

The Background and Birth of English Words Coined in Japan

和製英語の背景とその生まれ方 和文概要

伊 藤 由 樹 子

日々新しい言葉は生まれる。その多くには外来語、特に英語が用いられている。現代の日本人がどのようにして新しい言葉を生み出すのか、そしてその新語の中に英語はどれくらい含まれているのか。この論文では、著者が実地した新語作りの研究結果を初めに紹介する。次に英語が多く用いられるようになった背景と、現代の日本人が外来語を用いることに対してどのような意識を持っているのかを紹介する。

まず新語を生み出す研究には、32人の日本語第一言語話者に二つの商品を見せ、それぞれに名称を与えてもらうという実験を実地した。その結果、生み出された名前は複合語 (Compounding)、借用語 (Borrowing)、俗化語 (Commonization)、擬音語 (Echoic-Family Formation)、挿入辞語 (Affixing)、混合語 (Blending)、ルート創造語 (Root Creating) の7つに分類された。商品1、2共に一番多かったのは複合語で、二番目は借用語であった。

商品1では41%、商品2では34%の人が英語を用いた借用語を名称にした。借用語の用い方も多様で、その例として日本語の動詞に英語の接尾辞をあわせたものや (ツツキーナ = 「つつく」 + “-ena”)、英語と日本語の混合語 (うなづきバード = 「うなづき」 + “bird”) などがあった。

日本は長い歴史の中で他国の言葉を借用してきている。4世紀頃より中国から漢字を借用し、6世紀にはそれを原型として平仮名、片仮名という日本独自のアルファベットを生み出した。明治時代に入り、政治、経済、文学、芸術など西洋文化の

影響を受けることになり、多くの英語が日本に紹介され始めた。中国から入った漢字同様、英語も日本独自の音に変わり、意味も変わり、和製英語として定着するようになる。この和製英語にたいして、現代の日本人はどのような印象を持っているのだろうか。国立国語研究所が2005年に実地した外来語の意識調査によると17.3%の人のみが外来語を使用することに抵抗あると回答した。つまり、日本語第一言語話者の多くが抵抗なく外来語を使用しているようだ。新語を生み出す研究結果でも分かるように、現代の日本人は外来語を用いることによって更に言葉の幅を広げ、豊かにし、活性化し、発展させていこうとしているのである。

The Background and Birth of English Words Coined in Japan

Yukiko Ito

Introduction

How are new words invented in modern Japan? What are their unique characteristics? To answer these questions, I have asked native speakers of Japanese to create names for objects. I have classified the result, and found most interesting the numbers of English words being used. I was interested to know how the English words were being used, and this curiosity led me to analyze all the English words created by the participants. In the first half of this paper, I will introduce the result I have found from the experiment, mainly focusing on the English loan words. In the second half of this paper, I will introduce the background and people's perception toward the loan words, and how these coexist with the language of contemporary modern Japan.

Experiment for Creating New Words

Classification of the Result

The purpose of the experiment was to investigate how Japanese speakers invent a new name. To precede the experiment, I have asked thirty-two native Japanese speakers, all adults from mid twenties to late fifties, to invent a name for two objects. The objects used in the experiment exist, but none of the participants knew the name. The question was asked in Japanese. Below is the picture of the samples. It is followed by a list of the resulted

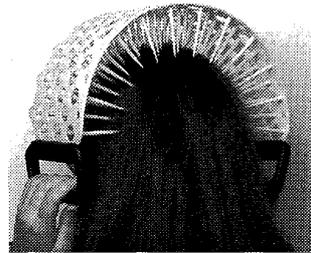
names.

