

## Multilingual Japan and the Borrowers of the Chuo Line

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Preface: CHUO LINE, Mitaka Station, Rush Hour 7am

(A) <i>Ah..Nemui.. shindoi...</i>	1
(B) <i>Kino Arukoru nomisugita n ja nai.. kao ga masshiro da yo...</i>	2
(A) <i>Hontori? Kino, ie ni kaette terebi mita.. omoshiroku nai</i>	3
<i>Kami no ke ga dorai ni natchatta shi. Iya da wa.... Gakko sabotchauka na?....</i>	4
(B) <i>Kyo samui ne.....</i>	5
(A) <i>Furansugo no sa-</i>	6
(B) <i>Mm... demo ano pilafu ga oish'katta ne</i>	7
(A) <i>Oish'katta ne</i>	8
<i>Kyo okasan sake bento tsukutta.</i>	9
(B) <i>Mmmm..Heeh...</i>	10
(A) <i>So</i>	11
(B) <i>Mezurashii ne..kyo doko de taberu?</i>	12
(A) <i>Ano sensei no namae wa nandatta ke? Furansugo no...</i>	13
(A) Ah I'm half-asleep...shattered...	
(B) You had too much to drink yesterday, didn't you..you're white as a sheet.	
(A) Am I? Came home last night and watched some TV.....Garbage. My hair's got dry. What a drag. Maybe I should skip school.	
(B) Pretty cold today, eh?	
(A) You know that French...	
(B) Mm..but that pilaff was really good, wasn't it?	
(A) Yeah, it was. My mum made a packed lunch with salmon for me today.	
(B) Mmm	
(A) Yeah	
(B) That's new..where are you eating lunch today?	
(A) What's that teacher's name...The French...?	

### Two Minutes on the Chuo Line

Language borrowing is easily studied. Pick up some random texts like newspaper flyers, written information from the post-office or bank, spoken conversation, etc. Being a mixed language, the hybridity of Japanese is the result of what linguists term "language contact": when languages and dialects in close proximity start to influence each other. Look at the extract above recorded (micro-tape recorder) from a morning rush-hour conversation on a Tokyo-bound train. It lasts two minutes including (long) pauses and takes place between two young women, probably college students. They were travelling on the 7.05 (Chuo line) from Mitaka to Shinjuku. Consider briefly this sample of speech from the point of view of borrowing.

1. (line 2) The word *arukoru* is Dutch and entered the country during the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) along with *kohi* and *koppu*.
2. (line 3) The word *hontori* is a blend of Japanese *honto* and the suffix of English – *ly* in “really.”
3. (lines 13 & 4) There are several Chinese-based words such as *sen* of *sensei* and *gakko* (compare Korean *hakkyo*).
4. (line 3) The *-shiroi* of *mashiroi* is likely associated with the Mongol *siroi*, Middle Mongol *siro'ai* (dust, powder, pollen), and Evenki *sirugi*, *sirgi* (sand, sandbank in a river).
5. (lines 3 & 4) There are English loans as *terebi* and *dorai*.
6. (line 2) In morphology, the *no* of *kino* may be associated with the *no*, *na*, *ni* or *n* of Polynesian languages signifying past time, e.g. *n* in the Philippines and New Hebrides, *na* in the Solomon Islands. In Old Japanese *ni*, the auxiliary verb shows a completed action as in *sugu-ni* (to have passed) (*sugi* to pass).
7. (line 9) *Sake* is from Ainu.
8. (line 4) The *sabo-* of *saboru* is a new grammatical creation. Add the grammatical verb suffix *-ru* to the French word *sabotage*. Then you have the meaning to play truant from school or miss classes. Other observations can be made from the point of view of language contact. For example, the “nul-subject” (absence of a grammatical subject) is typical of Austronesian and Asian languages. It is found in virtually all Philippine languages as well as Korean and Indonesian. The lexico-grammatical influence that we glimpse by peering through window of etymology poses big questions: what is the reason for Ainu and Chinese and French vocabulary in Japanese? Do these languages still exert influence? Are these languages currently used in Japan?

#### Sea Hermits and Language

The habit of living inside another creature’s shell gave rise to the popular name “hermit crab” because this tiny crustacean is perfectly structured to be able to adapt to the architecture and locomotion of its new home: a salvaged seashell, a moving sea sponge. What goes for the sea goes for language.

