International Journal of Culture and Art Studies (IJCAS)
Journal homepage: https://ijcas.usu.ac.id/

Japanglish: The Benefits of English Proficiency for Japanese Language Students' Vocabulary Acquisition in North Sumatra

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ARTICLE INFO
Article history:
Received 03 March 2023
Revised 02 April 2023
Accepted 20 April 2023
Available online 30 April 2023

E-ISSN: 2654-3591
P-ISSN: 2623-1999

How to cite:
Gapur, A., & Taulia. (2023). Japanglish: The Benefits of English Proficiency for Japanese Language Students' Vocabulary Acquisition in North Sumatra. *International Journal of Culture and* Art Studies, 7(1), 41-48.

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http://doi.org/10.32734/ijcas.v7i1.11868

ABSTRACT
Japanglish is a popular term for absorbing English words into the Japanese language. The phenomenon emerged due to the global usage of English as an international language, which has influenced other languages, including Japanese. As a result, many English loanwords have been absorbed into the Japanese language, particularly for modern terminology. These loanwords are known as *gairaigo* (外来語) or *katakanago* (カタカナ語). Although the incorporation process involves morphological and phonological changes, English loanwords are easily recognizable to those who understand English. This study aims to prove that English Proficiency among Japanese language learners can help improve their mastery of Japanese vocabulary and conversational ability. The study was conducted by providing special instructions on the formation and usage of Japanese loanwords in conversation. The study approach is qualitative with a descriptive method, employing behavioral theory and pre-test and post-test evaluation methods. Data were collected through observation of the teaching process and pre-test and post-test results from Japanese language students in Sumatra Utara. The findings indicate that English language proficiency among students offers advantages and influence in the mastery of Japanese vocabulary, especially in loanwords, and facilitates communication in conversation.
Keywords: Loan Words, *Gairaigo*, English, Japanese Learners

1. Introduction

As one of the languages the international community uses for communication, English vocabulary has been heavily absorbed by other languages. Japanese is one of them, with many modern terms in the fields of industry and technology using loanwords from English. Examples include 'computer,' which becomes *konpyuuta* (コンピューター) in Japanese, 'system,' which becomes *sisutemu* (システム), 'television' which becomes *terebi* (テレビ), and so on. This phenomenon is commonly called Japanglish, an abbreviation of Japanese and English. This situation demonstrates the significant role that English loanwords play in everyday Japanese communication and is predicted to continue to evolve. (Garland, 2021, p. 197; Yani, 2018).

The above examples of loanwords demonstrate that English vocabulary is absorbed into the Japanese language through a process and phonology rules appropriate for the Japanese language. The phonological changes in loanwords may seem confusing for those who have not studied Japanese, but for those who are currently or have previously studied Japanese, such changes are not unfamiliar. Language learners may even be able to guess and determine the original English word from its loanword in Japanese. If learners know the English word, they can automatically recognize its meaning and definition. Although the meaning of loanwords from English may not always be the same in Japanese, they are invariably related. For instance, the English word 'cunning' meaning sly or shrewd, is represented in Japanese as *Kaninggu* (カニング) with a specific meaning of 'cheating during an exam.' Conversely, if learners know a word in English, they can convert it into a loanword in Japanese by following the appropriate conversion rules.

Based on the observations, it is found that Japanese language learners at the university level (students) in North Sumatra often struggle to memorize Japanese vocabulary. This also affects their conversational ability in Japanese since the limited vocabulary they have memorized leads to an inability to respond to questions in a conversation. Therefore, it may be possible to improve students' mastery of their vocabulary and conversational ability by focusing on learning the rules for creating Japanese loanwords. This is supported by the fact that English is typically the first foreign language these students acquire, so that they may have more exposure to and understanding of English than Japanese.

