

# 英 語 科

## AREAS OF DIFFICULTY FOR SPEAKERS OF JAPANESE LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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### Foreword:

It is very important for the teachers of English as a foreign language to know the linguistic background of their students. For many of the mistakes the students make come from the difficulty that they have in adjusting their linguistic (and cultural) habits to those of English.

I have attempted here to describe this difficulty rather systematically, hoping that it will lead to the better understanding of the nature of the students' mistakes and to the more careful treatment of them in the process of teaching English as a foreign language.

Three areas will be discussed in the following order;

- I. The Sound System
- II. The Structural System
- III. The Socio-Cultural Patterns of Japanese and English.

### I. THE SOUND SYSTEM

#### 1. Vowels and Diphthongs

We have only five vowels in the Japanese language, whereas there are twelve vowels and nine diphthongs in the English language (according to A.C.Gimson: 1973).

Japanese /a, i, u, e, o/ are similar to English /ʌ, I, ʊ, e, ɒ/ respectively. As it is difficult for a Japanese to pronounce these English vowels accurately, he pronounces them usually by substituting them for Japanese equivalents. The same thing can be said in the case of E/ɑ:, i:, ɔ:, u:/; Japanese long vowels are regarded simply as the continuation of short vowels, while English long vowels have the quality different from short vowels, and so, a Japanese substitutes these English long vowels for J/aa, ii, uu, oo/.

The greatest difficulty with Japanese students learning the English sound system, therefore, lies in pronouncing E/æ, ə, ɜ:/ and in discriminating E/ʌ/ from E/ə or æ/ and E/ɑ:/ from E/ɜ:/.

#### 2. Consonants

Again, there are more consonants in English than in Japanese. Japanese doesn't have consonants like E/f, v, θ, ð, l, r/. They constitute the most difficult consonants for a Japanese student to recognize and produce.

J/p, t, k/ are pronounced with far less aspiration when compared with English equivalents, so some

practice is indispensable. The same is true of J/b, d, g/ for their weaker plosion.

J/tʃ, ʒ, ʃ/ occur only before J/i/, which makes it difficult for a Japanese to pronounce E/tʃ, ʒ, ʃ/ before E/ʌ, ɜ:/, etc./.

J/j/ occurs always before J/a, u, o/, so a problem arises when a Japanese pronounces E/j/ before the vowels except /a, u, o/. E/j/ before E/I/ is extremely difficult for him to recognize and pronounce correctly.

J/w/ occurs only before J/a/, so E/w/ followed by any one of E/ʊ, I, e, ɒ/ is very difficult for a Japanese to pronounce correctly.

J/r/ is an alveolar plosive, while E/r/ is a post-alveolar frictionless continuant. J/r/ is not like E/l/, either. The result is the extreme difficulty for a Japanese to discriminate E/l/ and E/r/ both in perception and production.

When it comes to consonant clusters, a Japanese student finds it terribly difficult to pronounce them without adding some vowel sounds between the consonants. This is due to the fact that every Japanese consonant is followed by either a Japanese vowel or a semi-vowel /j/ + a vowel, and that Japanese syllables are classified into three types, i.e. V, CV and CjV with some exceptions. (English syllables, on the other hand, can be described as a model like C<sub>0-3</sub>VC<sub>0-4</sub>.) This fact also explains the reason a Japanese student cannot pronounce an English final consonant without adding some vowel.

### 3. Accent and Rhythm

When we have five syllables as a word or as a sentence in the Japanese language, it may be represented as follows.

CV·CV·CV·CV·CV

Each syllable can be heard rather clearly (which is shown by dot [·]).

In English, it may be like;

CVCCVCCVCCVCCVC

A final consonant of a syllable and an initial consonant of the following syllable are apt to be pronounced successively, so the border of syllables is not clear (which is shown by slur [ - ]).

This difference of syllable structure leads to two distinctive differences between the two languages. First, stress accent of English vs. pitch accent of Japanese. In English, a vowel is stressed in order to give a stronger impression, while in Japanese a vowel is given a higher pitch. Second, stress-timed rhythm of English vs. syllable-timed rhythm of Japanese.

As a result, Japanese students find it very, very difficult to follow the natural flow of English speech, even if the speed is slowed down. In speaking, too, Japanese students tend to utter English sentences at a strangely precise pace. Stress-timed rhythm is the most important but least attended aspect of teaching spoken English to Japanese.