Language is a subtle and adaptable instrument. It is not what it seems. It is common for sociolinguists to note that the identity of a language is neither a Cartesian “clear and distinct idea” nor does its physical shape indicate the substance of what resides within. Nonstandard dialects such as Brabant Flemish, medieval Ladino and Kagoshima Japanese inhabit parallel worlds of Common Dutch, Castilian Spanish and Standard Japanese. The dialects diverge primarily from the point of view of lexis and phonology. Referring to the habitat of English in Japanese society, Honna (1995) employed the striking term “language within language.” He was pointing, among other things, to English-language loanwords in Japanese. Specifically, Honna tells the tale of how English has so comfortably climbed into the lexical, grammatical and pragmatic shell of the Japanese language (“Japanization patterns”). Indeed, so comprehensive is this transformation that he concludes that “the most remarkable influence which the English language has exerted in Japan is its influence on Japanese” (p. 45). We note that Honna’s detailed studies of loanwords (see Oshima, 2002 for an excellent summary)

are part of a bigger picture of social contact. The loanword phenomena coalesce, in the case of Japan, with the more massive burgeoning of a culturally “plural” Japan (Maher & Honna, 1994; Maher & Yashiro, 1995). Flickering moments on the sea’s surface are a sign of some more far-reaching oceanic changes going on below. . .

### The Borrowers

Borrowing and loanwords derive from language contact. They signal worm’s eye-view multilingualism: language contact at the level of a small unit of language. Borrowing is the insertion of elements from one language variety into the grammatical frame of another language variety. It is an example of how one (donor, source) language replicates itself in another (host, recipient) language. Borrowing is common for all languages in the world to borrow because they are in contact. So, in an English sentence like “**Sitting** (Latin-Greek) on his **yoga** (Sanskrit) **mat** (Latin-Phoenecian) in his **bungalow** (Hindi), the **tattooed** (Tahitian) (**instructor** (Latin) **paused** (Germanic) for **tea** (Chinese),” we see many historically transferred forms (i.e. lexical elements) settled into a recipient language. The source languages for borrowing in general Japanese have changed over time. Ogino (1988) has noted that borrowing from Sanskrit began in the Nara Period (710-) and peaked in the Heian Period (794-). *Kango* (Sino-Japanese) is heavily Japanized Chinese loanword. With a two-thousand year history and constituting over 50% of Japanese vocabulary *kango* (Chinese origin) is not categorized with *gairaigo* which are more recently related to their source languages. Portuguese was the main source of loans in the Muromachi Period (1392-1573) and the emphasis shifted to Dutch in the Edo Period (1603-1868). In the Meiji Era (1868-1911) French and German were important sources of borrowing whilst English continued its ascent and continues today to have the most impact upon Japanese.

### A Survey of Language Awareness of Borrowing

People hold various opinions about “language.” The range and detail of their knowledge about language is not uniform. “Language Awareness” refers to what people know and think about “language” and how personal assumptions about language (dialect, language learning, language and nation, bilingualism, and so on) are formed. A person’s knowledge about language might be connected to factors such as the perceiver’s gender, ethnicity, dialect experience, migration experience, religion, class. The result of the study described here indicates what educated young people in Japan think they know and believe about language. A “Language Awareness” study was conducted in Japan involving approximately 1000 subjects. The purpose was to find out young Japanese persons’ attitudes towards various aspects of language: historical, geographical, developmental, etc. Data were collected from first-year college students enrolled in their first semester: sites were fifteen four-year universities in Japan (Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, Okinawa, Shikoku). The data presented here relate to multilingualism/ bilingualism. It was a basic assumption of the survey that Japan is multilingual and multicultural (Maher & Yashiro, 1995). This survey is, therefore, part of a wider study of an old/new paradigm whereby Japan’s language situation is (re-) described as historically and contemporaneously multilingual or linguistically diverse. Overall, the aim is not to look for confirmation of stereotype but rather to obtain a valid

picture about language attitudes in contemporary society. What do we know about this language influence? In Japan, at junior and senior high school, foreign language education has long been part of the curriculum since the late nineteenth century: German, Russian, French and English. Currently, English is the main foreign language taught in schools nationwide and is practically compulsory. Most students' direct exposure to language analysis comes from the study of *Eigo* (English) and *Kokugo* (National language), the latter being subcategorized into *Gendaibun* (Modern Japanese), *Koten* (Classical Japanese) and *Kanbun* (Chinese classics). A variety of foreign languages are taught at university (Fujita-Round & Maher, 2008). We can assume that most of the information and issues dealt about language can be generally covered in the school curriculum. I assume that they may not be systematically dealt with in the first year curriculum of the sampled universities. However, people "pick up" information about language and form opinions about language from many varied sources such as friends, literature, newspaper and television, social networks, and so on. Most likely, a person's knowledge about language is subject to chance, vicarious learning and occasionally a systematic learning experience in an educational situation. What has and has not been picked up?

