

English: A Study of Japanese L1 Interference in L2 English

Prepared by:
Matthew G. Kroll

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in English Education

Approved by:

Kay McClave 4/26/2011
Thesis Advisor Date

Yvonne Clark 4/26/2011
Thesis Committee Member Date

Erin T. 4/26/2011
Thesis Committee Member Date

Sara Simmons 4-29-2011
Dean of Graduate Studies Date



Abstract

'Engrish' is not a joke. Though it has been played for comedy for decades, the collective body of L2 English errors by native Japanese speakers known as 'Engrish' deserves serious attention by ESL and EFL instructors. 'Engrish' is presented as an expression of L1 interference that impedes L2 attainment.

First, L1 interference--or negative L1 transfer as it is also known--is explained along with its relation to the three major movements in crosslinguistic studies in the past fifty years: Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, and Performance Analysis. Evidence of L1 interference in action is then presented through multiple studies into the phenomenon. The study results are analyzed and synthesized and in the final calculus, L1 interference is proven to be a significant factor in the course of Second Language Acquisition.

The phonetic, phonological and orthographic issues of 'Engrish' are then explored. With its rigid phonotactic constraints and its phonetic orthography, Japanese has many points of conflict with English. English loanwords in Japanese are presented as examples because the same patterns tend to characterize the spoken and in some ways the written aspects of 'Engrish.'

The morphosyntactic issues of 'Engrish' are explored next. While there are many syntactic and morphological similarities between English and Japanese, there are also a number of significant differences that can prove to be a source of difficulty for Japanese L2 English learners.

While this paper is primarily descriptive, attention is paid to some potential corrective strategies ESL and EFL instructors can employ in the classroom to help their native Japanese learners to overcome 'Engrish' and meet their English proficiency goals. Strategies are divided between the phonetic/phonological issues of 'Engrish' and the morphosyntactic issues of 'Engrish.'

'Engrish' is ultimately deemed a natural part of English acquisition for native Japanese speakers, as L1 interference itself is a natural part of the Second Language Acquisition process. That being said, understanding the patterns that constitute 'Engrish' can be a great benefit to ESL/EFL instructors seeking compensatory strategies. This understanding can also be applied to some degree to other forms of L1 interference as well, such as the 'Chinglish' of Chinese students and the 'Konglish' of Korean students.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. L1 Interference	1
A. Overview	1
B. Crosslinguistic Methodologies	2
B.1. Contrastive Analysis	2
B.2 Error Analysis	3
B.3 Performance Analysis	4
C. Studies on L1 Interference	5
C.1 Overview	5
C.2 Bhela's 1999 Study	5
C.3 Bennui's 2008 Study	7
C.4 Galasso's 1999 Study	8
C.5 Kohro's 2009 Study	9
D. Analysis of Study Results	10
D.1 Supporting Data	10
D.2 Conflicting Data	10
D.3 Reconciliation of Data	11
E. Conclusions	12
III. Phonetic, Phonological and Orthographic Aspects of 'Engrish'	13
A. Overview of Japanese Phonetics	13
B. Vowel Epenthesis	15
C. Consonant Assimilation	17
D. Vowel Assimilation	19
E. Consonant Gemination	20
F. R/L Ambiguity	22
G. Non-rhoticity	23
H. Phonetic Adaptation	24
IV. Morphosyntactic Aspects of 'Engrish'	25
A. Overview of Japanese Morphosyntax	25
B. Syntactical Incongruities	25
C. Articles	26
D. Verb and Noun Inflections	27
E. Postpositional Particles	27
F. Let's Verbing	28
V. Corrective Strategies for TESL/TEFL Instructors	29
A. Phonetic/Phonological Issues	29
B. Morphosyntactic Issues	31
VI. Conclusion	33
VII. Works Cited	34

Engrish: A Study of Japanese L1 Interference in L2 English

I. Introduction

'Engrish' is the common name for the collective body of stereotypical errors in English usage by native Japanese speakers. It has been the butt of many jokes for years upon years and spawned such websites as the long-running Engrish.com. However, for Japanese trying to achieve a higher degree of English proficiency, it is no laughing matter. 'Engrish' represents a stubborn pattern of systematic L1 interference that hampers their communicative competence. This pattern is largely predictable and rooted in Japanese phonotactics and morphosyntax. It is by no means a new problem and surely many if not all the familiar features of 'Engrish' have been addressed by EFL/ESL instructors before, though perhaps not in a comprehensive manner. While many teachers and students are eager to have solutions to the issues associated with 'Engrish,' ultimately this paper is more diagnostic than prescriptive. A better understanding of what 'Engrish' is and how it operates will serve as the basis for deeper exploration into corrective strategies.

II. L1 Interference

A. Overview

Second Language Acquisition is fundamentally different from First Language Acquisition. There are many factors behind this, and one of the foremost among them is the fact that people who are acquiring a second language already have an established background in their L1, a background they lacked when acquiring their first language. Because this established presence of the L1 has such a strong influence on how a person processes language, it comes as no surprise that the L1 will influence L2 learning. L1 transfer can be both positive and negative, either assisting L2 acquisition or hindering it. Another name for negative L1 transfer is L1

interference. Although this term has fallen out of favor with some SLA researchers, it still exists in contemporary literature and is useful for conveying the effect of negative L1 transfer. Because it creates a more vivid mental image of what negative L1 transfer is, the term 'L1 interference' will be used here. It must be stressed that L1 interference is not the only way the L1 influences L2 learning. However, L1 interference does exist; it is significant and it needs to be counteracted as much as possible by second language and foreign language instructors. Before I delve into the research, I will review the historical progression of crosslinguistic methodologies which play a considerable role in how L1 interference has been approached and perceived by the leading researchers in the field.

B. Crosslinguistic Methodologies

One aspect of the nature of theory is that it is rarely static, and this is true of the theories behind crosslinguistic studies. There has been a considerable metamorphosis since crosslinguistic studies were fully formalized back in the 1960s. This metamorphosis has consisted of three stages and each of these stages is represented by a different methodology. The first is Contrastive Analysis, followed by Error Analysis, then by Performance Analysis. Each of these stages reflects the times in which they were developed and popularized. Together they demonstrate how much thought has changed regarding the qualification and quantification of L2 errors.

B.1. Contrastive Analysis

Crosslinguistic studies as we know them today got their start in the 1960s with Contrastive Analysis. The key assertion of Contrastive Analysis was that the origins of the errors produced by L2 learners could be directly and reliably attributed to L1 interference and that through a systematic analysis of both the L1 and L2, these errors could be identified (Ortega 31).

Contrastive Analysis is sub-divided into a strong and weak version. The strong version is essentially what has just been said, that errors and difficulties of L2 learners can be predicted by contrasting the L2 with the learner's L1. According to Wardaugh, though, this is an untenable proposition, demanding more of linguists and linguistic theory than they can offer. It requires a knowledge of both languages that is both far too precise and too complete to be feasible (124-125). The weak version is far more reasonable, but in exchange sacrifices the greater part of the usefulness Contrastive Analysis is meant to provide. In the weak version, linguists simply account for observed difficulties using available linguistic knowledge (126). This weak version of Contrastive Analysis is both qualifiable and quantifiable, but is too limited in scope to draw many general conclusions. Ultimately, Contrastive Analysis claimed to be able to account for all L2 errors but could not prove it. While the weak version of Contrastive Analysis could hold up to scrutiny better, its scope was too limited to tackle the issue of L2 errors on a larger scale. The work to overcome these shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis paved the way for its successor: Error Analysis.

