Cultural Policy on Loanword Adoption in Modern Japanese and Hebrew: A Comparative Study

Rotem Kownera and Judith Rosenhouseb

aDepartment of Multidisciplinary Studies, The University of Haifa
bDepartment of Humanities and Art Studies, Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa

INTRODUCTION

The Japanese and Hebrew languages, although very far apart geographically and genetically, may serve as an example of languages which have passed a process of rapid and successful adaptation to the needs of the modern world. Nowadays the Japanese and Hebrew vocabularies contain an extremely large number of words of foreign origin, the result of a long legacy of linguistic borrowing. Whereas Japanese borrowed until modern times from the Ainu, Korean and most importantly from the Chinese languages, Hebrew borrowed from Aramaic, Greek, and later from Arabic. In the second half of the 19th century both aimed to serve as functionally living (national) languages, and for different reasons faced an acute need for modernization. So Herculean seemed the task that among speakers of both languages there were voices that urged romanization of the indigenous writing system.

Although eventually these ideas were rejected, both Japanese and Hebrew later acquired an enormous number of loanwords. Japanese first depended on the creation of new Sino-Japanese
terms, but gradually turned to European languages, mainly English, as a source of modern terms and concepts. Hebrew, however, experienced an almost reverse process chronologically. At first it relied on borrowed vocabulary from European languages, but soon turned to its own sources and used them to replace the newly acquired foreign vocabulary.

The term 'cultural policy' when used regarding language in general and loanword adoption in particular needs some clarification. We assume that cultural policy consists of both language ideology and language policy, and its outcome may be evaluated but also influenced by language practice. The latter term is the easiest to define, since practice is simply what people actually speak. Ideology, however, implies a set of beliefs about language articulated by its users, whereas policy is a set of intentions and expectations about language consciously articulated by its planners or any other 'agents' of authority who may be able to affect the transformation of those language beliefs and practice (cf. Spolsky and Shohamy, 2000).

Language planning processes consist of a number of activities which seem to set conflicting requirements concerning loanwords. On the one hand, language revival and lexical modernization demand rapid adoption of foreign words. On the other hand, language purification involves efforts to reduce the number of loanwords (on language planning see Nahir, 1984). Almost every language that has undergone planning processes offers a unique solution to these conflicting requirements. This solution, which we regard here as an aspect of 'cultural policy', is evident in the case of Japanese and Hebrew too.

In this study we focus on the cultural policies elaborated on the adoption and use of foreign words, a rather unexplored niche in the policies concerning language corpus, and examine the differences in these regards between the two language. We first briefly review the linguistic history of Japanese and Hebrew from the middle of the 19th century. There follows a description of the language policy that has shaped the modes of penetration and absorption of foreign words into each language, centering on the impact of English, the lingua franca of our times. We also analyze the reasons for the specific developments in each of the two languages, and draw conclusions as to the adoption and use of foreign words and the impact of each model of cultural policy on it.
THE MODERN JAPANESE MODEL

Historical Perspective

Japan ought to be one of the least susceptible countries to acquire a foreign language. During its long history it was occupied only once for a short time (1945–1952), and the foreign conquerors did not attempt to enforce their language. Compared with other countries, Japan is certainly a monolingual culture, the result of its long political and geographical isolation and the small number of minorities (less than 1%). Finally, for most of the speakers the knowledge of foreign language has not been associated with much material advantage, in contrast to the situation in former colonies or multilingual cultures. Thus, Japan lacks most of the factors that tend to affect the penetration of a foreign language to a host culture (Brosnahan, 1963).

Nevertheless, looking at the history of the Japanese language we note that its lexicon contains a very large number of loanwords borrowed during the long history of contacts with other peoples. The Japanese distinguish their own indigenous vocabulary (called wago or Yamato kotoba), words of Chinese origin (kango), hybrids (konshūgo) and words of other foreign origins (gairaigo), usually European (mainly English, and in lesser importance German, French, Dutch and Portuguese). The adoption of Chinese words dates back to the 6th century. Many of the Chinese words have been so thoroughly absorbed into the language that their foreign origin has been long forgotten. Because the characters (known also as ideographs, kanji in Japanese) which make up the Chinese words have a meaning of their own, users can often grasp the whole meaning even on a first encounter.

Used to express abstract concepts and scientific terms, Chinese words function in Japanese like Latinate words in English (for a historical review of the Japanese contacts with foreign languages, see Loveday 1997). The Chinese words resemble Latinate words in the way they are constructed, and because they are associated with ancient high culture, they enjoy a high status compared with the indigenous vocabulary. For their complexity and prestige they are used predominantly in literary and academic texts (Loveday, 1986; Shibatani, 1990). Although we do not deal with words of Chinese origin in this study, note that this vast heritage is very evident in modern Japanese, and the number of these words probably still
exceeds that of native words (47.5% vs. 36.7% in the early 1960s: see Japanese National Language Institute, 1964).

As Japan was opened to the West, numerous statesmen, reformers and activists who came in contact with Western civilization felt that their language did not suit the needs of a modernized nation. Mid-19th century spoken Japanese was divided into a multitude of remote dialects, the writing system was too complex for semi-educated people to handle, and the writing style had only little resemblance to colloquial Japanese. A modern language, as a growing number of reformists recognized, should be easily learned and spoken by members of all strata of society (Twine, 1991). Reformed language, they further realized, could serve the Japanese nation in its unification efforts, and enable it to become stronger and more affluent. They concentrated on three issues: standardizing the language, transforming the written style to a more colloquial style, and limiting the number of characters.

