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Gairaigo Derived from English in Japanese Advertising: Benefits, Drawbacks, and Global Implications

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ABSTRACT

Gairaigo, or loanwords borrowed from foreign languages, have become a ubiquitous feature of the Japanese language, with English being the most significant influence. The use of English loanwords in Japanese advertising has become increasingly common, with many commercials and other promotional materials incorporating *gairaigo* in their messaging. This study aims to explore the prevalence and significance of *gairaigo* derived from English in Japanese advertising, examining its benefits and drawbacks, and its global implications. This study utilized qualitative approach. The method used was descriptive method. Data collection technique through literature study. Data obtained online through various academic database, a total of 19 books and 26 scientific articles, and be analysed using descriptive analyse technique. This study found important benefits of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising, that are: increase product appeal to younger generations, more effective communication with international audiences, and enhanced global image of Japanese brands. However, there are also drawbacks, that are: limited accessibility for non-English speakers, potential language erosion and loss of cultural identity, and negative impact on traditional Japanese businesses. Furthermore, the global implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising are also significant, with the influence of Japanese advertising on global marketing trends and cultural exchange and cross-linguistic communication. Overall, while the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can bring numerous benefits, it is important to carefully consider its potential drawbacks and cultural implications for both domestic and global audiences. By understanding the impact of *gairaigo* on Japanese advertising, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between language, culture, and marketing in a global context. Further research is needed to continue exploring the impact and implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising. Further research is needed to continue exploring the impact and implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising.

KEYWORDS

Advertising; English Loanwords; *Gairaigo*; Globalization; Marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

Gairaigo, or loanwords borrowed from foreign languages, have become a ubiquitous feature of the Japanese language, with English being the most significant influence. The use of English loanwords

in Japanese advertising has become increasingly common, with many commercials and other promotional materials incorporating *gairaigo* in their messaging (Harada, 2016; Iwasaki, 2013; Kelly-Holmes, 2013; Shibamoto-Smith, 2014).

Gairaigo have a long history in Japan, dating back to at the least 16th century when the Portuguese introduced European loanwords to Japan (Matsumoto, 2012). However, the most significant influx of *gairaigo* occurred during the Meiji era (1868-1912), when Japan opened up to the West and began adopting Western technology and culture. During this time, a large number of English loanwords were introduced into the Japanese language, particularly in the fields of science, technology, and industry (Miyake & Nakayama, 2015).

One of the earliest examples of the earliest *gairaigo* words in Japanese were related to the railway industry, such as “*torokko*” (トロッコ), from the English word “truck”, which originally referred to railway freight cars (Ono, 2008). Another example of the earliest *gairaigo* in Japanese is believed to be the word “*pan*” (パン), which means “bread” in Japanese. The word was introduced to Japan by Portuguese traders in the 16th century, and was later adopted into the Japanese language during the Meiji period (1868-1912) (Matsuo, 2004).

The use of *gairaigo* continued to grow in the post-war era, as Japan became increasingly globalized and its economy expanded. English loanwords were particularly prominent in fields such as business, fashion, and entertainment (Miyake & Nakayama, 2015).

Examples of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising include “smartphone” is written as スマートフォン (*sumâtōfon*), “app” as アプリ (*apuri*), “jeans” as ジーンズ (*jīnzu*), and “hamburger” as ハンバーガー (*hanbâgâ*). Other common examples are “concept” is written as コンセプト (*konseptu*), “casual” as カジュアル (*kajuaru*), “original” as オリジナル (*orijinaru*), “design” as デザイン (*dezain*), “simple” as シンプル (*shinpuru*), and “catchy” as キャッチー (*kyatchi*) (Yano, 2019; Hasegawa, 2013).

Nowadays, *gairaigo* is a pervasive feature of Japanese language and culture, and is particularly prominent in advertising and media. English loanwords are often used in advertising slogans, product names, and company names to convey a sense of modernity and internationalism (Iwasaki & Ingulsrud, 2017; Miyake, 2019).

One of the main factors driving the spread of *gairaigo* is globalization. As Japan has become increasingly connected to the global economy, English has become the dominant language of business and international communication, and

the use of English loanwords has become more common in everyday speech (Sugiura, 2014).

The rapid development of technology has also contributed to the spread of *gairaigo*, as many technological terms and concepts are originally expressed in English. For example, terms such as “smartphone”, “tablet”, and “app” are widely used in Japan, and are often abbreviated or adapted to fit the Japanese phonetics (Kinsui, 2010).

