



Asia-Europe Institute
University of Malaya



International Workshop

New perspectives on Asian Epistemologies: Japan

PANEL II – JAPANESE EXPERIENCE OF CHANGE
22 SEPTEMBER, 2003

Challenges in Filipino-Japanese lexicography
by

Associate Professor Dr. Viveca Hernandez

Email:

veca_hernandez@yahoo.com;
vhernandez@kssp.upd.edu.ph

Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya

50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel : 03-7967 4645 / 03-7967 6910 / 03-7967 6921 Fax: 03-7954 0799 E-mail: asia_euro@um.edu.my

<http://www.asia-europe-institute.org>

Challenges in Filipino-Japanese Lexicography¹

by

Viveca V. Hernández, Ph.D.
Department of Linguistics
College of Social Sciences & Philosophy
University of the Philippines, Diliman

Based on Noam Chomsky's theory of language acquisition, humans are biologically equipped with a language faculty that is innate. Consisting of "at least two components: a cognitive system that stores information, and performance systems that access that information and use it in various ways," this language faculty which is unique to humans is assumed to consist of a computational system and a lexicon, i.e. mental dictionary, for each particular language (Chomsky 1995). Within this framework, each of us has grammatical competence, i.e. syntactic, semantic and phonological linguistic abilities, in our native languages. This means that as native speakers, we know what the morphemes of our language are as well as what they mean. Like dictionaries, our heads are filled with words and their meanings which enable us to use them to express our thoughts and to understand what others say. Our mental depository of information/data about words and morphemes is what we call lexicon. Thus, we are all walking dictionaries.

Like all of you, I have been using dictionaries, both monolingual and bilingual, as far as I can remember. Dictionaries have been and continue to be part and parcel of my

¹ I would like to acknowledge the Sumitomo Foundation for initially funding the research project; the Office of the Chancellor, University of the Philippines, Diliman for providing us the two computers being used solely for the said project; the Department of Linguistics, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, UP Diliman for giving the members of the research group a 3 unit research load to enable us to do this research in between our teaching duties; and the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya for organizing

academic life, first as a student brought up in the English dominated educational system in the Philippines, then as one learning other foreign languages like Spanish, Chinese and Japanese, and presently as a teacher, researcher and scholar as well. But my interest in lexicography, i.e. the editing or making a dictionary,² started about 25 years ago when I did a preliminary study on Arabic loan words in Filipino through Spanish. Later as a research student at the University of Tokyo and as a research assistant at the International Christian University in Mitaka, Tokyo, I did work on Spanish and Portuguese loan words in Japanese. After coming home from Japan, still working on dictionaries, I made a linguistic analysis of Pedro Serrano Laktaw's Spanish-Tagalog/Tagalog-Spanish Dictionaries and Grammar of Tagalog for my master's thesis and of the syntax of causative constructions in Ilokano for my doctoral dissertation.

This paper aims to share with you the challenges, as well as the lessons learned, that our research group had encountered in the process of compiling a Filipino-Japanese dictionary. With the number of students who enroll in the Japanese language courses in the Department of Linguistics, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines, Diliman increasing annually, the idea of compiling a Filipino-Japanese dictionary especially geared for Filipinos had been in my mind for quite some time. After discussing this with colleagues, I was encouraged to apply for a research project and to collaborate with other Japanese teachers to make this dream a reality. Our research project entitled "A Filipino-Japanese Dictionary for Filipino Students" which was initially funded by the Sumitomo Foundation³ is now on its third year. As

and funding this international workshop, "New Perspectives on Intra-Asian Epistemologies: Japan" (22-24 September 2003) in Kuala Lumpur.

² Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.

³ The Sumitomo Foundation grant amounted to \$5000 for the year 2001-2002.

envisioned by the group consisting of four faculty members of the Department of Linguistics,⁴ putting together such a Filipino-Japanese dictionary, where Filipino is the source language and Japanese the target language, is a pioneering endeavor since it will be the first bilingual dictionary whose main target users would be Filipino university students learning basic Japanese.

