

Hybridity of *Hanyu*: Classification and Characteristics of Loanwords in Mandarin Chinese

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現代中国語における外来語の分類と特徴に関する一考察

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Abstract

Lexical borrowing is a linguistic phenomenon associated with language contact. Focusing on Chinese lexical borrowing from English and Japanese, this paper aims to classify loanwords in the contemporary Chinese language based on how these loanwords are introduced into Chinese lexicon, and to discuss some of the characteristics of each category. It identifies and discusses the following types of borrowing: transliteration, paraphrasing, the combination of transliteration and paraphrasing, compound loanwords and direct borrowing. Moreover, it offers an observation of some recent developments in lexical borrowing in the Chinese language such as a preference to employ transliteration and coinage of new lexical items by combining existing Chinese vocabulary with suffix-words from Japanese. Furthermore, it suggests the necessity to engage in further inquiry into lexical borrowing as an outcome of cross-cultural influence. This paper serves as an initial step of a renewed effort to observe Chinese lexical borrowing and language use in the contemporary Chinese society.

Keywords: language contact, loanwords, borrowing, Mandarin Chinese, Chinese culture

キーワード：言語接触 外来語 借用 現代中国語 中国文化

Introduction

Language contact occurs whenever people from different language communities encounter and interact with each other, either through migration, trading, cultural exchange, or even war conflicts. As a phenomenon of language contact, lexical *borrowing*¹⁾ is fundamentally a linguistic outcome of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural influence (see Thomas 2001; Winford 2002). Well-known historical instances include the large-scale absorption of words from Latin, French and other languages into modern English during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries as well as the contemporary borrowing of English words in many other languages as a result of the emergence of English as an international lingua franca. *Loanwords*²⁾ refer to lexical items that are borrowed from other languages but have become a distinct and indelible constituent of the recipient language. Inquiry into lexical borrowing phenomenon informs us about the historical and social conditions underlying linguistic activities of human beings, illuminates the mechanism of influences between languages, as well as facilitates our understanding of the cultural transformation and social changes in association with linguistic movements.

During its evolution from the classical to the modern, *Mandarin Chinese*³⁾ has been much shaped and greatly enriched by other languages in terms of sentence structures and vocabulary development as a result of its contact with other languages, especially since the latter half of the nineteenth century. The influence from other languages and cultures is reflected in the nation's efforts to simplify and modernize complicated old Chinese into a language for general public use. These efforts have been represented by the *Vernacular Chinese Movement*⁴⁾ at the turn of the 20th century, the language reform in respect of national language policy and language education during the first half of the 20th century, and, equally significant if not more, the nationwide promotion of *Putonghua*⁵⁾ in mainland China since the mid-1950s.

It is acknowledged both in the general public and in academic arena that the contemporary Chinese language *borrowed* heavily from English and Japanese. The subject-verb sequential pattern, which is the

essential word order of modern Chinese, originates in English and a sizable fraction of its vocabulary for daily-use derives from Japanese.⁶⁾ Accordingly, the language contact between Chinese and other languages such as English and Japanese serves as a critical site for observing the development of Mandarin Chinese in the current Chinese society.

Chinese Lexical Borrowing as a Subject of Inquiry

Chinese lexical borrowing from other languages can be traced back to more than two thousand years ago, to the pre-Qin Era. Some of the most well-known and influential lexical borrowings include the introduction of words from *Sanskrit* concurrent with the spread of Buddhism into China during the *Sui* period (581-618 AD) and the *Tang* period (618-907 AD), as well as the borrowing from Arabic languages during the *Song* period (960-1279 AD), when trade among *Song*, South East Asian region and Western countries was flourishing. Recent borrowings occurred during the *Ming* period (1368-1644 AD), when Western Christian belief began to enter the Asian continent, as well as from the late *Qing* era (1644-1912 AD), when Western cultural values, together with modern science and technology, became to be accepted, appreciated and even embraced in China (Shi 2003 & 2004).