This study aims to prove that students' understanding of English can help improve their mastery of Japanese vocabulary and conversation. Previous studies on Japanese loanwords (*gairaigo*) have been conducted and mostly focus on their creation and meaning, such as the studies by Adrianis & Asri (2021) and Yaniar & Masrokhah (2021). Champ (2014) also studied the advantages of native English speakers in learning Japanese. Based on prior research, this study seeks to build on the investigation of *gairaigo* by exploring learners' comprehension of their formation and semantics. The aim is to determine whether such an understanding can enhance Japanese language learners' ability to retain vocabulary and improve their conversational skills, specifically in North Sumatra.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gairaigo (外来語)

Gairaigo is a type of Japanese vocabulary that originates from foreign languages but has been adapted to fit Japanese language rules (Sudjianto & Ahmad, 2014, p. 104). These loanwords have been used by Japanese society in their daily lives. However, these loanwords have different meanings, pronunciations, and spellings compared to their original language. It is easy to distinguish these words from those originating in Japanese since gairaigo is written in katakana. Pamungkas (2008, p. 4) states, "katakana is a Japanese writing system used to write loanwords from foreign languages that include nouns, places, names, countries and so on." Some examples of *gairaigo* loanwords include *repooto* (レポート) for report, *supuun* (スプーン) for spoon, *hansamu* (ハンサム) for handsome, and so on. Some *gairaigo* words have shortened forms, such as *depaato* (デパート) for a department store or *pasokon* (パソコン) for a personal computer. Additionally, some *gairaigo* words are combined with Japanese words; for example, *kopii suru* (コピーする) means to photocopy.

In addition to being written in katakana characters, *gairaigo* has different spelling rules than other Japanese vocabularies. For example, the English "l" sound is replaced by the Japanese "r" sound and the English "er" sound is replaced with the Japanese "a" sound. The nasal sound "ng" is written as "n + g" (ング) (Annisa, 2015). Consonants "t" and "d" are added with the vowel "o," such as hint becoming *hinto* and head becoming *heddo* (Sudjianto & Ahmad, 2014), and so on.

While *gairaigo* can be a challenge for Japanese language learners, knowledge of foreign languages, specifically English, can also help with the mastery of *gairaigo* vocabulary.

2.2. The Theory of Behaviorist Learning

This theory was pioneered by B.F. Skinner in his book Verbal Behavior in 1957 (Skinner, 2014). It is based on the stimulus-response learning theory (S-R theory). Several key points about language learning or acquisition according to the behaviorism theory are as follows:

- The behaviorism theory is empirical and based on observable data.
- The theory assumes that:
  - The process of language learning is only a part of the general learning process;
  - Humans do not have an innate potential to learn language;
  - A people's mind is a blank slate to be filled with S-R(Stimulus- Respons). associations;
  - All behavior is a response to stimuli, and behavior is formed in associative sequences.
- Learning in behaviorism is the process of forming associative relationships between stimulus and response that are repeated until habits are formed.
- Conditioning is always accompanied by reinforcing associations between S-R (Stimulus- Respons).
- Language is a complex human behavior, among other behaviors.
- A person acquires language through imitation.
- The frequency and intensity of the exercises presented to determine a person's language development. Therefore, drills are highly important.

This theory is applicable in teaching the formation of loanwords in Japanese. Students will become accustomed to converting English vocabulary into Japanese, resulting in better post-test results than pre-test results.

2.3. Pre-test and Post-test Evaluation Model

Evaluation is the assessment process by comparing the intended goals with actual progress/achievements. Meanwhile, Edwind Wandt and Gerald W. Brown defined evaluation as the process or action to determine the value of something (Ratnawulan & Rusdiana, 2015).

Pre-test and post-test in this study are objective tests with scores assessed by getting 1 point for the correct answer and 0 points for the wrong answer. The pre-test is conducted during the delivery of the material to determine the extent to which learners can master the presented material or subject matter. The type of test given should be relevant to the material to be taught. Meanwhile, a post-test is conducted at the end of the learning process for a material or intervention to assess the extent to which learners comprehend the material and the main focus of the material learned. The test material is related to the material that has been previously taught. The purpose is for teachers to determine which test results show a better understanding of learners. The teaching program is successful if learners better understand the material after learning.

