SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPANESE STYLE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPANESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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Abstract

Certain characteristics of Japanese "house style" run counter to the expectations of English readers, reflecting cross-cultural differences in attitude. For example, there is greater tolerance for indirectness, verbosity and repetition than in English. Phatic language in the form of flowery greetings, rhetorical questions and various expressions of low semantic content also plays an important role. So as not to distract the reader or distort the message, the Japanese-English translator may have to tone down or omit certain stylistic devices, at least with informative texts. This tension between the Japanese text and the constraints imposed by English points toward a sociolinguistic theory of translation that takes into account not only the degree of linguistic relatedness, but also the degree of overlap in communicative conventions.

Introduction

The term "style" usually refers to the features which characterise the writing of a particular person, and is generally used when discussing the effectiveness of different modes of expression in a literary context. My topic here, however, is style in a broader sense - i.e. "national style", defined as stylistic features that occur commonly in Japanese writing in general. Though obviously there are differences from author to author and genre to genre, there are also numerous stylistic traits that recur throughout a broad spectrum of Japanese writing.

These are consistent tendencies, rather than writer-specific preferences, and this collective style is a result less of conscious choice than of group convention and culturally-ingrained attitudes toward the use of language.

Though English has had an increasing influence on Japanese writing, there remains a wide gap between Japanese and English writing styles. Texts written in accordance with the conventions of Japanese style work efficiently within a Japanese communicative framework, as they conform to the expectations of Japanese readers. Indiscriminate transferal of these stylistic features into English, however, may reduce the effectiveness of the translation because they run counter to the expectations of the English reader. Though with literature it is the very exoticness of Japanese style that may pique the interest of the translation reader, and much of the value of the work may be lost if these features were "naturalized" in the translation, in informative texts these very same characteristics may act as a barrier to communication by distracting the reader's attention from the content of the text or even distorting the content. (The present discussion is confined to the translation of non-literary texts.)

Even if a stylistic feature can be reproduced in the translation, it may occur with different frequencies in the two languages, so that it has a different stylistic significance. For example, rhetorical questions exist in both English and Japanese, but their use is less common and hence
more marked in English. The fact that numerous stylistic features found in Japanese can also occur in English texts may tempt the translator to reproduce these features slavishly, leading to over-representation in the translation. Though such writing may be grammatically correct, it is often opaque and frustrating to the reader, or simply quaint and amusing. To avoid such translationese, the translator needs to be alive to the stylistic conventions of both languages, and to their likely effect on the reader. Below I shall outline some of the characteristics of the Japanese language or, more accurately, of how the Japanese people use their language, focusing on various interlinguistic and cross-cultural differences in style.

It should be noted that the term "characteristics" here does not mean unique to Japanese. Many discussions of the characteristics of Japanese are rather narrow in that they are based on comparisons with a handful of Western languages and ignore the fact that many of these characteristics can also be found in other languages. In the Japanese-English translation context, however, we are justified in using English as the yardstick against which Japanese is measured. This does not, however, imply any value judgements on the Japanese language or its users, or that Japanese is "inferior" to English in any way. It is simply an acknowledgement of certain differences that can cause problems in translation.

Phatic language

Phatic language is defined by Newmark (1979:14) as language which is used to establish an appropriate relationship with the reader. Though such phrases add little of substance to the meaning, they establish an atmosphere of rapport or affinity between writer and reader. Phatic language seems to play an especially important role in Japan, where much stress is laid on interpersonal relationships.

Aisatsu (salutations) are the most typical example of the phatic use of language. These flowery expressions of greeting that are common at the beginning and end of certain Japanese texts, such as letters, speeches and corporate material, constitute a cultural stumbling block in Japanese-English translation.

Some other phaticisms that are commonly used are goshuuchi no toori (as is well known), shuuuchi no gotoku (as is generally known), goshoochi no toori (as you are aware), and gozenji no yoo ni (as you know). These phatic phrases are deceptive in that they may mean quite the opposite of what they say. Similarly, such phrases as machiron (of course), akirana ni (clearly) and lu made mo naku (it goes without saying) may have the function of attracting the reader's attention or of forcing the writer's views on the reader, rather than being a statement of obvious or known fact. Terry (1985:2) writes that "...Japanese writers occasionally use expressions like these in statements that are far from well-known. In particular, a Japanese writer may quite inadvertently speak of a fact that is well-known in Japan, but not elsewhere. In this case, it is necessary for the translator to avoid insulting the reader by implying that something not known to the reader is known to everybody else." Other common phatic expressions are machigai naku (certainly), ... ni chigai nai (surely), shooji ni itte (to be frank), sochoku ni mooshimasu to ... (to put it plainly), tashika ni (assuredly), tokuhitsu/tokki subeki (worthy of special mention, noteworthy), and toozen (naturally).

