CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES OF L2 ENGLISH ON L1 JAPANESE IN JAPANESE-ENGLISH BILINGUALS

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1. Multi-competence as a theoretical background

One very common question in second language acquisition research is whether the language used by second language users is different from that of monolingual first language speakers. If that is the case, why is it different? And how is it different? A very obvious difference between these two groups of language speakers is that L2 users have two languages in their mind, while L1 monolinguals have just one.

Cook (1991) introduced the concept of "multi-competence". "Multi-competence" is defined as "a compound state of mind with two languages" and he claimed that this multi-competence is totally different from a monolingual competence in nature. The two languages in one brain are inter-related and united into a single, unique language system as a whole entity. Thus the holistic multicompetent language system is not just an addition of two individual monolingual language systems: the idea of multi-competence disagrees with the view of two completely separate language systems in the structure of bilingual lexicons. Following this perspective, dynamic interactions between the two languages should be found in the vocabulary use of second language users , and they should be reflected in the processing and representations of their mental lexicon.

It follows that even when the speaker is using just one language, at least some part of the other language would also be activated and therefore influencing the language in use. To paraphrase it in Grosjean's term (1982), even when bilinguals are in a "monolingual mode", the other language is not totally deactivated, but should be constantly available in a certain level.

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2. Cross-linguistic influence of L2 English on L1 Japanese *Katakanago*

Many researchers in second language acquisition have focused on the influences of a mother tongue into a second language. But the multi-competence view predicts the cross-linguistic influence in the other direction as well; that is, *L2 influence on L1 use.* In other words, if the speaker knows two or more languages, even their mother tongue (L1) will be different from that of monolingual native speakers because of the inevitable influences from the other languages.

As Weinreich (1964) claims, lexical interactions between bilingual's two languages seem to happen typically when the words from two languages are similar phonologically or morphologically. Likewise, Ringbom (1986) maintains that almost all examples of lexical transfer can be observed in terms of formal similarity. That is, we can assume that loanwords or cognates, which are words similar in form (and meaning sometimes) to words in another language, are more likely to cause cross-linguistic influences between bilinguals' two languages. Accordingly, it would seem to be viable to focus on Japanese loanwords of English origin (*Katakanago* in Japanese[2]) and English words for the purpose of observing the English influence on Japanese.

3. Research method: Japanese Association Task

3.1. Aim

The aim of the Japanese Association Task is to investigate whether there are any semantic influences of L2 English on L1 Japanese loanwords of English origin by Japanese users of English.

3.2. Subject

The subjects of this research are native Japanese speakers who are using and acquiring English as a L2 at different levels. The main group of subjects is 25 Japanese adults living in UK for different length of time from 4 months to more than ten years: the average length of stay for 2 years. Most of them are students studying in the different courses in the university of Essex. This main group is compared with a sub-group of 10 Japanese people who live in Japan and had learnt English in Japan for 6

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[2] Actually, *katakana-go* can be loanwords from any foreign languages, but currently more than 80% of all "katakana-go" used in Japan are those of English origin and here in this paper, I use the word "katakana-go" to refer to the loanwords of English origin exclusively.

years at least. This comparison is made in order to see the difference between different levels of multicompetent L2 users, assuming that people living in an English-speaking country have more exposure to English and less contact with Japanese than people who live in Japan. the same test was done with 4 monolingual Japanese speakers and 10 monolingual British people who don't know any Japanese at all as a control group in order to check the typical "Japanese" responses and the typical "English" responses respectively.

3.3. Language materials

The language materials are Japanese loanwords of English origin, *Katakana-go*. When those English words were borrowed into Japanese vocabulary, the original meaning was sometimes adapted into a new, different meaning according to Japanese culture or customs. For this test, *katakanago* with a different meaning in Japanese from that of the original English source word are selected as test words for association. For example, an English word "smart" means clever or stylish, but Japanese loanword "スマート" (sumaato) means slim or thin; the two meanings are quite different. Another example is a Japanese *katakanago*, タレント (talento), derived from an English word "talent". The Japanese タレント is a TV celebrity.

There are 16 Japanese loanwords as test items together with some other Japanese words as distracters. The 16 test loanwords are as follows:

> ボス *bosu* (from an English word "boss"), タレント *talent* (from "talent"), エシセイ *essei* (from "essay"), ナイーブ *naiibu* (from "naïve"), スマート *sumaato* (from "smart"), ベイク *baiku* (from "bike"), フエミニスト *feminisuto* (from "feminist"), クリーニング *kuliiningu* (from "cleaning"), ランチ *lanchi* (from "lunch"), アイス *aisu* (from "ice"), サワー *sawaa* (from "sour"), ナイフ *naihu* (from "knife"), ソース *soosu* (from "sauce"), カード *kaado* (from "card"), ヅュース *juusu* (from "juice") and スナツク *sunakku* (from "snack").

