TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE VS TRANSLATION EQUivalents: QUANTIFYING LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC EXAMPLES OF JAPANESE ENGLISH

Lyndon Small

Fukuoka University, Japan

This exploratory study quantifies the types and frequency of translation styles from Japanese into English. Data was compiled from a total of 484 first, second and third year EFL university students in Japan. Ten sets of lexical items were included for translation in a range of sentences and questions that might feature in elementary conversation. The data indicates that overall the most common style of translation for all year levels was direct translation rather than the usual English conversation style wording. The overall high frequency of direct translations supports the opinion of Honna (2009) that native Japanese speakers make particular lexical choices in English indicative of a Japanese style of communication. These are identifiable and quantifiable characteristics of a Japanese variety of English. Within the context of this variety, cognitive processes that determine aspects of translation are discussed with reference to the Theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (Evans 2009). In addition to accepting the validity of Japanese English a distinct variety, the relevance of this study for EFL learners and educators is to be aware of the style in which native Japanese speakers communicate in English. Japanese EFL learners could improve their communicative competence beyond the direct translation of grammar and lexis. To achieve this, an overall suggestion for educators is to help learners raise their pragmatic and associated cultural competence.

Keywords: Japanese English, Translation, LCCM theory, Cultural competence.

INTRODUCTION

Japanese English comprises aspects of usage that might seem unconventional to native English speakers. However, these aspects are not always incompatible with standard varieties such as Australian, American or British English, for example. This study contends that the overall proportion of direct translations from Japanese to English by a group of Japanese university students is not simply indicative of native language (L1) to a second language (L2) transfer, but that it is evidence of a component of Japanese English which importantly is both intelligible and comprehensible to a native English speaker. The first aim of the study was to identify the styles of translations from Japanese to English by native Japanese first, second and third year university EFL students. The second aim was to quantify the frequency of direct, lexically equivalent translations compared to those with English conversation style equivalence. Based on the data from a total of 484 students, another aim was to make generalisations about the predominant style of translation as a component of Japanese English, which in this article is considered a multi-faceted distinct variety of English. Translation is also considered within the Theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (LCCM theory) which can account for
processes of language cognition and interpretation (see Evans, 2009). A partial cognitive model profile is provided for one of the lexical concepts in the translation exercise to highlight aspects of learner comprehension and L2 translation. Furthermore, with direct implications for translation are issues related to variations in lexical vehicles, either as one lexical concept that can have a number of alternative L2 equivalents, or conversely, as a number of lexical concepts that have fewer L2 translated forms. Cognitive processes described in LCCM theory lead to typical L1 syntagmatic relations that can involve issues of direct language transfer to L2. These appear as a particular choice of lexis and in syntactic patterns (Honna 2009), further evidence of a Japanese English style such as 'drive by car', 'tomorrow is my holiday' and 'play with my friends'. It is difficult to know how loan words are conceptualised in L2 given the lexical, syntactic and semantic changes from the original language from which they are borrowed. This also has direct implications for translation in L2. The legitimacy of translation equivalents as an identifiable component of Japanese English is unquestioned. However, the suggestion for EFL educators and learners to improve overall communicative competence is to develop aspects of ‘cultural competency’ (Kachru and Smith (2008) and pragmatics (Berns 2009).

JAPANESE ENGLISH

A critical feature of Japanese English as an identifiable variety is that it is characterised by particular choices of lexical items, as mentioned by Honna (2009). To provide some examples, first in Japanese English and then in a standard English: drive by car / drive, go by car; go to the sea / go to the beach; play with my friends / have fun with, go out with, meet my friends and; Your song is nice / You can sing well. Other characteristics of Japanese English evident in this translation study are syntax and grammar which do not violate that of standard English varieties. However some written and spoken forms of Japanese English, although perfectly correct, might be perceived as unconventional selections to a native speaker of a standard English variety. This is apparent with the examples of direct translation equivalents compared to conversation style equivalence provided in the translation exercise of this study. In addition, the way that Japanese express themselves in English with unconventional forms was lauded by Baxter (1980) who at the time doubted the overall acceptance of Japanese English. This current study claims that one aspect of Japanese English as a distinct variety is evidenced in the high proportion of directly translated forms from Japanese to English. As such, it supports both the beliefs of Honna and Baxter in culturally unique expression in English by Japanese speakers.

