

“Manatsu no Sounds Good!”: Analyzing Usage of English in Japanese Popular

Jackson Koon Yat LEE

SPECIALLY - APPOINTED LECTURER, GIFU UNIVERSITY

Abstract:

English has been an essential part of Japanese pop-music for the past decades. Despite the music being targeted for primarily the local audience, English is often used in musician names, song titles, and lyrics. This research collected each best-selling song of the years from 1989 to 2016 and quantitatively analyzes how English was used in the songs, specifically the usages as musical fillers, isolated words, full sentences and code-switching mechanisms. It was discovered that 68% of the songs contained English with a majority of those songs used English in more than one form. Based on previous studies by Stanlow (2004) and Moody (2006), this study concluded by summarizing the motivations behind why artists decide to include English in their musical creations.

Keyword:

English, popular culture, J-pop, pop-music, loanword

1. Introduction

Music is universal, and many people come in contact with popular music of other languages before the language itself. For linguists, this heavy inclusion of English is an intriguing trend. This research answers the following three questions: how often is English used in Japanese pop-music, how is English used, and what are the artists trying to achieve. By analyzing 28 best-selling songs, this study has found that English is regularly included in Japanese popular music throughout decades. It also provides insights into how the English is used and summarizes various motivations behind it. Section 2 provides background knowledge about English in Japan before section 3 focuses on English's role in Japanese music. The research method and data are explained in section 4. Lastly, section 5 is devoted to presenting and discussing the results in detail.

2. English in Japan

It is necessary that we understand the role of English in Japan in general before discussing the role of English in the Japanese pop-music culture. In this section, we examine English in Japan in regards to history and the Japanese language.

2.1. English in Japanese history

From 1633 to 1853, Japan went through a period of national isolation that kept the country's relations with other nations extremely limited to protect the shogunate's power against foreign colonial and religious influences. When the country was forcibly reopened to the Western world by an American naval squadron after 200 years of isolation, numerous cultures, merchandise and philosophies came flowing into Japan and influenced the country's national culture. One of the biggest effects was the inclusion of English in the Japanese language in the form of loanwords to manage the huge amount of foreign items suddenly coming in that had no suitable words in Japanese for. We will further explore loanwords in later sections.

2.2. English in the Japanese language as loanwords

English is significantly visible in the Japanese language in the form of loanwords. Foreign loanwords in the Japanese language include words from various foreign languages including English, German, French, Portuguese, Russian, Dutch, and Italian (Chinese is excluded due to its deeper historical connection with the Japanese language) (Stanlaw, 2004). However, Stanlaw (2004) estimated that 5-10% of the Japanese ordinary daily vocabularies are loanwords, and 94% of such loanwords are of English origin.

Linguists have different perspectives on perceiving loanwords, especially with Japan being a relatively monolingual country. Stanlaw (2004) summarized the three broad approaches being: the 'loanword' approach, the 'English-inspired vocabulary item' approach, and the 'made-in-Japan English' approach. The 'loanword' approach suggests that the words come with the cultural meaning of its origin attached. For example, the loanwords *hazu* (husband) and *waiifu* (wife) represent the modern attitude towards marriage and gender equality whereas the Japanese words *shujin* and *kanai* strongly reflect the traditional Japanese view of

marriage as the words literally translate to ‘master’ and ‘the one at home’. The ‘English-inspired vocabulary item’ approach criticizes the metaphor of ‘loaning’ when many of the borrowed “English” terms have very different or no meaning for English speakers, such as ‘paper driver’ (people with driver’s license but rarely drive) and ‘consent’ (electric outlet). This approach argues that these “English” words are essentially Japanese lingual items, made to be used by Japanese people. The ‘made-in-Japan English’ approach, or also known as the *wasei-eigo* approach is similar to the ‘English-inspired vocabulary item’ approach as it recognizes that these “English” words may have little or different meanings in English, such as the made-in-Japan English term *paso-kon* to represent ‘personal computer’, but they are essentially English words that were created in Japan and assumed a life of their own to take on the Japanese-spin in meaning.

2.2.1. Process of loanword adaptation

Kay (1995) has identified five changes foreign words may go through in the process of being modified and adapted into the Japanese language: orthographical, phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactical. The orthographical changes and phonological changes are discussed in the next section as we examine how katakana is used to adapt foreign words.

Morphological changes occur in two ways: abbreviation and combination (Kay, 1995). Sometimes English words are abbreviated by backclipping, for example: *conbini* (conveni{ence store}), *pasokon* (perso[nal]+com[puter]). New combinations of English words with distinct Japanese meanings are often recognized as *wasei-eigo*, for example: *wanpiisu* (one+piece=dress), *opunkaa* (open+car=convertible). There are also examples of combinations of English and Japanese words, for example: *haburashi* (ha/tooth+brush=toothbrush), *denshireenji* (denshi/electric+range=microwave oven). With the last examples, one may question just how “English” those words are.