Nevertheless, academic inquiry on loanwords in Chinese has been far from being adequate in terms of quantity and quality. The shortage of research presumably arises from the disparities among scholars in their definition of the term *loanwords in Chinese* as well as in their stances of inquiry. For instance, there seems to be no consensus over whether or not *waseikango*⁷⁾ introduced into Chinese should be categorized as loanwords, since they are Japanese vocabulary coined by using borrowed Chinese characters (e.g. Wang 2010). Moreover, the lack of sufficient academic inquiry in this field is partly due to the fact that such academic efforts were frequently intervened and even interrupted by historical occurrences such as foreign invasions, internal conflicts and social turbulence.⁸⁾ Furthermore, it is conceivably not an easy task to grasp the fast changing linguistic landscape of China constituted in and shaped by the nation's rapid economic growth

and drastic social transformation during the last two decades (Shi 2013 preface).

Although the number of academic inquiry is limited, some of them are of critical importance. *On the Study of Loanwords in Modern Chinese* (Gao & Liu 1958) represents an initial significant work in this field. Liu, Gao, Mai and Shi (1984) make a deliberate effort to depict a more comprehensive picture of loanwords in Chinese with a focus on the words of English origin. Cen (1990) however distances himself from compiling a dictionary by enlisting in his work a large number of proper nouns such as person's names. Among the most recent academic research in this field during the last decade stands out *Loanwords in the Chinese Language* (Shi 2003), in which Shi devotes himself to a historical search for the loanwords in Chinese from other languages and cultures, and offers a remarkable analysis on the cultural meanings of linguistic borrowing. The quality of his work has won high recognition among scholars as well by the general public, which led to its revised edition in 2013.

Among the few earlier outstanding works on Chinese lexical borrowing is *A Dictionary of Loanwords in Hanyu* (Liu et al. 1984), which draws up a list of 7,704 loanwords in Chinese, among which 3,426 words have English as their source language and 882 words were believed to be of Japanese origin. Shi attempts to classify these loanwords in terms of their source languages and fourteen fields of usage (2003:162). His work indicates that English and Japanese are the two major source languages for loanwords in modern Chinese, and concludes that Chinese contact with English and Japanese since the turn of the 20th century has had a direct and profound impact on the formation and development of the contemporary Chinese language.

This paper makes a renewed effort to discuss loanwords in Mandarin Chinese by categorizing loanwords in terms of how these words are borrowed and introduced into Chinese as well as by examining the characteristics of each category. It especially attempts to make some observation of new developments in the use of borrowing vocabulary in contemporary Chinese society. To achieve this goal, the analysis focuses on the historic period since the turn of the 20th century and utilizes the relevant data regarding loanwords mainly from English and

Japanese.⁹⁾ Major sources of date include *A Dictionary of Loanwords in Hanyu* (Liu et al. 1984), *Loanwords in the Chinese Language* (Shi 2003 & 2013), *A Dictionary of Modern Chinese Language*, 6th edition (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 2012), as well as some on-line resources. Some of the examples cited are neologisms, newly coined terms, words or phrases that are in the process of entering common use, but that have not yet been enlisted in the references mentioned above. The study illustrated in this paper is intended to be an initial step for further inquiry into the cultural and social conditions that have made possible the movements of lexical borrowing and the use of loanword vocabulary in modern Chinese.

Classification and Characteristics of Loanwords in Chinese

Although Chinese lexical borrowing from other languages reflects a diversity in source languages, it is of great significance that the number of loanwords from English and Japanese accounts for about 45% and 12% of the total number of loanwords in modern Chinese respectively (Shi 2003; Ogawa 2006). English is a representative language using phonography and alphabets, whereas Japanese employs both a phonographic system, as in *kana*, and Chinese characters. Mandarin Chinese however is a typical language with morpheme words, an ideographic system and logograms of characters. An observation upon Chinese lexical borrowing from English and Japanese should shed invaluable light on the mechanism of language contact in general and linguistic borrowing in particular. With respect to loanwords in Chinese, five categories can be made based on how these words are borrowed or introduced.

Transliteration

The largest portion of loanwords in Mandarin Chinese falls under the category of *transliteration*¹⁰⁾, or loan-translation, where a word is translated morpheme-by-morpheme into another language. Transliteration is a representative way of introducing words from languages which use Latin or Roman alphabets such as English and many European languages. In the case of Chinese, the pronunciation of a loanword is indicated by a *Hanyu pinyin*¹¹⁾ which

has the closest pronunciation to its original sound, and the word is written in Chinese characters correspondent to that pinyin. This type of loanwords is prevalent especially in name nouns such as names of persons, places, chemical elements, sports,

measures and musical instruments (Liu et al. 1984: Chapter 4). The meaning of a loanword is usually not evident from the characters. Some examples are given below.