This example, “What time is it now?” (今何時ですか。ima nan ji desu ka) illustrates a simple direct translation from Japanese to English with the word ‘now’ and its equivalent in Japanese underlined. Although this is a well-formed question in both languages, in Japanese, it is usual to include ‘now’, while it is superfluous in English given the present tense grammar. Another superfluous translation from Japanese to English is the inclusion of the word ‘people’ when referring to nationality, as in this example: ‘American people’ (アメリカ人 amerikajin) rather than ‘Americans’. This is a further example of direct L1/L2 transfer, which although correct, reflects a noticeable and consistent difference between a style characteristic of Japanese English and standard varieties of English. While these examples might seem simplistic, it nevertheless demonstrates a fundamental focus of this study: Japanese English comprises forms that are not incompatible with that of standard English varieties. The direct translations in this study, albeit somewhat unconventional, clearly feature correct, comprehensible and coherent, examples of English. Hence the claim here is that Japanese English is not entirely different from standard English varieties and more than just a ‘here and now’ performance variety. Furthermore, Japanese English is not an 'interlanguage', which Jenkins (2009, p. 92) defined as
'learner' languages characterised by 'errors' rather than legitimate L2 varieties of English containing forms which happen to differ from those used in L1 English varieties.

With reference to foreign loan words, known as 'gairaigo' in Japanese, and lexical items referred to as 'waseigo' coined in Japan using elements of foreign vocabulary, culturally-specific Japanese syntax and semantic properties clearly distinguish Japanese English from other English varieties. This potentially has negative implications for the Japanese to effectively communicate in English for a number of reasons. One of these is that not all common loan words come from English. A common example is 'arubaito' (アルバイト) which means 'part-time job' that comes from the German verb 'arbeiten' (to work). Another issue for the use of loan words is that they have become nativised Japanese. Communication difficulties can arise when Japanese L1 speakers use loan words assuming that English and other L2 speakers understand their meaning. However factors such as variances in semantic properties, parts of speech, collocation, lack of contextual support and pronunciation, can combine to interfere with spontaneous and clear listener comprehension.

A quarter of a century ago, Stanlaw (1987, p. 195) summarized various distinctions between Japanised English loan words and the Japanese variety of English. In contemporary Japan, the use of loan words is incorporated into a more inclusive variety of English, including business contexts. Indeed, it is loan words that many people first think of when they hear the term 'Japanese English'.

**TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS AND TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE.**

As a direct result of the grammar-translation method, a standard approach in Japanese junior high and high schools, translation is considered in the framework of grammatical and syntactic equivalents (L1 $x = L2 \times$). It is reasonable to state that despite having completed at least seven years of formal English study at school, university students are more likely to translate with direct lexical equivalents rather than with translation equivalence that demonstrates various optional and equally valid, though perhaps more pragmatically appropriate linguistic choices. There can also be marked variations in the semantic properties of key vocabulary between Japanese and English. Furthermore, the same lexical concepts can be expressed with great syntactic variation between the two languages.

Aspects of communication such as comprehensibility, intelligibility and interpretability were discussed by Kachru and Smith (2008). Considering these, it is important to differentiate between direct and literal translations beyond their syntactic form. One example from the translation exercise, “What is your job?” is a direct translation whereas “What job is it?” is a literal translation. Although both translations have the same intended meaning and are highly intelligible, the latter would have low interpretability as an initial inquiry as opposed to a possible follow up question to develop the topic of 'someone's job'.

There are also grammatical distinctions between Japanese and English, such as the example “Where do you come from?” which is a direct translation in English. However, the literal translation from Japanese uses the past tense; “Where did you come from?”. Similarly, the direct translation “I have a cold.” features the present tense in English, whereas in Japanese the literal translation uses the past tense; “I caught a cold”.

In this article, the term 'translation equivalents' refers to direct translation, not literal translation. In contrast, the term 'translation equivalence' refers to a usual (conversation style) form used in standard English. Importantly for high interpretability, both translation equivalents and equivalence must largely maintain the meaning of the original form. The following examples illustrate the differences among translated forms:
Literal translation きょうは休みです。 (kyou ha yasumi desu) = Today rest is.
Translation equivalent = Today is my holiday.
Translation equivalence = Today is my day off/I don’t work today/I’m not working today.

