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Being Japanese in English: The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

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**BEING JAPANESE IN ENGLISH:
THE SOCIAL AND FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF
ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN JAPANESE**

by
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SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE
And The Department Of Linguistics And Cognitive Science At Pomona College
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The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

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Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. USAGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH-DERIVED VOCABULARY	7
2.1 LOANWORDS AND LANGUAGE BORROWING.....	7
2.2 BORROWING THROUGH LANGUAGE CONTACT	9
2.2.1 <i>Language Contact Situations and Borrowing</i>	9
2.2.2 <i>History of Japanese Language Contact</i>	11
2.2.3 <i>Sociolinguistic Significance of Japanese Language Contact</i>	13
2.3 LEXICAL BORROWING IN JAPANESE.....	14
2.3.1 <i>Native Japanese</i>	14
2.3.2 <i>Sino-Japanese</i>	15
2.3.3 <i>Non-Chinese Foreign Loanwords/Gairaigo</i>	16
2.3.4 <i>Other Strategies and Categories</i>	19
2.4 BREAKDOWN OF LEXICAL STRATA	20
2.5 LEXICAL INTEGRATION AND ADAPTATION	21
2.5.1 <i>Phonology</i>	22
2.5.2 <i>Morphology & Syntax</i>	23
2.5.3 <i>Orthography</i>	24
2.6 FACTORS OF LOANWORD USAGE	27
2.6.1 <i>Necessary Environments and English</i>	27
2.6.2 <i>Motives</i>	28
2.6.3 <i>Dissemination and Contributing Factors</i>	29
2.7 LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY AND THE HEGEMONY OF ENGLISH.....	32
2.7.1 <i>Hegemony of English and Native Language Identity</i>	32
2.7.2 <i>Japanese Linguistic Identity and English</i>	32
2.8. ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN JAPANESE	34
2.8.1 <i>Uses</i>	34
2.8.2 <i>Attitudes</i>	35
III. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS	37
3.1 METHODOLOGY	37
3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS	38
3.2.1 <i>Agreement Statements on Attitudes Towards English Loanwords</i>	38
3.2.2 <i>English Loanword Usage: Word Choice</i>	39
3.2.3 <i>English Loanword Usage: Judgments of Japaneseness</i>	40
3.2.4 <i>English Loanword Usage: Situations of Usage</i>	42
3.2.5 <i>Short Answer Questions on Identity</i>	42
3.2.6 <i>Demographics</i>	42
3.3 RESULTS	43
3.3.1 <i>Agreement Statements on Attitudes Towards English Loanwords</i>	43
3.3.2 <i>English Loanword Usage: Word Choice</i>	44
3.3.3 <i>English Loanword Usage: Judgments of Japaneseness</i>	47
3.3.4 <i>Short Answer</i>	51
3.4 GENERAL DISCUSSION	56
IV. CONCLUSION	60
REFERENCES	62

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that nearly 60% of the Japanese lexicon originated in a different language, in 2013 a 71-year-old man named Hoji Takahashi sued the Japanese national broadcasting organization for mental distress due to the excessive use of foreign-derived vocabulary in the daily news. Specifically, Takahashi protested against the number of English words occurring in broadcasts. About one in ten Japanese words are English loanwords—that is, lexical items that have been borrowed from English into Japanese—and the number grows every year. Among these borrowings are words that fill gaps in the Japanese language, new words coined from English lexical material, and even words that were borrowed even though semantically similar Japanese words already existed. These words permeate through the culture ending up in fashion, advertising, brand naming, song lyrics, academia, and in the news.

The degree and rate of lexical borrowing reflects the current sociolinguistic landscape, but so do the opinions of native speakers. So what does it mean for a language to continually import loanwords, yet prompt the ire of those who speak it? This thesis explores what current native speaker attitudes are towards English loanwords and how these loanwords are used in Japanese.

In this study participants answered a questionnaire of attitudes and opinions on English loanwords and sections attempting to gauge the usage of these loanwords. The results showed an overall positive attitude towards English loanwords and associations between the loanwords and modernity, youthfulness, and internationalism. In addition to that, participants expressed anxiety related to the overuse of English loanwords, reflective of Takahashi's mental distress lawsuit. However, the most salient and striking finding was evidence that English loanwords are seen as both a stylistic and a functional resource—a pool from which a Japanese speaker may choose a word for its definitional or affective nuances—and can even be used to index one's Japaneseness.

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

These findings reflect the availability with which Japanese is able to integrate foreign lexical material. Additionally, these findings challenge the belief that loanwords are a threat to the cultural identity of Japanese or that loanwords must be in opposition to native words.

The following Section II provides a review of the literature, including explanation about borrowing, the structure of the Japanese language, adoption and integration of loanwords, and a summary of what has previously been written about the function of and attitudes towards English loanwords in Japanese. Section III presents the research and analysis, including the questionnaire and a section-by-section presentation of the analysis followed by general discussion.

II. USAGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH-DERIVED VOCABULARY

2.1 LOANWORDS AND LANGUAGE BORROWING

Loanwords make up one of the more salient outcomes of cross-linguistic contact and language borrowing. Though there are many forms of language borrowing, this study will focus almost exclusively on loanwords and similar processes of importing lexical material from one language into another. Lexical borrowing can take shape in a number of ways, all with different degrees of faithfulness to the original donor language. I will be using the following terms in reference to lexical borrowing. These terms are based off of Hoffer's (2005) presentation of Hockett's (1958) categories of lexical borrowing.

► *Loanword*

An accepted definition of loanword (or **loan**) is a lexeme that occurs in the donor language and is adopted into the recipient, or borrowing, language (Hoffer 2005). Haspelmath (2009) argues that lexemes that give rise to loanwords are unanalyzable units in the borrowing language. However, he concedes that in cases where a language borrows a great deal of complex words from one language the morphology may become transparent and thus analyzable. This is a topic that will be discussed in greater detail in regards to Sino-Japanese loanwords, which are a lexical stratum of Japanese vocabulary consisting of words borrowed from Chinese largely during the 8th century.

► *Loan translation*

Loan translations, also known as calques, are direct one-to-one translations from the original language into the borrowing language. A particularly notable calque is the word 'loanword' which comes from the German word *lehnwort*. Loan translations will be more relevant in discussion on how Sino-Japanese has influenced how Japanese borrows concepts and phrases from other languages. In my study I will also investigate possible reasons why a loanword might be used instead of a loan translation and what type of effect that has on language identity.

► *Loan blend*

Loan blends are forms with elements from a loanword or other foreign lexical material and from the native language. In the literature concerning loanwords and lexical borrowing in Japanese, loan blends can be referred to as hybrids. Loan blends are particularly interesting for the topic of *wasei eigo*, a category of Japanese vocabulary based off of English-derived vocabulary but so altered and adapted in pronunciation and/or meaning that it is no longer recognizable in the English language. However, not all forms in *wasei eigo* are loan blends. Hoffer does not offer any category that encompasses the extent of possible forms in *wasei eigo*.

► *Loan Neologisms/Coinages*

Loan neologisms or coinages are loanwords that never existed in the donor language, but are perhaps foreign lexeme composites creating a new word in the borrowing language. One example of this in English is the word ‘television’ which comes from Greek *telos* meaning ‘far’ and French *visio* meaning ‘sight’. This fifth option is not included in Hoffer’s paper and is often not included in discussion on loanwords perhaps due to the connotation of semantic change rather than loanword adoption. Schmidt (2009) discusses coinage as an indication of the extent of integration and assimilation of lexical material, particularly in connection with Sino-Japanese vocabulary. However, Sino-Japanese is not the only foreign strata available for coinage. In this study I will investigate the large section of neologisms in *wasei eigo* and how a native speaker’s understanding of and attitudes towards coinages may differ in relation to other non-coinage loanwords.

I will discuss these and related terms as far as how they relate to Japanese language borrowing in greater depth below. For the sake of brevity, clarity, and convenience, the terms ‘loan’ and ‘loanword’ will be broadly used to refer to any foreign-derived vocabulary unless otherwise specified.

Given that I am establishing discussion on loanwords, it must follow that I am also establishing discussion on native vocabulary. This distinction between native and non-

native turns out to be a rather complicated relationship in Japanese. However, regardless of what constraints or definitions we decide on, the distinction between what is truly 'native' and what is not is not an easy one to make. As Haspelmath (2009) points out, at a certain point, it is impossible to ever really rule out that a word is not a loanword given that it could have, at some point, been borrowed into the language prehistorically. So ultimately 'native words' or 'non-loanwords' are terms we give to words for which we have no evidence that they were borrowed. Irwin (2011) begins to address this issue by setting time constraints on the categories. This and other strategies will be discussed below.

2.2 BORROWING THROUGH LANGUAGE CONTACT

Language contact is one of the most influential, if not the most influential, forces driving language change. When languages come into contact with each other language borrowing occurs. This foreign influence on a language can come in number of different ways, such as through trade, the spread of religion, or imperialism (Irwin 2011).

2.2.1 Language Contact Situations and Borrowing

All of the world's prominent languages have been on either end of a language-borrowing situation. In this section I will present brief histories of language contact for a handful of languages to illuminate the types of situations that give rise to borrowing.

The history of lexical borrowing in English, for example, begins with Celtic speakers, Roman conquerors, and Germanic tribes (Hoffer 2005). Through raids, invasions, and the spread of Christianity, today's English began to take shape. Each event of language contact added more to the language, sometimes as lexemes here and there or sometimes in large chunks of related vocabulary. Latin, as the European language of the educated, had a particular impact on English during the Renaissance and provided much of English's scientific and philosophical terminology. And through English merchants and traders, thousands of words from all over the world entered into the language. And as English speakers began to create an empire both in Europe and North America, their

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

conquest gave rise to more lexical adoption. This does not even take into account the diverse groups who immigrate to English-speaking countries and donate words from their own language into English.

The history of Spanish (Hoffer 2005) offers a similar story. The Spanish lexicon was enriched through a history of invasion, Roman conquest, the spread of religion (both Islam and Christianity alike), and again the colonization of the Americas. Jordanian Arabic as well follows similar narratives with different characters (Al-Khatib & Farghal 1999). As Jordan was under Turkish imperialism until British Mandate in 1920's, the Turkish language provided a huge amount of words to Arabic. Again, religion played a major role in language contact as it preserved Arabic underneath Turkish rule, creating a prime situation for language integration rather than eradication. The influence of English began to reach full swing after thousands of Palestinians, who were in close contact with the British, immigrated to Jordan. Additionally, and crucially, the Jordanian Ministry of Education decided to implement English teaching in schools due to the growing importance of English.

Hoffer (2005) provides the example of Chinese, another major world language, as a language with relatively less loanword importation. He explains that part of this is due to the fact that knowledge of loanwords in Chinese only goes back so far as the accuracy of linguistic reconstruction since Chinese characters do not give precise indication as to the pronunciation. Another reason for the lack of loanwords is that Chinese seems to prefer to innovate loan translations rather than accepting direct loanwords as units. However, Chinese still does have loanwords that originate from the languages of ethnic minorities in China, invasions of China, and British colonization of Hong Kong (affecting Cantonese in particular) (Hoffer 2005). In addition to the influence of religion and trade, Bulfoni (2009) cites the Opium War as a 'time of greatest impact on the part of the West' (Bulfoni 2009). Bulfoni maintains that the Chinese defeat inspired an urgency of modernizing and learning the science and technology of the West, which in turn motivated a great influx of new terms. As more contemporary Western influence, Bulfoni

also focuses on the role that the Internet has in encouraging lexical borrowing from English.

A pattern has become apparent. Immigration, conquest, invasion, education, and colonialism all seem to be key factors in language borrowing. These factors should be kept in mind once we turn our focus to Japanese and again in discussion on what factors affect attitudes towards loanwords.

Although there is a clear pattern, there is no one type of contact that leads to borrowing. There are, however, situations that can make language borrowing easier, more appealing, or inevitable. Some of the most common environments that lead to language borrowing include bilingualism and the subsequent diglossia, code switching, or code mixing that may occur (Hogan 2003). Hogan identifies five conditions that occur in such systems:

1. Vocabulary is constrained by norms concerning when and with whom usage occurs
2. Use of vocabulary reflects social attitudes towards those associated with that vocabulary
3. Economic and political dynamics influence linguistic choices concerning vocabulary
4. Linguistic choices to use or not use that vocabulary may serve a gate-keeping role
5. Language choices to either use or not use the vocabulary reflect either reaffirmations of group identity or assertions of dominance and opposition

Hogan also maintains that these five aspects are also found in Japanese usage of English-derived vocabulary. This will be discussed further in §2.2.3.

