



INSTITUTIONEN FÖR SPRÅK OCH LITTERATURER

OUT WITH THE NEW, IN WITH THE OLD

A study on Western loanwords in Japanese newspapers and the recommendations provided by the National Institute of Japanese Language and Linguistics.

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Handledare:	Martin Nordeborg
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Abstract

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With the current influx of Western loanwords, also called *gairaigo*, into the Japanese language, many Japanese citizens fear that the spirit of the language is disappearing. Nevertheless, borrowing words from foreign languages has historically been and still is an important part in the development of the Japanese language. However, some new *gairaigo* have been deemed unfitting or easily misunderstood by both the public and the National Institute of Japanese Language and Linguistics, which has led to the publication of ‘recommendation lists’ by the same institution, that lists said *gairaigo* and suggestions on how to replace them with native Japanese words. This thesis sought to examine if the recommendations had any effect on one of the biggest daily newspapers, the *Asahi Shimbun*. A total of 120 articles, 60 each from the year 1999 and 2019 were examined, covering five different categories in total. By comparing the amount of *gairaigo* from both years and with the recommendations, it was possible to determine that the amount of *gairaigo* that appeared in the articles has slightly increased, while the use of “difficult” *gairaigo* has remained the same.

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Table of content

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Topic	4
1.2 Purpose and research questions	5
1.3 Background	6
1.3.1 The National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics	6
1.3.2 Gairaigo and katakana	7
2. Theory and previous research	9
2.1 Theory	9
2.2 Previous research	11
3. Method and Material	13
3.1 Kikuzo II Visual	14
3.2 Limitations	16
4. Results and analysis	17
4.1 Articles from 1999	18
4.2 Articles from 2019	19
4.3 Matching gairaigo and their suggested substitutes	20
4.3.1 Articles from 1999	20
4.3.1.1 High-frequency words	22
4.3.2 Articles from 2019	22
4.3.2.1 High-frequency words	25
4.4 Comprehension rates of the matching gairaigo	26
5. Discussion	28
5.1 Answering the research questions	28
6. Conclusion	30
6.1 Further Research	32
Reference list	33
Online sources	35

1. Introduction

1.1 Topic

In the aftermath of World War II, Japan sought out to have a similar technological and economic progression to the United States. As a result Western and American culture has had a great influence on Japan over the course of the 20th century. Large amounts of Western loanwords have therefore poured into the language, perhaps subconsciously, as a way to mimic the American way of life (Olah, 2007, p.178). These loanwords, known as *gairaigo* in Japanese, are single or a set of words that have been taken from other languages either in their entirety as seen in *komittomento* - commitment, or partially as seen in *infura* - infrastructure. In recent decades, these types of words have become an inherent part of the Japanese language and they now make up more than 10% of the Japanese lexical vocabulary (Stanlaw, 2004, p.12). Understandably, the rapid increase of foreign words in the language has gradually become a topic of discussion in the media, with both authority figures and the general public having their say in the matter.

According to previously conducted research by Tomoda (1999), the increase in use and rapid borrowing of *gairaigo* has resulted in new words that are hardly recognizable or easily misunderstood by the average speaker. In addition, it seems that older people tend to have difficulty with excessive use of *gairaigo* (Carrol, 1991, p.309).

Needless to say, the younger generation should have a more positive approach when it comes to *gairaigo*, since they are for the most part at least somewhat connected to “Western culture” and have an ever-growing online presence.

Olah (2007) points out that as there is a prominent increase in *gairaigo*, some worry that there is a clear gap in the understanding of *gairaigo* between the young and the elderly, others that the presence of the Japanese ‘identity’ is declining with an increase in Western based loanwords.

Whatever the case, with an increase in amount, there also seems to be an increase in dissatisfaction from the Japanese public. As a response, The National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (hereafter referred to as NINJAL) has as of December 2019 released four lists with guidelines and recommendations as to which *gairaigo* should be substituted for more convenient Japanese words. Some of these difficult *gairaigo* are for example: *bariaafurii* - barrier-free, *guroobaru* - global, *konsensasu* - consensus and *negurekuto* - neglect.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

To specify, this study will focus on loanwords of Western origin, more specifically words that have been borrowed from Western languages. This study will be conducted on one of Japan's five national newspapers, the *Asahi Shimbun*, and its use of *gairaigo*. This due to the fact that much of the previous research conducted on the use of *gairaigo* seems to be on *gairaigo* appearing in newspapers. National newspapers often cover a wide range of topics, as well as have a large reader base throughout the country.

The research questions for this thesis are as follows:

1. What difference is there in the amount of *gairaigo* used in the *Asahi Shimbun* in the years 1999 and 2019?
2. To what extent does the newspaper follow the recommendations provided by NINJAL regarding the proposed decrease of *gairaigo* in favor of Japanese words?
3. Which types of *gairaigo* are most prominent in both publications of *Asahi Shimbun*?

1.3 Background

1.3.1 The National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics

NINJAL, established in 1948, is an independent institution in Japan. It conducts theoretical and empirical studies on the Japanese language and one of its main purposes has been to survey, recommend and promote the proper use of the Japanese language. Historically, NINJAL has created various Japanese corpora, as well as conducted studies on the comprehension level of *gairaigo*. Over the decades, NINJAL has carried out surveys on vocabulary.