B.2. Error Analysis

Contrastive Analysis could not hold up to strict empirical scrutiny and was eventually replaced with Error Analysis. Actually, Error Analysis predated Contrastive Analysis, but traditional Error Analysis was little more than an ad hoc attempt to identify errors (Sridhar 15). Initially it appeared that Error Analysis would fall into obsolescence when the more sophisticated Contrastive Analysis arrived on the scene with its grand claims of consistent error prediction. It was after Contrastive Analysis was discarded for failing to deliver on its claims that Error Analysis returned to prominence with a reformed and modernized methodology. For this new Error Analysis, the primary concern was not broad, hypothetical crosslinguistic analyses but

rather the learner's interlanguage, the snapshot of an individual's linguistic capacity at a given moment. Researchers using Error Analysis did not focus solely on errors *between* languages, but also studied errors *within* a language. In addition to this wider focus, the very concept of 'error' was recast as the 'hypotheses' made by the learner, distinguished from 'mistakes,' the performance-based lapses attributed to such failings as a faulty memory (16-18). Despite recasting the concept of error, some researchers were not satisfied and wanted to move beyond talking about error at all. This movement away from the concept of error would lead to the next phase of crosslinguistic studies: Performance Analysis.

B.3. Performance Analysis

Both Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis concern themselves primarily with the mechanics of language: grammar, phonetics and morphosyntax. This focus and the preoccupation with learner errors were seen by some as too narrow a treatment of L2 learning. For a more holistic approach, Performance Analysis was devised. Performance Analysis is centered on communicative competence over mechanical accuracy. Grammatical competence is one of the aspects of a learner's L2 proficiency that is observed, but it is only part of a larger whole where sociolinguistic factors, to include sociopragmatics, are as big a part if not the larger part of the overall focus (Carrasquillo 24). Through Performance Analysis, errors can be analyzed in context, giving them their proper weight in regard to overall communicative competence. By contextualizing errors and focusing on communicative competence, Performance Analysis is seen as surpassing earlier methodologies, which only catalogued errors (Chamot 239). However, while Contrastive Analysis has largely fallen to the wayside, the rise of Performance Analysis has not eliminated Error Analysis entirely. So long as its limitations are

acknowledged, Error Analysis retains some validity in crosslinguistic studies and continues to be used by some SLA researchers.

C. Studies on L1 Interference

C.1. Overview

The existence of L1 interference must not be taken for granted as simple common sense. Contrastive Analysis failed because of its lack of empirical support. However, its claims of L1 interference accounting for all L2 errors were too all-encompassing and deterministic to be tenable. The concept of L1 interference influencing L2 errors has continued to be a subject of exploration for researchers and below is a discussion of four studies. The first study is a fairly basic exploration of L1 interference with a limited sample population. It serves as a starting point for the discussion. The second study is more systematic, with a wider and deeper pool of data. The third study goes more into the theory behind the operation of L1 interference on the grammatical level. Lastly, the fourth study attempts to go beyond the grammatical focus of the previous study to explore L1 interference on the discursive level, albeit with limited returns. Ultimately, this is only meant to be a snapshot of recent research into L1 interference to demonstrate the concept's continued relevance even while many researchers are trying to move away from discussions of error and the like.

C.2. Bhela's 1999 Study

In 1999, Baljit Bhela of the Flinders University School of Education published a study on L1 interference that utilized learners whose L1s were Vietnamese, Cambodian, Spanish, and Italian. The goal of the study was to determine what syntactic structures of the L1 were causing difficulty in the L2 and how they were influencing the interpretation of meaning. The study also sought to determine what role the syntactic knowledge of both the L1 and the L2 played in these

difficulties (24). Four adult ESL students, each with a different L1 background, wrote a short narrative in both English and their native languages and then took part in an interview where their syntactical knowledge was tested by questions about the errors that were found in the writing sample and the elicitation to self-correct the L2 errors. The L1 writing samples were analyzed by experts in those languages while the L2 samples were analyzed by the researcher herself (25). The four subjects' L2 proficiency was assessed according to the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR), which is scored on a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 representing native-like proficiency. The L1 experts then evaluated the subjects' proficiency in their native languages. In both L1 and L2, all four subjects were rated as 1+, a rating that indicated the subjects should be capable of holding simple correspondence, using stock phrases, and conveying their own opinions and attitudes in a simple manner. The rating is not surprising for the L2, but the fact that the subjects have a similarly low writing proficiency in their L1 may have some bearing on the experimental data (25-26). The results showed that there was indeed evidence of L1 interference with the L2. Particular difficulty was expressed by the subjects with structures that were not present in their L1s. Bhela then refers to a 1988 study by Dechert to assert that the greater the structural difference between the L1 and L2, the more the L1 will interfere. The L1's structures are inserted to cover gaps in L2 syntactic knowledge (29). In the face of compelling evidence of L1 interference, Bhela is quick to note that the use of L1 structures to bridge the gaps in L2 syntactical knowledge is actually a good thing at the subjects' developmental stage. It represents a form of risk-taking, capitalizing on existing linguistic knowledge in an attempt to craft complex forms that would otherwise be inaccessible to them (30). While it is a point worth making that errors are a natural part of acquisitional development,

the important thing to take from Bhela's study for the purposes of this paper is the evidence that there are structural L2 errors whose origins can be positively identified as L1 interference.

C.3. Bennui's 2008 Study

Pairote Bennui of the University of Thaksin was concerned about ESL/EFL pedagogy that focused on syntactic, discursive and lexical errors yet failed to account for the role of L1 interference in these errors. He published this study in 2008 to analyze L1 interference as part of a larger effort to build a database of errors caused by L1 interference. He first highlights some of the factors that contribute to L1 interference in his native Thailand, such as the limited use of English in the classroom and the significant grammatical differences between the two languages (73-74). Twenty-eight third-year students of the University of Thaksin--who each had taken at least ten years of EFL instruction--were given a final examination that was designed by the researcher in their basic writing course, which the researcher also taught. The final exam included sections for organizing compound sentences, organizing complex sentences, writing short paragraphs, and correcting errors (81-82). The results demonstrated L1 interference on three levels: lexical, syntactic, and discursive. The results were then analyzed using four methodologies: contrastive analysis, error analysis, interlanguage analysis and contrastive rhetoric. The contrastive analysis was primarily concerned with lexical and syntactic errors, such as directly translating Thai words into English or even using Thai words outright, omitting English structures not found in Thai and using Thai word order in sentences. The error analysis focused more on overgeneralization, simplification and avoidance errors. The interlanguage analysis showed a tendency to rely on memorized forms and to avoid spontaneous generation for fear of errors. Lastly, contrastive rhetoric showed that the learners applied L1 patterns, such as the redundancy style of Thai, and students employed L1 writing conventions that were seen as

technical failures but still positive transfer from the perspective of the cultural enrichment of their discourse (89-91). The overwhelming presence of L1 interference, especially on the lexical and syntactic level, is treated as a serious issue that must be addressed by pedagogical reform. Bennui calls for extensive work to shore up the shortcomings caused by L1 interference while promoting the instances of positive transfer.

C.4. Galasso's 1999 Study

In 1999, Joseph Galasso of California State University at Northridge published a study about what he called the transfer of L1 parameters--L1 interference for the purposes of this paper. He approaches the issue from a Chomskyan perspective. His interpretation of the research data assumes the validity of Universal Grammar. In Universal Grammar, there are certain 'principles' that are common to the grammars of all languages. These 'principles' are contrasted with 'parameters' specific to individual languages. The premise of Universal Grammar is tied to the primary thrust of the study, which is to provide support for the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis. The Fundamental Difference Hypothesis states that "adults cease to operate as children in respect to their processing of linguistic information" (2-3). This is a rather basic and commonsense idea, that First Language Acquisition and Second Language Acquisition are not equivalent processes. More specifically, in the Chomskyan sense, the Language Acquisition Device no longer functions as it did when the individual was a child acquiring his L1. Basically, as a child, the only linguistic reference was Universal Grammar, which is 'learned' through a largely passive process. An adult, in contrast, has his L1 as a reference in place of Universal Grammar and has undergone the cognitive development to actively engage language. In exchange, his access to Universal Grammar is indirect, clouded by his parameterized L1, and so L1 interference is a predictable consequence of any attempt to acquire an L2 after the

maturational threshold has been passed (3-4). In this conceptual framework, L1 interference is the transfer of L1 parameters to the L2 as part of the acquisition strategy. Galasso's claim is that if parameters could be reset and there were no intrusion by the L1 on the L2, then Second Language Acquisition would be identical to First Language Acquisition. This would lend credence to the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis because the L1 parameters constitute the fundamental difference that prevents older learners from accessing Universal Grammar directly (5).