The teaching of English in Japanese schools has played a role in spread of *gairaigo*, as students become familiar with English vocabulary and grammar through formal instruction (Kuno, 2010). Japan’s economic and political relations with English-speaking countries have also had an impact on the use of *gairaigo*. English loanwords have been introduced into Japanese business and political vocabulary as a way to communicate more effectively with international partners (Kaneko & Matsumura, 2012).

Gairaigo can be seen as a way to express complex ideas more efficiently than in Japanese, which may require more words or explanation. The use of English loanwords can therefore save time and effort in communication, especially in fields such as science, technology, and academia (Iwasaki, 2014).

The use of English loanwords is often associated with modernity, sophistication, and internationalism, and is sometimes viewed as a symbol of higher social status in Japan (Takano, 2013). This social prestige can drive the use of *gairaigo* in certain context, such as advertising and branding. While the use of English loanwords in Japanese advertising is often seen as a way to convey modernity, globalism, and sophistication, it also raises concerns over the potential loss of traditional Japanese language and cultural identity (Harada, 2016; Iwasaki, 2013; Kelly-Holmes, 2013; Shibamoto-Smith, 2014).

This study aims to explore the prevalence and significance of *gairaigo* derived from English in Japanese advertising, examining its benefits, drawbacks, and its global implications. Understanding the history and evolution of *gairaigo* is important for understanding its role in contemporary Japanese society and its implications for language use and cultural identity. As one scholar notes, *gairaigo* is not simply a matter of language borrowing, but also reflects “the cultural, social, and economic interaction between Japan and other nations” (Miyake & Nakayama, 2015).

METHOD

This study utilized qualitative approach to explore the prevalence and significance of *gairaigo* derived from English in Japanese advertising. The method used was descriptive method. Data collection technique through literature study. Data obtained online through various academic database, a total of 19 books and 26 scientific articles, and be analysed using descriptive analyse technique to identify patterns and themes related to the prevalence and significance of *gairaigo* derived from English in Japanese advertising. Data analysis techniques include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Merriam, 2009). The findings provide insights into the benefits, drawbacks, and global implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising.

The research procedures for this topic involve the following steps (Creswell, 2014): (1) Defining the research question: The research question for this article is focused on exploring the prevalence and significance of *gairaigo* in advertising, as well as the potential benefits and drawbacks of its usage; (2) Identifying relevant keywords: Keywords related to the topic of *gairaigo* in advertising include terms such as “*gairaigo*”, “English loanwords”, “advertising”, “marketing”, and “globalization”; (3) Conducting a search: A search be conducted in various academic database such as JSTOR, ProQuest, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and Springer using the identified keywords. Additionally, relevant industry publications, such as advertising and marketing trade publications, also be searched for finding relevant information about *gairaigo* derived from English in Japanese advertising; (4) Reviewing and selecting sources: After conducting the search, relevant sources be reviewed and selected based on their relevance and credibility. Sources include academic articles, industry publications, books, and reports; (5) Organizing and synthesizing information. The information gathered from the selected sources then be organized and synthesized to address the research question and subtopics related to the prevalence, significance, benefits, and drawbacks of *gairaigo* usage in advertising; and (6) Analysing and interpreting findings: the findings of the literature study be analysed and interpreted to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future research related on this topic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Benefits of *Gairaigo* Derived from English in Japanese Advertising

The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising has several benefits that make it a popular choice for marketers. By incorporating English words and phrases into their advertising campaigns, companies can appeal to a wider audience, convey a sense of modernity and sophistication, and emphasize the global appeal of their products or services (Gottlieb, 2015; Iwabuchi, 2002; Kinsella, 2016; Takano, 2013). In addition, there are also other important benefits of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising, that are: increase product appeal to younger generations, more effective communication with international audiences, and enhanced global image of Japanese brands.

Increased Product Appeal to Younger Generations

The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can increase the product appeal to younger generations by appealing to their English proficiency. Many young people in Japan are proficient in English, either through education or exposure to Western media. By incorporating English words and phrases into advertising, companies can appeal to this demographic by using language that they are familiar with and comfortable using (Kinsella, 2016).

In addition to English proficiency, many young people in Japan are heavily influenced by Western culture, particularly American pop culture. The use of English loanwords in advertising can create a sense of Westernization and cosmopolitanism, which can be appealing to younger consumers (Takano, 2013; Hasegawa, 2018).