NINJAL (1952) surveyed *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper editions from 1949, and NINJAL (1970) analyzed the newspaper editions from 1966. The studies showed that *gairaigo* made up 5% and 11% of all words respectively (Irwin, 2011, pp.15-16).

NINJAL also publishes recommendations on various topics such as *keigo* (honorific language) and recommendations on the replacing of *gairaigo* with already existing *wago* (words of Japanese origin) or *kango* (words of Chinese origin that have been lexicalized). Up until now NINJAL has published four complete lists, consisting of a total of 176 *gairaigo* and their respective recommended and suggested substitutes.

As stated by NINJAL (2006), the reason for these recommendations is that it has become increasingly difficult to inform the general public about important matters by the use of *gairaigo*. Even if some helping mechanism was to be implemented, for example the meaning of the word being written out, it would in most cases just be easier to replace the *gairaigo* with a more fitting and easily understood Japanese word. In addition, by substituting the *gairaigo*, the usage of the more accurate word should spread more easily to the general public.

1.3.2 *Gairaigo* and *katakana*

The Japanese language has three writing systems; *kanji* (characters of Chinese origin), *hiragana* and *katakana*, the latter which is often used when presenting *gairaigo*. However, other categories of words such as onomatopoeic words like *gorogoro* - idling about, can either be written as ごろごろ (*hiragana*) or as ゴロゴロ (*katakana*).

Katakana is also used when given emphasis to a word of *kango* or *wago* (Igarashi, 2007, p.2). This of course leads to problems when trying to recognize *gairaigo* in written form, as words written in *katakana* are not necessarily *gairaigo*. However, since *gairaigo* that derive from Western languages sometimes contain sounds that are not found in the Japanese language, *katakana* words that contain these sounds are for certain *gairaigo*, and are therefore easier to recognize. One example is the combination of テ - *te* and イ - *i* to form the new sound テイ - *ti* (e.g. *paatii* – party), which can not be found in native Japanese vocabulary today, only in *gairaigo* or *wasei-eigo*, which are a combination of words consisting of Japanese and *gairaigo*. Another example is the foreign V-sound (*veroshitii* - velocity), but a V-sound can most of the time be substituted for a native B-sound (*beroshitii* - velocity).

On the other hand, *gairaigo* are not exclusively written in *katakana* either, and can sometimes be found written in either *kanji* or *hiragana*. A typical example of this is the word *garasu* - glass, written as ガラス (*katakana*), がらす (*hiragana*) or 硝子 (*kanji*).

Gairaigo written in *kanji* are called *ateji*. They are mainly words that poured into the language before *katakana* was being used to signify *gairaigo*, instead the *kanji* were chosen for their phonetic value rather than their pictographical meaning: 硝/*gara* - saltpetre + 子/*su* - child, son = 硝子/*garasu* - glass (Kunert, 2017, pp.8-9). *Gairaigo* that can be written in *hiragana* are for the most part nouns, sometimes adjectives and rarely verbs, and are the result of a long history of use within the Japanese language. By writing a *gairaigo* in *hiragana*, one would indicate a feeling of ownership of the foreign word (*ibid.*), or in other words, the *gairaigo* has been lexicalized.

If one is unsure about a word being of foreign origin or not, some of the more modern dictionaries seem to state if the word has been borrowed.

2. Theory and previous research

2.1 Theory

There are undoubtedly many suitable theories that work well with this study. However, since both the recommendations by NINJAL and the *Asahi Shimbun* articles are published by influential establishments, theories within the fields of language change, language politics and the borrowing of loanwords have to be briefly explained.

In short, all languages change, but it often goes unnoticed by the language's speakers since especially with borrowing, most of the change is gradual (Ferguson, 1977, pp.280, 282). If change does not happen gradually, the change is usually enforced by an authority in order to suit the narrative of said authority (Gottlieb, 1994, pp.1195-1196).

Borrowing is not only done in order to fill lexical gaps, neither is it done randomly as languages typically borrow from other languages of dominance or prestige (Lev-Ari and Peperkamp, 2014, p.381): e.g. many languages borrow from English, probably due to its role as the 'international language'. Borrowing can even take place without the need to fill any lexical gaps in a language. For example, *teemapaku* from the English word *theme park* exists despite the presence of an almost similar Japanese word, *yuuenchi*. This word has probably made its way into the language gradually as a way to market or describe a Westernized theme park, and it is unlikely that it was part of a reform of the Japanese language by the government.

In case it was part of a reform, the implementation of the word would fall under the term language politics. According to Josephson (2018), language politics include everything from the use of the language, to the policies of the language, and even power and hierarchies in between languages or people.

Being such a broad term however, this study will take a look at one aspect of language politics called language policy - which is the approach that authorities take when setting out on shaping the linguistic compositions of a society, or changing existing language arrangements (Busekist, 2011, p.2, 5).