In this survey, university students were asked to identify various loan words in Japanese. Specifically, these loanwords were from: AINU, FRENCH, ENGLISH and GERMAN/DUTCH. Students were given the opportunity to identify the source of various loanwords. The results indicate that European language derivations (English, French, German) are mostly identifiable despite the historical depth of the borrowing (17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century). *Tempura* is widely regarded as native Japanese though there is a folk belief that the word derives from 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese ("tempus-temporar"). *Tofu* correctly maintains its culinary association with Chinese food. However, the derivation from a lesser known local language such as Ainu is not well know. This is despite the fact that *konbu* is widely considered by Ainu people to be a "classic" example of Ainu language contribution to the Japanese lexicon. [See Figures beginning on the next page.]

#### Why Borrow?

Languages, including Japanese (Miller, 1967) borrow constantly and for well-known reasons such as (a) euphemism: *mataniti doresu* (maternity dress) instead of *ninpu fuku* (*dress for pregnant woman*), (b) economy: IC is shorter than *shuusekikairo* (and this is why instead of "Steckenpferd" or "Lieblingsbeschäftigung" a German speaker prefers "Hobby"), (c) prestige: *manejimento* instead of *keiei* (management), (d) naming new things: *tiihsatsu* (T-shirt). Borrowing typically results from cultural contact with other places. Japanese has borrowed from a variety of sources as far away as:

#### Portugual:

<i>pan</i>	pao
<i>kappa</i> (raincoat)	capa (cape, cloak)
<i>botan</i> (button)	botao (button)
<i>kabocha</i> (pumpkin)	

Cambodia: (aboboral) [Cambodian melon]

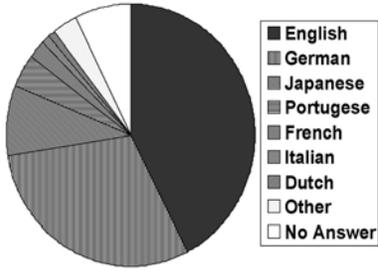


Figure 1: Recognition of loan word derivation: *arubaito* (part-time job: German)

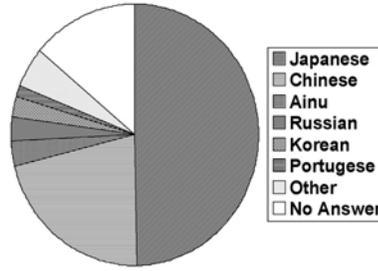


Figure 2: Recognition of loan word derivation: *kombu* (sea vegetable: Ainu)

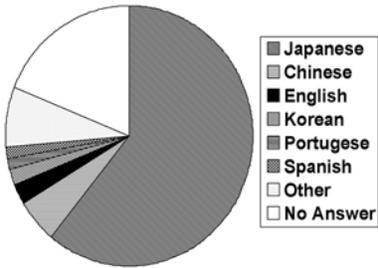


Figure 3: Recognition of loan word derivation: *kusuguttai* (ticklish: Japanese)

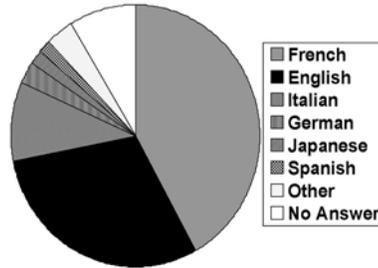


Figure 4: Recognition of loan word derivation: *atorie* (atelier: French)

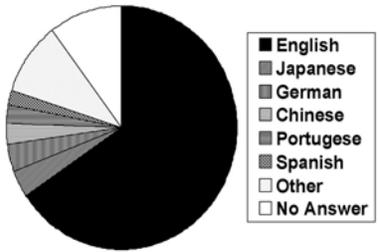


Figure 5: Recognition of loan word derivation: *sutamina* (stamina: English)