Younger consumers are often more interested in the latest and greatest products and services, and the use of *gairaigo* in advertising can create a sense of novelty and trendiness that can be particularly appealing to this demographic (Gottlieb, 2015). The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can also add a “cool factor” to the product or service being advertised, which can be particularly appealing to younger consumers. For examples, using English loanwords or phrases can create a sense of modernity and sophistication, which can help a product stand out in crowded market (Iwasaki & Ishii, 2016).

Younger generations in Japan are often familiar with global brands and products, and the use of *gairaigo* can help create a sense of connection and familiarity with these brands. By using English loanwords or phrases in advertising, companies can appeal to the sense of familiarity that younger consumers have with global brands, making their products and services more appealing (Iwata, 2018). The use of *gairaigo* in advertising can also enhance the brand image and reputation of a company. By using English loanwords or phrases in advertising, companies can create a sense of global sophistication and modernity, which can enhance their image and reputation among younger consumers (Kato, 2012).

More Effective Communication with International Audiences

Another benefit of using *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising is the potential for more effective communication with international audiences. English is a widely spoken and understood language worldwide, and the use of English loanwords or phrases can help Japanese companies communicate more effectively with international audiences, especially in the global marketplace (Iwata, 2018).

The use of *gairaigo* can also help overcome language barriers and facilitate international communication. For example, English loanwords or phrases can serve as a common ground for communication between people from different linguistics backgrounds, as they can understand the meaning of the loanword even if they do not understand the entire sentence or phrase (Gottlieb, 2014).

Furthermore, the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can help Japanese companies appeal to international consumers, who may be more familiar with English loanwords or phrases than with Japanese language and culture. This can be particularly important in industries such as fashion, music, and technology, where trends and innovations are often influenced by Western culture and values (Iwasaki & Ishii, 2016).

Overall, the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can help Japanese companies communicate more effectively with international audiences, overcome language barriers, and appeal to international consumers.

Enhanced Global Image of Japanese Brand

In Japanese advertising, the use of *gairaigo* derived from English can also contribute to the enhanced global image of Japanese brands by increasing their perceived authenticity and credibility in the global market (Matsuo & Takahashi, 2019). English loanwords or phrases can give a sense of internationality and can be seen as a symbol of Japan's integration into the global community (Aida, 2016).

In addition, the use of *gairaigo* derived from English vocabulary can help Japanese companies appeal to international customers and create a positive image of their brand in the global market. English loanwords or phrases are often associated with modernity, innovation, and high quality, which can enhance the perceived value of a product or brand (Iwata, 2018). This can ultimately lead to increased sales and brand loyalty, as well as a stronger position in the global market.

Moreover, the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can help Japanese companies compete with global brands and differentiate themselves from domestic competitors. By incorporating English loanwords or phrases into their advertising campaigns, Japanese companies can position themselves as innovative and cosmopolitan, which can be particularly effective for niche or luxury products (Nakamura, 2018).

Studies have also shown that the use of *gairaigo* derived from English vocabulary in Japanese advertising can influence global marketing trends, as other countries begin to adopt similar strategies in their own advertising campaigns (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010). This can lead to a greater integration of global advertising and marketing strategies, and contribute to a more interconnected and interdependent global economy.

This is particularly important in today's globalized world, where the ability to communicate and connect with people from different cultures and backgrounds is essential for businesses to succeed on a global scale. When Japanese companies use English loanwords or phrases strategically and appropriately, they can demonstrate their understanding of and participation in global trends and values, which can strengthen their brand image among international audiences.

Drawbacks of *Gairaigo* Derived from English in Japanese Advertising

In contrast to the benefits discussed above, the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising also has several drawbacks that must be considered. These drawbacks can affect both the effectiveness of the advertisement and the overall perception of the brand by consumers.

Limited Accessibility for Non-English Speakers

One of the drawbacks of using *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising is that it may limit accessibility for non-English speakers, especially those who are not familiar with the English language. While *gairaigo* terms may be well-known to younger generations and those who have studied English, they may be confusing or even incomprehensible to those who do not have a strong English background (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013). This may hinder the ability of Japanese advertisers to effectively reach and communicate with non-English speaking audiences both domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, it may lead to negative perceptions of the brand or product as being exclusive or only catering to a certain demographic, thereby limiting its appeal to a broader audience (Kelly-Holmes, 2010).

