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CONTACT SCENARIOS DURING THE JAPANESE MEDIATION IN THE ADOPTION OF ANGLICISMS IN CHINESE

The cross-cultural settings for the borrowing process between English and Chinese could be mediated on the part of the Japanese language for its significant historical and more recent role in the region. Attention is paid to the contact factors in the intermediate medium that determine the scenarios of such indirect penetrations. Both semantic and formal sides of the processes of tripartite language interaction during the adoption of Anglicisms in Chinese via Japanese are tackled with the emphasis on the interplay between the sound and graphic representation of the interim and ultimate lags of the borrowing process. The analysis considers the concomitant factors of the reductive simplification of the source item in the two-way target environment as well as the decomposition of the semantic content of the recipient units. The whole process is demonstrative of the inter-cultural subtlety of lexical borrowings in the typologically distant languages.

Key words: contact mediation, contact scenarios, English loans, secondary target language, Japanese, Chinese.

КОНТАКТНІ СЦЕНАРІЇ ПІД ЧАС ЯПОНСЬКОГО ПОСЕРЕДНИЦТВА У ЗАСВОЄННІ АНГЛІЦИЗМІВ КИТАЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

Міжкультурні обставини процесу запозичення між англійською та китайською мовою можуть зазнавати посередництва зі сторони японської мови з погляду на її вагому історичну та недавню роль в ареалі. Звернено увагу на чинники контактності у середовищі посередника, які визначають сценарії таких непрямих проникнень. Розглянуто змістові та формальні сторони процесів тристоронньої міжмовної взаємодії із по-різному модифікованою японсько-китайською еквіфінальністю англіцизмів асимілятивними процесами у звуковій та смислової структурах тимчасової та кінцевої ділянок процесу запозичення. Дослідження враховує супровідні чинники спрощення первинної одиниці у подвійному цільовому середовищі, а також компонентного розщеплення змістового плану запозичення. Проаналізований матеріал свідчить про міжкультурні тонкощі процесів лексичного запозичення між типологічно віддаленими мовами.

АНГЛО-КИТАЙСКИЕ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИЕ КОНТАКТЫ ЧЕРЕЗ ЯПОНСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

Межкультурные обстоятельства процесса заимствования между японским и китайским языком могут подвергаться посредничеству со стороны японского языка в виду существенной исторической и более недавней роли последнего в ареале. Обращено внимание на факторы контактности в среде языка-посредника, определяющие сценарии таких непрямых проникновений. Рассмотрены смысловые и формальные стороны процессов тристороннего межязыкового взаимодействия с по-разному модифицируемой японско-китайской эквивалентностью англицизмов ассимилятивными процессами в звуковой и смысловой структурах, временного и конечного отрезков процесса заимствования. Исследование учитывает сопровождающие факторы упрощения первичной единицы в двойной целевой среде, а также компонентного расщепления смыслового плана заимствования. Проанализированный материал свидетельствует о межкультурных тонкостях процессов лексического заимствования между типологически отдаленными языками.

Ключевые слова: контактное посредничество, контактные сценарии, англицизмы, вторичный целевой язык, японский язык, китайский язык.

Geographical neighborhood normally provides necessary conditions and natural convenience for language borrowing. The long history of frequent and large-scale borrowing between Chinese and Japanese is a good case in point. According to the research of the forerunner linguists in this field [cf. 5]), Chinese vocabulary had entered into Japanese and Korean Languages and was exported to other languages for centuries, especially in Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) and Tang Dynasty (618AD-907). Just as Japanese borrowed from ancient Chinese immensely, modern Chinese also takes in considerably from Japanese in modern times, especially after the Opium Wars in the middle of the 19th century. Japanese contributed to Chinese a considerable amount of Japanese characters as a result of the former's successful reformation and powerful economy. However, neighborhood does not necessarily mean large-scale language borrowing. There are still many other factors which contribute to language borrowing.

Political activities, including social reforms, national policy and diplomacy directly affect language borrowing. Taika Reform and the Meiji Restoration in Japan opened the door of the country and brought about peaks of both Chinese and English borrowings. The reform movements in the late Qing dynasty and the Opening-up and Reform policy in the 1980s rewarded China with adequate Japanese and English loans, which considerably enriched Chinese vocabulary stock.

