

# INVISIBLE ANGLICISMS IN JAPANESE

## Exploring English Loan Translations Using the GLAD Database

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*Keisuke* IMAMURA

**ABSTRACT** • This paper explores loan translations from English into Japanese – an area often overlooked due to the prevalence of direct lexical borrowing from English – by utilizing over 8,000 loan translation entries from the GLAD Database. A total of 664 loan translations were identified through a thorough investigation. At the same time, the analysis revealed that many English lexical items were borrowed directly, reflecting the Japanese language’s strong inclination toward direct borrowing. An examination of the lexical patterns of loan translations reveals a heavy reliance on Sino-Japanese words, suggesting a continuation of translation conventions established during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Western concepts were rapidly adopted during Japan’s modernization. Structurally, the analysis demonstrates the predominance of the N + N pattern; however, it also identifies formations that incorporate native morphemes, which may indicate a shift in trends in the creation of loan translations.

**KEYWORDS** • loan translation; Anglicism; Japanese; Sino-Japanese word.

### 1. Introduction

Research on Anglicisms in Japanese has been extensive, largely due to the visible and widespread nature of direct borrowings from English into Japanese (e.g., Ishiwata 2001; Jinnouchi 2007; Irwin 2011). However, studies on calques – i.e., loan translations or semantic loans – particularly those created after the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, remain very limited. This may be due to the decline of calquing practices, which were once common, and the overwhelming visibility of direct Anglicisms that have dramatically increased in contrast. While there is research on calques from Western languages – mostly loan creations – produced during Japan’s modernization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Yanabu 1982; Maruyama and Katō 1998), there is little discussion of calques created after this period. The existing literature only mentions a few examples, such as 注意を払う (*chūi o harau* ‘pay attention’) and 敬意を払う (*keii o harau* ‘pay respect’), which illustrate novel uses of *harau* (‘to pay’), extending its meaning from its traditional usage limited to physical objects, typically money (Jinnouchi 2007). The scarcity of research on this topic creates the impression that Anglicisms in Japanese occur almost exclusively as direct borrowings, with few exceptions of indirect borrowing. This study seeks to bridge this gap by systematically identifying and analyzing loan translations from English into Japanese using the GLAD Database.

The objectives of this research are:

- to identify loan translations from English into Japanese
- to examine borrowing tendencies and the structural characteristics of loan translations

In this study, the definition of loan translation follows that of Witalisz (2015: 57): “Loan translation is a one- or multi-word polymorphemic expression coined in the recipient language in a process that involves the replacement of the components of a foreign model with native morphemes/lexemes and the importation of the meaning of the foreign etymon”. The term loan rendition is treated as a subcategory of loan translation in this study, due to the ambiguity surrounding the exactness of translation in the context of English-Japanese equivalence.

## 2. Historical account of calques in Japanese

During Japan’s modernization in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the absorption of Western knowledge and culture became an urgent national task. In this process, Western concepts were rapidly adopted through calques – either coined within Chinese or newly created using Classical Chinese words and *kanji* (logographic Chinese characters). Much of the initial transmission of Western knowledge occurred via Chinese translations of Western books and English-Chinese dictionaries, which were accessible to Japanese intellectuals due to their familiarity with Classical Chinese (Chen 2019: 4). In the rush of the Meiji Restoration, Western concepts were also calqued directly into Japanese. As a result, many pseudo-Chinese words were created either through semantic loans – deliberate assignments of new Western meanings to existing Classical Chinese terms – or through original combinations of *kanji* (Chen 2011, 2019).

Reflecting the dramatic increase in Sino-Japanese vocabulary during this period, such words are now commonly classified into *premodern* (旧漢語 *kyū-kango*) and *modern* (新漢語 *shin-kango*) categories (see Figure 1). Chen (2019) compares the number of Sino-Japanese words in an English-Japanese dictionary published in 1867 with one from 1909, noting that the increase over this 42-year period matches the growth seen in the previous 800 years. This extraordinary linguistic expansion was the result of rapid and unprecedented socio-political changes during the Meiji era – changes unparalleled in Japanese history. As Coulmas (1989: 52) puts it, “[t]here was a great demand... for translation, and it is through translation that the modernization of Japanese society has left deep traces in the Japanese language”.

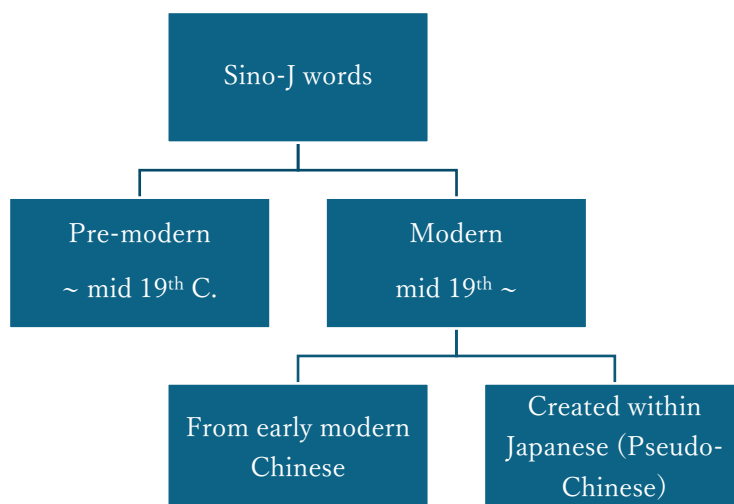


Figure 1. Classification of Sino-Japanese words (translated from Chen 2011, 2019).

