

外来語研究の一考察：英語教育との関わり

An Overview of Gairaigo Studies: Implications for English Education

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ABSTRACT

「日本語を汚している」、「濫用しすぎである」、といった外来語に対する批判的解釈は、過去も現在もポピュラーなものである。しかし、過去 50 年以上にも渡って批判されつづけている外来語は消滅するどころか、増加している。これは日本語における外来語の創作、使用が社会現象であり、日本語にとって必要な変化のプロセスであることを示している。また、外来語にまつわる批判の中でも、「英語教育に悪影響を与えている」という議論がある。本論は、この英語教育における外来語に焦点をあてている。英語教育における外来語の影響とは、1) 正しい英語の発音が覚えられない、2) 英語との意味の違いからの混乱、3) 不正確な文法の使用、4) 言語の記号化、などが挙げられている。しかし、現在外来語については英語の授業でも日本語の授業でもほとんど取り上げられていない。外来語を英語教育から外していることの方が、悪影響が大きいのではないだろうか。学習者が日本語のボキャブラリーとして持っている外来語を、英語教育に利用するという考えも数人の研究者が過去に提案している。この方法が有効である可能性を、第二言語習得の見地から考察してみた。外来語を社会環境からのインプットであると考えれば、英語教育で正しいインテイクのプロセスを提供することによって、英語というアウトプットが期待できる。

1. Introduction

Gairaigo has received criticism, its right to exist has been questioned, and we are still caught in the discussion of how gairaigo might ‘damage Japanese’ and disorient or distract people from ‘learning proper English’. Since roughly 80% of current gairaigo is of English origin or English-related words (Ishino, 1983: 52) (Ishiwata, 1983: 181), the influence of gairaigo on English education cannot be denied. However, arguments concerning gairaigo and English education have not changed at all in over 50 years. The argument in 1951 ran thus:

We must consider the methodology of language guidance. ...One-way criticism has not improved anything. This type of criticism has been around in all generations from a long time ago. “Papa” and “mama” became the issue during the gairaigo boom before WWII. Let us reflect on that calmly (Umegaki, 1951: 81).

As Umegaki discusses here, criticism did not solve the problem. The same argument is still discussed in 2001. Why is this repeated constantly, why does it seem like there is no progress, in spite of the fact that gairaigo has developed as a part of Japan: culturally, socially, and linguistically?

It is perhaps because gairaigo is still not taught either in Japanese or English education. Gairaigo is taught neither as Japanese nor as English. If gairaigo is not taught as a part of the total package of language instruction, gairaigo would seem to be like an orphan. Gairaigo, I urge, must be treated as an integral part of the Japanese language instead of an inferior class of language.

2. Does gairaigo positively or negatively affect English education?

Since many students face the first English course at the age of thirteen years old, gairaigo which is already part of their Japanese vocabulary, can have influence. The greatest influence of English gairaigo in English education is perhaps pronunciation. Then, there is also semantic, structural, grammatical confusion and semiotic connotations.

When words are borrowed from English, they undergo a Japanization process which changes the English pronunciation into the simple Japanese phonetic system. As E.O. Reischauer (1977) writes;

I have cited above a number of English words as borrowed in Japanese to illustrate how greatly their pronunciations are distorted in order to fit them into the simple Japanese phonetic system (396).

There are only five vowels in Japanese; /a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, /o/, and no long vowel sound or double vowel. For example, /æ/, /a/, and /ō/ are all expressed with /a/ in Japanese. Therefore, there is no difference between ‘match’ or ‘much’ in gairaigo and both become “*macchi*”. Also, there is no difference between /r/ and /l/, /θ/ and /s/ are both pronounced /s/. And /v/ and /b/ are both pronounced /b/ in gairaigo. So that ‘love’ and ‘rub’ become “*rabu*” and ‘throw’ and ‘slow’ become “*surō*”.