Based on Chomsky's innateness hypothesis, i.e. that an innate language faculty determines the process of language acquisition, I believe that such a bilingual dictionary would be a valuable tool for our Filipino students in learning a foreign language, in this case, Japanese. According to John Archibald (2001), the difference between the grammars of children and adults may be attributed to either cognitive or biological immaturity in children in the case of first language acquisition. But this cannot be said of second language acquisition by adults. It isn't the case that adult second language learners are either cognitively or biologically immature. Instead, they are influenced by their first language which is not present in the situation of the child. The diagram below

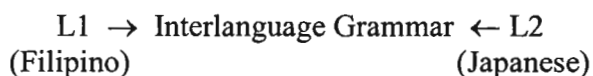


Figure 1. Influences on an interlanguage grammar

shows that second language learners have a systematic interlanguage grammar, i.e. "a system of mental representations influenced by both the first and the second language, and has features of each" (Archibald:450). For the purposes of this paper, first language

⁴ Aside from me as the main proponent, the research group includes three junior faculty members of the Department of Linguistics, namely, Antonio L Balmeo, Mary Ann P. Gaitan and Lucillyne C. Tabada, all of whom teach Japanese.

(L1) corresponds to the Philippine national language, Filipino, and second language (L2) or target language, Japanese.

As scholars and students of Linguistics, as well as teachers of the Japanese language, we have observed that most, if not all, of the English-Japanese/Japanese-English dictionaries, as well as the Filipino-Japanese/Japanese-Filipino dictionaries that are currently available are unsuitable for Filipino university students learning the basics of the Japanese language and/or are not user-friendly. In addition to this, in view of the fact that students are expected to learn new sentence patterns, verbal inflections, as well as about three hundred vocabulary items,⁵ which is compounded by the fact that the target language uses three types of scripts, i.e. *romaji*, *kana* and *kanji*, the challenge faced by the group was how to make the dictionary a comprehensive, yet useful tool simple enough for first-time learners of the Japanese language.

Dictionaries vary in the number of languages they contain as well as the primary purpose(s) the compilers have in writing them. A reference book containing an alphabetically arranged list of words in a source language for which, ideally, precise equivalents are given in another language, i.e. the target language, a bilingual dictionary aims to assist the user who understands one language but not the other. It is presumed that one of the languages is his native language. As Ladislav Zgusta (1991), one of the world's foremost lexicographers, states "the basic purpose of a bilingual dictionary is to coordinate with the lexical units of one language those lexical units of another language which are equivalent in their lexical meaning." One's purpose in using a bilingual dictionary is usually either to enable him to comprehend the source language, or to help

⁵ Examinees that take basic Level 4 of the Japanese Proficiency Examinations administered worldwide by the Japan Foundation are expected to know about 300 vocabulary items.

him express himself in the target language. Of these two, it is the latter that we had in mind when we embarked in making this Filipino-Japanese dictionary. As our intended target users are Filipino university students studying basic Japanese, we hope that the dictionary will help make their learning the language easier.

With lexical entries in the Filipino language based on Consuelo J. Paz' *Filipino Monolingual Dictionary* (1996), the group members were well aware of the fundamental difficulty of such a coordination of lexical units caused by what linguists call the anisomorphism (< *an-* 'not' + *-iso-* 'same' + *morph* 'form' + *-ism* 'non-count noun suffix referring to a characteristic feature') of languages, i.e. the non-parallelism of lexical forms. Like many bilingual lexicographers, all the more for us who are novices in this type of linguistic activity, we had to face the challenge to overcome this difficulty. Like them, we learned that it is impossible to make a unidirectional bilingual dictionary for speakers of both the source and target languages. Let me share with you some of the difficulties we encountered and how we resolved them.

As we had expected, there is often no one-to-one equivalent for many Filipino lexical entries in the target language, not only in the evident instances of flora and fauna indigenous to the source language like:

atis [ʔátis] n. a tree that bears very sweet fruit called custard apple⁶

alakdan [ʔalakdán] n. scorpion

bakawan [bakáwan] n. a species of mangrove tree the wood of which is used as firewood or for making charcoal

balete [baléteʔ] n. a species of tree associated with certain folkloric superstitions

bangus [banús] n. milkfish

buwaya [bwáya] n. crocodile

⁶ Phonetic transcriptions (IPA) are provided for lexical items in Filipino. The meanings are mostly based on Leo James English' *Tagalog-English Dictionary* (1986).