In language policy there is also language planning. The steps taken in language planning tend to be proposed by well-established institutions (Tomoda, 2005, pp.37-42). Of course, the perspective and attitudes of the public also need to be considered when proposing these changes, but in general, the proposed changes are made with an aim to make the language more suitable or correct in some way (ibid.). Having said that, it is important to keep in mind the following:

“Language policy in Japan, as indeed anywhere else, has always been formulated to suit the agenda of those in power at the time.” (Gottlieb, 1994, pp.1995)

Language planning often promotes a language, and the promotion of the national language is connected to the creation of the national identity. Therefore, any intervention (direct or indirect) of the promotion of the national language would in a sense be problematic for the national identity (Carrol, 2001, pp.1-3, 7-8). Thus, one could say that by introducing more *gairaigo* into the daily language and substituting Japanese words the national identity may be threatened, whereas carefully planning and guiding a language by limiting the use of *gairaigo* would in return be beneficial for the national identity.

These ideas are not recently derived, but have evolved historically into an attachment of the national language and as a marker of individual or national identity. With a high literacy rate all over the country for decades, these ideas have further been reinforced over many years by an essentialist genre known as *nihonjinron*, loosely translated as “theories of what it means to be Japanese” (Gottlieb, 2012, p.17). This literary genre heavily stresses the equivalence and importance of the Japanese language and the Japanese identity, and on a deeper level portrays Japanese as something unique, far more than any other language.

However, the idea of Monolingualism (one language) in an ever globalizing society and world is becoming increasingly irrelevant, yet there seems to be opposition from higher up in the Japanese society that does not want to allow other languages to expand freely.

Language reform and standardization are central parts of language policy and language planning (Carrol, 2001, p.2). Language reform is the direct change of a language other than standardizing it and can often be seen as a way to modernize the language. In turn, by enforcing standardization, such as a standardized script, spoken language and spelling for the sake of consistency, any miscommunication within a nation or language could be avoided. Relevant to this study, by for example enforcing the substitution of a *gairaigo* for a native Japanese word, one would in a sense standardize the language.

2.2 Previous research

Due to the nature of this study it is important to look over previous research on *gairaigo* in newspapers. Extensive use of *gairaigo* is usually found in newspapers and leaflets published by the city or prefecture, and the published material is often filled with well-placed *gairaigo* together with bright pictures and cartoons (Carroll, 1991, p.309).

It is often stated that there are several different types of functions that *gairaigo* tend to have. One study by Shimada (1999), focused on *gairaigo* in the national newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* Satellite edition and divided *gairaigo* into 4 main functional categories. These were (1) technical terms (words that have a special a specific meaning within a field), (2) lexical-gap-fillers (words that are present in the lending language but absent in the borrowing language), (3) elevating the images of the referents, and (4) replacing native vocabulary items. The goal of the study was to find out how Western loanwords in the newspaper articles function and which type of function was more prominent. The results showed the following: (1) technical terms (34.29%),

(2) lexical-gap-fillers (39.08%), (3) elevating the images of the referents (8.43%), (4) replacing native vocabulary items (22.03%). It is stated that the reason for why it exceeds 100% is that loanwords enter each category that they fall under.

Previous research by Fukuda (2006) has also been conducted on all five national newspapers on if and how they follow NINJAL's recommendations, similar to this study. *Yomiuri Shimbun* appeared to respond the most, even as to creating their own internal publishing guidelines in order for authors to stay in line and avoid difficult *gairaigo*. Another newspaper that somewhat follows the recommendations is the *Nikkei Shimbun*, which uses their own paraphrasing booklet. It seems that both of the above mentioned newspapers do make an effort in explaining the *gairaigo* that may be difficult to understand by some readers, but none of them has yet embraced a policy of replacing *gairaigo* with native words. Other newspapers like the *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Kyodo News* do not have any specific guidelines in place, and seem to treat *gairaigo* inconsistently, disregarding the recommendations completely.

As mentioned previously, there is an increased influx and borrowing of *gairaigo*, which in turn has resulted in new words that are difficult to recognize and easily misunderstood by the average Japanese speaker. In addition, older people tend to fail to understand sentences if they include difficult *gairaigo*. For the sake of argument, if say one word in a sentence is misunderstood or not understood at all, the entire meaning of the sentence may fail to be conveyed:

“*The house is in a state of _____.*” (Merriam-webster, 2019)

The original missing word in this sentence is *neglect*, which is also the borrowed word that has turned into a *gairaigo* (*negurekuto*) that NINJAL advises against using as previously mentioned. Any word inserted would drastically alter the meaning of the sentence. Because of this, difficult *gairaigo* may create a gap in understanding and the speakers who fail to understand these *gairaigo* become alienated in their own language.

3. Method and Material

This study will be conducted on one of Japan's national newspapers, the *Asahi Shimbun*, since the number of readers should be relatively high and located all over the country. Due to the limited timeframe, this study will only focus on one newspaper. Archived publications of the newspaper will be examined and analyzed. Publications from both 1999 and 2019 will give a total span of 20 years or one generation of possible change, and the articles are both published before and after the recommendations made by NINJAL (2006). In the recommendations a set of 176 words with substituting suggestions can be found, 174 of which are of English origin, 1 of German, and 1 of French.