Japanese does not have /ð/, /l/, /θ/, /f/, or /v/ in the phonetic system. These are replaced by something else in gairaigo for easier pronunciation while speaking Japanese. According to Ohnishi (1965), /f/, a voiceless labio-dental fricative is replaced by /h/ in

gairaigo and must be followed by one of the five Japanese vowels. In a similar process, English /v/ is substituted by /b/ in gairaigo, /θ/ is substituted by /s/, and /ð/ is substituted by /z/. They are all followed by a vowel.

Such shifts in pronunciation are a systematic process with gairaigo. Many Japanese who study English as a second language have problems with the pronunciation of English. Moreover, they have difficulty recognizing the difference between 'very' and 'berry' when listening (in *katakana* written text, there is no difference), because these words are homophones in Japanese gairaigo, *katakana* pronunciation — *berī*.

During the pronunciation shift process, English words also lose stress accents and transfer to pitch accents. Those learning English must search the original English pronunciation from *katakana* gairaigo. This is extra work for Japanese who study English as a second language.

The semantic change from English to gairaigo sometimes confuses the English learners. Whereas pronunciation change has certain patterns from which assumptions of native English pronunciation can be made, the semantic change of each gairaigo is different for each word. Therefore, the semantic change of gairaigo makes it difficult to investigate native English meanings.

There also has been grammatical confusion in English education. A newspaper article says that the gairaigo used in popular music has a large influence to English education in high school.

At an English practice in an English lesson, a student answered 'feel like dance' towards a question "what comes after 'feel like'?", because she thought of a Japanese popular song titled, 'Feel like Dance'. Among the top

twenty popular songs in 1997, nineteen are Japanese songs, of which eighteen include some form of English or gairaigo. The artists say that they are not concerned about grammatical correctness, but that the sound, rhythm, and image of English words which fit the music is more important. Also, they use English words instead of Japanese words in order to sound fun and 'cool' (*Asahi* newspaper; Nov. 1, 1997).

English is becoming a symbol instead of language to deliver the message. Especially with popular music, the rhythm and melody is more important than the meaning of the words when it comes to English words or gairaigo. The English words are part of the musical sound and are not used as language.

The same situation occurs with advertisements, names of products, titles, and so on. English words and gairaigo are used without much of concern about the actual meaning of the word, but simply because they sound good and look good. In other words, English words and gairaigo are used as symbols or signs of new materials and as a result, their meanings are of no or little concern. However, English learners take these words from the surrounding society and try to use them when they speak/write/use English. While English and gairaigo have been treated as semiotic symbols, they cannot be used as native English. Thus, the Japanese sociolinguistic context makes it harder for English learners to avoid such confusion.

In many cases, Japanese cannot differentiate between English gairaigo and other foreign gairaigo. Mainly because of the change in pronunciation, they cannot recognize which gairaigo is borrowed from English. Students assume that gairaigo written in *katakana* is English words. For example,

many Japanese students believe that *arubaito* (arbeit)¹⁾ is an English word. Students use this word in classroom as; “I did *arubaito* yesterday.” As a result, one kind of English frequently encountered English education is a mixture of English, other foreign languages, and gairaigo.

There are two opposing approaches concerning treatment of gairaigo in English education. One is to encourage the use of gairaigo as a positive advantage for English vocabulary acquisition. And the other is to consider gairaigo completely separate from English and avoid mentioning it in English education.

Several researches support gairaigo usage in English education. They suggest to utilize the available English gairaigo in order to maximize the English vocabulary and result in less effort of memorization for learners. Umegaki (1959) takes this standpoint and says that such approach provides an alternative teaching method.

In 1925, an elementary school teacher measured the number of English gairaigo known by 10,000 students. As a result, over one thousand gairaigo were listed (Umegaki, 1959). Although this data is dated, it still proves that students have a large gairaigo vocabulary.

Umegaki says that these gairaigo can be studied in English education by investigating the origin and English meaning of each gairaigo and correcting the pronunciation. Also, gairaigo can easily be related to other English words studied in order to gain vocabulary. For example, *sutēshon* (station) is commonly known. The English word ‘stay’ can be learned by relating it with *sutēshon*.