damadenotse [dámadenótʃe] (< Spanish *dama de noche*) n. a night blooming ornamental plant with sweet-scented flowers
duhat [dúhat] n. Java plum
husi [húsi] n. a fabric made of pineapple fibers
malunggay [malungáj] n. horseradish tree; a small tree, the leaves and seeds of which are used as vegetable
nipa [nípa] n. an East Indian palm
santol [santól] n. sandor tree and its fruit
singkamas [siŋkamás] n. an edible, turnip-like tuber
tamaraw [tamaráw] n. wild carabao commonly found in the mountains of Mindoro

but also for many common words, for example:

iskwater [ʔiskwáter] (< English squatter) n. a person who settles on another's land without right
salimpusa [sálimpúsaʔ] adj, n. a young playmate invited to participate in a game just to please him/her
lampaso [lampáso] (< Spanish *lampazo*) n. coconut husk used to polish the floor
sinigang [sinigán] n. sour soup of meat or fish with vegetables.

In such cases, where there is no exact one-to-one equivalent of the Filipino lexical item in Japanese, the group decides to do any one of the following: (a) the word is not included in the bilingual dictionary; (b) the meaning of the word is described or explained in the target language; or (c) it is treated as a loan word and written in *katakana*.

The group also had to decide how to deal with the large number of culture-bound words and phrases in very disparate languages such as Filipino and Japanese. Many kinship terms in Filipino have no exact equivalent in Japanese. For example, the word *kapatid* [kapatíd] in Filipino makes no distinction as to the gender/sex of the person concerned. Although the Japanese equivalent *kyōdai* could be given, to refer to 'brother or sister, siblings', it also has terms that differentiates not only the gender/sex but also the speaker's relationship to the person, as we can see in the following:

<i>ani</i> n. one's elder brother	vs.	<i>onīsan</i> n. another person's elder brother
<i>ane</i> n. one's elder sister	vs.	<i>onēsan</i> n. another person's elder sister
<i>otōto</i> n. one's younger brother	vs.	<i>otōtosan</i> n. another person's younger brother
<i>imōto</i> n. one's younger sister	vs.	<i>imōtosan</i> n. another person's younger sister.

In the same manner, while Filipino has

tatay [tátaj] or *ama* [ʔamá] n. father, and
nanay [nánaj] or *ina* [ʔináy] n. mother

the Japanese equivalents would be:

<i>chichi</i> n. one's father	vs.	<i>otōsan</i> n. another person's father, and
<i>haha</i> n. one's mother	vs.	<i>okāsan</i> n. another person's mother

respectively. The closest Japanese equivalents for the Filipino entries

ninong [nínɔŋ] n. godfather in baptism, confirmation or wedding, and
ninang [nínarŋ] n. godmother in baptism, confirmation or wedding

would be *nakōdo*, actually a 'go-between, matchmaker' specifically for a wedding.

Although this is not an exact equivalent, like the Filipino *ninong* and *ninang*, the *nakōdo* acts like the parents of the married couple. Be that as it may, there are no Japanese equivalents for

inaanak [ʔinaʔanáʔk] n. godchild, and
kompadre [kompádre] (< Spanish *compadre*) n. or
komadre [komádre] (< Spanish *comadre*) n.

to refer to the 'godparents of one's child in baptism, confirmation or wedding'. Other words that are specific to Filipino culture that have no Japanese equivalents are:

paninilbihan [panínilbíhan] n. practice/custom of a man doing menial or servile work at his fiancée's house before marriage, or
pamamanhikan [pamámanhíkan] n. act of formally asking for the hand of the prospective bride by the groom's parents

which are old Filipino customs still being practiced up to the present specially in the provinces. The non-existence of lexical equivalents in the target language of such practices could be explained by the fact that Japanese society is basically a male-oriented one where it is the woman that is expected to serve the man.

Idiomatic expressions are also problematic. Here are a few examples:

nuno-sa-punso [núnoʔsa punsó] n. goblin of the anthill
ningas-kugon [níŋaskúgon] (< *ningas* 'flame, small blaze' + *kugon* 'cogon, a species of tall grass') n. a person, group or something that is good only at starting something but doesn't finish it or doesn't last long, or
bahala na [bahálaʔna] (< *bahala* 'responsibility' + *na* 'already') expr. an expression somewhat equivalent to 'We'll see' or 'Come what may'.