2.2.2 History of Japanese Language Contact

Japanese is considered a language isolate as its linguistic ancestry continues to mystify the linguistic world. Although the genealogy of Japanese remains a mystery, it is quite clear that Japanese has a long history of borrowing. The neighboring languages of Japanese have all left their linguistic mark. Ryukyuan, which is considered either a very divergent dialect of Japanese or its closest linguistic relative, has also contributed words to Japanese vocabulary. These words are mainly restricted to concepts specific to Ryukyuan geography and culture, such as the word *gajumaru* ガジュマル for ‘banyan tree’ (Schmidt 2009).

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Language contact between Ainu, a language native to Japan, and Japanese is rather controversial, particularly due to Japanese colonization, settlement, and control over Ainu people and culture. This control also extended to assimilating the Ainu into mainstream Japanese culture including policy suppressing Ainu language. But like Ryukyuan, Ainu also left its mark on Japanese language. Also like Ryukyuan, Ainu influence on the language is mainly restricted to concepts associated with the Ainu, like *s(h)ake* 鮭 ‘salmon’ from Ainu *cukipe* (Schmidt 2009).

However, far and away, Chinese has had the largest influence on Japanese over the 1600 years of contact between China and Japan. Interestingly, Chinese is often ignored in discussion about loanwords and borrowing in Japanese (Schmidt 2009) possibly because it is so pervasive and the extent of the assimilation drastically reduces the ‘foreignness’.

Due to intense influence for about 1600 years, Japanese imported tens of thousands of Chinese words (Hoffer 2005), resulting in a category of Japanese called Sino-Japanese, which makes up nearly a third of the Japanese lexicon (Schmidt 2009). The Nara Period (8th century CE) was the height of the Sinicization of Japanese through the importation of Chinese script four centuries before and intense cultural interaction through religion, trade, and education. During this period most Japanese elites were bilingual in Japanese and Chinese (Schmidt 2009). Chinese was the language used at court and records were written almost exclusively in Chinese, thus Chinese was the language of the educated (Hoffer 2005). Between the 9th and 16th centuries Chinese contact decreased but the Chinese language remained to be the administrative language and there was a sort of diglossia with Classical Chinese being used as the formal language and Japanese used for everything else.

The 16th century marked the start of contact with Western powers such as the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch through trade. This period is particularly important because some scholars consider this to be the beginning of foreign loanword borrowing after the period of Sino-Japanese influx. Western influence was a slow trickle for the next two centuries

due to the period of isolation, *sakoku* 鎖国, start in the mid-17th century. That was until the 19th century when Japan was forced to end its isolation, resulting in the opening of the floodgates for Western influence on the Japanese language. Modernization occurred over a short period of time during which there was a large influx of borrowing from Western languages, mainly English. This was encouraged by the Japanese government sending scholars to study in the West.

As mentioned above, foreign influence often does not occur without resistance. There were brief purist movements to reject Western influence particularly during World War II (Schmidt 2009), but English emerged as a dominant influence, particularly following the end of WWII, aided by America's mass culture popularity and its military, economic, and socio-political prowess (Hoffer 2005, Schmidt 2009). And the number of English loanwords has just been growing since then. One report shows that the number of foreign loanwords (not including Sino-Japanese vocabulary) in 1994 was three and a half times the number in 1956 (Irwin 2011). Other estimates say that of the new items added to the Japanese dictionaries each year, somewhere between 60% and 70% of them are English loans (Hogan 2003).

2.2.3 Sociolinguistic Significance of Japanese Language Contact

Japan's history of language contact reflects contact situations that do not wholly subscribe to many of the other contact narratives. As mentioned above, many situations of foreign influence on a language include invasion, immigrants, conquest, colonialism, and imperialism. Japanese language contact, on the other hand, is not centered on colonialism or invasion, but more on trade and education.

Turning our attention to the topic at hand, though some scholars argue that English is accorded prestige in Japan, there is never any situation of bilingualism or diglossia with English (Hogan 2003). However, it would be remiss not to admit that after WWII, Americans occupied Japan for nearly seven years, which creates a dynamic of power and

colonialism associated with English in the affected areas. But for the most part language contact between Japanese and English does not fit into many of the attested narratives.

Hogan (2003) argues that although English never reached any level of bilingualism, diglossia, or code shifting, English-derived loanwords in Japanese are indeed similar to those types of situations. She argues that use of this set of vocabulary fits into the five aspects of code switching listed in §2.2.1 even though there is no code-switching environment. The ways this manifests sociolinguistically will be a main topic of investigation within this study.

2.3 LEXICAL BORROWING IN JAPANESE

Japanese is often split into a series of lexical strata, the number of which is sometimes debated. Schmidt (2009) identifies four categories in Japanese: native Japanese, Sino-Japanese, non-Chinese foreign vocabulary, and a hybrid group. These lexical strata, outlined below, are the basis for the terms that I will use in my study. Schmidt focuses on the fact that these categories are based on speaker perception of nativeness and foreignness rather than the actual origins of the words. This is reinforced by Tomoda's (2000) report from a survey of native Japanese speakers. The results found that over 30% of responses differed from the formal and etymological classification (Tomoda 2000).

Other authors also sometimes identify a third category called the mimetic stratum, which covers phonomimes, phenomimes, and psychomimes (Irwin 2011). However, no mimetic loans have been attested in Japanese and I will henceforth treat this category as a subset of the native stratum.

2.3.1 Native Japanese

Native Japanese is called *wago* 和語 'Japanese words' or *Yamato kotoba* 大和言葉 'words from the Yamato era' after Japan's first established kingdom in the 4th century CE. Schmidt defines Native Japanese vocabulary as words that are perceived by native speakers as not having come from another language. However, as noted before, these

perceptions are not always accurate. Schmidt offers the example of *kabocha* ‘pumpkin’, a word that arose from the Portuguese word for Cambodia. Native speakers now consider *kabocha* to be a Native Japanese word.

2.3.2 Sino-Japanese

Sino-Japanese vocabulary is called *kango* ‘Hàn words’ in Japanese and refers to words that native speakers perceive to have been borrowed from Chinese. For over 1,600 years Chinese has had a significant influence on the Japanese language and has provided Japanese with a great number of loanwords as well as a writing system. Most of the words in the Sino-Japanese stratum entered the Japanese language during the Nara Period around the 8th century CE, though Chinese script first entered Japan in the 4th century CE so it is likely that there were borrowings from Chinese preceding written record. Schmidt (2009) states that, based on statistical research in 1962 from the National Institute of the Japanese Language (*Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyūsho* 国立国語研究所, abbreviated as *Kokken* 国研), Sino-Japanese words make up 41.3% of Japanese vocabulary (Schmidt 2009).

An important category to note here are Japanese neologisms that use Sino-Japanese lexical material. As mentioned before, because Japanese imported such a large number of Chinese words, Chinese elements became analyzable (Haspelmath 2009). To use Haspelmath’s example, the Japanese language borrowed *kokumin* 国民 ‘citizen’ from Chinese *guó-mín* [country-people] 国民, in addition to borrowing more words with the element *kok(u)* 国 ‘country’ and words with the element *min* 民 ‘people’. This is illustrated in (1):

(1)	<i>kokumin</i>	国民	‘citizen’
	<i>kok-ka</i>	国家	‘nation’
	<i>oku-ō</i>	国王	‘king’
	<i>minshū</i>	民衆	‘population’
	<i>jūmin</i>	住民	‘inhabitant’

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Because there were so many borrowed words and many of them shared elements, the individual units in compounds became analyzable. Subsequently, Japanese coinages arose from this lexical material. An example of this is the word *yakyū* 野球 ‘baseball’ composed of the element *ya* 野 ‘field’ and *kyū* 球 ‘ball’. It is interesting to note that this term coexists with the English loan *bēsubōru* ベースボール ‘baseball’.

Finally, it is important to note here that many native Japanese speakers do not consider Sino-Japanese words loans and they treat them differently from other loanwords (Irwin 2011). Linguists reflect this treatment as often the term ‘loanword’ is used entirely separately from Sino-Japanese and Chinese might not even be mentioned in a discussion of loanwords in Japanese (Tomoda 2000, Hogan 2003, Irwin 2011). Irwin compares Sino-Japanese words to words like ‘*information*’ or ‘*horrible*’ in English, which originally came from Norman French but are entirely engrained in English such that most native speakers are unaware that they are technically loans. There are a number of differences in the phonological, morphosyntactic, and orthographic integrative mechanisms between the Sino-Japanese stratum and the stratum of foreign loanwords. This will be a topic of further discussion in my study to ascertain whether these two strata are fundamentally different, or whether merely parallel trajectories at different stages.

2.3.3 Non-Chinese Foreign Loanwords/Gairaigo

This stratum is the lexical category in which this investigation is primarily concerned. We will find, however, that its borders are not necessarily well defined. Schmidt uses the phrase ‘Non-Chinese Foreign vocabulary’ and defines it as words that native speakers perceive to be borrowed from languages other than Chinese. These words are mainly borrowings since the 16th century when Japanese contact with the West began.

Schmidt uses the term *gairaigo* 外来語 ‘words that came from outside’ synonymously with this strata. However, Irwin (2011) points out that *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (NKD), a highly esteemed Japanese dictionary, is a little more liberal with its definition. Crucially, words from Chinese that word borrowed more recently, such as *gyōza* ‘steamed

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

dumpling,’ are considered to be *gairaigo*. Though these words originate in Chinese, they are not part of the Sino-Japanese repertoire and have not undergone the process of full assimilation through time. Still others include any and all borrowings to be *gairaigo* (Sugimoto 2007 in Irwin 2011), included even the Sino-Japanese stratum.

In her survey on the concept of *gairaigo* Tomoda (2000) identified three additional terms encompassed by *gairaigo*: *katakanago*, *gaikokugo*, and *wasei eigo*:

► *Katakanago* カタカナ語 refers to words that are generally written in the *katakana* script, which is identifiably used for foreign words but not exclusively. Slang words and brand or product names are also often written in this script.

► *Gaikokugo* 外国語 translates to ‘foreign language’ and is used for foreign words that have little to no phonological modification and no semantic adaptation. Irwin proposes the English equivalents to *gaikokugo* might include ‘*zeitgeist*’ or ‘*chutzpah*’ as opposed to more integrated loanwords like ‘*thug*’ or ‘*kangaroo*.’

► *Wasei eigo* 和製英語 translates to ‘Japan-made English’ and is used for Japanese neologisms coined from lexical material that originated in English. Scholars describe these words with the terms coinages (Schmidt 2009), pseudo-loanwords (Hogan 2003), or ‘Japan-made English’ (Miller 1998), among other names. Tomoda defines *wasei eigo* as words that have undergone such significant phonological and semantic adaptation that they are no longer decipherable in English. These can include words whose meanings have strayed so far from their original English connotation as well as words that are a mix of English and Japanese lexical material¹.

Ultimately Tomoda settles on an etymologically and orthographically restricted definition of *gairaigo*: ‘words written in *katakana* and originating in a country other than China or

¹ Generally English lexical items are morphologically unanalyzable units, however there has been evidence of coinages such as *anshinjiraburu* which is a semi loan consisting of

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Japan' (Tomoda 2000). This is a deviation from Schmidt's perception-based distinction as well as from Irwin's definition that allows Chinese-originating recent loans.

Irwin (2011) adopts a more time-period based approach to the definition of *gairaigo*. Specifically, he accepts as *gairaigo* any word borrowed from a foreign language post mid-16th century. Additionally, the word must undergo Japanese phonological adaptation and have a meaning that is 'intelligible to the general speech community' (Irwin 2011). This time frame refers to the point at which Japanese contact with Western languages began. Irwin's definition allows all words, Chinese or otherwise, borrowed after this point to be considered *gairaigo*. However, all Chinese loans borrowed before mid-16th century are considered Sino-Japanese. Irwin does not address whether he considers non-Chinese loans borrowed pre-mid-16th century to be native or not.