The reliance on Chinese words and *kanji* for calquing Western concepts can be explained by the long-standing use of Classical Chinese in written communication and the tradition of borrowing from Chinese, as well as the lack of suitable native vocabulary for translating unfamiliar concepts. Due to the widespread use of Chinese writing, “the typical question a translator would ask was not what word would be suitable for rendering a given Western notion, but rather by means of which *kanji* a given meaning could be represented” (Coulmas 1989: 58). Yanabu (1982) describes the difficulties translators faced in finding appropriate equivalents for Western terms such as ‘society’, ‘individual’, ‘rights’, and ‘freedom’. Many of the entries proposed in early English-Japanese dictionaries were ultimately deemed inadequate, as “Japanese was found to be inadequate when it was suddenly put to the task of giving expression to this entirely alien conceptual universe” (Coulmas 1989: 55), a situation that arose after more than 250 years of national seclusion. As a consequence, translators and writers coined numerous neologisms using *kanji* and elements of the Chinese language.

While indirect borrowing was common during the early stages of Japan’s modernization, direct borrowing from Western languages – predominantly English – became increasingly prevalent as proficiency in Western languages grew among the Japanese population. Today, direct borrowing from English has become the primary source of new vocabulary items, gradually supplanting the role that Sino-Japanese words once played. According to widely cited data from the National Institute for Japanese Language (Miyajima 1997), the proportion of Western loanwords in magazine texts rose dramatically from 9.8% in 1956 to 30.7% in 1994 – a shift attributed almost entirely to the increase in Anglicisms. In contrast, the proportion of Sino-Japanese words declined from 47.5% to 35.5% over the same period. Despite the sharp rise in direct Anglicisms, English-derived words likely still enter Japanese through both direct and indirect borrowing. Although less common today, indirect borrowing probably continues alongside direct forms.

### **3. Methodology**

This study utilizes 8,042 entries from the GLAD Database. After filtering out duplicates, derivational forms, proper nouns, and obvious errors, a total of 5,836 valid entries were retained (Albanian 139; Cantonese 23; Mandarin 30; Czech 105; Danish 2,848; Dutch 394; French 29; German 126; Greek 115; Italian 10; Norwegian 1,367; Polish 323; Russian 206; Spanish 9; Ukrainian 8)<sup>1</sup>. For each English lexical item, corresponding Japanese equivalents were first identified and then categorized as loan translations or other types of borrowings.

In assessing whether a lexical item is a loan translation from English, both chronological and contextual evidence was considered, given the complexities involved in distinguishing loan translations (Witalisz 2015; Zabawa 2017; Pulcini 2023). Each lexical item was analyzed through a flowchart-based decision-making process, which involved checking the first attestations in both English and Japanese, and then evaluating whether the Japanese equivalent was likely created through translation from English (Figure 2). First attestations were primarily verified using the *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (NKD) for Japanese and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) for English. When a first attestation was not available in NKD, supplementary searches were conducted using Google Books and BCCWJ (Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese). Given the difficulty of definitively identifying loan translations, both conclusive and inconclusive evidence were taken into account (Cf. Witalisz 2015: 66-68).

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<sup>1</sup> See Gottlieb et al. (2018) for the details of the GLAD Database.

Any lexical item attested in Japanese before 1854 was considered a non-Anglicism. This is because English had had no influence on the Japanese lexicon until Japan reopened to foreign diplomatic relations through the Japan-US Treaty of Peace and Amity in 1854, despite some earlier contact with Great Britain and the United States (Ishiwata 2001). Given this historical context, it is highly likely that any expression found in Japanese prior to this period is a native innovation or a loan translation from another language. For example, in evaluating whether the expression 耳を貸す (*mimi o kasu* ‘lend an ear’) is a loan translation from the English phrase *lend an ear to*, we can conclude that it is not. Although *lend an ear to* is attested in English as early as 1480, *mimi o kasu* is first attested in 1797 – well before English could have influenced Japanese lexical development.