Sample 1



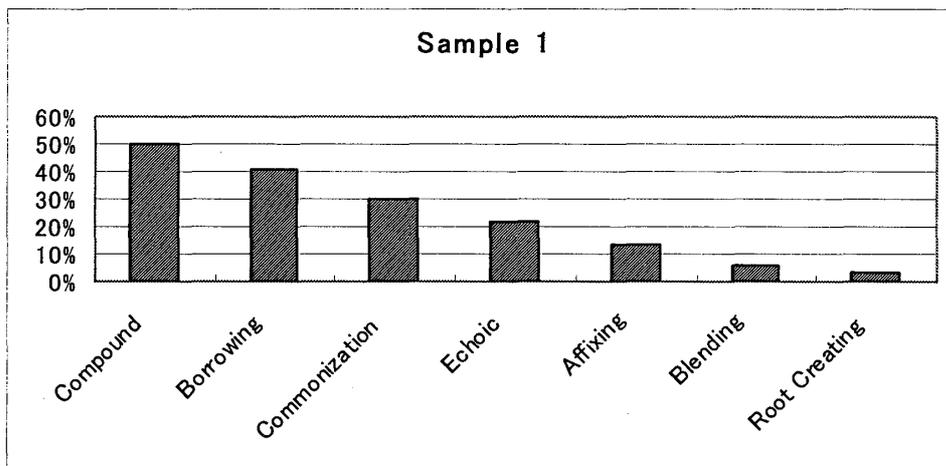
Sample 2

この刺繍がタマラナイ?



The grouping will be as follow:

For Sample 1 :



1. Compounding (50%)

Half of the participants named it by compounding two words. In most case, functioning words were combined with a noun.

2. Borrowing (41%)

Large number of participants used English words in a unique way.

3. Commonization (30%)

Since the object was a bird-like figure, and resembled a Japanese animated

figure, it may have affected the result.

4. Echoic-Family Formation (22%)

There are many echoic words in Japanese that are common. All of the echoic words used in this survey were not created by the participants.

5. Affixing (13%)

Affixing was used as a diminutive suffix.

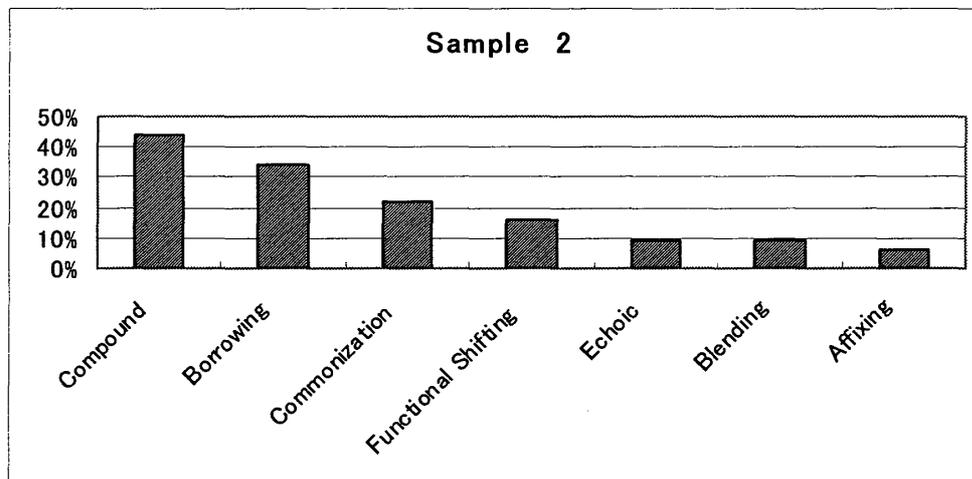
6. Blending (6%)

Two people blended the word 'hat' and 'tori'(bird) and name the object '*Hattori*'

7. Root Creating (3%)

Only one person has created a new root.

For Sample 2 :



1. Compounding (44%)

As like Sample 1, almost half of the people answered in compound form, and most of the answers were combination of < Function form > + < Noun >.

2. Borrowing (34%)

Here again, many participants used an English words. Many English words

were combined with Japanese words.