Literal translation 明日は仕事です。 (ashita ha shigoto desu) = Tomorrow job is.
Translation equivalent = Tomorrow is my job / I do/have my job.
Translation equivalence = Tomorrow I work / I’m working.

TRANSLATION EXERCISE

The translation exercise was completed during the first English lesson of the first and second semester in 2010. It was conducted in a total of seven first year, seven second year and three third year classes from various faculties in two different Japanese universities. The exercise comprised ten short questions and sentences that feature in elementary conversation, perhaps when meeting someone the first time. Prior to the written exercise, three examples were explained orally, first with direct translations from Japanese to English and then with alternative, English conversation style translations that conveyed the same meaning. The students were instructed in both English and in Japanese that they could delete words and make any changes as long as they translated the original meaning of the sentences in a usual English conversation style.

The particular task in this study required students to translate ten full sentences from Japanese into English within 10 minutes. The students translated the following sentences, shown here with a direct English translation and also a usual English conversation style translation. In both the Japanese sentences and the direct translations, the key lexical items are underlined.

1. 趣味はなんですか。What are your hobbies?
2. What are you interested in? What do you like to do in your free time?
3. この食べ物は美味しくです。This food is delicious.
4. This [food] is/tastes good/great/yummy.
5. 先週の火曜日、海でバーベキューをしました。Last Tuesday, I had a barbecue at the sea.
6. Last Tuesday, I had a barbecue at the beach.
7. 仕事はなんですか。What is your job?
8. What do you do?
9. 私の夢は医者になることです。My dream is to become a doctor.
10. I want to be/become a doctor. I dream of becoming a doctor.
11. 東京に2泊3日行きました。I went to Tokyo for two nights and three days.
12. I went to Tokyo for two nights. I went to Tokyo for three days.
13. 両親は毎週日曜日山を登るのが好きです。My parents like to climb (a) mountain(s) every Sunday.
14. My parents like to go walking/ go hiking in the mountains every Sunday.
15. 私のアパートは広いです，My apartment is wide.
16. My apartment is big.
17. このパソコンの使い方を教えてください，Please teach me how to use this computer.
18. Please tell me how to use this computer.
19. ピザを食べたいです，I want to eat pizza.
20. I’d like [to eat/to have] pizza. I want pizza.
21. The following are some recorded examples of variations from standard English syntax, grammar, spelling and semantics that resulted in low interpretability.
   a. What are your hobbies? What do you like hobbies? What are you like hobby?
   b. This food is delicious. Stated translation of 'food', which in English is superfluous.
   c. Last Tuesday, I had a barbecue at the sea. Collocation errors: played barbecue; ate a barbecue. Preposition errors: on the sea; in the sea.
   d. What is your job? What are you job? What job is it? Do you do what job?
   e. My dream is to become a doctor. “I dream of becoming a doctor (one day)” is acceptable with the same meaning of idealism and fantasy as “I dream of winning the lottery (one day)”. This is distinctly different from declaring an achievable goal.
   f. I went to Tokyo for two nights and three days. There was a high frequency of no translation beyond “I went to Tokyo.”
   g. My parents like to climb (a) mountain(s) every Sunday. There was a high frequency of incorrect spelling: crim, crime, clim, clime, climing, and crimming.
   h. My apartment is wide. There was a high frequency of ‘apart’ as the translation for ‘apartment’ because that is an example of a clipped loan word in Japanese (アパート/apa-to).
   i. Please teach me how to use this computer. Please tell this computer (how) to use. Please teach this computer.
   j. I want to eat pizza. Stated translation of 'to eat', which in English is superfluous.

Frequency of responses was tallied only from students who wrote seven or more complete sentences. Based on the total number of responses from 484 students, the translation of each of the ten sentences was recorded in one of seven categories shown here with its respective percentage: 1. translation with usual English conversation style and correct syntax 20.25%; 2. translation with usual English conversation style but with errors in syntax 5.39%; 3. direct translation of key vocabulary and correct English syntax 38.37%; 4. direct translation of key vocabulary but with errors in English syntax 14.69%; 5. incomprehensible English translation 12.77%; 6. incomplete English translation 5.91% and; 7. blank 2.62%.
The translations in categories 2 and 4 not only had high intelligibility, but also high interpretability as discussed by Kachru and Smith (2008, p. 59-69). The vocabulary and intended meaning of the directly translated sentences were not obscure, but in a spoken context could challenge an English L1 speaker to repair syntactic errors, resulting in more time required for language processing, possible repetition by both interlocutors and generally feeling that a conversation lacks shared spontaneous and coherent topic development.