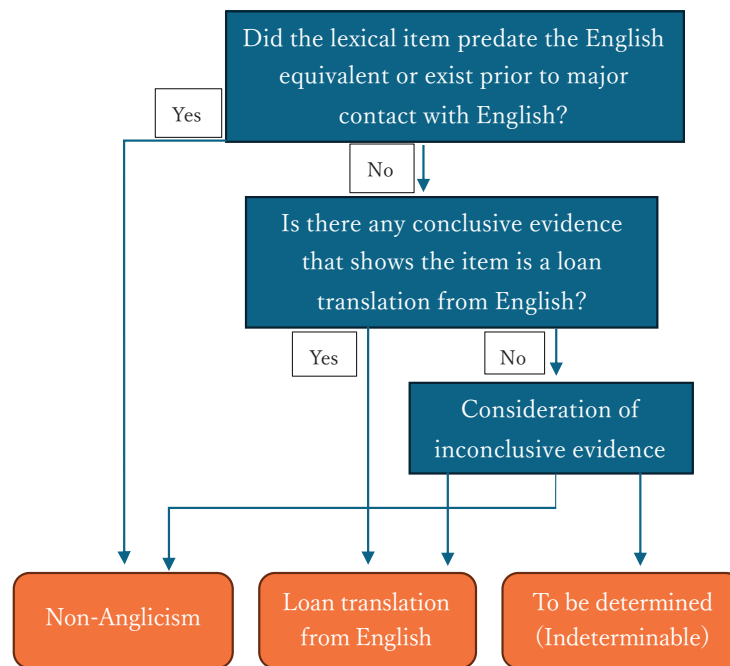


Figure 2. Yes–No flowchart for assessing English loan translations.

In evaluating evidence, two types were considered: conclusive and inconclusive. A lexical item was treated as having conclusive evidence of loan translation if it was explicitly documented as a translation from English. In many cases, etymological information on how a term was introduced into Japan is available. For example, 売り手市場 (*urite shijō*) is clearly identified as a translation of *seller's market* in the 経済新語辞典 (*Keizai shingo jiten*) [*Dictionary of Neologisms in Economics*] (1997, Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha). Similarly, 衝動買い (*shōdō gai*) can be regarded as a loan translation of *impulse buying*, as the history of the concept's development in the U.S. and its introduction to Japan is well-documented. The classification is further supported by first attestations: *impulse buying* in 1959, and *shōdōgai* in 1981. In a number of cases, Japanese expressions appear alongside their English source terms or direct borrowings (in parentheses), suggesting that the Japanese item is a loan translation from English – though not all such instances necessarily indicate the true etymology<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The inclusion of an English counterpart in parentheses does not necessarily indicate that the origin is English. For example, in considering whether 行間を読む (*gyōkan o yomu* ‘read between the lines’) is a

If no lexicographic or explicit etymological information was available for a given lexical item, inconclusive evidence was taken into consideration. This includes factors such as the origin of the referent and the background of the lexical innovator (i.e., the first user of the term). For instance, ウシガエル (*ushi gaeru* ‘bullfrog’) is almost certainly a translation of *bullfrog*, given that the species originates in North America. In such cases, the contextual evidence surrounding the introduction of the referent supports its classification as a loan translation, even in the absence of direct documentation.

If neither conclusive nor contextual evidence could be found, the lexical item was categorized as “to be determined (indeterminable)”. For example, 手荷物 (*te-nimotsu* ‘hand luggage’) required closer examination. The first attestation of *tenimotsu* is from 1892, while *hand luggage* appears in English as early as 1847. However, the earlier English attestation does not necessarily imply that the Japanese term is a loan translation from English. In such cases, the background of the author using the expression was considered. According to NKD, *tenimotsu* first appeared in a work by Higuchi Ichiyō, an author known for her limited exposure to Western influences. However, it is also possible that the expression first emerged in spoken language as a loan translation of *hand luggage*. Given this ambiguity, the status of *tenimotsu* was ultimately classified as indeterminable.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Borrowing Types and Distribution

For the 5,836 entries analyzed, the following five borrowing scenarios were identified:

- a. English word/phrase not introduced or borrowed
  - Unborrowable or simply not borrowed
  - Not borrowed because an equivalent already exists
- b. Directly borrowed
- c. Partially calqued (loan blend)
- d. Calqued
  - Loan translation
  - Loan creation
- e. Calqued or remodeled using Anglicisms (pseudo-Anglicisms)

Many English lexical items that are borrowed as loan translations in other languages are not borrowed into Japanese. This may be due to their untranslatability, a lack of perceived need, or the existence of equivalent expressions in Japanese. These equivalents are mostly native or Sino-Japanese words, but they also include pseudo-Anglicisms. For example, シャッターチャンス (*shattā chansu*, lit. ‘shutter chance’) corresponds to *photo opportunity*, and カッター (*kattā*, lit. ‘cutter’) is used to refer to a *Stanley knife*. Many English lexical items are also borrowed directly into Japanese. This is likely because Japanese, unlike Indo-European languages, lacks cognates and structural similarities with English and therefore produces fewer loan translations. In contrast,

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loan translation from English *read between the lines*, both “行間を読む (read between the lines)” and “行間を読む (zwischen den Zeilen lesen)” were found, suggesting the possibility of a loan translation from either English or German.

Indo-European languages often calque English expressions due to shared roots and syntactic compatibility.