#### 4. "A" vs. "AN"

As we have relatively independent syllables, and as we have vowel combinations such as /ai, ae/ etc., the proper use of indefinite articles, 'a' and 'an', is hard to be mastered by Japanese. Japanese students are ready to say 'a apple', for instance, and they don't feel strange at all. Much practice is needed to accustom them to the automatic use of 'a' and 'an'. The same care should be taken for the pronunciations of the definite article, 'the'.

#### 5. Foreign Words

A great many foreign words have been adopted into Japanese. Words of Chinese origin were once the majority, but recently there has been considerable

borrowing from European languages.

Because each word has received a special treatment before it becomes a member of Japanese vocabulary, the foreign words in Japanese are often quite different from the original. Katakana characters are used in writing them to indicate that they are borrowed from foreign languages, and these characters respond to hiragana characters, which represent the Japanese sounds. Consequently, the Japanese pronunciation of foreign words is usually unlike the original one.

As a Japanese student is so accustomed to the Japanized pronunciation of foreign words, he cannot help pronouncing English words in the Japanese way when he learns original ones.

- e.g. (1) coffee → J/koohii/  
 (2) radio → J/raɔ io/  
 (3) drive → J/doraibu/

## II. THE STRUCTURAL SYSTEM

### 1. Prepositions and Articles

We don't have prepositions and articles in the Japanese language.

Japanese particles, which are suffixes added to nouns, verbs, etc., are similar to prepositions in some respects.

- e.g. (4) He will come at six. = *Kare wa rokuji-ni kuru desho.*

In this example, a preposition 'at' is similar to a particle '-ni'. But this particle can be used also in the cases of 'on Monday' (= *getsuyo-ni*), 'in June' (= *rokugatsu-ni*), etc.

Japanese students, therefore, find difficulty in using different prepositions according to the words which they are followed, or according to the verbs and adjectives which they follow. Some examples of mistakes arising from this difficulty are shown below.

- e.g. (5) \*The sun rises from the east.  
 (6) \*I was late to class by ten minutes.  
 (7) \*Mr. Miyata will get married with an Australian girl.

When a preposition is not put before its object, it causes some trouble to a Japanese student. He often omits a preposition where necessary.

- e.g. (8) \*I have no friend to play.  
 (9) \*Is this the house they live?

English intransitive verbs are often followed by prepositions and function as transitive verbs. These are hard for a Japanese to use and he tends to omit prepositions.

e.g. (10) \*I listen the radio every morning.

(11) \*They looked kangaroos for a long time.

According to Y. Kanaguchi, "one of the errors most frequently found in English composition of Japanese students is related to the use of article." He thinks "article is to us Japanese the Gordian knot". (Y. Kanaguchi: 1972, Preface) In fact, Japanese speakers learning English are always at a loss whether to use article or not, which article ('a' or 'the') to use, etc. A native speaker of English will easily find several or more mistakes about the use of the article in English composition written by the average Japanese student.

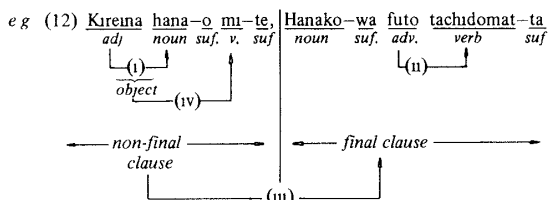
2. Word-order

Word-order is one of the main areas of difficulty which beginners may encounter, because the word-order of Japanese is quite different from that of English.

In the Japanese language,

- (i) the adjective precedes the noun it modifies,
  - (ii) the adverb precedes the verb,
  - (iii) the non-final clause precedes the main or final clause,
  - (iv) the object precedes the verb,
- and (v) the suffix follows the word or clause to which it belongs.

Here's a sentence which may illustrate how these rules work.



The comparison between the word-order of English and that of Japanese is as follows.

e.g. (13) When she saw some beautiful flowers,

1    2    3    4    5    6

Hanako stopped for a moment.