Figure 1. Pre-test and post-test stages

3. Method

This type of study uses qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2016) with a descriptive method. The data consists of the results of teaching observations in January 2023, which were analyzed and described to observe the phenomenon of the Japanese language by students facilitated by their English language skills. In support of the data, a simple evaluation method of pre-test and post-test was used in this study. The pre-test was conducted to measure the extent of student's ability to understand the formation of Japanese loanwords from English. After that, a special teaching approach was applied to teach loanword formation in Japanese for one week (7 days) based on the behaviorism theory. Then, a post-test was conducted to assess the improvement of students' proficiency and conversation skills.

The test questions (pre and post) were presented in the form of a vocabulary table in Indonesian that, when translated into Japanese, consists of loanwords from English. The following is a table for filling in the vocabulary.

Table 1. Pre and post-test questions

No	***Kosakata* *(Vocabs)***	***Bahasa Inggris*** **(English)**	***Jawaban Terjemahan dalam Bahasa Jepang*** **(Translated Answers in Japanese)**
1.	*Permainan*	Game	ゲーム (*geemu*)
2.	*Bolpoin*	Ballpoint pen	ボールペン (*bōrupen*)
3.	*Sepeda/motor*	Bike/motorcycle	バイク (*baiku*)
4.	*Bis*	Bus	バス (*basu*)
5.	*Bisnis*	Business	ビジネス (*bijinesu*)
6.	*Mentega*	Butter	バター (*batā*)
7.	*Kupu-kupu*	Butterfly	バタフライ (*batafurai*)
8.	*Kamera*	Camera	カメラ (*kamera*)

No	*Kosakata (Vocabs)*	*Bahasa Inggris* (English)	*Jawaban Terjemahan dalam Bahasa Jepang* (Translated Answers in Japanese)
9.	*Berkemah*	Camping	キャンプ (*kyanpu*)
10.	*Cokelat*	Chocolate	チョコレート (*chokorēto*)
11.	*Koktail*	Cocktail	カクテル (*kakuteru*)
12.	*Kopi*	Coffee	コーヒー (*kōhī*)
13.	*Komputer*	Computer	コンピューター (*konpyūtā*)
14.	*Cangkir*	Cup	コップ (*koppu*)
15.	*Tangga berjalan*	Elevator	エレベーター (*erebētā*)
16.	*Ramah*	Friendly	フレンドリー (*furendorī*)
17.	*Bensin*	Gasoline	ガソリン (*gasorin*)
18.	*Golf*	Golf	ゴルフ (*gorufu*)
19.	*Permen karet/permen karet*	Gum/chewing gum	ガム (*gamu*)
20.	*Hotel*	Hotel	ホテル (*hoteru*)
21.	*Es krim*	Ice cream	アイスクリーム (*aisukurīmu*)
22.	*Ide*	Idea	アイデア (*aidea*)
23.	*Jaket*	Jacket	ジャケット (*jaketto*)
24.	*Makan siang*	Lunch	ランチ (*ranchi*)
25.	*Memo/catatan*	Memo/note	メモ (*memo*)
26.	*Mikropon*	Microphone	マイク (*maiku*)
27.	*Oranye*	Orange	オレンジ (*orenji*)
28.	*Luar ruangan*	Outdoor	アウトドア (*auto doa*)
29.	*Celana/pakaian dalam*	Pants/underwear	パンツ (*pantsu*)
30.	*Berpesta*	Party	パーティ (*pāti*)
31.	*Piano*	Piano	ピアノ (*piano*)
32.	*Program*	Program	プログラム (puroguramu)
33.	*Memukul*	Punch	パンチ (*panchi*)
34.	*Restoran*	Restaurant	レストラン (*resutoran*)
35.	*salad*	Salad	サラダ (*sarada*)
36.	*Sandwich*	Sandwich	サンドイッチ (*sandoitchi*)