The study itself involved twenty students with little or no prior English knowledge. It was originally meant to be a test of Zev bar-Lev's Sheltered Initiation Language Learning method of ESL, which sets a natural progression via grammatical benchmarks and features no correction input from the instructor, but it was retooled to bolster the case of the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (10). The end result was that Galasso observed more than enough instances of L1 interference to support his position vis a vis the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis. If Universal Grammar is being accessed, it is only indirectly. For the older learner, the relationship with the L2 is predominantly shaped by the relationship with his L1 (16). For anyone who accepts the concept of Universal Grammar and seeks to understand the operation of L2 acquisition within that framework, Galasso's study provides a compelling perspective on L1 interference.

C.5. Kohro's 2009 Study

Yoshifumi Kohro of Kyushu International University published a study in 2009 on L1 interference within the context of contrastive rhetorical studies. Kohro synthesized a large amount of previous research to highlight the debate and conflicting data over the assertion that L1 interference would clearly be demonstrated in the form of rhetorical features unique to Japanese culture and global text structures. The broader, blanket assertions by earlier research

were contrasted with the less deterministic voices of more recent studies, which pointed out other factors at work such as writing ability in both the L1 and L2, metaknowledge about writing, the writer's background, and so on (2-3). Kohro took 19 L1 Japanese college freshmen with TOEFL scores ranging from 332 to 440 who had little experience writing in English and many with no experience at all writing English paragraphs or essays and had them write a personal experience narrative in both English and Japanese (5-6). The subjects then filled out questionnaires about their writing backgrounds and the composing process and took a 50-question metaknowledge test about writing in English (7). The end results determined that there were no instances of L1 transfer into the L2 compositions, but the reason for this was not certain. One possibility was that the global text structures of personal experience narratives that make for clear compositions cross the language barrier. Another possibility was that the subjects simply had too low an L2 proficiency level for any L1 transfer, and that a certain threshold level must be reached before transfer can happen (15-16). While the findings are by no means conclusive, it should give second thoughts to anyone who would reflexively assume that L1 interference is a guaranteed side effect of lower L2 proficiency.

D. Analysis of Study Results

D.1. Supporting Data

While no researchers deny the existence of L1 interference, the nature of such interference is not entirely agreed upon. However, the data compiled in these studies, for the most part, suggest that L1 interference is a fundamental part of Second Language Acquisition, with far-reaching influence at least in the basic and intermediate levels of L2 proficiency. The Bhela, Bennui and Galasso studies all demonstrate L1 interference playing a significant role. The Bennui study in particular shows extensive L1 interference in the learners' syntax, discourse and

lexicon. What is more, the L1 interference has largely been shown as being rather predictable. The Bhela study showed that structural gaps in L2 knowledge would be filled by the L1 regardless of whether or not the actual forms were even remotely analogous. The Bennui study was even more extensive in its catalog of L1 interference. The Galasso study also anticipated the errors made by the students due to L1 interference. All in all, the data support the ideas of L1 interference playing an extensive and significant role in the process of L2 learning and of many instances of L1 interference being reasonably easy to predict.

D.2. Conflicting Data

While the Bhela, Bennui and Galasso studies all showed L1 interference to be quite predictable, the Kohro study did not meet these expectations. There were no instances of the global text structures being transferred from L1 to L2. Indeed, L1 interference did not seem to play much of a role at all. There are also the claims in the Bennui study of positive L1 transfer. These elements would appear to undercut the pervasive influence of L1 interference, but the apparent discrepancies are actually rather easy to reconcile.

D.3. Reconciliation of Data

As has been mentioned before, the Kohro study was somewhat inconclusive. It was not certain if L2 proficiency was actually too low for L1 interference to occur or if the personal experience narratives were geared toward the transfer of L1 global text structures. Kohro himself wonders if the result would have been different if he had used subjects with a higher L2 proficiency level or if he had used more prevalent academic modes of writing such as expository or argumentative essays (16). Of course, just because L1 interference does not occur in one particular scenario does not mean it cannot occur elsewhere. Likewise, the existence of positive L1 transfer in the Bennui study does not negate the massive amounts of L1 interference. In a

scenario where such positive L1 transfer occurs, the use of 'negative L1 transfer' may be preferable to make abundantly clear that positive and negative transfer are part of one whole, two sides working to bridge the gap between L1 and L2. In the end, it can safely be said that L1 interference plays an extensive role but will not be found at the source of all errors. Instances of L1 interference are often predictable, but these predictions are not absolute and the occurrence of certain instances appears to be tied to the learner's proficiency level. From this, some generalizations can be drawn about L1 interference and from there steps can be taken toward pedagogical action.

E. Conclusions

The key shortcoming of Contrastive Analysis which has complicated the discussion of L1 interference ever since it became the target of serious critical scrutiny has been its narrow focus and its deterministic prognostication. Focusing solely on morphosyntactic errors ignores the greater part of language usage. The proponents of Performance Analysis have created a more widely applicable framework with their focus on communicative competence. Communication is, after all, the quintessential purpose of language, and communicative competence is indeed the most pertinent area on a functional level for the learner. Of course, the concept of L1 interference is still relevant because it is valuable for language teachers to understand how errors affect communicative competence. It should be noted, though, that these errors--even some of the more egregious ones--do not necessarily impair communication. In fact, the Bhela study showed that the syntactic errors due to L1 interference did not significantly hamper the semantic acceptability of the subjects' compositions (28). While the Bennui study was disturbed at the abundance of grammatical errors that plagued the English compositions of Thai university students, Bennui praised the creative use of Thai discursive elements and direct lexical borrowings as a way to

bring 'Thainess' to the nation's own unique brand of English (91). L1 interference is a fact of life in Second Language Acquisition, and it should be dealt with as a natural part of the process. L1 interference may ultimately be nothing more than a phase for some learners and a persistent aspect of L2 usage for others. Regardless, though L1 interference can hamper communication at times, it is generally a negotiable obstacle. With this grounding in what L1 interference is and how it operates, 'Engrish' can be explored as a demonstration of L1 interference in action.

III. Phonetic, Phonological and Orthographic Aspects of 'Engrish'

A. Overview of Japanese Phonetics

Japanese is a syllabic language. The basic unit of both the spoken and written language is the individual syllable. Rather than an alphabet, Japanese has two syllabaries: hiragana for native words and katakana for emphasis (much like italics in English) and foreign loanwords. Katakana will be used exclusively here, because low proficiency Japanese English speakers are often said to speak 'katakana English.' This is quite possibly due to the flood of English loanwords into everyday Japanese and a steady influx of new additions. The adaptation of loanwords to Japanese phonotactic constraints provides considerable insight into the phonetic component of 'Engrish.' A chart is provided below (see fig.1).