Hogan (2003) focuses on English-originating *gairaigo* and proposes the term 'English-derived vocabulary'. Within this umbrella term two types of loanwords emerge: direct loanwords and pseudo-loanwords. Direct loanwords correspond to borrowed lexemes that maintain a close resemblance to their original meaning and form. The category includes direct translations, as well as words that have undergone moderate semantic change. Hogan also includes English terms that have been truncated and loan blends that contain both foreign and native elements. Her definition of pseudo-loanwords is closely connected to Tomoda's definition of *wasei eigo*. Hogan's definition of pseudo-loanwords includes innovative combinations of English lexical elements as well as hybrid lexemes comprised of a mix of elements from the *gairaigo* stratum and one of the other strata. Table 1 summarizes these innovations and is reproduced from Hogan (2003) with slight modification:

Table 1. English-derived vocabulary formation

Rule	Derivation	English-derived lexical item	Meaning
Direct translation	butter	bātā	butter
Semantic restriction	instant	insutanto	ready-to-cook foods
Semantic expansion	up	-appu	increase, improve, intensify
Loan truncation	word processor	wa-puro	word processor
Loan blending	kiss	kissu-suru	to kiss
Foreign lexeme composites	cunning + paper	kanningu peipā	a 'cheat sheet'
Japanese + foreign lexeme composites	gorilla + kujira	gojira	Godzilla'

The definition I will be using for *gairaigo* is based mainly on Hogan's concept of English-derived vocabulary as it corresponds most directly with the questions of how English is used, what types of English loans can exist, and how these types intersect with ideas about and attitudes towards English loans. However, my study will also address the distinctions made in other definitions, such as the differences between Chinese loanwords and *gairaigo*, as well as the roles of orthography and time in perception of English-derived loanwords. Throughout my study I may use the terms 'English loan' or 'English loanword' to refer to English-derived *gairaigo*.

2.3.4 Other Strategies and Categories

The lexical strata of Japanese are also sometimes considered as four hierarchical categories: native, established loans, assimilated foreign, and unassimilated foreign (Itô & Mester 1999 in Irwin 2011). Irwin (2011) presents these categories as distinguished by phonological constraints. Namely, assimilated foreign vocabulary is constrained by 'no voiced obstruent geminates' (NO-DD) and unassimilated foreign vocabulary is constrained by the basic syllable constraints of Japanese and 'no complex syllable onsets or codas' (SYLLSTRUC). The organization of this approach is set inclusive such that the

innermost set (native Japanese vocabulary) maximally satisfies all constraints, while the outer sets satisfy just a subset of those constraints.

While I will not focus as much on phonological constraints as the defining features of the strata, the concept of foreign loans being either assimilated or unassimilated (Irwin 2011, Hogan 2003) factors in to how English or how Japanese these words are considered. This is addressed in Section III.

Finally, a note on the undiscussed ‘hybrid’ stratum: both Schmidt (2009) and Irwin (2011) include a hybrid category for words that contain elements from two different strata. As mentioned above, I am working with Hogan’s theory of English-derived vocabulary, which includes such things as loan blending and other composites. And so some of the hybrid category intersects with my umbrella definition of loanwords. For the most part I will be ignoring hybrid vocabulary that does not include *gairaigo*.

2.4 BREAKDOWN OF LEXICAL STRATA

Irwin (2011) presents survey data published by Kokken (cited as NINJAL in Irwin 2011), a comprehensive survey of vocabulary in magazines, which is reproduced in Table 2. According to the data from Kokken (1964, 2005a), in 1994 foreign loanwords made up 12% of the total words surveyed (token count) and 35% of the total number of different words (type count). The type count increased by three and half times what it was in 1956 when foreign vocabulary accounted for just 10% of the different words. However, although loanwords make up over a third of the type count, the individual *gairaigo* lexemes occur in low frequency (Irwin 2011).

Table 2. Distribution of Japanese lexemes by vocabulary stratum

		Native	Sino-Japanese	Foreign	Hybrid
Token Count	1956	54%	41%	3%	2%
	1994	37%	49%	12%	2%
Type Count	1956	37%	47%	10%	6%
	1994	25%	34%	35%	6%

(Kokken 1964, 2005a in Irwin 2011)

Schmidt (2009) also discusses this disparity between word count and frequency in his comparison of the Kokken (1962) study and a subdatabase (of his own compilation) of the basic Japanese vocabulary. Although Sino-Japanese and foreign vocabulary make up nearly 60% of the lexicon, Schmidt's subdatabase found an inverse pattern where native Japanese vocabulary made up 61.2% of the type count. Sino-Japanese made up almost a third of the basic vocabulary (30.2%) while non-Chinese foreign vocabulary (Schmidt's *gairaigo* strata) made up only 6.3% with hybrid vocabulary at 2.3% of basic vocabulary.

2.5 LEXICAL INTEGRATION AND ADAPTATION

Loanwords, when entering a language, often undergo changes to their pronunciation, morphology, syntax, and orthography in order to adapt to the borrowing language's grammar. The extent to which loanwords are altered can depend on any number of factors including knowledge of and attitudes toward the donor language or merely the age of the loanword. If the extent of the borrowing is great enough, the borrowing language may even import the donor language's phonological, morphosyntactic, or orthographic properties. This was the case with the extensive borrowing from Chinese that occurred in Japanese history (Haspelmath 2009). As mentioned before, Japan imported the writing system used in China and, due to the massive number of loanwords, much of the Chinese morphology.

The extent to which loanwords are adapted affects native speakers' perceptions of both native and loanwords. As discussed in the section on the lexical strata of Japanese, one strategy of dividing the Japanese lexicon is based on the extent of assimilation or non-assimilation of foreign vocabulary. Haspelmath refers to loanwords that are either adapted to a lesser extent or not adapted at all as 'foreignisms'. Possibly the Japanese equivalent of this is the *gaikokugo* 'foreign language' category identified in both Tomoda (2000) and Irwin (2011). Haspelmath points out that perception of a word as either a foreignism or a loanword on the part of the speakers is a rather complicated issue and does not depend on the degree of adaptation alone.

In this section I will just briefly cover general processes of loanword integration in Japanese.

2.5.1 Phonology

Because of the relatively restricted possible arrangements of phonemes in Japanese, loanwords undergo a fair amount of phonological adaptation. Schmidt (2009) covers rather extensively the specifics of these phonological processes and how they differ across lexical strata. However, I will not focus so much right now on the phonological integration except to say a few comments pertinent to the differences and similarities among the categories. Schmidt outlines a handful of phonological adaptations that distinguish Native Japanese from Sino-Japanese, however he adds that some of the phonological processes mentioned cover multiple strata. Additionally, some processes assigned to Sino-Japanese vocabulary are under scrutiny for whether or not they are truly specific to Sino-Japanese due to extensive sound change across Japanese including the Native stratum since third century.

As for the *gairaigo*, Schmidt presents two varieties commonly used in the literature: "conservative assimilation" and "innovative assimilation." For the word 'film', in the conservative variety preservation of Native and Sino-Japanese phonology is prioritized, resulting in *fuirumu* ファイルム. On the other hand, in the innovative variety preservation

of the loanword's native pronunciation is prioritized, outputting *firumu* ファイルム. The key difference between these two is that the conservative variety sticks closer to Native phonology which forces the *u* sound between *f* and *i*. The innovative variety does not force this *u* and allows the *i* to appear immediately after the *f*. The type of phonological integration that different loanwords undergo may reflect attitudes about which is more important—Japanese phonology or original pronunciation. Additionally, a shift from conservative assimilation to assimilation that more closely reflects the original pronunciation may indicate a shift in attitudes regarding the importance of the donor language's native properties.

Additionally, Hoffer (2005) cites shortening as evidence for the extent of integration English loanwords have undergone. This shortening can take the shape of either one long word being shortened into a smaller word or both words in a two-word term being shortened à la 'hazmat' from 'hazardous material'. Thus the word 'apartment' would be adapted as *apaatomento*, which would then be shortened to its final form *apaato* アパート. And 'personal computer' would be adapted as *paasonaru konpyuuta*, which would then be shortened to its final form *paso-kon* パソコン from 'perso(nal) com(puter)'. Hoffer argues that this grammatical process is one that native words have also been subject to, and thus is evidence for the high degree of integration that English loanwords have undergone.

However, I will not spend much time discussing the individual phonological processes of Japanese loanword integration here.

2.5.2 Morphology & Syntax

Morphosyntactically, Sino-Japanese vocabulary and *gairaigo* vocabulary are generally both inflected distinctly from the Native vocabulary. Verbs and adjectives in the Native stratum can take the appropriate inflections (*-ru* or *-u* for verbs and *-i* for adjectives), e.g. *tabe-ru* 食べる 'eat', *nom-u* 飲む 'drink', and *haya-i* 速い 'fast'. Vocabulary from the other two strata cannot be inflected and must take auxiliaries and particles instead (*suru*

‘do’ for verbs and either the *-na* particle or copular *da* for adjectives). This is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Morphosyntactic Rules for Verbs & Adjectives Across Lexical Strata

	Inflected Native		Paired with Auxiliary or Copula	
			Sino-Japanese	Gairaigo
Verbs	stem+ru/u		stem + 'suru'	
	tabe-ru 食べる eat'	nom-u 飲む drink'	benkyou suru 勉強する study + to do'	kissu suru キッスする kiss + to do'
Adjectives	stem+i		stem + 'da'	
	haya-i 速い fast'		kirei da きれいだ pretty + COP'	romanchikku da ロマンチックだ romantic + COP'

However, the distinction between Native vocabulary and non-Native vocabulary based on morphosyntactic rules is not steadfast. There are examples of lexical fusion between Native and Sino-Japanese morphosyntactic rules. Schmidt points out that only a very small number of non-Sino-Japanese foreign loanwords that can be inflected. Of the few that do get inflected, all take the *-ru* ending (Schmidt 2009). This type of inflection has a very colloquial, even teenage, feel to it (Schmidt 2009, “Global Teenspeak”). One innovation of this type is *makuru* which means ‘to go to McDonald’s.’ It is derived from the English loan *makudonarudo* マクドナルド ‘McDonald’s’ and has the *-ru* ending to make it a verb. Recently there have been popular websites circulating a so-called “Geopolitical Dictionary” (“Geopolitical Dictionary,” “Kinisoku”). By adding the *-ru* ending, various country names are comically turned into verbs with definitions relating to that country’s image or political history. For example, America is turned into the word *amerikaru* アメリカる, which has the meaning ‘claim someone else’s things as your own’ (“Kinisoku,” my translation).

2.5.3 Orthography

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Japanese orthography is borrowed from Chinese script. This borrowing gave rise to three different scripts: *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana*. These different scripts roughly correspond to the lexical strata, but not exactly. The following is a brief description of the general Japanese orthography and how orthographic processes are involved in loanword integration.

► Kanji

Kango (Sino-Japanese words) are written in *kanji* 漢字 ‘Hàn characters’ which are borrowed from Chinese script. Kanji have two types of readings: *on’yomi* ‘sound reading’ refers to original Chinese monosyllabic pronunciation and *kun’yomi* ‘meaning readings’ refers to the readings generally used for Native Japanese vocabulary.

There are three situations in which kanji and its readings do not accurately reflect the etymology. The first is a process called *ateji* 当て字 ‘phonetic equivalent’ (lit. ‘applied character’) through which *kanji* are assigned to non-Chinese words based on their sounds. For example, *kega* ‘wound’ is a Native word and the kanji are 怪我 which individually mean in Chinese ‘suspicious’ and ‘self’ respectively. These kanji are only used because their *on’yomi* reading correspond to *ke* and *ga*. The second situation is reanalysis. Occasionally words originally from the Native Japanese stratum, when written in kanji, are reanalyzed as belonging to the Sino-Japanese stratum. One example of this is the word for ‘Japanese radish,’ which changed from the Native pronunciation *ōne* to the Sino-Japanese pronunciation *daikon*. As illustrated in (2) below, once the word was written in kanji using the characters for ‘big’ and ‘root’ the word was reanalyzed as a Sino-Japanese borrowing and thus the reading changed from *kun’yomi* to *on’yomi*.

