Relating Katakana English to the English Original or Equivalents: Implications for English Education in Japan

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English loanwords or katakana English are sometimes regarded as "degenerate" but in reality many are now an integral part of contemporary Japanese and are used frequently on a daily basis. Knowledge about English loanwords would benefit Japanese English learners, helping them to become more sensitive to pronunciation, acquire more vocabulary, and develop grammatical skills. The purpose of this study is to consider the role of English loanwords in Japanese, provide a comprehensive typology of loanwords, and compare them with their English equivalents. There will also be a brief discussion of the educational implications of this kind of contrastive analysis of English loanwords in Japanese English language instruction.

英語借用語（またはカタカナ英語）はしばしば歪められた英語として蔑視されることがあるが、一部の極端な形態の例を除けば、その大部分が現代日本語の不可欠な要素になっており、日常生活で頻繁に使われている。したがって、これらを英語授業に導入することは、発音・語彙・文法などの面で英語習得に貢献できると考えられる。この研究は、英語借用語について多かれ少なかれ知られている事実を整理しなおし、元々の、あるいは相当すると考えられる英語の語句と比較することを目的とする。また、このようン作業が、日本の英語教育に対してどのような意味合いを持つか、簡単な考察を行う。

WHEN WE consider the role of English in Japan, we cannot ignore the phenomenon of English loanwords, or in Japanese, *gairaigo* or *katakana* English. According to studies conducted in the 1970s by the National Institute for the Japanese Language (1971, 1972, 1973, 1974), which were based on an examination of major newspapers, English loanwords at that time accounted for approximately 8% of Japanese vocabulary. Likewise, Arakawa (1977) indicated that a contemporary edition of a dictionary of loanwords contained no less than 27,000. More recently, Nakayama, Kiryu and Yamaguchi (2009) investigated a major Japanese newspaper, Mainichi (Tokyo edition of morning and evening papers), from over a 10-year period (1994-2003) and extracted the most basic and most frequently used words written in katakana or Roman characters. Of 8,226 such words, 1,299 were identified as being among the top 25% in frequency; of these, 30 were strictly Japanese or Chinese usage, which

left 1,239 as mostly English and to a lesser extent European-language based. Clearly, the use of katakana English is very prevalent.

Moreover, English does not seem to be simply borrowed in Japanese but appears to denote a particular symbolic function. For example, Japanese pop songs often use *good-bye*, which can be simply replaced by the Japanese *sayonara*. However, by using the English phrase, the song assumes a very different nuance of modernity or novelty or exoticness. This type of use is termed *semiotic*. Semiotics is a science of signs (van Lier, 2004), and thus semiotic functions of English refer to symbolic rather than surface "dictionary" meanings of English used in text.

English in fact is often used not only in contemporary Japanese pop music but also in neon and shop signs, menus, magazines, posters, advertisements, cartoons, clothes, newspaper headlines, and even traditional Japanese poetry of *haiku* and *tanka*, producing new elements of audacity, symbolism, poetry, artistry, exoticness, modernity, freedom, novelty, and creativity (Stanlaw, 2004, pp. 101-126; Seargeant, 2009, pp. 106-131; Barrs, 2011a, 2011b). English also symbolizes the world outside Japan, and stands as something that connects Japanese people to foreign countries and foreigners (Yashima, 2002). Finally, it provides a new voice for women in particular (Stanlaw, 2004, pp. 127-142), giving them greater rhetorical power, more linguistic options, and freedom.

Because of the prevalence of katakana in common usage and the special semiotic role these words play, greater attention to English loanwords could enhance English learning and teaching. However, the current textbooks for junior and senior high schools approved by the government hardly includes explicit lessons on this subject.

