Information from the German Institute for Japanese Studies

New Words for the Old

by Peter Backhaus

n autumn 2002, the mayor of Tokyo's Suginami Ward received a letter from a senior citizen who complained about the excessive use of loanwords in the ward's PR magazine. On counting, he said, he came across no less than 300 foreign words on only eight pages. Akauntabilitī (accountability) and akushonpuran (action plan), purezentēshon (presentation) and purototaipu (prototype), sukīmu (scheme) and sukiru (skill) – are there no Japanese words to express these concepts, he wondered.

Some months earlier the same year, this very question had already been raised in a quite different context. It was Japan's premier Koizumi, just turned 60 at the time, who during a meeting of the Council on Fiscal and Economic Policy grumbled about the high frequency of incomprehensible loanwords used by his bureaucrats. Koizumi held that if he himself could not make sense of terms like autosōshingu (outsourcing), bakkuofisu (back office) and inkyubētā (incubator), it appeared unlikely that the general public would.

These two incidents constitute something like the starting point to the latest episode of language planning in Japan: two people over 60 criticizing the excessive use of loanwords in administrative language. To be sure, complaints by elderly people about foreign neologisms are anything but new. The permanent influx of Western loans and, in particular, English-derived vocabulary throughout the 20th century has perpetually triggered public debates about the imminent decay of the Japanese language. A key term in this context has been the so-called "katakana overflow" (katakana no hanran), since these loans are usually written in the rectangular katakana script. What is new about the current situation is that the group of those who complain most - Japan's older generations, that is has now apparently reached sufficient

numerical strength to put this problem on the official agenda.

Thus, in June 2002, a commission was established at the National Institute for Japanese Language (kokuritsu kokugo kenkyūsho), which was charged with preparing a list of difficult "katakana words" (katakana kotoba) as well as possible alternatives to replace them. The "Foreign Loanwords Committee" (gairaigo iinkai) took up work in August 2002 (cf. DIJ Newsletter 19). Around the same time, the administration of Suginami Ward founded a "Plain Language Investigation Team" (wakariyasui kotoba kentō chīmu) that was to develop terminological alternatives to difficult administrative nomenclature, above all katakana words.

What is considered particularly problematic is the proliferation of foreign loans in those lexical domains that directly concern the needs of the elderly: kea (care), deisābisu (day service), infōmudokonsento (informed consent), nōmaraizēshon (normalization), nonsuteppubasu (non-step bus), medikaruchekku (medical check) and yunibāserudezain (universal design) are some of the most recent key terms in public welfare. Can it be taken for granted that elderly people understand these expressions?

Empirical surveys recently conducted by the National Institute for Japanese Language show that there is a clear intergenerational gap when it comes to the understanding of katakana words. For instance, while 76 % of all people questioned could make sense of the term *kea*, only 58 % of the 60+ population knew what it meant. Similar differences apply to all of the above terms (cf. Table 1).

Since 2002, both the "Foreign Loanwords Committee" at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Suginami Ward's "Plain Language Investigation Team" have been busy developing alternative expressions to replace these and many other katakana words in administrative use. The sum-

mary report of the "Foreign Loanwords Committee" is now available on the homepage of the National Institute for Japanese Language. It provides substitute expressions for a total of 176 katakana words, covering anything from akuseshibiritī (accessibility) to zeroemisshon (zero emission). The report emphasizes that not everyone may find the katakana words in question equally difficult, but that it is particularly the needs of the 60+ population which have been focused on.

A similar word list providing paraphrases and substitute terms for over 230 katakana words has recently been published in book form by Suginami Ward, in cooperation with the National Institute for Japanese Language. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government followed suit by issuing an in-house manual in order to counter the use of katakana words in their publications.