A total of 120 articles from 5 categories will be randomly selected from the publications of 1999 and 2019. In other words, 12 articles from each category and year. Articles from the categories of Culture (*bunka*), Society (*shakai*), Economy (*keizai*), Technology (*gijutsu*) and Politics (*seifu*) will be used due to the fact that Japanese newspaper articles are mostly categorized in this manner on the web. The *gairaigo* found in the articles will then be extracted, analyzed and matched up against the recommendations by NINJAL (2006). Top three *gairaigo* with the highest frequency from each category and year will also be analyzed. In case any *kango* or *wago* written in *katakana* is mistaken for a *gairaigo*, all of the words that have been extracted in the articles will be double checked with online dictionaries in order to confirm its foreign origin. Weblio, a web-based Japanese-English dictionary as well as Takoboto, an app-based Japanese-English dictionary, will be used when translating *gairaigo* in this paper.

Foreign names, except for those of continents, countries, capital cities or other well-known cities, hereby referred to as “well-known place names”, will not be counted in the number of *gairaigo*. Foreign names generally lack any native Japanese equivalent, and may often be names that are generally unknown. There are some previously conducted surveys on *gairaigo* where the researchers excluded the use of place names in its papers (Irwin, 2011, pp.15-16). However,

there is also published research where place names are included as a *gairaigo* category (Daulton, 2008, p.33). This thesis will therefore include the use of well-known place names as valid *gairaigo* on the basis that it has been done in previous research, and that some of them do have a Japanese equivalent; e.g. *beikoku* (*kango*) and *amerika* (*gairaigo*) both referring to the United States, whereas other may only have *ateji* writing; e.g. 瑞/zui + 典/ten - Sweden

Gairaigo written in *hiragana* or *kanji* will also not be counted since there are not any good listings of these words online. Furthermore, one can argue that because they can be written in two or all three writing systems, they no longer are treated as ‘foreign’ and are relatively known to the average native Japanese speaker. As mentioned previously, these *gairaigo* have been lexicalized.

Due to the given timeframe, this study will only focus on the *gairaigo* that NINJAL opposes, but it will not study the frequency of the suggested native Japanese words by NINJAL in the articles, since instead of substituting with the exact word, the writer may use other words or simply rephrase the sentence.

3.1 Kikuzo II Visual

One of the reasons for choosing to conduct this study on the *Asahi Shimbun* is that it is archived within the Kikuzo II Visual, which according to its website is the largest newspaper article database that grants easy access to past events online and is available in universities and libraries both in and outside the country (Kikuzo II Visual, 2019). It contains full text articles that dates back to 1985, which is far beyond the desired time period that this paper investigates, 1999–2019. One thing that is important when conducting this type of study is the number of words per article, since the length of any given article is a deciding factor in the number of *gairaigo* appearances.

Unfortunately, Kikuzo II Visual only states the number of characters an article has, not the amount of words. This seems to be the standard in word processing software as well, since the word count only shows the amount of characters when the article is pasted onto a document in Google Drive, and in Open Office Word it counts every character as a separate word. So due to the limited time frame, this study's lack of theory on Japanese word counting and the sheer time it would take to count the words of the examined articles, this aspect will be abandoned.

Using Kikuzo II Visual's search function, the dates will be set to 1999 and 2019 respectively, with 12 articles being randomly selected for each category and year. This gives a total of 60 articles per year. Only articles that have roughly around 700-800 Japanese characters will be used. Due to the lack of a category function in the search engine, the keyword function will instead be used. By writing the name of the category as a keyword (e.g. *bunka*) mostly articles relating to or somewhat relating to the category should show. Indeed, there will be times when articles merely mention the keyword without being a topic of said keyword.

The *gairaigo* found in each article will be written on a separate document. Then, the *gairaigo* will be matched up with NINJAL's recommendations on difficult *gairaigo*. Any *gairaigo* found in both the articles and the recommendations by NINJAL will be noted in the number of times it appeared.

3.2 Limitations

Some factors that are worth considering when conducting research of this kind are the number of articles, the length of those articles and what year they were published, since these factors can change the outcome of the research either somewhat or drastically. Another factor is the keywords used when searching for articles in a database. In order to be as transparent as possible within a category, all keywords except for the name of the category will be avoided. If for example in Economy (*keizai*) one would have searched with keywords like *money*, *coin*, *printing*, it is more likely that a lot more articles about the central bank printing money than say the stock market, even though both are considered to be within the realm of Economy (*keizai*). Failing to categorise a word as a *gairaigo* or not, or even failing to recognize if the *gairaigo* is a “place name”, proper noun or any other specific category may also have an impact on the results. Certain dictionaries may also define the *gairaigo* differently or lack definition altogether. As already mentioned, names (except for well-known place names) are disregarded as *gairaigo* in this study. *Gairaigo* that only match with half of a compound *gairaigo* from NINJAL’s recommendations is also disregarded: e.g. *keesu* - case will not be counted as a match, even though *keesusutadii* - case study appears in the recommendations.