Some English words go through drastic semantic changes and resemble little of their original meanings (Kay, 1995). For example, the Japanese word *saabisu* derived from the English word ‘service’ refers to the free food or drinks you might receive with your order, and the word *dorinkubaa* derived from ‘drink bar’ refers to a soda machine.

Lastly, while loanwords usually fit into Japanese sentences easily, some words go through syntactical changes (Kay, 1995). The most common case of this is with the use of *suru*, roughly translated as ‘to do’ something, for example: *shoppingu suru* (to go shopping), *sukii wo suru* (to ski).

2.2.2. Displaying loanwords

There are two ways within the Japanese writing systems to display loanwords: katakana and romaji. While the hiragana and kanji (Chinese characters) subsets of Japanese characters are used for Japanese-origin and Chinese-origin words, katakana is used to onomatopoeize foreign vocabulary in the Japanese language by adopting these new words into the Japanese phonemes and syllable patterns. For example, by moulding the segmental and suprasegmental features of the English words ‘volleyball’ and ‘basketball’ to fit the Japanese patterns, the word for these sports in Japanese are *bareebooru*/バレーボール and *basukettobooru*/バスケットボール, displayed only in katakana. Ironically, many of these everyday words are often incomprehensible to English speakers due to the orthographical changes and phonological changes after they are katakana-ized,

which may further demonstrate how foreign words are adapted mainly for Japanese usage.

The romaji system, on the other hand, simply displays any Japanese words using Western alphabets, regardless of the origin of the word. While hiragana, kanji and katakana are used collaboratively within a sentence, romaji would be used to display the entire sentence. However, romaji is rarely used for communication beyond the occasional advertisements to catch attention, so not many Japanese people consider romaji as a subset of the Japanese written language.

2.2.3. Reasons for using loanwords

The discussion of the reasons behind using loanwords is tremendously intriguing. Historically, loanwords are used to deal with the new foreign items with no Japanese lingual counterparts. However, linguists have identified more reasons why a Japanese speaker might choose to use a loanword, particularly when a Japanese word is also available. We cannot possibly analyze the motivations behind everyone in Japan who choose to use loanwords, but Stanlaw (2004) identified four common reasons, and these relate to this research directly when we discuss the reasons why some song writers choose to incorporate English words rather than Japanese words.

Stanlaw (2004) suggested that English loanwords are a linguistic resource for Japanese speakers to achieve various sociolinguistic ends. First, using these words help the speaker to appear more “modern, Western, chic, or sophisticated” (p. 17). He referenced how popular songs use English in their titles to achieve that effect. Second, the usage of some English loanwords reflect the changing attitude of the Japanese society. For example, while the usage of the Japanese phrase *watashi no* (meaning ‘my’) appears selfish, using the English ‘my’ is a much easier way to express the value of individualism in the modern Japanese society, so words like ‘my cup’ and ‘my pace’ became commonly used terms. Third, some English words appear less threatening and have less cultural constraints than the Japanese counterparts, and Stanlaw referenced the same example of ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ as discussed above. Lastly, he identified that there is more creative freedom and personal interpretation in how an individual uses the words. He described that in an interview he had with the famous pop-singer Matsutooya Yumi, when asked why she chose the mundane-sounding ‘dandelion’ over *tanpopo*, Yumi explained that she liked the ‘English hillside’ impression she felt from this word which added ‘a little fragrance of Western culture’ to the song.

We will return to these reasons in later sections when we discuss the findings of this research. At this point, I would like to clarify that for the purpose of this research, we focus on English within Japanese pop-songs and not loanwords. Many songwriters choose to use English over Japanese words for various reasons, including the ones Stanlaw suggested. In addition, this discussion of the background information of English within the Japanese language demonstrates that English as loanwords is a crucial part of the Japanese language, suggesting that songwriters spend extra effort when they choose to include non-loanword English in songs.

3. English in Japanese music

English is essential to the modern Japanese language, and as the popular music of a culture often reflects the values of its society, English is also indispensable in Japanese popular music. English can be found in different places in the modern Japanese music industry, including lyrics, song titles, and band names, while other languages are extremely rare. This premise seems to be understood and already accepted by essentially everyone who is knowledgeable about Japanese music.