As a critical part of contact linguistics, linguistic borrowings have drawn pretty much attention of researchers in recent years. As far as linguistic borrowings in Chinese are concerned, those which originate from English are of the greatest importance. A considerable portion of English words did not come into the Chinese lexicon in a direct way. They could be borrowed through the introduction of Japanese as a go-between language. Because the borrowing process does occur in language contact, no matter whether the resultant forms are loanwords or not, for this reason, indirect introduction via Japanese still serves as a subfield of Chinese borrowed words from English.

In the classification of Masini, 'Graph Loans' referred to the loanwords between the two languages that share a common writing system. When an English word is borrowed into Japanese, it is also possible for Chinese to copy this Japanese form to its own vocabulary. In this context, Masini's term has its limitation to cover the former procedure (English-Japanese) [2]. There are many borrowings that are introduced by Japanese from English into Chinese.

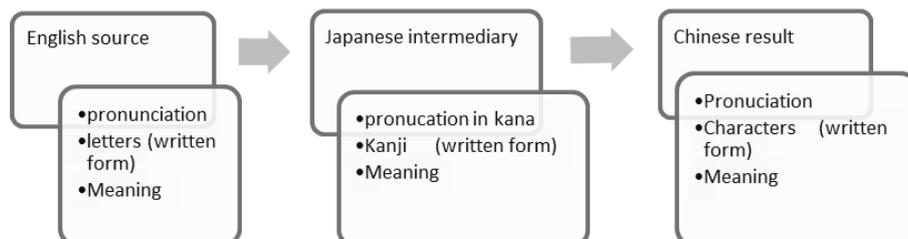
According to Shi Youwei [4] although these words originated in Japanese, phonologically they were treated as normal expressions in Chinese, and semantically all the characters still kept their intrinsic meanings in Chinese as well. He summarized such a phenomenon as a lexical borrowing of graphs rather than sounds. Due to these distinguishing features, a consensus has never been reached as to their identification as loanwords. He believed that they were 'loanwords which borrowed the written forms (from Japanese to Chinese)'. He recognized them as 'loanwords of graphical translation'.

1. Japanese Two Orthographies System

Peter Muysken discusses different ways in which bilingual speakers switch from one language to another in the course of conversation. In his work, he identifies three distinct patterns of mixing ('insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization') and explores how different mixing strategies depend on the contrasting grammatical properties of the languages involved, the degree of bilingual competence of the speaker and various social factors [3, 8].

Compared with Chinese, Japanese has its own strengths in borrowing words from English. The most prominent advantage lies in the writing system of the Japanese language, which consists of two distinct orthographies: a set of phonetic syllables known as kana (Japanese: 假名), and a collection of Chinese characters originally derived from China, known as Kanji (汉字). Kana could be further divided into two subsets: hiragana (平假名) and Katakana (片假名). The latter is mainly used to rewrite alien words by adapting them to Japanese phonetic system. That explains why numerous English words could enter Japanese vocabulary with little difficulty. Another reason is different attitudes to foreign cultures held by two languages. Relatively, Japanese is a more open system to borrow alien words. In consequence, Japanese has a large number of loanwords from English, which almost retain their foreign sounds but have been localized into local characters (hiragana and kanji) through semantic translation.

On that premise, many English words had entered Japanese lexicon before their concepts were brought to China. When borrowing such an English source, Chinese language will then confront two options, if this source has been localized into kanji already. Besides all kinds of direct loan, there is one alternative as indirect borrowing via Japanese. Comparatively, Japanese Kanji is more likely to be accepted by the Chinese language. Take the English words ‘telephone’ as an example: in a direct way it used to be transliterated into ‘德律风 (dé lǜ fēng)’, but later Chinese replaced this ‘absolute phonemic loan’ with the Japanese translation ‘電話’ (denwa) (‘电话 diàn huà’ in Simplified Chinese).



We could illustrate a model of indirect borrowings via Japanese with the figure above.