3. Commonization (22%)

Many names were related to puffer fish

4. Functional Shifting (16%)

“*Doesn't hurt*” <イタくないよ(itakunaiyo)>, “*Ah, Great!*” <うっう〜ん最高(wuwun-saiko)>, “*Is it Kenzan?*” <ケンザンですか(kenzann-desuka)> were all used as a noun.

5. Echoic-Family Formation (9%)

Only three participants used an echoic word form. Probably the object introduced did not give participants much image of an echoic sound.

6. Blending (9%)

Blending two Japanese words were found by three participants.

7. Affixing (6%)

Affixing was used as a diminutive suffix. Mainly to make it sound more ‘cute’.

Analyzing the use of English loan words

Only one name was classified as root-creating. The result shows that most words are created from an association with existing words. Still, I was surprised to see the number of English loan words being used by the Japanese participants to create a new name. The next step I decided to take was to focus on the English words, and analyze the way it was being used. Below are the result and a brief explanation for both samples.

The result of Sample 1

	Invented Names in Japanese	(Invented Names converted to Roman alphabet)	Word-Formation	Explanation
1	ツツキーナ	(<i>Tsuttukeena</i>)	Borrowing + Affixing	' <i>Tsuttuku</i> ': 'peck' (v) plus '-ena': '-er'. An English noun-forming suffix
2	トリッキー	(<i>Torikkie</i>)	Borrowing + Affixing	' <i>Tori</i> ': bird(n) plus '-kie': English noun-forming suffix. or ' <i>Torikkie</i> ': English word 'Tricky'
3	ミスタータップリ	(<i>Misuta. tappuri</i>)	Borrowing + Commonization	' <i>Misuta</i> ': 'Mr.' plus ' <i>Tappuri</i> ': plenty (adj)
4	Mr. Bow	(<i>Mr. Bow</i>)	Borrowing + Commonization	Compounding 2 English words using Roman Alphabet
5	Watering Duck	(<i>Watering Duck</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	Compounding 2 English words using Roman Alphabet
6	アメリカ版 起き上がりこぼし	(<i>Amerika-ban okiagarikoboshi</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Amerika-ban</i> ': American version plus ' <i>Okiagarikoboshi</i> ': Traditional Japanese toy object.
7	うなづきバード	(<i>Wunaduki-bado</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Wunaduku</i> ': nodding(v) plus ' <i>bado</i> ': bird(n)
8	きるマジック	(<i>Saru-magikku</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Saru</i> ': monkey(n) plus ' <i>Majikku</i> ': majick(n)
9	スタンプおじさん	(<i>Stampu-ojisan</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Sutampu</i> ': stamp(n) plus ' <i>Ojisan</i> ': middle to old age men (n)
10	ポップペコリハット	(<i>Poppo-pekori-hatto</i>)	Borrowing + Compound + Echoic	' <i>Poppo</i> ': sound image of a bird (derived from a children's song called 'Hatopoppo') plus ' <i>Pekori</i> ': mimetic word for bowing plus ' <i>Hatto</i> ': hat(n)
11	はっとり	(<i>Hattori</i>)	Borrowing + Blending + Commonization	Blending ' <i>Hatto</i> ': 'hat' (n) with ' <i>Tori</i> ': bird: ' <i>Hattori</i> ' also is a name of a famous Ninja.
12	ハットリくん	(<i>Hattori-kun</i>)	Borrowing + Blending + Commonization	Same as above. '-kun': is a casual way of saying 'Mr.' usually to a boy

Many participants have naturally adapted English words and change it to their original style. Most common way of adapting English words were compounding English word with Japanese. Compounding two nouns, one English and one Japanese was found in many cases, such as in “*saru* (=monkey) *majikku* (magic)” and “*sutampu* (stamp) *ojisan* (=middle age men)”.