7    8    9

= (in Japanese) 5-6-3-1, 7-9-8

Compared with the English sentence, the Japanese

sentence lacks a subject in the non-final clause. This is because the final clause in Japanese and especially the predicative verb or adjective of the final clause round off the entire sentence. As for this particular sentence, as we have 'Hanako' as a subject in the final clause, 'Hanako' is also the subject in the non-final clause.

The subjectless sentence is not very unusual in Japanese, and this is partly because we don't use personal pronouns as often as in English. Of course, we have personal pronouns which are equivalent to 'he', 'she', 'it', 'they', 'I', 'you', etc., but they don't often appear in daily dialogue. This is why Japanese students find difficulty in using English personal pronouns. They tend to omit them where they are needed, or to misuse them.

Rule (i) is applied to adjectival phrases and clauses, too.

e.g. (14) niwa-no hana

(=flowers in the garden)

(15) kino katta hana

(=flowers which I bought yesterday)

So, the adjectival use of participles and prepositional phrases cause much trouble to Japanese students. Relative clauses, especially, need much practice before they are mastered (we have no relative pronouns and adverbs in Japanese). Some examples of the typical errors arising from this difficulty are as follows.

e.g. (16) \*The girl is pretty reading a book under the tree.

(17) \*Yesterday I met a man was Mr. Taylor.

3. Questions and Answering Questions

The way to make interrogative sentences in Japanese is quite different from that in English.

e.g. (18) *Korewa hana desu.*

This is a flower.

*Korewa hana desu-ka.*

Is this a flower ?

(19) *Kimiwa furansgo o hanashimasu.*

You speak French.

*Kimiwa fransgo o hanashimasu-ka.*

Do you speak French ?

In this way, we attach a suffix (which is one of the Japanese auxiliary verbs) to verbs or adjectives or auxiliary verbs in order to express questions. So, the ending of the predicative is very important: there is no change of word-order nor of other elements, and the listener can't tell whether the sentence uttered by the speaker is interrogative or not until he hears the last part of the sentence, i.e. the predicative.

The different ways of forming English questions (inversion of 'to be', use of 'do', 'does', 'did' and other auxiliary verbs) cause tremendous trouble to Japanese students. There has been much discussion as to whether we should introduce 'do' type questions first or not. For once the students have learned one way of forming questions, they tend to apply that way to another type of questioning. Such awkward questions might be heard as follows.

e.g. (20) \*Speak you French?

(21) \*Are you speak French?

Interrogatives cause another trouble.

e.g. (22) *Korewa hana desu.*

This is a flower.

*Korewa nani desu-ka.*

What is this?

(23) *Taro wa asu kimasu.*

Taro will come tomorrow.

*Taro wa itsu kimasu-ka.*

When will Taro come?

Again, there is no change of word-order in Japanese sentences. Japanese equivalents of interrogatives take their position in the same place where we have what is asked about.

When the question which begins with interrogatives is inserted in another sentence and becomes a dependent question, the word-order of the subject and the verb in English becomes the same as the affirmative sentence. The students are often confused by this rule and tend to make such sentences as follows.

e.g. (24) \*Will you tell me when will Taro come?

Tag-questions are difficult, too, but can be treated as a summary of all sorts of Yes-No questions and will provide Japanese students with a good opportunity to realize the great difference between Japanese and English. In the Japanese language, we only have to add a suffix, *-ne* or *-desho* to the affirmative sentence to show uncertainty of the speaker or to confirm the statement made by the speaker, while in

English a statement is followed by a tag-question modelled on the main clause. Japanese students find it difficult to use an auxiliary or the copula 'to be' according to the main verb, and to use a personal pronoun correctly. The following mistakes are often heard.

e.g. (25) \*You are not ill, don't you?

(26) \*Tom goes to school, isn't she?

(27) \*Taro and you are brothers, aren't they?

(28) \*The students didn't attend the meeting, wasn't he?

Answering questions cause the same kind of trouble that tag-questions do. The students are troubled with the use of personal pronouns, auxiliaries and the copula 'to be' in the case of answering Yes-No questions.

'You' and 'I', and 'we', are especially difficult for them to use in conversation, for in daily life, the equivalents of these personal pronouns are least used.

e.g. (29) A: *Okaze desuka.*

(= Do you have a cold?)

B: *Hai, so nan desu.*

(= Yes, I do.)

