To Nobuko, with all my love . . .

I could not have done this without you, so please, this time, leave this sentence be.

JAMES STANLAW

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The dynamics of English words in contemporary Japanese: Japanese English and a 'beautiful human life'

Introduction

His demeanour and his Sony company pin indicated that he was an executive who could make people sit up and listen when he spoke. I was listening to him, too, albeit sitting two seats away on the bullet train Green Coach heading for Kyoto. 'We import too many of them from the Americans,' he declared authoritatively, eliciting nods of agreement from his two travelling companions. 'If you want to know what I think, that's my opinion!' 'And why can't we stop this invasion?' added the one seated across from him, 'We're really at their mercy.' I wondered just what they were talking about. What were these mysterious American imports that seemed to demoralize these veteran Sony bureaucrats so much? After another five minutes of listening to their conversation, the source of their anxiety was revealed, when I finally realized (with a mixture of interest and guilt) that they were actually lamenting the large number of English words that were being incorporated into the everyday Japanese language.

If words were an item of trade, the Japanese economy would be facing a deep crisis. While Americans have imported Japanese cars, computers, and electronic goods in huge numbers, only a few Japanese words have entered the vocabulary of most Americans, cultural items like geisha, karate, and sumo, or such food items as sukiyaki, sashimi, and sushi. The sad truth is that most Americans' knowledge of Japanese barely goes beyond the brand name of their latest camera, VCR, or stereo. In Japan, on the other hand, the number of words imported from English (typically American English) is simply astonishing. These include such everyday items as terebi for 'television', tabako ('tobacco') for cigarettes, as well as myriad baseball terms (e.g. hoomu ran 'home run' or suitoraiku 'strike'); many of which reflect the importation of related aspects of Western culture. In addition, however, many other items are uniquely Japanese in their provenance, and might more accurately be regarded as 'made-in-Japan' creations. This domestically-created Japanese
English vocabulary is notable for a wordstock comprising many items which have no real equivalents in US or British English. Examples of these include 
*kanzoku* ('camping car') for recreational vehicles, *raibu* ('live house') for coffee shops or jazz clubs with live music, or *あふる* ('after care') for product maintenance.

Estimates of the number of 'loanwords' in daily use in modern Japanese range from around three to five thousand terms, which represents approximately 5 to 10 percent of ordinary daily vocabulary as shown in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tokens (percent of total words in sample)</th>
<th>Types (percent of different words in sample)</th>
<th>Noun Types (percent of words in sample which are nouns)</th>
<th>Non-Noun Types (percent of words in sample which are not nouns)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wago (native Japanese words)</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kango (words of Chinese origin)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanshuugo (compounds of both Japanese and Chinese origin)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gairai (foreign loanwords)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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However, not all loans are created equal. As Table 2.2 shows, the vast majority of loanwords in newspapers are derived from English, while words from other European languages tend to be reserved for restricted purposes. For example, most of the Italian loanwords in Table 2.2 deal with music; while German has contributed many medical terms. French loanwords are often associated with high culture, whereas many words of Russian origin came in during the political upheavals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As we will see in the next chapter, Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish loanwords came into the language before Japan opened its doors to the West in the 1850s. The distribution of loanwords also varies according to context, as Table 2.3 below illustrates. The left-hand column shows the top twenty loanwords as found in a general newspaper survey, while the right-hand column displays a list of loanwords that are salient in the texts of women's magazines.
Loanword dictionaries of all types and sizes are popular in Japan, with the latest edition of the largest containing over 27,000 entries (Arakawa, 1977). Each year some publishers distribute linguistic yearbooks and almanacs reflecting the state of the language, which list the new loanwords that have appeared during the previous year. English loanwords are pervasive in Japan, and can be heard in daily conversation, on television and radio programmes, or seen in books and magazines of all kinds. Specialized technical journals also use substantial numbers of loanwords. English terms (usually written in roman letters) are almost compulsory on personal articles such as T-shirts, purses, men’s gym equipment or other kinds of tote bags, jackets, or sweaters. There is sometimes a transparent connection between the loanword and the labelled object, such as champion or head coach on a sweatshirt or tracksuit, or a university logo on a sweater. At other times, the associations are cloudy. Once I saw a T-shirt with fifty lines of an encyclopedia entry on the state of Georgia copied verbatim, listing its major industries and cash crops. Not infrequently, a suggestive or blatantly obscene phrase is written on a garment, the force of which presumably is unknown or ignored by the wearer. I once saw a young girl probably no more than thirteen years old wearing a T-shirt that said Baby do you want to do it? She was shopping with her mother, and yet no one around her seemed offended or shocked.

Japanese English in daily life

Explaining the pervasiveness of English loanwords to the casual observer of Japanese society is no easy task. On my first trip to Japan, I was surprised to find that there were two words for rice commonly used in the language: gohan, the traditional Japanese term, and raisu, an English loanword that has been phonologically nativized. I found it curious that an English word would be borrowed for something so basic to life in Japan as the main staple food. The word gohan itself can actually mean meal (‘breakfast’, ‘lunch’, or ‘dinner’). As an anthropologist with a background in sociolinguistics, I suspected that there were various motivations for this, and several possibilities immediately came to mind.

First, I considered the possibility that raisu was only used when dealing with foreigners, but then I noticed from the media that Japanese people would use the word when no foreigners were present, and I could easily find the term written in newspapers and magazines. My second hypothesis was that raisu was used for ‘foreign’ dishes such as kare raisu, i.e., ‘curry rice’, and that for more traditional Japanese dishes, one would use gohan, as in kuni gohan (‘chestnuts and rice’) or tori gohan (‘chicken and rice’). I found that this was often true, but that there were a number of exceptions, and the term raisu was also used for many domestic dishes in certain restaurants. My third hypothesis was that the choice of term would vary according to type of restaurant. Traditional Japanese-style restaurants (often referred to as shokudou) would serve gohan, while more modern or Western types of restaurants (labelled using an English loanword resutoran) would serve raisu. Again, there was a tendency for this to be the case, but this tendency was not uniformly consistent.

I finally thought I had solved the problem when I noticed that gohan was served in a traditional Japanese ricebowl (chawan) while raisu was served on a flat plate. However, a billboard in Tohoku, an area of Japan not noted for a high degree of Western acculturation, refuted this hypothesis. An older man was shown wearing a yukata (traditional Japanese informal robe) holding a chawan and smilingly saying, ‘Naisu raisu’ (‘nice rice’). Although this was just an advertising technique, it does indicate that people in their homes do sometimes put raisu in a bowl or gohan on a plate. In the last analysis, it appeared that the tendencies for naming rice that I had observed were simply that, heuristic tendencies rather than any hard and fast rules. My observations of such food-naming practices suggested that many speakers were totally unconcerned about such things, and there were few situations where it was completely wrong to use either term. Yet at the same time, the subject of loanwords is a volatile one in Japan. Whenever the topic is discussed, there are usually anxieties voiced about the ‘pollution’ of the language, or the ‘loss of traditional values’, or (from some Westerners) ‘the copycat mentality of the Japanese’, etc. As my research proceeded, I discovered that the use of English loanwords was a touchstone for a range of social and political anxieties, a number of which I discuss throughout this volume.

Many loanwords are transparent ‘phonetic loans’ (i.e., direct transliterations) as in jinsu (‘blue jeans’), basu (‘bus’), kohii (‘coffee’), kusya (‘cooler’, or ‘air-conditioner’), or apaato (‘apartment’). Other ‘loanwords’ refer to objects or phenomena that are particularly or uniquely Japanese. For example, gooruden utiku (‘Golden Week’) means the traditional week-long series of holidays starting with the Showa Emperor’s birthday on 29 April, including Constitution Day on 3 May, and ending on Children’s Day, 5 May. Similarly, many other loanwords have only a blurred resemblance to items in other varieties of English, and it is not unusual for the English loanword to take on a restricted meaning in comparison with that of the American English equivalent. For example, the Japanese English word kanningu (‘cunning’) generally designates cunning in an examination (i.e., ‘cheating’). Sutoraiki (‘strike’) refers only to a walkout or labour dispute and has none of the other more basic meanings associated the item in British or American English.