Compounding Japanese adjective with a word “Mr.” was a way to communize an object such as in “*misuta* (Mr.) *tappuri* (=plently)”. Two inventors blended English noun “hat” with Japanese noun “*tori* (=bird)” and named it “*hattori*” which is a famous name for a ninja-character. Adding an English suffix to a Japanese noun word was also found in the experiment. One participant named the object “*torikkie* (=tricky)” to a bird-like object which bows when a water is put in front. “*torikkie*” is a Japanese pronunciation for “tricky”, but not only that, “*tori*” means bird in Japanese, and by adding an English noun forming suffix “-kie”, the participant communized the name.

Result of sample 2

	Invented Names in Japanese	(Invented Names in Japanese)	Word-Formation	Explanation
1	マッサージ頭イ	(<i>massazie</i>)	Borrowing + Affixing	' <i>Massazie</i> ': English noun 'massage' plus '-zie': pronunciation we don't have in Japanese. .
2	スカルツパー	(<i>scaluppa</i>)	Borrowing + Affixing	' <i>Sukulupu</i> ': English noun 'scalp' plus '-ppa': -per:
3	Mr.ハリヤマ	(<i>Mr. Hariyama</i>)	Borrowing + Commonization	' <i>Misuta</i> ': English noun 'Mr.' plus ' <i>Hariyama</i> ': Japanese noun meaning pin cushion which also is a compound word meaning needle mountain
4	刺激ヘヤー	(<i>shigeki-hair</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Shigeki</i> ': Japanese noun meaning stimulus plus ' <i>Heyer</i> ': english noun 'hair'
5	頭皮マッサージャー	(<i>tohi-massager</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Tohi</i> ': Japanese noun meaning 'scalp' plus ' <i>Massajer</i> ': English noun 'massager'
6	Scalp Massager	(<i>Scalp Massager</i>)	Borrowing + Compound	Compounding 2 English words using Roman Alphabet

7	抜け毛予防 マッサージ用シート	<i>(Nukegeyobo-massage-yo-sheet)</i>	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Nukegeyobo</i> ': Japanese compound meaning 'protection for hair falling out' plus ' <i>Massajie</i> ': English noun 'massage' plus ' <i>Yo</i> ': Japanese word meaning 'for' plus ' <i>Sheeto</i> ': English noun 'sheet'
8	頭皮爽快マット	<i>(Tohi-sokai-mat)</i>	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Tohi</i> ': Japanese noun meaning 'scalp' plus ' <i>Sokai</i> ': Japanese adv. meaning 'refreshing' plus ' <i>Matto</i> ': English noun 'mat'
9	はりせんぼんヘッドギア	<i>(Harisenbonn-head gear)</i>	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Harisenbonn</i> ': Japanese noun meaning 'balloon fish', which is also a compound word meaning 'thousand needles' plus ' <i>Heddo gia</i> ': English word 'head gear'
10	ヘアケンザン	<i>(Hair-kennzann)</i>	Borrowing + Compound	' <i>Hea</i> ': English noun 'hair' plus ' <i>Kennzann</i> ': Japanese noun meaning 'needle-point flower holder'
11	The hair fix Junkie	<i>(The hair fix Junkie)</i>	Borrowing + Compound	Compounding English words using Roman Alphabet

For Sample 2, the words chosen by the participants were interesting. Three people used the English word "massage" but none used the Japanese word for massage, "*momu*". Two people used English word "hair" and one person used Japanese "*ke*". Also, two people used English word "scalp" and two people used Japanese "*tohi*". In this experiment, I was not able to find a pattern to see when Japanese people substitute English words, but obviously there were some words that Japanese people felt more comfortable in English loan words rather than in Japanese. The most common way of using English loan words were to form a compound word with Japanese, which a same result showed in Sample 1. One participant used a suffix to form an interesting word. The participant used the English word "massage" and changed the suffix into "-zie". The sound "-zie" is not found in Japanese, therefore the sound "*massazie*" sounds more "English" than "massage" to Japanese people which ironically is not an English word.