Japanese "Katakana" Character List

ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ								
a	i	u	e	o								
カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ	ガ	ギ	グ	ゲ	ゴ	ギヤ	ギユ	ギョ
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	ga	gi	gu	ge	go	gya	gyu	gyo
サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ	ザ	ジ	ズ	ゼ	ゾ	ジャ	ジュ	ジョ
sa	shi	su	se	so	za	ji	zu	ze	zo	ja	ju	jo
タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト	ダ	ヂ	ヅ	デ	ド	ヂヤ	ヂュ	ヂョ
ta	chi	tsu	te	to	da	ji	zu	ze	do	ja	ju	jo
ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ						ニヤ	ニユ	ニョ
na	ni	nu	ne	no						nya	nyu	nyo
ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ	バ	ビ	ブ	ベ	ボ	ビヤ	ビユ	ビョ
ha	hi	fu	he	ho	ba	bi	bu	be	bo	bya	byu	byo
マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ						ミヤ	ミュ	ミョ
ma	mi	mu	me	mo						mya	myu	myo
ヤ		ユ		ヨ								
ya		yu		yo								
ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ						リヤ	リュ	リョ
ra	ri	ru	re	ro						rya	ryu	ryo
ワ				ヲ								
wa				wo								
ン					パ	ピ	プ	ペ	ポ	ピヤ	ピユ	ピョ
n					pa	pi	pu	pe	po	pya	pyu	pyo

Fig. 1. "Japanese 'Katakana' Chart;" *DMS Nihongo de Onamae*;

Royal Institute of Technology, 1998; Web; 09 Dec. 2009.

The root of all Japanese syllables is five vowels, /a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, and /o/ (seen in the upper left of fig. 1). From these five syllables the *Gojuuonzu* is constructed ('Fifty Sound Chart'), the left column of the chart. The left column of fig. 1 demonstrates the regular CV pattern applied for all the basic consonants. The sole exception to the CV pattern in the Fifty Sound Chart is the syllabic N (found in the lower left corner of fig. 1). The syllables *yi*, *ye*, *wi*, *wu*, and *we* are not

included due to obsolescence. The *tenten* (") diacritics are added to produce /g/, /z/, /d/, and /b/ (as seen in the center column of fig. 1), while the *maru* (°) applied to the /h/ column produces /p/ (as seen at the bottom of the center column in fig. 1). The C+/i/ syllable from each column can be combined with *ya*, *yu* or *yo* to create the contractions seen in the right column. (Apparently due to space limitations, this chart omits the contracted syllables for *ki*, *shi*, *chi*, and *hi*.) All native Japanese sounds are contained within this chart and it is within these bounds, for the most part, that spoken 'Engrish' and sometimes written 'Engrish' are expressed. Also worth noting is that there are two main forms of romanization of Japanese: the Hepburn and Kunrei systems. While the Kunrei system is the official romanization used in Japan, the Hepburn system better reflects the actual pronunciation in most dialects of the language (at least to the ear of native English speakers), and that is why the Hepburn system is being employed here. In general, though, all Japanese words here will be rendered both in katakana and IPA.

B. Vowel Epenthesis

One of the most distinctive features of Japanese phonology is the total absence of closed syllables and the rarity of complex consonant clusters. Because every consonant except the syllabic N must be followed with a vowel (excepting the instances of consonant gemination to be discussed later), vowel epenthesis tends to be prevalent in the production of all but the most proficient Japanese L2 English speakers. When dealing with branched onsets and word-final consonants, the vowel most commonly inserted is /u/ (Monahan). A notable exception is word-final /t/ and /d/. Because the pronunciation shifts with ッ (/tsu/) and ヅ (/dzu/), the t/d+u syllables, /o/ is inserted instead following /t/ and /d/. For /tɕ/ and /dʑ/, /i/ is used in the coda

	English		Japanese	
	Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
epenthetic /u/	ice cream	/aɪskri:m/	アイスクリーム	/aɪsukuɾi:mu/
word-final /d/+/o/	bed	/bed/	ベッド	/beddo/
word-final /t/+/o/	gate	/geɪt/	ゲート	/ge:to/
word-final /tʃ/+/i/	switch	/swɪtʃ/	スイッチ	/suitei/
word-final /dʒ/+/i/	bridge	/brɪdʒ/	ブリッジ	/buɾiddʒi/

Fig. 2. Vowel epenthesis in Japanese loanwords.

of a syllable (Monahan). The vowel /i/ is also used in some cases to differentiate homophones, such as *brake* and *break* and a labor *strike* and the verb *strike* that means 'to hit' (Kubozono 114). This pattern of using /i/ to distinguish homophones is not applied universally, however, and is better classified as an exception to the general rules.

	Katakana	IPA
brake	ブレーキ	/buɾe:ki/
break	ブレイク	/buɾe:ku/
strike (labor)	ストライキ	/sutoɾaiki/
strike (hit)	ストライク	/sutoɾaiku/

Fig. 3. /u/ and /i/ to distinguish homophones

Through the work of Emmanuel Dupoux of the *Laboratoire de Science Cognitive et Psycholinguistique* and his colleagues, considerable light has been shed on the operation of vowel epenthesis in Japanese. The premise of an early experiment was a hypothesis about the source of vowel epenthesis in Japanese. Originally the hypothesis supposed two possibilities why vowel epenthesis occurs in Japanese. The first possibility was a matter of speech production, that the Japanese had lost the ability to produce complex consonant clusters and therefore resorted to vowel epenthesis for ease of articulation. The second possibility was a matter of orthography. Because Japanese does not have an alphabet, loanwords have to be rendered in such a way that conforms to the writing system, which in turn influences how words are written when the Roman alphabet is used. However, it was a third possibility that Dupoux and his colleagues pursued, that

vowel epenthesis occurs on the perceptual level (Dupoux et al, "Epenthetic Vowels" 1569). The results of the experiment indicated that native Japanese speakers have a tendency to perceive "illusory" vowel epenthesis where it is not acoustically present (1577). A later experiment gathered further evidence toward the idea that vowel epenthesis in Japanese occurs on the perceptual level by demonstrating its prelexical nature. Dupoux and his colleagues thought that using nonwords with illegal consonant clusters would cause the native Japanese speakers to infer the nonwords' lexical neighbors. For instance, the illegal cluster found in 'mikdo' was assumed to be perceived as the Japanese word *mikado*. However, instead of perceiving the lexical neighbor, the native Japanese speakers followed the standard patterns of vowel epenthesis and rendered 'mikdo' as the nonword 'mikudo' ("New Evidence" 501). Dupoux then posited that high vowel devoicing in Japanese may be the reason for the predominance of /u/ and /i/ in vowel epenthesis in Japanese, but irregular implementation hinging on a number of different factors prevents any solid conclusions without further study (501-502).

C. Consonant Assimilation

Japanese phonetics lacks several consonant sounds found in English as well as other languages from which it borrows. Rather than trying to produce those nonnative sounds, Japanese tends to adapt them to the preexisting set. This pattern of assimilating foreign consonants into existing phonemes has been established in Best's Perceptual Assimilation Model, which asserts that foreign phonemes similar to those in the language will be assimilated while those that are significantly different will remain distinct (Dupoux et al., "Epenthetic Vowels" 1568). The dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are replaced by the alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/ respectively (as seen in the first row of fig. 4). The labio-dental fricatives are not fully articulated either (see the second row of fig. 4). With the exception of instances of フ (/ɸu/), which is

somewhere between /f/ and /h/ in articulation, /h/ is used in place of /f/ in nearly all instances (Watkins). Also, /v/ is traditionally replaced with /b/. Taking a couple of examples of sounds not normally found in English that are also adapted to Japanese phonotactics, /x/ is replaced by geminating (doubling) /h/ and /dʒ/ with /dz/ (as seen in the third and fourth rows of fig. 4 respectively).

		English		Japanese	
		Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
dental fricatives	/θ/ → /s/	Catherine	/kæθəɪn/	キャサリン	/kjasɑɾin/
	/ð/ → /z/	brother	/brʌðə/	ブラザー	/buɾaza:/
labio-dental fricatives	/f/ → /h/	coffee	/kɑfi:/	コーヒー	/ko:hi:/
		platform	/plætfɔ:m/	プラットフォーム	/puɾattoho:mu/
	/v/ → /b/	Venus	/vi:nəs/	ビーナス	/bi:nasu/
voiceless velar fricative	/x/ → /h/	Mach	/max/	マッハ	/mahha/
		Dietrich	/di:tri:x/	ディートリッヒ	/di:toɾihhi/
voiced palato-alveolar fricative	/ʒ/ → /dz/	genre	/ʒɑniə/	ジャンル	/dzanɾu/
		vison	/viʒən/	ビジョン	/bidzɔn/

Fig. 4. Consonant assimilation in Japanese loanwords.