We turn to public education to examine how deeply English is connected to modern music in Japan by witnessing how early on children interact with Japanese songs that subtly include English. Western-style music has been a part of Japanese music education since the 1880s (Kitagawa, 2009). By inspecting the list of songs included in one of the popular music textbooks used in Japanese elementary schools, we can find English loanwords within song titles such as ‘*koime no march*’, ‘message’ and ‘*dagakki party*’, written in katakana: ‘こいめのマーチ’, ‘メッセージ’ and ‘だがつきパーティー’ in songs aimed for as young as first grade (Kyouikugeijutsusha, 2017a). The first appearances of song titles written in English is in the fifth grade textbook with the songs ‘Believe’ and ‘A good day’, both songs by Japanese writers (Kyouikugeijutsusha, 2017b). The sixth grader’s textbook includes the first code-switching song titles of ‘Wish ~夢を信じて’ and ‘ALWAYS 三丁目の夕日’ (Kyouikugeijutsusha, 2017c). The trend only increases upon entering junior high school, as the first year textbooks by the same publisher include the songs ‘We’ll Find The Way ~はるかな道へ’, ‘Forever’ and ‘Let’s Search For Tomorrow’ (Kyouikugeijutsusha, 2017d). These textbooks are all approved by the Ministry of Education. This demonstrates how young generations in Japan are conditioned through education to accept the concept of seeing, hearing and singing English within Japanese music.

4. Research method

To find and discuss the various usages of English in Japanese popular music, this research drew data from 28 different Japanese pop songs by examining and extracting the English lyrics from each song. These lyrics are categorized into four different types of English usages in order to provide a better overview of how English is utilized in English pop songs. In this section, we discuss the research method and the data used for the study.

4.1. Method procedures

Examining best-selling singles of each year from 1989 to 2016, we focus on the English lyrics by extracting the sentences that include English. Songs without English lyrics are identified and removed from consideration. Once we have separated the songs with English in the lyrics and songs without, we classify the lyrics into four categories based on their usage.

Since it is extremely difficult to quantify each English word within a song, especially in cases of

repetitions, all instances of a type of English usage will simply count as one to note that “this type of usage has appeared in this song”. In a similar study, Moody and Matsumoto (2003) also categorized the English lyrics in Japanese songs into four categories: musical fillers, single words and phrases, clauses and sentences, and code-ambiguation. While they claimed the code-ambiguation (when English or Japanese words are used with possible meanings in both languages, for example, the sound *ai* could be the English ‘I’, or *ai*, Japanese for ‘love’) is the most innovating function of J-pop (Moody and Matsumoto, 2003), I believe that this is an obsolete category as such code-ambiguation was popular in the early 2000s but was rarely seen before then and is even rarer since. Instead, the four categories used in this research are the following:

1. Musical fillers (words like ‘ah’, ‘wow’, ‘yeah’, ‘oh’, etc.)
2. Isolated words and phrases (expressing an incomplete idea)
3. Phrases and sentences (expressing a complete idea)
4. Code-switching (mixing English and Japanese within a phrase to express an idea)

In their research, Moody and Matsumoto (2003) defined that musical fillers appear in romaji and therefore can be counted as English words, despite them being pronounced as Japanese words. I disagree about the fillers being romaji, as the lyrics almost always present these musical fillers in English spellings. If they were presented in romaji, ‘yeah’ would be shown as *ieea*, ‘wow’ (pronounced as ‘whoa’ /wo/) in songs, would be *wuou*, and *wu* is actually not a typical sound in the Japanese phonetics. Therefore, not only are they not shown as romaji, they are often not pronounced as Japanese words either. However, I do identify them as English because they self-identify as English words as they are written and sung as English.

I decided to differentiate between phrases that express a complete idea with those that do not. For instance, there is a difference between the lyric that is simply ‘true heart’ and a full-sentence line such as ‘my love is always true for you’. For the purpose of this research, grammatical correctness is not as important as the visible effort on the artist’s attempt to deliver a complete idea in English.

The significance of the addition of the code-switching category which Moody and Matsumoto did not include in their research is that Japan is very much a monolingual country where code-switching does not normally occur in everyday conversations (Moody, 2006), and if we adopt the loanwords as a part of the Japanese language perspective, especially considering how the phonetic features of these foreign words are changed to fit the Japanese features, the usage of loanwords within Japanese sentences should not be considered code-switching. Therefore, this category of English usage is distinctly for musical purposes rather than conversational purposes, and this gives us insight to see if English in lyrics are used in similar ways loanwords are used in conversational sentences.

4.2. Loanword or English?

How do we distinguish between loanwords and English? We have witnessed how English is already a significant part of the modern Japanese language in the form of loanwords, and some people may consider loanwords to be more ‘Japanese’ than ‘English’. I propose that we examine the lingual items in question based on two factors: 1. Are they written in English or katakana? 2. Are the artists singing these words as

‘English’? The first factor is easy to identify as we can reference the official lyrics released with the songs. As for the second factor, if the artists have endeavoured to pronounce the words to sound more ‘English’, specifically if the words are sung with the English syllable patterns, then they were considered to be sung as ‘English’ instead of ‘Japanese’ or ‘loanwords’. While phonetic segmental features of English words can easily be sung in ‘Japanese’ ways while keeping the rhythm of the song intact (for example, pronouncing /v/ as /b/), suprasegmental features, especially the syllables of the words, would influence the rhythm and melody of the song if sung in ‘Japanese ways’ (for example, ‘beachside’ {2} vs *biichisaido* {5}). Therefore, the ‘Englishness’ of the word can be determined based on the syllables of the word in the artist’s performance.