(2)

<i>Kanji</i>	大	根
Native reading (<i>on’yomi</i>)	<i>ō</i>	<i>ne</i>
Sino-Japanese reanalysis (<i>kun’yomi</i>)	<i>dai</i>	<i>kon</i>
Gloss	‘big’	‘root’

The third situation is a semantic cousin of *ateji* where *kanji* is assigned not based on the phonetic reading but on the meaning. Occasionally foreign words will end up with semantically accurate *kanji* orthography. It was not uncommon for foreign words to be written with phonetically-based *ateji* such as the word *Amerika* which used to be written in *kanji* based on the *on'yomi*: 亜米利加. However, some foreign words were assigned *kanji* based on the meaning, like the word *tabako* 煙草, from Portuguese word for tobacco. Neither of the characters have a reading (either *on'yomi* or *kun'yomi*) that corresponds with the sounds *ta-ba-ko*, but the meanings of the characters are ‘smoke’ and ‘herb’ respectively. This type of reading, where there is not actual correspondence with the sounds, is called *gikun* 義訓 (lit. ‘meaning + Japanese character reading’) and often appears with *kana* over or next to the characters to indicate pronunciation. In more recent times the *gikun* orthography has been cast to the wayside in favor of *hiragana* or *katakana* spellings.

► Hiragana

Hiragana ひらがな is a syllabary script developed from cursive Chinese calligraphy. Most function words, conjugational endings for verbs and adjectives, and auxiliaries are written in hiragana. Hiragana is also used for Native words that do not have *kanji* assigned to them and very infrequently for foreign loanwords. Hiragana can also be used as pronunciation guides for the logographic *kanji*.

► Katakana

Katakana カタカナ is another syllabary script developed from Chinese character shorthand. Katakana is associated most strongly with foreign loanwords and foreign names. Sometimes words normally written in *kanji* will be written in *katakana* when used in a scientific context. For example, the word *hito* ‘person’ is generally written with the *kanji* 人 but when referring to ‘human species’ it will be written in *katakana*: ヒト.

Foreign loanwords were almost exclusively identified orthographically by its rendering in katakana. However, katakana has begun to take on an old-fashioned feeling (McKenzie 2008) and there has been a slow shift towards writing English loanwords in their original Roman script, called *rōmaji*. This use of *rōmaji* is predominantly apparent in ‘music, fashion, print media and advertising in Japan’ (McKenzie 2008). McKenzie speculates that this may reflect changing positions in the Japanese-English relationship.

2.6 FACTORS OF LOANWORD USAGE

It is important to address what environments and motives factor into loanword usage with specific focus on the Japanese situation. These factors are necessary to assess and analyze how attitudes towards *gairaigo* fit into the sociolinguistic history of Japanese and English. Sections §2.6.1-§2.6.3 provide a review of the necessary environments, motives for adoption, areas of borrowing, and the processes of loan dissemination.

2.6.1 Necessary Environments and English

Kowner & Rosenhouse (2008) identify three basic requirements for borrowing: some type of contact between the loaning and borrowing languages, at least a basic understanding of the borrowed word’s meaning, and at least some tendency to bilingualism. As discussed in §2.2.1 there is also often a pattern of immigration, conquest, invasion, education, and colonialism heavily influencing the influx of loans into a language. Yet we have seen that Japanese does not follow this general model. As discussed above, Japanese never experienced such invasion or colonization with Chinese and yet the Sino-Japanese stratum makes up over a third of the Japanese lexicon. Additionally, Japanese has neither a bilingualism relationship with English nor colonialism relationship in the traditional sense. Given that loanwords make up 10% of the Japanese lexicon of which English accounts for 90% of those loanwords and 60%-70% of new words added every year (Takashi 1992, Hogan 2003, Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008, *inter alia*), we must assume that there are other stronger forces at play causing such an influx of English into Japanese.

2.6.2 *Motives*

The motives for borrowing ultimately fall into two categories that I will call the functional and social motivations, and what Al-Khatib & Farghal (1999) refer to as the instrumental and integrative orientations. In the former, the functional motivation consists of borrowing by necessity. In the latter, the social motivation consists of borrowings motivated by cultural ideals, prestige, or pressure.

► *Functional Motivation*

It is a generally accepted fact that words are often borrowed for their “need-filling function”, especially from a language like English that is often used as the *lingua franca* of contemporary technology and philosophy (Honna 1995, Al-Khatib & Farghal 1999, Hogan 2003, Kowner & Rosenhouse 2008, Haspelmath 2009, *inter alia*). Indeed this reflects the main flood of English loanwords into the Japanese lexicon during the Meiji Restoration in 1868 in which Japan transformed from a feudalistic nation to a modern one (Takashi 1992, Schmidt 2009, Irwin 2011).

Many words filling gaps in Japanese were technical terms for new technology, especially computer technology and household appliances, new concepts and movements, or nuanced forms of existing concepts. This last category includes terminology for the Western version of an existing thing, such as ‘kitchen’ giving rise to the coexistence of the loan *kicchin* キッチン for a Western kitchen and *daidokoro* 台所 for a traditional Japanese kitchen.

► *Social Motivation*

So on the one side we have the functional motivation of loanwords’ need-filling function and on the other is the social motivation. Studies of borrowing show that a tendency towards cultural emulation of some prestige, admired, or dominant culture plays a large role in lexical borrowing from that culture (Al-Khatib & Farghal 1995, Hogan 2003, Al Btoush 2014, to name just a few). As for Japanese speakers, English holds a very high position of prestige as an emblem of Western modernization, internationalism, and

sophistication (Hogan 2003, Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008, and others). Takashi (1992) study on the use of English loanwords in advertisements found that English loanwords were used to indicate that products reflected these characteristics attributed to the Western lifestyle. Additionally, Hogan's 2003 case study in the northern village of Aoyama revealed that English loanwords were also often used for academic or philosophical terms as a mark of education and prestige. Hogan's study also showed that sometimes using English loanwords in this way doesn't always produce a favorable result. In one situation a senior teacher used an obscure loanword that his colleagues did not understand and one colleague thought "he was conceited and wanted to impress his colleagues with specialist jargon" (Hogan 2003).

Loanwords also offer themselves up as stylistic resources. This may account for redundancy in loanwords such as the coexistence of both *gyuunyuu* 牛乳 and *miruku* ミルク for 'milk'. Reasons for using one over the other may depend on whether it's an ingredient, an advertised product, in spoken conversation, in written form, or any number of other factors. Related to their stylistic benefits, loanwords are often used as euphemisms. Loanwords may be used for terms and ideas that have "linguistic baggage" attached to the native Japanese term, thus encouraging the coexistence of native words and their roughly equivalent loanword. These euphemisms may be used for words that have specific connotations for the native term, such as *shakkin* 借金 'loan' which suggests economic poverty and imprudent spending, whereas the *gairaigo* term *roon* ローン sounds more like a planned buy-now-and-pay-later effort (Honna 1995). Or loanwords may be euphemisms for delicate or taboo subjects, such as using the *gairaigo* term *sekuhara* セクハラ to mean 'sexual harassment' instead of the heavier native term *seiteki-iyagarase* 性的嫌がらせ.

2.6.3 Dissemination and Contributing Factors

Kowner & Rosenhouse (2008) identify three main factors of loanword dissemination: direct communication, mass media, and the education system. In the case of Japanese, direct communication does not play a large part. Unlike the many languages that import

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

loanwords through immigration, invasion, or colonization processes, most Japanese speakers do not have much direct contact with the English-speaking world, and so loanword dissemination is largely through media and education.

Media is a very large factor in loanword dissemination, particularly through Japan's national public broadcasting organization, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (known as NHK for *Nippon Housou Kyoukai* 日本放送協会). The use of *gairaigo* in news organizations like NHK and prominent newspapers play a large role in circulating the loanwords as well as validating the words as appropriate for official usage. Additionally, because of the attractive attributes assigned to English loanwords, English-derived loans and words are often used in advertising and brand naming. Relatedly, in Japanese songs English loanwords and even English words that have not been assimilated into Japanese often make their way into the lyrics.

The third factor listed by Kowner & Rosenhouse, education, is another very visible source of loanword diffusion. After WWII English education became compulsory in Japan and learning English was seen as a necessary component to understanding the world. Students graduating from senior high school had six years of English learning and in 1991 over 94% of Japanese 15-year-olds chose to go to senior high (Honna 1995). Because of this, the majority of Japan's citizens have had extensive classroom exposure to the English language.

However, it is important to note that despite rigorous English language programs in place and compulsory English education through senior high school, Japan consistently ranks low in national TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores (Honna 1995, Daulton 2008.). Because of this, those both in and outside of Japan have asked the question: What is wrong with Japanese speakers and learning English? Honna (1995) argues that nothing is wrong given the sociolinguistic circumstances of Japan—specifically that English is neither particularly important nor necessary for communication in Japan. And yet there is anxiety and shame surrounding their inability to speak English like native English speakers do. Honna attributes this angst to the idea

that Japanese speakers believe that English is still the property of just Anglo-America, rather than a global language for which non-native varieties are acceptable and valid. These anxieties are ones to be kept in mind during the discussion of results below.

Along with education, other language policies have exerted a strong influence on the adoption of English-derived vocabulary in Japan. First and foremost, the *katakana* syllabary is used almost solely for foreign words. While before *katakana* became the norm for non-Japanese words, many borrowed terms were rendered with *kanji* translations either with semantically accurate characters for concepts or phonetically similar characters for names. Once rules and conventions for *katakana* were established, it became exceedingly easy to nativize and adapt foreign words into the Japanese phonology and orthography. It should be noted that Honna (1995) argues that such a writing system could not exist without an impulse on the part of the speakers to use loanwords. In this way *katakana* is both a factor in and a product of loanword adoption.

Functionally *katakana* eases the process of incorporating a foreign word into Japanese, but it has more cultural effects as well. Using a different orthography adds another layer of stylistic possibility in written language, which is seen in the use of *katakana* for non-*gairaigo* words. Igarashi (2007) found that the use of *katakana* to write non-*gairaigo*² words has increased from 8.21% of all *katakana* words in 1955 to 14% of all *katakana* words in 2007.

Some also argue that *katakana* helps to create a cultural barrier between ‘native’ and ‘foreign’ words, possibly easing anxiety regarding linguistic and cultural identity, as will be described in the following section.

² These words include *kango* (words of Chinese origin), *wago* (native non-*kango* Japanese words), words of mixed orthography, onomatopoeia, and proper nouns (Igarashi 2007).

2.7 LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY AND THE HEGEMONY OF ENGLISH

2.7.1 Hegemony of English and Native Language Identity

Concern about protecting and preserving the native language and cultural integrity is not uncommon in situations of language contact and lexical borrowing (Al-Khatib & Farghal 1999, Hogan 2003, Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008, Bulfoni 2009, *inter alia*). Foreign loans can be perceived as a threat or a contamination to the borrowing language. This topic is particularly sensitive when it comes to lexical borrowing from English. English has emerged as a *lingua franca* internationally and has become the first choice second language (Kowner & Rosenhouse 2008). This prestigious status did not occur passively but through centuries of British, and later American, imperialism, colonization, and steady growth of economic and military power. Anglo-American power and presence has enjoyed global propagation through military engagements, global economies, and the reach and influence of Anglo-American media.

Due to its imperialist and colonialist history, the proliferation of English loanwords in other languages can provoke discomfort, anxiety, or anger. Certainly this is clear in the Al-Khatib & Farghal (1999) study of English loanwords in Jordanian Arabic in which 66% of participants believed that English borrowing is a type of cultural colonization and 72% thought that it posed a threat to Arabic. Along this line of thinking, participants responded with remarks upon the decay and detriment Arabic is subjected to through the use of English loans. In her paper titled *Lexical Borrowing from English in the Internet Era: How to Preserve Chinese Identity*, Bulfoni (2009) presents the opinions of academics concerned about English lexical and orthographic loans ‘invading’ and ‘polluting’ Chinese.

