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BORROWING AND POLITENESS STRATEGY IN JAPANESE

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INTRODUCTION

Forms which have been taken from a foreign language into one's native language can be divided into two types: cultural borrowings and core borrowings (Scotton 1988, Myers-Scotton 1993). Cultural borrowing forms represent objects or concepts new to host language culture and fill lexical gaps in the host language (e.g., terebi 'television'). Core borrowing forms are items for which the host language always has viable equivalents and meet no lexical needs (e.g., raisensu 'license'). The latter type, core borrowing, has been especially attracting the attention of linguists in the field of language contact. One of the questions that has arisen is why core borrowing forms are borrowed where there is no lexical need. If there is no lexical need to borrow words from another language, then why are the words borrowed?

In the case of English core forms borrowed into Japanese, one of the popular views of this question has been that the core borrowing is due to the quasi-diglossic situation between Japanese and English, where English is the language of prestige since the post war era in Japan (e.g., Toyama 1973, Loveday 1986). According to this view, Japanese speakers' desire to identify with the culture of English speakers has been the major force of core borrowing forms. For example, through the examination of TV commercials and print advertisements, Takashi (1990) argues that the primary reason for borrowed word use in advertisements is to make the product modern and sophisticated. Along a similar line, Haarman (1986: 212) argues that "the key to understanding multilingualism in Japanese mass media and the relationship of such communication patterns to language preferences and stereotyping images popular among Japanese about Europe and North America is the prestige functions of foreign languages" (emphasis added). Haarman (1986) studied naming of various products and companies in TV commercials. The result is shown below:

TABLE 1. Naming (products, companies)
(TV commercials during April 29th - May 5th, 1984, taken from Haarmann, 1986)

kanji	8	%
hiragana	2.5	%
katakana	39.6	%
alphabet	18.4	%

Kanji are Chinese characters which are used to describe essentially content words in Japanese. Hiragana is a Japanese syllable writing system, and katakana is another Japanese syllable writing system which is used to express borrowed words. Notice that the majority of naming is done in katakana, which is used for loan words. The Japanese writing systems (Kanji and Hiragana) comprise only 10% of the writings in TV commercials. Haarman (1986) associates the predominate use of loan words with the prestige function of foreign languages (e.g., English, French).

Indeed, it is not difficult to find an example of a borrowed form whose function is that of prestige. The following utterance was made by a professor to his students in a Japanese university classroom.

- (1) Kore maeni iuta desyo, ano printed matter
 this before said TAG that
 o kubatta toki ni iuta yo na?
 ACC handed when at said TAG Q

'I said this, right. When I handed out that printed matter I said this, right?'

The professor deliberately used the borrowed form printed matter instead of its Japanese equivalent insatubutu. The instance is a core borrowing and its motivation seems to be coming from the prestige function of the borrowed form. By choosing the English form printed matter, the professor manifested his association with the language of prestige. The choice of the English form conveyed the message to his students that the professor knows English and he can use it if he wishes. Aside from individual words and phrases, sometimes a certain grammatical structure can also be borrowed. The following example is taken from an advertisement for a bank.

- (2) This is natu na no da
 summer is
 'This is summer.'

By framing the simple message that it is summer in English sentence structure, the bank aims to establish itself as a modern international bank with prestige. The structural borrowing along with this is appears to be very successful in reaching out to customers and this specific bank has been using the hybrid phrase of English and Japanese as an eye-catching advertisement phrase for several years now.

Beside the function of prestige and its related concepts such as modernity and internationalization, is there any other function for core borrowing? In this paper, I will argue that core borrowing can function as a conversational strategy in interpersonal negotiations between a speaker and a hearer. More specifically, core borrowing may be used as a politeness strategy to save 'face' (Brown and Levinson 1978) of participants in conversation. For example, a speaker or a writer may use core borrowing as a dynamic strategy to be polite to his/her addressee.

The data for the present study are drawn from the following three sources: 6 hours of tape-recorded conversations among Japanese college students, 4 hours of tape-recorded radio programs, and various written materials such as weekly and monthly magazines, all of which were collected in Japan during the fall of 1995.