4.3. Description of the source

The 28 songs selected are the best-selling singles of each year from 1989 to 2016, based on Oricon Inc.. A list of the songs analyzed is included in Appendix 1. Oricon Inc. is the leading data collecting firm that focuses on the music industry in Japan, famed in tracking CD sales and providing daily statistics and ranking of the sales figures (2018). It is important to note that their data only includes physical sales and not digital sales, and there are yet to be any authoritative sources that gather information from the various digital marketplaces (such as iTunes and *Chaku-uta*) that have become more popular in recent years.

4.3.1. What is a ‘single’?

In Japan, music is sold mainly in three different forms: singles, albums and digital tracks. When an artist releases a new song, they are usually first released in the form of a single including one ‘A-side’ song that is being heavily promoted and another ‘B-side’ song as the accompanying track that receives little attention. Typically, two to four singles are released before the artist assembles an album to include them.

For the purpose of this research, only one song from each single is used. In the cases of ‘Double-A’ and ‘Triple-A’ singles, the first track is selected as they are often recognized to be the more popular song (except for item 3 ‘*Love Story wa totsuzen ni*’ due to its overwhelming popularity).

Since singles are heavily promoted alongside their releases, analyzing the best-selling single of each year should yield us a list of the most played and promoted pop songs at the time, reflecting the songs widely accepted and adored by the society.

4.3.2. The featured artists and music genre

With 28 songs included on this list, there are 20 solo or group artists of both genders of various age groups, ranging from teenagers to performers in their forties at the time of release. These singers span various genres of music, including pop, pop-rock, new wave, folk rock, hip-hop, idol, and more. The diversity in the artists will help illustrate that the reach of English in Japanese popular music is a phenomenon shared by almost everyone and not only a subgroup of the society.

4.4. Research questions

This research aims to address the following questions below in the next section:

1. How often is English of each of the four categories used in Japanese pop-music?
2. What types of words are used?
3. What results were the artists trying to achieve by including English in the lyrics?

5. Results and discussion

In this section, we examine the results as well as to analyze and discuss the implications of the results in regards to these individual questions. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the tracklist and extracted lyrics.

5.1. How English is used in Japanese pop-music

With the extracted English from the 28 songs, the data demonstrates how often English of each category is used in Japanese popular music. In this research, I have found that all the words written in English are also pronounced as English, thus they are all analyzed as English.

5.1.1. English vs. no English

Table 1 displays the results of having English lyrics in songs versus the songs with no English lyrics. Out of the 28 best-sellers, 19 (68%) of the songs included English lyrics to some degree. I believe such a number is sufficient to claim that English's appearance in Japanese popular music is indeed a regular occurrence.

Table 1. Songs with English lyrics vs. songs without

	Of the 28 examined songs	(%)
Contain English lyrics	19	68%
Contain no English lyrics	9	32%

One song (Appendix item 14) actually has an English title 'Independence' but zero English within the lyrics. Given that this research is set out to examine how English is used within songs, and titles of songs are not 'sung', that track is considered to be in the group without English lyrics.

Out of the 9 songs without English, 3 of them are atypical pop-songs as two of them (2 and 11) are children's songs and one (19) was a ballad performed by a Japanese classical tenor singer. Despite being atypical pop-songs, we will include them in this research based on their undeniable popularity and fame.

The result correlates with another similar research done by Moody in 2001 (cited in Moody 2006), where he examined 307 Oricon top-50 songs in the year 2000 and found that 62% of the songs contained English and Japanese lyrics. While he focused on one particular calendar year, our finding suggests that this phenomenon is beyond a short-term fad, but is in fact a trend generations in the making.

5.1.2. Four categories of English usage

As aforementioned, this research approached categorizing the different English usages within Japanese pop-songs by identifying four types:

1. Musical fillers (words like ‘ah’, ‘wow’, ‘yeah’, etc.)
2. Isolated words and phrases (expressing an incomplete idea)
3. Phrases and sentences (expressing a complete idea)
4. Code-switching (mixing English and Japanese within a phrase to express an idea)

The results of the usage are shown in Table 2 below. To examine how English is used in Japanese songs, we focus our attention more on the results in proportion to songs containing English lyrics, and less on the other 9 songs without English lyrics. Almost every category appeared in around half of the songs analyzed, which is rather significant.

Table 2. Four categories of English usage

	Of the 28 songs	(%)	Of the 19 songs containing English lyrics	(%)
Contain English lyrics	19	68%	19	100%
Contain musical fillers	8	29%	8	42%
Contain isolated words and phrases	9	32%	9	47%
Contain phrases and sentences	12	43%	12	63%
Contain code-switching	12	43%	12	63%

5.1.2.1 Songs containing musical fillers

As discussed above in section 4, many of the musical fillers in Japanese songs are identified as English, and 42% of the songs include English as musical fillers. We cannot gain a lot of information from the word choices for fillers, but the fact that many artists make the extra effort to include English fillers is astounding. A quick glance at the full lyrics would also reflect that there are more English fillers than Japanese fillers. Perhaps Japanese simply has less musical filler choices.

