



## Articles

## Gairaigo in Japanese and Its Cultural Implication

Afif Kharisma Erlina<sup>1</sup>, Oktavianus Oktavianus<sup>2</sup>, Lindawati Lindawati<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, Padang, Indonesia

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### CORRESPONDENCE

E-mail: [kharismaerlina@gmail.com](mailto:kharismaerlina@gmail.com)

### A B S T R A C T

This research is an attempt to study *gairaigo* in Japanese. The study is focused on the formation, meaning, and cultural implication of *gairaigo*. The data for this study are Japanese loan words borrowed from English taken from NHK Easy Japanese News from May 2021 to October 2021. The research used qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data are collected by using the non-participant observation method. The analysis of data is done by using the intralingual equivalent method. The result of the study shows from 32 *gairaigo* collected from NHK Easy Japanese News, 98% of them are adapted to the Japanese linguistic system in the form of sound insertion and substitution. The formation of *gairaigo* is done by adjusting linguistic forms of English into Japanese. The formation of *gairaigo* causes the change in meaning which also implies Japanese culture. The formation of *gairaigo* while maintaining the linguistic features of the Japanese language is a sign of the language loyalty of Japanese speakers to their language.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A language does not always have sufficient vocabulary to meet the communication needs of its speakers. Meanwhile, communication and interaction across cultures for many purposes cannot be avoided. The absence of certain cultural concepts and vocabularies in one language can be overcome through loan words. The contact of one language with the other through loan words leads to the emergence of linguistic globalization as in the case of Japanese and English.

Japan and England are two countries that are geographically far apart. They have different languages and cultures. In terms of language use, to reduce the gap caused by linguistic and cultural differences between the two countries, loan words become the choice even though it is also possible to have other motives to borrow the words from the donor languages. This phenomenon is common in all languages in the world. Indonesian language, for example, has absorbed the words from Sanskrit, Arabic, Dutch, Chinese, French, English, and local languages (Mulyadi, 2014).

In Japanese, a loan word is defined as *gairaigo*,

which means word borrowed from other languages. Japanese borrows a lot of English vocabulary (Stanlaw, 2004). Then, Omar (2015) noted that language contact between Japanese and English is through trade and education. Japan certainly needs to market its industrial products to western countries and at the same time, western countries also need to learn from Japan. Japan's industrial products can be found almost everywhere in the world. Besides, a good system of education invites people from many countries to come to Japan (Oktavianus, 2017).

In this modern era, cooperation among the countries in the world needs to develop. Language with all its variations and sources plays a very important role in carrying out this cooperation. *Gairaigo* is part of the language elements that can support that network.

The use of the *gairaigo* continues to increase due to the influence of globalization. *Gairaigo* is used widely in the Japanese speech community both in the form of spoken and written language. The absence of certain words to express a given concept in Japanese also triggers them to invent

and use *gairaigo*.

As it occurs in other languages in the world, *gairaigo* borrowed from foreign languages has been adapted to Japanese pronunciation and writing rules (Tsuji-muta, 1997). The meaning of *gairaigo* is also possible to shift and even change. The shift and change in meaning have cultural implications. Although there is an adjustment process, *gairaigo* is still understood by the speaker of the language from which it came (Shibatani, 2001).

*Gairaigo* is an interesting topic to study. Researchers have studied *gairaigo* from a different perspective by using different approaches and theories. Oshima (2002) conducted a study on the social context of the use of *gairaigo*. The data are taken from the Asahi Shimbun. The study aims to prove whether there is a change in *gairaigo* patterns over time or whether its use remains stable. The result of the study indicated that there is a shift in semantic and structural patterns of *gairaigo* in Japanese.

Horikawa (2013) investigated English loan words in Japanese. The study aims to determine the current status of commonly used English loan words in contemporary written Japanese. This research tries to uncover the perception of Japanese over 60 years old toward English loan words. The results of the research indicate that Japanese people over 60 years old find difficulties in understanding words related to technologies compared to the younger generation. It is because the younger generation is more concerned with technological things.

Sari (2019) researched the formation of abbreviated loan words in Japanese. Data are taken from Asahi Shinbun Digital Website of Automotive Technology Column. The research indicated that *gairaigo* has three types of formation processes namely (1) the omission of the first part of the word which is called *jouryaku* in Japanese. For example, the form of *internet shop* in English becomes *nettoshoppu*; (2) the omission of the last part of the word which is called *geryaku*. For example, the form of *car navigation* in English becomes *kaanabi* in English; and (3) the omission in the first and last parts of word which is called *jougeriyaku*. For example, the form of *laser radar* in English becomes *reedaa* in Japanese.