Metaphors based on English enter Japanese, but the loanwords used to symbolize them are often different from those in other varieties of English. For example, a ‘spaghetti western’ becomes maharuni uesutan (‘macaroni western’), while a dokuta suoteppu (‘doctor stop’) is a prohibition on certain
activities under doctor's advice (e.g. Dokutaa suatappu de kin'en-chuu nan da! 'I'm not smoking because of my doctor's orders!'). Paapin ('purple') refers to young people making a nuisance of themselves, and is derived from the fashion of teenage motorcycle gangs wearing purple scarves. The recently de-nationalized Japanese National Railways had a very successful tourist promotion with a Discover Japan slogan. In 1983 they started another campaign, Naisu Midii Pasu ('Nice Midii Pass'), geared to encourage middle-aged (midii) career women to take their nice (naisu) vacations on the National Railways, using special open tickets (pasu) that allow rail travel anywhere in Japan. Another example is the use of pinku-furumou or pinku muubii 'pink film' or 'pink movie' for 'blue movie' (such metaphors are sometimes ignored, and the term jaku eiga 'fuck film' is also sometimes used).

Japanese English words, just like native terms, can carry a variety of meanings. Hotto ('hot') refers to warm beverages, and going to a coffee shop and saying hotto kudasai ('Hot, please') will get you a cup of hot coffee. Also heard, however, are the latest hotto nyuusu ('hot news') or hotto na wadai ('hot topic'). And there is also the term hotto na hoppuru ('hot couple'), which is used by the media to refer to celebrity couples from the film and pop music worlds. Some observers have claimed much of the English now polluting the Japanese language has been spread by the advertising industry, and it is true that advertisements across all media use English words extensively. These are found in such product names as Cattle-Boutique (leather goods shop), White and White (toothpaste), and Mimy Fish (cat food), and some loanwords have even morphed into generic names, such as shaa-pen (or shaapu-pen or shaapu-pen shuru) for 'mechanical pencil' (from 'Eversharp'), or kurakushon ('automobile horn', from 'Klason').

Even local stores may use English names for eye-catching purposes. For example, one store in the shopping mall at the Yokohama railway station displays the name, It's Demo. To uninitiated observer, this might be understood as 'it is a demo', perhaps a store where new products are demonstrated. But if the name is pronounced with a 'nativized' Japanese pronunciation, it then becomes isu-demo, the Japanese word for 'always', which is entirely appropriate for the actual function of the shop, a 24-hour convenience store that is always open. Nevertheless, the claim that advertising is the prime cause of the spread of English throughout Japanese culture and language is patently false. In fact, as I shall show in Chapter 3, there is a long history of linguistic contact and borrowing from Western languages which stretches back at least four hundred years. If anything, the ubiquity of English words in contemporary Japanese advertising is as much a reflection of their increasing use in contemporary Japan as a cause of their popularity.

One very real source for English words and the English language generally is the education system. The teaching of English in Japan is both compulsory and extensive, with almost all high schools providing English instruction in a system that employs around 60,000 English teachers nationwide. According to policies established by the Ministry of Education, all middle school students, and most senior high school students, are required to study a foreign language and usually this is English. Almost all middle school students begin studying English in the seventh grade, about 70 percent of high school students continue studying English, as do 100 percent of university students (English is a required subject for all college and university students). Students who plan on entering a university are required to take an examination in English, and many students spend much of their preparation time studying English in jaku (private cramming schools).

Although English is taught as a foreign language throughout the school system, English in the form of 'loanwords', or in the form of English neologisms 'created in Japan', receives no official sanction in Japan. The Ministry of Education has regularly expressed dismay concerning the vast amount of borrowing from English that occurs in Japanese. Ironically, while members of the Japanese government express official anxiety about the issue, actual language use within the Japanese civil service suggests Japanese English words are as widely used as in the private sector.

Japanese English as a linguistic resource

English 'loanwords' and other English words in Japanese do not simply add foreign spice to an otherwise jaded indigenous linguistic palate. Like other linguistic resources, they are used in the communicative strategies of Japanese people to achieve a variety of sociolinguistic ends, and to accomplish certain goals when speaking or writing. These may be as mundane as trying to impress a member of the opposite sex, or as subtle as rephrasing a potentially embarrassing question.

For example, many Japanese English words carry connotations of the speaker or topic being modern, Western, chic, or sophisticated, which may indeed contribute to the popularity of English words in advertisements and in the broadcast media. Radio and television programmes use them continually, and a very high proportion of contemporary pop songs use English loanwords in the text or title: for example, Rabu isu oobaa ('Love is over'), Erushakeshon ('Escalation'), Ko wa samoa furingu ('Love is a summer feeling'), and Tengoku no kissu ('Heaven's kiss'). In 1981 Tanaka Yasuo's best-selling first novel Nantanaku Kurisuwaru 'Somehow Crystal' contained what was perceived as a 'hip' glossary of over forty pages of notes, mostly explaining the English words used in the text.
Some English loanwords seem to reflect changing Japanese attitudes and priorities. For example, many commentators have suggested that the English loanword possessive pronoun *mai* ('my') apparently is indicative of the challenge of individualism to the collective group. Examples include *mai-hoomu* ('my home'), *mai-keesu* ('my pace'), *mai-puraibashii* ('my privacy'), and *mai-a-k-soku* (the 'my car' tribe, or those who own their own cars). In the media this prefix is found on a vast array of products and advertisements: *my juice, my pack, my summer, my girl calendar*. One explanation is that it is difficult to express the individualism of the contemporary world (in contrast to the collectivist notions of moral probity associated with traditional Japanese society) in 'pure' Japanese without sounding offensive. It has been claimed that native terms for 'my' (e.g. *watashi no*) or 'self' (e.g. *jibun*) tend to sound selfish, and that it may be easier to use an English word in expressing one's independence, because it does not carry the same connotations. Similarly, it has been commented that when it comes to matters of the heart and romance, one is able to use English with a greater ease than the native Japanese terms. For example, the modern Japanese habit of taking a girl to a movie, or to dinner, or to a coffee shop is described as *deeto suru*, doing 'a date'.

For some perhaps, English words appear less threatening than their Japanese equivalents, e.g. *mensu* instead of *gokkei* for 'menstruation'; *masu* for 'masturbation', or *repu* rather than *goakan* for 'rape'. Numerous informants have told me that the English word is less loaded than the native Japanese term, although Wilkerson (1998) tellingly argues that this is not always the case. English loanwords may also serve to excite or titillate, rather than defusing a loaded term. This seems to be especially true in the genre of men's comics, where various activities are routinely described using a brutally explicit variety of English sexual slang. The availability of English loanwords may also provide speakers with a means of circumventing other linguistic and cultural constraints. For example, the loans *hazu* ('husband') and *waifu* ('wife') may convey a lighter symbolic load than the native Japanese terms *shujin* ('husband', 'master') or *kanai* ('wife' literally, meaning 'the one inside the house'). Members of the Japanese National Debating Team told me a few years ago that debates were almost impossible to conduct in Japanese, especially for women. To their knowledge, all these societies in Japan conduct their contests in English.