Another problematic area that is culture-bound is how to deal with difference in the levels of politeness in Filipino and Japanese. Compared to Japanese which has a highly complex system of polite/formal versus informal language, Filipino has a relatively simple way of showing respect to the person one is speaking to. Filipinos simply use either *po* [poʔ], or the less formal *ho* [hoʔ], which is equivalent to 'sir' or 'madam' out of respect in addressing an elder or superior which is expressed in Japanese by the use of the clitics *-san* or *-sama* attached to the name of the person being addressed or spoken about. Another way Filipinos show respect is by using the plural forms of personal pronouns:

	Nominative	Accusative/Genetive
1 st Person Exclusive Inclusive	<i>kami</i> [kamí] <i>tayo</i> [tájo]	<i>namin</i> [námin] <i>natin</i> [nátin]
2 nd Person	<i>kayo</i> [kajó]	<i>ninyo</i> [ninjó]
3 rd person	<i>sila</i> [silá]	<i>nila</i> [nilá]

Table 1. Plural forms of personal pronouns

Although both the Filipino and Japanese languages make use of onomatopoeia in forming words, it seems that Japanese considerably has more onomatopoeic words than Filipino. I am sure that, like me, those of you who have studied Japanese would have had first-hand experience in coping with the big number of such words which are commonly used everyday in conversation, newspapers, magazines, and cartoons. Andrew C. Chang (2000) states that

the role of this sound symbolism is a very important one because Japanese has a very limited number of verbs. One role of mimeses and onomatopoeia ... is to fill in the gap and provide a means for concise expression when a sufficiently descriptive verb does not exist. They make the language vivid. They conjur[e] up imagery instantly in the mind of the native speaker, thus producing a synaesthetic effect.

In addition to *giseigo* 'phonomimes' or conventionalized expressions that mimic natural sounds, Masayoshi Shibatani (1990) states that "the Japanese lexicon has two other classes of sound-symbolic or synaesthetic expressions", i.e. *gitaigo* 'phonomimes' which "depict" states, conditions, or manners of the external world" and *gizyoogo* 'psychomimes' which "symbolize mental conditions or sensations" (Shibatani:153-54).

In the case of *giseigo*, equivalents of Filipino entries could be found. Here are some examples given by Shibatani:

aw-aw [ʔawʔáw] = wan-wan 'bow-wow'
tiktilaok [tíktíláok] = *kokekokkoo* 'cock-a-doodle-doo'
tagaktak [tagakták] = *zaa-zaa* '(sound of a downpour)'

In the case of the last example, *tagaktak* is used to refer to the sound of any liquid dropping like rain, water from a faucet, sweat, etc. in Filipino, unlike the Japanese *zaa-zaa* which refers only to the sound of heavy rainfall. But as can be observed in the following examples of *gitaigo* and *gizyoogo*:

gumigiwang-giwang [gumigíwangíwan] adj. v. to roll; to keep rolling or swaying from side to side = *yobo-yobo* 'wobbly'
bagay na bagay [bágajnabágaj] adj. very appropriate; very suitable = *pittari* 'matching perfectly'
huli [hulí] or *atrasado* [ʔatrasádo] (< Spanish *atrasar* 'to delay' + *ado*) adj. adv. 'late; delayed' = *guzu-guzu* 'tardily'
matindi [matindí] adj. poignant = *ziin* 'poignantly'
kinakabahan [kinákabahán] adj. nervous = *ira-ira* 'nervously'

the Filipino entries which are not onomatopoeic have onomatopoeic or sound-symbolic equivalents in Japanese.

Quite a large number of entries in Filipino turn out to have two or more equivalents in Japanese. When this arises, the problem was how to decide which of the semantic equivalents should be included in the dictionary taking into account their differences/nuances in the target language. Following are some examples:

rekwest [rekwést] n. 1. *yōsei, mōshikomi, yōbō* 2. *juyō* 3. *negai, negaigoto, tanomi, rikuesuto*⁷
vt. /mag-, i-/ 1. [...ni] *negau, kou, motomeru, konsei suru* 2. [Infinitive ya Clause o tomonatte] *motomeru, negau, tanomu*