4. Results and analysis

All 120 articles from both 1999 and 2019 are articles that consist of roughly 700-800 characters each. In the results below, there are two things that are to be noted. The first one is “*Gairaigo* appearance”: e.g. if the word *shiataa* - theater, appears two times it is counted as two appearances. Second, “Number of different *gairaigo*”: e.g. even if the word *shiataa* - theater appears two times, it is only counted as one *gairaigo* in this column. The “NINJAL matching” column states the number of times a difficult *gairaigo* from the recommendations appears in an article, this will later be referred to as “matching *gairaigo*”. Lastly, the amount of *gairaigo* that appears one, two, three and four or more times are written out in their respective column, this being relevant when looking at high-frequency *gairaigo* later on.

Following this comes the lists of matching *gairaigo* divided into respective category where they were found, and *gairaigo* that appear more than once are followed with the number of appearances. Also, lists with the top three high-frequency *gairaigo* from each category will be shown below. It is important to note that a high-frequency word may appear in several categories simultaneously, and in the statistics is treated as a separate word as stated above, but when answering the research questions it will be treated as one word.

4.1 Articles from 1999

Beginning with the results from 1999, there were a total of 632 appearances of *gairaigo* found in the articles. The category with most appearances of *gairaigo* was Technology (*gijutsu*) followed by Culture (*bunka*) with 147 and 141 appearances each. Technology also seems to be the category with the most *gairaigo* appearing four times or more in the articles, and the most matching *gairaigo*, seven to be exact, which is the highest number of a single category in this study. Followed by Culture (*bunka*), with six *gairaigo* appearing more than four times with three matching. Society (*shakai*) and Politics (*seiji*) turn out to have similar results, 130 and 124 appearances respectively with two matching and six appearing four or more times. Lowest on the list is Economy (*keizai*) with merely 90 appearances of *gairaigo* with one matching.

<i>Asahi Shimbun</i> 1999	<i>Gairaigo</i> appearance	Number of different <i>gairaigo</i>	NINJAL matching	Appeared one time	Appeared two times	Appeared three times	Appeared four or more times
Culture (<i>bunka</i>)	141	94	3	71	13	4	6
Society (<i>shakai</i>)	130	90	2	71	8	5	6
Economy (<i>keizai</i>)	90	56	1	37	11	3	5
Technology (<i>gijutsu</i>)	147	86	7	57	12	10	7
Politics (<i>seiji</i>)	124	72	2	52	9	5	6
In total	632	398	15	288	53	27	30

4.2 Articles from 2019

Next, the articles from 2019 show slightly different results. Culture (*bunka*) has the highest appearances of *gairaigo* with 221 appearances, but with none matching the recommendations. 11 of the *gairaigo* appeared four times or more. After comes Technology (*gijutsu*) with 215 appearances and five matching, but it also has the highest number of *gairaigo* appearing four times or more. Society (*shakai*) and Economy (*keizai*) had 134 and 109 appearances respectively and both categories have five matching *gairaigo* as well as four appearing four times or more. Finally, Politics (*seiji*) showed 73 appearances with no matching *gairaigo* and only two appearing four times or more.

<i>Asahi Shimbun</i> 2019	<i>Gairaigo</i> appearance	Number of different <i>gairaigo</i>	NINJAL matching	Appeared one time	Appeared two times	Appeared three times	Appeared four or more times
Culture (<i>bunka</i>)	221	118	0	83	13	11	11
Society (<i>shakai</i>)	134	89	5	65	12	8	4
Economy (<i>keizai</i>)	109	80	5	62	11	3	4
Technology (<i>gijutsu</i>)	215	106	5	63	19	9	15
Politics (<i>seiji</i>)	73	52	0	41	5	4	2
In total	752	445	15	314	60	35	36

4.3 Matching *gairaigo* and their suggested substitutes

Following comes a list of *gairaigo* that appeared in both the articles from *Asahi Shimbun* and the recommendations by NINJAL. Under the matching *gairaigo* are the suggested substitutes that NINJAL recommend using, followed by a translation of the substitutes. Some of the suggested substitutes lack any entry in the dictionaries. However, this seems to only be the case if the substitute is a compound word. In other words, if there is any entry in the dictionaries the meaning has been written down next to the original Japanese word.

4.3.1 Articles from 1999

Culture:

bariafurii - barrier-free

- Suggestion: *shouheikinashi* (no entry) (compound word)

Comprising of the words *shouheiki* - enclosing wall, boundary fence, obstacle, and *nashi* - without

guroobaru - global

- Suggestion: *chikyuukibo* - global scale (compound word)

Comprising of the words *chikyuu* - the earth, the globe, and *kibo* - scale, scope

bijon - vision

- Suggestion: *tenbou* - view, outlook, prospect

Society:

boodaaresu - borderless

- Suggestion: *mukyoukai* - lack of boundary, borderless, confluence

- Suggestion: *dakkyoukai* - weakened boundary, perforated boundary, dissolved boundary

komyuniti - community

- Suggestion: *chiikishakai* - regional community (compound word)

Comprising of the words *chiiki* -area, region, and *shakai* - society, public, community

- Suggestion: *kyoudoutai* - cooperative body, cooperative system, collective

Economy:

konsensasu - consensus

- Suggestion: *goui* - agreement, consent, mutual understanding

Technology:

shiizu - seeds

- Suggestion: *tane* - seed

benchaa - venture (5x)