Finally, another reason for the use of English words in Japanese is that individuals apparently feel free to use them in creative and highly personal ways. For example, one Japanese linguist (Shibata, 1975) describes how a movie scriptwriter invented new loanwords thus:

> In the script I found the expression 'flower street.' I then asked the script writer what it meant and where he picked up the expression. The reply was: 'I just made it up myself.' I was subsequently told that the meaning had to do with the decoration of flowers, a decoration movement that was going on at the time. I no longer recall the exact meaning, but there can be no mistake that Japanized 'English,' such as *happy end* or *flower street,* was introduced into the Japanese lexicon by people... in a more or less similar fashion. (Shibata, 1975: 170)

In my own research on Japanese colour terminology (which I discuss in Chapter 9), I often found informants 'creating' their own colour names using English loanwords (such as *peuru paapuru* 'pale purple', or *hawaito bureu* 'white blue'). Tanaka, the author of the novel mentioned earlier, also explains that he invented the term *kuriutaru* ('crystal') to describe the attitudes of today's Japanese youth. According to Tanaka, *crystal lets you see things through a cloudy reflection*, and today's crystal generation judge people shallowly, by external appearances, and by *what they wear and acquire* (Tanaka, 1981).

The issue of the intrusion of English words into the Japanese language is a sensitive topic in contemporary Japan, and discussions of the issue in academic writings and the print media often invoke appeals to notions of cultural superiority and inferiority, national and self-identity, and a range of other social and political issues (as we will see in Chapter 11). Not only Japanese commentators, but also American and other foreign observers have condemned the use of loanwords. At the same time, among linguists and other academics, there seem to be at least three broad approaches to the analysis of English vocabulary in Japanese: first, the 'loanword' approach; second, the 'English-inspired vocabulary item' approach; and, third, the 'made-in-Japanese English' (wa-setu eigo) approach.

The loanword approach asserts that it is impossible to detach the 'Englishness' of borrowed terms from their source, and therefore the label of 'loanword' is an appropriate one. In this view, such items are essentially 'foreign', which is a major source of their attraction in the first instance. Proponents of this view would tend to deny that these items are ever fully nativized. Although some might argue that many English words are fully integrated into the Japanese cultural and linguistic systems, the advocates of the loanword approach deny this. Their contention is the importation of Western concepts and words carries with it a cultural payload. For example, the use of the English loans *hazu* ('husband') and *waifu* ('wife') mentioned above carry with them a range of connotations, e.g. modern attitudes to marriage, greater equality between the sexes, the changing role of motherhood, etc. In this view words are not simply the building blocks of communication, but are the transmitters of culture, in this case, a foreign culture. In other words, English loanwords are *English* and *are* loanwords.

The English-inspired vocabulary item approach argues that, in many instances of contemporary linguistic contact, English loanwords are not really loanwords at all, as there is no actual borrowing that occurs. 'Borrowing' is thus an inappropriate metaphor, as, in many cases, nothing is
ever received, and nothing is ever returned. The limitations of this metaphor are illustrated by the loanword test given at the end of this chapter. Unless the reader is familiar with the Japanese language and Japanese culture, she will probably flunk the test (see pp. 37-42). As the answer key to the quiz explains, most of these so-called ‘English’ terms are simply not transparent to non-Japanese speakers of English; they are terms made in Japan for Japanese consumption.

Perhaps a more accurate way of referring to such items would be to label these ‘English-inspired vocabulary items’. A word in English may act as a motivation for the formation of some phonological symbol, and or conceptual unit, in Japanese; but no established English lexeme is ever really transferred from the donor language (English) to the recipient language (Japanese). Instead, new words are created within the Japanese language system by using English. Often, there may be a conceptual and linguistic overlap between the new term and the original English word, but many such instances often involve radical semantic modifications. In this view then, English words are essentially Japanese items, and their use in Japanese may be very different from their use in other varieties of English.

The third perspective, the ‘made-in-Japan English’ (or wa-sei eigo) approach, is actually a stronger version of the second approach. In this view, one that I tend to subscribe to myself, the argument is that most of the English words found in Japanese today are ‘home-grown’, and are items of Japanese-made English or wa-sei eigo, as the translated term reads in the Japanese original (Miller, 1997; Ishiyama, 1987; Abe, 1990; Yamada, 1995). One argument against this view is that many of the English words that are used in Japan, in newspapers, television, academic writing, etc., appear to retain their original meanings and their written forms at least are indistinguishable from corresponding items in other varieties of English (as opposed to their spoken forms which are invariably modified to match the norms of Japanese English phonology). One difficulty in responding to this argument directly is that no accurate figures are available to distinguish ‘normal’ English loanwords from wa-sei eigo loanwords, for a number of reasons, not least because of the difficulty in distinguishing ‘type’ from ‘token’ in this context (where type refers to distinct words, and token to related items). For example, the 2001 September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center added teroru (‘terrorism’) to the language alongside the previously extant tero. These terms are not exactly equivalent, as tero is a noun and teroru can be a verb, and seems to permit a wider range of usage than tero. For example, teroru teroru (‘That’s terrorism, I tell you!’) can be applied to situations that are metaphorically, rather than literally violent, such as in clothes with loudly-cashing colours. Thus, the range of meanings associated with teroru are very different than those associated with the original English source or even the earlier loan tero, the usage of which is arguably somewhat closer to the English ‘terror’.

In addition, it is significant that once English words are brought into the language, whether by scientists importing the latest jargon, or teenagers inventing new skateboard slang, such words often assume a life of their own, and their meanings can change in unpredictable ways. In many instances, if an English word retains a place in the language (and is not discarded or forgotten), its range of meanings will become modified and will thus be re-made in Japan. To cite one recent example of this, one might consider some of the various terms for ‘computer’, ‘email’, and ‘PC’ currently used in Japan. The English ‘computer’ and Japanese konpyouutsua, despite their obvious linkage, are not always exactly equivalent. If you talk to a Japanese person, or refer to one of the popular glossaries of current phrases, you will find that both terms refer to electronic machines that calculate numbers and process data (Masakazu, 2002). However, while Americans or Canadians may have ‘computers’ on their desks at home, a Japanese likely would not. As one informant said, ‘To me, konpyouutsua represents the whole system. It is something big, It is like a computer network or infrastructure.’ Instead, Japanese people would have a waa puro (‘word processor’) or paso-kon (‘personal computer’), while the Japanese English acronym PC would be reserved for ‘political correctness’ or ‘patrol car’ (what Americans call a ‘police squad car’). One of the reasons for this is that until relatively recently, waa puro, or dedicated Japanese-language word processors, were more commonly-used than desktop computers for writing documents.

In the case of ‘email’, there are a number of English and Japanese equivalents available to Japanese language-users, including these five:

1. eメール (‘e-mail’)
2. メール (meiru)
3. 電子メール (denshi-meiru) (‘electronic mail’)
4. e-mail, E-mail, Email (e-mail)
5. イーメール (ii-meiru)

Arguably the most neutral term of the five is number 3, the Japanese-English hybrid, the term most often used in computer instruction books or technical manuals. Number 1 is found in many newspaper and magazine advertisements, while number 2 is the most colloquial and is very popular on the Internet. In emails themselves, a common opening line is meiru moratta (‘1 got your mail’) or meiru arigatoo (‘Thanks for your mail’), and the hybrid is rarely if ever used in this context (denshi-meiru moratta for ‘I got your mail’ read very oddly). Number 4 illustrates the various ways of writing the word ‘email’ on business cards, where an English expression is typically used. Finally, one should note that the last form, with ‘email’ written completely in the katakana script, does not, to my knowledge, occur at all.

There are many other instances where the meanings of English terms
become restricted, expanded, or modified in some way. The question that is raised is, then, what is a ‘real’ loanword, and what is ‘made-in-Japan’ English? I would suggest here that almost all the high-frequency English words in everyday use in the country are either ‘made-in-Japan’ or undergo such modifications that we may argue that they are re-made in Japan.