	<i>Loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>original word in English</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
1.	迪斯科	dí sī kē	disco	ディスコ
2.	伊妹儿	yī mèi er	email	電子メール
3.	巧克力	qiǎo kè lì	chocolate	チョコレート
4.	吉他	jí tā	guitar	ギター
5.	麦克风	mài kè fēng	microphone	マイク

Transliteration is not a traditional path through which lexical borrowing from Japanese occurs, since Japanese borrowed and uses Chinese characters. However, recent years have seen an increase in the

number of this type of loanwords from Japanese with direct relevance to everyday life, suggesting a strong and persistent influence from Japanese culture, as shown in the following examples.

	<i>Loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>original word in Japanese</i>	<i>English</i>
1.	榻榻米	tā tā mǐ	畳 (tatami)	tatami
2.	卡哇伊	kā wā yī	かわいい (kawaii)	lovely
3.	欧巴桑	ō bā sang	おばさん (obasan)	aunt

Transliteration loanwords bear an intriguing characteristic attributable to the distinct nature of the relation between Chinese characters and their pronunciation. It is usual and common in Chinese that one *pinyin*, instead of matching one character, may correspond to multiple characters, and one character may also have multiple pronunciation.¹²⁾ This opens up the space for word choice in transliteration. In the case of a pronunciation or *pinyin* that corresponds to multiple Chinese characters, preference is given to the Chinese

character which reveals the essence or quality of the concept or object being introduced, since Chinese characters are ideography and carry meanings. This is convincingly true in transliteration loanwords that are names of companies and brands names of merchandise. In the practice of translation or advertising, transliteration using the most appropriate characters, in terms of both pronunciation and connotation, is believed to be the ultimate goal. A list of examples is given below for discussion and appreciation.

	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>original word in English</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
1.	奔驰	bēn chí	Benz	ベンツ
2.	马自达	mǎ zì dá	Matsuda	マツダ
3.	古姿	gǔ zī	Gucci	グッチ
4.	雅诗兰黛	yǎ sī lán dài	EsteeLauder	エスティローダー
5.	娇兰	jiāo lán	Guerlain	ゲラン
6.	迷你裙	mí nǐ qún	mini-skirt	ミニスカート
7.	托福	tuō fú	TOEFL	TOEFL トーフル
8.	托业	tuō yè	TOEIC	TOEIC
9.	雅思	yǎ sī	IETS	IELTS
10.	可口可乐	kě kǒu kě lè	Coca Cola	コカコーラ
11.	博客	bó kè	blog	ブログ
12.	宜家	yī jiā	IKEA	イケア

The first two examples are cited as excellent transliteration of world-famous brand names. *Benchi* (奔驰) signifies a sequence of moving or passing with elegance and speed, whereas *Mazida* (马自达) implies a horse running with force towards its goal. Both enable us to visualize an automobile characterized by speed, power, grace and excellence. In example 3, 4 and 5 respectively, *zi* (姿 meaning “posture” or “proportion”), *ya* (雅 meaning “grace”), and *lan* (兰 meaning “orchid”) are all synonyms of beauty and elegance, and thus enjoy a high appearance frequency in the names of commercial goods for women. *Mini* (迷你) in example 6 literally means “intriguing you”, and this is probably what a mini-skirt is for. *Tuofu* (托福 meaning “dreaming for happiness”) in example 7, *tuoye* (托业 meaning “dreaming for good occupation”) in example 8 and *yasi* (雅思 meaning “sweet memory and imagination”) in example 9 are all truly reflective of the importance of these standardized proficiency tests in the minds of test-takers as they imagine and envision their future careers. *Kekoukele* (可口可乐) has always been cited as a classic example of excellent translation from English, because this loanword in Chinese simply means “delicious and fun”. *Boke* (博