Developing substitutes for katakana words is not always an easy task. Things are most convenient where indigenous vocabulary coexists with the loanword in question. *Kea* (care), for instance, can be easily rephrased as *teate* or *kaigo*, just as *medikaruchekku* (medical check) in Japanese is nothing else but *igakuteki kensa*. A great deal of loans frequently used in administra-

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"Katakana word" (original English term)	Intelligibility rate	
	All ages	60+
ケア	75.6%	58.1 %
(care)		
デイサービス	77.2 %	73.2 %
(day service)		
インフォームドコンセント	23.3 %	12.7 %
(informed consent)		
ノーマライゼーション	12.2 %	5 %
(normalization)		
ノンステップバス	45.4%	32.1 %
(non-step bus)		
メディカルチェック	52.9%	31.6 %
(medical check)		
ユニバーセルデザイン	29.8%	18.9 %
(universal design)		

Table 1: Intelligibility of "katakana words".

Source: http://www.kokken.go.jp/public/gairaigo/Yoron/index.html

tive language can be done away with in similar ways, reaffirming the truism that terms of English origin are not necessarily imported in order to fill lexical gaps.

However, such cases also occur: Concepts like "informed consent", "normalization" or "universal design" do not have native Japanese correspondents and consequently can only be replaced if new terms are coined in their stead. Thus "informed consent" has to be Japanized into nattoku shinryō ("consent treatment"), "normalization" becomes tōseika ("life equalization"), and "universal design" is paraphrased as banninmuke sekkei ("design for everybody") (cf. Table 2). However native these terms may appear, they are neologisms that will be looked for in vain in any Japanese dictionary published so far. Hard to say to what extent they will be more easily understood by Japan's 60+ population than their katakana counterparts.

How successful the recent initiatives eventually will turn out to be largely depends on the overall acceptance by the general public. The National Institute for Japanese Language has been anxious to emphasize that their list of substitute terms is no Orwellian Newspeak but merely a suggestion on how communication between administrative organs and citizens could be improved. Yet many people view the introduction of the new vocabulary with suspicion, particularly because it is, to some extent at least, reminiscent of the large-scale replacement of Western loans by native neologisms in the 1930s and 1940s - not an episode in modern Japanese history people like to remember.

Another question is in how far Japanese administrations will prove willing to actually make use of the new vocabulary in practice. In this respect, a recent article in the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper criticizes Tokyo's Governor Ishihara for the high frequency of loans in his speech. This would undermine the efforts by the Metropolitan Government to reduce the number of loanwords in their publications. A recent statement by Ishihara about the strategies pursued by his agency in promoting Tokyo as host city for future Olympic Games is given as an example. Here is what he said: "I cannot give a dorafuto (draft), and there are also domestic kompetitā (competitors). We'll have a burēnstōmingu (brainstorming) about it once Tokyo has become nominēto (nominated) as Japan's representative."

Irrespective of how things will develop, the recent initiatives to reduce the use of loanwords are highly interesting, particularly because of their obvious demographic motivation. At a time when elderly people make up an ever growing share of the Japanese populace, the linguistic needs of this age cohort experience a higher degree of attention than any time before. This shift of focus to people of higher age is likely to have an impact on how language planning and, eventually, language change in Japan will develop in the years to come. The DIJ will continue to keep an eye on it.

References:

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National Institute for Japanese Language (kokuritsu kokugo kenkyūsho) (2006): Gairaigo iikae teian – Sōshūhen [Suggestions for rephrasing loanwords – Summary report]. Tokyo: National Institute for Japanese Language (http://www.kokken.go.jp/public/gairaigo/Teian1_4/iikae_teian1_4.pdf).

Suginami Ward (2006): *Gairaigo yakusho kotoba iikae chō* [Rephrasing handbook for loanwords and administrative language]. Tokyo: Gyōsei.

"Katakana word" (original English term)	Substitute term
ケア	手当て 介護
(care)	
デイサービス	日帰り介護
(day service)	
インフォームドコンセント	納得診療 説明と同意
(informed consent)	
ノーマライゼーション	等生化
(normalization)	
ノンステップバス	無断差バス
(non-step bus)	
メディカルチェック	医学的検査
(medical check)	
ユニバーセルデザイン	万人向け設計
(universal design)	

Table 2: "Katakana words" and their substitutes.