Refer to the Japanese meanings of those test words in Appendix.

3.4. Procedure

The task is an association task, so basically the subject is given one word and they have to think of other words that immediately come into their mind. The test administrator (myself) showed and read out a test word and the subject wrote down as

many associated words as possible in 20 seconds. The entire task, including the instruction, was done in Japanese.

3.5. Prediction

The hypothesis is that when the subjects are given the Japanese loanword in the test, they have an automatic access to the original English meaning as well as Japanese meaning and therefore they subconsciously associate the test Japanese word with the things related in English meaning. For example, a Japanese *katakanago* ボス (*bosu*) is derived from an English word "boss". Its meaning is either (a) 'a person who has gained control of his own organization, especially criminal or political, with coercion' (Miura, 1979): in short, a (strong) leader of gangsters or politicians; or (b) a leader in a group of animals, typically monkeys and dogs. If the test word is ボス (*bosu*) in Japanese, the prediction is that they will write words associated with the English "boss" like "office"(kaisha), "work" (shigoto), as well as more Japanese related words like "monkey" (saru), "gangsters" (yakuza, gyanngu), etc.

This prediction is made by the assumption that there will be subconscious cross-linguistic transfer of meaning from L2 English to L1 Japanese in the subject's language use; in the sense that this task is conducted all in Japanese but some influence of the English knowledge could possibly emerge.

4. Result

The table shows the distribution of the total score of English influence for each subject in the three groups: main subjects living in U.K., sub-group subjects studying English in Japan and control Japanese monolinguals. For example, look at the row of total score 5; five people from the main group gained a total score 5 and just one person from the sub group and zero from the control group. There are 16 Japanese loanwords for the association test, so the maximum score of English influence is 16, which means that the subject associated all the 16 test words with things only related to English meaning. As you can see, in the main group, there is one subject who got the score of 13 out of 16;actually, she's been living in UK for more than 15 years. There is also one subject who scored just one point in the main subject. But almost all the main group subjects got the score within the range of 3 to 8. As for the subgroup people, the majority of them scored 1 to 2 points except two subjects. One of them scored 5 and the

other scored 0. As for the control group, 3 out of 4 people scored 0 point of English influence, as we expected. And one person gained just one point out of 16. Strictly speaking, there should not be even a single score of "English influence of meaning" from Japanese monolingual subjects theoretically because they are not supposed to have any English knowledge. But in reality, it is almost impossible in Japan to find very pure Japanese monolinguals who don't know any English at all.

Table 1. The individual scores for English influence in the three
groups of subjects.

total score of English influence	Number of Main Group Subjects (#1)	Number of Sub Group Subjects (#2)	Number of Japanese Control Subjects (#3)
0	0	1	3
1	1	3	1
2	0	5	0
3	3	0	0
4	2	0	0
5	5	1	0
6	5	0	0
7	5	0	0
8	2	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
13	1	0	0
14	0	0	0
15	0	0	0
16	0	0	0

(#1) subjects living in U.K. (#2) subjects studying English in Japan
(#3) control monolingual subjects

Next, shall we look at the average scores of "English" influence by the three different groups. Look at the Bar Chart below.

We can see the clear difference between groups. The average score of the main group is 5.7, the sub group 1.8 and the Japanese control 0.25. It could be said that whether the subjects are living in UK or Japan is fairly reliable indicator of the relative amount of use of English, thus the relative amount of influence from English. Thus, we can maintain that the more familiar the subject is to the English words for use, the higher points they gain for the semantic influence of English in Japanese association task.

Bar Chart 1: The average scores of English influence by the three groups

average scor

6 — 5.7
5
4
3 — ■ 系列1
2 — 1.8
1 — 0.25
0

Main Group   Sub Group   ControlG
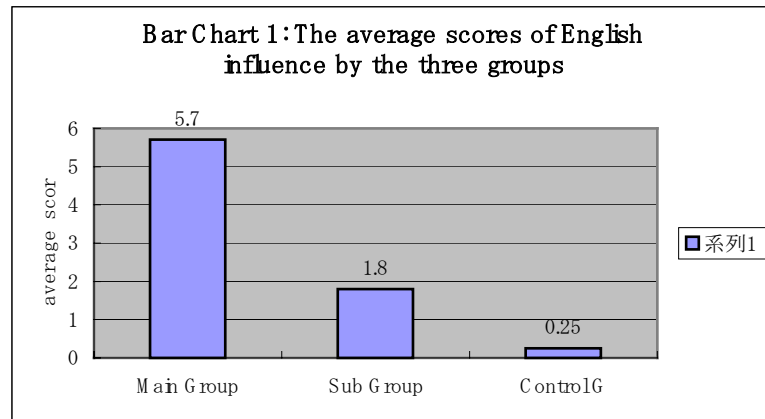
5. Conclusion