The studies on the meaning of *gairaigo* is also done by Wilistyani et al (2018). The data were collected from *Garuda Orient Holidays* January-

March 2017. The research indicated that *gairaigo* had undergone generalization and specialization of meaning.

Susan (2003) studied the perception of the Japanese native and non-native speakers toward *gairaigo*. This research stated that the use of *gairaigo* has a positive impact to strengthen the English of Japanese.

The studies previously conducted by the researchers have provided us with a lot of information about *gairaigo*. However, the cultural implication of the use of *gairaigo* has not yet been studied. Therefore, the study of *gairaigo* on the aspects that have not much been explored related to *gairaigo* needs to do to know more about the Japanese language and culture.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses qualitative and quantitative approaches. The two approaches are used as the basis to investigate the form, meaning, and cultural implication of *gairaigo*. The data for this study are Japanese loan words borrowed from English taken from *NHK Easy Japanese News* from May 2021 to October 2021.

The method of collecting data is nonparticipant observation. The data analysis uses intralingual equivalent method (Sudaryanto, 2015). The intralingual method compares and relates the elements of two or more languages to identify the language patterns, their similarities, differences, and even changes.

To verify the origin and the meaning of *gairaigo* as well as the phonetic transcription of English, two dictionaries are used. They are the Japanese *dictionary*, *Tangorin* (2021) and *The Oxford Learner's Dictionary* (2021). *The Oxford Learner's Dictionary* is used to verify the meaning of English words which are borrowed into Japanese. Phonetic transcription of English also refers to *The Oxford Learner's Dictionary*. The Japanese dictionary is used to verify the origin of *gairaigo*. Then, the meaning of *gairaigo* in the dictionary is compared with the meaning of the same *gairaigo* used in *NHK Easy Japanese News* to observe. This step is done to observe the shift in the meaning of *gairaigo*.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After observing and investigating *NHK Easy Japanese News* from May 2021 to October 2021,

Table 1. *Gairaigo in Japanese*

No	English	<i>Gairaigo</i>	No	English	<i>Gairaigo</i>
1	Class /kla:s/	クラス <i>kurasu</i>	17	Dancer /'da:nsə(r)/	ダンサー <i>Dansaa</i>
2	Machine /mə'ʃi:n/	マシン <i>mishin</i>	18	Principle /'prɪnsəpl/	プリンシパル <i>purinshipar</i> )
3	Screw /skru:/	スクリュー <i>sukuryuu</i>	19	Ticket /'tikɪt/	チケット <i>chiketto</i>
4	Event /i'vent/	イベント <i>ibento</i>	20	Drama /'dra:mə/	ドラマ <i>dorama</i>
5	Mansion /mə'ʃi:n/	マンション <i>manshon</i>	21	Belt /belt/	ベルト <i>beruto</i>
6	Center /'sentə(r)/	センター <i>sentā</i> )	22	Hotel /həʊ'tel/	ホテル <i>hoteru</i>
7	Point /pɔɪnt/	ポイント <i>Pointo</i>	23	Level /'levl/	レベル <i>Reberu</i>
8	Cup noodle /kʌp nu:dl/	カップめん <i>kappume</i> )	24	Speaker /'spi:kə(r)/	スピーカー <i>supiikaa</i>
9	Trouble /'trʌbl/	トラブル <i>toraburu</i>	25	Game /geɪm/	ゲーム <i>Geemu</i>
10	Summit /'sʌmɪt/	サミット <i>samitto</i>	26	Talent /'tælənt/	タレント <i>tarento</i>
11	Symbol /'sɪmbl/	シンボル <i>sinboru</i>	27	Case /keɪs/	ケース <i>keesu</i>
12	Passport /'pɑ:spɔ:t/	パスポート <i>pasupooto</i>	28	Cleaning /'kli:nɪŋ/	クリーニング <i>kuriiningu</i>
13	Coach /kəʊtʃ/	コーチ <i>Koochi</i>	29	Image /'ɪmɪdʒ/	イメージ <i>imeeji</i>
14	Message /'mesɪdʒ/	メッセージ <i>messeeji</i>	30	Timing /'taɪmɪŋ/	タイミング <i>taimingu</i>
15	Heading /'hedɪŋ/	ヘディング <i>heding</i> )	31	Set /set/	セット <i>Setto</i>
16	Zero /'ziərəʊ/	ゼロ <i>zero</i>	32	Captain /'kæptɪn/	キャプテン <i>kyaputen</i>

Source: *NHK Easy Japanese News*, (May 2021 to October 2021)

it was found that there are 32 *gairaigo* used in that online media as presented in the following table.