5.1.2.2. Songs containing isolated words and phrases

Out of the songs, 47% of them include isolated words or phrases. These words do not convey complete ideas, thus they can be less relevant to the rest of the song and simultaneously easier to add into the lyrics. With lower relevancy, these words are there likely to contribute to the mood of the song more than the meaning.

5.1.2.3. Songs containing phrases and sentences

Contrasting with the second category, 63% of the songs employ phrases and sentences that carry complete ideas. They cohere with the rest of the lyrics directly and carry more value in their meaning. Presumably, it also takes more linguistic effort to write English sentences than inserting random words, so the high figure is indeed noteworthy.

5.1.2.4. Songs containing code-switching

Since code-switching does not normally happen in everyday conversations in the monolingual country, the 63% figure of English-Japanese code-switching in songs was unexpected. These English words

do not simply replace loanwords, as loanwords still appeared regularly in the lyrics and are excluded from consideration. We will take a deeper look into the types of words used for code-switching in section 5.2.

5.1.3. One or multiple usage

The table below demonstrates that almost three-fourths of the songs use English in more than one way.

Table 3. One usage vs. mixed usage

	Of the 28 songs	(%)	Of the 19 songs containing English lyrics	(%)
Contain one category of English usage	5	18%	5	26%
Contain mixed English usage	14	50%	14	74%

This suggests that most of the song writers do not limit themselves to using English in one style, but rather they insert English wherever they determine it is appropriate and suitable to express their creativity.

5.1.4 Summary

The various tables from the collected data have successfully shown that the appearance of English in Japanese popular songs is extremely frequent, with over 68% of the analyzed songs containing English in various ways. This discovery supports the results of Moody and Matsumoto (2003).

5.2. The types of words used

Working with limitations, it is difficult to quantify all the English lyrics collected in this research and apply values to them. However, we can visualize some common themes within the extracted lyrics and make a few inferences. Each of the points below can easily warrant deeper research.

5.2.1. Level of English

Based on my personal teaching experience and textbooks I have used in Japan, other than several words such as ‘celebrate (9.1, repetitions within the same song are unlisted)’, ‘tight (9.5)’, ‘destiny (12.1)’, ‘beginner (22.3)’ which are introduced in high schools, the majority of the words and sentences used in these songs are around the junior high school level. Many of the simpler words and phrases are even recognizable for elementary school students, for instance, ‘hello (9.8)’, ‘good bye (9.7)’, ‘morning (10.4)’, ‘can you...? (9.1, 13.1)’, and ‘stand up (22.4)’.

The crucial point regarding the level of the English is intelligibility. Based on the English analyzed, it seems that the most popular songs avoid containing difficult English. In Japan, virtually everyone who went through high school have studied English, thus a majority of the audience should be able to understand the English lyrics. I imagine the main reasons behind using easy words were consideration for the general public to understand the meaning of the lyrics, the limitations of the song writer’s English ability, or likely both.

5.2.2. Common words

Henard and Rossetti (2014) studied the lyrics of the most successful English songs of the past 50 years where he identified lists of the most important words in lyrics of each decade. Comparing the English

lyrics extracted from our Japanese pop-songs with his lists, there are many words that overlap: ‘baby (13.3, 26.1)’, ‘time (9.3, 18.5)’, ‘heart (4.2, 9.7, 16.4, 26.6)’, ‘good (24.1)’, ‘life (20.1, 21.3)’, and of course, ‘love (7.1, 9.3, 10.1, 16.1, 26.1)’.

The intriguing factor is how these English words were likely chosen for their different connotations than their Japanese counterparts. In particular, the word ‘baby’ does not have an equivalent Japanese word. This topic is briefly discussed in the early section on reasons for using loanwords, and we will further discuss the reasons in regards to music in a later section.

5.2.3. Usage of pronouns and possessive cases

Another notable point about the lyrics is the regular usage of the pronouns ‘you (9.2, 10.1, 13.1, 16.5)’ and ‘I (9.9, 10.1, 16.2, 18.22, 20.1, 21.5)’, as well as the possessive determiners ‘your (16.1, 20.1, 22.2)’ and ‘my (9.7, 16.3, 20.1, 21.4)’. The significance of the usage of ‘my’ is explained earlier, but ‘you’ and ‘I’ are also noteworthy in that pronouns are often dropped in conversations when the main subject of the conversation is mutually understood (Aston, 1888). Lyrics like ‘I wish forever (16.2)’ would become 永遠に願う, stating ‘wish forever’ with the ‘I’ implied and dropped. This is to avoid direct references to self and others to show humbleness, yet song writers seem to have no refrain from using them in songs.