The translator has to distinguish the phatic form from the denotative element, and, where necessary, tone down or even omit obsequious phaticisms. Though the expression may have the positive effect of creating an empathetic response on the part of Japanese readers, it may jar on the English reader, thus producing the opposite effect to that intended.

The phatic use of language is a recurring theme that underlies many of the stylistic features to be discussed here. It can be interpreted against the background of the oft-cited Japanese liking for harmony, and demonstrates how not only objective linguistic factors but also cultural and attitudinal factors must be taken into account in translation.

Repetitiveness

Japanese readers seem to be considerably
more tolerant of repetition, both formal and thematic, than are English readers. One form in which this appears is the same word recurring several times in close proximity. One of the translators in a study I carried out commented that the problem facing the translator is how to avoid being equally repetitious by default. He remarked that in Japanese, repetition does not have the same connotations of sloppiness that it has in English. In Japanese it conveys "reassuring continuity", whereas in English it may give the impression that the writer lacks articulateness. This "reassuring continuity" may play a phatic role in Japanese communication.

Because of the English dislike for repetition, the translator may use a synonym, a pronoun, a superordinate or a paraphrase. The negation of the antonym of the word is another method, though this may introduce a slightly different nuance. It should be noted, however, that the failure to use a standard, consistent translation throughout the text may confuse the reader, and the lack of concordance may introduce artificial distinctions not present in the Japanese.

Single words are not the only manifestation of repetitiousness in Japanese. Sometimes whole phrases or even sentences are repeated. There may be a slight variation in wording, but the idea remains the same. Japanese authors also like to summarize their work before moving on to a new topic. Such expressions may sound redundant in English and are a poor lead-in to a new section, so the translator should consider omitting them.

Nevertheless, omitting repetitions of an idea is much more risky than using "elegant variations" to avoid lexical repetition. Slight differences of expression may in fact indicate some disparity in the ideas expressed, and these distinctions may be lost if the translator "cleans up" the text. Automatically interpreting repetition as padding and hence omitting it can result in under-translation. When in doubt each occurrence should be retained, using different expressions to indicate that there is some distinction, be it simply superficial or more substantial. Moreover, repetition may be appropriate from the viewpoint of parallelism or emphasis, and a similar effect will have to be produced in English, whether by repetition or by other appropriate means.

**Verbosity**

A related aspect is that of verbosity. Whereas economy and precision of language are held up as ideals in English prose writing (though these goals are certainly not always achieved), in Japanese it seems that there is greater acceptance of verbiage. One outcome of this loquaciousness is the tendency to use sentences that are longer than is usual in English.

One factor contributing to verbozeness in Japanese prose is a predilection for phrases or even sentences with a low semantic content. Some examples at the phraseal level are no baai (in the case of), ippoo (on the one hand), taho (on the other hand), no okage de (thanks to), to iu dankai de (at the stage of), to iu mokuteki no tame ni (for the purpose of), to iu wake de (for this reason), to iu riyuu de (for the reason that) and jookyou/ genjoo de aru (The situation/current state of affairs is that ...). At the sentence level, some sentences are a repetition or summary of earlier content, while others are simply stating the obvious.

For the translator, the difficulty lies firstly in discerning the message that is camouflaged by these superfluities, and then in deciding to what extent it is advisable and/or possible to remove this extraneous material. As with so many issues in translation, there is no clear-cut answer, and the translator has to take into account a variety of factors, such as text type and intended reader. In many instances, however, retaining all of the wordiness of the Japanese text may produce a negative reaction in the English reader where the original text had no such effect on its readers.

**Indirect Expressions**

The Japanese seem to regard indirectness as a virtue, and dislike stating explicitly what can merely be suggested. In his famous work *Bunshoo Tokuhon* (1960) Tanizaki says that this vagueness allows full rein to the reader's imagination, unlike English, where everything is spelt out clearly for the reader(1). Haraoaka (1982:114) views this favorable attitude toward expressions full of implication and the tendency to avoid decisive endings (which also appears at the suprasentential level) as a manifestation of the Japanese concern with the feelings of others, and
comments that such expressions may seem insincere, indecisive, apologetic, and circuitous to the English reader.