When a lexical unit is calqued into Japanese, it may take one of several forms: partial calques (loan blends), full calques, or full calques incorporating well-established Anglicisms. Lexical units that include proper names (e.g., *Parkinson's disease*) or alphabetic elements (e.g., *X factor*) are classified as fully calqued, since alternative translation strategies are not typically viable. Calques that incorporate Anglicisms are treated separately in this study, as they do not meet the criteria for loan translations as defined herein. For example, チキンレース (*chikin rēsu* ‘chicken + race’) is a loan rendition of *game of chicken*, made more descriptive through the use of familiar Anglicisms.

The number and proportion of each borrowing category are shown in Figure 3. Some English lexical items have been borrowed into Japanese both directly and indirectly. These are typically introduced together, with one form placed in parentheses (e.g., ダブルスタンダード (二重規範)). However, a quick online search usually reveals which form is more commonly used. In this study, only the more commonly used form is counted.

Roughly half of the lexical items are not borrowed into Japanese. This is an expected result, considering the large number of loan translations recorded in the GLAD Database. Among the 2,901 unborrowed cases, native equivalents were found for 276 items. Examples include 草食系男子 (*sōshoku-kei danshi* ‘herbivorous men’) for *beta male*, 固定電話 (*kotei denwa* ‘fixed telephone’) for *landline*, and 井の中の蛙 (*i no naka no kawazu* ‘frog in a well’) for *big fish in a small pond*.

In the remaining 2,625 cases, no native equivalent could be found. These items are considered untranslatable, which may be attributed to structural differences between English and Japanese. Many of the English phrases that are calqued in Indo-European languages – especially Germanic ones – cannot be translated into Japanese in the same way, as they rely on structural similarities not shared with Japanese. Examples include: *you know* (Danish *du ved*), *around the clock* (German *rund um die Uhr*), *as a rule* (Dutch *als regel*), and *at the end of the day* (Albanian *në fund të ditës*).

Among the remaining half of the cases, where borrowing did occur, the majority are direct borrowings from English. Calques are significantly less frequent, though not rare. It is somewhat unexpected to find as many as 678 instances of indirect borrowing from English. Of these, 664 are classified as loan translations, and 14 as loan creations. Loan creations include, for instance, 補完性原理 (*hokansei-genri*, lit. ‘principle of complementarity’), which is used to express *subsidiarity*. Although calquing is no longer the dominant borrowing strategy, it continues to serve as a productive method for incorporating English lexical items into Japanese.

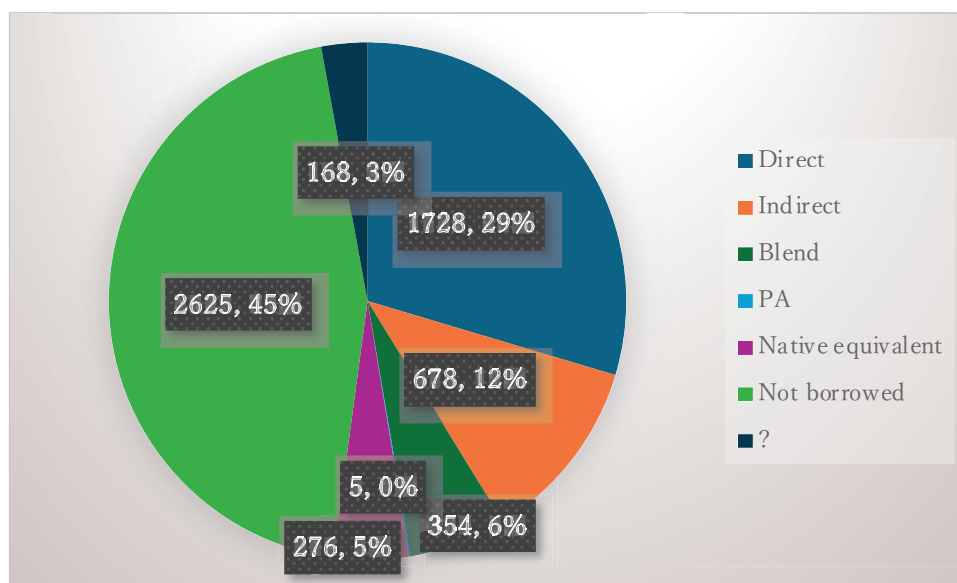


Figure 3. Borrowing type breakdown across 5,836 loan translation entries.

#### 4.2. Lexical Characteristics of Loan Translations

This section examines the lexical strata – native, Sino-Japanese, loan, and hybrid – of the elements found in the 657 loan translations (excluding 7 sentence-like loan translations), totaling 1,318 elements<sup>3</sup>. Figure 4 presents the number and proportion of each lexical stratum. Sino-Japanese elements account for 89%, which is significantly higher than their proportion in the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ), where they represent 49.8% of the type count<sup>4</sup>. This striking contrast highlights the heavy reliance on Sino-Japanese lexical items in loan translations.