客) in example 11 suggests a cool image of a passerby on the net, who, knowledgeable and self-assured about the topic of concern, drops off with confidence a few lines for others to meditate upon. In example 12, the combination of *yi* (宜), meaning “cozy and comfortable”, and *jia* (家), meaning “home”, transcribes the very message that IKEA is striving to deliver to its customers. All the examples discussed above represent wonderful combinations of transliteration and paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing

*Paraphrasing*¹³⁾, which may also be called *semantic calque*, is another well-employed method in Chinese lexical borrowing from other languages. With the meaning of a source word being transferred, a new Chinese vocabulary with same or similar meaning as that of the source word is created. This method profits on the ideographic attribute of Chinese characters, and differs itself from free translation in that many of these borrowings are well-established and in universal use. Examples of paraphrasing are given in the table below.

loanword	pinyin	source word in English	Japanese
1. 手球	shǒuqiú	hand-ball	ハンドボール
2. 电视	diànshì	television	テレビ
3. 视窗	shìchuāng	Windows	ウィンドウズ
4. 千年虫	qiānnián chóng	millennium bug	2000年問題
5. 超级市场	chāoji shìchǎng	supermarket	スーパー
6. 电梯	diàntī	elevator	エレベーター
7. 浏览器	yóulǎnqì	browser	ブラウザ
loanword	pinyin	source word in Japanese	English
1. 生鱼片	shēngyú piàn	刺身	sashimi (raw fish)
2. 随身听	suíshēn tīng	ウォークマン	Walkman
3. 机器猫	jīqì māo	ドラエモン	Doraemon (a machine in the shape of a cat)

Paraphrasing is especially instrumental when the pronunciation of a lexical item (i.e. a word) in its source language is very different from that in Chinese and there is not a Chinese character available which has a close pronunciation to that of the original word. Moreover, paraphrasing has the merit of grasping and

transferring the meaning of a word or concept. However, it usually takes time for a borrowing of this type to be accepted as a standard loanword into the Chinese lexicon.

Combination of Transliteration and Paraphrasing

This category of lexical borrowing takes on the merits of transliteration and paraphrasing, and therefore shows more flexibility and productivity in forming new vocabulary. As a linguistic movement, it

is more liable to occur when a new concept from another language cannot be readily explained by an existing word in Chinese. The following is a list of examples in this respect.

	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>source word in English</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
1.	水上芭蕾	shuǐ shàng bālěi	water ballet	シクロアイス ト スイミング
2.	文化休克	wénhuà xiūkè	cultural shock	カルチャーショック
3.	微博	wēibó	microblogging	ミニブログ
4.	奶昔	nǎixī	milk shake	ミルクシェイク
5.	冰淇淋	bīngqílín	ice cream	アイスクリーム
6.	星巴克	xīngbākè	Starbucks	スターバックス

Shuishang (水上) means “on the water”, and *balei* (芭蕾) has a very close pronunciation of “ballet”; *wenhua* (文化) is a semantic translation of “culture” and *xiuke* (休克) is a transliteration of “shock”. *Weibo* (微博) in example 3 is a combination of *wei* (微), meaning “micro”, and *bo* (博), a transliteration of “blogging”. *Naixi* (奶昔) is a new coinage of *nai* (奶), meaning “milk”, and *xie* (昔), a character merely pronounced similarly as “shake”. *Bingqilin* (冰淇淋) is composed of *bing* (冰), meaning “ice”, and *qilin* (淇淋), two characters which sound very close to “cream”; *xingbake* (星巴克) consists of *xing* (星), meaning “star”, and *bake* (巴克), two characters with a tradition of appearance in transliteration loanwords.

As discussed in the section of transliteration, Chinese characters are ideographic, and therefore the most appropriate character is chosen in terms of the connotation it carries as well as the image it creates. In the examples listed above, *lei* (蕾) in example 1

means “bud”, *xiu* (休) in example 2 has the meaning of “rest” and “stop”; *bo* (博) in example 3 means “knowledgeable”, and *lin* (淋) with the radical of *water* (氵) in example 5 sets up an image of “fluidity”. These Chinese characters are preferred on the grounds that they suggest positive meanings and explain attributes and quality of the concepts or objects described in the original lexical items.