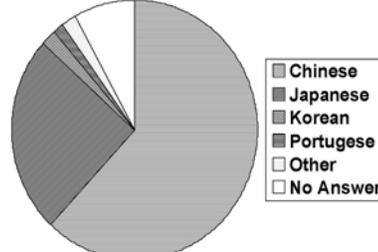


Figure 6: Recognition of loan word derivation: *toofu* (tofu: Chinese)

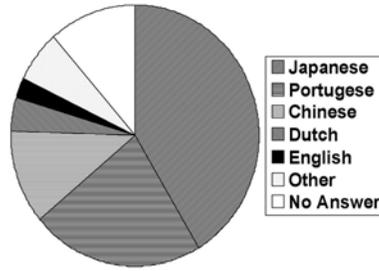


Figure 7: Recognition of loan word derivation: *tempura* (tempura: Portuguese)

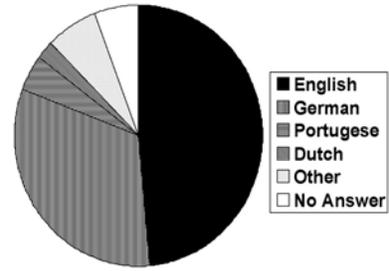


Figure 8: Recognition of loan word derivation: *biiru* (beer: Dutch/German)

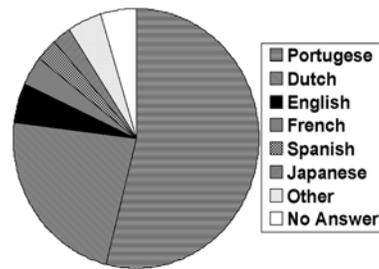


Figure 9: Recognition of loan word derivation: *kasutera* (castella cake: Portuguese)

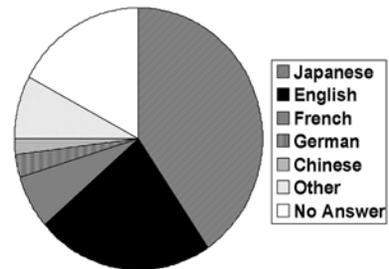


Figure 10: Recognition of loan word derivation: *saboru* (sabotage/play truant: French)

Holland

<i>chokki</i> (vest)	jak
<i>ekisu</i> (extract)	extract
<i>mesu</i> (surgical knife)	mes
<i>penki</i> (paint)	pek

Roughly 3000 words were borrowed from Dutch, many being replaced by other borrowing (from *kaas* to *chiizu* and *boter* to *bata*). Much borrowing is field-specific and results from a practical need.

Art, cuisine (French)

<i>guratan</i>	gratin	(gratin)
<i>dessan</i>	dessin	(drawing)
<i>atorie</i>	atelier	(atelier)
<i>konkuuru</i>	concours	(competition)

Medicine and Mountain Climbing (German)

<i>wakuchin</i>	vakzin	(vaccine)
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<i>gaaze</i>	gaze	(surgical gauze)
<i>gerende</i>	gelende	(ski slope)
<i>ryukkusakku</i>	rucksack	(rucksack)

The use of *gairaigo* is frequently genre-based. In newspapers, specialist *gairaigo* is employed freely within Economics or Sport without translation because “readers would not understand such translations anyway. . . . It is not an issue of *gairaigo*. It is an issue of the readers’ interest and professional area” (Asahi Shimbun quoted in Oshima, 2002, p. 144).

Oshima (2002) has argued that *gairaigo* provides Japanese with an expanded lexicon, and functions in the same way as *kango* in that they both provide subtlety of distinction between similar actions, generality and ambiguity, capability of abbreviation and high word-building capacity. Consider the word for “see.” In Japanese whereas this is simply *miru* (see), in *kango* the word *kansatsu* permits considerable extension to look, see, watch, etc.: *kansatsu*, *kengaku*, *kanbyo*, *nozoku*.

Speakers of the host variety normally reclassify a borrowed item by changing its social description (e.g. the Chinese *shu* (hand) and Ainu *shake* (salmon) are both considered “Japanese” rather than loanwords) We can observe two types of borrowing: importation and substitution. If the borrowing is similar enough to the model of language A so that native speakers would accept it as their own, the borrowing speakers may be said to have “imported” the model into their language. But if the reproduction of the model is not so adequate, then a substitution is taking place. As mentioned above, well-established loanwords which are strongly assimilated may no longer be perceived as borrowed by either dictionaries or the speakers themselves. In contrast, “one-off” loanwords that occur only perhaps only once in a corpus are called “nonce borrowings.” Borrowing is a normal part of language life (*genko seikatsu*) since any one language is a constantly moving sea into which rivers of other languages flow. All borrowing between two languages presupposes some minimum of bilingualism between the two language groups.