One obvious way to relate English loanwords to English learning is to compare them with the original or equivalent English vocabulary items. This may help learners to acquire a larger vocabulary, better pronunciation, and more accurate

grammar. For example, Daulton (1998) showed that use of English loanwords in Japanese as a basis for learning English improved pronunciation by 69%. Kato, Yamamoto, and Sakata (1987) also believe that Japanese learners of English will be assisted in acquiring not only more accurate English but also a greater amount of vocabulary and a better sense of the English mind-set. This can be accomplished, according to them, through knowledge of how the pronunciation, meaning and usage in katakana English deviate from the original English (pp. iii-iv). To this end, they have developed a katakana English dictionary with a special focus on *wasei eigo*, Japan-made English words and expressions. Finally, over 60% of the college students in a study by Olah (2007) felt that English loanwords should be taught more in English classes. Thus, incorporation of English loanwords into regular English lessons may serve to enhance current English teaching methods.

The purpose of the present paper, therefore, is to present a typology of English loanwords in Japanese together with the original or equivalent English from which they are derived. There will also be a discussion of how the knowledge of such loanwords might be useful in relation to English education in Japan. It is hoped that such a typology will be particularly useful for teachers who are relatively new to English teaching in Japan.

Terminological Definitions and Methodology

Before we move on to the categorization of English loanwords, we need to clarify certain terminologies. First, in the present study, *English loanword* and *katakana English* will be used interchangeably. In this regard, it is necessary to briefly discuss three types of English loanword as defined by Stanlaw (2004, pp. 19-20). One is the English loanword in its true sense in that English is borrowed because of the absence of an equivalent in Japanese. A second is the so-called "made-in-Japan English" or *wasei eigo*. In this case, English vocabulary is used but it assumes a new

meaning, or possesses a subtle nuance which is not present in the original or equivalent English. A third is a variation of the second type and usually consists of part of vocabulary items from two languages. These are usually English and Japanese but sometimes other languages may be used instead of Japanese. However, this third type has rather non-transparent meanings even to Japanese native speakers. For this reason, it will be excluded from discussion in this paper and we will focus on the first two types, both of which will be referred to as either English loanwords or katakana English. Actual examples of these types will be presented later in this section.

Secondly, in terms of notation, English loanwords in this study will be written first in Japanese, followed by pronunciation codes in brackets, and then by their English meaning or equivalents in parentheses. It also should be noted, however, that English loanwords can be expressed in not only katanaka but also Roman characters, *hiragana* or even *kanji*. In fact, they can be written in a combination of any of these writing systems. Nevertheless, their expression in katakana is the most prevalent form, and therefore, the phrase katakana English will be used in this study to refer to English loanwords even if they are written in characters other than katakana.

Thirdly, the categories will be based on specific linguistic aspects: namely, phonological, formal, grammatical, and semantic dimensions. This will be followed by special examination of Japan-made English (*wasei eigo*) on one hand and loanwords based on or inspired by non-English European vocabulary items on the other. As described earlier, since English-inspired or Japan-made vocabulary items have their own unique meanings and nuances, they deserve special attention for analysis. Loanwords that are based on or inspired by non-English European vocabulary are often erroneously thought to be English loanwords and therefore require some discussion regarding their impact on English learning. The categorization of the following

section is an adaptation of that by Kato et al. (1987), and the examples are taken from a range of sources (Kato et al., 1987; Stanlaw, 2004; Tanaka & Byer, 1987).

Categorization of English Loanwords in Japanese
Phonological Aspect

The first factor to consider when comparing English loanwords with the original English or English equivalents is their pronunciation.

Consonant-Ending Words Becoming Vowel-Ending

First, there is the phenomenon of consonant-ending English words ending up having a vowel at the end in katakana. For example, *nice* becomes [naisu], *mail* becomes [meeru], and *ticket* becomes [chiketto].