In this example, there are no subjects both in the sentences A and B. We understand who is the subject of the sentence by the situations under which the conversation takes place, by the polite and non-polite forms employed by the speaker, etc. The following mistakes are due to these characteristics of Japanese.

e.g. (30) Are you a student?

\*Yes, I do.

(31) Did you and Hanako visit Australia?

\*No, they didn't.

(32) Do we have lunch here?

\*Yes, you are.

(33) Are Tom and Bob brothers?

\*No, he isn't.

Furthermore, Japanese equivalents of 'Yes' and 'No' are different in that they show whether the listener agrees to what the speaker has said or not. English 'Yes' and 'No', of course, indicate that the following sentence is affirmative or negative. Because of this nature of Japanese 'Yes' and 'No', it is very confusing for a Japanese to answer negative questions.

e.g. (34) Aren't you hungry?

\*Yes, I am.

(35) Can't you swim?

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\*No, I can.

Questions beginning with interrogative pronouns which are subjects of the sentence cause much trouble.

e.g. (36) Who went to the park with you?

Jim did.

Who is the tallest boy in your class?

Jim is.

Who swims best in your family?

Jim does.

Who has ever been to Japan?

Jim has.

To all these questions, we employ the same pattern: *Jimu desu*. So, these different patterns of answering questions in English are very confusing to Japanese students.

4. Negation

As in question, we only have to add a suffix, *-nai* or *-n* to the affirmative when we make the negative sentence.

e.g. (37) *Watashi wa iku*.

I will go.

*Watashi wa ika-nai*.

I will not go.

(38) *Imoto wa piyano ga hikemasu*.

My sister can play the piano.

*Imoto wa piyano ga hikemase-n*.

My sister can't play the piano.

So, the different negative forms in English cause the same type of difficulty to a Japanese.

e.g. (39) \*My brother isn't go to school.

There are no Japanese equivalents of 'nothing', 'nowhere', 'never', 'few', 'hardly', 'scarcely', etc., strictly speaking. The following mistakes are due to this fact.

e.g. (40) \*I don't have nothing to say.

(41) \*There aren't few apples in the basket.

The sentences which have 'no more than', 'not less than', 'not more ..... than .....', etc. are very difficult for a Japanese to grasp the meanings of, and this is due to the same fact.

5. Number and Case

Concept of plurality is almost absent in the Japanese language.

e.g. (42) I have a pencil.

I have some pencils.

= *Enpitsu o motte imasu*.

The two English sentences above become the same sentence in Japanese (we can be particular about the number, but usually we aren't).

We don't distinguish countable and uncountable nouns. In Japanese almost every noun can be counted by using various nouns which are employed in counting number. The noun itself does not change its form even when it is counted.

e.g. (43) a pencil = *enpitsu ippon*

two pencils = *enpitsu nihon*

The absence of the indefinite article seems to be closely related to the absence of plurality. Plural forms, indefinite article, and uncountable nouns (abstract nouns, material nouns and some collective nouns) produce great difficulty for Japanese students. They are often confused by these troublesome nouns and article, and confuse the rules they should apply to each situation. Some examples of typical errors are shown below.

e.g. (44) \*There is many books on the table.

(45) \*We had many snow yesterday.

(46) \*The teacher gave me a good advice.

(47) \*These fruits are very sweet.

(48) \*Get me a white chalk, please.

The use of 'some' and 'any' is difficult, too. The students tend either to omit them where they are needed or to mix them up. (cf. the comparison of the example No. 13: p.78)

e.g. (49) \*I'd like to drink milk.

(50) \*We didn't buy some apples.

Japanese pronouns aren't inflected. The case is expressed by adding particular suffixes (particles) to pronouns and nouns.

e.g. (51)    he            his            him  
                   *kare*        *kare-no*    *kare-o*  
                   (-wa)

So, Japanese students need to internalize the different forms of pronouns.

I	my	me	mine
you	your	you	yours
he	his	him	his
.....			

This kind of table is often printed in the textbook and students are required to learn it by heart. Beginners

are often at a loss which they should use in which case.

- e.g. (52) \*I went to the park with she.  
(53) \*Show me you book.

## 6. Concord

Concord of person, number, gender causes trouble, too. Most reasons are already mentioned.