5.2.4. Code-switching

Lastly, there are differences between the code-switching as seen in the lyrics and the usage of loanwords in conversational Japanese. Many of the English words are used in two variations: using English words that are not available as common loanwords (ex. ‘secret (13.1)’, ‘beginner (22.3)’, ‘70’s/seventies (26.3)’), or two or more English words used together within the Japanese sentence (ex. ‘my life (20.1, 21.1)’, ‘sounds good (24.1)’, ‘because I love you (10.1)’). For the former, since the loanword option is not available, the writers decided on the English words rather than Japanese. For the latter, they include words that may be common individual loanwords, but are used in ways or with other words that are irregular to conversational usage, such as ‘on the beach (23.2)’, where ‘beach’ is a common loanword in Japanese as *beechi*/ビーチ, but ‘on the’ are not, and ‘sounds good (24.1)’, where ‘good’ is regularly used in Japanese as *guddo*/グッド, but ‘sounds’ is not.

It is also important to point out that code-switching in Japanese music may sometimes ignore grammatical rules. For example: ‘真夏の*sounds good* (24.1)’ (translates: Sounds good *of the summer time*); ‘俺流*start dash*で行くんだ (18.16)’ (translates: *My style, I go by start dash*).

These striking differences show that the English words used in lyrics and loanwords in the Japanese language are not interchangeable. Therefore, I disagree with Moody’s (2006) suggestion that the English lyrics are simply romanized renditions of loanwords.

5.3. The artists’ desired results

There is no single dominating reason for writers to use English in Japanese pop-music. By expanding on the previous research of Stanlaw (2004) and Moody (2006), demonstrating with examples and adding my own suggestions, this discussion serves as a summary to explore the various explanations why many song

writers may be motivated to make such a creative decision.

5.3.1. Image

As aforementioned, Stanlaw (2004) identified four motivations behind the usage of English loanwords in the Japanese language, and I will demonstrate that his suggestions are also applicable towards English lyrics. His first reason was that using loanwords makes the speaker appear more “modern, chic and sophisticated” (p. 17), and considering English is a foreign language in Japan, displaying a strong command of it makes the performer appear well educated, especially if they overcome the issue of pronunciation too.

5.3.2. Changing social attitude

Stanlaw suggested the popular usage of ‘my’ as a loanword reflects the changing attitude of the Japanese society (2004). I have highlighted the usage of ‘my’ in the English lyrics, and the regular usages of ‘you’ and ‘I’ also reflect how the society is shifting towards an endorsement of individualism, to be seen and to recognize other people as individuals. Comparing the statement ‘I love you (10.1)’ and its Japanese counterpart of *aishiteru*/愛してる which simply says ‘loving’, the English does appear more personal with the participants included.

5.3.3. Avoiding cultural constraints

Related to the point above, some Japanese words may be replaced by loanwords because of their negative connotations (for example, ‘husband’ and ‘wife’), and this has encouraged some people to look for loanword alternatives (Stanlaw, 2004), or in pop-music, English alternatives. What resulted from this are usages of words with much less cultural constraints or limitations. The most interesting examples are the English words of ‘darling (8.1)’ and ‘baby (13.3, 26.1)’, because there are no equivalents in Japanese. There are no such affectionate names in Japanese for lovers to use, except for occasional married couples which may call each other *omae*/お前 and *anata*/あなた, which are actually both terms for ‘you’ spoken by different genders. Many couples use nicknames derived from their real names, but there are no generic affectionate names as in English. Another word like ‘kiss (9.2, 10.6)’ is used regularly because the traditional Japanese term *kuchizuke*/くち付け, literally meaning ‘sticking of mouths’, has a very out-dated connotation when affection was rarely discussed in public. In fact, this is simply an obsolete term even in conversational Japanese as they are replaced by the loanword of ‘kiss’ (キス) and the word *chuu* (ちゅう), which is the onomatopoeia of a kiss. Therefore, using these English words in songs can avoid cultural constraints or limitations.

5.3.4. Creative interpretation

The last point raised by Stanlaw (2004) was that song writers have greater creative freedom to interpret the loanwords and English words. Since the English lyrics do not have decades of built-up connotations, words such as ‘true heart (4.2)’ and ‘beginner (22.3)’ are vague enough for the artists to add their own implications, just as how Matsutooya Yumi preferred ‘dandelion’ to avoid the folksong-like image (Stanlaw, 2004). The audience can insert their own images of ‘morning moon (10.4)’ and ‘doop な rhyme で (with a doop rhyme) (18.4)’. ‘Make bounce (18.21)’, and ‘celebrate’ in ‘can you celebrate? (9.1)’ might make little sense to native speakers, so the interpretation is all up to the artists and listeners. Without the knowledge of the subtext of the English words, artists have much more freedom with how they want to interpret the

English.