Romanized Pronunciation

Another factor is that katakana English is often based on Romanized pronunciation, which makes it difficult to guess the original English whose pronunciation is usually not Romance-language based, such as Spanish. In addition to this, English words are notorious for inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation, and therefore it can be challenging to guess not only the original English sound but also the spelling. Examples include オーブン [oobun] (*oven*), グローブ [guroobu] (*glove*), and サタン [satan] (*Satan* [séitən] but not *Saturn* [sǽtən]).

Absence or Inconsistency of Sounds

Another source of phonetic confusion is the absence of English sounds in the Japanese system and their inaccurate or ambiguous representation. This often results in multiple possible

English words for one katakana English word. For example, in the Japanese system, the distinction between [r] and [l] sounds is blurred and both are lumped together as the Japanese ラ行 [ragyo] sounds. Thus, ライト [raito] may be *right* or *light*; ライター [raitaa] can be *writer* or *lighter*; and ラップ [rappu] *wrap, rap* or *lap*.

Other such challenging sounds and sound combinations include the following: [v] - [b]; [f] - [h]; [Θ] - [s]; [ti] – [chi]; [tu] – [tsu]; [σ] - [z]: [æ] - [ɑ] - [ə] - [ʌ]; [si] - [ʃ]; [zi] –[ji].

Simplified Pronunciation

In the Japanese sound system, double vowels are not necessarily enunciated and thus end up being single vowels. Thus, reconstruction of the original English in this regard can be challenging. Examples are: ウエスト [uesuto] for *waist, waste,* or *west;* コード [koodo] for *cord, code,* or *chord;* and コート [kooto] for *coat* or *court.*

Formal Aspect

There are a few types of this kind. One is where only the front portion of a word/words is retained in the katakana English. For example, パソコン[paso-kon] (*personal computer*), シャーペン [shaa-pen] (sharp pencil or *mechanical pencil*), and エアコン [ea-kon] (*air conditioner*).

Another type is the reverse, where only the latter portion is retained. Examples are: ホーム [hoomu] (*platform*), ネル [neru] (*flannel*), and ニス [nisu] (*varnish*).

Still another type is where plural -(e)s or past participial endings –ed are omitted. The suffixes are often omitted by Japanese learners where such omission is not crucial to comprehension or conveyance of the meaning. Also such words are more natural and easier to pronounce in Japanese. Examples are: マッシュポテト [masshu-poteto] (*mashed potato*), アップダウン [appu-daun] (*ups and downs*), and サーフィン [saafin] (*surfing*).

Grammatical Aspect

One type in this category is where the English noun, often a gerund, is accompanied by a Japanese auxiliary verb –*suru* to form a new verb. Examples are: クッキングする[kukkingu-suru] (to *cook*), クリーニングする [kuriiningu-suru] (to *clean*), and ランニングする [ran-ningu-suru] (to *run*).

A similar type is where the English verb is used as a noun to create a Japanese verb by adding –*suru* to the English. プロポーズする [puropoozu-suru] (to *propose* [a marriage]), エキサイト(する) [ekisaito-suru] (to *get excited*), and エンジョイする [enjoi-suru] (to *enjoy oneself*).

Still another is the transformation of an English adjective into a noun in order to create a new adjective by adding –*na*. Examples are: エキサイテイングな [ekisaitingu-na] (*exciting*), スムーズな [sumuuzu-na] (*smooth*), and タイムリーな [taimurii-na] (*timely*).

Finally, there is the transformation of an English adjective into an adverb by adding –*ni*. Examples are: ジャストに [jasuto-ni] (*just/exactly*), スムーズに [sumuuzu-ni] (*smoothly*), and カラフルに [karafuru-ni] (*colorfully*).

Semantic Aspect
Specification of Meaning

This class is where the meaning of English loanword is narrowed down after adoption from the English original. For example, サービス [saabisu] (*service*) is primarily used in the sense of price discounts, special offers in sale, and customer service whereas the English original has various meanings including the condition of being put to use, ritually prescribed acts as in church service, and a kindly act. Because the original has a broader range of meanings, its reversion is relatively easy.