This may reflect two factors: (a) the lack of native Japanese words suitable for expressing modern concepts, and (b) the continued perception that Sino-Japanese lexical items are more appropriate for translating foreign concepts. For example, when translating *acid*, there is no alternative but to use Sino-Japanese words such as 酸 (*san*) or 酸性 (*san-sei*), as the concept does not exist in native Japanese vocabulary. This partly explains the dramatic increase in the use of Sino-Japanese words in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as discussed in Section 2. In contrast, *bioethics* can be translated as 命の倫理 (*inochi no rinri*), partially using native Japanese words, instead of 生命倫理 (*seimei rinri*), which is fully Sino-Japanese. The choice of Sino-Japanese over native words in such cases appears to be stylistic rather than semantic. In this sense, the translation tradition that began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century seems to remain dominant in modern Japanese.

<sup>3</sup> Each etymon is treated as a single unit rather than being broken down into multiple morphemes. For example, *cognitive dissonance* is counted as two elements, and its Japanese equivalent, 認知的不協和 (*ninchi-teki fu-kyōwa*), is likewise treated as two elements.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the “short-unit word” search function. Data available at <https://clrd.ninjal.ac.jp/bccwj/bccchu.html> (last accessed April 14, 2025). See Maekawa et al. (2014) for details on the search functions.

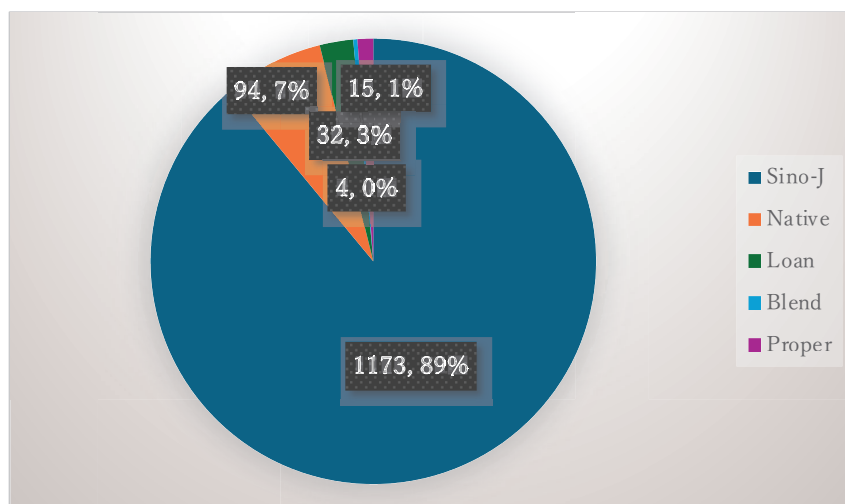


Figure 4. Lexical breakdown of 1,318 loan translation elements.

### 4.3. Structural Characteristics of Loan Translations

#### 4.3.1. Overview

The heavy reliance on Sino-Japanese lexical items in loan translations appears to limit their structural diversity. Figure 5 presents the breakdown of structural patterns among the 664 loan translations. The majority of cases are noun phrases, reflecting a general tendency in borrowing. Among these, the N + N structure is by far the most dominant, partially due to the prevalence of Sino-Japanese compounds. The second most common pattern is N + genitive particle (*no*) + N. Noun phrases involving nominalized verbs are much less common but still notable, with 18 total instances observed in the patterns  $[_N V] + N$  and  $N + [_N V]$ . Affixation is also attested, with 10 examples found. In contrast, the use of adjectives and adjectival nouns – as in  $Adj + N$  or  $AdjN + N$  structures – is extremely rare. Verbal phrases are also uncommon, with only three instances, while seven sentence-like phrases were identified.

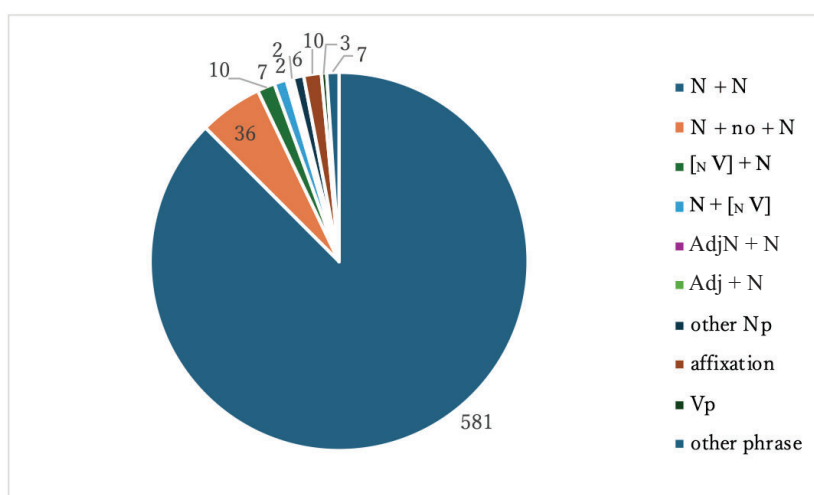


Figure 5. Structural patterns of loan translations.