5.3.5. Globally reaching identity

Moody (2006) suggested that a strong motivation include English in Japanese pop-music is to fulfill the desire of the monolingual society to create a global and cosmopolitan identity. Considering artists' aspiration for popularity, I agree with Moody and I would further propose that artists want to create an identity of global reach and/or global potential. For performers, the crucial factor is not to be familiar with other cultures, but rather that the audience from other cultures can become familiarized with them. I believe this is reflected by the many song titles in English, despite the songs being mostly in Japanese. In addition, the many English band names on the list indicate the hope the artists have for their names to be globally recognized. English helps create the desired image of a globally reaching identity, or at least global potential.

5.3.6. Musical framing

Lastly, there is the musical framing, specifically rhythms and word syllables. Song writers are always working within the boundaries set by the melodies. In order to convey more details in the limited syllable counts, many English words do have the advantage of generally taking less syllables than the Japanese words, for example, ‘love (7.1, 9.3, 10.1, 16.1, 26.1)’ {1 syllable} vs. *aishiteru* {5}, ‘heart (4.2, 9.7, 16.4, 26.6)’ {1 syllable} vs. *kokoro* {3}, and ‘new world (21.1)’ {2} vs. *atarashii sekai* {8}. With each line of a song containing an estimated 5 to 15 syllables, using the corresponding English words to replace the Japanese words will provide the writers with more space in the songs for expressing ideas.

6. Conclusion

Through this research, it is clear English has an essential role in Japanese popular music, thus reflecting its acceptance by the society. I have summarized various motivations why song writers may choose to include English in their lyrical works, and this research can be the foundation for future research into specific reasons discussed above. It is fascinating how Japan as a relatively monolingual country has adapted English into its popular culture. Simultaneously, the inclusion has intrigued and facilitated people outside of the community to appreciate the music, myself included. This phenomenon is worth further exploration so that English can embrace a more clarified purpose within Japanese popular music.

Appendix 1: Discography and extracted English lyrics.

A. Discography of the songs used for the research:

Item number	Year	Artist	Song title
1	1989	Princess Princess	<i>Diamonds</i>
2	1990	B.B. Queens	<i>Odoru Pompokolin</i>
3	1991	Kazumasa Oda	<i>Love Story wa totsuzen ni</i>
4	1992	Kome Kome CLUB	<i>Kimi ga iru dake de</i>
5	1993	CHAGE & ASKA	YAH YAH YAH
6	1994	Mr. Children	<i>Innocent World</i>
7	1995	DREAMS COME TRUE	LOVE LOVE LOVE
8	1996	Mr. Children	<i>Namonaki uta</i>
9	1997	Namie Amuro	Can You Celebrate?
10	1998	GLAY	<i>Yuuwaku</i>
11	1999	Kentaro Hayami, Ayumi Shigemori, Himawari Kids and Dango Gasshodan	Dango 3 Kyodai
12	2000	Southern All Stars	TSUNAMI
13	2001	Hikaru Utada	Can you keep a secret?
14	2002	Ayumi Hamasaki	independence
15	2003	SMAP	<i>Sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana</i>
16	2004	Ken Hirai	<i>Hitomi wo tojite</i>
17	2005	Shuji to Akira	<i>Seishun Amigo</i>
18	2006	KAT-TUN	Real Face
19	2007	Masafumi Akikawa	<i>Sen no kaze ni natte</i>
20	2008	Arashi	truth
21	2009	Arashi	Believe
22	2010	AKB48	Beginner
23	2011	AKB48	<i>Flying Get</i>
24	2012	AKB48	<i>Manatsu no Sounds Good!</i>
25	2013	AKB48	<i>Sayonara Crawl</i>
26	2014	AKB48	<i>Labrador Retriever</i>
27	2015	AKB48	<i>Bokutachi wa tatakawanai</i>
28	2016	AKB48	<i>Tsubasa wa iranai</i>

Italic font in the table indicates that the words are written in Japanese (hiragana, katakana or kanji). Otherwise, they are written in English.

B. Extracted English lyrics from the selected 28 songs:

Yellow highlight = Musical fillers

Pink highlight = Isolated words and phrases

Blue highlight = Phrases and sentences

Green highlight = Code-switching

1. Diamonds – Princess Princess (1989)

1.1 AH AH

2. Odoru Pompokolin – B.B. Queens (1990)

N/A

3. Love story wa totsuzen ni – Kazumasa Oda (1991)

N/A

4. Kimi ga iru dake de – Kome kome CLUB (1992)

4.1 wow wow

4.2 True Heart

5. YAH YAH YAH – CHAGE & ASKA (1993)

5.1 YAH YAH YAH YAH YAH YAH YAH YAH

5.2 hang in there!