### The Formation of *Gairaigo*

Every language has its lexicon. The form and structure of the lexicon are different from language to language including in Japanese and English. Japan and English have a different writing systems. Japan has three writing systems namely *katakana*, *hirakana*, and *kanji*.

In the case of *gairaigo*, the English words

borrowed into Japanese are treated in two ways. First, words absorbed from English into Japanese are adapted in some parts to the language system commonly used in Japanese. Second, words are borrowed totally without adjustment in the recipient language.

Of 32 *gairaigo* collected from *NHK Easy Japanese News*, 98% of them are adapted to the Japanese linguistic system in the form of sound insertion and substitution. From the data in table 1, it can be proved that the vowel [o] is inserted at the end of English words ended with consonants

[t] and [d] as in (7), (10), (12), (19), (21), (26) and (31). Vowel [u] is inserted at the end of English words ended with [l] as in (9), (11), (18), (22), and (23), consonant [m] as in (25), consonant [ŋ] as in (28) and (30), and [s] as in (27). Vowel [i] is inserted at the end of the English word ended with alveo-palatal affricative as in (13) and (14).

*Gairaigo* is also invented through the insertion of a vowel between two consonants in English words as in the data (3), (9), (12), (18), (20), (24), (28), and (32).

*Gairaigo* is also formed through sound alternations. The consonant [v] is substituted by [b] as in data (4) and (23). This alternation is caused by the fact that the Japanese does not have consonant [v]. Japanese has consonant [b]. Thus, Japanese adapted the word *level* to *reberu* and *event* to *ibento* in Japanese. It seems that sound alternation does not only occur when English words are borrowed into Japanese but the same case also occurs in many languages in the world. In speaking English, for example, the speakers of the Indonesian language tend to transfer [θ] to [s] or [t] to pronounce the word *thank* /θæŋk/ in English.

Then, from table 1, four words do not change significantly as in (2), (5), (6), and (16). However, the four words are still not pronounced the same as in their original form in English. The adjustment of form does not occur in the word *zero* as in (16).

### The Meaning of *Gairaigo*

Meaning is part of language elements that are dynamic; unstable and open-ended (Leech, 1981) and tends to shift and even change (Ulmann, 1977). Meillet (2018) stated that one of the causes of changes in meaning is due to social aspects in the life of the speakers of the language.

It is possible that words previously categorized as general terms then they are used to name and label specific concepts. Words that are initially used in certain groups will experience an expansion of meaning when used by the general public. Thus, meaning in language is possible to shift from general to specific meaning and vice versa. Nasihin (2007) also proposed a total change of meaning in which the original meaning in the language from which *gairaigo* came may disappear.

Among 32 *gairaigo* collected from *NHK Easy Japanese News*, 98% of them have also changed meaning. The meaning of *gairaigo* is

extended, restricted, and changed. The changes in the meaning of *gairaigo* in Japanese can be seen in the following diagram.

From the above diagram, the narrowing of meaning dominates Japanese *gairaigo* with the

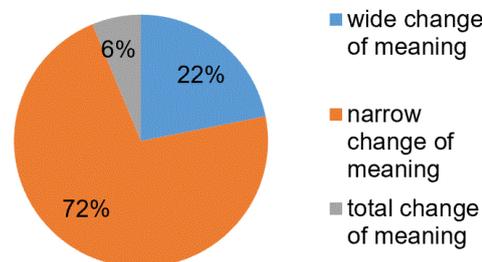


Fig 1: The Change of Meaning of *Gairaigo*

percentage of 72% of the total *gairaigo* collected. Then, it is followed by a wide and total change of meaning. This finding indicated that Japan tends to use *gairaigo* for certain concepts. It seems that the Japanese perceive a word in a different way than English.