To achieve the first aims of this study to categorise and quantify types of translation, the number of responses was combined for categories 1 and 2 to represent an actual or clearly intended translation of Japanese using a usual conversation style of English. Similarly, the responses in categories 3 and 4 were combined to represent an actual or clearly intended direct translation of Japanese to English. For each year level, the percentage of translation styles of the ten key lexical items is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Year Level</th>
<th>Translation %</th>
<th>Direct Translation %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Item</td>
<td>n = 148</td>
<td>n = 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. hobby/ies</td>
<td>14.86</td>
<td>8.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. delicious</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td>20.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. the sea</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>14.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. your job</td>
<td>13.51</td>
<td>19.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. my dream</td>
<td>14.86</td>
<td>15.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. two nights/three days</td>
<td>20.27</td>
<td>35.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. climb (a) mountain(s)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. wide</td>
<td>46.62</td>
<td>51.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. teach</td>
<td>56.75</td>
<td>53.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. want to eat</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this initial display of data, lexical items 6, 8 and 9 stood out compared to the others. Not only was there a comparatively low percentage of direct translation of 'two nights and three days', but combined with the percentage of the usual English conversation style, clearly a majority of students did not know how to translate this expression. With such minimal data, item #6 was not considered in the rest of this study as a possible example of Japanese English. The relatively high percentage of conversation style translations for lexical items 8 and 9 showed a high correlation to standard English forms. For the following presentation of data, the remaining seven lexical items are shown to best represent the general trends of translation in this study; refer Tables 2 and 3.
To fulfill the second aim of this study to compare the frequency of English conversation style translation equivalence to the frequency of direct lexical equivalent translations, refer Tables 2 and 3. In addition, the average for combined year level lexical item responses is included. To generalise, the frequency of conversation style translations is significantly less than that of direct translation equivalents.

Overall, the data in Tables 2 and 3 shows that from a total of 2901 responses, just over one quarter were English conversation style translations. Specifically, 22.78% were correct sentences and 5.27% had errors, for a combined total of 28.05%. Alternatively, almost three quarters (71.93%) were direct lexically equivalent translations, comprising 53.13% correct sentences and 18.8% with errors. Despite the initial spoken and written requests to translate the sentences in a usual conversation style, clearly among these groups of Japanese university students, the most common style was direct translation using lexical and syntactic equivalents.

**LCCM THEORY**

The Theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (LCCM theory) expounded by Evans (2009) can help to explain cognitive processing. Furthermore, the principles of this theory could also be applied to account for the ways that L1 speakers access, process and translate L2 lexical concepts.

Miscomprehension or lack of comprehension can be especially evident and highlighted when the same lexical items (loan words) are used in both L1 and L2. They may or may not have shared semantic properties accessed via differing cognitive model profiles. Similarly, lexical concepts that might at least superficially have translation equivalents might also lack compatible translation equivalence in a second language. To illustrate this point, let's consider the lexical concept glossed here as [climb a mountain], which accounted for the second highest proportion of direct translation and also the lowest proportion of translation equivalence in this
Figure 1 displays a partial cognitive model profile for the lexical concept [climb a mountain] in English and also in Japanese, which shows access routes to semantic potential.

Although translation equivalents can be reflected in accurate syntactic structures, translation equivalence is not possible without access to salient features of L2 secondary cognitive models. As such, it is difficult to accurately translate an L2 concept without awareness of its semantic components. This is despite the fact that the lexical concept [climb a mountain] in both English and Japanese share essentially the same sense, referred to as a primary cognitive model. At the same time, both languages have a distinct cultural sense that triggers different secondary cognitive models that subsequently provide access to variations in the concept’s semantic potential.