No	*Kosakata* *(Vocabs)*	*Bahasa Inggris* **(English)**	*Jawaban Terjemahan dalam Bahasa Jepang* **(Translated Answers in Japanese)**
37.	*Skandal*	Scandal	スキャンダル (*sukyandaru*)
38.	*Sampo*	Shampoo	シャンプー (*shampū*)
39.	*Toko*	Shop/store	ショップ (*shoppu*)
40.	*Perak*	Silver	シルバー (*shirubā*)
41.	*Ponsel cerdas*	Smartphone	スマートフォン (*sumāto fon*)
42.	*Membumbui*	Spice	スパイス (*supaisu*)
43.	*Olahraga*	Sports	スポーツ (*supōtsu*)
44.	*Sweter*	Sweater	セーター (*sētā*)
45.	*Meja*	Table	テーブル (*tēburu*)
46.	*Televisi*	Television	テレビ (*terebi*)
47.	*Tenis*	Tennis	テニス (*tenisu*)
48.	*Hari Valentine*	Valentine's day	バレンタインデー (*barentain dē*)
49.	*Rompi*	Vest	ベスト (*besuto*)
50.	*baju putih*	White shirt	ワイシャツ (*waishatsu*)

A table like Table 1 was given to students for the pre-test and post-test. The English column was removed, and the Japanese translation column, written in *katakana*, was left blank for participants to fill in. The participants of this study were students from the Japanese Language Program in North Sumatra, namely from the Japanese Language Programs of the Universitas Sumatera Utara and Universitas Harapan Medan. Five second-year students were selected from each program, resulting in a total of 10 participants. The students were selected based on their proficiency in English, which was demonstrated by their TOEFL results of 500 or above and second-year status.

The data in this study consisted of vocabulary created by the students during the observation process throughout the teaching process and pre-test and post-test evaluations from the Japanese Language Program students in North Sumatra.

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, documentation, and field notes. The data analysis technique used in this study was the analysis method by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consisted of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The purpose of data condensation was to simplify abstract data into a clear and detailed summary. The data were obtained from observing the teaching process and test results. The next process was data display. After condensation, the data were organized into an appropriate framework or chart. Data display was the process of presenting data in a simple form of narrative exposition of the study findings on the influence of English language proficiency on the mastery of Japanese vocabulary and conversation. The final step was data verification or conclusion drawing. The processed data were then drawn to conclusions. The conclusions contained the essence of the presented data, which was transformed into concise and meaningful statements. The analysis results were compiled to reveal the reality of implementing pre-test and post-test techniques in measuring the success of learning evaluation.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Result

The results of this study showed the students' activity in converting English vocabulary into Japanese. This was observed through the students' learning and practice processes in the classroom. Emphasis and behavioral

habituation toward converting English vocabulary into Japanese in their learning process impacted their mastery of Japanese vocabulary. Certainly, this also influenced their other Japanese language skills, such as conversation.

