

FOREIGN INFLUENCE ON JAPANESE AND VICE VERSA

Tadao Shimomiya

(Gakushuin University, Tokyo)

Abstract : The oldest foreign influence in Japan came from China, beginning in the fourth century. Today, the Japanese vocabulary of Chinese origin is 48 per cent, while the vocabulary of native Japanese is 37 per cent. As for Japanese loanwords in English and other European languages, Japanese had given as of 1892 only 27 items and was 22nd place in the list of foreign sources. As of 1994, Japanese is the second most productive modern supplier and is slowly gaining on French (Cannon, 1995).

Keywords : loanword, Japanese loanwords in English and other European languages, foreign influence on Japanese, Wörter und Sachen, Sino-Japanese, emprunt de luxe in Japanese, technical words of Chinese origin, Sprachbund, loan translation in Japanese

1. This study supplements Shizuka Saito's "English Influence on Japanese" which he presented at the Second International Congress of Linguists held at Geneva in 1931. Linguistic influence is one of the most remarkable fields of currently popular contact linguistics. Unlike Saito (1933), my study deals both ways : foreign influence on Japanese and Japanese influence on foreign languages. For geographical reasons, influence here is not as intensive and extensive as in the case of the Balkan linguistic area (Sprachbund).

2. The oldest foreign influence in Japan came from China. Chinese words and thinking (expressing ideas) continued flooding in Japanese from the fourth to eighth century. Even today, half of Japanese words in daily newspapers are of Chinese origin (called Sino-Japanese). Words of abstract notion and technical words are Sino-Japanese. The Japanese situation today reminds us of Latin and Greek elements in modern English.
3. 'Linguistics' in Japanese, for example, *gengogaku* (gengo-gaku 'language-study') is Sino-Japanese, where *gengo* (gen-go 'speech-word') is again Sino-Japanese. 'Outline of linguistics' in Japanese, *gengogaku gairon*, is again Sino-Japanese (*gairon* 'approximate theory', i.e. general theory). Contrary to such Japanese technical terms, German and Russian have native elements : Einführung in die Sprachwissenschaft, Vvedenie v jazykoznanie, all Germanic and Slavic elements.
4. The high proportion of the vocabulary of modern Japanese of Chinese origin (48 per cent) reduces that of native Japanese to 37 per cent (Japanese National Language Research Institute, 1961, Loveday 1996).
5. As the German linguists call it "Wörter und Sachen", new things come around with words. European things and words began to arrive in Japan in the 16th century. Portuguese and Spanish preachers brought us botão (button), carta (playing cards), castella (sponge cake, very popular in Japan, from pão de Castella), pão (bread), sabão (soap), tabaco. They taught us also how to use the gun. Western learning (first of all, medical science, chemistry, physics, botany, irrigation) was introduced by Dutch people (via Nagasaki in Kyushu), who brought us alcohol, bier, doek, gas, glas, gom, kop, pomp and ransel (ransel is even today the first present a child receives from his or her parents on entering a primary school at the age of six). Then followed English, French (ballet, cabaret, café, chemise, *saboru* 'do sabotage, do not study or work', with Japanese verb infinitive suffix *-ru*), Russian (*interi* 'intellectual person, from intelligenciya, *noruma* 'work quota', brought back by Japanese soldiers detained in Siberia by the Soviet army in 1945-1950), and German (Arbeit Gelände Hütte Karte 'medical note' Seminar Thema)

6. Earlier than European words came a number of Sanskrit words (with Buddhism) through China (*danna* 'patron, husband' from Sanskrit *dāna-pati* 'one who can give', *kawara* 'tile').
7. Examples of emprunt de luxe (Ernst Tappolet, 1913), whereby a loanword sounds more refined, more luxurious than its native word : *kamera* (for *shashinki* 'photograph machine'), *depāto* shortened from department store (for *hyakkaten* 'hundred-ware-store'), *tēburu* from table (for *shokutaku* 'eating stand', with semantic restriction), *puretaporute* (prêt-à-porter, for *kiseifuku* 'already made clothes'), baby-car (for *ubaguruma* 'nurse carriage, baby carriage').
8. A good example of loan translation is the Japanese word *tetsudō* 'iron-road', calqued on European words like Eisenbahn, chemin de fer, ferrovia.
9. Reception of foreign words causes several adaptations, as known everywhere :
 - (1) phonetic adaptation : Du. glas > Jap. *garasu* (as in glass window; no initial consonant cluster is allowed in Japanese), later E. glass (as in a glass of water) > Jap. *gurasu*.
 - (2) cutting, shortening (of head or tail) : E. sewing machine > Jap. *mishin*; platform > Jap. *hōmu*; department store > *depāto*; television > *terebi*; word processor > *wāpuro*.
 - (3) hybrid formation : *sarakin* < salaried man *kin'yū* 'finance, i.e. money-lending for salaried men'; *karuchā-ppoi* 'having some culture'; *saboru* 'idle away, don't go to school or work' (French sabotage + Japanese infinitive suffix *-ru*)
 - (4) semantic restriction : *karute* 'patient's medical record' from G. Karte
 - (5) semantic shift : *sumāto* 'slim, slender' < E. smart
10. Grammatical influence : In order to express the third personal pronoun 'he' and 'she', unknown in Japanese grammar, translators in the Meiji Era (1868-1912, age of modernization in Japan) used *kare* ("that") for 'he' and *kanojo* ("that woman") for 'she'. Western syntax is seen in such sentences as 'Sorrow fell upon the whole family', 'Price rising of beer is being discussed', 'News of poisonous sarin gas ran throughout the country', with non-animate subjects, which was alien to Japanese syntax. Relative pronoun like *tokorono*, as seen in translations and speeches (which the speaker has to emphasize what he expresses) is also a new