The following data are the description of the meaning of *gairaigo* among 32 data found in *NHK Easy Japanese News*.

このロボットを田んぼに入れて、スクリューを回すと、水が濁ります。水の中に光が入らなくなって、米が育つのに邪魔になる草が大きくなりません。

*Kono robotto o tanbo ni irete, **sukuryuu** o mawasu to, mizu ga nigorimasu. Mizu no naka ni hikari ga hairanakunatte, mai ga sodatsu no ni jama ni naru kusa ga ookikunarimasen*

‘Put this robot in a rice field and turn the **screw** to muddy the water. Light does not enter the water, and the grass that interferes with the rice growth does not grow (Source: *NHK Easy Japanese News*, 31 May 2021)’

In the above data, *gairaigo* is スクリュー/*sukuryuu*/. *Gairaigo* is borrowed from the English word *screw* which means *bolt*. The meaning of the word */sukuryuu/* is defined in *NHK Easy Japanese News* as in the following description.

‘船の底の後ろに取りつけた、船を進める仕掛け。せんぷうきのはねのような形をしている。プロペラ’

*‘fune no soko no ushiro ni toritsuketa, fune o susumeru shikake. Senpuuki no hane no youna katachi o shiteiru. Puropera’.*

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‘Mechanism for advancing the ship which is installed at the rear of the bottom of the ship. It is shaped like a propeller fan.’

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In the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (2001), the meaning of the word *screw* is to fasten one thing to another or make something tight with a *screw*. In the dictionary, the word *screw* refers to a class of nouns as in the sentence *you need to screw all the parts together*. The word スクリュー /*sukuryuu*/ does not only refer to a *bolt* which is a small object to connect two objects but also refers to a screw-shaped object attached to the robot when the screw is rotated. It will make the robot move following its function. Thus, the word スクリュー /*sukuryuu*/ has undergone an expansion of meaning from a word that only refers to something more specific to a more general one.

The change of meaning of *gairaigo* in Japanese can also be identified through the following data.

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ワクチンパスポートは外国入るときに、新しいコロナウイルスのワクチンを受けたことを証明する書類です

---

*Wakuchin pasupooto wa gaikoku hairu toki ni, atarashii korona virusu no wakuchin o uketa koto o shoumeisuru shorui desu.*

---

‘A vaccine passport is a document that proves that you have received a new coronavirus vaccine when you enter a foreign country (Source: *NHK Easy Japanese News*, 18 June 2021)’

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In the above data, the word /*pasupooto*/ has changed in meaning. This *gairaigo* is borrowed from the English *passport*. The meaning of the word /*pasupooto*/ is defined by *NHK Easy Japanese News* as follows:

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‘国が発行する外国旅行に必要な身分証明書。旅券’。

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*Kuni ga hakkousuru gaikoku ryokou ni hitsuyouna mibun shoumeisho. Ryoken.*

---

‘Identity card issued by the state for overseas travel’.

---

In the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (2001), the meaning of *passport* is an official document that identifies someone as a citizen of a particular country, and that she or he may have to show when you enter or leave a country from certain countries, and which you may have to show when you enter or leave a country (Source: *Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries*, 2001)

The word *passport* in English is an official document in the form of a pocketbook to identify a person as a citizen of a particular country. However, after being absorbed into Japanese, the word パスポート /*pasupooto*/ has changed its meaning as in the example of the news sentence above. Then, the word パスポート /*pasupooto*/ does not only refer to a person’s official citizenship identity document but also refers to documents to prove that the person has been officially vaccinated or also known as ワクチンパスポート *wakuchin pasupooto* ‘vaccine passport’.

The word /*pasupooto*/ has undergone an expansion of meaning or generalization from a word that only refers to something more specific to a more general word. A document to approve that someone has officially been vaccinated is called a vaccine certificate.

Of the 32 *gairaigo* found in *NHK Easy Japanese News online application*, the following example is the narrowing meaning of *gairaigo*.