Compound Loanwords

This group of loanwords is characterized by a combination of a transliteration or paraphrase of a source word and an existing Chinese word or a character which indicates an attribute or a special feature of the concept or product being focused on. Loanwords of this category are prevalent in the fields of sports and commercial products, which is evidenced in the following examples.

	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>source word in English</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
1.	啤酒	pí jiǔ	beer	ビール
2.	酒吧	Jiǔ bā	bar	バー
3.	保龄球	bǎo líng qiú	bowling	ボーリング
4.	拉力赛	lālì sài	rally	ラリー
5.	汉堡包	hànbǎo bāo	hamburger	ハンバーガー
6.	沙丁鱼	shā dīng yú	sardine	いわし

Jiu (酒), meaning “liquid”, is added to *pi* (啤), a transliteration of “beer”, as in example 1; it is added as a prefix to *ba* (吧), which sounds similar to “bar”, in example 2. Both *pi* (啤) and *ba* (吧) share the same radical of *mouth* (kou 口), suggesting the

relevance to drinking. In example 3, *qiu* (球), which means “ball”, is attached to *baoling* (保龄), which has a close pronunciation of “bowling”. In example 4 *sai* (赛), meaning “match” or “game”, is added to *lali* (拉力), which sounds like “rally”. Moreover, *baoling* (保龄)

are ideograms meaning “keep fit and remain young”, and *lali* (拉 力) carries the meaning of “prolonged strength”, both of which are descriptive of the nature of these two types of sports. *Bao* (包) in example 5, which means “bun”, and *yu* (鱼) in example 6, meaning “fish”, are added just to make clear the type of products respectively.

Direct Borrowing

This group of loanwords especially refers to the words directly borrowed from source languages which use Chinese characters in writing such as Japanese. Modern Mandarin Chinese encompasses a significant portion of this type of loanwords as a result of a history of interaction between China and Japan since the mid-nineteenth century. *Waseikango* (和製漢語), words coined in Japanese during the process of learning and translating knowledge from other cultures, were introduced into the Chinese language concurrent with their concepts and ideas. The general

rule concerning Chinese lexical borrowing from Japanese is that Chinese characters of Japanese, called *kanji* in Japanese, are replaced by Chinese characters in Chinese, and words are pronounced according to pinyin.¹⁴⁾

Borrowing of waseikango

Waseikango consist of three groups of Japanese lexical items coined by using Chinese characters. *Table 1* below lists some words from the group of *shinkango* (新漢語), the Japanese words coined during the Meiji period for the purpose of introducing Western knowledge through the translation of Western languages. *Table 2* indicates a large group of Japanese words created in the ancient times and have become an essential part of the everyday Japanese vocabulary. *Table 3* gives some examples of other Japanese lexical items that came into being through semantic modification of existing Chinese characters.

Table 1:	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>source word in Japanese</i>	<i>English</i>
	科学	kēxué	科学 (kagaku)	science
	资本	zīběn	資本 (shihon)	capital
	哲学	zéxué	哲学 (tetsugaku)	philosophy
	人权	rénquán	人權 (jinken)	human rights
	法律	fǎlǜ	法律 (ritsu)	law

Table 2:	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>source word in Japanese</i>	<i>English</i>
	歌舞伎	gēwǔjì	歌舞伎 (kabuki)	kabuki
	和服	héfú	和服 (wafuku)	wafuku
	方针	fāngzhēn	方針 (houshin)	guideline
	写真	xiězhēn	写真 (shashin)	photo, picture
	人气	rénqì	人氣 (ninki)	popularity

Table 3:	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>source word in Japanese</i>	<i>English</i>
	经济	jīngjì	經濟 (keizai)	economy
	文学	wénxué	文学 (bungaku)	literature
	文化	wénhuà	文化 (bunka)	culture
	古典	gǔdiǎn	古典 (koten)	classical
	主体	zhǔtǐ	主体 (shutai)	subject, entity

Features regarding lexical borrowing from Japanese

While a *waseikango* is being introduced into Chinese, its *kanji* is transcribed to Chinese characters and the word is pronounced according to pinyin in

mainland China. In addition, direct borrowing from Japanese follow some special rules in most cases. Some distinguishing features of borrowing processes are discussed below.