### 4.3.2. Noun phrase

All Sino-Japanese lexical items are essentially nouns, and they can be freely combined to form N + N compounds. The category of “noun” in this context includes Sino-Japanese noun roots, which are generally bound morphemes but still carry nominal meaning. For example, in 下垂足 (*kasui-soku* ‘drop foot’), the Sino-Japanese morpheme 足 (*soku*) means ‘foot’ but functions only within compounds; in isolation, the native word 足 (*ashi*) would be used instead. Given their nominal semantics, Sino-Japanese noun roots are typically treated as nouns in compound morphology (cf. Kageyama 2011).

Although it is possible to render English lexical items using other structures – such as Adj + N or AdjN + N – the N + N structure tends to exhibit a more tightly integrated form, which may facilitate the lexicalization of newly coined compounds. This structural compactness may contribute to the preference for N + N compounds. For instance, the literal translation of *deep structure* is 深い構造 (*fukai kōzō*), but this Adj + N syntactic combination presents a looser, less morphologically bound relationship than the N + N compound alternative. This is probably the reason why N + N structure 深層構造 (*shinsō-kōzo*) is chosen over Adj + N structure.

#### (1) N + N

achievement motive → 達成動機 (*tassei dōki*: achievement motive)

acid rain → 酸性雨 (*san-sei u*: acidic rain)

air conditioning → 空調 (*kū-chō*: air-control)

background radiation → 環境放射線 (*kankyō hōshasen*: environment radiation)

bioethics → 生命倫理 (*seimei rinri*: life ethics)

cold war → 冷戦 (*rei-sen*: cold-war)

counteraction → 反作用 (*han-sayō*: counter-action)

deep structure → 深層構造 (*shinsō kōzō*: deep-layer structure)

developing country → 発展途上国 (*hatten tojō koku*: development in progress country)

sexual orientation → 性的指向 (*sei-teki shikō*: sex-ADJ orientation)

The second most common pattern found is N + *no* + N, which connects two nouns with the genitive particle *no*. This construction is used not only to translate English “N of N” or “N’s N” structures but also to calque English Adj + N and N + N expressions. N + *no* + N is commonly used in loan translations involving native Japanese words, where omitting *no* would result in ungrammaticality (e.g., 草の根 (*kusa no ne* ‘grassroots’), \*草根 (*kusa-ne*)). It is also employed in cases where the English etymon includes an adjective, but the calqued Japanese equivalent lacks a native adjectival form. For example, 緑の革命 (*midori no kakumei* ‘green revolution’) uses *midori* (‘green’), which does not have an adjectival form, necessitating the use of *no*. In some cases, *no* is added to English N + N compounds to achieve semantic differentiation. For instance, 食砂漠 (*shoku-sabaku*) would be a grammatically well-formed compound, but it is semantically infelicitous: 食 (*shoku* ‘food’) is not an inherent attribute or subtype of 砂漠 (*sabaku* ‘desert’). As such, the compound might be misinterpreted as a ‘desert made of food’ rather than a metaphorical ‘desert in terms of food’. The metaphorical meaning of *food desert* – a place lacking access to affordable food – would likely be lost. By contrast, inserting the genitive particle in 食の砂漠 (*shoku no sabaku*) explicitly marks a relational interpretation, better aligning with the intended semantics of the English original.

In this way, the N + *no* + N construction conveys a semantic distinction from N + N, which tends to imply a more subordinate relationship between the two elements. When it is necessary to emphasize the independent or relational nature of the first N, the N + *no* + N construction is often

preferred. There are cases in which a single lexical item is translated in both structures, as seen in the case of *cultural appropriation*, which can be rendered as either 文化盗用 (*bunka tōyō*) or 文化の盗用 (*bunka no tōyō*). Both forms are fully acceptable, and the choice depends on the nuance the speaker or writer wishes to convey. This distinction is somewhat analogous to the use or omission of “of” in English – e.g., *appropriation of culture* versus *cultural appropriation*.

(2) N + *no* + N

- conspiracy of silence → 沈黙の共謀 (*chimmoku no kyōbō*: silence GEN conspiracy)  
 freedom of speech → 言論の自由 (*genron no jiyū*: speech GEN freedom)  
 deficit of democracy → 民主主義の赤字 (*minshushugi no akaji*: democracy GEN deficit)  
 cultural appropriation → 文化の盗用 (*bunka no tōyō*: culture GEN appropriation)  
 father’s day → 父の日 (*chichi no hi*: father GEN day)  
 food desert → 食の砂漠 (*shoku no sabaku*: food GEN desert)  
 grassroot → 草の根 (*kusa no ne*: grass GEN root) cf. \*草根 (*kusa-ne*: grass-root)  
 iron lady → 鉄の女 (*tetsu no onna*: iron GEN woman)  
 green revolution → 緑の革命 (*midori no kakumei*: green GEN revolution)  
 canary in the coalmine → 炭鉱のカナリア (*tankō no kanaria*: coal.mine GEN canary)<sup>5</sup>

Noun phrases formed through the nominalization of native verbs are less common but are found among loan translations. In both [<sub>N</sub> V] + N and N + [<sub>N</sub> V] structures, the verbs appear in the conjunctive form and function syntactically as nouns. The semantic relationships between the elements are varied, reflecting the diversity of interpretations found in the original English compounds.