Expansion of Meaning

Conversely, some loanwords end up having broader meanings than the original. For example, カーペット [kaapetto] (*carpet*) can refer to *carpets, rugs* and even *runners*; グランド [gurando] orグラウンド [guraundo] (*ground*) can mean *earth, playground, cricket-ground, field,* or *baseball field;* ジュース [juusu] (*juice*) may include *100% fruit juice, soft drink,* or *deuce* (as in tennis).

English-Inspired Loanwords or Japan-Made English (Wasei Eigo)

This category may overlap with the formal and semantic aspects; however, to highlight their originality and creativity of conception, these loanwords are included in a separate section.

Some of these loanwords are single words such as クーラー [kuuraa] (cooler or *air-conditioner*), ストーブ [sutoobu] (stove or *range*), ファイト[faito] (fight or *Hang in there!, Hip, hip, hooray!*), and カンニング [kan-ningu] (cunning or *cheating on a test*).

However, many actually have two-word forms. For example, ゴールデン・アワー [gooruden-awaa] (golden hour or *prime time*), オールド・ミス [oorudo-misu] orハイミス [hai-misu] (old miss / high miss or *old maid/spinster*), and キーホルダー [kii-horudaa] (key holder or *key ring, key case, key chain*).

Sometimes, English prefixes or suffixes are attached to English / foreign words to create new words:ナイター [naitaa] (nighter or *night game*), アルバイター[arubaitaa] (arbeiter or *part-time worker*).

Finally, there are imitations of Western languages for trademarks of Japanese products:チャック(巾着)[chakku] (derived from kinchaku = a *traditional purse*), セメダイン [seme-dain] (*cement-dyne*), and クレパス [kure-pasu] (*crayon pastel + pastel*).

Western Language Origin Words Other Than English

These are not exactly English loanwords; however, they are often believed to be of English origin and used by Japanese learners in their English. Therefore, they are included here to raise awareness. It should be noted, however, that there are differences in terms of their pronunciation.

- *Portuguese*: カステラ[kasutera] (pao de Castella = *sponge cake*), パン [pan] (pão = *bread*), and ボタン [botan] (botão = *button*).

- *Spanish*: カナリア [kanaria] (canaria = canary) and プラチナ [purachina] (platino = *platinum*).

- *Dutch*: オルゴール [orugooru] (orgel = *music box*), ゴム [gomu] (gom = *rubber*), and コック [kokku] (kok = *cook/chef*).

- *French*: アンケート [ankeeto] (enquête = *questionnaire*), コンクール [konkuuru] (concours = *concour*), ズボン [zubon] (jupon = *trousers, slacks, pants*).

- *German*: アルバイト [arubaito] (Arbeit = *work*), エネルギー [en-erugii] (Energie = *energy*), ボンベ [bunbe] (Bombe = *tank*), ワッペン [wappen] (Wappen = *badge, emblem*).

- *Italian*: カルテット [karutetto] (quartetto = *quartet*), ビエンナーレ [bien-naare] (biennale = *biennial*), ファッショ [fassho] (fascio = *Facism*).

- *Russian*: カンパ [kanpa] (kanpaniija = campaign à *fund-raising, contribution*), コンビナート [kinbinaato] (kombinat = *industrial complex*), ノルマ [noruma] (norma = *norm, quota, assignment*).

- *Latin*: ウイルス [uirusu] (virus = *virus*), パピルス [papirusu] (papyrus = *papyrus* [pəpái(ə)rəs]), ミサ[misa] (missa = *Mass*).

Implications of Teaching English Loanwords for English Education in Japan

Phonology

Consonant-ending English words are often pronounced by Japanese learners with a vowel sound added at the end. Pronunciation of a consonant is a challenging task both linguistically and psychologically because it is a drastic change from the Japanese way of pronouncing words.