In addition, the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising may also lead to cultural misunderstanding and misinterpretations. This is particularly true for English loanwords that have taken on a different meaning or connotation in Japanese culture, known as *wasei-eigo* (Suzuki & Oba, 2015). For example, the English word “salaryman” is commonly used in Japan to refer to a white-collar worker, but its meaning has evolved to encompass a distinct cultural identity and lifestyle. In this context, the use of “salaryman” in advertising targeting a global audience may be confusing or even perceived as inappropriate. Companies must pay attention of the use of English loanwords which may not be appropriate in reaching global audiences (Chung & Zhao, 2019; Okazaki, 2005).

The use of *gairaigo* derived from English in Japanese advertising may also be seen as a reflection of Japan’s perceived cultural and linguistic dependence on the West, which may not align with the desired brand image or message (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013).

Overuse of Gairaigo Can Lead to Language Erosion and Loss Cultural Identity

The overuse of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can lead to language erosion and weakening Japanese traditional values and customs. Excessive use of *gairaigo* can dilute the Japanese language, making it less unique and more similar to English. Moreover, it can create a language barrier between different generations in Japan, as older generations may not be familiar with the newer *gairaigo* words. The overuse of *gairaigo* can also make Japanese advertising less appealing to international audiences who may not understand the meaning of loanwords (Sugimoto, 2009).

Iwasaki (2002) stated that, the overuse of *gairaigo* can lead to a decline in the quality of Japanese language education, as students may become more focused on learning English loanwords rather than traditional Japanese vocabulary and grammar. Additionally, it can lead to a decrease in the use of traditional Japanese words and expressions, which are often more nuanced and culturally specific.

Moreover, the overuse of *gairaigo* can also lead to a decline in linguistic diversity, as the widespread adoption of English loanwords can lead to the displacement of native Japanese words and phrases. This, in turn, can have negative consequences for the preservation of cultural heritage and the maintenance of a diverse linguistic landscape (Miyake, 2013).

Excessive use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can lead to the erosion of the Japanese language and a loss of cultural identity. As Japanese companies increasingly incorporate English loanwords into their advertising, there is a risk that the distinctiveness of the Japanese language and culture could be diminished. Some critics argue that this trend is part of a broader cultural homogenization that is taking place in Japan and around the world, as local cultures are increasingly subsumed by a globalized, English-dominated culture (Kinsella, 2019; Maher, 2007).

However, it is worth noting that the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising is not necessarily a one-way process that erodes Japanese language and culture. Instead, it can be viewed as a dynamic and constantly evolving phenomenon, where English loanwords are incorporated into the Japanese language and culture in a way that is both creative and context-dependent (Matsumoto, 2011).

Potential Negative Impact on Traditional Japanese Business

The extensive use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising may have a potential negative impact on traditional Japanese businesses that have been operating in the domestic market for many years without the need to incorporate foreign words into their brand names or advertising slogans. The over-reliance on *gairaigo* in advertising could create a sense of inferiority among these businesses and may lead to a loss of customers who prefer to support local brands with more traditional names.

Research has shown that the use of *gairaigo* in advertising has increased in recent years and has had a significant impact on the Japanese language and culture. According to one study, the excessive use of *gairaigo* in advertising has led to a shift in the linguistic landscape of Japan, with the dominance of English words in public spaces causing concern among language experts and the general public (Ogawa, 2019). Moreover, another study has highlighted the potential negative impact of *gairaigo* on traditional Japanese businesses, suggesting that the overuse of foreign words may lead to a loss of customers and market share for these businesses (Ito, 2017).

The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can have a negative impact on traditional Japanese businesses that do not use English loanwords extensively in their communication. Such businesses may be perceived as old-fashioned or out of touch with modern trends, leading to a decline in their appeal to younger generations. This can be especially detrimental in industries where brand image and appeal are crucial to success, such as fashion and cosmetics. Additionally, the use of English loanwords can be confusing and inaccessible for non-English speakers, such as elderly people or those with lower level of education. This can limit the effectiveness of advertising campaigns and lead to a loss of potential customer (Kinsella, 2019; McKay & Wong, 2017; Shibamoto-Smith, 2017).

While the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising has its benefits, it is important to consider its potential negative impact on traditional Japanese language and culture, as well as its potential effects on local businesses. It is important to strike a balance between incorporating foreign words and maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity and tradition.

Global Implication of Gairaigo Derived from English in Japanese Advertising

The increasing use of English loanwords in Japanese advertisements is not unique to Japan, as the globalization of markets has led to the incorporation of foreign languages into advertising campaigns in many countries. The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising reflects Japan's position as a global economic power and its desire to appeal to international audiences.