2.7.2 Japanese Linguistic Identity and English

As for Japanese, Hogan’s (2003) study of English loanword usage in a northern Japanese town showed that some of the speakers felt distress that English loanwords were corrupting the beauty of Japanese and that they sound muddled and confusing when used in excess. This view is echoed in other accounts, such as that of Prime Minister Koizumi

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Jun'ichiro who lashed out angrily when his telecommunications minister gave a presentation using too many English loanwords. A more extreme example is the case that inspired this investigation: Hoji Takahashi suing NHK for mental distress caused by excessive use of foreign words (Osaki 2013).

However, it is important to note that most of the literature reflects a much less purist view of English in Japanese, as will be discussed in §2.8.2. Kowner & Dalot-Bul (2008), among others, argue that there are systems in place that create cultural barriers between what is 'native' and what is 'foreign', easing possible anxiety about the corruption of one with the other. This brings us back to the use of *katakana* for foreign words. As discussed above, *katakana* offers official legitimacy to lexical borrowings and an easy way to assimilate loanwords into Japanese. Some maintain that even while it helps make foreign words more Japanese, *katakana* simultaneously clearly separates what is 'foreign' from what is not. Those who agree believe that this separation helps assuage anxiety regarding the 'corruption' of Japanese by reducing the "cultural sense of identity loss" (Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008).

Kowner & Dalot-Bul relate this back to the oft-described inferiority complex of Japan in relation to the global powers of the West (Hogan 2003, Honna 1995, Takashi 1992) by arguing that the Japanese total-receptivity of English loanwords is not suggestive of subordination to the West's superiority, but is more indicative of ongoing construction of 'Japaneseness'. Cultural barriers like distinct orthography and conspicuously foreign *gairaigo* protect the Japaneseness from the 'interference' of English loanwords. Along these lines, Kowner & Dalot-Bul conclude that Japanese identity is recognized through comparison and opposition with English loanwords. As loanwords are made distinct and separate from Japanese words, by amplifying the difference from the Other, Kowner & Dalot-Bul claim that "the sense of self is accentuated" (Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008).

These themes of inferiority, Japaneseness, and construction of Japanese identity will be explored in the discussion of results.

2.8. ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN JAPANESE

Section 2.8 summarizes the usage of English loanwords in Japanese and native speaker attitudes towards them as reported so far in the literature. It is off of these reports and observations that this study builds.

2.8.1 Uses

The uses of English loanwords in Japanese follow the categories delineated in §2.6.2 driven by functional and social motivations. During the Meiji Restoration modernization attempts led to an influx of English loans in the technological, scientific, and other academic fields (Schmidt 2009, Takashi 1992, Irwin 2011). In addition to the academic realm, most of English borrowings relate to material goods, as indicated by the database compiled in Schmidt (2009) which found that English loanwords make up over 20% of words referring to *Food and drink*, *Clothing and grooming*, *The house*, and *Modern world*³. However, Irwin (2011) notes that English loanwords differ from other donor languages in that the borrowings are not restricted to nouns and verbs but include adjectives, adverbs, interjections, prepositions, numbers, pronouns, prefixes, and occasionally articles and conjunctions. In Japanese, the only other donor language that has this extensive of a reach across semantic word classes is Chinese with overwhelming percentages as is expected of the Sino-Japanese stratum (Schmidt 2009).

As mentioned in §2.6.2, English loanwords are often used stylistically or euphemistically. This stylistic feature of *gairaigo* is used generously in the realm of advertisement and name branding. Igarashi (2007) found that *gairaigo* made up 14.01% of the words in TV commercials and that *gairaigo* usage in magazines increased from 2.9% of the words to 13.6% between 1962 and 2007.

³ Categories based on semantic fields as specified in Schmidt (2009).

2.8.2 Attitudes

In her case study Hogan (2003) found that there was a general consensus among the Aoyama townspeople that English-derived vocabulary marked a generational divide. English terms were used to align oneself with the ‘young people’ while more traditional Japanese terms were used with older people and in formal situations. In general, English loanwords were associated with modernity, youthfulness, and informality. However, loanwords also seem more academic and erudite due to the high number of English loans in scientific and philosophical realms borrowed during the Meiji Restoration (Hogan 2003, Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008). The youthfulness and scholarly aspects of loanwords come together in advertising where they are used to evince sophistication, internationalism, and the general prestige of Western-like products and lifestyle (Takashi 1992, Hogan 2003).

However, reported attitudes have not been wholly favorable. Irwin (2011) found that in four different nationwide polls, the majority of respondents felt that there were too many *gairaigo* words in everyday written and spoken language. In the most recent survey, BBK⁴ (2008) found that 40% of participants felt that using *gairaigo* in everyday speech was undesirable—an increase from 36% in 2000 (Irwin 2011). This poll also found that older participants were more likely to find loanwords undesirable. Reasons for this negative opinion included over 50% of participants saying that “the intrinsic goodness of Japanese is being lost” through loanwords, with about the same percentage of people saying that loanwords were hard to understand.

Hogan’s report echoes a number of these sentiments, as many of the speakers expressed that English loanwords were invaluable but also frustrating and difficult. Hogan concluded that consciously or unconsciously, the people of Aoyama gave tacit approval of Western culture by exploiting the positive image associated with English loanwords.

⁴ *Bunkachou Bunkabu Kokugoka* (BBK): the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs, Culture Bureau, National Language Division

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Simultaneously, they also contested the influence of the West by criticizing excessive loanword usage and by using loanwords as euphemism for taboo subjects.

It was with these attitudes and opinions in mind that I created the following questionnaire for the present study.

III. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Given the background thus far, the main goal of this research was to tackle two overarching research questions:

1. What attitudes do native Japanese speakers currently have towards English loanwords?
2. How are these attitudes reflected in native Japanese speakers' usage and judgment of English loanwords?

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This study follows the work of a number of previous studies examining English loanwords in other languages, specifically Al-Khatib & Farghal (1999) on Jordanian Arabic, Hogan 2003 on Japanese, and McTague (1990) on Korean, as well as others⁵. Both Al-Khatib & Farghal and McTague both used attitude statement questionnaires in which participants rated their agreement with each statement. Hogan's study involved interviews and a more free answer approach to ascertaining native speaker thoughts and opinions on English loanwords. In Alzahrani (2010), a study on English loanwords in Arabic spoken by Saudis living in America, participants are asked to choose between an English loanword and its semantic equivalent in Arabic along with giving an explanation for their choice.

In an attempt to echo the methodologies of previous studies, research was conducted through an extensive questionnaire combining both quantitative and qualitative data based on previous models. The questionnaire was made up of six main sections, described below, in order to collect data concerning attitudes towards English loanwords, conceptualization of these words within the Japanese language, and actual their actual usage. The questionnaire was presented entirely in Japanese as it was directed towards a native Japanese speaking population. The questionnaire was created online using the

⁵ (Al Btoush 2014, Alzahrani 2010, McTague 1990, Park 2006, Saugera 2007)

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

web-based survey platform Qualtrics and distributed online through social media, online forums, and other online means of contact.

Of the 57 total participants 49 reported their gender, resulting in 23 men and 26 women. Of the 48 who reported their age 36 were 19-29 years old, 6 were 30-39 years old, 2 were 40-49 years old, and 4 were 50-59 years old. In sum there were 36 participants below the age of 30 and 12 participants 30 years old or above. All participants were native speakers of Japanese. As an incentive to take the questionnaire, participants entered into a raffle to win one of two ¥2500 (about \$25) Amazon gift cards.

Note: In this section I will use the term *loanword* to refer to all types of lexical borrowing from English into Japanese. The terms *native Japanese* or *non-loan Japanese* refer to Japanese that is not of foreign origin NOT including Chinese words that were borrowed into Japanese two thousand years ago.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS

In the following sections I will explain the format and content of each section of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was presented in Japanese so all representations of the questions and answers are translations.

3.2.1 Agreement Statements on Attitudes Towards English Loanwords

Participants were presented with 16 statements concerning attitudes towards English loanwords. These questions were formulated based on those used in the Al-Khatib & Farghal (1999) study on English loanwords in Jordanian Arabic and on opinions expressed by interviewees in Hogan (2003).

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Attitudes Towards English Loanwords:

1. Using English loanwords fills gaps in Japanese.
2. English loanwords are useful.
3. English loanwords are necessary.
4. English loanwords are convenient for discussing taboo subjects.
5. English loanwords are attractive in advertising.
6. Using English loanwords makes you sound _____.
 - a. Intelligent
 - b. Cosmopolitan
 - c. Youthful
 - d. Tech-savvy
 - e. Modern
7. English loanwords disturb/corrupt the Japanese language
8. English loanwords should only be used when there is no other native word available
9. New concepts and technology should be expressed using native Japanese concepts rather than adopting the English word (e.g. *denshikeisanki* versus *konpyuuta* for “computer”).
10. English loanwords are confusing.
11. English loanwords are ugly.
12. I feel uncomfortable when someone uses English excessively.

These questions can be split into positive attitudes (Questions 1-6) and negative attitudes (Questions 7-11). Participants rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5). Participants were provided with room for comments on their answers.

3.2.2 English Loanword Usage: Word Choice

Participants were first asked to provide examples of English loanwords they might use instead of the equivalent Japanese word. The rest of the section was made up of 7 word choice questions. Each question had a sentence fill-in-the-blank word and four choices: the English loanword, the non-loan Japanese equivalent, “Either is fine”, or “Neither is good”. The following are translations of the sentences with the key words in bold:

1. This kimono’s pattern is **cute**.
2. Does Takada-san have a **boyfriend**?
3. **Rape** is a serious problem around the world.
4. Is your **cellphone** from Apple or Samsung?
5. After the new advertising campaign, that company’s image **improved**.
6. The study abroad program in Germany is a good **chance** to practice my German.
7. Before her guest arrived, she put on **makeup**.

These words were chosen because they represent different semantic categories, including everyday words, products, technology, and taboo topics. Participants were provided with room for comments on their answers.

3.2.3 English Loanword Usage: Judgments of Japaneseness

Participants were presented with a list of 19 words and were asked to rate each one on how Japanese or how English each one felt. The scale used was a five-point Likert with the following options: Japanese (1), Close to Japanese (2), Can be thought of either way (3), Close to English (4), and English (5). Each word was written in both *katakana* and *hiragana* to avoid orthographic bias. The list contained 2 native Japanese words and 5 English words that were transcribed into the Japanese phonology in order to determine the baseline for “most Japanese” and “most English”. Below are the loanwords and their original English representations:

Table 4. Loanwords for Judgments of Japaneseness

	Loanword	Original English	Category
1	<i>Anime</i>	Animation	
2	<i>Katsu</i>	Cutlet	
3	<i>Konbini</i>	Convenience store	Direct
4	<i>Rakkii</i>	Lucky	Translation
5	<i>Sekuhara</i>	Sexual harassment	
6	<i>Tabako</i>	Tobacco	
7	<i>Terebi</i>	Television	
8	<i>Ikemen</i>	<i>Ike</i> + men	= “handsome man”
9	<i>Kanningu peepaa</i>	Cunning paper	= “cheat sheet”
10	<i>Donmai</i>	Don’t mind	= “don’t worry about it”
11	<i>Maipeesu</i>	My pace	= “at one’s own pace”
12	<i>Sumaato</i>	Smart	= “stylish”

The test words were English loanwords spanning a number of semantic categories and were either Direct Translations or *wasei eigo*. I have modified these categories largely based off of those in Hogan (2003). Direct Translation loanwords are lexical borrowings that more or less keep the same form (phonologization notwithstanding) and undergo

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

minimal semantic change. Included in this category are Loan Truncations that are essentially Direct Translations that have been shortened. For example, ‘sexual harassment’ is phonologized to *sekushuaru harasumento* and subsequently truncated to *sekuhara*. Additionally, there are also Near Translations that are very closely related to the original form and meaning but undergo either semantic restriction or expansion. For example, *donmai* comes from ‘don’t mind’ but is used almost exclusively in sports as a call to other to “shake it off” or “don’t worry about it”. This word is classified as a Near Translation because its meaning has become restricted to something more specific even though it is related to the original English.