(3) [<sub>N</sub> V] + N

- way of life → 生き方 (*iki-kata*: live.NMLZ-way)  
 containment policy → 封じ込め政策 (*fūji-kome seisaku*: seal-contain.NMLZ policy)  
 folding bike → 折りたたみ自転車 (*ori-tatami jitensha*: fold-fold.NMLZ bicycle)  
 rating agency → 格付け会社 (*kaku-zuke gaisha*: rank-assign.NMLZ company)

(4) N + [<sub>N</sub> V]

- whiplash → むち打ち (*muchi-uchi*: whip-hit.NMLZ)  
 witch hunt → 魔女狩り (*majo-gari*: witch-hunt.NMLZ)  
 genetic modification → 遺伝子組み換え (*idenshi kumi-kae*: gene assemble-change.NMLZ)  
 impulse buying → 衝動買い (*shōdō-gai*: impulse-buy.NMLZ)

In contrast to the relatively common noun phrases involving verbs, noun phrases with adjectives and adjectival nouns (AdjN, i.e., noun-like adjectives) are rare in loan translations. Only two cases each of AdjN + N and Adj + N structures were identified, despite 107 out of the 664 English source items originally exhibiting an Adj + N structure. In 有害な男らしさ (*yūgai-na otoko-rashisa* ‘toxic masculinity’), the left-hand element is a Sino-Japanese word that could potentially form an N + N compound; however, the right-hand element is a native Japanese word

<sup>5</sup> A more literal translation, 炭鉱の中のカナリア (*tankō no naka no kanaria*), appears in early usage, but 炭鉱のカナリア (*tankō no kanaria*) is far more common, reflecting a preference for the N *no* N construction.

that cannot be rendered naturally into an N + N form. Introspectively, an N + N translation is conceivable – e.g., 有害男性性 (*yūgai dansei-sei*) – but this may suggest that all masculinity is inherently toxic. Therefore, the independent and relational nature of the AdjN + N structure, similar to that of N + *no* + N, is preferred in this case. Similarly, 持続可能な発展 (*jizoku-kanō-na hatten* ‘sustainable development’) uses the AdjN + N structure to preserve this relational nuance. Cases of Adj + N constructions such as 白い嘘 (*shiroi uso* ‘white lie’) and 汚い爆弾 (*kitanai bakudan* ‘dirty bomb’) also exist, despite the theoretical possibility of forming corresponding Sino-Japanese compounds such as 白嘘 (*hak-kyo*) or 汚染爆弾 (*osen bakudan*). All attested examples of AdjN + N and Adj + N structures date from the 1990s onward, possibly indicating a shift in patterns of loan translation creation.

(5) AdjN + N

toxic masculinity → 有害な男らしさ (*yūgai-na otoko-rashisa*: harmful-ATTR man-likeness)  
 sustainable development → 持続可能な開発 (*jizoku-kanō-na kaihatsu*: continuation-possible-ATTR development)

(6) Adj + N

dirty bomb → 汚い爆弾 (*kitanai bakudan*: dirty bomb)  
 white lie → 白い嘘 (*shiroi uso*: white lie)

Other types of noun phrases are also found, as shown in example (7). For instance, the passive form 開かれた (*hirakareta*) is used for the transitive verb 開く (*hiraku* ‘to open’); ための (*tame no*) appears as a translation of *for*; and に係る (*ni kakaru* ‘related to’) is used as a rendition of *in*. The use of the archaic adjectival form, as in 古き良き日々 (*furuki yoki hibi* ‘the good old days’), is also attested. These limited examples still illustrate the acceptability of various native Japanese morphemes and constructions in loan translations from English.

(7) Other types of noun phrase

good old days → 古き良き日々 (*furuki yo-ki hibi*: old-ATTR good-ATTR days)  
 open society → 開かれた社会 (*hira-kareta shakai*: open-PASS.PST society)  
 partnership for peace → 平和のための協力 (*heiwa no tame no kyōryoku*: peace GEN sake GEN cooperation)  
 trading in influence → 影響力に係る取引 (*eikyōryoku ni kakaru torihiki*: influence DAT concern.ATTR transaction)  
 splendid isolation 光栄ある孤立 (*kōei-arū koritsu*: honour-have.ATTR isolation)

### 4.3.3. Affixation

Loan translations incorporating Sino-Japanese affixes are also commonly observed. The following examples include the use of affixes such as 脱 (*datsu* ‘de-’), 非 (*hi* ‘non-’), 反 (*han* ‘counter-, anti-’), and 化 (*ka* ‘-ization’), as well as the adjectival marker 的 (*teki*). Most of these are considered pseudo-Chinese affixes (cf. Chen 2011, 2012, 2019). While most affixations result in nouns, some also form adjectival nouns when used in combination with 的 (*teki*).