Special attention should be paid to concord between a subject and its finite verb. In the Japanese language, the verb doesn't change its form according to the subject. Concord between a subject in the third person singular and the present tense form of a verb causes much trouble not only to beginners but also to advanced students. This rule should be internalized perfectly at the very early stage. Mistakes arising from this difficulty include the following.

- e.g. (54) \*He go to school every day.  
(55) \*Do your brother speak French?  
(56) \*Helen don't knows Japanese at all.  
(57) \*Who play tennis with you every Sunday?  
(58) \*School begin at nine o'clock.  
(59) \*This cake taste too sweet.  
(60) \*February have only twenty-eight days.  
(61) \*Does your father has a car?  
(62) \*Everybody like such kind of music.

Concord between a subject and the present and past forms of 'to be' also produces difficulty, but it seems that this is relatively easily mastered by Japanese students.

Concord of person between a noun or pronoun and the pronoun(s) referring to it causes much difficulty. The correct use of pronouns, here too, is difficult for Japanese students to master.

- e.g. (63) \*Birds were building its nests.  
(64) The student generally likes sports.  
\*They play football, cricket, hockey,  
etc.

Concord of number is often combined with concord of person, and also causes some trouble.

- e.g. (65) This man is a doctor.

These men are doctors.

As I have already mentioned (II-5: p.80), these two sentences are translated into one Japanese sentence. To change 'this' to 'these', 'man' to 'men', 'is' to 'are' and 'a doctor' to 'doctors' seems redundant to a

Japanese speaker. So, even a careful student cannot make a correct sentence.

Difficulty arising from concord of gender is attributed to the lack of gender in Japanese (as far as grammatical gender is concerned).

Concord of tense is one of the major difficulties Japanese students may face. It is because Japanese tenses are not as exact as English, and because, strictly speaking, we don't have indirect speech. This will be dealt with later (II-9). Here I will give only some examples of errors Japanese students often make.

- e.g. (66) \*He said he knows all about it.  
(67) \*I asked him when he arrived in Tokyo.

## 7. Tense and Aspect

Japanese tenses are expressed by suffixes (auxiliary verbs).

We have three classes of conjugated forms in the Japanese language; the verb, the adjective and the auxiliary verb. The conjugation of them is quite different from that of English verbs. The conjugation is simply a list of "base" forms of the verb, the adjective, or the auxiliary verb. Each verb, adjective or auxiliary verb has "bases" or "roots" to most of which suffixes may be attached (e.g. *kai-*, *akakat-*, *mashi-*, *deshi-*). Suffixes may be followed by other suffixes. For example, the past tense is formed as follows.

- e.g. (68)

Predicate	Present	Past
verb	<i>kaku</i> (=write)	<i>kai-ta</i> (=wrote)
adjective	<i>akai</i> (=is red)	<i>akakat-ta</i> (=was red)
auxiliary verb	<i>masu</i> (=is, am, are) <i>da</i> (=is, am, are) <i>desu</i> (=is, am, are)	<i>mashi-ta</i> (=was, were) <i>dat-ta</i> (=was, were) <i>deshi-ta</i> (=was, were)

As is seen above, one of the six forms (the adverbial form) is used with an auxiliary verb, '-ta'. The forms thus formed not only refer to the past tense but also indicate the completed action or event, i.e. the present perfect. Japanese present tense is expressed by the conclusive or finite form of the verb, the adjective or the auxiliary verb. The future tense is expressed by adding a suffix which means 'uncertainty' to one of the forms (the attributive form).

The compounds formed in this way may correspond to the way tense, voice, aspect, mood, etc. are expressed in the English language. In English, the verb

has its root form, past form, present participle, past participle, to-infinitive, gerund, etc., and these forms play very important roles in tense, aspect, etc.

This difference between Japanese and English verbs both in forms and functions explains the tremendous difficulty of Japanese speakers learning how to express English tenses and aspects.

The present perfect and the past perfect are especially difficult for a Japanese to master, for we don't have exact equivalents in our language. There is much need for familiarizing the students with not only the forms but also the concepts of these two tenses.

As I earlier pointed out (II-6), there is no concord of tense in Japanese. This is because the predicate of the final clause rounds off the entire sentence, and so the predicate of the non-final clause does not have to express tense. One example of this rule is already shown in the sentence of the example No. 12.