A related factor is the dislike for assertiveness. Leggett (1968:792) declares that "Japanese seems to have a strong tendency to avoid too definite or assertive a statement, possibly because it is thought presumptuous to impose one's own views on the reader without conceeding that there are possible alternatives. This notion is completely foreign to most Western readers, and they will usually be unable to make the 'mental jump' necessary to appreciate it; if you state your opinion vaguely because you want to leave room for various possible interpretations besides your own, they will often simply take this as a sign of vague and muddled thinking." In other words, indirect expressions are a sign of politeness or deference to the opinions of others, and have a phatic function. They are often used for deliberate effect, and are not regarded by the Japanese as poor style.

Indirectness is the result of culturally-ingrained attitudes on the part of Japanese writers rather than of any inherent or objective characteristics of the language itself. The Japanese language does possess the necessary means for clear expression if so desired. Conversely, devices similar to many of those used to achieve indirectness in Japanese exist also in English. Nevertheless, these socio-culturally-determined attitudes toward the use of language in Japan do result in considerably greater indirectness than is acceptable in English-speaking communities.

Nowadays the weight of overt opinion as far as non-literary writing at least is concerned seems to have swung against indirectness, and the authors of scientific papers, for example, are frequently urged to be precise and explicit. Shedding these habits of indirectness is no easy task, however, and such expressions still abound even in technical texts.

This tendency to use oblique expressions manifests itself in both lexical items and grammatical constructions. One of the most commonly-occurring lexical items that contributes to vagueness in Japanese is 

\[
\text{nado} \quad \text{(and so on)}
\]

Endo (1988:6) notes that one function of 

\[
\text{nado} \quad \text{is "... to add ambiguity, which can show modesty, deference, or diffidence, and often causes problems in translation if it can be mistaken for the second more literal meaning of for example."}
\]

There is also a predilection for such unexplicit phrases as 

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\text{no yoo na (like a ...), kono sono /ano yoo na (such a ...), and koo /soo shita (such) where in English a more direct "this/these" or "that/those" would suffice. A few of the other items that are commonly used to blur statements are ... suru keikoo ga aru (There is a tendency to ...), osoraku (probably), tabun (perhaps), rashii (seems), hotondo (about), bakari (something like), teki (suffix meaning -tic or -tical), nari (either ... or), o chuushin ni (centring around), kankei no (related), o meguru (concerning), no haikei kara (owing to this background), iwaba (so to speak), isshu no (a kind of), ichio (more or less), chotto (a little), sorosoro (by and by), aru ... (a certain ...), shibaraku (a while), ... no hoo (on the ... side), and koto ni you (possibly) (often used in combination with kamoshirenai (perhaps)).
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Negative expressions are frequently used to soften the directness of a statement. For instance, this may take the form of negative rhetorical questions (e.g. de wa nai deshoo ka [is it not that ...?] or double negatives (e.g. nai koto wa nai [It is not that there is no ...]). Particles such as mo, demo and toka are also used for a circumspectionary effect or to indicate that one is simply citing a possible example. Likewise, the frequentative tari form can be used to make a statement less direct by hinting at other possibilities. Another method of introducing a hesitant note is the use of mid-sentence self-questioning, as in the following:

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\text{... nihonjin to iu no wa jukyoo no eikyoo deshoo ka, ningen kankei no naka de "noo" to iu koto o hakkiri liinuki bakkuguraundo ga arimasu. (Morita and Ishihara, 1989:109) (... the Japanese - perhaps because of the influence of Confucianism? - have traditionally found it difficult to give a straightforward "no" in their dealings with people.)
}\]

If the indirectness is a deliberate evasionary tactic, the translation should retain this tone so
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as to avoid over-translation - i.e. expressing more than the original. If it is culturally-conditioned, retaining the forms that produce this indirectness may make the writer sound genuinely tentative and hesitant in English, instead of simply couching his or her opinions in a manner that is acceptable to a Japanese audience.

Sentence-final expressions

A major factor contributing to indirectness in Japanese texts is the use of indeterminate sentence-final expressions. One common type consists of the passive form of verbs such as iu (to say), omou (to think), kanjiru (to feel) and kangaeru (to consider). When these are being used to report the actual opinions of other people, they can be translated overtly. Often, however, the passive form of such verbs expresses not a passive meaning, but a volitional sense. Influenced by the form of these verbs, however, translators tend to render them with an English passive, which may give the misleading impression that the writer is trying to conceal the source of the opinion.