While the general trend is to adapt foreign sounds to native phonotactic constraints, there are, however, adaptations that exist for some non-native sounds. The labio-dental fricatives are among the sounds to be adapted (see the first row of fig. 5). By adding diacritics to *ウ*, the syllable *ヴ* (/vu/) is made to produce /v/. Miniature vowels are then appended to *ヴ* to create the other four syllables: *va*, *vi*, *ve* and *vo*. The same technique is applied to *フ* (/φu/) for the /f/ syllables. It is also used with *イ* and *ウ* in place of the obsolete syllables *yi*, *ye*, *wi*, and *we* (see the second row of fig. 5). *ウ* is used for *wu* and while *wo* is still in use, it is not applied to loanwords and *ウオ* is used instead. Contrary to their Kunrei romanizations, *ち*, *ぢ*, *つ*, and *づ* are not generally pronounced as /ti/, /di/, /tu/, and /du/. To produce these pronunciations in loanwords, *イ* is added to *テ*/*デ* and *ウ* to *ト*/*ド* (as seen in the third row of fig. 5). In all these

cases, though, it should be noted that while the orthography has been adapted to meet the source language halfway, many native Japanese speakers will still employ the older assimilation

		/a/	/i/	/u/	/e/	/o/
labio-dental fricatives	/v/	ヴァ/va/	ヴィ/vi/	ヴ/vu/	ヴェ/ve/	ヴォ/vo/
	/f/	ファ/ɸa/	フィ/ɸi/	フ/ɸu/	フェ/ɸe/	フォ/ɸo/
replacements for obsolete syllables	/y/				イエ/ie/	
	/w/		ウィ/wi/		ウェ/we/	ウォ/wo/
/i/ and /u/ with alveolar stops	/t/		ティ/ti/	トゥ/tu/		
	/d/		ディ/di/	ドゥ/du/		

Fig. 5. Adaptations for non-native syllables.

patterns regardless of how a word is written. For instance, even if *Venus* were rendered as ヴィーナス (/vi:nasu/), it is still highly likely that the standard /v/ to /b/ pattern of consonant assimilation will be followed and the word will be pronounced as (/bi:nasu/). This is how strong consonant assimilation is in Japanese and how resistant Japanese phonotactics are to changes that are attempted via the language's orthography.

English		Japanese	
Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
face	/feɪs/	フェース	/ɸe:su/
woman	/wʊmən/	ウーマン	/u:man/
water	/wɑ:tə/	ウォーター	/(u)ɔ:ta:/

Fig. 6. Examples of adapted non-native sound

D. Vowel Assimilation

Just as consonants are assimilated to match Japanese phonotactics, non-native vowels are also assimilated. There are more than twice as many vowels in English as in Japanese and these must all be adjusted to fit into the five articulation slots Japanese allows. All lax vowels must be made tense and reduced vowels must have distinction restored to them (Smith). (See fig. 6.)

Unlike consonants, where efforts have been made to adapt the orthography in order to produce renditions of foreign words that are more faithful to their spelling in the original language, the

five vowels remain as they are with no formal attempt to expand articulation beyond the bounds already set by the phonotactics of the language.

	English		Japanese	
	Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
lax vowel made tense	<i>pot</i>	/pat/	ポット	/potto/
restored distinction to reduced vowels	<i>brother</i>	/bɹʌðəɹ/	ブラザー	/buɾaza:/

Fig. 7. Vowel assimilation Japanese loanwords.

E. Consonant Gemination

While Japanese phonotactics do not allow for complex consonant clusters, they do however allow consonant gemination. This doubling of consonants is represented by a small ツ before the syllable. Several such examples have been cited previously, but now the operation behind this adaptive pattern will be examined. Consonant gemination in Japanese is actually fairly complex, but it nevertheless tends to follow readily predictable patterns. John Koo and Yayoi Homma provide an excellent study of these patterns in action.

First is the gemination of consonants in the word-final syllable when following a short vowel segment in the original language. This only applies to identical voiceless obstruents, namely /p/, /t/, /k/, /s/, and /ç/, in native words, though in loanwords there are also instances where /f/ and /dʒ/ are geminated, /dʒ/ being the only exception to the principle that only voiceless consonants are geminated (126-127). Another factor is the morpheme boundary. Morpheme-final obstruents are also geminated just like word-final obstruents. It should be noted, though, that there are apparent exceptions, such as ネクタイ (/nekutai/) for *necktie* (/nektai/) where other instances of *neck* as a morpheme are rendered as ネック (/nekku/) as in ネックラス (/nekkuɾasu/) for *necklace* (/nekləs/). These are presumed to be the result of the assumption that

such words were comprised of a single morpheme (127). Stops before the word-final position, namely of the /ks/, /ps/, and /ts/ clusters, are geminated. Note that /ts/ is not subject to vowel

	English		Japanese	
	Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
word-final obstruent	pocket	/pəkət/	ポケット	/poketto/
morpheme-final obstruent	rucksack	/ɹʌksæk/	リュックサック	/ɹjʊkkusakku/
stop before word-final /s/	box	/baks/	ボックス	/bokkusu/
	lips	/lɪps/	リップス	/ɹɪppusu/
	cats	/kæts/	キャッツ	/kɹjattsu/
word-final /ʃ/	rush	/ɹʌʃ/	ラッシュ	/ɹaɕɕu/
morpheme-final /s/+ing	dressing	/dɹɛsɪŋ/	ドレッシング	/doɹɕɕɪŋgu/
obstruents preceding /ən/	cotton	/kətən/	コットン	/kotton/
	fashion	/fæʃən/	ファッション	/fɕɕɛɕon/
obstruents preceding /l/	couple	/kʌpəl/	カップル	/kappuɾu/

Fig. 8. General rules for consonant gemination in Japanese loanwords.

epenthesis because it is a legal consonant cluster in Japanese (128). Regardless of spelling in the original language, instances of the word-final /ʃ/ are usually geminated, while /s/ is not unless the component word is attached to a derivational suffix. For instance, *dress* (/dɹɛs/) in Japanese is rendered /doɹɕɕu/, but the derivational form *dress*ing (/dɹɛsɪŋ/) is rendered /doɹɕɕɪŋgu/. The last instances of gemination occur in obstruents preceding /ən/ and those preceding a syllabic lateral (i.e. the syllable *ru*, which usually takes the place of a word-final /l/ from the original spelling). The exception is alveolar stops; but Koo and Homma are unable to provide a reason for why this is and simply point out the phenomenon (129). (See fig. 9.) Koo and Homma admit that these rules are neither absolute nor exhaustive and they have some reservations about how much consonant gemination is phonologically caused versus induced by the influence of spelling (131). Nevertheless, they provide a thorough and invaluable guide to the general principles guiding this adaptive pattern.

	English		Japanese	
	Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
/t/	bottle	/batəl/	ボトル	/botɔɾu/
/d/	paddle	/pædəl/	パドル	/padɔɾu/

Fig. 9. Exceptions to word-final /l/ gemination rule.