Source: http://www.kokken.go.jp/public/gairaigo/Teian1_4/iikae_teian1_4.pdf



CURRENT RESEARCH

Labour Migration to Japan

Is labour migration a solution to Japan's shrinking workforce caused by the nation's demographic change? Government agencies, economic associations, civil society groups, and international organizations address this question controversially. One central point of the discourse is the revision of the immigration guidelines for socalled unskilled labour (tanjun rōdō). Japan's legal system does not allow for unskilled labour immigration; yet revisions seem necessary, since unskilled migrants are the very workforce that Japan's labour market will need most in the near future in order to compensate for vacancies resulting from the nation's demographic change.

Two opposite sides of the discourse will be exemplified by introducing the positions of two government agencies. The Ministry of Justice argues for an increasingly restrictive handling of labour migration. For instance, it proposes to tighten the relatively generous immigration guidelines for Nikkeijin (former emigrants from Japan and their descendants), which at the present stage may be understood as one loophole for unskilled labour migration to Japan. It also plans on implementing severe penalties against undocumented foreign labourers and their employers.

In contrast to the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acknowledges labour migration to Japan as a necessary countermeasure to an ever shrinking workforce. Thus it is at present negotiating *Economic Partnership Agreements* (EPA) with the Philippines and with Thailand. These bilateral agreements – albeit restricted to certain professions (e.g., the care sector) and to nationals of the two Southeast Asian countries – will allow for migration of low-skilled labour to Japan without any fundamental legal reforms.

However, the number of migrant workers coming to Japan via EPAs will not suffice to make up for Japan's demographically induced decline in workforce. According to the United Nations (2000) study *Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?*, Japan would have to become the target of migration movements of an entirely different scale: 600,000 labour migrants per year if it were to keep its workforce at the level of 1995, and some astronomical ten million per year in order to prevent the ratio of working vs. non-working

population from changing. It is not only against the background of Japan's current political discourse on labour migration that these figures appear unrealistic.

The DIJ research project on labour migration to Japan, conducted by Gabriele Vogt, addresses two main issues: One aspect deals with the question, which (if any) model of labour migration might be suitable – meaning it is based on a broad political consensus, widely accepted by the general public, and economically reasonable – for Japan and its rapid demographic transition. Secondly, insights into dynamic changes in structures of interdependence between the various political actors participating in the discourse described above are being sought after.

Glossary of Population Sciences and Demographic Change

Florian Coulmas, Claus Harmer and Matthias Koch have prepared a trilingual "Glossary of Population Sciences and Demographic Change". The glossary is the most comprehensive electronic and conventional tool in the field of population sciences. It makes the demographic terminology accessible in three directions: Japanese-English-German, English-Japanese-German, German-Japanese-English. It contains technical terms from the most important fields of research in population sciences, particularly social demography/population sociology, population geography, political demography, historical demography, medical demography, biodemography, mathematical demography/statistics and theory, as well as more indirectly involved subareas such as psychology, law (legal science), technology, study of religions, theology, linguistics and educational science. An additional category covers catch phrases and buzzwords that have enriched the Japanese lexicon in connection with the country's demographic change.

The database version of the glossary was launched at the end of 2005 and has been used in-house by the researchers at the DIJ for their research projects. The trilingual opening page allows full-text searching and search result sorting in all three languages. It is planned to publish the data as a book in the course of 2006. While the book is a mere glossary, the database also features fields for definitions and explanations as well as links that point to relevant homepages. For instance, for the German term "Weltbevölkerungsuhr" the book gives the English and Japanese counterparts "world population clock" and *sekai jinkō dokei*, whereas the online database additionally offers a link connecting to a homepage that displays the estimated increase of the world population in real time. The database will be updated and improved on a regular basis.

DIJ EVENTS

International Conference and Symposium

Family Policy in the Aging Society – A German-Japanese Comparison (Tokyo, March 9–11, 2006)

With rapidly aging societies in Germany and Japan, family policy in both countries is increasingly gaining in importance. In Japan, which so far has had no explicit family policy with a public ministry in charge of it, the inauguration of Kuniko Inoguchi as Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs (literally her title should be translated as "Minister of State for Declining Birth Rate and Gender-Equal Participation") in October 2005 has helped to raise public interest in these issues.

