (*katakana* English) (Miller, 2013; Underwood, 1999). There are also some loanwords for which the initials are written in *romaji*

and are always pronounced based on the Japanese pronunciation of the English letters, such as OL (office + lady), which refers to a female clerical worker (Kay, 1995).

Morphologically, Kay (1995) suggested that borrowed English words can be very long because of the necessity to add extra vowels to accommodate the Japanese syllabic structure. Consequently, there is a tendency in Japanese to use abbreviations of these long loanwords (Granger & Paquot, 2010) by omitting (‘clipping’) part of the original, as in the case of *masukomi* (mass commu[nication]) (Granger & Paquot, 2010; Kay, 1995; Matsuura, Rilling, Chiba, Kim, & Rini, 2016). Abbreviating and combining (‘blending’) words also produces new terms, such as *sekuhara* for sexual harassment (Granger & Paquot, 2010; Kay, 1995). Many neologisms have also been developed by uniquely combining English words, such as *opun ka* (open + car) for a convertible (Kay, 1995). These neologisms are called *wasei eigo* (‘made in Japan English’) (Hogan, 2003; Kay, 1995), and are modeled on English, but have been remodeled and adopted into modern everyday Japanese lexicon (Barrs, 2013; Miller, 2013). There are also many loanblends or words made from a combination of words from two different languages, such as *haburashi* (toothbrush), which is made up of *ha* (Japanese for tooth) and brush, and *rorupan* (bread roll), which is a combination of roll and *pão* in Portuguese (Kay, 1995; Olah, 2007). Additionally, many loanwords are shortened to save time when speaking (Olah, 2007). Usually this occurs when people are unaware of the original form of the word (Olah, 2007). These shortened versions can become a standard way of saying or writing the word, as in the case of *akuseru* for accelerator (Olah, 2007).

Huynh (2013) observed that one of the distinctive features of the English loanword has been its adaptation in meaning to accommodate the lexical needs of the Japanese language. As borrowed words generally tend to acquire culture-specific meaning, they also undergo some semantic modifications including a slight change in nuance, a complete deviation in meaning from the English cognate, or they even take on new meanings in Japanese (Kay, 1995; Huynh, 2013). Such coined loanwords of English origin are also referred to as *wasei eigo*, such as *kuuraa* (cooler) for air conditioner and *shoto katto* (short cut) meaning short haircut (Kay, 1995; Huynh, 2013). Some English words have also given rise to two forms with different meanings, such as *airon* for an iron and *aian* for a golf iron (Kay, 1995).⁶ Kay (1995) and Huynh (2013) also observed that some English loanwords in Japanese have narrower, more specific, or restricted meanings in Japanese compared to their original counterparts, such as the word *purin*, which only refers to caramel custard pudding in Japanese.

Finally, Japanese grammatical elements are also affixed to loanwords to enable them to fit into Japanese sentence structures as if they were native words (Kay, 1995). For example, many loanword nouns can be used as verbs with the addition of Japanese *suru* (to do), as in *shopping*

suru (to do some shopping), and some loanword adjectives take Japanese adjectival or adverbial endings, as in *ereganto-na* (elegant) and *ereganto-ni* (elegantly) (Kay, 1995).

Conclusion

The English-language expert David Crystal estimated that the number of English-users has topped 350 million in Asia alone and that non-native speakers of English now outnumber native speakers by three to one (Power, 2005). The diversification of English therefore is a natural outcome of the international spread of the English language (Honna, 2016). Consequently, people express regional pride and a sense of belonging to a place by speaking English in their own way (Schneider, 2011). Therefore, English is not only viewed as an international language, but has also become localized and indigenized to fulfill important local functions (Schneider, 2011). Honna (2016) noted that in many countries, people cannot speak English without including some of the foundations of their own language and culture; this phenomenon is also observed in Japanese people, who cannot use English without using Japanese features (Honna, 2016).

This literature review has shown that the Japanese language has a long history of borrowing words from foreign languages. Japan's rapid modernization and technological developments have facilitated the inclusion of many *gairaigo* words in Japanese that originated from English words. A striking feature of such English-derived words is that they undergo orthographical, phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactical changes, meaning that these *gairaigo* words are often significantly different in both sound and meaning from the original English words. Many Japanese people are aware that the English-derived words that have undergone significant linguistic changes are no longer legitimate loanwords (Miller, 1998; Tomoda, 1999); consequently, separate metalinguistic terms are used, such as *katakana eigo* and *wasei eigo* (Miller, 1998). In other words, it could be suggested that a unique type of English language has been developed in Japan for local communication. Based on these considerations, it is questionable whether or not this 'Japanese English' can be truly regarded as English language, as non-Japanese speakers are unlikely to understand these words because of the linguistic changes that they have undergone. Nevertheless, the locally adapted English-derived loanwords called *gairaigo* have become integrated into the Japanese language and play an important role in modern Japanese communication, and therefore could be considered a local variety of World English.

Footnotes

- 1 Japanese adopted Chinese characters for its writing in the late 4th century because at that time, the Japanese language had no written communication system of their own (Olah, 2007). Intellectual culture, including Chinese language and Buddhism, were transferred to Japan from the early 5th century to the middle of the 6th century (Frellesvig, 2010).
- 2 According to Hall (1971), the Tokugawa (or Edo) Period was from 1600 to 1868 or 1603 to 1867.
- 3 For example, many words commonly used by Japanese people today, such as *pan* for bread and *tabako* for cigarette, were introduced by the Portuguese people (Kay, 1995).
- 4 As a result, many words related to medicine and science were borrowed from the Dutch language, and it contributed a number of words that remain in use today, such as *kohi* (coffee) and *biru* (beer) (Kay, 1995).
- 5 In linguistics, the term orthography refers to a writing system (Trask, 2007); phonology refers to a sound system (Trask, 2007); morphology refers to word structure (Trask, 2007); semantics refers to meaning; and syntax refers to sentence structure (Trask, 2007).
- 6 This is despite the fact that the word 'iron', in fact, also has both these meanings in English depending on the context (see "Iron," n.d.). Therefore, there is a possibility that the Japanese people have just taken both meanings and have not in fact changed the meaning.

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