Umegaki (1959) stated three functions in utilizing gairaigo in English education;

1) It saves extra effort to memorize new words by utilizing well known English gairaigo vocabulary.

2) New vocabulary is well memorized by associating it with gairaigo.

3) It raises students’ interest.

(160)

However, he also mentioned that gairaigo should only be utilized for richer vocabulary and pronunciation practice, not for English grammar or writing practice. Grammatical rules and patterns of gairaigo are usually quite different from those of English. For example, the lack of a past tense (e. g., condensed milk comes to be *kondensu miruku*) and plural markings (e.g., two shots comes to be *tsū shotto*) in gairaigo can be problematic. Gairaigo should be used at the word level only in the English classroom.

Another opinion to support gairaigo usage in English education is forwarded by Ichikawa (1949). Ichikawa sees the value of gairaigo in English education as follows;

English teachers in classrooms, especially for beginners, they can teach pronunciation and spelling utilizing English words which are already in Japanese. It is not sure how much this method has been used in classrooms, but it is a way to increase student’s interests (60-61).

Ichikawa’s statement supports the three functions of gairaigo in English education indicated by Umegaki. Ichikawa says that teaching English by using gairaigo as a material for pronunciation practice will help learners to gain vocabulary. In order to concentrate on pronunciation and spelling practice, gairaigo is useful because of its familiarity to the students. It takes less effort to memorize

the words. He also says that studying the origin of gairaigo usually interests students.

Ueno (1976) also supports the utilization of gairaigo in English education as an effective method to reinforce English vocabulary. Teaching gairaigo related with English in the classroom gives students confidence and comfort just like meeting a friend in a foreign country by chance. However, he insists the importance for learners to recognize that gairaigo is not English, but a part of Japanese.

On the other hand, Yasui (1988) states that the issue of using gairaigo in English education greatly depends on what type of gairaigo is studied. There is variety of gairaigo and not all of them can be used in English education. Semantic differences between gairaigo and English are quite complicated, and it might even take more effort for students to understand English meaning from gairaigo.

In order to avoid such confusion, Yasui maintains gairaigo should be separated from English education. He believes that there is less intervention between two languages from a standpoint of coordinate bilingualism rather than compound bilingualism, when learning a language. However, he suggests educators making comments and mentioning gairaigo throughout English education if it helps students to memorize English words related to gairaigo.

From the discussions above, it is clear that it is not easy to leave gairaigo out of the English classroom. Teachers could ignore the relation between gairaigo and English, but sometimes complete disregard can cause other problems. For example, when the English word 'naive' is taught in the classroom without any discussion of its relation with the gairaigo *naibu* (pure and honest), students cannot recognize the relationship.

The problem is when students try to speak English, they use the word *naibu*, meaning pure and honest. They know that 'naive' means childlike or foolish from their English education, but when they mean 'pure and honest', they use naive in English. They do not recognize *naibu* came from 'naive'. Or they might not even remember that they learned 'naive' in classroom, but they remember the word *naibu* from their daily conversation in Japanese.

It is difficult to leave English gairaigo completely out of English education. The issue is how gairaigo should be treated in the process of teaching English. It is important to treat gairaigo as part of Japanese and gairaigo cannot be used as English.

3. A view from second language acquisition

As has been discussed, gairaigo has negative and positive effects on English education. Umegaki (1959), Ichikawa (1949), and Ueno (1976) have suggested utilizing gairaigo to enrich vocabulary and pronunciation practice in English education. This is potentially effective in increasing vocabulary with less effort. By association with gairaigo already known, it is possible to raise students' motivation and interest.

Gairaigo is so far wholly ignored in English education. Likewise, gairaigo is not discussed in the field of Japanese language education. Individual teachers may refer to its existence, but gairaigo in particular does not appear in textbooks. However, as has been mentioned, the English learner still has contact with English gairaigo in daily life, and the 'input' of gairaigo is normal. I suggest here that the problem with gairaigo in English education is not the input itself, but the process of disposi-

tion.