Related to this is the tendency of Japanese learners to pronounce English words in Romanized ways. This is perhaps due to a misconception that Romanized characters and their sounds are based on English. In reality, English is not a member of the Romance language family, and it has developed its own pronunciation system, which has resulted in "notorious" discrepancies between spelling and pronunciation. Thus, it is very important for teachers to convey the notion to their students that English has its own pronunciation distinct from "Roma-ji" (Roman characters).

It should also be explained to them that despite the seeming discrepancies between English spelling and pronunciation, there are some recognized regular patterns. However, it seems that these phonological rules based on spelling are not necessarily taught at junior and senior high schools. This may be a first step to overcoming the phonological gaps between katakana English items and their English originals or equivalents.

Moreover, English is now being taught at the primary education level in Japan. For this age group, acquisition of native-like pronunciation comes more easily (Flege, cited in Ellis, 1999, p. 2); therefore, if this natural acquisition of English sounds is combined with some logical explanations about the discrepancies between Japanese English and English counterparts, their learning may be reinforced. However, such an approach using logical explanations may be more effective for older learners in junior high and above (Bongaerts, cited in Ellis, 1999, p. 2).

Form and Grammar

English loanwords are often formed by taking the first or last half of English words or a combination of such parts of two words. This type of knowledge alone can help Japanese learners "reconstruct" the English equivalents. The verb loanword taking the form of –suru is also relatively easy to deal with because –suru precedes a gerund; thus, if the English suffix -ing is removed, the plain form English verb is usually given automatically unless the spelling has been altered in the process of adding -ing such as run changing to running (two ns), age changing to aging, or picnic to picnicking.

A somewhat more challenging task is to find the English equivalents from the verbal loanwords consisting of a verb and –suru, or the adjectival loanwords consisting of an adjective and –na, or adverbial loanwords consisting of an adjective and –ni. The difficulty of the first type lies in the fact that usually the Japanese language requires a noun before –suru whereas the English loanwords of this type require a verb. More confusingly, the type mentioned in the previous paragraph requires a gerund, which is a noun. While this can be overcome by keeping the form in mind that a gerund always has –ing at the end, the real challenge appears when the verb changes from transitive to intransitive (or vice versa) between the English loanwords and their equivalents. For example, the loanword エキサイトする [ekisaito-suru] is used intransitively (to get excited) whereas the English equivalent excite is a transitive verb (excite someone/something).

The second and third types of loanwords mentioned above (taking -na and –ni forms) are also confusing in terms of the altered parts of speech. English loanwords taking the –na form have an adjective before –na whereas the Japanese words of this type take a noun before –na. Likewise, loanwords taking the –ni form use an adjective before –ni while the Japanese words take a noun. Although these are discrepancies, they are regular within

the loanwords and therefore can be assimilated rapidly once they are brought to the learners' attention.

The most challenging grammatically, however, is the type of loanword which drops the plural form *–s* or *–es* or the past participial suffix of *–ed*. Thus, マッシュポテト may be thought of as *mash (a) potato* (a verbal phrase) rather than *mashed potato*, サーフィン as *surfin'* instead of *surfing,* or アップダウン as *up-down* (an adjectival phrase) not *ups and downs*. Each one presents an interesting case. *Mash potato* can mean the same thing as *mashed potato* if *mash* is treated as a noun meaning *what is mashed*, whereas if *mash* is taken as a verb this can be a quite confusing phrase. *Surfin'*, in contrast, is not so problematic because, in colloquial text, an *–ing* form is often written as *-in'* (such as *singin'*). *Up-down*, on the other hand, may be more challenging because in English *up-down* is an adjective (as in *up-down controls*); if it is to be used as a noun it requires a plural form and two plural nouns must be connected with *and* (*ups and downs*). Obviously, this type of English construction is more linguistically challenging than others because it requires a greater attention to subtleties.

