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## Americanization of Japanese and Japanization of English

The history of Japanese is very complicated. According to S. A. Starostin<sup>1</sup> it separated from the Altaic family about six thousand years ago. Its trustworthy history begins about two thousand years ago when the Proto-Japanese tribes migrated from the continent to the Japanese islands. Before that time the islands were inhabited by Austronesian aborigines. Their languages were probably similar to the languages of the Taiwan aborigines. The new-comers mixed with the old residents and Japanese changed under the influence of the Austronesian substratum. The culture of Japan of the first centuries A.D. was rather primitive and then it experienced the influence of the more developed Chinese culture. This influence existed in the sphere of language too. The most ancient Japanese texts (VII-IX centuries) are Chinesanized to a small degree but until the end of the Heian period (XI-XII centuries) the Japanese language changed considerably. The newest period of the language contacts in Japan began in the middle of the XIX century. Since that time the influence of the European languages especially American English is considerable.

Some Japanologists consider Japanese a hybrid language. It deviated from the Altaic standard more than other Altaic languages. The structure of Modern Japanese possesses Altaic, Austronesian, Chinese and English features. Of course it is impossible to explain all the changes by the influence of languages in contact. For instance the increase of inflexion at the expense of agglutination at the verb, disappearance of differences between finite and participle forms are purely structural changes and it is hardly possible to connect them with the influence of a substratum or adstratum.

The most stable component of the system of Japanese is its grammar structure especially the syntactic one. The word order did not change and both old Japanese and Modern Japanese are SOV languages although all the languages in contact during the last two thousand years are SVO languages.

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<sup>1</sup> S. A. Starostin, *Altayskaya problema i proiskhozhdeniye yaponskogo yazyka*. Moscow, 1991.

This situation differs from the situation of some Turkic languages of Europe especially the languages of non-Moslem peoples (Gagauz, Karaim) which are moving to the SVO type. The suffixal character of morphology, vagueness of borders between suffixes and post-positive particles, the spreading of constructions with auxiliary verbs, the strict differentiation on nouns and verbs with the vagueness of the singling out the class of adjectives, the prevalence of non-finite verbal constructions over complex and compound sentences of European type and many other primordial Altaic features are very stable at the history of Japanese. The Japanese grammar remains Altaic basically but vocabulary and phonetics changed considerably. Of course the majority of the Swadesh's list has Altaic etymologies but more than half of words in the dictionaries of Modern Japanese are old and new borrowings.

The influence of the Austronesian substratum is the most considerable in the field of phonetics. Ethnically the majority of Japanese are descendants of Austronesian people who while changing their languages adapted the phonological system of Proto-Japanese to their phonetical habits. The number of phonemes decreased, the vowel harmony disappeared and the syllable structure became very simple. The phonological structure of Old Japanese (VIII-IX centuries) was the simplest. There were only five vowels in the IX century, all the syllables had the CV structure and moras coincided with syllables. The Japanese syllable script (kana) reflects this stage. Since X-XI centuries the phonological and syllable systems became more difficult again under the influence of Chinese. The morphological feature of Austronesian origin is prefixation. There are several prefixes in Japanese. One of them is prefix *ma=* (often with gemination of the text consonant) with the meaning of intensification of a quality: *shiro* 'white', *masshiro* 'snow-white', *naka* 'middle', *mannaka* 'very middle'. E. D. Polivanov proposed an Austronesian etymology of this prefix.<sup>2</sup> The most common Japanese prefix is the honorific marker *o=* which joins every noun except Chinese borrowings. The latter are combined with the other prefix *go=* which was borrowed from Chinese too but became the morphological marker only in Japanese. The Japanese accentuation has not the Altaic origin either and probably goes back to the Austronesian substratum too.

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<sup>2</sup> E. D. Polivanov, "Odná iz yaponó-malayskikh paralelei" *Izvestiya Rossiyskoy Akademii nauk*. VI. vyp. XII, No 18:1918.

The Chinese influence changes the Japanese language at all the levels except the syntactic one. Many Chinese roots and words were borrowed with the Chinese characters; the process of formation of new words from Chinese roots was going on for more than a thousand years and continues nowadays. Chinese words and roots underwent the phonetic and phonological adaptation. However some of their peculiarities remained, as a result the phonological system of Japanese changed: long vowels, geminates, palatalized consonants appeared, syllable structure became more difficult. The Chinese stratum of vocabulary is very significant, it includes the majority of cultural words. Some grammatical markers as the above-mentioned *go*= were borrowed from Chinese although they are not numerous. I have already described the Chinese component of the system of Japanese in details at the 35 PIAC.<sup>3</sup>

The first borrowings from the Western languages appeared in Japanese in the XVI-XVIII centuries. They were originally borrowings from Portuguese (*pan* 'bread', *tabako* 'tobacco', *tempura* 'tempura (Japanese national dish)' from *tempero* 'moderate') then from Dutch (*koohii* 'coffee', *biiru* 'beer', *garasu* 'glass'). Such words were not numerous and did not change the structure of Japanese.