The modernization process Japan initiated prompted the need for a larger vocabulary as well. Curiously, the conceptual adaptation Japanese experienced faced very few barriers and little opposition. In 1868 Japan underwent one of the most dramatic events in its long history. In a virtual revolution, known as the Meiji Restoration, the military dictatorship of Tokugawa was defeated and a group of Westernizers embarked on the modernization of Japan. During the first decades after the Meiji Restoration, thousands of additional kango-like words were added to the Japanese lexicon. Most of these were coined in Japan by the device of new combinations of Chinese characters as translations of concepts introduced from the West (Coulmas, 1990; Saito, 1977). The majority of Japanese speakers, however, have not been aware of the origin of the kango they use. So successful was this ‘Chinese’ revival, in fact, that those responsible for language reform in China at the same period resorted heavily to existing Japanese kango-like lexical terms mainly in the technical and political domain (e.g. Cousland, 1908: i).

Side by side with the resurrection of the Chinese lexicon, the Japanese language witnessed the vast acquisition of new lexical items borrowed from European languages. In 1859 the proportion of Chinese-originated words in the Genkai dictionary was 60% and that of other foreign words was only 1.4%. The rate of non-Chinese foreign entries had increased to 3.5% in the Reikai Kokugojiten dictionary published in 1956 and to 7.8% in the Shin Meikai Kokugojiten dictionary published in 1972. This ratio has probably passed 10% in
recent years, and even more in the mass media, and with increasing usage even in government ministries (Carroll, 1991; Shibatani, 1990). In absolute numbers the figures are even more striking: the *Gairaigo jiten* [Dictionary of Foreign Loanwords] published more than two decades ago contains 27,000 entries and since then the list has much enlarged (Arakawa, 1977). In fact, some experts predict that *gairaigo* may replace gradually all the Chinese vocabulary in the Japanese language (Ishino, 1977; Passin, 1982).

During the 20th century, English became the dominant source of new vocabulary, while the share of either Chinese-originated words or Dutch and Portuguese decreased. The move toward vocabulary from Western languages and notably English has been associated with two reasons. First, sensitivity to ranking led Japanese to perceive English as the most prestigious language internationally, and to associate the use of English with modernity and internationalization. Second, owing to the limited inventory of syllables available in Japanese for *kango* words, the number of often incomprehensible homonyms was multiplied during the Meiji era. The borrowing from English has slowed down this phenomenon.

The attitude toward English, however, varied. Before and during the Pacific War, English endured a short period of attempts at linguistic purification, whereas during the subsequent Occupation period (1945–1952) the Japanese public radiated enthusiasm for the language of the victors. In a survey of 7,000 *gairaigo*, Morimoto (1978) found that 94% of them were of English origin, while Stanlaw (1982) estimated that 8% of the entire Japanese vocabulary was English-based. Honna (1995) attributed three main factors to the current prevalence of English loanwords in Japanese: the existence of a separate script (called *katakana*) used almost solely for writing foreign words, the restriction imposed upon neoclassical compounding by the reduction of the number of Chinese characters in use, and the compulsory nature of English education. Tranter (1997), however, maintains that the ease of linguistic adoption in Japanese is the result of the existence of a set of transcription rules established for this purpose rather than a direct result of the existence of a specially designated syllabary of the *katakana*. Further, Tranter contends that the approximately 2,000 Chinese characters approved nowadays for daily use could have been combined to represent any technical term.

From a different perspective, Honna overlooked somewhat the substantial role which the U.S.A. and the U.K. have played as
models for technological, cultural, and military emulation in Japan during the last century, a trend which further increased after the Japanese defeat in World War II. The seven years of American occupation enhanced the position of English as the language for communication with foreigners. Additional stimulation to acquire the English language occurred with the re-emergence of Japan as an economic power, since the U.S.A. became its predominant trading partner. Due to the increasing importance of gairaigo in the Japanese language, their genuine foreign origin and their continuous acquisition in the present, we focus here only on these words.

Gairaigo: Loanwords in Contemporary Japanese

The current large vocabulary of gairaigo in Japanese is characterized by the following features:

Written Form. In contrast to the Chinese-originated vocabulary, which is written like the indigenous vocabulary in Chinese characters (kanji), and may be written also in another phonetic syllabary called hiragana, gairaigo are written in the above-mentioned katakana. This script immediately betrays the origin of these loanwords and permanently gives them the special status of foreign words.

Phonology. Despite the indication of the foreign origin, all gairaigo undergo a process of 'Japanization.' Due to the phonological constraints of the katakana (e.g. limited number of phonemes and vowels; syllables and words with almost no consonant ending) they sound quite different from the original pronunciation (Lovins, 1975; Vance, 1986). That is, they are pronounced according to their Japanese spelling, often with the omission of consonants or the insertion of vowels into the foreign consonant clusters, thus changing their original syllabic structures (e.g. shirt > shatsu; bus > basu). The most common in regard to English is the dropping of English suffixes such as -s, -ed, and -ing (e.g. sunglasses > san-gurasu; frying pan > furai pan) (cf. Kawamoto, 1983). Recently, however, there has been a growing attempt, perhaps a revival, to maintain some of the original sounds of gairaigo by constructing new phonemes using letter compounds based on existing letters (e.g. di, ti, fi). These new phonemes are used only in katakana and may gradually change the sound system of modern Japanese (for
a table of contemporary spelling innovations, see Loveday, 1997: 115).