DIFFERENT LEXICAL VEHICLES

Research within the framework of LCCM theory can highlight a significant dichotomy: variations in L1/L2 conceptual systems and the way that these are reflected in styles of translation from one respective linguistic system to another. Evans (2009, p. 129-131) explained that although lexical concepts have similar cross-linguistic cognitive model profiles, the linguistic content will not be identical, as lexical concepts are language specific. Although LCCM theory can explain access paths to conceptions via secondary cognitive models in L1, both the semantic potential and the linguistic expression of L2 lexical concepts will vary in L1 and vice versa. This is apparent when similar lexical concepts are expressed via different linguistic ‘vehicles’ (Evans 2009, p. 230-231). The lexical concept glossed here as [to put on/wear clothing] uses the vehicle ‘wear’ in English and ‘kiru’ (着る) in Japanese. In addition, there are a number of conceptual equivalents in Japanese depending on where clothing or accessories are put on one’s body. To provide two examples of these, the lexical concept [to put on headwear] is represented by the vehicle ‘kaburu’ (被る), whereas the lexical concept [to put on footwear] is represented by the vehicle ‘haku’ (履く). These examples demonstrate that when translating from Japanese to English it is ‘safe’ to choose the verb ‘wear’, referring to any part of the body where clothing or accessories are placed. Conversely, translating from English
to Japanese requires selection of more specific lexical vehicles. An implication of this for teaching and learning foreign vocabulary is a need for learners to be aware that lexical concepts in L1 may have either multiple vehicles or fewer vehicles than those in L2.

The potential dilemma of lexical vehicle selection is evident when translating a very common verb ‘suru’ (する) from Japanese to English. This verb is used to modify Japanese nouns to verbs and can be translated into various common English verbs as shown in these examples: to have a meal; to play tennis; to go + skiing (gerund); to make a phone call and; to do homework. Translation should be considered easier when there are less lexical vehicles to choose in L2. However, this is not always so. Given that the Japanese verb ‘suru’ (する) collocates with all sports and activities, one common example of Japanese English is to translate this verb as ‘play’, which in standard English is considered an error if collocated with a gerund, such as ‘play skiing’. This was a common collocation error in lexical item #3 of the translation exercise; ‘play barbecue’.

LEXICAL SELECTION AND SYNTACTIC PATTERNS

Another variation between conceptual and linguistic systems is evidenced in lexical selection when communicating in L2. Factors that influence broad or narrow, single or multiple lexical selection (Evans 2009, p. 235) will affect L2 comprehension and production. The data from the translation exercise in this study has shown discernible syntactic patterns that represent a fairly limited and predictable range of lexical selection. Cognitive processes described in LCCM theory lead to typical L1 syntagmatic relations that can involve issues of direct language transfer in L2. For example, native Japanese speakers might choose to say “What is your job?” rather than “What do you do?” when talking in English (Honna 2009). The consistency and frequency of such patterns supports the view that these exemplify a distinct style of L2 production that is an identifiable component of Japanese English.

CONCEPTUALISING LOAN WORDS IN L2

A significant characteristic of Japanese English is the prevalence of mainly English loan words (see Stanlaw, 1987). There are numerous factors that affect the focused teaching and learning of these words: English spelling, pronunciation, syntax and semantic properties. From the perspective of LCCM theory, educators have to help learners to resolve conflicts in accessing and processing L1 to L2 loan word primary cognitive models. An LCCM framework can also explain that when Japanese EFL learners encounter loan word lexical concepts in an English context, they are accessed in the same way as is figurative language in L1. This means that to comprehend English meanings and usage, second language learners have to consciously access secondary cognitive models for concepts which are not related in their native language. The form and function of loan words in Japanese, in particular ‘made in Japan’ lexical concepts called ‘waseigo’, increases the challenge to effectively express these in English. To achieve this involves conscious learner effort to reroute L1 paths of access, overriding their ‘default’ lexical associations to activate unconventional L1 secondary cognitive models in order to reach a conception of loan word meaning in L2.