*Kireina hana-o mi-te,*

*Hanako-wa futo tachidomat-ta.*

Here, the predicate, '*mi-te*', doesn't indicate tense. As we have a past form of '*tachidomaru*' (=stop), i.e. '*tachidomat-ta*' (=stopped) in the final clause, the tense of the non-final clause is also the past.

Some examples of mistakes arising from the above-mentioned characteristics of the Japanese language are as follows.

- e.g. (69) \*I wrote many letters yesterday.  
 (70) \*Did you went to school last Saturday?  
 (71) \*When have you finished your assignment?  
 (72) \*I'm stay in London with my parents.  
 (73) \*We had enjoyed seeing the movie yesterday.

#### 8. Mood and Voice

The reason for difficulty in learning English mood and voice has already been mentioned.

The subjunctive (or unfulfilled conditional) causes much difficulty, for the forms of the verb are not the same as English equivalents in the subjunctive mood, though some correspond to each other. The difference is very clear in the case of non-final subjunctive clause, because the predicate of the final clause determines whether or not the conditional is unfulfilled and whether the tense is past, present or future.

Mistakes arising from this include the following.

- e.g. (74) \*If it didn't rain yesterday, I went out.  
 (75) \*If I am a bird, I can fly freely.

We have both passive and active voices in Japanese, but there are some differences which may cause some trouble to Japanese students.

First, passive voice is used in English in some cases where we use active voice in Japanese; Japanese verbs used in these cases are mostly intransitive verbs and they are the verbs expressing anger, fear, delight and sorrow. Usually these expressions in English are learned as idioms or collocations (e.g. 'be surprised at', 'be tired of', 'be interested in', 'be disappointed at', etc.).

The second problem about voice is that a suffix which is employed for passive voice in Japanese is also used to indicate respect for other people (honorific language), possibility, causative, etc. As a result, Japanese students use passive voice where it should not be used.

#### 9. Narration

As is already mentioned, we don't have the same type of indirect speech as English. A difference, if any, between direct and indirect speeches in Japanese is whether or not there are quotation marks. So Japanese indirect speech is something like represented speech: no change of person, time, place and no concord of tense.

As a result of this, Japanese students are not good at reporting a statement or question in indirect style.

- e.g. (76) Tom said to me, "I'll give you this book."  
 → \*Tom told me that he'll give you this book.  
 (77) Tom said to me, "When did you arrive here?"  
 → \*Tom asked me when I arrived here.  
 (78) I said to him, "Aren't you afraid?"  
 → \*I asked him if you weren't afraid.  
 (79) I said to Helen, "Where did you find your watch?"  
 → \*I asked Helen where she had found your watch.

#### 10. Comparison

Japanese adjectives and adverbs do not have comparative and superlative degree forms. Comparison in Japanese is expressed simply by adding adverbs or

particles.

Because of this, the students tend to use 'more' and 'most' in almost every case.

e.g. (80) \*My sister is more fast than I.

(81) \*This is the most easy question.

As we don't have equivalents of 'less' and 'least', it is difficult for us to understand and produce comparison of inferiority. Comparison of proportion, especially when inversion of words takes place, produces difficulty, too.

### 11. Vocabulary

It goes without saying that one particular word in a language is not exactly the same as the equivalent in another language. They may overlap in some of the meanings they have, but it almost always happens that some of the meanings are not included in the meanings of the equivalent in another language.

However, when one learns a foreign language after one has established one's linguistic habits in mother tongue, one tends to associate a word of a foreign language with a word of mother tongue which has a similar meaning, and vice versa. This association may facilitate the learning but often leads to misunderstandings and mistakes. There are quite a few examples of this type when a Japanese learns English, so I will give only some of them.

e.g. (82) \*That man is running very early.

('early' and 'fast' are translated into the same Japanese)

(83) \*Would you teach me the way to the station?

(the verb 'tell' in 'tell me the way' is translated into the same Japanese as that of 'teach')

(84) \*May I borrow the telephone?

('use' in 'use the telephone' is the same as 'borrow' in Japanese translation)

Another area of difficulty in vocabulary arises from the fact that a great many foreign words have been Japaneseized. As is already mentioned (I-5), a word borrowed from a foreign language receives a special treatment before it becomes a member of Japanese vocabulary. Meanings of these foreign words are sometimes different from the original meanings, or at least their usage has been modified to the extent

that they may fit into Japanese.