Languages are not completely independent systems with strong boundaries. They interact and mingle. English loans are superficially recognized as loans because of their *katakana* representation. However, they are structurally and semantically treated as Japanese words. Languages are neighbours. Many are relatives even if, after several generations, the original family connections are obscured or forgotten. For example, languages of Asia like Japanese and Korean have borrowed words from Chinese since ancient times and have assimilated them into their native lexicons. Noun borrowing is especially common. Sino-origin nouns such as *shuppatsu* “departure” (Japanese) and *chwulpal* (Korean) are converted into verbs by attaching verbalizing suffixes, i.e. *suru* in Japanese and *hata* in Korean.

Language borrowing is like the movement of traffic. Languages are wide expressways through which heavy traffic passes. Sometimes a small car containing one word crosses the border and sometimes several truck-loads of words (thousands) are brought in at once. The borrowed word *wetto* (English “wet”) is no longer used in ordinary conversation in Japanese but thousands of other words have embedded in the language. Some words for the body (sacred in Buddhism) are said to derive from Sanskrit (*atama* head and *hoppeta* cheeks as well as temple-related objects like “sara” and “kawara” and “hachi.” *Danaparti* meaning “a great man and patron of religion” led to the word “Danna” or husband in Japanese was said to be introduced by the Indian visitors to Nara during the Heian period. The English “husband”

has some limited use in Japanese. The massive vocabulary of scientific English replaced German, the previous medical lingua franca. As one language comes into contact with another, language X extends the boundaries of language Y. Sometimes it is clear like the Portuguese borrowings “tempura” and “pan” and sometimes it is not clear as when some Portuguese linguists claim that “sakana” and “arigato” are Portuguese words given to Japanese.

The donors of loanwords may be different even when the host languages seem to be in similar situations. During the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, the Amoy language continued to borrow from Southeastern Asian languages, whilst Taiwanese switched donors to Japanese. Thus, Amoy and Taiwanese became separated politically and linguistically. The result is that all modern loanwords in Amoy are foreign to Taiwanese people, and Japanese loanwords in Taiwanese are equally foreign to speakers of Amoy. The extent of borrowing in a language may lead to disagreement on the classification of the language itself. For instance, when talking about Modern Hebrew the traditional view is that the Hebrew language of Israel is “Semitic”: Hebrew revived. The revisionist position is it is “Indo-European”: Yiddish relexified (i.e. Yiddish is the substratum and Hebrew a superstratum). It may be claimed therefore that “Israeli” is both Semitic and Indo-European at the same time, i.e. with Hebrew and Yiddish as its primary contributors. Similarly, how is a language classified with powerful Altaic associations, Austronesian features and with a heavily Sino-Japanese lexicon?

The derivation of a loanword is sometimes ambiguous. For example, in the Mindanao pidgins Chabacano there is the expression *guirin-guirin* (“to drink a lot”). It was introduced during the period of the wartime Japanese occupation. The Japanese *gui-gui nomu* (swig at a bottle, gulp down) “Gui-” is the Japanese root for “drink” (water, alcohol, etc.) A remote possibility is that “-rin” is borrowed from the English aspectual “-ing” to suggest the state of “be-ing” drunk. Thus, Chabacano speakers might have commented on a Japanese soldiers who were drinking heavily that “[They are] guiring!” A further explanation that has been suggested is that the “-ing” morpheme is related to the phrase *guden-guden* which means to drink oneself into a stupor or behave drunkenly. The mid-vowel /d/ consonant which is not as strongly plosive in Japanese as it is in Chabacano/Visayan being eventually replaced by an /r/. Here is another semantic extension from the wartime period. Taiwanese borrowed the first part of the *ousebo* to make *ouse* during the Japanese occupation and it underwent a semantic extension to mean “bribe” during the Chinese occupation. The popular explanation? The older Taiwanese generation always claims that Japanese officers were very honest and upright. Comparing the two eras Taiwanese observe that the Japanese did not take bribes as Chinese officers did.