5.3 ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah

6. Innocent world – Mr. Children (1994)

6.1 Ah

6.2 mr. myself

6.3 oh miss yourself

7. LOVE LOVE LOVE – DREAMS COME TRUE (1995)

7.1 LOVE LOVE 愛を叫ぼう

8. Namonaki uta – Mr. Children (1996)

8.1 Oh darlin 君は誰

8.2 oh

8.3 絶望、失望(Down)

9. Can you Celebrate? – Namie Amuro (1997)

9.1 Can you celebrate?

9.2 Can you kiss me tonight?

9.3 We will love long long time

9.4 Lalala... Lalala...

9.5 Can you hold me tight?

9.6 Let's a party time tonight

9.7 Say good bye my lonely heart

9.8 Say hello forever

9.9 I can celebrate...

10. Yuuwaku – GLAY (1998)

10.1 時に愛は2人を試してる Because I love you

10.2 WOW

10.3 Oh

10.4 MORNING MOON

10.5 I don't know how to love, don't ask me why

10.6 KISSから始まる夜は熱く

10.7 無くすもののない明日に向かう So

Dive

10.8 ZEROを手にしたオマエは強く

11. Dango 3 Kyoudai – Kentaro Hayami, Ayumi Shigemori, Himawari Kids and Dango Gasshodan (1999)

N/A

12. TSUNAMI – Southern All Stars (2000)

12.1 Oh, My destiny

12.2 津波のような侘しさに

I know ..怯えてる.

12.3 Hoo...

12.4 Oh, Sweet memory

13. Can you keep a secret? – Hikaru Utada (2001)

13.1 Can you keep a secret?

13.2 Hit it off like this

13.3 oh baby

13.4 Come on

13.5 Can you keep a secret? Or このまま
secret

13.6 Won't you come on?

13.7 movin' shadow

**14. independent – Ayumi Hamasaki
(2002)**

N/A

**15. Sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana – SMAP
(2003)**

15.1 NO.1にならなくてもいい

15.2もともと特別なOnly one

16. Hitomi wo tojite – Ken Hirai (2004)

16.1 Your love forever

16.2 I wish forever

16.3 Always my love

16.4 Your love is always in my heart

16.5 You're my everything

17. Seishun Amigo – Shuji to Akira (2005)

N/A

18. Real Face – KAT-TUN (2006)

18.1 俺がハスラーKID

18.2 超えられるかDis

18.3 Ha-Ha 俺はJOKER

18.4 DoopなRhymeで 泣き出す嬢ちゃん

18.5 これが俺のShow Time

18.6 壮大キメろ All Night

18.7 ヤバメなFLOWで 沸き出す場内

18.8 West Side East Side 上げるHands
up!

18.9 J.O.K.E.R K.O劇になる

18.10 Ai-Yo 警報鳴らせかざせ手を

18.11 Ah

18.12 To go Through fire and water

18.13 The low of the jungle, So we never
lost

18.14 Sneaker, Speaker, Diva, ここのKey
Right?

18.15 Big Star, East Side, West Side, 俺の
Big Time

18.16 俺流 Start Dashで 行くんだ

18.17 Time lost can't be recalled

18.18 Faith come move mountain

18.19 J-O-K-E-R Yeah

18.20 Wake up, wake up, make up 覚める
才能

18.21 Play back, make bounce 定番壊し
Shine on

18.22 Failure teaches success, So I wanna
believe

18.23 The die is cast, So we have to go

**19. Sen no kaze ni natte – Masafumi
Akikawa (2007)**

N/A

20. truth – Arashi (2008)

20.1 I take your life forever, You take my
life forever

20.2 I take your life forever, You take my
life

21. Believe – Arashi (2009)

21.1 It's a brand new world

21.2 Ah

21.3 時代に期待せず進むmy life

21.4 This is the movement looking for my
life

21.5 I can find myself

21.6 It's a brand new world

22. Beginner – AKB48 (2010)

22.1 In your position set!

22.2 Change your mind, change your world

22.3 何も知らなくていい Beginner!

22.4 Stand up! Together!

22.5 誰もがBeginner!

22.6 Stand up! Right away!

22.7 もいちどBeginner!

22.8 We can be reborn all the time

23. Flying Get – AKB48 (2011)

23.1 Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na

23.2 容赦ない太陽が 強火で照りつけるon
the beach

24. Manatsu no Sounds good! – AKB48 (2012)

24.1 真夏のSounds good!

24.2 波音Sounds good!

24.3 Yes!

24.4 渚のGood job!

24.5 きっかけGood job!

25. Sayonara Crawl – AKB48 (2013)

N/A

26. Labrador Retriever – AKB48 (2014)

26.1 Baby Love

26.2 Beachside

26.3 70's ビキニが 今年のお気に入りだね

26.4 バカンスに来たのかい? (Oh Yeah!)

26.6 Pure Heart

27. Bokutachi wa tatakawanai – AKB48 (2015)

N/A

28. Tsubasa wa iranai – AKB48 (2016)

N/A

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