The result of the association task clearly demonstrated the semantic transfer of L2 English into L1 Japanese loanwords; a great amount of cross-linguistic influence were observed from the main subjects; some amount from the subgroup and almost none from monolingual Japanese speakers. In this way, we can conclude that L2 Japanese users of English are different from monolingual Japanese speakers in terms of the use of L1 Japanese *katakanago* as a result of the influence from their L2 knowledge of English. This confirms that L2 does influence on L1 as the multi-competence perspective predicts. And it suggests in the modeling of Japanese-English mental lexicon that there would be some level of merged areas where both languages would always be activated and therefore influencing each other even in a monolingual mode.

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Appendix: The meanings of the 16 test Japanese *katakanago* used in the association task

General reference (Miura, 1979, 1985)

ボス "bosu" (from 'boss')

(a)'a person who has gained control of his organization, especially political or criminal, with coercion' (Miura, 1979): in short, a (strong) leader of gangsters or politicians (b) a leader in a group of animals, typically monkeys and dogs.

タレント "talento" (from 'talent')

a TV celebrity (who is not necessarily talented!).

エシセイ "essei" (from 'essay')

literary jottings as a genre of literature; it's not an academic writing, but more like a free writing about your own feelings or thoughts, which is often written by タレント (a Japanese celebrity) or professional writers for the publication in magazines or newspapers.

ナイーブ "naiibu" (from 'naive')

shy, pure, innocent, delicate, unaffected or weak; the word is always used to characterise a person with a positive, laudatory connotation. (It seems to typically reflect the Japanese conventional value to praise those kind of people rather than active, experienced people with the art of living).

スマート "smaato" (from 'smart')

slim, slender, thin; the word is used to refer to a physical body.

ベイク "baiku" (from 'bike')

a motorbike, not a bicycle.

フエミニスト "feminisuto" (from 'feminist')

a man who is indulgent with women, a gentleman. (Recently, however, the original English meaning of 'a person who advocates women's rights' has been spreading gradually as well).

クリーニング "kuliiningu" (from 'cleaning')

it's an abbreviation of ドライクリーニング "dorai-kuliininngu"(from 'dry cleaning'). That is, the word refers only to dry cleaning, not any kinds of house cleaning.

アイス "aisu" (from 'ice')

It seems that initially the word was used as an abbreviation of アイスクリーム "aisu kuriimu" (from 'ice cream'); however, actually it refers not only to an ice cream but also to an ice-lolly (In this way, shortening words by abbreviation is one of the typical features of Japanese adaptation of loan words).

サワー "sawaa" (from 'sour')

a kind of alcoholic drink made of a Japanese "Shochuu" spirit

ランチ "lanchi" (from 'lunch')

a western-style set meal (typically, a combination plate with a soup and/or salad, coffee) served during lunch time typically at an inexpensive restaurant.

ナイフ "naihu" (from 'knife')

(a) a western-style small knife for some specific purposes like peeling fruits or sharpening a pencil, different from the one for cooking; (b) a table knife (this meaning is the same as that of the English word).

ソース "soosu" (from 'sauce')

ソース "soosu" by itself refers to a special Japanese table sauce inspired by a Worcestershire sauce; other types of sauce, thus, have to be named by their respective names (e.g. しようゆ "shooyu" for soy sauce) or adding a specification in front of ソース "soosu" (e.g. トマトソース "tomato-soosu" for tomato sauce)

カード "kaado" (from 'card')

カード "kaado" is to refer specifically to a bank (debit) card or a credit card; by adding another word in the front for specification, the word can be used for other kind of cards as well like a telephone card, an ID card, a membership card or Christmas card: e.g. テレフォンカード "telephon kaado" for 'a telephone card'

It seems to be the case that most kind of cards referred to by カード "kaado" are made of plastic rather than paper in Japan.

ヅュース "juusu" (from 'juice')

any kind of soft drinks including coke, iced tea or coffee

スナツク "sunakku" (from 'snack')

(a) a bar for drinking or a pub; (b) a kind of fried savoury snack made of corn or potato; it is normally 'crisps' in English (but not other kinds of snacks).