One may argue that the plural form *–s/es* and the past participial *–ed* can be dropped without damaging the meaning especially in oral communication. This is true to a certain extent because these morphemes are usually acquired late precisely due to their insignificance in terms of affecting the message itself (Krashen, 1977). Thus, caution is needed if the learners' developmental stage has not yet reached a point where they can pay conscious attention to morphological endings (Clark & Clark, 1977, p. 345; Pienemann, Johnston, & Brindley, 1988).

Semantics and English-Inspired Loanwords or Japan-Made English

Many wasei-eigo words and some English-inspired loanwords have become well established and could pass as "authentic

English." For instance, *cash card* (ATM card), *key holder* (key ring), *coin laundry* (laundromat) and *gasoline stand* (gas station) can be used without impairing communication. The greatest educational dilemma is whether such loanwords and wasei eigo should be permitted in English learning classrooms. The position taken in this paper is affirmative. The rationale is that, just as World Englishes are becoming more accepted in the global community, Japanized English should also have a place in it.

However, even according to this World Englishes paradigm (Kachru, 1985), English in the Outer Circle (English as a foreign language) is viewed as peripheral and the varieties from that category are not regarded as "institutionalized" but rather viewed as "performance varieties" (Kachru, 1992, p. 55). The differences between the two are as follows. The institutional varieties "have an extended range of uses in the sociolinguistic context of a nation," "have an extended register and style range," "a process of *nativization* of the registers and styles has taken place," and "a body of nativized English literature has developed" (p. 55). On the other hand, the performance varieties have a "highly restricted functional range in specific contexts" such as "tourism, commerce and other international transactions" (p. 55). It is true that the Japanese English variety does not meet these criteria and our subject in this paper is limited to vocabulary items; however, the role which these items play in the Japanese language and society is quite extensive and certainly not limited to a few specialized areas or circumstances (Stanlaw, 2004; Seargeant, 2009).

This function, including that of semiotics of English in Japanese text, is what seems to be neglected in previous discussion of Japanese English as a variety (Stanlaw, 1992, p. 178, pp. 195-196); Seargeant, 2009, pp. 163-165). In fact, this neglect is what is referred to by Seargeant (2009) as a "disregarded linguistic residue" (pp. 143-144), which is marginalized in current applied linguistics. This is all the more reason why English teachers

should pay more attention to the important place occupied by English loanwords or katakana English; these English vocabulary items are used in daily *Japanese*, not necessarily as part of *English*. By raising their own awareness, teachers and learners may find such loanwords to be quite useful in their English teaching or learning.

Translation in Language Teaching

Finally, given the important place of English in the Japanese language and society today (Stanlaw, 2004; Seargeant, 2009), the monolingual approach to English teaching does not seem appropriate. Cook (2010, pp. 85-103), for example, has argued compellingly that the monolingual approach that has dominated CLT has no empirical support and cannot therefore be justified, asserting that relating the second language to the first and vice versa is a natural part of the second language learning process. Therefore, it is detrimental to this process if the learner is prohibited from using the first language or resorting to translation. For, after all, frequent interaction between two languages is a fact of life, and if the goal of SLA is bilingualism (Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986, p. 5), the use of both Japanese and English in the English classroom should be even more encouraged. For this purpose, translation should be revived and utilized more frequently as a teaching and learning method (Cook, 2010, pp. 155-156). Translation between Japanese and English vocabulary items as well as active discussion about the historical backgrounds, linguistic features and socio-cultural nuances of katakana English in relation to their English equivalences can stimulate both the teaching and learning processes.

Conclusion

In this paper, English loanwords or katakana English have been categorized according to a variety of linguistic criteria and it has been demonstrated that these vocabulary items can be utilized to enhance the learning process in terms of pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, and even grammar. The days when English *was* a foreign language are over; English is now becoming part of the Japanese language. This tendency is probably taking place more rapidly than is generally understood. For that reason, teachers and learners alike need to pay more attention to English loanwords both inside and outside their classrooms.

Bio Data

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