<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>source word</i>	<i>Romaji</i>	<i>English</i>
1. 写手	xiěshǒu	書き手	kakite	writer
2. 宅急送	zhǎijísòng	宅急便	takyubin	express delivery
3. 自动售货机	zìdòng shòuhuòjī	自動販売機	jidouhanbaiki	vending machine
4. 写真	xiězhēn	写真	shashin	photo
5. 新干线	xīn gàn xiàn	新幹線	Shinkansen	shinkansen
6. 单身族	dānshēn zú	独身貴族	dokushinkizoku	unmarried person living affluently
7. 洗手间	xǐ shǒu jiān	お手洗い	otearai	washroom
8. 确认距离	quèrèn jùlí	距離確認	kyorikakunin	check distance

Example 1 represents a two-step movement of transfer of a Japanese word to a Chinese word: (1) the omission of “*ki* き”, the *suffix* of the Japanese word, to get closer to Chinese linguistic rule, and (2) the replacement of “書” by a simplified Chinese character “写”, a more popular word meaning “writing” in modern Mandarin Chinese. Some other examples include “maichang 买 场”, meaning “selling place”, which comes from Japanese “売場 *uriba*”, and “duwu 读 物”, meaning “reading material”, which is a borrowing of Japanese “読み物 *yomimono*”.

Example 2 reflects a semantic consideration upon the difference in the meaning of same characters between Japanese and Chinese. “便”, which means “mail and delivery” in Japanese, does not carry the same meaning in Chinese, and therefore is replaced by “送 *song*”, which has the meaning of “sending” or “delivering” in Chinese.

Example 3 is an instance of substitution as linguistic adaptation. It shows that words with same Chinese characters in Japanese and Chinese may differ greatly in actual use. In such a case, a choice of characters in a loanword is demanded to convey the exact meaning of its Japanese word. The word “*fanmai* 贩卖” in Chinese means “selling goods” as it is meant in Japanese “hanbai 販 売”. However, in modern Chinese language use this word is always associated with a negative connotation; it usually carries the meaning of “selling something illegally or with an evil purpose”, as in “*fanmai dupin* 贩卖毒品” and “*fanmai wenwu* 贩卖文物”, meaning “selling drugs” and “illegally selling cultural relics” respectively. Therefore, Japanese “hanbai 贩卖” is substituted by Chinese “shouhuo 售 货”, a neutral word meaning “selling goods” in Chinese.

Example 4 indicates another critical linguistic

phenomenon regarding the use of Chinese characters in Japanese and modern Chinese. While the same characters are used in the loanword, the loanword itself only takes up partial meaning or usage of the original Japanese word. “*Shashin* 写真” in Japanese means (1) a faithful copy of an object and (2) photography (Nimura 2008), whereas “*xiezhēn* 写真” as a loanword in Chinese only matches the second usage of the Japanese source word.

Example 5 involves a semantic extension in that the connotation of a Japanese word has been extended in the loanword in Chinese. In addition to its reference to Japan’s *Shinkansen* express train, “*Xingganxian* 新干线” in Chinese has also been used to refer to the most updated information on a hot topic, as in “*ruanjian xingganxian* 软件新干线”, meaning “new trends in software”, and “*mingxing xingganxian* 明星新干线”, columns which entertain their readers by providing “the most updated information about stars and celebrities.”

Example 6 reflects another prominent phenomenon of Chinese lexical borrowing from Japanese in recent years. Some Japanese suffixes, when they are introduced into Chinese, become very productive in that more words are created in Chinese as coinages of these suffixes and other Chinese words. “*Zoku* 族” is the most productive and one of the most commonly used suffixes borrowed from Japanese. 族 in Japanese usually means “a group of people”, but the meaning of it in Chinese is originally limited to “clan” or “race”. When it is added to group nouns as a suffix, the coined words in Chinese refer to particular groups which share their special interests or engage in their particular activities. The borrowing of Japanese suffix “族” serves the descriptive purpose, as the dramatic socioeconomic change in China has given rise to a

division of people into particular groups. The following table gives some words with this suffix that

are frequently used in the current Chinese society.