**Semantic Features.** As with many other host languages (Lyons, 1977) the absorption of foreign words into Japanese language has led to certain semantic processes. Most of gairaigo filled semantic voids in Japanese, mainly in the modern technological domain. In certain domains the vast majority of the terms consist of loanwords. English terms have even replaced certain indigenous taxonomies, inasmuch as 52% of flower names, 35% of vegetable names, and 24% of animal names are based on English words (Morimoto, 1978). In certain cases, we may find narrowed meaning of the foreign word in Japanese. Often, when an indigenous word did exist, gairaigo evolved to express a specific part of the original meaning: raisu ['rice': used only for rice served on a plate in Western-style restaurants]. Another feature is the extended meaning of the foreign word in Japanese. Gairaigo frequently witness a transfer or shift in meaning: manshon (mansion) [a small Japanese-style condominium]; bosu ['boss': head of criminal gang]. This semantic form also enables users to express local, technical, or social flavor. A special feature of Japanese is its indigenous coinage known as wasei eigo (Japanese-made English). This semantic form expresses more than other forms certain creativity and even a sense of humor, e.g. sukinshippu ['skinship': physical contact usually between mother and child], famicon [family computer].

**Diffusion in Japanese.** Certain gairaigo have only partly penetrated the language while others have acquired several meanings, and still others have more than one phonological structure. Although dictionaries and almanacs partly function in Japan as a tool which contains any genuine, recent linguistic acquisitions, they hardly manage to control the flood of new gairaigo. The flexible morphological structure of the Japanese (nouns + suru make verbs, nouns + teki, no or na make adjectives) enables nouns to be easily transformed into other morphological categories (verbs, adjectives) which facilitates the integration of foreign words in Japanese.

The use of gairaigo vocabulary, particularly those stemming from English, has a special connotation in Japan. It mainly denotes prestige, and has the additional connotation of modernity, open-mindedness, internationalism, and the Western lifestyle. People may use this vocabulary to display knowledge of a foreign language for
social prestige or status (Loveday, 1997). The mass media channels use the foreign language words not to transfer information but to appeal to readers' and viewers' feelings of attraction, arousal, and self-esteem (Haarmann, 1989; Stanlaw, 1992). Further, the use of *gairaigo*, especially English-based words, symbolizes modernity rather than modernization, and expresses one's level of acquisition of Western-ness (Loveday, 1986; 1997). The abundance of English words in advertisements in Japan is not matched, perhaps, in any language other than English itself (Haarmann, 1984; 1986; 1989). Yet in spite of the torrent of foreign words in Japanese, the number of fluent speakers of English is relatively low, so the effect of *gairaigo* on acquisition of foreign languages and even the openness to foreign languages seems very limited (Inoguchi, 1999).

*Language Planning and Cultural Policy*

Language planning is usually activated by state authorities, but this was not exactly the case with modern Japanese. The successive reforms of the Japanese language were the joint product of pressure groups that had stimulated public interest and subsequent government committees, which took over and finalized the suggested reforms. Since the early stages of the Meiji era there were growing voices for reform and even abolition of the archaic and highly complex writing system based on Chinese characters. Compared with the problem of limited vocabulary and the need to adopt new terms and concepts, those linguistic deficiencies seemed much more severe to the extent that Mori Arinori, who became Minister of Education in 1886, suggested the adoption of English in toto (Twine, 1991).

Established toward the end of the 19th century, linguistic societies such as Society for Unification of Speech and Writing (*Gembun Itchi Kai*) and Language Association (*Gengo Gakkai*) pushed steadily for reforms in writing style, standardization of the language, as well as for the establishment of a national language advisory body (Twine, 1978; Yamamoto, 1969). Eventually, in 1900 the government, through the Education Ministry, established the National Language Inquiry Society (*Kokugo Chōsa Kai*), which was replaced in 1902 by the larger National Language Inquiry Board (*Kokugo Chōsa Linkai*). The following years were characterized by continuous linguistic reforms. In 1900 the shape of the *katakana* as well as another phonetic script
was standardized, in 1901 the Education Ministry stipulated practice of a standard form of Japanese, the language used by middle-upper classes of Tokyo, and a year later the National Language Inquiry Board published the first official normative grammars (Maher, 1995). At the same time, only little attention was paid to the spoken language, and similarly the amazing adaptation of Japanese to contemporary conceptual development was achieved almost without intervention from the language treatment system.

After many transformations, in 1934 the Education Ministry established the National Language Council (Kokugo Shingikai), but only after the Japan’s defeat in 1945 could further reforms take place. Although this council dealt mainly with script reforms of kanji (Gottlieb, 1995; Seeley, 1991; Unger, 1996), in 1991 it produced a policy document named ‘the writing of foreign loanwords’. In this document it defined an outline of the usage of katakana and thus it provided a clear guideline for future usage of this script but not the actual usage of the vocabulary. The document also manifests a desire to turn Japanese into a more communicative and international language, as can be observed in the new tendency for a pronunciation closer to the original words. This included the introduction of non-native sounds as mentioned above (Carroll, 1997; Gottlieb, 1994).

In 1948 the National Japanese Language Research Institute (Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyūjo) was established as an affiliate of the Education Ministry to implement the policy adopted by the National Language Council (Gottlieb, 1995). Since then it has been doing research in the area of linguistic structure, linguistic change, and Japanese language teaching. Among about 100 volumes of scientific research, the institute also published a volume of guidelines regarding the teaching of loanwords (Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyūjo, 1990). Nevertheless, the activity of the institute has not focused on lexical modernization and its contribution to planning or moderating the adoption of foreign words has been minimal (Grootaers, 1983).

Japan’s public broadcasting organization, NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai), also has a significant role in language planning in general, and controlling the usage of loanwords in particular (Carroll, 1995). Since the Pacific War, NHK, through its two research organs, the Committee on Broadcast Research Language (Hōsō Yōgo linkai) and the Research Group on Broadcast Research Language (Hōsō Yōgo Kenkyūkan), has served as the single most important institution in
defining the standard language, and subsequently in disseminating it throughout Japan. Since the first radio broadcast in 1925, NHK has been instrumental in controlling and promulgating the usage of loanwords. It even published a book regarding, *inter alia*, the correct *katakana* spelling of loanwords (NHK, 1987). This contribution, however, has been overwhelmed in recent decades by the growth of commercial TV and radio stations. Not only are they more popular than NHK, they tend to use and introduce more English-inspired words due to more liberal attitudes and various commercial needs.