- Suggestion: *shinkoukigyou* - start-up company (compound word)

Comprising of the words *shinkou* - rising, developing, emergent, and *kigyou* - enterprise, undertaking, corporation

monitaringu - monitoring

- Suggestion: *keizokukanshi* (no entry) (compound word)

Comprising of the words *keizoku* - continuation, and *kanshi* - monitoring, watching, observation

Politics:

konsensasu - consensus

- Suggestion: *goui* - agreement, consent, mutual understanding

puresensu - presence

- Suggestion: *sonzaikan* - presence (compound word)

Comprising of the words *sonzai* - existence, being, and *kan* - feeling, sensation, emotion

4.3.1.1 High-frequency words

Culture: *opera* - opera (8x), *uiin* - Vienna (6x), *ingurisshu* - english (5x)

Society: *ajia* - Asia (6x), *monoreeru* - monorail (6x), *shingapooru* - Singapore (4x)

Economy: *kanpanii* - company (as in business) (5x), *gyappu* - gap (4x), *kurabu* - club (as in association) (4x)

Technology: *kiro* - kilometer (11x), *benchaa* - venture (5x), *kurinikku* - clinic (4x)

Politics: *yuuro* - euro (as in currency) (12x), *isuramu* - Islam (7x), *supein* - Spain (7x)

4.3.2 Articles from 2019

Society:

akusesu - access

- Suggestion: *setsuzoku* - connection, attachment, link
- Suggestion: *koutsuushudan* - means of transportation, transportation system
- Suggestion: *sannyuu* - entering (the marketplace), introducing (something) to the market, access

komyuniti - community

- Suggestion: *chiikishakai* - regional community (compound word)

Comprising of the words *chiiki* -area, region, and *shakai* - society, public, community

- Suggestion: *kyoudoutai* - cooperative body, cooperative system, collective

bariafurii - barrier-free (3x)

- Suggestion: *shouheikinashi* (no entry) (compound word)

Comprising of the words *shouheiki* - enclosing wall, boundary fence, obstacle, and *nashi* - without

Economy:

akusesu - access

- Suggestion: *setsuzoku* - connection, attachment, link
- Suggestion: *koutsuushudan* - means of transportation, transportation system
- Suggestion: *sannyuu* - entering (the marketplace), introducing (something) to the market, access

infura - infrastructure

- Suggestion: *shakaikiso* (no entry) (compound word)

Comprising of the words *shakai* - society, public, community, and *kiso* - foundation, basis

guroobaru - global

- Suggestion: *chikyuukibo* - global scale (compound word)

Comprising of the words *chikyuu* - the earth, the globe, and *kibo* - scale, scope

benchaa - venture

- Suggestion: *shinkoukigyuu* - start-up company (compound word)

Comprising of the words *shinkou* - rising, developing, emergent, and *kigyuu* - enterprise, undertaking, corporation

makuro - macro

- Suggestion: *kyoshiteki* - macroscopic

Technology:

insentibu - incentive

- Suggestion: *iyokushigeki* (no entry) (compound word)

Comprising of the words *iyoku* - will, desire, ambition, and *shigeki* - stimulus, impetus, incentive

konsooshiamu - consortium (2x)

- Suggestion: *kyoudoujigyoutai* - consortium (compound word)

Comprising of the words *kyoudoujigyou* - joint enterprise, joint venture and *tai* - body, physique, shape

haiburiddo - hybrid

- Suggestion: *fukugougata* - compound type (compound word)

Comprising of the words *fukugou* - composite, combined, complex, and *kata/gata* - model, type (e.g. of machine, goods, etc.), style

waakushoppu - workshop

- Suggestion: *kenkyuushuukai* - workshop (compound word)

Comprising of the words *kenkyuu* - study, research, investigation, and *shuukai* - meeting, assembly, gathering

4.3.2.1 High-frequency words

Culture: *piano* - piano (10x), *ibento* - event (7x), *kosupureeya* - cosplayer (7x)

Society: *supein* - Spain (6x), *medaru* - medal (6x), *sooshiaru* - social (4x)

Economy: *ankeeto* - questionnaire (4x), *koohii* - coffee (4x), *ruwanda* - Rwanda (4x)

Technology: *deeta* - data (10x), *miniboodo* - a small surfing board (8x), *guruupu* - group

Politics: *roshia* - Russia (6x), *ukuraina* - Ukraine (4x), *intabyuu* - interview (3x)

By comparing the results of the *gairaigo* found in all the articles from 1999 and 2019, it shows that there is a slight overall increase of *gairaigo* from 1999 to 2019 in *Asahi Shimbun*. Looking closer at the three main columns, there was an increase in “*Gairaigo* appearance” (+19%) and the “Number of different *gairaigo*” (+11.8%), but the number of “NINJAL matching” remained the same at 15 *gairaigo*. However, the distribution of the matching *gairaigo* has slightly changed. Culture (*bunka*) and Politics (*seiji*) did not use any of the difficult *gairaigo* in the 2019 articles, compared to the articles from 1999 where three and two matching *gairaigo* respectively were found. Furthermore, there also seems to be an increase in *gairaigo* appearance in all categories, except for in Politics (*seiji*), which has had a decrease in “*Gairaigo* appearance” (-41.1%), “Number of different *gairaigo*” (-27.8%) and “NINJAL matching” (-100%). However, this may only be a coincidence and other articles from Politics (*seiji*) may have shown different results. In addition, Society (*shakai*) only had a minimal decrease in “Number of different *gairaigo*” (-1.1%).