F. R/L Ambiguity

A facet of Japanese phonetics frequently lampooned is the apparent inability of Japanese speakers to distinguish /ɹ/ from /l/. The confusion on the part of Japanese speakers is unsurprising, as Japanese does not have the /l/ phoneme and rather than /ɹ/, the sound actually produced by native Japanese speakers is /ɾ/, which is somewhere in the middle, closer in articulation to /t/. This leads to the case of the 'coin roundly' (see fig. 10). The 'roundly' is supposed to be 'laundry,' a mistaken romanization drawn from the loanword ランドリー (/ɾandoɾi:/). This sort of mixing during romanization is evidence that native Japanese speakers



Fig. 10. Coin Roundly; Personal photograph by Matthew Kroll; 20 Aug. 2007.

with at least some English exposure know intellectually that there is a distinction between R and L, but because they cannot--generally speaking--either perceive or articulate these two phonemes distinctly, they are in essence doing little more than guessing. Overcompensating with L can also

happen when Japanese speakers opt to err on the side of caution (Dougill 20). Less common are instances where both L and R are used together, usually a word-final *-ru* being rendered as *-rɪ*. Although limited in scope, an experiment at Indiana University demonstrated strong support for the idea that perception and production of the L/R ambiguity are closely linked, even when the native Japanese speaker studied had a fairly high level of experience and proficiency with English (Kinnaird and Zapf 14). This corresponds to the work of Dupoux and his colleagues to assert the perceptual nature of vowel epenthesis, as covered earlier, providing a basis for a larger assertion that most if not all of the adaptive patterns for Japanese loanwords are perceptual in nature. This understandably makes correction all the more difficult because it demands a significant shift in cognitive processes.

G. Non-rhoticity

For ease of articulation purposes, there are occasions where elision occurs, namely in the /ɹ/ found in the coda of syllables. This non-rhotic pattern is much the same as it is in a number of English dialects, such as those found in England and the Eastern United States (Harris 4). The non-rhotic pattern can be found in word-final instances of /ɹ/ or in part of a branching coda. Both /aɹ/ and /əɹ/ are pronounced as /a:/, but with /iəɹ/, /ia/ is used. This pattern is quite regular and exceptions are rare, at least for English loanwords. ビール (*/bi:ɹu/*) for *beer* comes from the

	English		Japanese	
	Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
word-final /ɹ/	car	/kaɹ/	カー	/ka:/
/ɹ/ in branching coda	park	/paɹk/	パーク	/pa:ku/
/aɹ/ and /əɹ/ as /a:/	bar	/baɹ/	バー	/ba:/
	hamburger	/hæmbɜ:gəɹ/	ハンバーガー	/hamba:ga:/
/iəɹ/ as /ia/	career	/kæɹiəɹ/	キャリア	/kaɹia/

Fig. 11. Non-rhoticity in Japanese loanwords.

Dutch *bier* (/biəɹ/), although the non-rhotic pattern is applied to ビアガーデン (/biaga:den/) for *beer garden* (/biəɹgɑ:den/). From German, *Arbeit*, which is widely used in Japan to refer to part-time work, does not follow the non-rhotic patterns that are so reliable elsewhere. Neither does

German		Japanese	
Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
Arbeit	/aɪbaɪt/	アルバイト	/aɪbaɪto/
Hamburg	/hambʊəɪk/	ハンブルク	/hambʊɾuku/

Fig. 12. Exceptions to non-rhoticity from German

the city of Hamburg, which is a particularly interesting case because the non-rhotic /hamba:gu/ is used for hamburger steak and the doubly non-rhotic /hamba:ga:/ for the fast food hamburger (Wells). This would appear to be an attempt to better conform with L2 phonotactic constraints, as German is not as forgiving of non-rhoticity as English. With exceptions like these in mind, however, the non-rhoticity of Japanese remains a highly predictable adaptive pattern.

	Katakana	IPA
Hamburg (city)	ハンブルク	/hambʊɾuku/
hamburger steak	ハンバーグ	/hamba:gu/
hamburger (fast food)	ハンバーガー	/hamba:ga:/

Fig. 13. Rhotic and non-rhotic derivation of Hamburg

H. Phonetic Adaptation

Because the Japanese syllabary is phonetic, there is no disconnect between how words are written and how they are pronounced. With all its lexical borrowings and the complicated history behind the codification of its spelling, English is rather dramatically removed from any semblance of having a phonetic orthography. This, of course, applies equally to consonants as well as vowels. In English, the letter C is realized as either /k/ or /s/. In the word *recycle* (/ɹəsaɪkəl/), the first C is pronounced as /s/ and the second as /k/. In Japanese, *recycle* is rendered as リサイクル (/ɾisaikuru/). There, like elsewhere, the letter C is rendered according to its pronunciation. For vowels, consider the many different spellings that can represent the long E

(/i:/), such 'ee,' 'ey,' and 'ea.' All three of these are indistinguishable when rendered in katakana (see fig. 13). While this pattern of phonetic adaptation certainly helps ease pronunciation, it also

	English		Japanese	
	Roman	IPA	Katakana	IPA
'ee' as / i:/	speed	/spi:d/	スピード	/supi:do/
'ey' as / i:/	key	/ki:/	キー	/ki:/
'ea' as / i:/	team	/ti:m/	チーム	/tei:mu/

Fig. 13. Renderings of /i:/ Japanese loanwords.

increases the difficulty of rendering the words in the original language, one of the many ways that the adaptive patterns of loanwords complicate ESL/EFL for native Japanese speakers.

IV. Morphosyntactic Aspects of 'English'

A. Overview of Japanese Morphosyntax

Despite the reputation that Japanese has of being a highly difficult language to learn, it is in many ways structurally simpler than a number of "easier" languages and also has a surprising number of common features with English. Neither language has gender or declension for their nouns. Verbs are in general not conjugated based on number or person. Japanese postpositional particles function much like English prepositions in most contexts. It may be that because of these similarities, the differences between the two languages express themselves in a more pronounced manner.

B. Syntactical Incongruities

Although Japanese syntax can be rather fluid, especially in the informal context, the standard pattern for sentences is SOV, unlike the SVO pattern of English. For instance, 'I kicked the ball' would be rendered *Watashi wa booru wo kerimashita*, which would be directly translated as 'I the ball kicked' (Chino, "A Dictionary" 160). This tends to be a problem only when students are directly translating an original Japanese draft into English word by word. That

being said, the basic word order remains a key conceptual difference in how sentences are formed in Japanese and English that can be a source of difficulty.

In Japanese, context is relied upon much more heavily than in English. Implied subjects occur in English but rarely. In Japanese, on the other hand, implied subjects are common and implied objects are even possible. Pronouns can be used in place of nouns, but more often than not, the subject is understood from context (Rubin 26). Rubin cites a scene from the James Clavell novel *Shogun* which illustrates this nicely: "'Yukimasu means I go, but equally you, he, she, it, we, they go, or will go, or even could have gone'" (11). The tendency in Japanese to leave subjects and even objects implied can lead to omissions in English that obscure meaning and unnecessarily complicate communication.

C. Articles

Another major point of difficulty for Japanese L2 English students that tends to be especially problematic in writing is the use of articles. Articles do not exist in Japanese and so it is a great challenge for native Japanese speakers to use English articles correctly. In a study by Toshihiko Kobayashi that gauged the accuracy of editing grammatical errors of L2 English compositions written by L1 Japanese students, the editors who were Japanese native speakers left errors in article usage uncorrected at a significantly higher rate than their native English speaking counterparts. The study also demonstrated the ways in which articles are commonly misused. The most straightforward is simple omission, but the most common error is overuse. Similar to the case of the L/R ambiguity, Japanese learners of English tend to be highly sensitive to this fundamental difference between the two languages and are likely to overcompensate. The other common type of misuse involves using the definite article where the indefinite is appropriate or vice versa (52).

D. Verb and Noun Inflections

English has largely shed its inflections for both nouns and verbs over the centuries. This is helpful for Japanese learners because Japanese nouns are not inflected and Japanese verbs undergo limited conjugation--primarily for tense--unlike a Romance language such as Spanish which must also account for person and number. That being said, the inflections that do persist in English tend to be problematic for Japanese learners of English. Japanese nouns are not inflected to form plurals and so the *-s* and *-es* inflections are often omitted in L2 English. In the Kobayashi study, errors relating to noun number went uncorrected by more than half of the Japanese editors. While a higher education level narrowed the gap between the native and nonnative speakers, correct use of noun number proved to be a persistent challenge for native Japanese speakers (99). Irregular plurals prove even more problematic. For verbs, the inflection for the third-person singular is also dropped more often than not and irregular conjugations like *be* are quite difficult as Japanese has no irregular verbs.