The other category is *Wasei Eigo*, the so-called “English made in Japan”. *Wasei Eigo* loanwords are lexical borrowings whose semantic meaning have strayed far from their original meaning and neologisms comprising of lexical composites creating entirely new words and meanings. Neologism are often Lexeme Composites, words that can include English-only lexemes or both English and Japanese. An example of an English-only lexeme composite is the word *kanningu peepaa* made up of the phonologized ‘cunning’ and ‘paper’. This word means ‘cheat sheet’ in Japanese, even though the term doesn’t exist in English nor do the separate lexemes really fit the Japanese semantics. These categories are represented by the following abbreviations:

Table 5. Loanword Categories

Category	Subcategory	Abbreviation
Direct Translation	Direct Translation (including Loan Truncations)	DT
DT: Near Translations	Semantic Restriction	SR
	Semantic Expansion	SE
<i>Wasei Eigo</i>	Foreign Lexeme Composite	FLC
	Japanese + Foreign Lexeme Composite	JFLC

Participants were provided with room for comments on their answers.

3.2.4 English Loanword Usage: Situations of Usage

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they would use English loanwords in a variety of situations. This question was included to quantify the association of English loanwords with a certain register or situation or medium. Participants rated each of the 8 following situations on a five-point Likert scale on frequency of usage: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Very Often (5). Below are translations of the statements:

1. Talking with friends at school.
2. Talking with teachers at school.
3. Talking with parents at home.
4. Talking with siblings at home.
5. Writing an essay
6. Talking with friends about Western culture
7. Giving a presentation on Western culture
8. When sending text messages, posting online, etc.

Participants were provided with room for comments on their answers.

3.2.5 Short Answer Questions on Identity

The short answer section consisted of three questions about the participants' identity with Japan, the Japanese language, and English loanwords. The translations of these questions are below:

1. For you, what kind of things do you feel are Japanese-like?
2. How important is the Japanese language to being Japanese?
3. Please write about your opinions on English and English loanwords in Japanese.

3.2.6 Demographics

Participants were asked to list their age, gender, hometown, nationality, languages spoken other than Japanese, highest level of education, and when and for how long they received English education. Additionally, they were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale how often they had English exposure: Every Day (1), Every Week (2), Twice a Month (3), Once a Month (4), and Rarely (5). The translations of the statements are replicated below:

How often do you ____ ?

- a. Watch English movies or TV shows
- b. Read books in English
- c. Visit English websites
- d. Listen to English songs

3.3 RESULTS

3.3.1 Agreement Statements on Attitudes Towards English Loanwords

For the purpose of analysis, all responses of “Neither Agree nor Disagree” were ignored. The data from the attitude statements show a general trend of positive attitudes toward English loanwords, as shown in the graph below. Over half (68.0%) chose either Agree or Strongly Agree for positive statements (e.g. *English loanwords are useful*) while just over a third (35.9%) chose either Agree or Strongly Agree for negative statements (e.g. *English loanwords disturb/corrupt the Japanese language*).

A chi-square test of goodness of fit was performed to determine which statements exhibited a significant difference in those who chose Agree or Strongly Agree and those who chose Disagree or Strongly Disagree. Eight statements were found to have significant differences, showing that Agree/Strongly Agree responses were significantly higher than Disagree/Strongly Disagree responses for positive attitudes towards English loanwords (EL), while the reverse was true for negative attitudes except for the last attitude. Although most opinions on English loanwords were positive, the data shows that excessive use of loanwords causes unease. This opinion was reinforced by answers to the short answer section, discussed below. The following chart shows the breakdown for all attitudes with significant values highlighted. For all instances, $df = 1$ with a critical value of 3.85 for an alpha level of 0.05.

Table 6. Agreement Statements on Attitudes Towards English Loanwords

Question	Agree	Disagree	N	Chi-square
Positive	68.0%	32.0%		
Using EL fills gaps in Japanese.	100.0%	0.0%	42	42.00
EL are useful.	94.0%	6.0%	50	38.72
EL are necessary.	90.7%	9.3%	43	28.49
EL are convenient for discussing taboo subjects.	47.5%	52.5%	40	0.10
EL are attractive in advertising.	58.1%	41.9%	43	1.14
Using EL makes you sound ____.				
a. Intelligent	45.2%	54.8%	31	0.29
b. Cosmopolitan	60.0%	40.0%	40	1.60
c. Youthful	73.8%	26.2%	42	9.52
d. Tech-savvy	45.2%	54.8%	42	0.38
e. Modern	65.3%	34.7%	49	4.59
Negative	35.9%	64.1%		
EL disturb/corrupt the Japanese language	43.6%	56.4%	39	0.64
EL should only be used when no other native word is available	29.5%	70.5%	44	7.36
New concepts should be expressed using native Japanese rather than adopting the English word.	15.2%	84.8%	46	22.26
EL are confusing.	51.2%	48.8%	41	0.10
EL are ugly.	12.8%	87.2%	47	26.06
I feel uncomfortable when someone uses EL excessively.	63.0%	37.0%	46	4.65

Chi-square tests of independence were performed to examine any possible relationship between answers to attitudes and age, gender, years of education, and frequency of exposure to English media, but the results did not show any significant correlation.

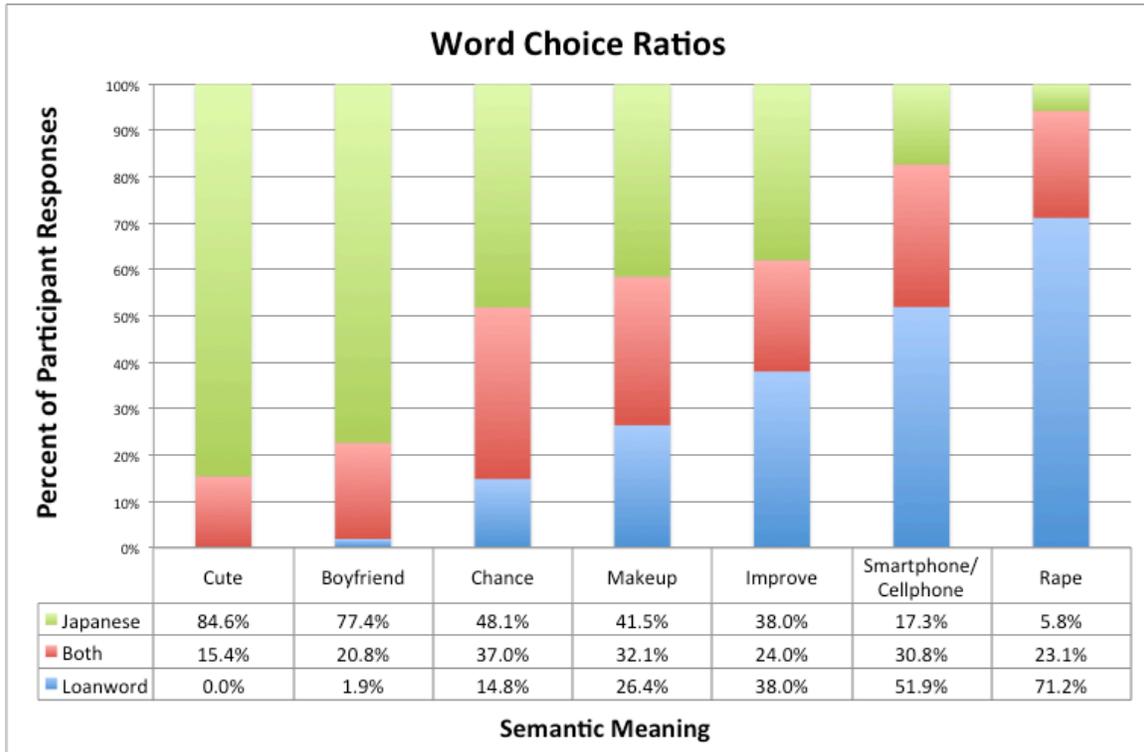
3.3.2 English Loanword Usage: Word Choice

In order to focus on word choice between the options of an English loan or a non-loan Japanese word, all responses of Neither were ignored. Additionally, participants that chose Neither made up just 3.2% of the total responses. The following graph shows the percentage of responses for each choice, represented by the semantic meaning. Overall, Loanword was chosen 29.2% of the time, Both 26.2%, and Japanese 44.7%. Though

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

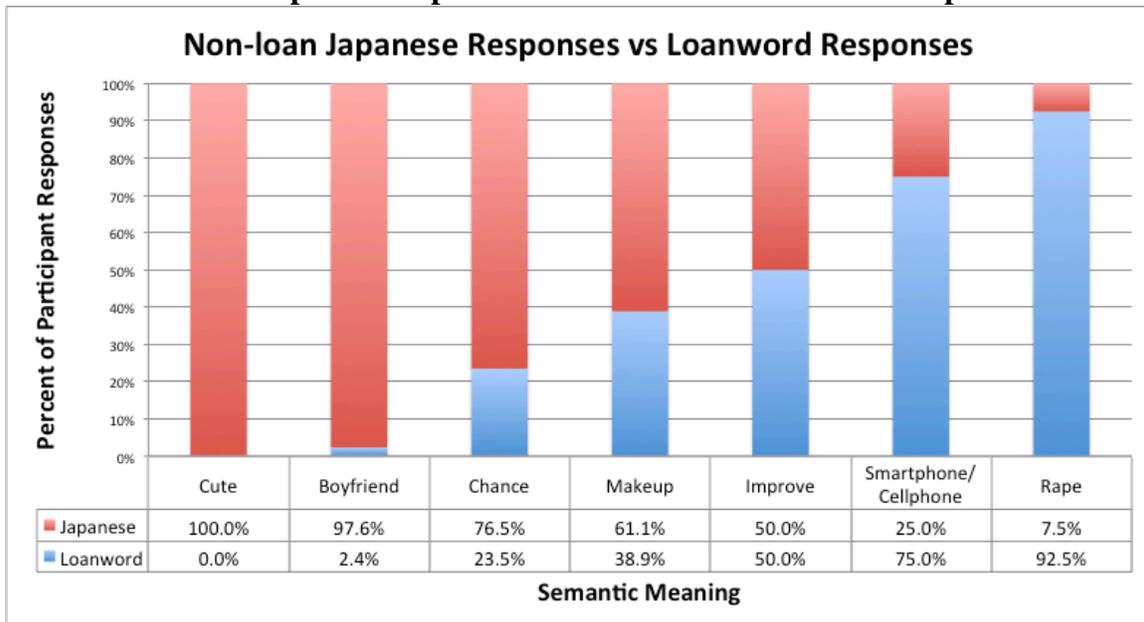
Japanese is chosen more often than loanwords, it appears that no general trend can be determined and word choice depends heavily on the situation and each word on a case-by-case basis.

Graph 1. Ratios of Participant Choices of Loanwords and Native Japanese Words



In a comparison of just the Japanese and Loanword responses, four of the three questions exhibited significant differences. As shown below, the Japanese words for ‘cute’ and ‘boyfriend’ were preferred significantly more than the corresponding loanword, but the loanwords for ‘rape’ and ‘smartphone/cellphone’ were preferred significantly more than the corresponding Japanese word. Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were performed to determine this significance: $\chi^2_{\text{cute}} (1, N = 44) = 28.44, p < 0.05$; $\chi^2_{\text{boyfriend}} (1, N = 42) = 23.95, p < 0.05$; $\chi^2_{\text{rape}} (1, N = 40) = 47.55, p < 0.05$; $\chi^2_{\text{phone}} (1, N = 36) = 19.28, p < 0.05$.

Graph 2. Comparison of Non-Loan versus Loan Responses



There is no clear across the board trend of whether to use an English loanword or the Japanese word that applies to all seven loanwords, so it appears that each loanword is treated differently based on any number of other factors besides its status as a loanword. Possible explanations for the results can be found in the participants’ comments on this section of the questionnaire.

A number of participants mentioned that English loanwords have a sense of lightness and candidness associated with them. This may explain why the loanword for ‘rape’ was much more preferred to the Japanese word, as many of the responses included references to avoiding direct and “heavy” language. This desire to soften language is echoed in the later short answer responses as a definitive characteristic of being Japanese. Additionally, in response to a question about when one would use a loanword instead of a non-loan Japanese word, one participant said:

“A lot of people use English loanwords for LGBT topics. I think that this is because when the word is *kango*⁶ it has a strong impression.”⁷

⁶ *Kango* are words that are either of Chinese origin or are Japanese coinages using Chinese-origin morphemes. These words are written exclusively in *kanji*, Chinese logographic characters.