4.4 Comprehension rates of the matching *gairaigo*

Table 1. NINJAL's grading on the use of *gairaigo*. (NINJAL 2006)

	Comprehension rate	Action advised
★☆☆☆	<25%	Most difficult to understand. Advised not to use.
★★☆☆	25-50%	There is a possibility that these words will be integrated at some point, but for now, one should avoid the use of these words.
★★★☆	50-75%	These words are on the way to being integrated, and not problematic for use in most cases. However they may still require some kind of special treatment.
★★★★	>75%	These words are completely integrated. There is no problem using them.

All of the *gairaigo* found in the recommendations have a <75% rating.

Below is a complete *gairaigo* list of matching *gairaigo* found in this study. Beside the *gairaigo* are the average comprehension rates, followed by the general comprehension rates of people of 60 years of age or older. The list is based on NINJAL's grading on the difficulty of the 176 *gairaigo* (see table 1.) and the *gairaigo* are written in alphabetical order, not the recommendations original list order. Worth to be noted is that the number of appearances (30) do not correlate with the total number of individual *gairaigo* from NINJAL's recommendations found in the text (17) (see below). Looking at the average comprehension rates, four of the *gairaigo* had ★★★☆, seven had ★★☆☆, and six had ★☆☆☆, which makes the number of *gairaigo* almost equally distributed in terms of level of difficulty. However, only *bariafurii*, was rated ★★★☆ for people of ≥ 60 years, followed by six ★★☆☆ and ten ★☆☆☆ *gairaigo*, proving that the majority of the matching *gairaigo* are harder for the elderly to understand. However, the most frequent, *benchaa* (6x) and *bariafurii* (4x) had the same comprehension rate in both categories respectively.

<i>Gairaigo</i>	Average comprehension rate	≥ 60 years of age
<i>akusesu</i> - access (2x)	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>bariafurii</i> - barrier-free (4x)	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
<i>benchaa</i> - venture (6x)	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>bijon</i> - vision	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>boodaaresu</i> - borderless	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>guroobaru</i> - global (2x)	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>haiburiddo</i> - hybrid	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>infura</i> - infrastructure	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>insentibu</i> - incentive	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>komyuniti</i> - community (2x)	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>konsensasu</i> - consensus (2x)	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>konsooshiamu</i> - consortium (2x)	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>makuro</i> - macro	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>monitaringu</i> - monitoring	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>presensu</i> - presence	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>shiizu</i> - seeds	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆
<i>waakushoppu</i> - workshop	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆

5. Discussion

5.1 Answering the research questions

Beginning with the first question: *What difference is there in the amount of gairaigo used in the Asahi Shimbun in the years 1999 and 2019?*

As stated above, there seems to have been a slight overall increase in both *gairaigo* appearance and the number of different *gairaigo* from 1999 to 2019. Even though there has been an increase, it is not as much as one might believe, on the assumption that there is a daily influx of *gairaigo* pouring into the language. Then again, this is a very small study that is only being conducted on one newspaper, and with more time and resources the results may vary even with publications from the same year and newspaper. Furthermore, since the study is only conducted on one newspaper it does not really shed much light on the supposedly overall heavy use of *gairaigo* in Japanese media from the perspective of newspapers. Nevertheless, one can still answer the first research question from the limited amount of results; the *difference* is a slight increase in the amount of *gairaigo* used as of 2019 in *Asahi Shimbun*.

Following up with the second question: *To what extent does the newspaper follow the recommendations provided by NINJAL regarding the proposed decrease of gairaigo in favor of Japanese words?*

This question is somewhat more difficult to answer with the current results, since the number of matching *gairaigo* are overall the same in the articles of 1999 and 2019. However, since the amount of matching remain the same, even though the *gairaigo* appearance has increased, this means that there is an overall decrease in the number of matching from 1999 to 2019. In 1999 there was about 23.7 matching for every 1000 appearances of *gairaigo*, and in 2019 it had

decreased to roughly 19.9 matching for every 1000 appearance of *gairaigo*. Then again, this may be a coincidence instead of a conscious effort by the writers and publishers of the newspaper, and the results might change with different or more articles.

The third question: *Which types of gairaigo are most prominent in both publications from Asahi Shimbun?*

The original idea was to look at the top 30 high-frequency *gairaigo* in the articles, three from each category and year, but *supein* - Spain appeared in both Politics 1999 (7x) and Society 2019 (6x). Because of this, it will be treated as one high-frequency *gairaigo* with 13 appearances in the discussion. Out of the 29 high-frequency *gairaigo* found, seven of them were “well-known place names” that appeared in a total of 43 times: *supein* - Spain (13x), *ajia* - Asia (6x), *uiin* - Vienna (6x), *roshia* - Russia (6x), *ruwanda* - Rwanda (4x), *shingapooru* - Singapore (4x), and *ukuraina* - Ukraine (4x). Interesting enough, certain place names seem to appear in certain categories in either year. *Supein* - Spain had a high-frequency rate in Politics (*seiji*) 1999, but this changed to Society (*shakai*) in 2019, instead *roshia* - Russia and *ukuraina* - Ukraine were the most used *gairaigo* in articles from Politics (*seiji*) 2019. There is certainly a connection between the heavy use of *gairaigo* like *supein* - Spain and *yuuro* - euro in 1999, and *roshia* - Russia and *ukuraina* - Ukraine in 2019, as they also fall under Politics (*seiji*), and the articles were published during periods of historical and current political change respectively.