A similar effect of avoiding the abruptness of an outright statement and of distorting the writer from the observation by making less overtly subjective is achieved by using potential forms (e.g. ... to ieyoo [It could be said that ...], ni omoeru [It can be thought that ...]), nai ([It is possible that ...]) and "permissive" expressions (e.g. ... to itte yoi [It can be said that ...] and ... to kangaete yoi [It can be thought that...]).

Some other sentence-final forms that express an attitude of caution or conjecture on the part of the writer are ... yosoo sareru (It is anticipated that ...), ... suru mono to mirareru (It is thought that ...), ... to iu fuu ni mirareru (It is regarded as ...), ... to sareru (It is considered as ...), deshoo/ daroo (If I suppose ...), ... to iu koto de aru/aro (It is probable that ...), ... to iu koto ni naru (It means that ...), kamoshireinai (perhaps), ... yoo da (It seems that ...), and soo da (Apparently), as well as negative or negative-sounding expressions such as ... to wa ilinkui (It is difficult to say that ...) and ... to wa igatai (It is hard to say that ...) instead of a straight negative verb. These sentence endings may be used in combination - e.g. takai wake de wa nai to ieru no de wa nai daroo ka (Could we not say that it is not that it is expensive?); ... de wa nai ka to mo omoete kuru ([I] begin to think that might not it be that ...). They are not always verb-focused; noun-centered phrases with a low semantic content are also common - e.g. choookoo ga aru (There are indications that ...), ... to iu no ga genjitsu da (The fact is that ...), ... to iu jokyou desu (The situation is that ...), and ... no ga genjoo desu (The current state of affairs is that ...).

The repeated use of such phrases dilutes the force of a text, and they are often best omitted in the interests of conciseness and clarity. Usually their omission does not alter the substantial meaning. The note of hesitancy is lost, but this is a positive factor rather than a negative one when translating into English, which prefers more forthright expression of opinions.

Of course, not all sentence-final expressions are meaningless or indicative of vagueness. Many impart a particular nuance, while others serve to emphasize the writer's point. Nevertheless, many expressions have lost their original emphatic force through over-use, and contribute little to the meaning - e.g. iu made mo nai (Needless to say...), kataru beku mo nai (It goes without saying...), ... ni chigai nai (surely) and ... ni machigai nai (certainly).

Self-effacing expressions

The Japanese have a predilection for various self-effacing or self-negating expressions, often found as a disclaimer at the beginning or end of a discourse. Such expressions of modesty, whether sincere or not, can be interpreted as a sign of respect toward the reader - i.e. as another illustration of how Japanese linguistic expression is very conscious of interpersonal relationships.

These apologetic expressions include disparaging comments on one's speaking or writing abilities and one's knowledge or appearance, and apologies for referring to one's self or private life. Though English writers use similar self-belittling devices on occasion, these utterances seem much more frequent in Japanese. Some such expressions cited by Saita et al. (1984:20) are as follows:

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Watashi wa betsu ni senmonka de wa nai no desu ga ... (I am no expert, but ...)
Toojisha de aru watashi ga iu no mo okashii no desu ga ... (It is odd for me to say so myself ...)
Watashigoto de kyooshuku desu ga ...
(I apologize for bringing up personal matters, but ...)
Watashi no yoo na mono ga senetsu desu ga ... (It is presumptuous for someone like me to say so, but ...)
Other oft-used expressions are temae miso de wa aru ga ...
(I am blowing my own trumpet, but ...) and watashi no jiron desu ga ...
(It is my pet theory that ...) In the following sentence the deprecatory elements virtually outweigh the substantive content:
Sate, isasaka somatsu ni mieru kameshirenai mondai ni kodawatte kita okage de, yaya tadatoshii ashidori de wa atta keredomo, nihongo to eigo no kanari kihonteki na hassoo no chigai ga, oborogenagara mihajimeru tokoromo made tadoritsuketa yoo na ki ga suru. (Anzai, 1983:105)
(Having gone into what may appear to be a somewhat unimportant issue at some length, I feel that we have reached, though with some difficulty, a place where we can begin to see, although indistinctly, some quite fundamental differences between Japanese and English thought.)
Sometimes this humility takes the form of overt deference to the reader, expressed as a rhetorical question:
Doomo watashi no kanji toshite wa, koosha no hoo ga yahari nihongo toshite shikkuri kuru yoo ni omoeru no da ga, dekusha wo de okenji ni naru daroo ka.
(Anzai, 1983:17)
(It is my feeling that somehow the latter is more natural as Japanese, but how do readers feel about this?)
These expressions cannot always be taken at face value. If translated literally, the reader may mistake this ostensible modesty for real inability. For example, a speaker using the superficially diffident phrase sate shiken o noberu naraba (If I were to venture my opinion ...) is actually putting on airs. Hence the translator may again be called on to intervene by applying a cultural filter that removes some of this apparent humility so as to avoid giving a false impression to the English reader.