Evidently, the official policy of the institutions dealing with language has focused mainly on the written language. In contrast to spoken language, it is, Carroll (1997) argues, relatively easy to codify, set standards for, and monitor. Still, even within the domain of the written language, most attention was paid to the *kanji* and least to *katakana*. This may be explained by the same reasons, such as the inability to control the penetration of vocabulary written in *katakana* and perhaps the view that the uninhibited acquisition of loanwords is an important tool in modernization.

With only little official guidance, the role of tracking, cataloguing, and standardizing the massive penetration of foreign words in Japan was undertaken partly by compilers of dictionaries. Since Japan's early history, dictionaries have been an integral and influential part of Japanese intellectual life, and in the last century a special genre of professional dictionaries and lexicons (*senmon jiten*) has been developed. This type of dictionary, a strong indication of a society which cherishes knowledge and information, consists currently of several thousands of specific volumes which cover almost any kind of subject. They also include dictionaries of recently coined words, dictionaries of slang, and dictionaries of loanwords (e.g. Arakawa, 1977; Motwani, 1991; Saito, 1985). Most of them are published privately, such as the annually issued *Gendai Yōgo no Kiso Chishiki* [Basic Knowledge of Contemporary Terminology] which deals with new terms, most of which are loanwords, classified according to subjects (e.g. Jiyūkōkumin, 2000). Others are an enterprise of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Since the 1950s, this ministry, with the cooperation of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the pertinent Scientific Association, has compiled scores of dictionaries of scientific terms (*Gakujutsu Yōgo Shū*) in all the major scientific disciplines (e.g. Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1986).
THE MODERN HEBREW MODEL

Historical Perspective

Hebrew has a long history, and its earliest periods are documented by the Bible starting about 2000 BC. Foreign vocabulary exists already in the Bible (Accadian, Egyptian, Persian, Aramaic). Later on, words from Old Egyptian, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and Arabic were added to the Hebrew vocabulary, the last in particular in the scientific and cultural domains that were prevalent in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Ben-David, 1967). Most of these words are now part and parcel of the language and speakers are not usually aware of their foreign origins. Unlike Japanese, Hebrew underwent a period of half-living existence, from about 100 BC to the 19th century AD, in which it was not a native language for its speakers, though it continued serving for written correspondence, and even oral communication, on matters which dealt mainly (but not solely) with religious issues. As the language of sacred scriptures, Hebrew has been preserved and revered, though also secular texts were written in it all the time, for example in the Middle Ages, such as translations of scientific material (Chomsky, 1977).

The rise of Jewish nationalism in the latter half of the 19th century involved a move to a new ideological monolingualism, in which Hebrew was one of a few choices. This period of ‘revival’ of the Hebrew language, or renewed usage in the 19th century, was undoubtedly influenced by the emancipation and enlightenment movement in Europe in general and Germany in particular. At the end of the 19th century the Zionist movement became active and Jewish immigrants began coming to Palestine, to live in and develop the land (Harshav, 1993). The revival of Hebrew was long process of mutually reinforcing decisions among activists of the Zionist movement both in Europe and in Palestine.

Hebrew ‘revivalists’ started with literary works imitating the Biblical style, and later continued with more innovative activities, such as coinage of new words. Hebrew newspapers began to appear in Europe as well as in Palestine, then under the Ottoman rule. These newspapers and journals filled the need for terms expressing modern concepts and objects by transliterating foreign words (mīlim lo’aziyyot) of European languages, mainly German, French, and Russian at that time. Early scholars translated European terms into Hebrew almost literally, e.g. the German Fernsprecher (telephone)
which was literally translated into Hebrew as saH-raHoq; but now it is obsolete, since the European (international) telefon has prevailed. In contrast, the German Handschuh (glove) was translated-coined in Hebrew as beit yad (lit. hand-house), but eventually a Hebrew single-word term kfafa has taken over (Avineri, 1964). For the train a new term had to be coined, rakkevet (derived from rekhev [vehicle]), which has been used up to now.

The arrival in Palestine of Zionist Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe was the main stimulus in the revival of Hebrew as a language for everyday life. These immigrants needed a single language that would serve communication, education, and political-nationalistic purposes. Some of their vocabulary was the result of the activity of the Language Committee (Va’ad Ha-Lashon), which began its work in 1897 for a year, ceased to exist, and was revived in 1904. With the activity of Ben-Yehuda, the leading Hebrew reformer of the early 20th century, they considered Hebrew as the Jewish lingua franca, and later as the official language for daily use (Mandel, 1993; Shur, 1996). In Palestine, these groups mixed with the native Sephardi population, and a new type of ‘mixed’ Hebrew began to develop which is now Israeli, or contemporary, Hebrew.

Since about the beginning of the 20th century new generations of native speakers of Hebrew have grown up in Palestine (later, the State of Israel) and Hebrew has resumed the natural course of development (Blanc, 1954; Mandel, 1981; Rosen, 1956). The promulgation of Hebrew focused on children and this process was conducted in several stages. At first, children whose mother tongue was not Hebrew received at school the proper attitudes toward Hebrew and later the linguistic model of usage. Following the acquisition of language, these children diffused the language at home (i.e. taught it to their parents) and finally, they taught their own children Hebrew as a mother tongue (Nahir, 1988).