The three *gairaigo* that appeared the most were *supein* - Spain (13x), followed by *yuuro* - euro (12x) and *kiro* - kilometer (11x). These three *gairaigo* were borrowed as lexical gap-fillers, since they probably fill a lexical gap in the Japanese language. *Kiro* might also fall in under technical terms as it is also used as a measurement term. Interesting enough, the second highest frequency word of Technology (*gijutsu*) 1999 was *benchaa* - venture (5x), which is one of the words found in NINJAL’s recommendations and the only word out of the 29 high-frequency *gairaigo* that matches. *Benchaa* is also the *gairaigo* with the highest appearance rate (6x) out of all matching *gairaigo*. The suggestion given to replace *benchaa* is *shinkoukigyō* - start-up company,

comprising of the words *shinkou* - rising, developing, emergent, and *kigyō* - enterprise, undertaking, corporation. Looking at the translations however, one would think that *benchaa* instead would have appeared in the Economy (*keizai*) 1999 articles like in 2019. This may be due to only using one keyword when searching for articles in Kikuzo II Visual. It appeared a total of six times in all articles, five times in Technology (*gijutsu*) 1999 as previously mentioned and one time in Economy (*keizai*) 2019.

Some of the suggestions seem to have been compound words, which is a word composed of two or more words. Some of the compound words lack any entry in the dictionaries, so there is a probability that NINJAL may have created these ‘compound suggestions’ out of the lack of an exact native equivalent to the *gairaigo*.

6. Conclusion

The results found through this study advocates that the *Asahi Shimbun* generally does not follow the recommendations provided by NINJAL, since the same amount of overall matching *gairaigo* can be found in the 1999 and 2019 newspaper articles, and it also shows that the writers slightly increased use of *gairaigo* is probably not due to a conscious effort, but because of new borrowings entering the language over a period of 20 years. This is much in line with previous research by Fukuda (2006) that was conducted on Japanese newspapers. As stated previously, *Asahi Shimbun* at that time did not have any specific guidelines which in turn led to an inconsistent use of *gairaigo*, disregarding the recommendations. Of course, the study was published very close to the publishing of the recommendations, so the effect it would have had at such a short time would be minimal, but since similar results have been found in this study, one can conclude that *Asahi Shimbun* in most cases still does not really follow the recommendations.

On the other hand, Fukuda's research also shows that *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Nikkei Shimbun* somewhat follow the recommendations, so NINJAL does seem to have at least some authority in language policy. NINJAL has also been involved in several surveys of vocabulary which seems to often be referenced, especially when talking about *gairaigo*. But because the institution only publishes recommendations and guidelines, these can either be followed or ignored if not enforced by a higher authority.

It is understandable that an independent institution like NINJAL would raise concern over the increasing influx of *gairaigo*, and it is not impossible to imagine the same thing happening in other countries or regions if the borrowing comes from a language that is not closely related to the native language. After all, people who lack exposure to Western languages will have trouble understanding and applying new words that have been borrowed from for example English or German. Also, with any culture that is deeply entangled with its language, it is rather easy to understand that by replacing native vocabulary one might feel a part of the culture and national identity disappearing as well.

Undoubtedly, if there is a high influx of uncontrolled *gairaigo*, there should be some form of standardization or reform applied by the government in order to regulate the amount of borrowing done. This would in turn somewhat ease especially the elderly's burden of feeling alienated in their own language, and since NINJAL only recommends the substitution of a few hundred *gairaigo* as opposed to all *gairaigo* this would not be too hard to adapt to either, as a first step of regulation.

The idea of purifying Japanese from Westernization is rather unattainable due to globalization. Without doubt, the need for international and intercontinental communication is essential and monolingualism is not quite possible on a global scale, although in theory, constructed languages like Esperanto may make monolingualism possible. All loanwords somewhat assist us in understanding other countries and cultures. It is also harder these days to stop borrowing completely since the internet allows for easy access to information, media and entertainment

from other countries. Like previously stated, it is a good thing that NINJAL tries to moderate the use of *gairaigo* to lower the possibility of miscommunication and misunderstanding, and recommendations like these should keep being published and improved in the future.

6.1 Further Research

Further research should be conducted with a larger sample base of newspaper articles, different lengths, as well as having the publishing dates be changed. It would be interesting to see if the results would vary at all, and new research conducted on other national newspapers in order to see any change in the use of *gairaigo* up to date would also be beneficial. Research could also be conducted on local newspapers and later comparing the findings to national newspapers in order to spot any difference between their use of *gairaigo*.

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