E. Postpositional Particles

A significant element of the Japanese language is postpositional particles, or *joshi*. In many cases, particles operate much like prepositions in English, but their functionality is much more diverse than that. They can be used to denote nouns as subjects or objects, mark certain words as either adjectives or adverbs, and they can indicate interrogatives, emphasis or gendered speech. Japanese learners of English often have difficulties when they have to make distinctions in English that do not exist in Japanese. Two of the most prominent involve the particle *ni*. *Ni* perhaps has the most diverse usage of all the particles, and it is in two of its functions where the ambiguity creates confusion in the transition to English. *Ni* can indicate either 'to' or 'for' when used with indirect objects, e.g. *Watashi ni kureru?* can be either 'You're giving it to me?' or

'(You're giving it) For me?' (Chino, "All About Particles" 56). The form '[noun] *no tame ni*' unambiguously indicates something done for the sake of the noun, but it tends to be used only when there is a need to emphasize the benefit to someone. In Japanese, the distinction between 'to' and 'for' is largely understood from the context of the sentence but verbalizing that distinction in English is often a point of difficulty and the 'to/for' ambiguity is a fairly common sight, particularly in Japanese L2 English writing. *Ni* can also indicate where something is in, at or on, e.g. *Reizouko ni oita* ('I put it in the refrigerator'), *Teeburu ni oita* ('I put it on the table'), and *Mise ni oita* ('I left it at the store') (52). Again, there are less ambiguous constructions such as '[noun] *no naka ni*' ('inside [noun]') and '[noun] *no ue ni*' ('on top of [noun]'), but context is more often used to make the distinction in Japanese. However, the ambiguity makes it difficult to distinguish the prepositions in English. These ambiguities are ultimately not a major disruption to communication, but they can obscure and confuse the intended meaning and often stubbornly persist.

F. Let's Verbing

Another common sight in 'English' writing, especially promotional work, and occasionally in speech as well is the ungrammatical construction 'Let's [verb]ing' (see fig. 15). This construction is linked to a heavily used verb conjugation in Japanese commonly known as the volitional form. The volitional form of *ikimasu* ('to go') would be *ikimashou*, which would most easily be translated as 'Let's go.' It acts as a sort of invitation for the listener to join the speaker in whatever action he is doing (Chino, "A Dictionary" 210). Making direct appeals to the audience has obvious uses for advertising and many promotions use the volitional form to this end. Why native Japanese speakers tend to use the *-ing* form of verbs in the construction is not entirely clear, however. English gerunds are not uncommon in loanwords and it could be that the

thought behind the construction is to say 'Let's do [action]' and the 'do' is simply implied. Research data is lacking, unfortunately, so the intermediary step that bridges a volitional expression in Japanese to the 'Let's [verb]ing' construction remains something of a mystery, but that does not mean correction is particularly difficult.



Fig. 15. Let's Driving; Personal photograph by Matthew Kroll; 08 Aug. 2007.

V. Corrective Strategies for TESL/TEFL Instructors

A. Phonetic/Phonological Issues

Understanding the adaptive patterns of Japanese is a valuable asset for teachers of English as a Second Language and teachers of English as a Foreign Language working with native Japanese speakers. These patterns are an intrinsic part of how the Japanese perceive and employ foreign languages, especially at the lower proficiency levels. Adherence to these patterns leads to the aforementioned phenomenon known as 'katakana English,' where Japanese speakers speak English exactly as it would be if the English dialog was rendered in katakana, such as *Ai haddo raisu ando miso suupu* (/ai haddo ɾaisu ando miso su:pu/) for 'I had rice and miso soup.' By knowing what the adaptive patterns are, teachers of ESL/EFL can target the specific weaknesses they produce, devoting more time and practice to them and less to sounds that are

already represented in the students' native language. For instance, Japanese speakers have no trouble pronouncing /p/ and /b/, but it is quite difficult for them to comfortably use /θ/ and /ð/. Getting the students to eliminate all the extra vowels that appear via epenthesis is another major challenge. There is some hope for teachers to meet the students halfway, though, as the devoicing or even outright deletion of vowels does occur in everyday Japanese speech and offers a frame of reference that can be used to help students overcome their natural tendency to epenthesize vowels (Ogasawara and Warner 376). For consonant assimilation, Best's Perceptual Assimilation Model states that listeners will be unable to access the detailed phonetic characteristics of assimilated sounds (Dupoux et al., "Epenthetic Vowels" 1568). This means that native Japanese speakers will have great difficulty perceiving the difference between phonemes as they are properly articulated in English and as they have been assimilated into Japanese. Unable to perceive the difference, speakers will find articulating that difference all but impossible. As mentioned earlier, the perceptual inability of Japanese speakers to distinguish phonemes also applies to the issue of R/L ambiguity. Overcoming this problem of perception is no small feat and requires a dedicated effort and an abundance of patience on both the student's and the teacher's part. Knowing this perceptual block is in place will at least give the teacher all the more reason to demonstrate the necessary patience to help the student distinguish these sounds.

All the above issues do not stop at speaking. They also extend to writing. Japanese students will write English the way they hear it. Vowel epenthesis, consonant assimilation and all the other strategies to adapt foreign sounds to Japanese phonotactics will be reflected to one degree or another in students' writing. A teacher who knows the adaptive patterns of Japanese is well equipped to target the particular areas of greatest difficulty, and this allows for a focused

approach that meets the students' needs and maximizes the effectiveness of how class time is utilized.

B. Morphosyntactic Issues

Correcting issues with morphosyntax is a daunting challenge, but there have been a number of promising studies that demonstrate techniques that can assist students. Kim McDonough and Youjin Kim of Northern Arizona University found that syntactic priming was useful in eliciting the production of target structures. Syntactic priming is, in essence, simple exposure to a target structure followed by an elicitation to reproduce the structure. Oftentimes, certain key words--such as the verb--are retained to facilitate reproduction, which is called a lexical boost (387). While lexical boost can be helpful in the short term, the study's results indicated that greater lexical diversity may provide an even greater benefit to production in the long term (395). Therefore, when coupled with greater lexical diversity, this sort of modeling behavior can serve as the basis for wider genuine use of the target structures.

Consciousness-raising and noticing activities are important ways to make students increasingly aware of trouble areas and to improve cognitive processing. The challenge is to draw out any unconscious awareness into the consciousness to be actively engaged. Explicit instruction is not the only--nor necessarily the best--way to make consciousness-raising and noticing happen. The key is exposure to the forms, and engaging in communicative language using those forms can improve both proficiency gains and the durability of the lessons learned (Norris, "Learning to Think Backwards" 44-45). Implicit teaching strategies such as recasts can help foster noticing and once that awareness is established, understanding and proficiency can improve. A sample exercise provided by Norris begins with a list of related structures, different types of relative clauses in this case. Each structure is accompanied by an explanation and

examples. Students are given a list of sample sentences and must identify the structures. Another exercise has students pair up nouns with the appropriate target structure to form sentences. For instance, a personal noun would be paired with a 'who' clause and the noun for a thing would be paired with a 'that' clause (Norris, "Teaching Relative Clauses" 36-37). The set structures provide a framework to build upon and lexical diversity in the exercises build a broader base from which genuine production can be built. Again, exposure is the key to success here. The more students work with troublesome structures, the more they will become aware of how they are used.