In Europe, the World Zionist Congress decided in 1907 after a long struggle in favor of Hebrew (mainly against Yiddish) as its official language, thereby granting it formal recognition as a national language (Nahir, 1978). In the same year the language committee resumed its work, innovating new terms as needed, including many names for new kinds of food, flora, and fauna. In 1949, a year after the establishment of the State of Israel, the activities of the Language Committee eventually led to the establishment of the Academy of the Hebrew Language (ha-Aqademiyya la-Lashon ha-IVrit), and four years later the Supreme Hebrew Language Institute Law,
passed in the Knesset (Israeli parliament), charged the Academy with continuing the work of the former Hebrew Language Committee (Dotan and Ketko, 1963).

During the process of adapting Hebrew as a functional and modern language, thousands of words were borrowed from European languages. This process of ‘Europeanization’ of Hebrew exceeded mere loan translations of words and expressions from European languages, and penetrated its grammatical structure (e.g. Blanc, 1954). Others, however, have concluded that Modern Hebrew is still a Semitic language, but warned that with further development it may cease being so (Rabin, 1993).

*Milim Lo'aziyot: Loanwords in Contemporary Hebrew*

The current large vocabulary of *milim lo'aziyot* in Hebrew is characterized by the following features:

**Written Form.** Since Hebrew uses its own alphabet, the Semitic Hebrew alphabet, it has to adapt any foreign word to it. Not all the English phonemes, for example, exist in Hebrew, just as not all the Hebrew letters can be represented in the English (Latinate) alphabet. The Academy of the Hebrew Language has set definite rules for the Hebraization or transcription of foreign words in Hebrew. In fact, this adds to the Hebrew alphabet many new (diacritical) marks. Once a foreign word is adopted in Hebrew, its written form is indistinguishable from other words. This is a totally different situation from that of the Japanese language, as described above.

**Phonology.** As in Japanese, foreign words sometimes have phonemes and syllable structure which do not exist in the original Hebrew inventory. The processes which such language-dependent differences necessitate are similar to those encountered in Japanese. In Modern Hebrew certain sounds and structures were adopted, in other cases, the elements were Hebraized.

**Semantic Features.** Like Japanese and other languages, Hebrew also reveals semantic changes when foreign words are integrated in the host language. Many words fill semantic voids also in Hebrew, mainly in the technological domain (computer terms, medicine,
various industry parts, etc.), but also in various cultural and social domains. A large number of words are innovated in Hebrew by the Academy of the Hebrew Language, with the aim of replacing the foreign words as part of its language planning role. In many cases the two sets of words (the new Hebrew terms and the foreign ones) are synonymous. Often this causes the foreign word to go practically out of circulation (cf. haslama vs. escalata [escalation]). Sometimes both words, the foreign and the Hebrew coinage, continue to compete for popularity (e.g. monit vs. taxi; [massok vs. helicopter]). As in Japanese, Modern Hebrew loanwords may carry specialized (narrower) meaning of the foreign word in its Hebrew use (e.g. test is used mainly for a driving test or a car licensing test), or expanded meaning (e.g. pancher [puncture] is used for ‘any kind of mishap’). There are in Hebrew a few indigenous coinings based on the foreign words, e.g. bankat (bank + small) [automatic cash dispenser] (cf. Machauf, 1997).

**Diffusion in Hebrew.**  As in Japanese, certain Milim Lo'aziyyot have only partly penetrated the language while others have acquired several meanings. Hebrew dictionaries are far from helpful in following the recent loanword acquisition. As in other languages, the survival and integration of newly coined words in Hebrew requires at least three conditions: that the new form be morphologically and semantically transparent, phonetically easy to pronounce, and in luck with the public. The flexible morphological structure of the Hebrew root and pattern system (consonantal roots + vowel changes and other affixes yielding patterns) enables nouns to be easily transformed into other morphological categories (verbs, adjectives), which facilitates the integration of foreign words in Hebrew. In terms of luck, the use of loanwords has only sometimes an additional flavor and prestige which automatically accompanies the use of gair-aigo in Japanese. The local culture is basically Western, but also nationalistic-Israeli, so it does not aim at the special stress of ‘foreignness’.

**Language Planning and Cultural Policy**

In contrast to Japanese, the revival of Hebrew at the end of the 19th century began under odd circumstances, namely there was no state with Hebrew as its official language. The movement that
adapted Modern Hebrew as its language was Zionism, and its ideology involved the creation of a new Jewish identity, based on ‘transformed’ people, language, and land. Hence, the historical circumstances that affected the Hebrew revitalization help ‘account for the ideological strength of the language and its crucial role in defining modern Israeli identity’ (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999: 69). This strong ideology has determined the rapid spread of the language as well as the cultural policy toward loanword adoption.

The evolution of the Hebrew language policy may be divided, following Landau (1990), into three stages, and this periodization has relevance also to attitudes toward loanwords. In the first stage, from 1890 to 1920, the revival of the spoken Hebrew was a major aim. In this stage, which roughly corresponds to the period from the establishment of the first Hebrew Language Committee to the end of Ottoman rule, the planning of Hebrew involved education and teaching of the language to its speakers, as well as the desire to form some standardization in it. After a fierce ‘language war’, Hebrew was declared the formal language of teaching in the newly established higher education institutions, the Polytechnic Institute in Haifa in 1913 (currently the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology) and later in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as well as in the primary schools.

For word innovation at the beginning of the 20th century, journalists and writers relied partly on adapting foreign words to Hebrew from the European languages (such as German, French, Russian, and Polish) they were fluent in (cf. Nahir, 1983). Members of the Language Committee and the Teachers’ Association, in particular Ben-Yehuda, stressed the need to turn to the Semitic roots of the language (Arabic, in particular) in order to coin new terms. Ben-Yehuda himself coined about 250 Hebrew words.