The change in meaning and usage, of course, causes trouble to a Japanese when he learns English words which he has already known for years in Japanese. The words which come from German, Portuguese, etc. are often thought to be from English, so the students tend to use them in English sentences.

Some examples of the mistakes arising from the Japanese foreign words are shown below.

e.g. (85) \*In winter we often do skate.

('skate' is used only as a noun in Japanese)

(86) \*Many university students do arbeit during the vacation.

('a part-time job' is 'arubaito' in Japanese, which is thought from English though it is from German 'Arbeit')

## III. THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PATTERNS OF JAPANESE AND ENGLISH

### 1. Vocabulary

There are hundreds of Japanese words which cannot be translated into English, because they are deeply rooted in Japanese culture and society, especially those words related to minute differences of weather and season, to family and social relationships, to food and things of daily necessity, to Shintoism and Buddhism, etc.

As a result, when Japanese students talk about Japanese culture and their everyday life, they often find it very difficult to explain in English. But when a Japanese learns the English language and culture, this does not make much trouble. (It will surely cause tremendous trouble to a native speaker of English learning Japanese.)

Nevertheless, some words in English are difficult for Japanese to grasp the full meanings of and to use in correct situation. M. Umegaki points out that "the meanings of 'mind' in English are very difficult for a Japanese to grasp; the words, 'heart' and 'soul', add to this difficulty because the areas of the meanings of these three words are different from those of Japanese 'kokoro' ". (Umegaki, 1966: pp. 86-87) According to him, 'kokoro' can be translated into



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twenty-two different words or phrases depending on the situation where it is used.” (Umegaki, 1974: p. 307) They are;

mind, mentality, heart, spirit, a temperament, a turn of mind, idea, thought, consideration, sympathy, affections, interest, care, will, intention, inclination, fancy, taste, a mood, humor, a frame of mind, purport.

### 2. Style and Speech Level

In Japanese, we have what is called ‘*keigo*’ (honorific language). This is a kind of linguistic system of references and addresses, which might be regarded as voice. It consists of three kinds; the one used in speaking to elders and people in higher position, the one used in speaking about oneself, and the deferential one. We also have three speech levels; vulgar, ordinary and polite. Both categories overlap in some way, and the way to use them properly is so difficult that even a Japanese native speaker is sometimes confused.

This, again, does not create difficulty when a Japanese learns English, which doesn’t have as distinctive levels of style and speech as Japanese. However, Japanese students tend to reflect some of these things even when they speak in English. It may be because they can’t be completely free from their cultural-linguistic habit in mother tongue.

As a result, they are likely to use ‘would’, ‘could’, ‘might’, ‘should’, etc. in order to express something like remoteness or politeness. They sometimes avoid speaking directly and exactly, as they don’t want to be regarded as too straightforward. It is sometimes said that Japanese people never say ‘No’. This seems to be due to the Japanese way of thinking that to say ‘No’ may give a bad impression of straightforwardness, and that to express their mind circuitously can avoid it.

### 3. Address

Addressing people is closely related to styles and speech levels. The way to address people is determined by the speaker, the one spoken to, and the situation.

Japanese learners of English find little difficulty in the English way of addressing. They feel relieved, for they don’t have to think about the situation, etc.

But, the problem arises when it comes to calling other people by their given name or nickname.

Given names are used by girls calling each other, by parents calling children, and by very intimate friends calling each other. But, to call one’s elder brother and sister, for example, by their given name is regarded as very rude and impolite. In addition, we don’t call each other’s name so often in our daily conversation as English-speaking people do.

A Japanese student may call his friends by their given name, but may be embarrassed when he is supposed to address seniors by their given name or when he is addressed by his given name by his juniors. It may be often the case that a Japanese avoids using people’s name as much as possible.

### 4. Social Customs

Some social customs in English-speaking society are difficult to understand, much more to practice. They should be explained to Japanese students when they appear in learning situations. For example, how to take a western-style bath, how the ‘lady first’ principle works on various occasions, how important a handshaking custom is, what Christian customs are, etc.

Some Japanese textbooks devote some lessons to explaining these things, but more cultural introduction is desired.

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