The conference, which was organized by the University of Tsukuba, the German Institute for Japanese Studies, the Japanese-German Center Berlin, the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation and the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Social Law, dealt with the topic from a historical, demographical, societal, social policy and economic perspective. During the two-day colloquium experts from Germany and Japan discussed various issues of family policy in both countries. The results were presented to the general public in a symposium on March 11.

Both the papers and the discussions revealed that there are various similarities as well as differences in the family policies of the two countries. One of the most obvious points in common between Germany and Japan is the fact that family policy in both countries is historically burdened by the negative experiences of the population policies of the 1930s and 1940s. The German federal family reports, regularly published since 1968, clearly reveal a change in the concept of family, which since the 1980s includes various types of family arrangements besides the traditional nuclear family (consisting of a married couple with children). The Japanese White Books, on the oth-



er hand, still portray a rather conservative image of the "ideal family".

Other distinct differences between the two countries can be observed with regard to public policy measures. Whereas Germany, with significant disparities between West and East Germany, has concentrated its efforts on money transfers and social policy measures to reward family care work, Japan has been less active in this field. On the other hand, Japan has put more efforts into the development of child care facilities.

It has to be pointed out, however, that these sort of measures in both countries so far have not been able to reverse the development of declining birth rates. Since this development cannot be explained monocausally, this result does not come as a surprise. All speakers agreed that family policy measures to increase the birth rate can only be effective if they provide a suitable mix of financial support, child care facilities and time management (balancing work and family life). To implement such a mix successfully will certainly require further political and societal changes.

For a detailed list of speakers and presentation topics, please see our website at: http://www.dijtokyo.org/?page=event_detail.php&p_id=444. For further questions, please contact the organizer Harald Conrad (conrad@dijtokyo.org).



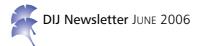
Kuniko Inoguchi (Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs)



Wolfgang Meincke (German Ministry of Family Affairs)



Bernd Baron von Maydell (Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Social Law)





Panellists (left to right): Nakagawa, Miki, Akisue, Kondō

fast and effective process of catching up got underway. The "BioRegio Competition" of 1997 is a good example that is acknowledged internationally as one of the most successful promotion schemes in the field of technology policy. The competition has led to the creation of biotechnology clusters all over Germany. The development was supported by the active engagement of both the German central government and the local state governments, as well as the growing interest of the capital market in the new technology and in young, capital-intensive companies.

In Japan, the central government initiated a national strategy for biotechnology in order to secure the competitiveness of this industry in the world's second-largest market. The 2001 "Industrial Cluster Plan" aims at boosting the capabilities of several regions to de-

International Symposium

Biotech Clusters in Germany and Japan: Examples of Successful Innovation and Industrial Policy (Tokyo, April 21, 2006)

Modern biotechnology is deemed to be one of the most important key technologies of the 21st century. Biotechnology helps to generate numerous innovations in the pharmaceutical industry, environmental technology, in agriculture, chemistry and other areas.

In Germany, biotechnology had been unpopular with policy-makers and the public well into the 1990s. But then, there was a sudden turn, and a



Panellists (left to right): Müller, Plate, Bindseil, Moerke



Audience at the international Biotechnology Symposium, Tokyo, April 4, 2006

velop new technologies and at encouraging the creation and growth of innovative companies. Among the 19 projects for regional development no less than five focus on biotechnology.

The symposium, organized jointly by the German Institute for Japanese Studies (Andreas Moerke) and the Development Bank of Japan (DBJ), aimed at showing the preconditions for a successful creation of clusters by presenting case studies of various biotech clusters, and at stimulating further development by giving examples for "best practices".

The introductory remarks by Florian Coulmas (DIJ) and Zen'ya Yamazaki (DBJ) were followed by two key note speeches that gave an overview of recent developments in Europe. Satoshi Fukasawa (DBJ) reported on the latest trends in R&D promotion by the European Union and pointed to the increas-



ing importance of co-operations, which also offers chances for Japanese companies to engage in Europe. Ralph Fülop (DBJ Frankfurt Representative Office) presented a just-published research report on successful biotechnology regions in Germany ("Erfolgreiche Biotechnologieregionen in Deutschland"), thus linking in with the topics of biotechnology and successful innovation strategies. In his presentation, Mr. Fülop also gave an overview on how the programs of state institutions promote the creation of biotechnology clusters.