	<i>loanword</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>English</i>
a.	白领族	báilǐng zú	white-collar workers
b.	素食族	sùshí zú	vegetarians
c.	工薪族	gōngxīn zú	salary workers
d.	追星族	zhuīxīng zú	movie star fans
e.	不婚族	bùhūn zú	persons who prefer to remain unmarried

Example 7 and 8 indicate a syntactical change accompanying lexical borrowing from Japanese: the change of word order from object-verb to verb-object. When a Japanese word is introduced into Chinese, the loanword follows Chinese word sequence of verb-object, making it more acceptable in the Chinese environment. This syntactical reverse is observable especially in compound vocabulary. The Japanese *kana* “お” and “い” are taken off, and then “te 手” (hand) and “arai 洗” (wash) are reversed to be “洗手”. By adding “jian 间”, a word which means “room”, the Chinese word “xishoujian 洗手间” is thus born. In the same way, “kyori 距離”, which means “distance” both in Japanese and Chinese, and “kakunin 確認”, which means “check, make sure”, are reversed in the Chinese loanword “queren juli 确认距离”.

Conclusion

This study offers an observation and explanation of Chinese lexical borrowing from English and Japanese. The types of borrowing as identified, categorized and discussed in this paper are transliteration, paraphrasing, combination of transliteration and paraphrasing, compound loanwords and direct borrowing.

The discussion upon loanwords in Mandarin Chinese leads to three general observations regarding some distinguishing features of lexical borrowing phenomenon in the contemporary Chinese language.

First, as a unique component of Chinese lexicon, loanword vocabulary reflects the hybrid nature of modern Mandarin Chinese. Since modern Chinese has been greatly enriched by the borrowing from English and Japanese, Chinese lexical borrowing offers a critical area of study upon the Chinese language and the history of its people in terms of

linguistic contact and cultural influence.

Second, although diversity can be observed regarding how foreign words are introduced into Chinese, *paraphrasing* has historically been a major path through which lexical borrowing occurs. This is attributable to the fact that Chinese is an ideography language and Chinese characters are ideograms.

Third, even in the case of transliteration, there has been a tradition to search for the most appropriate word or character that helps illuminate the nature and promote the image of a concept or product such as a company name or a brand name. Such a practice becomes possible because Chinese contains a great number of polyphonic words and multi-word homophone.

New tendencies in the formation and use of loanwords in everyday life of Chinese people can be seen at least in the following three aspects, and each requires further inquiry in its historical/social context and from a cross-cultural perspective.

First, due to social and historical reasons, people in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in many cases use different loanwords for the same source word. For example, for the English word “party”, “*juhui*” (聚会), a paraphrasing loanword, is common in mainland China, whereas “*paidui*” (派对), a transliteration, is preferred in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Another example is the word “taxi”. It is “*chuzuche*” (出租车) in mainland China but “*dishi*” (的士) in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The phenomenon of difference in lexical choice deserves future observation.

Second, language use in current Chinese society reveals a growing interest in borrowing foreign lexical items through transliteration, and this is especially the case when these new vocabulary are directly related to daily life of Chinese people. 尼特族 (*nitezū*)

for “NEEDS” and 卡哇伊 (kawayi) for Japanese *kawaii* (可愛い), meaning “cute and lovely”, are the two examples of high frequency appearance in social media nowadays.

Third, there is a tendency to exploit some suffix words which are originally borrowed from Japanese. An increasing number of new words are coined in Chinese by combining an existing word with such a suffix word. “化” has been traditionally used as a suffix both in Japanese lexicon and in Chinese loanword vocabulary; “族” is a suffix word that originally comes from Japanese but enjoys its popularity in forming new Chinese lexical items in recent years.

The loanword vocabulary in Mandarin Chinese constitutes a very important part of the language and life of Chinese people. It continues to expand and evolve, serving the changing linguistic needs of modern Chinese society. Linguistic borrowing should be viewed both as an outcome of languages in contact and as an outcome of cross-cultural influences. It is therefore both necessary and meaningful to examine the social and cultural conditions that make Chinese lexical borrowing possible as well as to explore the significance of this linguistic movement to the development of contemporary Chinese language and culture.

