

「英文和訳におけるカタカナ表記の研究」

The Study of Katakana Notation in English-Japanese Translation

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the Katakana notation in English-Japanese translation by high school students. As National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) pointed out that a lot of unfamiliar Katakana-go, foreign words without Japanese translation, were used in public. And this tendency seems to be the same in English-Japanese translation in English textbooks. Additionally, it is likely that the trend would affect students when they translate English into Japanese.

In order to examine the Katakana notation in English textbooks, this paper did a survey on five of them. In the research, this paper revealed that there were two types of Katakana-go. One was “Standard Katakana-go”, words adopted from foreign languages and the other is “Non-Standard Katakana-go”, originally Japanese words written not in Chinese character or in Hiragana but in Katakana.

Referring to “Standard Katakana-go”, 606 words appeared in the textbooks. In order to research the tendency of English Japanese translation by high school students, this paper randomly picked up Katakana-go with Japanese translation, such as “musician” 「ミュージシャン (音楽家)」. Like this case, students showed tendency to use Katakana-go instead of proper Japanese translation.

However, Japanese English teachers seemed to disapprove of students using Katakana-go. Although, more than 20% of students translated “chicken”, “beef” “good news” and “roses” into Katakana-go, teachers did not give them full marks.

According to the orthographic rule of Katakana, we are expected to write animals' and plants' names in Katakana even they are Japanese. Two of the textbooks adopted this rule and the other did not. To see the students' inclination, this paper also picked up English animals' and plants' names at random and asked students to translate them into Japanese. In the result, more than 70% of students translated “cats”, “dogs”, “rabbits”, “a street dog”, “elephants”, “chickens” and “cherry trees” into Japanese using either Chinese characters or Hiragana. From this point, it can be said that a lot of students have a tendency to use Chinese characters or Hiragana with Japanese words.

The same tendency appeared in the translation of “Non-Standard Katakana-go”. Tallied the number of “Non-Standard Katakana-go” in the five textbooks, 62 words appeared with this style. Only to focus on translation parts, 47 words met definition of “Non-Standard Katakana-go”. Further out, 38 words were all Japanese names and 9 words were translated into Japanese but written in Katakana. As to Japanese names, more than 50 % of students used Katakana yet this tendency reversed when translating Japanese family names.

Making relation to the rest of 9 words, Katakana was well used in “manga” and “bags”.

In Japanese schools, no matter what subjects students are studying, teachers coach them to use “Proper Japanese”. It means students are expected to use Chinese characters when necessary. So when students make errors with the Chinese characters they use in English Japanese translation, teachers tend to deduct points on their test

This paper only focused on the Katakana notation in English Japanese translation. Henceforth, this study is expected to expand to research the errors with Chinese characters in English Japanese translation and see how Japanese English teachers deal with those.