---

国は毎年、女性は一生に産む子どもの数がわかる「出生率」を計算しています。去年の出生率は1.34で、おととしより0.02ポイント低くなりました。2016年から5年続けて、前の年より下がっています。

---

*Kuni wa maitoshi, jousei wa isshouni umu kodomo no kazu ga wakaruru ‘shusseiritsu’ o keisanshite imasu. Kyonen no shusseiritsu wa 1.34 de, ototoshiyori 0.02 pointo hikuku narimashita. 2016 nen kara 5 nen tsudzukete, mae no toshi yori agate imasu.*

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‘Every year, the country calculates a birth rate that tells the number of children a woman will have in her lifetime. Last year’s fertility rate was 1.34, 0.02 **points** lower than adults. It has been lower than the previous year for five consecutive years since 2016 (Source: *NHK Easy Japanese News*, 7 June 2021)’.

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In the data above, the word *gairaigo* with the change of meaning is ポイント /*pointo*/. *Gairaigo* is borrowed from the English word *point*. The meaning of the word /*pointo*/ in the text in *NHK Easy Japanese News* is as follows:

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‘点。悪点。得点。点数.’

---

*ten, waruten, tokuten. Tensuu*

---

‘point/score and number’

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In the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2001), the word *point* means a thing that somebody says or writes giving their opinion or stating a fact.

The word *point* in English has a wider meaning than ポイント/*pointo*/ in Japanese. The word *point* in English can be used to show the facts and express opinions in spoken or written forms. The word *point* has a narrow meaning when it was absorbed into Japanese where it only refers to the meaning of value or score. It can be stated that the word ポイント/*pointo*/ has a narrow meaning from a word that refers to something more general to a more specific word.

The other example of *gairaigo* having a narrowing meaning can be identified in the following data.

---

イギリスで、日本やアメリカなど7つの国のリーダーが集まるG7サミットがありました。

---

*Igirisu de, nihon ya Amerika nado nanatsu no kuni no riidaa ga atsumaru G7 samitto ga arimasu.*

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'In the United Kingdom, there was a G7 *summit* where leaders from seven countries, including Japan and the United States, gathered. (Source: *NHK Easy Japanese News, 14 June 2021*)'

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In the data above, there is the word *gairaigo* which has changed its meaning, that is the word サミット/*samitto*/. *Gairaigo* has borrowed from the English word *summit*. The meaning of /*samitto*/ in the sentence above refers to the official meeting of the G7 Summit or the high-level conference among several countries. The word *summit* in the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2001) refers to the highest point of something (top of a mountain).

The word *summit* also refers to 'an official meeting or series of meetings between the leaders of two or more governments to discuss important matters.' Based on the data found, the word サミット/*samitto*/ in Japanese only refers to an official meeting among government leaders to discuss important matters. It is contrary to the word *summit* in English, which also refers to the 'peak/highest point of something,' especially the top of a mountain. The word *peak* in Japanese is called 頂上/*choujyou*/. It can be stated that the word サミット/*samitto*/ in Japanese has changed its meaning. It is categorized as a narrow meaning where the meaning of the original word in English is wider than after being absorbed into the Japanese

language.

The total change of meaning of *gairaigo* can also be identified in the following data.

---

ルールでは、海に来た人たちに放送で、周りの人と近くならないように言います。海岸で酒を飲んではいけません。大きな声で話さないように、スピーカーから出す音楽などを小さくしなければなりません。

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*Ruuru de wa, umi ni kita hito tachi ni housou de, mawari no hito chikaku naranai youni iimasu. Kaigan de sake o nonde wa ikemasen. Ookina koe de hanasanai youni, supiikaa kara dasu ongaku nado o chiisaku shinakerbanari-masen.*

---

'The rule is to broadcast to people who come to the sea and tell them not to be close to the people around them. Do not drink alcohol on the beach. The music from the *speakers* should be small so that you do not speak loudly (*NHK Easy Japanese News, 31 May 2021*)'.

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In the above data, there is the word *gairaigo* which has a change of meaning such as スピーカー/*supiikaa*/. *Gairaigo* borrows from English speakers. The meaning of the word as explained by *NHK Easy Japanese News* is as follows:

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‘電気の信号を、音声に変えて聞かせるための器械。’

---

*'Denki no singo o, onsei ni kaete kikaseru tame no kikai.*

---

'A device for converting electrical signals into sound'.

---

Meanwhile, in the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2021), the meaning of *speaker* is a person who gives a talk or makes a speech.

### Cultural Implication

Language and culture are closely related to each other. Concerning the relationship between language and culture, Kramsch (1998:3) stated that language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultures. Culture itself has wide scopes which are categorized as tangible and intangible cultures.