FACE AND POLITENESS STRATEGY

Brown and Levinson (1978) argue that speakers employ various politeness strategies to save 'face' in conducting so-called Face Threatening Acts (FTA). According to them, 'face' is the basic want or desire of a speaker/addressee and face can be classified into two types: negative face and positive face. Negative face is the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others. Positive face is the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. This includes the desire to be understood, liked or admired by

others. The FTA is an act which intrinsically threatens face. It includes requests, orders, suggestions, warnings, offers, promises, compliments, criticism, and disagreement, among others. Brown and Levinson (1978) claims that various politeness strategies will be employed by speakers to mitigate the threat to the faces in interpersonal conversations. For example, Brown and Levinson (1978) argues that the use of 'point-of-view' operations can work to distance speaker from hearer or from the particular FTA. As an illustration for this distancing strategy, they offer the switch of tense from present to past, in which a speaker can distance him/herself from the here and now. Observe the following example.

- (3) I was wondering whether you could do me a little favor.

Notice that the past tense was is used in (3). This is a way to minimize the imposition on the addressee and thus minimize the potential face threat. In a sense, the speaker is distancing him/herself from the actual speech act of request.

The present study takes this theory of politeness strategy for its theoretical background and examines various English borrowings in Japanese discourse with respect to their function as a politeness strategy.

BORROWED FORM AS FACE SAVING

In this section, I will first examine instances of borrowing which are used to save the addressee's positive face. Observe the following examples.

- (4) a. Roon de kuruma wo katta no?
 loan by car ACC bought Q
 'Did you buy your car by getting a loan?'
 b. Shakkin-site kuruma wo katta no?
 loan-did car ACC bought Q

The utterance in (4a) is more successful in being indirect/non-confrontational than the utterance in (4b), due to its borrowing form roon 'loan'. As a politeness strategy, choosing the borrowing form roon (4a) rather than its Japanese equivalent shakkin (4b) is a way to mitigate the threatened face (of addressee) involved in the conversation. The Japanese word shakkin implies that the person who gets the loan does not have control over his/her financial matters, and as such he/she has to get the loan as an undesirable consequence. In other words, shakkin is the word which possibly threatens the person's positive face (i.e., the desire to be liked or admired by others). On the other hand, the English borrowed form roon does not have such connotation. Next, observe the following example which is taken from an advertisement for a bank.

- (5) a. Kyassinngu wa ansin dekiru
 cashing TOP feel secured can
 kyookai kamee no mise de.
 organization member GEN shop at
 'Please get a loan from the member shops of the
 organization.'

- b. Shyakkin wa ansin dekiru
 cashing TOP feel secured can
 kyookai kamee no mise de.
 organization member GEN shop at

The example in (5a) in which the borrowed form kyassinngu appears is the actual sentence used by a bank for advertisement. Like roon in (5a), the borrowed form kyassinngu is used as a politeness strategy to save the face of potential customers. It is highly unlikely that the sentence in (5b), which has Japanese shyakkin, is used as an advertisement. The borrowed form kyassinngu in (5a) conveys the sense of modernization and positive image to customers and even encourages them to get the loan. This is because the borrowed form can successfully function as a politeness strategy: the borrowed form can promote the positive image of the addressee. Next, observe the examples in (6).

- (6) a. Kono seetaa hankyuu no baagen de katta n.
 this sweater Hankyuu GEN bargain at bought Q
 'Did you buy this sweater at the bargain sale at Hankyuu
 department store?'
 b. Kono seetaa hankyuu no yasuuri de katta n.
 this sweater Hankyuu GEN bargain at bought Q

The sentence in (6a) has the borrowed form baagen, while the sentence in (6b) has the Japanese equivalent yasuuri instead. The sentence which a speaker actually uttered is (6a), but not (6b). The Japanese word yasuuri literally means 'cheap sale' and it implies that the sale is for shoppers who cannot afford to buy high quality fashionable items or that the goods sold there are not in high quality. In other words, the utterance in (6b) with yasuuri is a potential threat to the addressee's positive face. However, the utterance in (6a) with the borrowed form baagen substantially decreases the threat, instead it actually promotes the addressee's positive face: the addressee may be a smart modern shopper in an urban setting. Next, observe the following examples which are taken from the announcement in a bus.