Although a near equal number of participants agreed and disagreed with the statement *English loanwords are useful for discussing taboo topics* (47.5% and 52.5% respectively), these comments and results show that native Japanese speakers may in fact be using loanwords to talk about heavy subjects because it has a lighter, less serious connotation than the native Japanese terms that might carry more linguistic baggage and weight.

When asked about when one would use a loanword, one respondent answered that it feels outdated when put into writing, which was echoed by many others who mentioned avoiding English loanwords in written reports or when addressing a respected audience (such as elders or superiors). This is also reflected in other reports of English loanwords feeling “light” and thus casual, so much so that it is sometimes inappropriate.

Other responses mentioned the frequency of the words in other contexts. For example, one respondent mentioned that the loanword for ‘smartphone/cellphone’ appears often in media, which may explain why the loanword *sumaho* (from English *smartphone*) is preferred to the Japanese *keitai*. However, another explanation could be differences in word meaning between the loanword and the non-loan. Although both words technically mean the same thing, many of the commenters mentioned that some pairs had slightly different impressions, while others they considered to be interchangeable. It seems to make more sense that loanwords would have a different meaning, harkening back to the concept of lexical borrowing satisfying a need-filling function (Al-Khatib 1999, Kowner 2008, among others). What is interesting is why a loanword might be used if it has the same semantic nuances of its non-loan equivalent.

3.3.3 English Loanword Usage: Judgments of Japaneseness

In order to gauge the Japaneseness or foreignness associated with loanwords, participants rated words on a five-point scale from Japanese (1), Close to Japanese (2), Can be thought of either way (3), Close to English (4), and English (5). In order to standardize

⁷ This is my own translation.

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

the scores, I found the median between the mean score for the native Japanese words⁸ and the mean score for the non-loan English words (that had been run through the Japanese phonology)⁹ and calculated the distance from the median for each loanword's mean score. Then I standardized the data by setting the distance from the median as -1 for Japanese and 1 for English. This way, each mean score was scored on a scale of -1 to 1 (Japanese to English), resulting in a Standardized Mean (SM) per word.

Graph 3 shows the standardized scores¹⁰. It is clear that the majority of the scores fall on the Japanese side of the median, with a total mean of -0.425. This is not overly surprising as all of the loanwords presented are relatively frequent words in the Japanese lexicon.

Graph 3. Standardized Scores of Japaneseness from -1 (Japanese) to 1 (English)

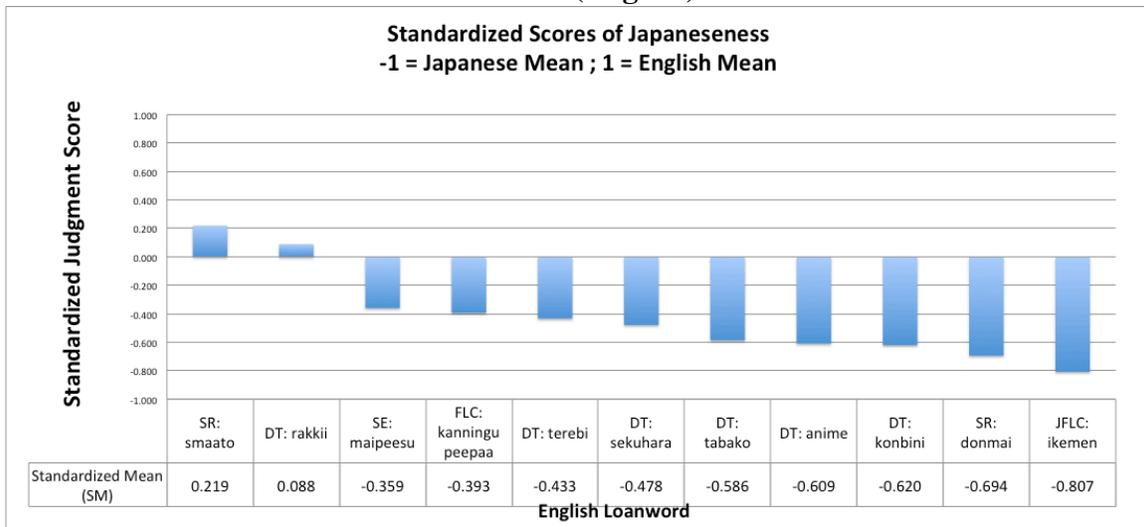


Table 7 shows the scores and standard deviation from the mean of the loanwords for each word.

⁸ The native Japanese words: *tatami*, a traditional Japanese rush-covered straw mat; and *kūkō*, the Japanese word for ‘airport’.

⁹ The non-loan English words (before phonologization): ‘carrot’, ‘marriage’, ‘pencil’, ‘quiet’, and ‘scissors’.

¹⁰ *Katsu* was not included as it was unintentionally ambiguous between the native Japanese verb ‘to win’ 勝つ and the English loanword ‘cutlet’ カツ.

Table 7. Standardized Japaneseness Score and Standard Deviation from Mean

Category	Loanword	Standardized Mean	SD from Mean
	[English]	1	4.5
SR	<i>smaato</i>	0.219	2.03
DT	<i>rakkii</i>	0.088	1.62
SE	<i>maipeesu</i>	-0.359	0.21
FLC	<i>kanningu peepaa</i>	-0.393	0.1
DT	<i>terebi</i>	-0.433	-0.03
DT	<i>seuhara</i>	-0.478	-0.17
DT	<i>tabako</i>	-0.586	-0.51
DT	<i>anime</i>	-0.609	-0.58
DT	<i>konbini</i>	-0.62	-0.62
SR	<i>donmai</i>	-0.694	-0.85
JFLC	<i>ikemen</i>	-0.807	-1.21
	[Japanese]	-1	-1.82
	Mean =	-0.425	

► **Expectations**

I had expected that loanwords of the same category would pattern together because each category represents the distance from the original word and meaning. Along these lines, I expected that Direct Translation (non Near Translation) loanwords would be considered more English because their form and meaning are closer to the original English, then Near Translations would be closer to Japanese than English, and final *Wasei Eigo* loanwords would be considered more Japanese.

► **Direct Translation**

The results showed that on the whole Direct Translation loanwords did pattern together but they fell toward the Japanese side of the spectrum. Except for two outliers, all of the Direct Translation standardized mean scores fell between -0.433 and -0.694, incidentally below the average score -0.425. This shows that Direct Translation loanwords are considered to be pretty Japanese as far as loanwords are concerned, contrary to my expectations.

One possible explanation comes from the comments on this section. A number of the participants mentioned that it feels more Japanese when a loanword is shortened from its

original form. This may explain why so many of the Direct Translation loanwords were considered to feel Japanese as most of them were also Loan Truncations¹¹. The two loanwords that stood apart from the rest provide support for this analysis. *Rakki* ('lucky', SM = 0.088) fell on the English side of the median at -1.62 standard deviations from the mean of all the loanwords. *Smaato* (from 'smart', but meaning 'fashionably dressed') was deemed the most English of all the loanwords with a standardized score of 0.219 at 2.03 standard deviations from the mean. Although *rakki* is a Direct Translation and *smaato* is a Near Translation (with semantic restriction), both are non-truncated loans and both are considered to be more English-sounding. The only semantic expansion word, *maipeesu*¹², scored -0.359 at just 0.21 standard deviations from the mean and seems to pattern with the Direct Translations yet is still the least Japanese of them all. This may also be because there is no truncation to make it sound more Japanese.

So if we conclude that truncation plays a role in how Japanese a loanword sounds, we are still left with *tabako* (from 'tobacco') having an SM of -0.586 at -0.51 standard deviations from the mean. A few possible reasons for its low score despite the lack of truncation could be a) the length of time *tabako* has been in Japanese; b) that sometimes it is given *gikun*, when *kanji* characters assigned to words based on the meaning rather than the reading; or c) the possibility that *tabako* could have come from a number of languages given that the word sounds the same in multiple languages.

► *Wasei Eigo*

It is unsurprising that *ikemen* ('handsome man' from Japanese *iketeru* 'sexy' and English 'men') was considered the most Japanese out of all of the loanwords as it is the only Japanese and foreign lexeme composite. However, the other lexeme composite *kanningu peepaa* ('cheat sheet' from 'cunning' and 'paper') is a complete Japanese coinage with

¹¹ *Terebi* < *terebijon* < 'television' ; *sekuhara* < *sekushuaru harasumento* < 'sexual harassment' ; *anime* < *animeshon* < 'animation' ; *konbini* < *konbiniensu stoa* < 'convenience store'.

¹² *Maipeesu* comes from 'my pace' and can mean 'to go at one's own pace' or can be used as an adjective meaning 'selfish'.

little semantic relationship to the original English, and yet it scored -0.359, just barely above the mean but deemed closer to English than most of the Direct Translations. It is possible that this is because *kanningu peepaa* is still subject the preference for truncated phrases.

Overall it appears that there is not a strong correlation between loanword category and how Japanese or how English the loanword seem to native speakers, but instead there may be a relationship between the Japanese-ness and certain integrative processes the loanword has undergone, such as phrase shortening. Additionally, closeness to the original semantics does not seem to play a large role in how Japanese native speakers consider the loanword.

3.3.4 Short Answer¹³

Overall two salient outlooks on English loanwords in Japanese emerged from short answer and comment responses. The first is that English loanwords are undeniably useful, necessary, and convenient. The second is that there is an amount of unease regarding the excessive use of English loanwords. These opinions overwhelmingly made up the majority of the comments and were often simultaneously expressed by participants.

► Loanwords as a Resource for Richness of Expression

Out of 43 responses regarding opinions on English loanwords in Japanese, 27 participants expressed that loanwords were convenient, useful, helpful, or otherwise beneficial to the Japanese language. This opinion was echoed numerous times in other comments throughout the questionnaire. The responses show that there is little resistance to English loanwords being used for new concepts or to describe things that are difficult to express in native Japanese. There is an overall sense that English loanwords expand the Japanese lexicon in an advantageous way.

¹³ The answers to the short answer section and comments were translated by myself, Haruka Sano, Yumi Matsumaya, Satoshi Aikawa, and Tiffany Zhu.

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

One participant commented that having multiple synonyms for the same meaning is useful and expands the possibilities for expression,

“... In terms of the coexistence of vocabularies of the same meaning, we can utilize both words—I don’t think the Japanese language is being undermined. If anything, you could say that the possibilities of Japanese are increasing.”

These responses as well as those in the comments on the Word Choice section reflect the nuance in loanwords. Even if a loanword has the same general meaning of an original Japanese word, there may be slight nuance that could make a loanword more appropriate or specific in a given situation. Another response said likened the convenience loanwords to precise scientific jargon:

“[Even if] it’s a difficult concept to explain in Japanese you can get the point across to others with one loanword... In the same way that terminology is used in research papers, there is a lot of convenience in using one word to communicate.”

Additionally, one of the most common descriptors of Japanese-like characteristics that the participants offered was the concept of *aimai*: using ambiguous words, indirect phrasing, and general circumlocution. As mentioned above in the section on Word Choice, a number of participants recognized loanwords as a tool to soften one’s language especially when discussing heavy topics or giving dispreferred responses. One participant writes:

“This is in the way of... avoiding direct words, indirectly trying to convey your feelings. In that sense, for example when you want to express “indecisiveness”, you could say something like ‘mmm a little bit *ambibarento*¹⁴ isn’t it?’ The loanword adds a cushion to it, so pragmatically you would think it seems Japanese. It is the same kind of cushion when using things like ‘mm a little bit ... isn’t it?’ or ‘I think that’s a little...’. Japanese is characterized by words like these that don’t have much content.”

One participant adds that loanwords can be used to sound playful such as saying *naisu* for ‘nice’, but the flipside of this is a concern that loanwords can be too candid and too

¹⁴ *Ambibarento* is the English loanword for ‘ambivalent’

informal. In response to the Judgments of Japaneseness section, a participant expresses frustration with the lightness associated with some loanwords. They write:

“Abbreviated, *sekuhara* [for ‘sexual harassment’] sounds stupid and makes me think that the issue is not seen as a serious problem.”