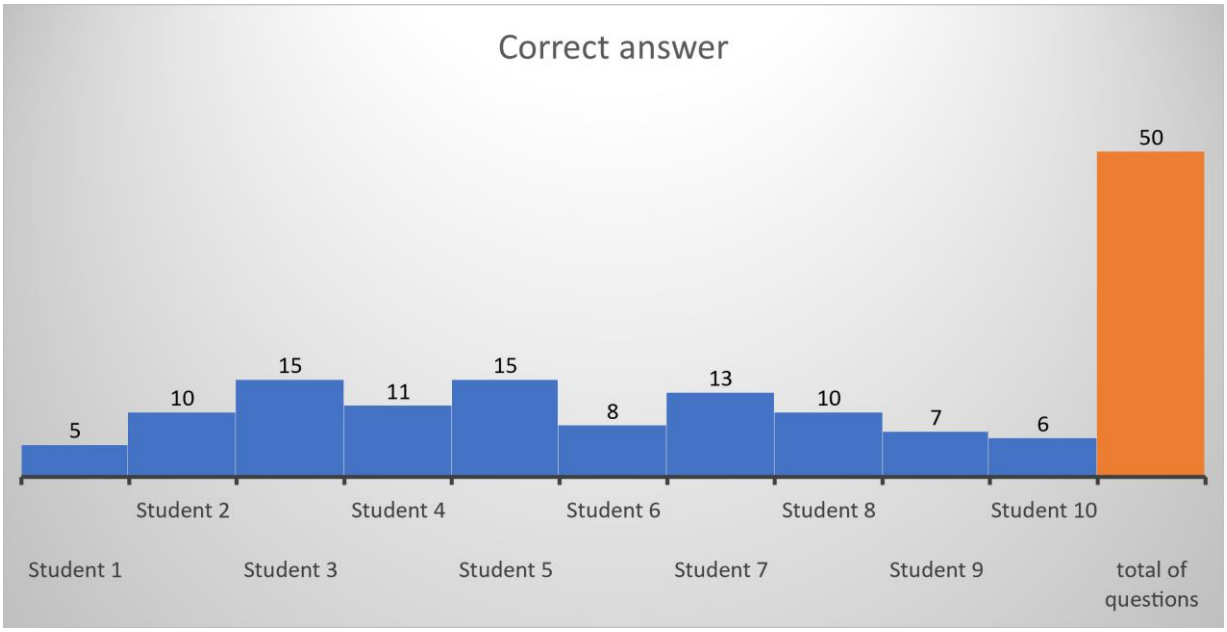

Figure 2. Pre-test results

Here are the results of the initial pre-test the students took before intensive teaching and behavioral habituation for one week on converting English into Japanese vocabulary. The results showed that the students could only answer a maximum of 30 percent of the total questions. However, after the teaching emphasized behavioral habituating the conversion of English vocabulary into absorbed Japanese vocabulary, the post-test yielded the following results.

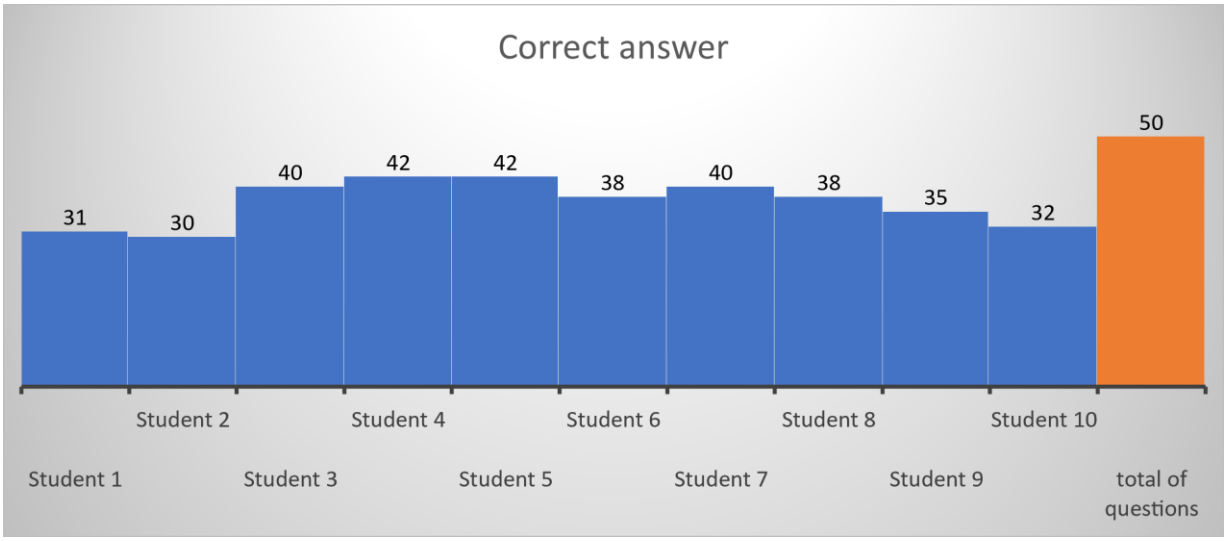

Figure 3. Post-test results

There was an increase in the number of correct answers in the post-test for each student, which was 60 percent of the total questions. This study did not focus on the quantitative details of the student's test results but rather on the qualitative aspects and phenomena observed in the field due to teaching and behavioral habituation through practice. The simple calculation data above only serves as supporting evidence and provides a concrete picture of the improvement achieved.