2. Methods of Borrowing

Generally, there are two methods for Japanese to borrow an English word: phonemic loan with its katakana, or semantic description through free translation. Either of these two ways of borrowing is illustrated with broken lines because of their relation of alternativeness. For the first step of the borrowing process, the resultant forms are usually written in kanji in the system of the Japanese intermediary.

For the second step, Japanese words in Kanji are taken back to the Chinese language by keeping their written forms. As we once mentioned, this process is referred to ‘Graph Loans’ by Masini [2]. Since Kanji themselves are the Chinese characters (in traditional forms 繁体汉字 fǎn tǐ hàn zì) that are used in the modern Japanese writing system, Shi Youwei [4, p. 248] named this return trip between the two languages as ‘a large-scale backflow of Chinese characters’.

In the overall mode of borrowings, it is difficult to find any apparent connection between the English source and the Chinese result. Without knowing its true origin or the whole process, the final result could be easily taken for granted as intrinsic in Chinese. In addition, to a resultant form in modern Chinese, characters are generally rewritten in their simplified version.

One instance is the Chinese word ‘俱乐部’. At first, the English source ‘club’ is borrowed into Japanese katakana as Kurabu and ‘俱樂部’ in Kanji. After that the Japanese words ‘俱樂部’ are simplified into the Chinese result ‘俱乐部’ as a graphic borrowing. Finally, the resultant form is pronounced into ‘俱乐部 jù lè bù’ in the Chinese Pinyin as normal. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of meaning, three characters of the Chinese result have their own meaning as follows: 俱 jù – all, complete; 乐 lè – joyful, happy; 部 bù – unit, section. Their semantic total is quite approximate to the meaning of the whole words, ‘an organization for people who share a particular interest or enjoy similar activities’. As a consequence, the resultant form in Chinese could be easily misunderstood as a word of native origin.

Since Japanese-Chinese borrowing is always a graphic loan, the criterion to classify indirect loans via Japanese mainly depends on the way English words are borrowed into the Japanese lexicon. For the reason of insufficient knowledge of Japanese, the present author could only give it a rough classification into three parts.

(1) Transliteration

English sources are phonologically transcribed with katakana and every kanji matching kana not contributing to its individual semantic property.



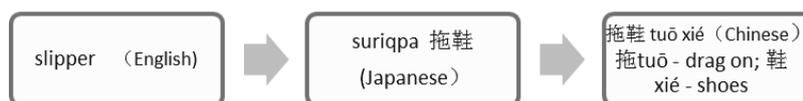
(2) Added semantic transliteration

Besides the phonemic similarity between an English word and Japanese katakana, kanji themselves are also relative to the meaning of the English source.



(lit. 混 hùn – mix; 凝 níng – solidification; 土 tǔ – soil)

(lit. 浪 làng – wave, stroll; 漫 màn – graceful, soft and beautiful)



(lit. 拖 tuō – drag on; 鞋 xié – shoes)

(3) Semantic translation

To an English source, it is its concept rather than the word itself that is borrowed by Japanese. Therefore, the resultant form in Japanese does not resemble the English source phonetically or morphologically, i. e. a word is translated semantically from English to Japanese, in a literal or free way.



• (lit. 民 mín – people; 主 zhǔ – administration)



(lit. 社 shè – society, large community; 会 huì – association, community)



(图 tú – picture, magazine; 书 shū – book; 馆 guǎn – large building)

3. Conclusion

Since Chinese and English belong to two different language families, linguistic borrowing between them is rather complicated as far as the borrowing method is concerned. In modern history, Japanese and English successively exercised similar influence on Chinese, though on a smaller scale, as a result of their advanced modern culture, especially the sophisticated technology and material culture. English now seems to act as ancient Chinese as regards ancient Japan. For instance, the new generations of Japanese youngsters prefer borrowing English with Katakana to using traditional Chinese loanwords with hirakana.

A point to be noted is that, within a country, the flow of language also observes this law, just as Bloomfield [1] put it, in all cases; it is the lower language which borrows predominantly from the upper one. Obviously, 'the lower language' here refers to 'the culturally lower language'.

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