- (7) a. Sirubaa siito e doozo.
 silver seat to please.
 'Please have a seat at the silver seat.'
 b. Roojin/tosiyori notame no seki e doozo.
 aged person for GEN seat to please.

The sentence in (7a) with the borrowed English form sirubaa siito 'silver seat', which means seats for seniors, is the one actually used by a conductor in a bus. The sentence in (7b) has Japanese word roojin/tosiyori notame no seki 'seats for seniors', which is equal to sirubaa siito in reference. However, its conversational effect is very different from (7a). The word roojin or tosiyori implies that the person is very old and physically weak, and probably needs some sort of physical assistance from others. Thus, the phrase roojin/tosiyori notame no seki 'seats for seniors' is potentially a threat to the face of those senior citizens. The phrase roojin or tosiyori does not give them a positive self-image. Many seniors will not

appreciate being directed to the reserved seats by the utterance in (7b). On the other hand, the utterance in (7a) is very successful in the sense that the face threat to the addressee is avoided by the borrowed form sirubaa sito, which functions to distance the addressee from roojin/tosiyori 'old people'. Actually, the borrowed form provides listeners with the positive image of someone who is still healthy and does not require any assistance from others despite his/her age.

Next, observe the following utterance which was made by a college student to her friend in conversation.

- (8) a. Mattyan no sairensu wa akuseputaburu jyanai de.
 GEN silence TOP acceptable not TAG
 'Mattyan's silence is not acceptable.'
- b. Mattyan no sairensu wa yuruse-nai de.
 GEN silence TOP unacceptable TAG

The speaker uttered the sentence in (8a) to her friend (Mattyan) who did not respond to the speaker and kept silent. The use of borrowed form akuseputaburu can be interpreted as a politeness strategy to save the addressee's face. The sentence (8b) with the Japanese equivalence yuruse-nai is a strong statement that the speaker cannot tolerate the addressee's silence and that the addressee has been behaving very undesirably (thus the addressee is a very undesirable person). However, the borrowed form akuseputaburu in (8a), due to its foreign origin, does not convey such a serious message to the addressee. Rather, the borrowed form helps obscure the assertion that the silence is undesirable. In other words, the borrowed form helps the speaker distance him/herself from the assertion.

The next example involves a politeness strategy which has been employed to save the speaker's own face. The utterance was made by a college student who was describing her emotional status during the exam period.

- (9) a. Asita siken ya kara na, honma
 tomorrow test is because TAG really
 watasi buruu haitten nen.
 I blue enter TAG
 'I'm blue because there will be a test tomorrow.'
- b. Asita siken ya kara na, honma
 tomorrow test is because TAG really
 watasi yuuutsu ya nen.
 I depressed is TAG

The speaker describes her depressed emotional status due to the exam period. The actual sentence she uttered was (9a) which has borrowed form buruu, but not (9b) which has the Japanese equivalent of the borrowed form. By choosing the borrowed form which does not explicitly mean the state of depression, the speaker successfully avoided describing her as someone who is stressed out, and someone who is far from being admirable by others. Consequently, she saved her positive face. On the other hand, if the speaker had uttered the sentence in (9b) with yuuutsu, it would have given the impression that she openly admits that she is in big trouble. She would not have been able to maintain herself as someone who is desirable by others.

Next, I will examine the use of the borrowed form which functions as a way to save negative face. Recall that negative face is the want of every competent adult member that his/her actions be unimpeded by others (Brown and Levinson 1978). For example, a speech act of request is a potential threat to the addressee because the addressee may feel he/she has to accommodate the request against his/her will. In the following example, a speaker (office worker) is trying to inform his superior (department chief) that his department has recently received a complaint from a customer and that he needs advice on solving the complaint from his chief.