In addition to crafting strategies and exercises for overcoming morphosyntactic difficulties, teachers should also be aware of certain affective factors that may influence how effective these strategies and exercises are in the classroom. A study by Shawn Loewen of the University of Auckland indicates that while grammar education is valued by most L2 students from various backgrounds, error correction is seen as distinct from grammar study and largely viewed negatively. ESL students tend to value communication over structural accuracy when compared to EFL learners (101). Japanese students in particular were found to prioritize grammar over communication (98). The reason for this is that, in Japan, English is one of the major components of the all-important entrance examinations for high school and college. As these examinations focus on more objective measures like grammatical accuracy, Japanese students in the EFL setting tend to prioritize what is found on the test. In general, only students who intend to study abroad or work with English speakers will place much value on English for communicative purposes. Awareness of the usage and proficiency goals of the students is critical to tailoring instruction to meet their needs and adopting the strategies that are the best fit.

VI. Conclusion

'Engrish' is not incomprehensible. While some allowances must be made for individual idiosyncrasies, there are many common elements that can be analyzed, connected to aspects of Japanese, and then targeted for correction. Observers of Japanese culture like Ryukoku University professor John Dougill argue that 'Engrish' as it is commonly seen in Japan is not meant to communicate meaning but rather mood. It amounts to little more than decoration with a touch of the exotic (20). The goal here is not to stem T-shirts emblazoned with such slogans as 'Life is a best,' but rather to deal with the issues faced by serious Japanese ESL/EFL students who are striving for a higher level of attainment. As difficult as it may appear at times, the situation is far from hopeless. L1 interference is a natural part of Second Language Acquisition. So, too, is 'Engrish' to ESL/EFL for native Japanese speakers. The strategies employed to overcome 'Engrish' can be adapted and extrapolated to other cases of L1 interference in English learning, such as the so-called 'Chinglish' for Chinese speakers and 'Konglish' for Korean speakers. More research is needed to continue to refine corrective strategies to optimize the path to achieving students' proficiency goals.

Works Cited

- Bennui, Pairote. "A Study of L1 Interference in the Writing of Thai EFL Students." *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research* 4(2008): 73-102. *MELTA*. Web. 22 Mar. 2010.
- Bhela, Baljit. "Native Language Interference in Learning a Second Language: Exploratory Case Studies of Native Language Interference with Target Language Usage." *International Education Journal* 1(1): 22-31. *Flinders University School of Education*. Web. 22 Mar. 2010.
- Carrasquillo, Angela. *Teaching English as a Second Language: A Resource Guide*. New York: Routledge, 1994. *Google Books*. Web. 22 Mar. 2010.
- Chamot, Anna Uhl. "Contrastive/Error/Performance Analyses: A Comparison Applied to the Interlanguage of an Older Child Acquiring English." *The First Delaware Symposium on Language Studies*. East Brunswick: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1983. 235-248. *Google Books*. Web. 24 Apr. 2010.
- Chino, Naoko. *A Dictionary of Basic Japanese Sentence Patterns*. New York: Kodansha America, 2000. Print.
- Chino, Naoko. *All About Particles: A Handbook of Japanese Function Words*. New York: Kodansha America, 2000. Print.
- Dougill, John. "Japan and English as an Alien Language." *English Today* 24.1 (2008): 18-22. *EBSCO*. Web. 28 Sep. 2010.
- Dupoux, Emmanuel, et al. "Epenthetic Vowels in Japanese: A Perceptual Illusion?" *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 25.6 (1999): 1568-1578. *CiteSeerX*. Pennsylvania State University. Web. 15 Nov. 2009.

- Dupoux, Emmanuel, et al. "New Evidence for Prelexical Phonological Processing in Word Recognition." *Language and Cognitive Processes* 16.5-6 (2001): 491-505. *Laboratoire de Sciences Cognitives et Psycholinguistique*. Web. 15 Nov. 2009.
- Galasso, Joseph. "Interference in Second Language Acquisition: A Review of the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis--Transferring the 'Pro-drop' Parameter from Spanish to English." Working paper. California State University, Northridge, 2002.
- Izumi, Shinichi, and Martha Bigelow. "Does Output Promote Noticing and Second Language Acquisition?" *TESOL Quarterly* 34.2 (2000): 239-278. JSTOR. Web. 02 Oct. 2010.
- Kinnaird, Susan, and Jennifer Zapf. "An Acoustical Analysis of a Japanese Speaker's Production of English /r/ and /l/." *IULC Working Papers Online* 4 (2004). Indiana University, 2009. Web. 04 Dec. 2009.
- Kobayashi, Toshihiko. "Native and Nonnative Reactions to ESL Compositions." *TESOL Quarterly* 26.1 (1992): 81-112. JSTOR. Web. 04 Oct. 2010.
- Koo, John H. and Yayoi Homma. "Consonant Gemination in English Loanwords of Japanese." *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 23.2 (1989): 125-134. JSTOR. Web. 15 Nov. 2009.
- Kubozono, Haruo. "Epenthetic Vowels and Accent in Japanese: Facts and Paradoxes." *Issues in Japanese Phonology and Morphology*. Ed. Jeroen van der Weijer and Tetsuo Nishihara. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001. *Google Books*. Web. 15 Nov. 2009.
- Loewen, Shawn, et al. "Second Language Learners' Beliefs About Grammar Instruction and Error Correction." *The Modern Language Journal* 93.1 (2009): 91-104. JSTOR. Web. 04 Oct. 2010.

- McDonough, Kim, and Youjin Kim. "Syntactic Priming, Type Frequency, and EFL Learners' Production of Wh-Questions." *The Modern Language Journal* 93.3 (2009): 386-398. *JSTOR*. Web. 04 Oct. 2010.
- Monahan, Philip J., et al. "Not All Epenthetic Contexts Are Equal: Differential Effects in Japanese Illusory Vowel Perception." *Department of Linguistics*. University of Maryland, 09 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 Nov. 2009.
- Norris, Robert W. "Learning to Think Backwards: Japanese Students and the Acquisition of English Relative Clauses." *Bulletin of Fukuoka International University* 4 (2000): 41-46. *National Institute of Informatics Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator*. Web. 07 Oct. 2010.
- Norris, Robert W. "Teaching Relative Clauses to Japanese University Students: Practical Lesson Plans." *Bulletin of Fukuoka International University* 6 (2001): 35-45. *National Institute of Informatics Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator*. Web. 12 Nov. 2010.
- Ogasawara, Naomi, and Natasha Warner. "Processing Missing Vowels: Allophonic Processing in Japanese." *Language and Cognitive Processes* 24.3 (2009): 376-411. *EBSCO*. Web. 04 Dec. 2009.
- Okada, Hideo. "Japanese." *Handbook of the International Phonetic Alphabet: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.
- Ortega, Lourdes. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education, 2009. Print.

- Riney, Timothy J., Mari Takada and Mitsuhiro Ota. "Segmentals and Global Foreign Accent: The Japanese Flap in ESL." *TESOL Quarterly* 34.4 (2000): 711-737. *JSTOR*. Web. 04 Oct. 2010.
- Rubin, Jay. *Making Sense of Japanese: What the Textbooks Don't Tell You*. New York: Kodansha America, 1998. Print.
- Sridhar, S.N. "Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Interlanguage: Three Phases of One Goal?" *Studies in Language Learning* 1(1975): 2-35. *ERIC*. Web. 24 Apr. 2010.
- Smith, R. Edward. "Natural Phonology of Japanese." Diss. University of Hawaii, 1980.
- Wardaugh, Roland. "The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis." *TESOL Quarterly* 4.2(1970): 123-130. *JSTOR*. Web. 22 Mar. 2010.
- Watkins, Thayer. "The Japanese Language and Its Syllabification." *Thayer Watkins: Linguistics*. San Jose State University, 2008. Web. 04 Dec. 2009.
- Wells, John. "Loanwords in Japanese." *John Wells' Phonetic Blog*. University College of London, 2007. Web. 11 Dec. 2009.