An indication of the attitudes of the Hebrew Language Committee towards loanwords can be found in the declared goals published in 1912. Among its nine stated objectives three concerned vocabulary and had a direct bearing on loanwords. The Committee was supposed ‘to examine the entire corpus of Hebrew literature for all Hebrew words—avoiding non-Semitic words unless they have acquired a Hebrew form or are in current use’ and ‘to create necessary words, following the rules of grammar and linguist analogy, preferably derived from Hebrew roots and otherwise from Arabic (as a first choice), Aramaic, Canaanite, or Egyptian ones’, and ‘to coin words which are not only grammatically correct but
also morphologically sound and harmonious’ (Fellman, 1973: 82–83).

In the second stage, which corresponds more or less to the period of the British Mandate in Palestine until the 1948, the main emphasis was on standardization of the language and making it generally applicable. As for loanwords, this period was characterized by a massive expansion of the Hebrew vocabulary based partly on the adoption and acceptance of non-Semitic words and the publication of word lists in many domains for standard use.

The third stage, from 1948 to the present, corresponds to the period since the establishment of the State of Israel. With the establishment of the Academy of the Hebrew Language in Jerusalem, language planning was entrusted to it. As defined in 1954, the objectives of the newly established Academy were more vague than those of the Hebrew Language Committee and none had clear relevance to the adoption of loanwords. The role of the Academy was ‘to guide the development of the Hebrew language according to its nature, needs and possibilities in every domain of theory and practice…’ (ha-Aqademiyya la-Lashon ha-’lvrit, 1970: 71). In practice, however, the Academy has set guidelines and offered new vocabulary which, rather than accommodating loanwords, has purged them from the language (Fellman, 1977; Medan, 1983; Nahir, 1979).

Another source of vocabulary innovation was the Office of Technological Terminology situated at the Technion. Until its closing in 2000 this office was in charge of coining the necessary Hebrew scientific and technological terms and preparing glossaries or dictionaries for them. These activities supplied new terminology in Hebrew coming mainly from English nowadays, but also from German, English, French, and Russian in earlier years, being the most important languages of these fields. The procedures for each new term were finally confirmed at the head office in Jerusalem. Over the years, about 55 scientific and technological dictionaries and glossaries have appeared through the work of the office for technological terminology alone, and many others in the Academy’s head office for areas of humanities and social studies (Irmmay, R., 1997; Irmmay, S., 1997; Retner, 2000).

Like the NHK in Japan, Israel’s national broadcasting authority, The Voice of Israel (Kol Israel) and later The Broadcasting Authority (Rashut Hashidur), has been an important source of disseminating the language policy toward loanwords. This official branch of the
media has been instrumental in the dissemination of a standardized and often ‘purified’ version of Hebrew. For that purpose it employs a representative of the Academy of the Hebrew Language as a ‘language watchdog’ (Nahir, 1984).

Notwithstanding the contribution of these institutions, the progress and life of a language cannot proceed only by instructions from the official language authorities. Along with the increase of the Hebrew-speaking population in Israel (from a few thousands at the beginning of the 20th century, to 600,000 in 1948, and to more than five millions at present), Hebrew has become a truly living language, ranging in use from literature and poetry to news and every kind of science, slang, and children’s innovations. This ‘miracle’ was certainly not only an outcome of institutional supervision. New words in Hebrew, Rabin noted four decades earlier, ‘are not only invented for technical items missing in the language, but also (as in European languages) by modern poets and writers, by politicians in search of slogans, by advertisers etc.’ (Rabin, 1963: 20). Therefore, the Academy has not been able to control the influx of new terminology, just as it has not succeeded in implementing standardized spelling and pronunciation.

Dictionaries of the Hebrew languages issued by private initiative also appear, including a dictionary of Hebrew slang and of ‘lost words’ (i.e. coined words that were not integrated in the language) (e.g. Ben-Amotz and Ben-Yehuda, 1972; Orman, 1996). In the same vein, some dictionaries dealing with highly necessary technical terminology (e.g. for computer studies, the military) have appeared, which do not heed the rulings of the Academy (e.g. Israeli Navy n.d.). The difference in numbers of volumes, whether privately published or by the Academy, between Japanese and Hebrew dictionaries, is probably due to the size of the population in each of these countries, their financial means, and the number of scientists who can and want to work in the field.

The success of Modern Hebrew has overpowered and even suppressed the use and status of other languages used by immigrants to Israel. Only English has not succumbed to the hegemony of Hebrew, and recent trends attest that the status of English is even on the rise. Interestingly, the position of English has not been the result of the legacy of the three decades of rule by the British Mandatory government in Palestine. It has mainly been a result of post-independence trends such as a sizable English-speaking immigrant community, foreign tourism, emigration to English-speaking
countries, intensive economic and military contacts with English-speaking countries, and the growing role of English as a *lingua franca* in other parts of the world as well (Cooper, 1985; Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999).

The positive attitude towards English can be seen in the choice of language during interviews with foreigners, academic conferences, and contact with overseas visitors; in advertisements and articles in the Hebrew press; and in street signs (Nadel and Fishman, 1977; Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999). Israelis also rate the social prestige of English at the top, together with Hebrew, and the Education Ministry faces growing pressures to lower the age of exposure to English in schools (Cooper, 1985, Nadel and Fishman, 1977). Thus, in the case of English the effects of the mass media and natural language development outweigh the activities of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, due in part to its limited propagating abilities. Consequently, English loanwords penetrate Hebrew as freely as they do Japanese, and the Academy has often recognized their use post factum.