Notes

- 1) The word “borrowing” is used in this paper as a general and traditional term to describe the adoption into a language of a linguistic item used in another. See Haugen, E. I., “The rise and fall of an immigrant language: Norwegian in America”, In N. C. Dorian (Ed.), *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*, pp. 100-119, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- 2) The equivalent of *loanwords* in Chinese is *wailaiyu* (外来语), which itself is a borrowing from Japanese lexicology, *gairaigo* 外来語, a term coined in Japanese by using Chinese characters. In mainland China, *wailaici* (外来词) is a more popular term.
- 3) *Xiandai Hanyu* (现代汉语) in the Chinese language, *Mandarin Chinese or Modern Chinese* is defined as the standard and official language of the People’s Republic of China. It is also the official language of the Republic of China, where it is called *Guoyu* (国语), and one of the four official languages of Singapore. Its phonology is based upon the Beijing dialect, whereas its vocabulary is drawn from diverse groups of Mandarin varieties. It is also referred to as Chinese or the *contemporary Chinese language*. This paper focuses on and draws data from the language interpreted and used in the People’s Republic of China, where it is usually known as *Putonghua* (普通话).
- 4) *Baihuawen Yundong* (白话文运动) in Chinese, it refers to a sequence of collective efforts by Chinese intellectuals then to simplify the sentence structures and lexicons of *classical Chinese or literary Chinese*, called *Wenyanwen* (文言文) or *Guanhua* (官话), by introducing grammar and vocabulary from other languages prominently English and Japanese. It is believed to have paved the way for the formation of the current Mandarin Chinese language.
- 5) Promoted especially since 1956 in mainland China, *Putonghua* (普通话) is the colloquial alternative to *Classical Chinese* and the spoken language unifying the various dialects of *Han* ethnic group and used as the standard and official language in China. It is augmented by *Hanyu Pinyin romanization* (汉语拼音) for pedagogical purposes. The term is used interchangeably with *Mandarin Chinese* and *the Chinese language*.
- 6) Estimation concerning the percentage of loanwords from Japanese in modern Mandarin Chinese varies greatly among scholars ranging from 30% to as much as 70%, which accounts for the necessity for further inquiry in this field. For reference, see Tan, Ruqian, “Japanese Language in Chinese language”, in Sanetou Keishu, *Modern History of Sino-Japan Exchange*, Shunjuusha, 1973 (譚汝謙『中国語のなかの日本語・補遺』実藤惠秀『近代日中交渉史話』の附録、春秋社、1973年). Also see Chen Shengbao, *Chinese Borrowings from the Japanese language* (中国語の中の日本語) (www.nichibun.ac.jp/graphicversion/dbase/forum/text/fn091.html) (Retrieved 2015-5-12)
- 7) 和製漢語 in Japanese, this term refers to a group of vocabulary in Japanese created by using Chinese characters. For a detailed reading, see Chen, Liwei, *The Formation and Development of Waseikango*, Kyukoshoin, 2001 (陳力衛『和製漢語の形成と展開』

- 汲古書院、2001年)。Also see Toudou, Akiyasu, *Kanji and the Japanese Language*, Shuei Publishers, 1969 (藤堂明保『漢字と日本語』、秀英出版社、1969年) and Takashima, Toshio, *Kanji and Japanese People*, Bunshunshinsho, 2001 (高島俊男『漢字と日本人』文春新書、2001)。
- 8) This is especially true in the case of mainland China. One of the representative historical instances of social turbulence in contemporary China is the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976.
- 9) It should be noted that many words are originally from other languages. Since they have been absorbed into Modern English and introduced into Chinese via English, they are treated as loanwords from English in this paper.
- 10) *yinyi* (音译) in Chinese and *onyaku* (音訳) in Japanese.
- 11) *Hanyu pinyin* (汉语拼音) is the official phonetic system for transcribing the Mandarin pronunciations of Chinese characters into Latin alphabets in the People's Republic of China, and is often used to teach Standard Chinese.
- 12) These characters are called *duoyinzi* (多音字) in Chinese, characters that have multiple *pinyin*.
- 13) *Yiyi* (意译) in Chinese and *iyaku* (意訳) in Japanese.
- 14) Chinese characters in Japan and China have undergone simplification and other changes in respective countries. The Chinese characters in Japanese, which is called *kanji*, employ a special phonetic system, which is very different from the *pinyin* system promoted and used in the People's Republic of China.
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