English loan Words in Current Japan

The Overflowing Use of English

Why were many English words being used by the participants? Why were they combined or blended with Japanese words? First I was surprised to see the result, but when I analyzed the current language situation, I realized that English loan words existed as a normal part of daily life in Japan, which I, a native speaker of Japanese, was not aware of myself.

Although it is hard to describe Japan as a nation of English speakers, English loan words have become a part of the language that it is almost impossible to eliminate. It is easy to identify loan words in written Japanese because it is kept separate by being written in katakana alphabet. Katakana alphabet is a single symbol which represents a syllable, and not phoneme. Therefore, it could change the sound and the rhythm of the source language dramatically. For example, the pronunciation for the English words may change from “radio / *reydiow* /” to / *radziyo* /, “trophy / *trowfiy* /” to / *torofiy* /, “love / *lav* /” to / *rabu* / and “help / *help* /” to / *herupu* / which English native speakers may not distinguish them as an English words.

When English loan words are adapted in Japan, not only do they change the pronunciation, but the word itself could change in meaning and in functions. For example, the English word “smart” (“*sumaato*” in Japanese) limits its meaning to “stylish” and the word “cool” (“*kuuru*” in Japanese) limits its meaning to “a reticent person”, which reticent person is thought to be “cool” in Japan. Compound words are created by combining Japanese and English words such as in “*aidia* (=idea) *shohin*” (manufactured goods that are interesting and new) and “*kansen* (=watching a sport’s match) *tsua* (=tour)”. It could be combined with two English words which native English speakers will not use

together, such as “*sarariy* (=salary) *mann* (=men)” which means “people who works for a company”, and “*peypa* (=paper) *doraiba* (=driver)” which means “people who have a driver’s license but do not drive”. Many contractions are found in long words and phrases in English, such as “*pasokon*” for “personal computer” and “*airkon*” for “air conditioner”. What Japanese people even did were they combined two English words “*office*” and “*lady*”, and took their initial letters “OL” to name an assistant women working in office. Many English plural nouns have dropped the “s” sound at the end and became Japanese “*sutokkingu*” and not “*sutokkingusu*” for “stockings” and “*sangurasu*” and not “*sangurasusu*” for sunglasses. Besides blending and compounding, adding English suffix to Japanese words were found such as in “*oshare* (=fashionable)-*izumu* (=ism)” (TV program which interviews celebrities) and “*uranai* (=fortunetell)-*izumu*” (internet web page for fortunetell). These Japanese made English words are called “*Wasei-Eigo*” In Japan, and Japanese people think it is “Japanese” more than “English”.

History of Japanese language

Japan has a long history of adapting a language from a civilized country. The earliest and the biggest influence were by China which Japan has adapted the calendar, religion, literature, and governmental structure. Starting around 4th century, Japan has adapted *kanji*, the writing system from China, and by 6th century, Japan has invented its original alphabet which is known as hiragana and katakana. Even after the invention of the original alphabet, Japanese was strongly influenced by Chinese characters. During the Heian era (8th to 10th Century), literature meant novel that is only written in Chinese letters, and hiragana or katakana was not being used. The influence from

China lasted for a long time until Meiji Era, when English took over the role and became the most influential language. At that time, English was the language of internationalization and global technology for Japanese. Music, literature, arts, business, politics, and other cultural aspects were all influenced by the west. At the same time, language of English innovated into Japan. The language of western culture sounded new and stunning to Japanese. Many new words were introduced and many existing words were replaced by English. Number of *kanji* words were also replaced by English. *Kanji* is a symbolic alphabet that it makes sense visually, but the sounds it produces did not always fit suitably to Japanese language. Many words sounded more simple and easy to fit than Chinese origin words. Just like Japan used Chinese-characters as a model and created an original alphabet, Japanese do not just borrow and copy the language, but adapts and creates its own style. The same thing could be said in “wasei-Eigo”, the Japanese made English.