At present, the creation and influx of English words shows no signs of diminishing, and a recent study suggested that the proportion of English loanwords in Japanese-language newspapers had increased by 33 percent over a fifteen-year period (Minami, Shinoo, and Asahi Shimbun Gakugeiba, 2002). Few societies in today’s world appear to borrow so extensively, and with such variety and enthusiasm. There may be a number of reasons for this. First, there is a tradition of linguistic borrowing (at both the spoken and written level) that can be traced back to contact with the Chinese language at least sixteen hundred years ago, when written Chinese provided the basis of the Japanese writing system. Second, the minimum of six years of English education that almost every Japanese child receives contributes to a common pool of symbolic and linguistic knowledge that provides an extra resource for many different communicative activities, from casual conversation to intellectual discussions. This, combined with the Japanese people’s strong interest in things western, suggests that the motivations for English ‘borrowing’ and ‘creation’ are explicable only through reference to a range of social and political considerations. I do my best to explore these issues throughout this volume. In the following sections of this chapter, however, I shall elaborate on the notion that Japanese English (as defined and explained above, i.e. comprising both loanwords and created words) functions as a linguistic and cultural resource in a range of subtle and often unexpected ways.

Japanese English and the ‘beautiful human life’

In every Japanese city, an American or British visitor is immediately struck by the ubiquity of English signage in a society where a functional grasp of English (at least for everyday communicative purposes) seems fragmented at best. On a recent visit to Tokyo, I noticed a young OL (office lady), standing outside a beauty parlor, reading the neon sign flashing in English before her:

Are you satisfied with your hair?
If you are looking for super beautician
Try "Kenzo" beauty salon.
We know you will be happy!!

After just a few seconds’ hesitation, she walked in order to get a paama
('perm'), or some other hair treatment. On another occasion in Hokkaido, I saw two teenagers approach the Coin Snack vending machine, and look over

the available selections. They were standing in a machine emblazoned with a photograph of an American motorcycle cop and a US airman, both staring into the sunset holding their cans Georgia Kafe Ore (‘Georgia coffee old’). As the two boys collected their cans from the tray, the machine flashed:

Thank you!
Anytime you want to take a rest
Please remember we’re always
Here and waiting for your coming.

Not long ago, in a coffee shop in Kyoto, I sat and listened as the jukebox played a song by Matsutoyaa Yumi (‘Yuming’), a female pop icon in the New Music movement of the 1970s and 1980s. I reflected on the creative blend of English and Japanese in the chorus of the song entitled Sukoshidake Kata-omoi (‘Just a little unrequited love’):

Izoo datte
I love you more than you,
You love me sukkoshi dake,
Kata-omoi more than you

This might be broadly glossed as ‘It’s always so / that I love you more than you love me / you only love me a little bit / It’s always unrequited love.

I present these anecdotes here to illustrate the often unexpected ways in which English occurs in Japanese society. However, as I have mentioned earlier, the use of English is not restricted to signage and pop culture, but is imbricated in the fabric of Japanese life in a myriad of ways, from the media to academic life, from advertising to personal conversation. In the next section of this chapter I extend the discussion of Japan English today by considering a
number of the symbolic functions of English, and examining how certain terms have become established public symbols while others are reserved for private purposes, noting the interrelationships between the individual's uses of English and institutionalized displays of the language. Finally, I provide a brief guide to the current language debates on English in Japan (and Japanese English), which find regular expression in the discourse of academics, educationalists, and the media.

The symbols and exhibitions of Japanese English in public and private space

One of the important contributions that anthropologists have made to the study of symbolism has been in the analysis of the relations between the collective and the individual components of symbols. Firth (1973) calls these the 'public' and 'private' aspects of symbolism, terms that refer to the creation of symbols, their presence in the minds of particular individuals, and their collective use 'in the culture'. Symbols also have manifestations, either in personal displays or institutional exhibitions. In this section, I will discuss the symbolic and the performance aspects (or 'exhibitions') of English words in Japanese: how and for what purposes they are created, and how they are displayed or exhibited. Symbols that have group effects, and those that have social appeal and consciousness, or represent the values and aspects of the collectivity, can be termed 'public symbols', whereas the term 'private symbols' refer to those whose use and effect may be more typically observed in the individual and personal lives of people (and may not be shared by everyone in a culture). Leach (1976) claims that public symbols are associated with acts of communication, while private symbols are associated with expression. My argument here is that Japanese English plays an interesting role in both types of symbolism in Japan.

One obvious and emblematic example of the public symbolism of what I am calling Japanese English here is seen in the commercial messages (CMs or 'advertising slogans') for that most American of products, Coca-Cola. In a recent nationwide campaign, the lead slogan for the campaign has been Sawayaka, teisuti, I feel Coke!, which might be translated as 'Refreshing, tasty, I feel [like] Coke'. In order to promote their product in this campaign, Coca-Cola in Japan devised video campaigns aimed at three distinct groups: young people, older age-groups, and housewives. Casually-dressed youngsters pose for the camera and flash their young smiles, and the background and each person has a coke can in their hand or mouth. Smiles are in abundance as the catchy lyrics of the jingle ring out:

The imeji (images) here are aimed at young people, depicting all the fun to be had when drinking Coke, and how cool you can look. The song also appears aimed at the so-called shinjinrui (the 'new generation'), with its visual messages of individualism 'doing your own thing', and 'doing it now'. Linguistically, the jingle is interesting because of the embedded code-switching from Japanese to English throughout and the use of the Japanese English teisuti for tasty.

The second commercial is designed to appeal to older folks, and perhaps for those yet to develop a taste for the most successful aerated-dyed-water drink of all time. This time the jingle goes: Itsuka kimi ni I feel Coke! / I feel Coke! / wa karu ha sura sa / itsuka datte! / sawayaka, teisuti, I feel Coke!, which translates as 'Someday you'll know as I do, / this feeling of I feel Coke! / I feel Coke! / refreshing, tasty, I feel Coke! /'. Instead of the images of the shinjuku generation, we see traditional scenes: people pulling up fishing nets, grandmothers sitting on the steps of traditional country houses, summer festivals, and a young kimono-clad girl smiling holding a can of Coke. Her enticing smile beckons Grandma to try it, to experience the cool and
at the average Japanese housewife and mother. Here we see everyday housewives in their aprons doing the laundry, women talking on pay phones, and mothers with babies meeting each other on the street. This time the words of the ring out: *Itsuka aoha* I feel Coke! / I feel Coke! / waharu hazu sa / itsuka date / Sawayaka, teisuti, I feel Coke! ('Sometime, when we meet, I feel Coke! / I feel Coke! You should know / someday / refreshing, tasty, I feel Coke! /'). The final shot is a Coke machine in front of a Japanese-style home at dusk, with everyone getting ready for dinner.

In all three films, certain Japanese English words and phrases, namely, teisuti (tasty), and I feel Coke!, are used to complement the visual language of the advertisers. Such phrases may communicate different messages to different speakers and age groups, but they nevertheless invoke a shared frame of reference general enough across such groups. In this context, then, there is direct evidence to support the claim that such Japanese English words and phrases serve as very effective public symbols in the worlds of advertising and consumer culture.

The use of items of Japanese English to express private symbols may be found in colour-naming practices in Japan. As we will see in Chapter 9, the Japanese language has appropriated the basic lexicon of colour vocabulary from English, along with many secondary colour terms (Stanlaw, 1987a; 1997a). This additional Japanese English colour vocabulary creates the space for creativity and innovation when speaking or writing of colours. For example, in my earlier research on this topic, I asked a female informant to name the hues of a number of ambiguously coloured objects. In the face of uncertainty, e.g. when the shade in question was not obviously a simple *aka* ('red') or *ao* ('blue'), she often resorted to English colour terms. When English basic terms did not exactly suffice (which was often), she refined her answer by creating English-based compound and secondary colour terms, using words like *rooku paa puru* ('rose purple'), *hoto buru* ('hot blue'), and *houaito gure* ('white grey') in our interviews. When asked to explain the origin of such terms; she responded, 'I guess I just made them up.' Further questioning revealed that she had used a number of these 'made-up' terms before: 'Oh yes, in fact, I have used *peoru paa puru* ('pale purple') many times before. My friend has a dress that is almost that colour' (Stanlaw, 1987a). This informant was not untypical as many others responded in similar ways during my interviews. Their accounts suggest that Japanese people often use English loanwords to create new vocabulary items in their everyday speech, or to simply play with the language, a finding supported by other researchers in this field (Sibata, 1975). This example suggests that such new linguistic forms, expressed in a form of Japanese English, can thus serve as dynamic and effective private symbols and, whatever their private provenance, are also readily understandable by other members of contemporary Japanese society.