Regardless of whether or not the softness associated with loanwords is a good thing, it is still an interesting notion that English loanwords may be used to index or perform a certain sort of Japaneseness—this identity associated with being indirect and ambiguous—despite their foreign origin. What is salient from these responses is that most Japanese speakers regard loanwords as a resource and an advantage, rather than a nuisance or a blight.

► Discomfort Regarding Excessive Loanword Use

Although the general trend reflects a favorable view of English loanwords, there were some general expressions of wanting to preserve and honor Japanese, but others expressed no worries about English affecting the Japanese-ness of the language. However, there were a number of concerns about the overuse of loanwords. This can be summarized as three interconnected topics:

1. Functional disruption
2. Emotional discomfort
3. Cultural anxiety about English

► Function Disruption

A common complaint about English loanwords is that they can be difficult to understand at first glance especially if they are not very common. Because loanwords are of foreign origin, they are written in the syllabary *katakana*. The equivalent native Japanese words, often of Chinese origin, are usually written in logographic *kanji*. The syllabary is convenient for introducing foreign concepts into the Japanese lexicon because it is often difficult to find *kanji* to match the English word. On the other hand, because meanings are associated with each individual *kanji* character, it is “possible to deduce the meaning of the sentence relatively quickly” even if the word is not familiar to the reader, as one

participant writes. *Katakana* does not have this ease of access, which may slow down understanding or entirely impede comprehension.

Along those lines, though many loanwords are frequent and recognized by all speakers, the use of lesser-known loanwords causes additional challenges. Infrequent loanwords poses functional problem of comprehension failure for the audience but can also lead to emotional unease.

► **Emotional Discomfort**

As noted above in the section on Attitudes, 63% of participants said they Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the statement *I feel uncomfortable when someone uses English loanwords excessively*. Many of the comments regarding mentioned discomfort with people who used many loanwords in order to appear intelligent. On the topic of people who use infrequent English loanwords instead of their common Japanese equivalent, one participant writes, “I suppose those kinds of people are trying to look like they are smart, but it feels uncomfortable and stupid”. Another writes that unnecessarily heavy use of loanwords has the effect of sounding deliberately ambiguous or dishonest. This discomfort may be revealing of a deeper cultural anxiety.

► **Cultural Anxiety about English**

As mentioned above, a number of the comments regarding distaste of excessive use of loanwords mentioned difficulty understanding uncommon words. Not knowing loanwords is not merely shortage of lexicon but an admission to ignorance of English, instantly creating a divide between those who are familiar with English and those who are not. Although English is not strictly a prestige language in Japan, as all official business is conducted in Japanese, English is a hegemonic language carrying with it heavy baggage of power structures and authority. Those with the means to learn and master English are consequently those that can master the language of power. Thus, *not* understanding English loanwords is a reflection of one’s socio-economic status and quickly establishes a disparity between the haves and have-nots, so to speak, of linguistic superiority.

One participant expressed this situation particularly well, using this power dynamic to explain why many Japanese speakers may feel alienated by English loanwords:

“Hence I feel English is oftentimes employed as a social marker of ‘advanced, cool, valuable’ Western culture, or socio-economic superiority amongst the Japanese. For these reasons, some people feel that it is impolite to thoughtlessly use English or English loanwords when speaking to people with various socio-economic statuses or people who grew up only speaking Japanese. That can be interpreted as an assertion for authority or superiority, which the vast majority of the Japanese did not have an access to.”

These opinions reinforce those expressed in Hogan (2003) of English loanwords creating social distance between the speaker and their audience. Using loanwords may make the speaker seem knowledgeable and authoritative but can also alienate and even embarrass their audience if their audience is unfamiliar with the English.

Related to unease about not knowing English is an anxiety about getting English right. A number of participants expressed concern and confusion about English loanwords that did not exactly correspond to the meanings of the original English words, particularly for newer words and concepts. One participant writes,

“There are too many loanwords words like *haitenshon*, *kureemu*, and *sukinshippu*¹⁵ that are commonly used but whose meanings are mistaken. Hearing these words makes me feel sorry for those who use them rather than thinking that they are cool or youthful.”

Others express similar sentiments about wishing loanwords more closely resembled their original English form and meaning while others said that these words made trying to speak in English more confusing. For example one response said, “I think [loanwords are] good for people learning English. I think it is an opportunity to learn English daily,” showing that speakers do associate English loanwords with English to some extent. However, one participant expresses what a number of others echo:

¹⁵ *Haitenshon* from *high tension* meaning ‘excited’; *kureemu* from *claim* meaning ‘complaint’, *sukinshippu* from *skinship* meaning ‘

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

“Because there are many cases in which *gairaigo* have meanings that are different from the original meanings of the English words, we may mix them up when speaking in English and it does not make sense.”

So here we see both sides of the how English loanwords create anxieties about English. On the one hand, Japanese speakers are uncomfortable with the power dynamic that excessive use of loanwords can bring to table due to the prestige of the English language. On the other hand, there is still a desire to make the English side of Japanese, so to speak, closer to the original English. On one side, discomfort with English; on the other, longing to be closer to English.

3.4 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of this questionnaire reflect a number of the findings presented in Hogan (2003), upon which much of this study was based. Attitudes and usage generally agreed that English loanwords were associated with informality, youthfulness, attractiveness, and necessity. However, even though the notion that gratuitous use of loanwords was unattractive and undesirable held true, fewer negative attitudes were associated with loanwords usage. This finding is particularly notable given that the BBK surveys cited in Irwin (2011) suggested that the majority of people found *gairaigo* undesirable. The present study found that few people agreed that loanwords were ugly or were corrupting Japanese and, even though loanwords were favored for heavy topics, there was no explicit association between English loanwords and taboo subjects. It seems the association had less to do with taboo subjects seeming foreign and more to do with foreign loanwords offering an emotionally lighter lexical option. This is directly divergent from Al-Khatib & Farghal's (1999) finding that English loanwords were consciously associated with and used for taboo subjects in Jordanian Arabic.

Hogan concludes that loanword usage and attitudes in her study validate Western cultural influence through the positive association of English loanwords (youthful, modern, trendy), while simultaneously challenging these influences through the labeling of stigmatized behavior as foreign and discomfort associated with those who use English loanwords to show off.

My results do not show this duality of validation and opposition to Western cultural influence, rather both the positive and negative attitudes towards English loanwords serve to reinforce the status of English as a valuable and prestigious language. The overwhelming positive attitudes reveal that English loanwords are seen as useful and necessary as well as youthful and modern. This supports English as an attractive language at least for use in Japanese. On the other hand, the negative attitudes expose an anxiety and inferiority complex regarding English. Excessive use of loanwords makes others uncomfortable not because English is viewed negatively, but because the prestige of knowing English (or the potential shame of not knowing English) creates an uncomfortable power dynamic between the speaker and the audience. Additionally, discomfort about not understanding English loanwords stems from anxiety about not having access to a language of power. This finding is in line with what previous literature, such as Honna (1995), has said on learning English in Japan. Preoccupation with an inability to speak like a native Anglo-American speaker feeds this angst and discomfort surrounding gratuitous use of (especially lesser known) English loanwords.

However, English loanword usage does not only reflect the attractiveness or power of English (and the English-speaking Western world) but can also index one's *Japanese* identity. In particular, these loans can be used to create ambiguity and circumlocution, which a number of participants identified as important cultural markers of Japaneseness. Because native speakers associate loanwords with lighter, softer, and more playful or informal overtones, loanwords are used to create indirect or ambiguous expressions. Thus, English loanwords are a pragmatic resource to soften statement or make it vague. On the one hand, overuse or improper use of English loanwords for this effect may be too obfuscatory and off-putting—for example, loans are particularly popular with politicians dodging questions with vague and confusing loanwords (Irwin 2011). But on the other hand, English loanwords have become a tool for performing Japanese-ness despite their foreign origins.

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Even though foreign lexical borrowings are often seen as threats to cultural identity (Al-Khatib & Farghal 1999, Hogan 2003, Kowner & Dalot-Bul 2008, Bulfoni 2009, Irwin 2011), here we see English loanwords used to construct the Japanese identity based on fundamentally Japanese values. It is not as Kowner & Dalot-Bul concluded in which Japaneseness is performed through its opposition to English. Instead, English-derived vocabulary plays a novel role separate from its Western associations.

It is then perhaps not so surprising that most of the loanwords were rated closer to Japanese in the questionnaire section of Japaneseness judgments. The less associated the loanwords are with their Western origins, the less likely it is that they will be perceived, as Kowner & Dalot-Bul presumed, in contrast to 'native' words.

Al-Khatib & Farghal hypothesized and found that English loanword usage in Jordanian Arabic would be predicted more by instrumental orientation than by integrative orientation, meaning that their functional qualities would be more of an influence on their use than their attitudinal properties. Japanese presents a different story. English loanwords seem to be chosen equally based on their functional motivations (as necessary words) as chosen based on their social motivations (as seen as attractive, indirect, sophisticated, etc.). Additionally, the need-filling function of loanwords gives rise not only to words for entirely new concept or to words that replace earlier native words, but instead creates loanwords that can coexist with their native counterparts while providing nuanced yet synonymic options.

Overall, Japanese speakers' opinions reflect the receptiveness of the Japanese language to loanword integration. So what makes Japanese different from Jordanian Arabic, whose speakers find much more threat, distaste, and reluctant acceptance of English loanwords? While the scope of this project is much too small to definitively answer that question, I believe the key may lie in the unique orthographic system and a relative lack of imperialist presence. As a writing system, *katakana* is particularly flexible and lends itself easily to creative expression and playfulness. Because there are distinct orthographies for each lexical stratum, foreign words are seamlessly integrated into

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

Japanese while still retaining a mark of their origin. The general necessity of *gairaigo* and availability of English for coinage adds another layer of possibility for speakers to make the English more Japanese.

There is still discomfort with excessive English usage—excess that may occur precisely because it is so easy to assimilate new words. However, the anxiety originates in the underlying inferiority complex Japan has with regards to the English-speaking West—at its root, an issue of not mastering English *enough* rather than having *too much* English. Due to these properties and factors, there is little perceived threat to the overall unity and cultural identity of Japanese.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study has provided an image of contemporary attitudes towards English loanwords in Japanese, and how native speakers use and think about them. The findings indicate that English loanwords are overwhelmingly viewed as useful and necessary, and are by and large associated with positive connotations. Additionally, many native Japanese speakers feel that loanwords provide more options for expression, both functionally and as a possible pragmatic tool for performing Japaneseness. On the other hand, overuse of loanwords—especially less common ones—can also exemplify the power imbalance between Japanese and the powerful and hegemonic English.

Furthermore, we have seen the how powerful the Japanese linguistic systems are at assimilating English into the Japanese language. With established and institutionally supported phonological and orthographic conventions in place, foreign-derived vocabulary can easily become nativized, assimilated, and considered to be Japanese in the minds of speakers.

While this is certainly a thought-provoking image, it is still just a snapshot of what is happening. The limitations of this project are not enough to provide a significant portion of the big picture. The sample size of just 57 participants is obviously a limiting factor, as is the lack of age diversity among the participants. Additionally, it would be ideal to test a larger number of loanwords so that multiple semantic, morphological, and phonological categories of loans could be compared with confidence in both the word choice section and the Japaneseness judgments section.

Looking forward, there is much more research that can and should be done to explore the linguistic possibilities and implications of English-derived lexical material in Japanese, particularly in the realm of the future of English in Japanese. As more lexical innovations come about, it would be interesting to investigate differences and similarities between English borrowings and the Sino-Japanese course of assimilation, particularly as English

The Social and Functional Role of English Loanwords in Japanese

loans begin to seem morphologically analyzable (à la *anshinjiraburu* from *un* + ‘believe’ + *able*). Observing these changes in comparison to the already fully integrated system of Sino-Japanese may provide insight as to the process of language change.

Language change and lexical borrowing are necessarily tied into the sociolinguistic landscape and, as such, the possibilities of and attitudes towards lexical borrowing in Japanese are reflective of the socio-political and cultural atmosphere of the time. Though the power dynamic between English and Japanese continues to lean towards English, the findings in this study have shown that Japanese is far from threatened and clearly adaptable and flourishing. To repeat the words of one participant,

“I don’t think the Japanese language is being undermined. If anything, you could say that the possibilities of Japanese are increasing.”

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