The second part of the symposium was dedicated to case studies of successful biotech clusters. Kai-Uwe Bindseil (BioTOP) introduced the Cluster Berlin-Brandenburg, Klaus Plate (Heidelberg Technology Park) lectured on the peculiarities of the Heidelberg cluster, Takashi Miki (City of Kobe) on those of the "Kobe Medical Industry Development Project" and Masayuki Nakagawa on the "Osaka Biocluster". All speakers agreed that the availability of excellent research institutions and the close link between science and industry, as well as the development of an adequate infrastructure and the overall acceptance of the technology were the preconditions for a successful creation of clusters. The German speakers especially emphasized the long-term perspective: it takes ten years and more to build up a successful cluster.

Presentations were followed by a panel discussion in which the above speakers were joined by Yoshirō Akisue (Kazusa Akademia Park), Masayuki Kondō (Yokohama National University) and Nikolaus Müller (Nihon Schering KK) to discuss the following questions: What are the preconditions for a successful creation of clusters? What characteristics should the linkage between science and industry have in order to enable an effective transfer of knowledge? How should the general framework be designed and what kind of support from state institutions is desirable for clusters and companies? What role does venture capital play for the creation of biotechnology clusters? In addition, the panel also took questions from the audience.

The symposium was part of the "Germany in Japan 2005/2006" campaign. We gratefully acknowledge sponsorship by Sonderhoff & Einsel Law and Patent Office and by the Japan Economic Research Institute, as well as support from the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Japan and the EU Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation. The symposium was held under the auspices of the German Embassy in Japan. The presentations are available on the DIJ

homepage (http://www.dijtokyo.org/?page=event_detail.php&p_id=446); the report by the Development Bank of Japan can be downloaded from the homepage of the Frankfurt Representative Office (www.dbjffm.de) under the following link: http://www.dbjffm.de/s/veroeff/DBJFFM_Biocluster_19.1.pdf. For further questions feel free to contact the organizers at biotech@dijtokyo.org.

International Conference

Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies

(San Francisco, April 6-9, 2006)

In this year's AAS Annual Meeting held in San Francisco on April 6-9, which with its 3,000 visitors was a rather large event, the DIJ participated with a presentation. On April 7, Andreas Moerke together with Mark Tilton (Purdue University) organized a panel on perspectives of the political and economic change in both countries. Mark Tilton gave a presentation on the (de)regulation of industries in both countries, while Andreas Moerke highlighted trends in the field of corporate governance in Japan and Germany. Steven Vogel (UC at Berkeley) acted as Commentator on the presentations; Pat Boling (Purdue University) chaired the session.

WORKING PAPERS

06/1 Annette Schad-Seifert: Japans kinderarme Gesellschaft – Die niedrige Geburtenrate und das Gender-Problem [Japan's low fertility society – The falling birth rate and the problem of gender]

The implementation of political reforms and measures to cope with the extremely low fertility rate of the Japanese society has become a matter of urgent necessity to the Japanese government under Prime Minister Koizumi and has led to the appointment of a Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs (shōshika danjo kyōdō sankaku; literally "Minister of State for Declining Birth Rate and Gender-Equal Participation") in the Cabinet Office. Since the decline in fertility has come about owing to change in marriage behaviour such as the postponement of marriage or people choosing to remain single throughout their lives, it is necessary to thoroughly examine the socio-economic factors influencing this behaviour. It has been suggested that the trend to postpone marriage or to not marry at all was mainly caused by a change in female attitudes and gender-related problems such as the maladjusted balance between work and family life.

The paper questions the assumption that the falling birth rate is primarily induced by a change in the mindset of women. Instead, it argues that social scientific research on the process of demographic transformation has to take into consideration more general changes in the social and economic environment as well as structural factors influencing both individual decisions and the ways of living for both sexes across all generations.