In addition to the level of private and public symbols just discussed, there is another related dimension of Japanese English use to consider in this context. Having just discussed how symbols originate or are created, we can now proceed to examine how and where such symbols are displayed or 'exhibited'. There are personal and public dimensions to this as well but here I would argue there is a less obvious distinction between private and public space (given the activity of 'display'), but rather of a cline of differences between different types of displays and exhibitions. Here, I discuss two examples of such activity: (i) the personal displays of the amateur musicians in a Tokyo park; and (ii) the institutionalized exhibitions of song lyrics penned by a major female pop singer.

I have elsewhere discussed the personal displays of the amateur rock musicians who gather in Tokyo's Yoyogi Park on Sundays (Stanlaw, 1990a). Most of these performers use English names, and their PR signs, costumes, posters, and so on, are also filled with Japanese English phrases. For example, one group who called themselves The Tomcats spray-painted phrases like 'We Are Big Bad Cat,' 'No Money,' and 'Mad Route' on their van. Their performance schedule was titled 'Tomcat Live.' Even solo amateur musicians like 'St. Kazu' play their guitars and put up banners reminding the audience that they are playing Somewhere today out on the street. Another group in Yoyogi Park were named Tokyo Rocan Roller, written in roman letters which can be read as 'Tokyo rock and rollers' (see Figure 2.3 below). However, above the middle word of their name were written two small Sino-Japanese characters, 荒々 (which translate as rokan, or 'the six senses'). Thus the name spells out the fact that they are Tokyo rock and rollers, but also makes the claim that they are a delight to the senses. Of course, in this setting, the distinction between the personal and the public is blurred, but it is worth noting that they were not professional musicians, but a group of teenagers in a garage band.

Example of institutionalized displays can be seen in many of the song lyrics of contemporary Japanese pop music (Stanlaw, 1989; 1998; 200a). For example, the famous female singer Matsutoya Yumi (see also Chapter 5) uses several English images and metaphors in her song Dandiraien ('Dandelion'). In one of the choruses, she sings:

*Kimi wa dandiraien*  
Kizutueta hibi wa  
kare ni de-ko tame no  
soo yo unmei ga  
yooi shite kureta  
taisetsu-na ressun  
Ir wasuke na reidi ni naru  
You are a dandelion.  
Those days,  
when your heart was hurt
This song in the original is laced with the lyricism that has made Yuming famous in Japan. She sings that her love floats like dandelion seeds over the water, and will endure to bloom again. The dandelion images in her song seem to be written to express the fragility of romantic love, and the possibility of its survival and growth. For Westerners the dandelion image may appear mundane or trivial, but informants tell me that if Yuming had used the standard Japanese word tambora for dandelion, the song would have sound like a folksong, sung by a country girl in love to a country lad. Instead, the English loanword 

The intelligibility of Japanese English

In Japan today there are many people who express confusion at the use of English in the modern Japanese language. Some older people lament: 

Ichi-do kita de, doo to ima ka uwarimasu ka? ('How are you supposed to understand that the first time hearing it?'). Some newer items are no doubt confusing to the older generation, but in many societies in the world, slang and other forms of linguistic innovation is associated with the speech habits of the young. This is also true of Japanese English, which in contemporary society is often regarded as 'hip' and modern.
This is noticeably true in the pop music world, where it is claimed that it is almost compulsory to speak Japanese with a Western flavour. Masumi Masami, a musical booking agent, was interviewed by a magazine called LIB a few years ago, and I translate his answer to one question below. The translation shows just how frequent the occurrence of loanwords in his speech is:

New Yorkers' (Nyus Yookaa) select night clubs not only on the basis of 'space' (supersus) but also care for the 'epoch maker' (epokkku moekka) that is created by the 'policy' (porishii) and the 'concept' (konsepusto). This is especially true as the 'night scene' (naito-shin) is multi-coloured. In the very 'trendy clubs' (torendii na kurabu) are the major shows, that is, the 'sound' (sando) called 'house music' (hauusu-nyuujikku). The kind of clubs are the 'regular clubs' (regyurasu-kurabu) which 'open' (oopen) around 9:00 or 10:00 pm, and they 'close' (kuroasu) at 4:00 am; or the 'supper clubs' (sasau-kuurasu); or the 'after hours' (afutasu-awazasu) club which are 'open' (oopen) from midnight until lunch time of the following day; or the 'one night clubs' (wan naito-kurabu) which open for only one day, [usually] on the same day of the week . . . there are usually some connections required. And they have many 'event nights' (ibento-naito) such as 'Korean Night' (korian-naito) and 'Plácido Domingo Night' (domingo-naito). When I went back this time, I was told by the 'producer' (produjyusaa) who owns the 'Dead Zone' (deddo-zoon) that he is going to play a 'Pearl Harbor Night' (paaru hoabaa-naito). For this event he is calling in a Japanese 'DJ' (disuku jyokki), a Japanese 'staff' (sutaffi), and a Japanese 'dancer' (dansaa). (Inoue, 1993: 128)

This particular variety of hip Japanese English is simply not accessible to most Japanese, and, when asked for his response, a Japanese colleague fluent in English commented: 'I have absolutely no idea at all what this person is talking about! The only thing I can think of is, it is some guy who is a cool businessman, who wears sunglasses and an expensive black leather jacket.' So the loanwords appear to create an opaque in-group jargon for a specific occupational and interest in-group here, i.e. music industry professionals and pop music aficionados.

The question of intelligibility also arises in sports broadcasting, for instance, which in standard Japanese calls for a vivid play-by-play commentary, marked by such phrases "Utau!" ('It's a hit!'), "Haitta!" ('It's entered the stands!'), or "It ateri" ('A good hit') (Inagaki, 1985; Maitland, 1991). English phrases are often used in similar situations, in similar ways, e.g. 'Tachi auto' ('He's tagged out!' literally meaning 'touch out') or "shuto goro" ('It's a blazing ground ball!', literally meaning 'a spot goro goro; i.e. an onomatopoeic expression suggesting something rolling or rumbling). English words can also be used as adjectives and adverbs: "powaful i na batingu" ('powerful batting'), "ii jirai" (an 'easy fly' to catch), "shuu i shita" ('stolen base', literally meaning 'did a steal'). Inagaki calls such phrases 'noush stops' (a not unproblematic grammatical tag), suggesting that these are short of noun-like locutions of key vocabulary.

Significantly, however, he argues that English loanwords play a similar role in Japanese, with Japanese English phrases accounting for some 34.9% of such phrases in sports commentaries (Inagaki, 1995). All of which suggests that many of such phrases must be well-known among the general public.

The issue of intelligibility is also of crucial interest to the advertising industry. Despite the claim by some commentators that some Japanese English in advertising is not easily comprehensible, my own interviews with advertising industry professionals have indicated that the Japanese English in the copy is regularly checked for intelligibility. For example, one informant from the Dentsu company told me that all material was checked with Japanese speakers: 'After all, we couldn't sell something if people didn't understand what we were selling, right?' Executives told me that their campaigns used words that most people could recognize and respond to. Although the intent of using katakana-kotoba (foreign italicized words) was certainly to create eye-catching copy, obscure terms were scrupulously avoided; advertisements, they asserted, had to convey information about the product, not confuse the audience.