- (10) a. Okyaku kara kureemu ga dete irun desu kedo.
customer from claim NOM occurred is but
'The customer has placed a complaint, but...'
- b. Okyaku kara monku ga dete irun desu kedo.
customer from claim NOM occurred is but

Ending an incomplete sentence by a conjunctive kedo 'but' is a common way to make a request to one's senior in the Japanese context. The office worker uttered (10a) with the borrowed form kureemu, but not (10b) with monku 'complaint'. The Japanese word monku implies that the matter is very serious in its nature. On the contrary, the borrowed form kureemu implies that a problem is a minor one and is likely to be easily solved. The sentence (10a) is more successful than the sentence in (10b) in the sense that (10a) makes a lesser threat to the addressee's negative face by minimizing the imposition: (10a) is effective in making the complaint a minor one. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), minimizing the imposition is a strategy to save the addressee's negative face and they offer the following example among others.

- (11) I just want to ask you if I can borrow a tiny bit of/little/single sheet of paper.

The underlined expressions such as little and single help minimize the imposition. Exactly the same effect as in (11) can be obtained by using a borrowed form in the Japanese context in (10a).

Direct imperatives are clear examples of bold-on-record usage in which no face redress is involved. Thus, the form of direct imperative is a threat to addressee's negative face and speakers usually avoid such forms except in certain situations such as great urgency and desperation. The following examples suggest that one way to mitigate the face threat in direct imperatives is to use borrowed forms in the Japanese context.

- (12) a. Shape up your muscles.
b. Kinniku wo kitae-nasai
muscle ACC shape up-IMP
- (13) a. Shape up your smiles. ('Put a smile on your face.')
- b. Warai wo tukuri-nasai.
smile ACC make-IMP

- (14) a. Shape up sense of beauty. ('Shape up your fashion sense.')
- b. Biteki kankaku wo migaki-nasai.
 beauty sense ACC brush up-IMP

The above examples in (12a), (13a), and (14a), which are written entirely in English, are taken from advertisements in magazines. The Japanese imperative sentences in (12b), (13b), and (14b) which end with the imperative morpheme -nasai set the tone that someone in a higher position than the addressee is giving an order to the addressee. This causes a threat to the addressee's negative face: a social norm is that a customer (addressee) should be given maximum freedom about what he/she will buy/do and the seller should not impose any constraint on the customer. The borrowed forms in (12a), (13a), and (14a) minimize such face threats to the addressee. It is likely that readers may not take the sentences in (12a), (13a), and (14a) as directed to themselves, but rather addressed to a non-specified general public as a simple statement or a fixed phrase which does not cause any imposition on him/herself.

Next, as an extension of borrowed form in related phenomena, I will consider the following two cases: code-switching and Japanese words written in katakana.

CODE-SWITCHING AND POLITENESS STRATEGY

It is generally assumed that borrowings occur in a monolingual speaker's speech, while code-switching requires a certain competence in both languages. In other words, code-switching is part of the speech of bilinguals, not monolinguals. Although the distinction between code-switching and borrowing may be made based on the speaker's relative fluency in two languages, it is not necessarily the case that bilinguals always code-switch and never use borrowings. It is equally not warranted to claim that monolinguals always use borrowings and never code-switch. Gingras (1974) argues that the size of the linguistic item may be used to differentiate borrowing and code-switching. According to him, single words should be classified as borrowings and others (e.g., clauses) as code-switching. If we follow this view, the next example, which involves a non idiomatic sentence from English in Japanese discourse, may be treated as code-switching. The conversation occurred among three college students who have all recently returned from their two year study program in the U.S. After listening to her friend's statement, a college student tries to assure her friend that she is a valuable friend and that she respects her.

- (15) C: Atasi nanka sona koto ikko mo itte nai noni
 I TAG that thing one even say not though
 Miho ga itumo nannka sonna fuuni kaisyaku suru.
 NOM always somehow that way interpret do
 'I have never said that, but somehow Miho always interprets
 things in her own way.'
- M: (laugh)
- C: Toiu-koto wa Miho ga soo omotteiru toiu-koto.
 COMP TOP NOM that think COMP
 'That means Miho thinks that way.'

D: Sonna koto nai yo. I respect you.
 that thing not TAG
 'That's not true. I respect you.'