EFFICIENCY VERSUS PROFICIENCY

Although translation equivalents can be an efficient way of communicating, this might not equate with high L2 language proficiency. Beyond grammar and syntax, L2 users need to be
aware of how appropriate it is to make particular statements. More specifically, to understand when and to whom statements may or may not be appropriate are important components of ‘cultural competency’ discussed by Kachru and Smith (2008, p. 66). Communicative competence entails not only the knowledge that guides language users in choosing what to say and to whom, it is also the social and cultural context of interaction that influences these pragmatic aspects of communication (Berns 2009, p. 719). To illustrate this with some examples within mainstream Australian culture, it is a cultural faux pas to ask someone their age, especially the first time you meet them. Even employing the use of a softening strategy such as “Do you mind if I ask [your age/how old you are]?” does not alleviate the level of discomfort in being asked the question. It is simply inappropriate to ask and so for smooth and friendly communication it should be avoided. Similarly, topics related to how much money one earns or spends and also religious and political beliefs are best avoided, especially during an initial conversation. On the other hand, to ask “How old are you?” is a perfectly acceptable question when Japanese meet. In addition, Japanese might feel culturally obliged to state that food provided by the (non-Japanese) party host is delicious, when in fact it is rather simple and plain. The incongruity of the statement could be interpreted as being insincere.

A conversation in English between a Japanese and foreign speaker can be a minefield of cultural mores and (para)linguistic conventions that can contrast significantly. This has the potential for cross cultural 'pragmatic failure' as explained at length by Thomas (1983 in Bolton & Kachru, 2006). For example, although it is acceptable for a Japanese L1 speaker to take the lead in an English conversation with an English L1 speaker, to ask a consecutive number of questions, especially on unrelated themes can seem to be more of an ‘interview’ style, without further topic development. Alternatively, the Japanese speaker as a passive interlocutor, not knowing how to respond to questions, develop topics or to give (very) short responses, compounds the myth of the 'shy Japanese'. Such issues highlight that linguistic efficiency might not be indicative of linguistic proficiency. An ability to efficiently translate into English involves overlapping significant aspects of cultural and pragmatic competence (Kachru and Smith, 2008), factors that EFL learners and educators need to focus on to raise overall linguistic proficiency subsumed under the umbrella of 'communicative competence'.

With evidence that the predominant style of translation uses direct syntactic equivalents, EFL educators should accept the validity of this component of Japanese English for the reason that the translation examples shown in this study are not erroneous and are indeed completely compatible with standard varieties of English. Moreover, despite their sometimes unconventional forms, they are intelligible and can be easily interpreted. Furthermore as Burns (2007) stressed, effective teaching includes consideration of learners from a positive and not a “deficit” perspective. Therefore, the use of directly translated forms per se should not be considered deficient in terms of communicative ability.

In addition, educators should encourage learners to increase their cultural competence, considering pragmatic aspects of communication such as how appropriate statements can be in various communicative contexts. For example, students should learn about the content (topics) and manner (timing and paralinguistic aspects) that allow smooth and comfortable communication and also those that don’t, such as private or taboo topics/manner. EFL learners need to understand that most language is not formulaic. There can be a number of viable alternatives to express L1 concepts clearly in English, so translation equivalence can be just as effective and perhaps more so than direct translation equivalents.
CONCLUSION

Translation using direct lexical and syntactic equivalents from Japanese to English by a group of university students was the predominant style in this study. There was a ratio of 2:1 for the use of translation equivalents to that of conversation style translation equivalence. It is important to state the validity of direct translation with forms that do not violate English syntax and are comprehensible to native English speakers. English syntactic patterns used by native Japanese speakers have been identified and quantified that reflect particular lexical selection. This is an important feature to support the claim that Japanese English is a distinct, though non-standard variety. LCCM theory, which accounts for processes of language cognition and interpretation, was discussed and exemplified with the lexical concept 'climb a mountain' to illustrate the complexity of translating variations in meaning between Japanese and English. There are obvious implications from this example that although lexical items and concepts may be shared, the cultural interpretation of these can vary considerably and this might not be apparent from translated syntactic forms alone. The use of translation equivalents might not be erroneous, but particular or restricted lexical selection can represent unconventional forms in standard English varieties and this could give a negative impression of overall linguistic proficiency in L2 based on L1 transfer. EFL educators are encouraged to accept the validity of Japanese English, while encouraging learners to increase their cultural competence, considering pragmatic aspects of communication. Learners should understand topics that allow smooth and comfortable communication as well as those that don’t, which are private or taboo. Furthermore, paralinguistic aspects of communication are also pertinent to overall communicative competence. Effective communication not only comprises correct grammar, but also socio-cultural awareness. Therefore, a speaker who knows what to say and also how and when to say it in a second language can be considered culturally competent.

REFERENCES