Examples of Japanese English embedded in advertising slogans and copy include the following taken from Sugano (1995: 841):

kaasanaritii [Nissan]  
'carsonality' (versus 'personality')

Rosu e wa yoru tobu rosu ga nai [Pan American Airlines]  
'When you fly at night to Los Angeles [Rosu in Japanese] there is no loss'

kuuru minio Guam [Japanese Airlines]  
'cool-mint Guam' (advertisement for flights to Guam )

Uesuto saizu sutorii [Keiio Department Stores]  
'West Size Story'

Word play and puns obviously play an important role in these examples, although the punning can also extend to the Japanese elements in copy, such as Guam Guam Everybody ('Gan Gan Everybody'), which was a slogan in a Japanese Airlines advertisement. Gan gan in Japanese corresponds to 'Go! Go!' in English, thus suggesting that consumers should rush to Guam for a vacation. The popularity of Japanese English phrases and the use of English as an added linguistic resource in advertising has led to accusations that the industry is a main instigator of linguistic 'pollution' in society, although, as I have indicated earlier, the empirical basis of such charges is shaky at best. As for the issue of intelligibility, evidence suggests that many of these Japanese English phrases and words enjoy a high level of comprehensibility in the general community.

A wider issue is the problem of 'meaning' in general. One of the conclusions that Haarmann (1989) reached in his research on Japanese television commercials was that '[a]lthough a majority of viewers can recognize
catch phrases in English from TV commercials, their meaning is completely clear only to a minority.' He based this conclusion on the results of a questionnaire given to about eight hundred college students, who were asked to explain the meanings of nine commonly heard slogans, such as For Beautiful Life (Shiseido cosmetics), My life - My gas (the Tokyo Gas Company), and Do you know me? (American Express). According to Haarman, fewer than 50 percent of the respondents gave the 'right' explanation of such slogans. However, an approach like Haarman's assumes that there is an unequivocal 'right' explanation of these slogans. This may not be the case. How many Americans, for example, are able to give the correct explanation of such popular US slogans as It's the heartbeat of America? (Chevrolet), or 'Marlboro Country' (Marlboro's cigarettes)? The point surely is that there is no one single 'real' meaning of such Japanese English phrases waiting to be discovered, accessible only to those Japanese with an attested high level of proficiency in the English language. As we saw in some examples in the case of the woman creating her own English-based colour terms, in the realm of the personal, meaning is sometimes constructed and negotiated by speakers in a particular context, for particular and private purposes.

Some people in Japan would be loath to accept such an argument. Many English language teachers in Japan, both Japanese and foreign, appear to detest the occurrence of Japanese English, in all its various forms. In one interview, an American teacher commented, 'If for one thing, it makes our job so much more difficult, they come into our class thinking they already know so much English, when in fact they actually have to unlearn a lot'. This again reminds us that much of the 'English' in Japan is of the home-grown variety, and the meanings of many 'loanwords' are typically modified in the Japanese context to express rather different meanings than their equivalents in other varieties of English. Sometimes these meanings differ in small and subtle ways, while at other times they differ more radically.

The issue of 'loanwords' and Japanese English

In the earlier sections of this chapter, I discuss a number of points related to the issue of lexical borrowing and 'loanwords'. One general point here is that in all languages there is cline of 'loanwordness' with respect to borrowed items. For example, most Americans would know regard the word 'restaurant' as an item of American English, but might be variably uncertain how to treat such words as 'lingerie', 'rendezvous', or 'ménage à trois'. As mentioned earlier, the problem of defining what is a 'loanword' in Japanese is not a simple task. Many of these terms are not imported at all, but made in Japan (wa-sei eigo). Because of the almost universal presence of English language programmes in the Japanese education system, the distinction between 'borrowed' and 'indigenous' items is further blurred. For example, items such as the English number system, the English basic colour term system, and the English body parts system are now part of the speech repertoire of almost every Japanese. In addition, the katakana syllabary of the writing system allows both for the somewhat easy importation and the nativization of such items within Japanese. Spelling a word in the katakana writing system instantly nativizes any new item by adopting the borrowed item to the Japanese phonological system.

If we go beyond mere individual lexical items and look at whole phrases or sentences which are borrowed, such as ai tabu yuu ('I love you'), a number of other points may be made. First, many of these phrases are created in Japan, and, second, many English items are often incorporated into 'real' Japanese collocations, as in the 'Sawayaka, teisutu, I feel Coke' example already given. Third, we also need to acknowledge that most British and US 'native' English speakers would have difficulty in explaining what many of these 'English' phrases (e.g. New Life Scene Creator, a slogan for Label Shampoo) are supposed to mean, as would speakers of other varieties of English. Which again supports the claim that many such words and phrases are not 'loanwords' in a conventional interpretation, but rather items of a distinct variety of 'Japanese English' in the wa-sei-eigo ('Japanese-made English') sense.

In response to this, others have asserted that all those items that are regularly written in romaji ('roman letters') should be classified as gairaigo ('loanwords', 外来語). One major problem with this, however, is that there is a good deal of variation in the orthography used to represent English words. For example, one hit song in the early 1990s from the female rock band Princess was sometimes written as Diamonds (in English) and sometimes nataized in the katakana syllabary as ダイヤモンド (dataymond). Which raises the question of whether both forms should be regarded as loanwords, or not. A second point is that, in certain contexts, roman letters are apparently used for visual purposes only, as in the case of clothes and many other personal belongings where some kind of English word or phrase is almost compulsory. At the same time, it is not uncommon for Japanese words or names to be written in romaji to create an artistic or visual effect.

In brief, Japanese language-users today appear to be experimenting with the orthographic and visual aspects of their language and writing systems in a way reminiscent of their importation of Chinese in the fifth century AD. In the contemporary context, although many Japanese English words are 'taken' from English in some instances, in other cases they may never have been 'in the language' to start with, at least not in the form that they appear in Japanese. When it comes to deciding what an English 'loanword' in contemporary Japan is, I would argue that discussion of this issue has been blurred by the adoption of a false metaphor, that is the notion of 'borrowing', which in this context is both misleading and problematic.
Borrowing revisited: Loanwords and Japanese English

Traditionally, many linguists have viewed language contact (correctly or otherwise) in terms of senders and receivers, contributors and recipients, borrowers and givers. This perspective typically involves looking at linguistic contact from the vantage point of the donor language, and in Japan finds expression in what I have called the 'English loanwords' approach. An alternative way of discussing language contact in Japan is to eschew the term 'loanword', and to attempt to analyse and interpret such patterns of linguistic contact from the Japanese perspective. Instead of focusing solely on the convergence or divergence of patterns of Japanese English from the norms of notional British and American standards, we might rather highlight the motivations and purposes supporting the use of English words and phrases within Japanese society. This approach, I believe, has the potential to offer many insights. By this I am not only referring to the study of *wasei-eigo* ('Japanese-made English'), but also to the whole range of discourses that attempt to analyse construction, creation, and even resistance and rejection to the language in its Japanese contexts; so that we may move towards a consideration of 'Japanese English' in a much wider sense.

Within the linguistic literature, linguists typically classified lexical borrowings in terms of four processes: 'loanwords', 'loan blends', 'loan shifts', and 'loan translations' (or 'calques') (see Haugen, 1972; Lehiste, 1988). The differences between these categories depend on how a linguistic unit's form in terms of the phonological and morphological structure of the word and its meaning originate in the donor language and are manifested in a recipient language. In this framework, a 'loanword' is a term where both the form and the meaning are borrowed, as in such items as *geisha*, *blitzkrieg*, or *perestroika*. A 'loan blend' is an item where the meaning is borrowed but part of the form retains a characteristic from the donor language. An example of this might be 'beautik', which combines the English 'beaut' with a Slavic diminutive suffix *nik*. A 'loan shift' is where a new borrowed meaning is imposed on a form native to the recipient language, as in the adoption of the native English word 'go' to refer to the Japanese board game carrying an orthographically similar name in Japanese *go* or *igo*. A 'loan translation', finally, is a morpheme-for-morpheme translation from the donor language into the borrowing language, as in the English word 'superman', derived from Nietzsche's *übermensch*.