The recent massive invasion of English loanwords to Hebrew has not passed unchallenged. In 1980 three language laws were submitted to the Israeli parliament in order to 'erect a barrier against foreign-language domination' (cited in Cooper, 1985: 240), with the English considered implicitly as the main threat. The bills required the use of Hebrew in signs, advertisements, menus, international agreements; the use of Hebrew dubbing in foreign films; and the exclusion of foreign words in contracts or advertisements if parallel Hebrew terms exist. Eventually the legal attempt to halt English did not arouse much interest either with the public or the members of the parliament, and with the expiration of the parliament's term it was not brought again for vote (Cooper, 1985). On the whole, it seems that the threat English makes on Hebrew is not imminent. Members of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, Spolsky and Shohamy (1999) contend, are not afraid English would drive Hebrew altogether, but rather that it would succeed in taking over the higher domains of academic and cultural use.

Interestingly, linguists and educators were less alarmed by the Russian language even though Israel has absorbed close to one million Russian speaking immigrants since the collapse of the Soviet Union. While only very few Russian words entered Hebrew, the massive use of Russian in Israel has somewhat altered the monolingual ideology of the Israeli society.
COMPARISON

Underlying Factors of Cultural Policy towards Loanwords Adoption

Language contacts are normal and frequent in inter-societal human communication. People move around, and with them their cultures, manufactured material objects, and conceptual Weltanschauung. People keep hearing the languages of neighbors, visitors, tourists, visiting merchants in their places, conquerors, etc. Such contacts have existed and are documented since very ancient periods, for example, thousands of years ago between Korea, China and Japan in the Far East, as well as between Egypt and Sumer, and later Babylon, in the Middle East.

Turning to Japanese and Hebrew, we note basic historical differences between them. Japanese has developed on a relatively isolated archipelago, geographically remote from other languages and cultures. Except for regional traders, only few people visited it. European explorers, for instance, reached it only in the middle of the 16th century, and a century later the contact with them, as well as with other foreigners, was virtually cut off for more than two centuries. Contact with Western civilization was re-established only in the second half of the 19th century. Moreover, Japan was never colonized by a foreign force. Despite the intensive emulation of Western technology and culture, many Japanese have retained a feeling of cultural self-sufficiency and national identity, which is partly based on their language (cf. Miller, 1982).

Hebrew, on the other hand, underwent a long period of stagnation, and its revival is firmly linked with the national revival and the establishment of the State of Israel. The inhabitants of the country have come in recurring waves from numerous different lands, all speaking their own mother tongue. The development of Hebrew as a mother tongue has gone hand in hand with national, historical, and cultural development in this century. Hebrew is also influenced by various languages with which its speakers were in touch, mainly in the cultural domains. In the last century, the slang on the one hand and high language registers on the other have absorbed many lexical items from neighboring languages (i.e. Arabic), or European languages which the speakers heard in their surroundings (i.e. Russian, German, Yiddish, Spanish, or French).
Despite these basic historical and geographical differences, Modern Japanese and Hebrew also share certain similarities that helped shape their attitude towards foreign loanwords in general and English loanwords in particular. Speakers of Japanese and Hebrew lack a strong colonial heritage, and both have experienced only little encouragement from English-speaking countries. The spread of English in both languages stems from its high status and growing role as lingua franca. English, a language that only a few speakers of Japanese and Hebrew were in direct contact with, represents for both native Hebrew and native Japanese speakers the most copious origin for the Western modern culture, especially after World War II.

*Cultural Policies on Loanwords Adoption: Ideology, Policy, and Practice*

As time goes on, new objects are invented, new activities are undertaken and the old vocabulary becomes obsolete and insufficient. This is the most important cause for adding and coining new terms or dictionary items. This description is valid for the Japanese and the Hebrew models, as well as other languages. Yet, a careful analysis of the cultural policies toward loanwords pursued in the two languages are far from identical.

From an ideological standpoint, reformers of both Japanese and Hebrew aimed to make their respective languages adaptable to modernity, a living medium for communication in any domain of life. Yet language ideology in Japan has not regarded the flood of new loanwords as a threat to Japanese, whereas Hebrew ideologists had first to struggle to make it the sole language of their group through a clear lexical distinction from other languages in use.

The need for new vocabulary items often leads to ideological debates between purists and reformers. During the Meiji era there were various levels of opposition to reform. The Futsū bun (General Style) Movement, for example, opposed the colloquial style, pressing for changes to be made by modification of the existing style (Twine, 1991). As for adoption of loanwords, some critics argue even today that massive borrowing instead of creating an indigenous lexicon is a symbol of cultural backwardness and threat to the language (Burling, 1992). Others contend that enlarging a vocabulary using words which only few understand reinforces the Japanese- (and Hebrew-) speaking people's indifferent or ambiguous attitude
toward the meaning of words. In contrast, supporters of the foreign words argue that they enrich the language and make foreign languages more accessible (cf. Kawamoto, 1983).

Hebrew witnessed a more acute conflict, as it seems to have had a stronger control of the processing of new terms, including borrowed foreign words, as well as a greater need for language purity. The conflict continues between educators-normativists on the one hand, and *Sabra* native speakers of Hebrew or naturalists on the other, as to the development of the language at school level, where Classical Hebrew grammar is taught and tested (Nir, 1974). While the educational syllabus is still based on Classical Hebrew, students and teachers use Modern Hebrew (Schwarzwald, 1988). Although Hebrew has withstood probably greater pressures than Japanese for ‘external purification’, that is, efforts to preserve the ‘purity’ of language and protect it from foreign influences, it has also continued to absorb numerous loanwords, and at present the two tendencies can be observed simultaneously.

No wonder that specialized dictionaries published by the Academy of the Hebrew Language contain an increasing number of loanwords (Nahir, 1984). In fact, both Japanese and Hebrew may serve as a good example for well-normed wide-currency languages which have been willing to make structural compromises in accepting loanword adoption. Compared with more conservative languages (e.g. Tiwi, Australia; Gaelic, Scotland; Nahuatl, Mexico) their flexible attitudes appear to foster the process of revival and ultimately to enhance their survival chances (cf. Dorian, 1994).