The coincidence of three major factors is to be considered relevant to the demographic trend of low fertility:

- 1) the continuity of traditional attitudes and expectations both in gender relations as well as in intergenerational relations:
- 2) the interdependencies between the more affluent parent cohort of the baby boom generation and their more economically pressed adult children; and
- 3) structural changes in the labour market that led companies to reduce the number of regular employment positions and to hire more employees of both sexes as part-timers (*freeter*).

THE DIJ ON THE NET

Recent Additions to Our Homepage

In April 2006, the DIJ set up the new "Internet Resources" section on its homepage (www.dijtokyo.org). This section provides direct access to two recent projects of the DIJ: the "Special Collections in Japanese University Libraries" database and the virtual exhibition of the Institute's "Bandō Collection". In addition, there is a direct link to the DIJ library catalogue. The inclusion of further projects is being planned.

Recordings of the DIJ Forum

Audio recordings of presentations given at the DIJ Forum will be provided for download on the Institute's homepage whenever possible. Available so far are the events of March 23, 2006 (Prof. Klaus Vollmer) and of July 5, 2005 (Prof. Ito Peng).



OTHER MATTERS/ OUTLOOK

Call for Papers

Japanstudien: Jahrbuch des deutschen Instituts für Japanstudien

Japanstudien is a peer-reviewed journal published annually by the German Institute for Japanese Studies. The journal includes articles on the culture, economy, society and politics of modern Japan as well as Germany-Japan relations. Papers on these topics are welcome from scholars in any academic discipline. Most issues of Japanstudien focus on a particular topic. The subject of volume 19, which is expected to be published in autumn 2007, is

Family/families

You will find the detailed Call for Papers on the DIJ homepage (http://www.dijtokyo.org/?page=publication_detail.php&p_id=955). For further information, please contact Peter Backhaus (backhaus@dijtokyo.org).

Personnel News

Dr. Isa Ducke, Research Fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies since June 2001 and head of the Social Science Section since November 2005, has left the DIJ on May 31, 2006. Isa Ducke has been one of the co-organizers of the DIJ Social Science Study Group since February 2002 and has organized several events related to political science topics. Much of her research dealt with the DIJ focus topics "Japan in Asia" and "Challenges of Demographic Change", in addition to other research projects of the Institute, to which she contributed with various lectures and publications. Within the research focus of "Japan in Asia", she edited the volume "Japan und Korea auf dem Weg in eine gemeinsame Zukunft" (Japan and Korea on the Road to a Joint Future; DIJ Monographs, No. 36) in co-operation with Sven Saaler. It resulted from a conference organized by the DIJ together with the Japan Culture Institute (Japanisches Kulturinstitut) Cologne, the Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) and the Federal Centre for Political Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung). The focus of her work was on the research project "Internet and Politics", which resulted in several articles,

the DIJ publication "E-Democracy in East Asia? How the Internet Affects Politics and Civil Society in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan" (DIJ Miscellanea, Vol. 17), and a monograph to be published by Routledge in 2007.

Dr. Volker Elis joined the DIJ Business & Economics Section as a research fellow in April 2006. Before that, he was a research associate at the Institute for Oriental and Asian Studies at the University of Bonn (Department of Japanese Studies), where he had been engaged in research and teaching activities in the fields of economics and geography in particular. He received his doctorate with a thesis on the topic "Regional Policy in Japan - the Economic Area of Shizuoka Prefecture". At the DIJ, Volker Elis will contribute to the Institute's research project "Challenges of Demographic Change" with a study entitled "Measures for Economic Development in Areas Affected by Depopulation in Japan". The study will focus on policy options and the scope of action of regional policy actors and institutions in areas challenged by population decrease and overaging.

DIJ Forum

Richard J. Samuels, Professor of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: "Japanese Grand Strategies: Past and Future" (May 18, 2006)

Satomi Kurosu, Professor of Sociology, Reitaku University, Chiba: "The Tokugawa Mating Game: Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in Historical Perspective" (June 22, 2006)



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