The four types of borrowing discussed here represent specific types of lexical transfer. However, the basic general formula is based on a unitary assumption: that there is a concept/meaning unit that is taken (or 'borrowed') from a foreign language into the target language. This concept may be encoded totally in the linguistic form of the host language ('loan shift' and 'loan translation'), totally encoded in the form of the donor language ('loanword'), or a mixture of both ('loan blend').

The argument that all such lexical transfers should be regarded as the incorporation of 'foreign elements' in the Japanese language rests heavily on the borrowing metaphor. In this view, words or phrases, i.e. linguistic symbols, are little different from physical objects. Those who take this 'loanword approach' claim that it is impossible to detach the foreignness from the borrowed linguistic elements. For example, ordering a drink *on za rokkü* ('on the rocks') conjures up notions of suave, debonair Western men in dinner jackets, far-away places, and so on, and it is these properties of being Western and chic that caused the word to be borrowed in the first place. Similarly, the proponents of such an approach argue that even if such a lexical item has a long history in the recipient language, there is still some symbolic baggage left over. Today, after nearly fifteen hundred years, some commentators still claim that Chinese loans and Chinese readings of characters still sound noticeably different than native Japanese terms, and that their excessive use sounds overly erudite, literary, or pedantic. The bottom line of this argument, then, is that it is impossible to incorporate English elements into Japanese without also accepting a symbolic package with each imported item, and that, as noted above, English loanwords are English and they are loanwords.

An alternative view is that loanwords are not loanwords at all, as nothing is really borrowed, and nothing is given back. 'Borrowing', then, is less an adequate descriptive term than a somewhat vague metaphor used to describe the complex patterning of cultural and linguistic contact. In this view, many Japanese English loanwords are more accurately (if somewhat clumsily) described as 'English-inspired vocabulary items'. Here, the argument is that the 'donor' language, e.g. English, may motivate or inspire the local formation of some new phonological symbol or a new conceptual unit in Japanese, but this is simply not the same process as 'borrowing' an item from a foreign language into Japanese. As I have argued above, my belief is that a large proportion (if not the majority) of Japanese English words are of the indigenous 'home grown' variety, despite a degree of overlap between a Japanese term and a corresponding English item.

In support of this, one may cite specific items. For example, the Japanese English equivalent to air-conditioner is *kuura* (or 'cooler') which may be unfamiliar to users of other varieties of English (cf. 'meat cooler' in American English); and the word *saabitsu* is used very differently than the US equivalent item (in Japan this typically glosses the custom of giving a regular customer extra attention or additional products). Examples of loan blends include *tobameshi* for 'Italian food' (*mehi* is 'food'); *ton-taten* for 'pork cutlet' (*ton* is 'pork'); *dôbutsu bishoketto* for 'animal biscuits' (*dôbutsu* is 'animal'); and *ita-choko* for 'chocolate bar' (*ita* is a 'board'). A great number of imported nouns may also pair with Japanese verb *suru* ('to do') to construct instant hybrid compounds (such as *tenisu-suru*, or 'to play tennis'), and there is a tendency to 'verbalize'...
English nouns. This occurs in instances like mokkuru, which combines the Mc from 'McDonald's' and the Japanese verbal ending -ru, rendering something 'Macing' for 'going to McDonald's' (Yonekawa, 1999).

In the Japanese-English language contact situation, both loan shifts and loan translations are relatively infrequent. Loan shifts, where native word forms become applied to borrowed meanings occur when the meaning of some native term becomes applied to a foreign (and 'new') concept. For example, using ai (‘love’ or ‘affection’) as an equivalent to ‘love’ in the English ‘I love you’ did not enter the Japanese sociolinguistic register until recently. Loan translations, or 'calques' were frequent during the Second World War when the government wanted to purge the Japanese language of foreign influences, and it was at this time when the English-inspired sutoraiku ('strike') was replaced by it tama ippon (see Chapter 3 below).

At this stage of the discussion, two broad points may be made. First, it seems clear that there is only a partial fit between the traditional view of linguistic borrowing and the Japanese situation. The meanings of Japanese English words are not so much borrowed from abroad as created, negotiated, and recreated within Japanese society. Japanese English words and phrases are often utilized for Japanese aims and purposes, regardless of their meanings in the donor language. Second, rather than regarding these as ‘loanwords’, it is more appropriate to consider these as 'English-inspired vocabulary items'. The term 'loanword' seems to imply a given fixed structure and meaning which corresponds to an exact equivalent in the donor language. The alternative view of these as English-inspired vocabulary items opens a perspective which creates a space for the creative and dynamic dimensions of lexical creation (vs. loanword acquisition) in this context.

The sociolinguistic realities underpinning the acquisition and use of this type of English suggest that many of these 'borrowed' words and phrases are more accurately regarded as Japanese terms, on a number of different levels. Many such items represent the feelings of Japanese speakers, and thus serve more to express the realities of contemporary Japanese culture than to import foreign cultural concepts into Japan. Regardless of the fears of language purists on both sides of the Pacific, there is every indication that the Japanese and English languages and cultures will come into increasing contact in the years ahead. In this context, language and cultural change appears inevitable, and such patterns of change find linguistic expression in the hybrid forms of Japanese English that we have discussed in this chapter.

There is strong evidence that English now has a permanent place in the linguistic repertoire of the Japanese people. The thousands of English-influenced vocabulary items that have entered the Japanese language have had a contemporary influence similar to that of the Chinese language in the fifth century. In earlier eras of Japanese history, many foreign elements were rapidly incorporated in Japanese life and customs, and became nativized within Japanese culture. Today, there seems to be a surprising lack of tension between these 'foreign', i.e. English, linguistic items, and the indigenous language system, Japanese. Not least, perhaps, because many of these linguistic items are created within Japan and within the Japanese cultural and linguistic matrix.

As we shall soon see, Japan has had a long and rich tradition of linguistic contact, and this is reviewed in some detail in Chapter 3, which follows. Before proceeding, however, the reader is now invited to take the following test in Japanese English, which is designed for the non-Japanese speaker of English.

Test in Japanese English: A quiz for non-Japanese speakers of English

Please choose the letter which you feel gives the best definition, as used in Japan, for each English loanword given below.

1. *ron-pari* ‘London Paris'
   a. a European vacation
   b. a fashion boutique
   c. being cross-eyed

2. *baikingu* ‘Viking'
   a. a Norse Viking
   b. a man's athershave
   c. a smorgasbord

3. *beteran* ‘veteran'
   a. a former member of the armed forces
   b. a retired company employee
   c. a professional or expert

4. *gettsu* ‘get two'
   a. a two-for-one sale at a department store
   b. an ad campaign encouraging people to buy two 2-litre bottles of Sapporo Beer
   c. a double play in baseball

5. *dabura kyasuto* ‘double cast'
   a. a special fly-fishing technique
   b. a special cast used to set broken bones
   c. two people assigned the same role in a play

6. *saabisu* ‘service'
   a. having an automobile fixed
   b. being waited on at a restaurant
   c. complimentary extras for customers
7. *roodo sho* 'road show'
   a. a travelling theatre company
   b. a circus
   c. first-run films showing in large theatres

8. *sukin reii* 'skin lady'
   a. a striptease artist
   b. a fashion consultant
   c. a woman selling prophylactics door to door

9. *oorai* 'all right'
   a. being 'safe' during a baseball play
   b. OK! emphatic agreement
   c. the sound someone yells as he/she helps guide a vehicle to back up into a parking space