4.2. Discussion

The study results showed that the English language proficiency of the students is beneficial in supporting vocabulary and conversation skills in learning the Japanese language in the field. This is in line with a previous study conducted by Champ (2014).

In the process of learning and behaving, besides teaching the theoretical concepts of absorption of vocabulary into the Japanese language, the behavioral habituation of using absorbed vocabulary in simple conversations is also performed, which encourages and stimulates the students to answer using absorbed vocabulary. For example, the students are often asked questions such as:

それは何ですか *Sore wa nan desu ka*	What is that? (pointing at the student's smartphone)
アイスクリームが好きですか。 ***aisukuriimu*** *ga suki desu ka.*	you like ice cream?
誕生日**パーティー**に行ったことがありますか。 *Tajoubi* ***paatii*** *ini itta koto ga arimasu ka.*	have you ever been to a birthday party

In Japanese language learning classes, students are encouraged to actively communicate using the Japanese language. One way to support this learning activity is by implementing the drill method, where each student is given questions in Japanese, especially regarding the topic they are learning. By repeating these questions, students are expected to become more accustomed to expressing themselves in Japanese and hone their speaking skills. In addition, it is agreed upon in class that efforts will be made to use the Japanese language when communicating with teachers and peers. This is intended to create a Japanese-language environment that supports the concept of behavioral habituated language learning. Students are expected to maximize their study time and achieve their learning goals with the support of such an environment.

Through drill activities and the agreed-upon rule for communication in Japanese, it is hoped that students will improve their understanding of the Japanese language and become more confident in expressing themselves with increased fluency and naturalness. With a better understanding and improved speaking skills, students are expected to be better prepared to communicate directly with Japanese people in the future, both academically and professionally.

In class, it is observed that students find it easier to make conversation on the latest technology-related topics with the help of absorbed vocabulary they have learned. For example, students can quickly mention words such as "*Nōto*" (ノート), which means "laptop" or "notebook," "*sumaatofon*" (スマートフォン), which means "smartphone," "*Geemu*" (ゲーム), which means "game," "*Intanetto*" (インタネット), which means "internet," or "*onrain*" (オンライン), which means "online." Here, the semantic phenomenon of *gairaigo* is also observed, as sometimes it has different meanings from its source language. "*Nōto*" (ノート) or *Nōtobukku*, which students use in conversation to refer to a computer device like a laptop, is more commonly understood as a notebook in Japanese society.

Daily, the use of absorbed vocabulary is becoming increasingly common, especially in the rapidly developing technology industry. By learning this method, students become ready to communicate effectively with Japanese people on the latest technology and innovation-related topics.

However, despite making learning and communication easier, students are expected to also pay attention to using original Japanese vocabulary on the last day of the meeting. This is based on the awareness that excessive dependence on absorbed vocabulary can threaten the purity of the Japanese language, and the use of native vocabulary is becoming rare. Therefore, students are expected to choose wisely the vocabulary they use daily and try to continue learning and appreciating original Japanese vocabulary. Incorporating absorbed vocabulary is used as an option to facilitate communication in Japanese while maintaining a good balance with native vocabulary.

5. Conclusion

The dominance of English as an international language has resulted in the incorporation of English loanwords into the Japanese language. This has made mastering English a factor in learning Japanese for foreign learners. Proficiency in English, coupled with an understanding of the characteristic morphological changes in loanwords in Japanese, can facilitate foreign students in creating loanwords in Japanese. Although loanwords are not native expressions in Japanese, their use can serve as an option to help students in communication. The meanings of English loanwords sometimes differ from their native Japanese counterparts, but generally, their meanings are still related to their original meanings in English.

6. Acknowledgement

Appreciation is hereby expressed to the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) of Universitas Harapan Medan for the financial support to implement this study. Without their support, this study would not have been possible. The confidence placed in this work by the LPPM is greatly valued. It is hoped that the outcome of this study will contribute significantly to advancing knowledge in the field.

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