Speakers of the two languages differ also in their attitudes toward the penetration of the foreign words. This is apparently linked to the basic self-confidence of the speakers as well as language ideology regarding each of these two languages. Since the Japanese are relatively confident of their language (although their confidence toward their culture has been fluctuating during recent history and has gained much from ‘auto-Orientalist’ efforts; cf. Befu, 1995), they are less afraid of adding foreign words to their basic lexicon. At the same time, they keep their foreign status visible. The Hebrew speakers are torn between two elements. They wish to have a ‘normal’ language and culture, which is often perceived as following the leading English-speaking culture by imitation. On the other hand, they wish to strengthen their linguistic independence by enriching the language by more lexical items that will adapt it to modern needs. This leads to a seemingly contradictory phenomenon in
which speaking fluent English is highly regarded but people who use too many Anglicisms in their speech are often considered to be snobbish or 'showing off' their cultural-educational social status.

The two languages have greatly differed in their respective language policies. Japan's various language institutions have acted to facilitate the flow of new vocabulary to Modern Japanese rather than to control it. Thus, by having no definitive language policy regarding lexical modernization, Japan has opted for the most liberal attitude towards loanwords and has allowed numerous agents to adopt any foreign vocabulary they have desired. Over the years, various bodies such as the public broadcasting organization and private publishers have ventured to organize some of the acquired corpus. In Hebrew, by contrast, the Academy of the Hebrew Language was supposed to and often succeeded in setting guidelines for lexical modernization and replacing acquired loanwords as much as possible (see a case study in Fellman and Fishman, 1977).

Language policy may be related also to working knowledge of the *lingua franca* by a given community. The creators of new terms want them to be understood within the local community but also to facilitate communication beyond its borders. This conflict between two contradicting goals, Jernudd (1977) pointed out, is commonly faced by corpus innovators and leads to preference for indigenous terms in the former case and loanwords in the latter case. The Japanese, who lacked in the beginning of their modernization both indigenous terminology and a functional medium of communication with foreigners, chose loanwords. Jewish immigrants to Palestine, in contrast, had native-level knowledge of various European languages but lacked good knowledge of a common language within their new community, and so they focused on indigenous terms.

As for the actual practice of loanwords in the two languages, the differences between them are also prominent. At first sight observers may regard the use of foreign words in Japanese as bordering on pidgin-English, but the process which led to the loss of other than the most essential features of loanwords in Japanese is often conscious, and the linguistic adoption is partly governed by the phonological constraints of the *katakana*. In fact, during the modern history of Japan, a genuine though temporary Japanese-based pidgin has developed in certain periods and locations, which undoubtedly affected the mainstream language (cf. Goodman, 1967; Loveday, 1986: 28–29; Miller, 1967).
As for Hebrew, its speakers use a relatively large number of loanwords in their daily life, despite the ideological stand and the policies of the Academy of the Hebrew Language. The partial failure of the purification efforts in Israel can be attributed to the struggle among various currents within the Zionist movement and perhaps to the weakening of its ideological position in recent decades. As in other languages, the attraction to use modern and prestigious loanwords tends to undermine official language policy, which in turn has a tendency to be a diluted version of ideological desires. Nevertheless, Hebrew speakers tend with time and rising education to decrease their reliance on loanwords, whereas Japanese speakers tend to increase it.

CONCLUSIONS

The cultural policies towards loanword adoption in both Japanese and Hebrew reflect a long heritage of more than a century of language policy, ideology, and actual practice. So while the process of adoption seems to be similar in many linguistic aspects for both models, its motives and sociolinguistic implications are considerably different.

Japanese reformers and speakers were concerned about its relevance to modern life and therefore willing to adopt much foreign vocabulary. They have also attributed prestige to usage of foreign words, and thus sustained the process of borrowing. This approach is shared by only a small part of the Hebrew-speaking society. At first sight we may assume that the degree of integration of foreign words in Japanese and Hebrew varies due to their different structures. The Japanese language is able to transform nouns into verbs and adjectives by using different devices, and adapts foreign elements phonetically. Hebrew, in contrast, adapts loanwords to the Semitic root + pattern structure, and makes them in only partial phonetic modification. The latter process allows fuller integration of many words, which can thus be transformed from nouns into verbs and adjectives, for example, involving gender and number designations, as required in Hebrew.

But a deeper look into cultural policies on loanword adoption in each model reveals that they are not based on linguistic structure alone. Ideologically, speakers of Japanese are relatively confident of their language, so they are less afraid of adding foreign words to
their basic lexicon. At the same time, the features of the Japanese script assist them by retaining the foreign status of the loanwords visible even after hundreds of years. In contrast, the linguistic competition that Modern Hebrew has faced seems to be the main reason for the low self-confidence manifested by its speakers toward the use of loanwords. In absolute terms, however, both languages are striking in their incessant borrowing of foreign words, a phenomenon which attests to the current strength of English as a lingua franca, and perhaps to the impossibility of curbing this tendency.

We have surveyed here the adoption of foreign and especially English words into the modern vocabularies of Japanese and Hebrew, as well as the cultural policy toward this adoption. These two languages are not unique in this sense since the spread of English as the lingua franca and the world’s becoming increasingly a ‘global village’ affect the modern vocabulary of almost any language. Certain linguistic features in this process are so prevalent that may even be considered language universals. Ultimately, however, the ‘local’ effects of the speakers’ attitudes to their own mother tongue and to foreign languages, which very much depend on historical, psychological, and sociological factors, produce differences in the details of the processes and in the results.

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