The Perception of Modern Japanese

How do Modern Japanese people view English and English loan words? The National Language Research Institute conducted an attitude survey for English loan words in October 2005. The extraction of the result is shown below:

I Are you in favor of increase use of foreign words?

Yes 37.1% No 55.3%

II Do you think Japanese-English words are acceptable?

Yes 62.4% No 17.3%

III What is the advantage of using English loan words?

- a) Convenient for communication 29.5%
- b) Sounds new 28.2%
- c) It can describe words that cannot be expressed in native tongue. 25.6%

IV What is the disadvantage of using English loan words?

- a) Communication defect may occur depending on the interlocutor. 46.7%
- b) May cause misunderstanding and confusion 37.2%
- c) Demolish the Japanese culture 33.3%

V Which foreign language have your learned before?

- a) English 77.5%
- b) Germany 8.2%
- c) Chinese 6.2%

VI Do you think English is a powerful language?

Yes 73.1% No 15.8%

(Source: National Language Research Institute, 2005, translated by Ito)

More than half of the participants answered that they are concerned to increase the use of loan words. The major concern was communication deflection. The participants were worried of the massive numbers of English

loan words being introduced spontaneously because people, especially the elderly, were having trouble catching up with the newly introduced words. In written context, Japanese people can guess the meaning of the word if it is written in kanji, since kanji represents a symbol. However, if English words are introduced and written in katakana, there are no clues to find out the meaning. Possible solution for this problem could be eliminating the use of English words and creating Japanese names by using kanji, but many thought receiving a careful explanation for the definition of the loan words and simplifying the words by abbreviating will be the way to solve the problem.

In many countries, loan words are a central issue. In South Korea, the Ministry of Education restricts the use of foreign words, and also works on to eliminate Japanese words which were introduced during the colonial period. However, in Japan, not much attention has been paid on the loanword itself. Over 60% of the respondents for the survey answered that Japanese made English words are acceptable, and not many showed resistance for using a non-native word. Majority of the participants see English as the most powerful language, and have studied English as their foreign language. Adapting a powerful language and using it in the original style is what Japan has been doing for a long time. The issue of loan words for Japanese perception was based on its inconvenience, and not for a fear for corruption of their native culture and language.

Conclusion

It is not difficult to be critical about using the loan words. Some may say it lacks originality. Some may say it is not respecting its own culture. However, Japan has a long history of adapting foreign languages. In the past, Chinese

was the model. Now, the shift has been made to English. The participants in my experiments had used English loan words to create a catchy name. When I analyzed the loan words used in the daily life, they were not just copied from the source language, but it was manipulated in a way to add wealth to the Japanese language. Adapting a language is a key for development and enrichment. The flexibility and openness to foreign words is the culture of Japan.

References

- Fukao, T. (1979). Foreign words in katakana. Akasaka, Tokyo: The Simul Press, Inc.
- Kagano S. (2002). Japanese language will evolve. Shibuya-ku, Tokyo: Nihon Hoso Shuppanyokai
- Matumoto-Stewart, A. (1993). All about katakana. Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo: Kodnsha America, Inc.
- Sato T. (2003). The derivation of Japanese language. Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo: Meiji Shoin
- Takeuchi, L. (1999). The structure and history of Japanese from yamatokotoba to nihongo. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited
- Tessa, C. (2001). Language planning and language change in Japan. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press
- The National Language Research Institute 2005, Attitude survey for English loan words. Retrieved August, 2006, from http://www.kokken.go.jp/katsudo/kenkyu_jyo/genzai/ishiki/index.html
- Umesato T. (2004). The future of Japanese language. Shibuya-ku, Tokyo: Nihon Hoso Shuppanyokai
- Yamaguchi A. (1997). A history of the Japanese language. Tokyo, Japan: University of Tokyo Press