tanong [tanón] n. 1. *shitsumon, shitsugi, toi* 2. *gimonbun* 3. *utagai, gimon, gigi, fushin* 4. *mondai, ronten*
vt. /mag-, -in, i-/ 1. [*hito ni*] *shitsumon suru, tou* 2. [...o] *tankyū suru, kenkyū suru* 3. ...ni *utagai o hasamu, gimon o okosu*
vi. /mag-/ *shitsumon o suru, tou*

kyut [kjut] adj. 1. *kireina, kawaii* 2. *rikōna, hashikkoi, kinokiita, kibinna*

In addition to this, there are many verb entries in Filipino that have different transitive & intransitive forms in Japanese. Here are a couple of examples:

bukas [bukás] vt. /mag-, -an/ 1. *akeru, hiraku, hirogeru* 2. *hajimeru*
vi. /-um-/ 1. *hiraku, aku* 2. *hajimaru* 3. [*mise nado*] *aku, aiteiru*

mali [malí?] vt. 1. /magka-/ *machigaeru, omoichigai o suru, gokai suru*
2. *torichigaeru, ayamaru*
vi. /magka-, ma-/ *machigau*

Despite all the difficulties and the challenges that the research group encountered, the lessons we learned in compiling this bilingual dictionary more than compensate for all the headaches, stiff necks and backaches we had to endure owing to the long hours spent in pouring over countless books, references as well as monolingual, bilingual and *kanji* dictionaries. In looking for and deciding on the most appropriate lexical meanings of the Filipino lexical items in Japanese, not only were we enlightened and have become more cognizant of the different nuances of the meanings of words in both Filipino and Japanese, we also increased our knowledge about the other components of grammar, i.e. phonology, morphology and syntax. In the process, not only did our vocabulary in

⁷ Meanings given are mostly based on Kenkyusha's New English-Japanese Dictionary (1963).

Japanese multiply, it also enabled us to become better teachers and researchers. Aside from the most obvious benefit of gaining more knowledge ourselves as a consequence of being exposed to thousands of words, both in Filipino and in Japanese, and I believe I can speak for everyone involved in the project, we have learned that indeed the coordination of lexical units of one language to another involves more than just grammar. It is an intercultural process. As expected, there is often no one-to-one correspondence of items, instead one often has no recourse but to give a descriptive or cultural explanation for a particular lexicon as an alternative.

What can be done with these lessons? Although our Filipino-Japanese Dictionary is still to be completed, I cannot help but be excited about the possibility of expanding our dictionary to perhaps a more ambitious multilingual ASEAN-Japanese dictionary in the future. Being here and participating in this workshop where ASEAN scholars interact with and learn from each other gives me this dream, that ASEAN lexicographers meet and come together for future collaboration.

References

- Archibald, John. 2001. Second language acquisition. In *Contemporary linguistics: an introduction*. 4th ed. Eds. William O'Grady, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Chang, Andrew C. 2000. *A thesaurus of Japanese mimesis and onomatopoeia: Usage and categories*. 2nd ed. Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten.
- English, Leo James. 1986. *Tagalog-English dictionary*. Quezon City: Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.
- Kawamoto, Shigeo, ed. supervisor. Ida, Takaaki and Eiichi Yamamoto, eds. 1983. *Nihongo ni natta gairaigo jiten* [Dictionary of Japanese loan words]. Tokyo: Shūeisha.
- Iwasaki, Tamihei and Jujiro Kawamura. 1960. *Kenkyusha's new English-Japanese dictionary on bilingual principles*. 4th ed. Tokyo: Kenkyusha Limited.
- Landau, Sidney I. 1984. *Dictionaries: The art and craft of lexicography*. New York: The Scribner Press.

- Masuda, Tsuyoshi. 1968. *Kenkyusha's new school Japanese-English dictionary*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha Ltd.
- Nelson, Andrew Nathaniel. 1974. *The modern reader's Japanese-English character dictionary*. 2nd rev. ed. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc.
- Newell, Leonard. 1995. *Handbook on lexicography for Philippine and other languages*. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.
- O'Grady, William, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller, eds. 2001. *Contemporary linguistics: An introduction*. 4th ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Paz, Consuelo J. Filipino monolingual dictionary. TS. University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. 1996.
- Shibatani, Masayoshi. 1990. *The languages of Japan*. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Webster's new collegiate dictionary*.
- Zgusta, Ladislav. 1971. *Manual of lexicography* (= *Janua Linguarum 39*). Prague: Academia, Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and The Hague: Mouton.