The situation changed after the Meiji restoration (1867-1868) when the intensive Europeanization began. Many borrowings appeared in Japanese since the Meiji restoration to the beginning of the XXth century, then their quality decreased at the time of militarism and purism. Since the time of the American occupation of Japan (1945-1952) this process became very intensive again. Before the Second World War Japanese was under the influence of different Western languages especially French, German, British English and American English. However after the time of the occupation American English became the main and almost the only source of borrowings; even the names of peculiarities of third countries (except China and Korea) come to Japanese through American English in the American phonetic kind. Some words of different origin are ousted by American duplicates: *beddo* from *bed* and *betto* from German *Bett* coexisted for several decades but only *beddo* exists now. The influence of other languages is preserved only at some fields: fashion for French, medicine for German. Practically all the structural changes in Japanese of the XXth century are results of the influence of

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<sup>3</sup> V. M. Alpatov, "Japanese as a Hybrid Altaic-Chinese Language" in *Proceedings of the 35th Permanent International Altaistic Conference. September 12-17. 1992. Taipei.*

American English (contacts of Japan with Great Britain are not significant and the peculiarities of British English are estimated by Japanese people even as not British but as dialectal American ones).

The borrowings from English (as the borrowings from Chinese) underwent the phonetic and phonological adaptations. However they changed the system of Japanese too. New phonemes appeared or allophones became particular phonemes. The phoneme *v* exists only in borrowings: *voryuumu* 'volume' *t* and *c* are allophones outside the borrowings from English: *c* is a variant of *t* before *u*: *mat-e* 'wait!', *mac-u* 'waits' but *t* and *c* are distinguished at different positions in the subsystem of borrowings: *tutti* 'tutti', *cepperin* 'zeppelin'. Unpalatalized sounds are impossible before *i* in Japanese, for instance *t* turns into palatalized *ch* at this position: *mach-i* 'at the time of waiting'. However this restriction is not important in the subsystems of borrowings and we find pairs: *chii* 'position' (from Chinese) – *tii* 'tee'. However some fundamental peculiarities of the English system of phonemes are alien to Japanese even now. The difference of the phonemes *l* and *r* important in English but it does not exist in Japanese since the Proto-Japanese stage until now. This difference does not exist in Korean and Chinese either. The number of borrowings from English with the original *l* and *r* is significant but this difference has not appeared in Japanese: *reezaa* from *razor* and *reezaa* from *laser* are homonyms (the corresponding sound is marked as *r* in the standard transcription but it differs from both the sounds). Japanese people can learn the correct pronunciation of both sounds but they can not distinguish them by ear.

The morphonology of English borrowings is different from the morphonology of other strata of Japanese. We can distinguish only 24 morphophonemes for the primordial subsystem uniting Altaic and Austronesian elements, 32 morphophonemes for the Chinese subsystem and 36 morphophonemes for the subsystem of the borrowings; only 21 morphophonemes are common.<sup>4</sup> Vowel phonemes and morphophonemes are the same in all the subsystems but consonant phonemes and morphophonemes are very different.

The morphophonological structure of morphs is very strict in the Chinese subsystem for the reason of the strict structure of them in Chinese. However

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<sup>4</sup> V. M. Alpatov, *Morfonologicheskiye osobennosti zaimstvovaniy v sovremennom yaponskom yazyke*. Znak. Moscow, 1994.

such structure in the Western subsystem is as free as possible. The number of syllables within a morph is not limited: *noiezahharihikaito* from German *neue Sachlichkeit* (it is necessary to consider that many English or German phrases became words in Japanese). Some syllable structures are possible only in borrowings as CVVC: *zoon* 'zone', *saruun* 'saloon'.