The interesting thing to observe is the fact that the language and culture of every country are not the same. Wierzbicka (2003) stated that different culture speaks different languages. Japanese has a different linguistic system from English. Certain sounds of Japanese are not possessed by English. If English words are borrowed into Japanese

as indicated in table 1, there should be some adaptations to the Japanese linguistic system.

The adaptation of English words into the Japanese linguistic system to form *gairaigo* has cultural implications. *Gairaigo* has implications for the language attitude of Japanese speakers, the enrichment of Japanese vocabularies, the early stage to recognize English embedded in Japanese and cultural maintenance.

*Language Attitude.* The way the Japanese borrowed and treated English words reflects their language attitude. On the one hand, Japanese speakers borrow English words into Japanese. On the other hand, they do not want to lose their Japanese linguistic features. Japanese speakers embedded linguistic features of English and their Japanese language in one word. This phenomenon can be seen in the following examples.

**Table 2: *Gairaigo* and Language Attitude**

English Words	<i>Gairaigo</i>
<i>Talent</i> /'tælənt/	<i>Tarento</i>
<i>Event</i> /i'vent/	<i>Ibento</i>
<i>Drama</i> /'dra:mə/	<i>Dorama</i>
<i>Summit</i> /'sʌmɪt/	<i>Samitto</i>
<i>Case</i> /keɪs/	<i>Keesu</i>

(Source: NHK Easy Japanese News, 7 June 2021)

The formation of *gairaigo* while maintaining the linguistic features of the Japanese language is a sign of the language loyalty of Japanese speakers to their language.

*Two cultures in one word.* The formation of *gairaigo* by maintaining the linguistic elements of English and Japanese illustrates that there are two different cultures in one word. The words *tarento*, *ibento*, *dorama*, *samitto*, *keesu*, and the other words in table 1 contain the linguistic features of English and Japanese. The linking of two cultures in one word has a wide impact. *Gairaigo* can be the initial marker of the relationship between Japanese and English.

*Enrichment of Japanese words.* *Gairaigo* can improve the number of Japanese words. With *gairaigo*, a new form with a new meaning can be invented. Then, a new form with old meanings can

also be created. Due to ethnographic factors, the meaning of *gairaigo* can be extended, restricted, and even totally changed.

*The Early Stage to Recognize English.* One of the ways to know and learn a foreign language at the early stage is continuous exposure to the foreign language which becomes the target of learning. English words borrowed into Japanese can be regarded as the early stage to recognize English. The presence of linguistic features of English in Japanese words can help and guide the Japanese speakers to recognize English as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 3: *Gairaigo* and Language Recognition**

English Words	<i>Gairaigo</i>
<i>Center</i> /'sɛntə(r)/	<i>Sentaa</i>
<i>Point</i> /'pɔɪnt/	<i>Pointo</i>
<i>Image</i> /'ɪmɪdʒ/	<i>Imeegi</i>
<i>Captain</i> /'kæptɪn/	<i>Kyaputen</i>
<i>Speaker</i> /'spi:kə(r)/	<i>Supiikaa</i>

(Source: NHK Easy Japanese News, 7 June 2021)

The examples in table 3 above are the Japanese with a *taste* of English which can serve as the early stage to recognize English. English words undergo a process of Japanisation (Honma, 2010).

*Cultural Maintenance.* The formation of *gairaigo* by incorporating the linguistic features of the Japanese into English is to maintain the Japanese language and culture. By inserting Japanese linguistic features into *gairaigo*, Japanese people have shown a way of maintaining their culture. Thus, the substitution of [v] with [b] in the word *event* to *ibento* is not only the problem of sound adaptation in Japanese but also the effort to keep their culture. Language is a culture.

Language is the social and cultural identity of one speech community (Crystal, 1998). In line with this statement, it can be said that the Japanese language is the social and cultural identity of Japanese people. Thus, *gairaigo* as presented in table 1, is the marker of the social and cultural identity of the Japanese.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Referring to the analysis of data above, it can be concluded that the Japanese have their way of forming *gairaigo*. The formation of *gairaigo* also leads to changes in meaning and has wide cultural implications for Japanese culture.

*Gairaigo* in Japanese gives the idea that different languages can connect through the transfer of linguistic forms among them. In the future, it can be predicted that the speakers of languages in the world will always build a network that will also have an impact on the development of their language as in *garaigo* in Japanese.

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