English gairaigo is already considered an issue in the present educational situation though no gairaigo studies are offered. Since English gairaigo is part of the learner's input from society, English education should deal with that input into language. What is needed in English education may be a process to turn 'input' into 'intake', and lead to 'output'. Input is the L2 (second language) data which the learner hears or sees; intake is that portion of the L2 which is assimilated and fed into the interlanguage system (Ellis, 1985:159). This jargon and its usefulness to our discussion will be clarified below.

According to Ellis, there are five components of second language acquisition which interrelate. These are situational factors, linguistic input, learner differences, learner process, and linguistic output (Ellis, 1985: 279-280).

Situational factors are the environment of second language learning such as the classroom setting, natural setting, and sources of communication. Linguistic input is spoken or written data that the learner uses to learn the rules of the target language in a certain order or sequence. Learner differences such as age, attitude, motivation and personality greatly influence the level of proficiency achieved. There is a process through which the learner must operate in order to input data in order to obtain 'comprehensible input' and also to vary 'output' in the target language. Finally, linguistic output needs to be performed in order to achieve comprehensible output. People learn to write by writing and learn to read by reading. The learner can understand the target language by achieving comprehensible input, but it does not mean the learner has achieved comprehensible

output.

Gairaigo may be regarded as linguistic input: a natural situational factor. The issue is, of course, that gairaigo is not a part of the target language. However, as Ellis says, the instructor can control the input data in the classroom. Therefore, it is possible for instructors to select gairaigo that can be useful to the learning process.

Ellis argues that input data is not enough, that learners need comprehensible input before the internal process mechanism can work. On how input data can be comprehensible, Ellis suggests:

One way is by the use of structures and vocabulary, which the learner already knows. However, this type of input cannot foster development, because it supplies no new linguistic material. Another way is by a "here-and-now" operation, which enables the learner to make use of the linguistic and extralinguistic contexts and his general knowledge to interpret language, which he does not actually know (Ellis, 1985: 157-158).

Let me briefly summarize my argument. For Japanese who study English as a second language, English gairaigo is certainly not English words they know, but rather words they are aware of. Some of the English gairaigo which is already input data for Japanese can be comprehensible by the "here-and-now" operation. English gairaigo is then interpreted back into the native English which the learners are learning.

Another aspect of linguistic input according to Ellis is that 'input' must become 'intake' in the process of language learning (Ellis, 1985). Japanese who learn English as a

second language tend to skip such processes because they unconsciously input gairaigo as English input data which will result in gairaigo output in their English. Therefore, the intake process must not be ignored.

The learning process itself in the learner's 'black box' might not be fully explained, but the results of such an order in the learning process appears in linguistic output. There are many cases in which Japanese English learners are unable to reach comprehensible output from gairaigo input because the intake process is not provided in English education classrooms.

What is required to change the situation regarding gairaigo is a change in attitudes towards gairaigo. The solution is not only to search for a methodology of use of gairaigo in English education classrooms but also to teach the structure and linguistic rules of gairaigo along with theories of loan words in general.

4. Conclusion

It is more effective, I would argue here, to teach gairaigo in Japanese language education classes as 'derivation of foreign languages'. In the current education system in Japan, *katakana* is taught along with some gairaigo, but nothing is taught about the background of gairaigo. A closer analysis of gairaigo ought to be conducted in the classroom in order to avoid further meaningless criticism of gairaigo usage in Japanese society.

The main point of this paper, as I have tried to demonstrate, is that gairaigo is an integral part of Japanese. Furthermore, English gairaigo should not be left out of English or Japanese language education; gairaigo could have both negative and positive

influences on the learner. First, learners need to recognize the position of gairaigo in Japanese, and then they may undertake the necessary learning process of input, intake, and output as English.

The future of gairaigo in the Japanese language is secure. It will always be there. It will not go away. How can educators, linguists, the media come to terms with this fact? The evolution of gairaigo in the Japanese language is an engaging linguistic phenomenon and one that will provide much material for future linguistic research.

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- i) 'Arubaito' means part time job in Japanese. 'Arbeito' means work in German.

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