Appearance of borrowed affixes and subsidiary words is a sign of an important role of borrowings. Some affixes are singled out because of a significant number of borrowings of the same type: =*uumu* 'chemical element' in *tor'uumu* 'thorium', *erb'uumu* 'erbium' and so on. Other elements are used rather freely for word-formation. Such element is the negative *no*: when a group of state employees organized the movement for appearance at working places without neckties (for the purpose of economy) this movement was called *no-nekutai*. The word *no-ai-ron* means 'thing that is not allowed to iron'. Such *no* can be considered as a new prefix (some negative prefixes exist at the Chinese subsystem). Even the definite article is borrowed. It is common in advertisements and in titles especially in the TV titles: *Za chansu* 'The chance', *Naruhodo za waarudo* 'Really the world' (the last example is the combination of a primordial Japanese word with a borrowing). Japanese has not articles but it is possible that such category will be formed through borrowings. However cases of the borrowing of an indefinite article are not fixed.

There are a lot of patterns of word formation from borrowed roots in Japanese. For instance there are many new words with the first component *mai* from *my* with the meaning 'private': *maihoomu* 'private house', *maikaa* 'private car' and so on. Tens and hundreds words are similar to the English ones although they are built in Japan. There are no words or word-combinations \**nighter*, \**salary man*, \**auto by(cicle)* in English but there are words *naitaa* 'evening (baseball or football) play with electric lighting', *sarariman* 'employee', *octobai* '(motor) cycle' in Japanese. New words can appear as a result of shortening: *hoomu* from *puratohoomu* 'platform', *zenesuto* from *zeneraaruu-sutoraiiki* 'general strike'. So this subsystem is developing by its laws irrespective of the development of English.

The influence of English becomes apparent even at the sphere of syntax. Passive constructions existed both in Old Japanese and in Modern Japanese but one of their peculiarities was the impossibility of an inanimate subject. This limitation disappeared now under the influence of English. Linguists mention that the use of such constructions is connected with the Western

semantic sphere: *Sakana ga neko ni taberareta* 'Fish is eaten by (the) cat' is not natural but *Booru ga nagerareta* 'Baseball' ball is thrown' is common. The less evident example is the change of government of some verbs and verbal constructions. A hundred years ago only the sentence *Boku wa mizu ga nomitai* 'I want to drink water' was possible (*wa* is the topic marker, *ga* is the subject marker). However this variant is not the most usual in the modern language *Boku wa mizu o nomitai* or even *Boku ga mizu o nomitai* (*o* is the direct object marker) are more common. The role of English is possible here.

Semantically the majority of new borrowings are connected with the Western culture especially with the American mass culture. Many of such words have synonyms or quasi-synonyms but they are not unnecessary. Japanese people are boiling rice for many centuries and have two words (*meshi* and Chinese borrowing *gohan*) for boiled rice but both the words are associated with the Japanese manner of boiling. Therefore it is natural to call rice boiled in a Western manner not *meshi* or *gohan* but *raisu*. There are several Japanese words with the meaning 'wife' (special words with meanings 'my wife', 'wife of a superior', 'wife of an inferior' etc.) but all of them are associated with the traditional Japanese family where the role of a woman is subordinate; if family relations are equal the word *waifu* seems to be more convenient. The above-mentioned words with the component *mai* (my) have Japanese synonyms but they are associated with American ideas of privacy and individualism.

The general frequency of borrowings in Japanese texts is about 6-9% but it increases considerably in the texts connected with the sphere of consumption. For instance their number in the scientific and technical texts including texts on radioelectronics and motor-car construction is not significant. However the majority of words in an instruction for buyers of recorders or car owners are borrowings from English. The meaning of some words is narrowed: *doraibu* 'drive' is not 'drive in general' but only drive with aims of amusing. Some borrowings of such type are written in Latin letters although they are read in Japanese and not in English. Many of such words are not intelligible to the majority of Japanese people especially in the sphere of publicity but they have an image of prestige and high quality.

Changes in Japanese are common for many modern languages. The influence of English on Japanese is comparable with the influence of Chinese on it in the past. However many Altaic features of Japanese remains very stable.

The contacts between Japanese and English were one-sided until the last decades. There were many borrowings from English to Japanese but the borrowings from Japanese to English were only not numerous names of specific Japanese realities. However the economic successes of Japan intensified the role of the Japanese culture in the world. The spreading of the Japanese technics and the Japanese management is connected with the spreading of the Japanese painting, the Japanese food and so on; the names of them are spreading too. Not only words as *sushi*, *hibachi* but *giri*, *gyosei-shido* are fixed in English: there are some translation loan words in English as forward looking posture as the equivalent of *maemuki no shisei* in Japanese. Some Japanese linguists write that the role of Japan in the modern world leads to the Japanization of English.<sup>5</sup> However such perspectives are not clear yet.

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<sup>5</sup> Suzuki Takao, "Internationalization and Language" *Japan Times* 09. 02. 1987.