Influence of Japanese on Global Marketing Trends

The influence of *gairaigo* on Japanese advertising on global marketing trends cannot be ignored. As mentioned earlier, *gairaigo* has become prevalent in Japanese advertising, and its use has been seen as a way for Japanese brands to appeal to international audiences. This trend has not gone unnoticed, and it has influenced marketing strategies in other countries. For instance, many global brands now use English words in their advertisements in non-English speaking countries to appeal to younger generations and create a sense of modernity.

The impact of *gairaigo* on global marketing trends is a topic of interest for many researchers. A study by Ohara and Ichihashi (2017) found that the use of English loanwords in Japanese advertising has not only influenced advertising in Japan but has also impacted advertising in other countries, such as South Korea and China. Moreover, Jung and Nakao (2015) found that some of the trends and techniques used in Japanese advertising, including the use of *gairaigo* have been adopted by marketers in other countries, such as South Korea, China, and Taiwan.

The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising has significant global implications. As Japan continues to expand its presence in the global marketplace, the use of English loanwords in advertising campaigns helps to create a more cosmopolitan image of Japanese brands and products. This is particularly important in industries such as technology and fashion, where Japanese companies compete with their international counterparts. By incorporating English loanwords into their advertising, Japanese companies can create a sense of familiarity and appeal to international consumers who may be more familiar with English vocabulary (Crystal, 2003).

Cultural Exchange and Cross-Linguistic Communication

The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can also contribute to cultural exchange and cross-linguistic communication. By incorporating English loanwords, Japanese advertisements can help to familiarize foreign audiences with Japanese culture and language. This exchange can lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of Japanese products and services, as well as encourage cross-cultural interactions and relationship. Additionally, it can also serve as a means of promoting Japanese language and culture globally (Kinsella, 2019; Kondo & Han, 2019; Lie, 2017; Matsuda, 2016).

In Japanese advertising, the use of *gairaigo* can also have a positive impact on language learning and language exchange programs for Japanese learners of English. As an example, may find it easier to learn and remember English vocabulary when it is presented in a familiar context such as advertising. This can also help to promote language exchange programs, where Japanese and foreign language learners can work together to improve their language skills and cultural understanding (Watanabe, 2006).

The use of *gairaigo* has also contributed to cultural exchange and cross-linguistic communication between Japan and other countries. By incorporating English loanwords into their advertisements, Japanese companies' area able to communicate with foreign consumers in a way that is familiar and easily understood. This can help to break down language and cultural barriers, and promote a greater understanding and appreciation of Japanese products and culture in other parts of the world (Ogawa, 2012; Kotabe & Helsen, 2008).

Consumers tend to have more positive attitudes towards advertisements that are sensitive to their cultural background and use language that resonates with their identity (Jin & Li, 2010). Additionally, marketers who incorporate cultural themes and values into their advertising campaigns have been found to have a stronger impact on consumers, leading to increased brand loyalty and sales (Singh & Pereira, 2005).

Businesses can benefit from adopting a cross-cultural approach to their marketing strategies by exploring alternative ways to communicate their brand messages that are more culturally relevant and engaging for diverse audiences, such as using

localized language and imagery (Samiee & Jeong, 2019; Zhang & Gelb, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study has explored the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising and its benefits, drawbacks, and global implications. The use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising has become prevalent practice in recent years, as it offers several benefits such as increased product appeal to younger generations, enabling more effective communication with international audiences, and an enhanced global image of Japanese brands. However, the overuse of *gairaigo* can also lead to limitations in accessibility for non-English speakers, potential erosion of language and cultural identity, and potential negatively impacts on traditional businesses.

Furthermore, the global implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising are also significant, with the influence on global marketing trends, cultural exchange, and cross-linguistic communication. The implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising extend beyond national boundaries, highlighting the importance of cultural sensitivity and linguistic diversity in international marketing.

Overall, the findings of this research highlight the importance of balancing the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising to effectively reach diverse audiences while preserving linguistic and cultural diversity. As *gairaigo* continues to shape global marketing trends and cross-cultural communication, it is crucial for marketers to be mindful of the potential implications and strive for cultural sensitivity in their marketing strategies.

While the use of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising can bring numerous benefits, it is important to carefully consider its potential drawbacks and cultural implication for both domestic and global audiences. By recognizing the potential benefits and drawbacks of *gairaigo*, advertisers and marketers can make informed decisions about language use and contribute to more effective and culturally sensitive cross-linguistic communication.

The research findings have important implications for businesses, marketers, and policymakers involved in global marketing and cross-cultural communication.

Further research is needed to continue exploring the impact and implications of *gairaigo* in Japanese advertising.

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