The categorization of “borrowing” in Japanese is heavily dependent upon how it occurs as a written item or written form. In Japanese classification, *Kango* or loan words from Chinese are not strictly considered *gairaigo*. The term *gairaigo* normally refers to words of European origin. Thus, the Japanese-origin word *hayasa* (speed) and the kango *sokuryoku* (speed) are equally non-loan words, whereas the latter assimilates into the kanji text a word like *supiido* (speed). The three writing systems in Japanese allow for a multi-level borrowing. They also determine the “track” of a word coming into the language. For example, the place-name Sapporo is an Ainu word meaning “dry river bed” (sap-poro-pet) but realized in kanji it is fully assimilated as Japanese and would not considered Ainu. *Tempura* is explained by some linguists as deriving from a Portuguese word. However, written in hiragana or kanji it is

not regarded as a loan word. However, words which might have entered Japan (via Dejima) likewise in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries such as *castella* or *tabako* are still considered loan-words owing to their location in Katakana.

Many *gairaigo* emerge to bring nuances of meaning to a concept even when the expressions seem similar. These nuances, mostly along an “old-new” continuum, are discernable but not so easily described. Compare the following expressions:

department store	( <i>hyakkaten</i> vs. <i>depaato</i> ),
office-worker	( <i>kaisha-in</i> vs. <i>salariiman</i> , <i>bijinesuman</i> ),
fashionable, popular	( <i>ryuko</i> vs. <i>hayari</i> , <i>buumu</i> )

### *Gairaigo*: A Complex Architecture

From the viewpoint of morphology, since there is no declension in Japanese, English inflection is deleted as in *happii endo* (happy ending) and *sukuranburu eggu* (scrambled eggs) but also *sutendo gurasu* (stained glass). From the viewpoint of phonology, assimilation of a borrowed word takes place when the foreign sound is replaced by a native sound. Compare the pronunciation of English “soccer” with the Japanese *sakkaa* with various vowel and consonant changes (e.g. rounded to open vowel and doubling of the middle consonant). Also, in Japanese,

1. No /r/ and /l/ distinction so “right” and “light” are both pronounced *raito*.
2. No /th/ so replacement by /s/ or /z/ as in *seori* (theory) and *wezaa* (weather).
3. The open syllable structure of Japanese (CV) allows the easily devoiced vowel /u/ to be inserted between consonant clusters of borrowings like *kurabu* (club) and *booru* (ball).

Borrowing mechanisms are subject to change. For example, /ti/ and /tu/ were traditionally pronounce as chi and tsu (chiimu “team” and tsu “two”) but are now pronounced as *tiimu* and *tuu*.

From the viewpoint of semantics, assimilation may not be partial or total. Compare the German *energisches* with the Japanese *enerugisshu* both indicating “energetic, enterprising.” *Kombineshon* (combination), an ice-skating or dancing term, is a homophone which directly translates from its English derivation. *Konbi* (combination) and *kombini* (convenience store) are tail abbreviations. Metaphoric extension can be seen in words such as *panku* (puncture) which is used in *panku jotai* (completely exhausted). Whereas a word may have wide metaphorical extension in the donor language, its specialist meanings are retained as a loanword as in *birudingu* (skyscraper), *hiiru* (high-heel shoes), *insutanto* (pre-cooked food) and *adobanteiji* (“advantage” in sport). A loan-word plus a Japanese word is common as in *fitto suru* (to fit). Loan blends are seen in *arukooru chuudoku* (alcoholism) and *roomaji* (Roman characters). Loan translations, showing one-to-one correspondence between host language and kanji, are found in *shuumatsu* (weekend), *hitsuyo-aku* (necessary evil) and *kuko* (airport). Loanwords not only introduce new terminology in the arts and sciences but are typically barometers of social change. Thus, *furiitaa* which combines *furii* (English “free”) and *arubaita* (German “arbeiter” or *worker*) designates a person who works part-time for no

particular company. In a few cases the foreign pronunciation is preserved as in the word *badi* from the American “body” as in *naisu badi* (nice body) or *sereba* (celebrity body, the kind of slim body that TV/film celebrities might have).

There is much folklinguistic awareness of “gairaigo” in Japan. Words are a fact of language life (*gengo seikatsu*). Words, especially new ones whose meaning you know not, are ever present: in a post-office explanation, a TV commercial, a new school curriculum, a novel or newspaper article, or a recently action group whose activity requires a new way of talking about a new problem. This is not the same as saying that language borrowing is also sign of language contact whose longer shadow is (increasing) societal multilingualism. It is awareness of multilingualism in Japan that now exercises the social mind.

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