(8) Affixation

bio-ethical → 生命倫理的な (*seimei-rinri-teki-na*: life-ethics-ADJ-ATTR)  
 bio-medical → 生医学的な (*sei-igaku-teki-na*: life-medicine-ADJ-ATTR)  
 counter-factual → 反事実的な (*han-jijitsu-teki-na*: counter-fact-ADJ-ATTR)  
 counterintuitive → 反直感的な (*han-chokkan-teki-na*: counter-intuition-ADJ-ATTR)

decarbonization → 脱炭素化 (*datsu-tanso-ka*: detachment-carbon-ATTR)  
 deindustrialize → 脱工業化 (*datsu-kōgyō-ka*: detachment-carbon-NMLZ)  
 demilitarization → 非武装化 (*hi-busō-ka*: non-armament-NMLZ)  
 denuclearization → 非核化 (*hi-kaku-ka*: non-nuclear-NMLZ)

#### 4.3.4. Verbal phrase

Verbal phrases in the form of N + dative/accusative particle (*ni/o*) + V are extremely rare, with only two cases identified. The first example, 神経にさわる (*shinkei ni sawaru* ‘get on someone’s nerves’), was attested as early as 1910 in the work of Natsume Sōseki, a prominent novelist and scholar of English literature. The second example, 違いをつくる (*chigai o tsukuru* ‘make a difference’), is less common and may sound somewhat unnatural to some native speakers, but it is used, particularly in sports-related contexts.

(9) N + *ni/o* + V

touch the nerve → 神経に障る (*shinkei ni sawaru*: nerve DAT touch)

make a difference → 違いを作る (*chigai o tsukuru*: difference ACC make)

#### 4.3.5. Other types of phrase (idiom, proverb/saying, pragmatic formula)

Loan translations of other sentence-like phrases – such as idioms, proverbs/sayings, and pragmatic formulae – are also rare but do exist. For example, the conversational formula 良い一日を (*yoi ichinichi o*) is clearly a loan translation of *have a nice day*. While it is not commonly used in spoken communication, it appears more frequently in written contexts such as blogs and social media posts.

(10) Other phrasal constructions

time is money → 時は金なり (*toki wa kane nari*: time TOP money COP)

barking dogs seldom bite → 吠える犬は噛み付かぬ (*hoeru inu wa kami-tsuka-nu*: bark.ATTR dog TOP bite-attach-NEG)

from cradle to grave → ゆりかごから墓場まで (*yurikago kara hakaba made*: cradle ABL graveyard TERM)

from cradle to cradle → ゆりかごからゆりかごまで (*yurikago kara hakaba made*: cradle ABL cradle TERM)

have a nice day → 良い一日を (*yoi ichinichi o*: good one-day ACC)

don’t put all your eggs in the same basket → 卵を一つのカゴに盛るな (*tamago o hitotsu no kago ni moru-na*: egg ACC one GEN basket DAT put-NEG.IMP)

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

This study identified 664 English loan translations in Japanese by utilizing entries from the GLAD Database, demonstrating that such translations are by no means rare in the language. Given the lack of prior research on modern English loan translations into Japanese, these findings represent a significant advancement in the field. The compiled list of loan translations also provides a foundation for further investigation and identification of additional examples. At the same time, as expected, loan translations appear to play a secondary role in comparison to direct borrowings. Direct borrowing remains the primary form of borrowing from English, as evidenced by many English lexical items that appear as direct borrowings in Japanese, even when they exist as loan translations in other languages.

The lexical and structural analyses conducted in this study reveal several constraints on how English concepts are rendered into Japanese through loan translation. The near-exclusive use of Sino-Japanese words in early loan translations during the modernization era likely shaped the long-standing tradition of loan translation in Japanese. Contemporary examples continue to exhibit a heavy reliance on Sino-Japanese elements, partly due to the abundance of semantically compatible vocabulary. Many of the loan translations identified in this study are scientific, political, economic, or medical terms, whose component elements were already well established as calques of Western concepts. Further research is needed to examine the ongoing prevalence and role of modern Sino-Japanese words (*shin-kango*) in loan translation.

At the same time, loan translations using native Japanese words and morphemes are not uncommon. This may indicate a shift in translation practices – possibly reflecting either a decline in the productivity of Sino-Japanese vocabulary or a growing tendency to favor native lexical resources. Chen (2019: 522-523) notes that the productivity of Sino-Japanese compounds has declined markedly since the mid-Shōwa period (mid-20<sup>th</sup> century), and suggests that hybrid formations – involving native, Sino-Japanese, and other loanword elements – may become increasingly central in neologism creation. In this respect, the lexical and structural features observed in modern English loan translations may be the reflection of broader changes in the Japanese lexicon.

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**KEISUKE IMAMURA** • is an associate professor of Japanese Language and Linguistics at Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology. His research interest is on contact linguistics involving Japanese. He has published a number of academic articles, book chapters, and books about Japanese influence on languages in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as on the English influence on Japanese. Publication includes *A Dictionary of Japanese Loanwords in Palauan* (iREi Micronesia, 2019), *The Japanese Language in the Pacific Region* (Routledge, 2024).

**E-MAIL** • [kimamu0@kaiyodai.ac.jp](mailto:kimamu0@kaiyodai.ac.jp)