10. *bebii kaa* 'baby car'
    a. a compact automobile
    b. a special car-seat for children
    c. a stroller

11. *kurisumasu kooki* 'Christmas cake'
    a. a cake given to employees at Christmas time
    b. a cake exchanged at Christmas when visiting relatives
    c. a spinster

12. *konsento* 'consent'; 'concentric'
    a. to agree, during a negotiation
    b. the father giving approval to a prospective spouse
    c. an electric outlet

13. *sayonara hoomu ran* 'Sayonara home run'
    a. travelling quickly home during vacation time
    b. saying goodbye to drinking companions while leaving
    c. a game-ending baseball home run

14. *baajin roodo* 'virgin road'
    a. an uncharted trail
    b. the main street in front of an all-girls high school
    c. the church aisle a bride walks down

15. *sukuramburu* 'scramble'
    a. a kind of breakfast, serving eggs and toast
    b. a football scrimmage
    c. an intersection filled with pedestrians going every which way

16. *dorai* 'dry'
    a. the condition of being non-wet
    b. a condition described in anti-perspirant commercials
    c. a person who is overly business-like, serious, or unsentimental

17. *wueto* 'wet'
    a. the condition of being non-dry
    b. the new, all-day, soft contact lenses
    c. a person who is overly sentimental

18. *peepadoraiba* 'paper driver'
    a. stapler, or paper clip
    b. a person who delivers morning newspapers by truck
    c. a person who has their licence, but rarely actually drives

19. *shiruba* *shiito* 'silver seat'
    a. American-style stools found in bars or short-order restaurants
    b. a ride at the new Tokyo Disneyland amusement park
    c. seats on buses and trains reserved for the elderly

20. *dokku* 'dock'
    a. part of a courtroom
    b. connecting the Space Shuttle with a satellite
    c. a clinic

Bonus question:

21. *rimo kon* 'remote control'
    a. a piece of machinery controlled from afar
    b. a television selector for use while seated
    c. a husband who goes straight home after work

Answers:

1. *ron-pari* 'London Paris'
   c. being cross-eyed
   
   A person who looks towards Paris with his right eye and towards London with his left is bound to have eye problems. Thus, a person who is cross-eyed or squints is sometimes said to be *ron-pari.*

2. *baikingu* 'Viking'
   c. a smorgasbord
A smorgasbord is a Scandinavian meal, Vikings are Scandinavians, so an all-you-can-eat is called a baikingu.

3. betaran 'veteran'
   c. a professional or expert
   A professional person is presumably experienced and expert; thus he or she is dubbed a betaran.

4. gettsuu 'get two'
   c. a double play in baseball
   A double play gets two men out at the same time, so this is called gettsuu in Japanese.

5. daburu krasuto 'double cast'
   c. two people assigned the same role in a play
   A double cast is a situation where two actors are given the same role, presumably appearing on different dates.

6. saabisu 'service'
   c. complimentary extras for customers
   The term saabisu in Japanese English refers to the extra benefits given to the regular customers of a shop or business.

7. roodo shoo 'road show'
   c. first-run films showing in large theatres
   The first-run showing of a new film in Japan is called a roodo shoo, by analogy perhaps with plays in the United States which are on the road before they arrive on Broadway.

8. sukin redii 'skin lady'
   c. a woman selling prophylactics door to door
   Women who sell condoms (konndoomu) door-to-door are called sukin rediisu. The term presumably comes from the brand names condoms are often given in Japan (e.g. Wrinkle Skins, Skin Less Skins, etc.).

9. oorai 'all right'
   c. the sound someone yells as he/she helps guide a vehicle to back up into a parking space
   A person helping a bus or truck back up usually stands off to the side waving his/her hands and slowly says oorai, oorai, oorai until the correct position is reached. He/she then raises his/her palms and yells sustoppu ('stop!').

10. bebi kaa 'baby car'
    c. a stroller
    A stroller (American English) or pram (British English) is a bebi kaa.

11. kurisumasu keki 'Christmas cake'
    c. a spinster
    In Japan it was traditionally believed that a woman older than twenty-five was too old for marriage. Christmas cakes get stale after 25 December, hence kurisumasu keki to refer to an unmarried woman. However, today the average age for marriage for Japanese women is 27.5 years, so this term is less popular than previously.

12. konsento 'consent'; 'concentric'
    c. an electric outlet
    The etymology of this loanword is obscure. Some Japanese loanword dictionaries say it comes from 'concentric', the shape of early electric outlets.

13. sayoonaar hoomu run 'Sayonara home run'
    c. a game-ending baseball home run
    When someone hits a homer into the stands in the ninth inning, everyone says 'goodbye' (sayonara) and goes home.

14. baalin roodo 'virgin road'
    c. the church aisle a bride walks down
    According to traditional belief, when a Japanese bride walks down the aisle she should be dressed in white and still be a virgin.

15. sukurambruru
    c. an intersection filled with pedestrians going every which way
    The full expression is sukurambruru koosaten or 'scrambled intersection' (koosaten means 'crossroads, intersection' in Japanese). This is even used in official documents, and appears in questions in written driving tests.

16. dorai 'dry'
    c. a person who is overly business-like, serious, or unsentimental
    A person who is a cold fish, too business-like, too serious, or too distant, is said to be dorai in Japanese. However, this term and the next now seem to be decreasing in popularity.

17. uetto 'wet'
    c. a person who is overly sentimental
The opposite of Number 16 above, of course, is ‘wet’. This is someone who is too sensitive, sentimental, melancholy, or teary-eyed.

18. peepadoriba ‘paper driver’
   c. a person who has their licence, but rarely actually drives

   Owning a car in Japan can be quite troublesome, especially in the larger cities where it is difficult to have a garage or find somewhere to park. Thus, many people, young women in particular, have a driver’s licence but rarely use it.

19. shiruba shiito ‘silver seat’
   c. seats on buses and trains reserved for the elderly

   ‘Silver’ has become a metaphor for aging in Japan in the last decade or so. Many seats, cards, passes, or programmes referring to the elderly, take the prefix shiruba.

20. dokku ‘dock’
   c. a clinic

   A ship gets ‘dry-docked’ when undergoing maintenance; hence, by analogy, clinics can also be termed dokku. For example, a ningen dokku, or ‘human dock’ (ningen means ‘human being’ in Japanese), is a complete and thorough physical examination given at the hospital.

Bonus question:

1. rimo kon ‘remote control’
   a. a piece of machinery controlled from afar
   b. a television selector for use while seated
   c. a husband who goes straight home after work

   All three answers are correct. Answer C is no longer as prevalent as it once was as more and more Japanese young men are spending time with their families after work rather than going out to the bars with their co-workers. Thus, returning home early is no longer quite the stigma that it was a few years ago. The term rimo kon now is especially used for the device to control the television set from a chair or floor, if the television is in a traditional Japanese room.

Summary

In this chapter, I have set out to establish a framework for the discussion of Japanese English that follows in subsequent chapters. In particular, I have considered the occurrence and widespread use of Japanese English, particularly Japanese English lexical items, in everyday life in Japanese society. In order to provide the reader with a broad understanding of the status and functions of Japanese English as a linguistic resource, I have also presented a number of detailed examples of language use to illustrate the ways in which the use of English contributes to the ‘beautiful human life’ of contemporary Japan, drawn from the worlds of advertising, popular music and the sports commentaries. The overarching argument in this chapter is that traditional approaches to linguistic ‘borrowing’ and English ‘loanwords’ in Japan are insufficient to account for the dynamics of Japanese-English language contact, and the varieties of ‘Japanese English’ that have occurred as the result of this contact. In the final pages of the chapter, readers are invited to complete a Japanese English test, which illustrates in detail many of the theoretical issues that have been discussed.