The speaker C says to M (Miho) that M always misunderstands C. M simply laughs and does not offer any explicit apology or explanation to C's comment, which in turn frustrates C. By observing what is going on between C and M, their mutual friend D makes a statement which assures C that she is liked by others and that there is no ill feeling toward C among her friends. In doing so, D code-switches and ends her utterance in English clause I respect you. Why did she use the English sentence instead of Japanese sentence? She could have easily uttered a Japanese sentence such as sonkee site iru wa yo 'I respect you'. One possible answer to this question may be related to the speaker's politeness strategy. Given the fact that all three have experienced living in the country where English is spoken, English may function as their in-group language or 'we-code' (Gumperz 1971). The choice of the English sentence I respect you can mark the speaker's personal involvement and sense of solidarity; thus it functions as a way to promote the addressee's positive face. By using the English sentence, the speaker D assures the addressee C that she is a ratified and valued member of their group.

JAPANESE WORDS IN KATAKANA

In orthography, one of the Japanese writing systems, katakana, is used to express borrowed form. For example, the borrowed word terebi 'television' is written in katakana, but neither in hiragana nor in kanji. Thus, anything written in katakana denotes a concept or item which is foreign to Japanese. In this respect, it is interesting to note that some Japanese native vocabularies are now written in katakana, but not in hiragana or kanji which are reserved for any Japanese vocabularies. Observe the following examples taken from magazines.

(16) Ore batu iti ya kara na.
 I wrong mark/punishment one TAG because TAG
 'I have once divorced, you know.'

In (16), there is no borrowed form involved, yet the Japanese word batu it, which literally means 'punishment one', is written in katakana as if the word were borrowed from some foreign language. Why was the word not written in hiragana or kanji? Again, the choice may be related to a politeness strategy. In Japan, someone who gets a divorce is generally considered as someone who failed not only in his/her marriage but in his/her social life to a certain extent and the act of divorce may be viewed negatively. If this is the case, by describing the divorce in katakana, which is reserved for something foreign, the writer may claim the sense of remoteness from the actual referent of batu it. In other words, the writer can successfully distance him/herself from the undesirable referent. This will lead to saving his/her positive face as a desirable person. Thus, using katakana in describing a non-foreign concept can function as a skillful way to mitigate a threat to one's positive face. Next, observe another example of katakana usage in terms of the distance strategy.

- (17) Yanagi no babaa ga 2000 en toru kara
 GEN old woman NOM yen take because
 watasi wa 1500 en na no.
 I TOP yen is TAG
 'Because Yanagi's old female owner charges 2000 yen, I get only
 1500 yen.'

The above sentence was written by a gay bar host who was describing the salary system at a gay bar called Yanagi. When a patron pays 3500 yen, the gay host will receive only 1500 yen and 2000 yen will be taken by the old female owner of the bar. The host uses the Japanese word babaa 'old woman', which is a word of contempt equivalent to English 'bitch', because he thinks the owner charges too much. He is extremely unhappy with the owner, and he wants to convey that feeling in the sentence, yet he wants to avoid committing himself to the use of a strong word of contempt because the word choice may degrade his integrity as well as his socially prescribed behavior as a female: he is a female and any female does not use any rude slang. In other words, he wants to maintain his positive face. One way to accomplish this is to use katakana and distance himself from the negative word. By using katakana, the gay host is diminishing face threat to himself.

CONCLUSION

Functional analysis of core borrowing has been centered around the idea of prestige, modernity and internationalization. The present study approached the issue of function for core borrowing from a different view. It argued that core borrowing can be viewed as a conversational strategy in interpersonal negotiations between a speaker and a hearer (see Canagarajah 1995 for Tamil context). More specifically, it argued that core borrowing forms can be analyzed as a means of politeness strategy. In addition to passively using a borrowed form to convey the sense of prestige and other related concepts, speakers can actively use borrowed forms to mitigate possibly face threatening speech acts including request and criticism. It is this skillful usage of borrowed forms that the present study has examined. It has also shown that this use of borrowed forms can be extended to the use of katakana writing systems even when there are no apparent foreign words involved. The use of the katakana writing system can also function as a face saving strategy.

To summarize, then, the present study has shown that the use of borrowed forms (and katakana system in case of writing) in the Japanese context can be viewed as a discourse strategy by participants actively involved in interpersonal negotiations (e.g., Giles et al. 1991, Scotton 1988).

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