11. Morphological influence was discussed at the VIth International Congress of Linguists held in Paris (See the Actes publiés par M. Lejeune, Librairie Honoré Champion, Paris 1949, especially articles by C. E. Bazell, G. Bonfante, L. Gáldi, V. Kiparsky, M. Krepinsky, Alan Ross, A. Sauvageot, H. Vogt).

12. Proverb : "Time is money", whose idea was already among the ancient Greeks, and which has become international through Benjamin Franklin, is common among the Japanese. Another proverb, "The grass is greener on the other side of the fence (compare with the Japanese "The flower in my neighbor's garden is red"), was imported from the United States into Japan in the 1920s (Wolfgang Mieder, University of Vermont, in October 1996 at Tokyo International Proverb Forum).

13. Japanese exports begin with classical words like *haiku*, *ikebana*, *koto*, *sakura*, *shamisen*, *sumo* and other typical technical words characteristic of Japanese culture. Japanese beauty, as discovered by Europeans, is dealt with by Rikutaro Fukuda (Professor emeritus of Tokyo University of Education, English literature, former Vice President of the PEN Club) and his students in *Discovery of Japan — Japanese as seen in the OED*, Tokyo Seitoku Junior College (1995-), which studies Japanese words registered in the Oxford English Dictionary (second edition 1989, 373 items).

14. Lokotsch (1927), a classical work and useful book in this field, gives (among 2235 words of Oriental origin) 11 Japanese words (*bonso*, *chin*, *geisha*, *harakiri*, *jinrikisha*, *jujitsu*, *kakemono*, *kimono*, *mikado*, *mogusa*, *yoshiwara*; not found are *ikebana*, *judo*, *karate*, *sashimi*, *sumo*, *sushi*, *tempura*). German and French are slower in receiving Japanese words than English.

15. A recent example of international expansion is *walkman* (a pocket tape recorder with which one can hear music while walking), which originated in Japan and spread from the United States throughout the world, as pointed out by Prof. Garland Cannon of Texas University at the XVth International Congress of Linguists held at Quebec City in 1992.

According to Cannon (1995), the number of Japanese loans in English has increased steadily since 1940. By 1992 Japanese had given only 27 items and was 92nd place

source, etymology and definition.

16. Long (1997), whose paper I heard at the XVIth International Congress of Linguists, contains the following interesting information concerning Japanese loanwords in English. (1) back borrowing : *dry beer*, *OL* (office lady), *walkman*, *zaitech* 'technology to save money' (*zai-* from *zaisan* 'wealth'), (2) loan translation : bullet train, examination hell, floating world, (3) partial translation : *karōshi* syndrome (*karōshi* 'death from overwork'); *Minamata* disease (*Minamata*, a polluted sea in Kyushu).

17. A Japanese loanword known in French literature is *mousmé* or *mousmée* (phonologically : *musumé*, cf. *musuko* "son"), originally 'one's daughter, a girl, a young girl', introduced by Pierre Loti in 1887 in the meaning of 'a tea house girl, a girl serving tea', and used by Proust (*Oui, me repondit Albertine, elle a l'air d'une petite mousmé, A la recherche du temps perdu*, Edition de la Pléiade, p. 652).

Bibliography :

- Arakawa Sobei. 1978. *Dictionary of Foreign Words in Japanese*. Tokyo, Kadokawa Shoten.
- Cannon, Garland. 1995. 'Innovative Japanese Borrowings in English', *Dictionaries*, 16, 90-101.
- Cannon, Garland. 1996. *The Japanese Contributions to the English Language*. Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz. (contains 1425 Japanese loanwords in English; the first part is an extensive study in linguistics of loanwords)
- Duden. *Das grosse Fremdwörterbuch*. 1994. Mannheim, Dudenverlag. (contains 122 Japanese loanwords in German).
- Fukuda, Rikutarō, et al. 1995-. *Discovery of Japan by Europeans*. No. 1-4. (1995-97, to be continued). Tokyo, Tokyo Seitoku Junior College.
- Lokotsch, Karl. 1927. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der europäischen Wörter orientalischen Ursprungs*. Heidelberg, Carl Winter.
- Loveday, Leo J. 1996. *Language Contact in Japan : A Sociolinguistic History*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Saito, Shizuka. 1933. 'English Influence on Japanese', *Actes du deuxième congrès international des linguistes, Genève 25-29 août 1931*. Paris 1993. 227-229.