**Hyperbole**

On the other side of the coin is the frequency of exaggerated expressions in Japanese - e.g. sugoi (superb), monosugoku (tremendous), osoroshii hodo (awfully), mottomo (most), saikoo ni (supremely), mugen no (infinite), zetsudai no (immense), kanpeki ni (perfectly), banzen no (infallible), zessai no (unrivaled), karigi mo naku (unlimited), shinu hodo (be dying for ...), hisshi (desperate), kesshite (on no account), mattaku (completely), hontoo ni (really), zettai ni (absolutely), itsu demo (anytime), dokoo demo (anywhere), subete (all), rekishiteki shunken (historic moment), yume no (a dream ...), danjite (decidedly), karada o hatte (wager one’s own flesh and blood for ...), inochi o kakete (at the risk of one’s life), inochi no kagiri (as long as one lives), shinde mo (stake one’s life), danko taru (unfaulting), batsu gun (outstanding), saitei (lowest), yuniiiku (unique), mooretsu (intense), kessaku (masterpiece), yuushuu (excellent), attooteki (overwhelming), nihon ichi (best in Japan), sekai ichi (best in the world), daichi (firstly), akumade (exceedingly) and the prefixes toku (extra), choo (ultra-) and dai (great) (Fujii, 1977). The over-use of the honorific particle o (often in combination with the honorific suffix san) and the use of the personal pronoun wareware (we) in such phrases as wareware nihonjin (we Japanese) are other aspects of hyperbole in Japanese (3). Another manifestation of this tendency is the frequent use of fine-sounding terms in the titles of institutions - e.g. bunka (cultural), kokusai (international). Exaggeration is also common in greetings, including overstated expressions of humility, as discussed above.

The indiscriminate use of exaggerated expressions in Japanese has weakened their impact as an emphatic device. Translating these literally may result in greater intensity in the
translation than was intended by the writer. For example, many loan words have been so overused that their meaning has been diluted, and literal translation may make them sound misleadingly exaggerated - e.g. shokku (shock), buumu (boom), eriito (elite), beteran (veteran), VIP. Hence it may be necessary to tone down the language in order to achieve an equivalent effect and to avoid giving the reader a false impression. For instance, kakkiteki, kiwamete and tondemo nai are frequently used in Japanese, but the dictionary equivalents (epochal or epoch-making; extremely or exceedingly; absurd, preposterous, outrageous, monstrous) are very forceful terms in English.

Rhetorical questions

One of the functions of rhetorical questions is to indicate doubt or uncertainty, and so their frequency in Japanese is another manifestation of the preference for indirectness. Another possible reason for their frequency may be the fact that they imply that the reader will agree with the writer's views - i.e. they are an indication of the characteristically Japanese desire to achieve rapport with the reader. Terry (1985:4) has commented that reproducing rhetorical questions in a translation may make the writer sound childish or pompous, and that purely rhetorical questions are rare in English except in political speeches and the like.

Rhetorical questions commonly take such forms as daroo/deshoo ka (Is it likely that ...?), (.... shitara) ikaga deshoo ka (How about ....?) and (X) to wa nan daroo ka (What is [X]?). Even more widespread is the use of hesitant negative forms such as de wa nai/ arimasen ka (Is it not that ...?), de wa nai deshoo ka (Would it not be that ...?), to omowareru no de wa nai ka (Could it not be thought that ...?), to ieru no de wa nai daroo ka (Could it not be said that ...?), de wa nakatta ka (Was it not that ...?), no de wa aru mai ka (Is it not that ...?), and ... to ikirenai no de wa nai ka (Is it not that it cannot be said that ...?). Frequently the writer will immediately answer the self-posed question:

Eigo no Judeotai to nihongo no ukemi wa, doko ga doo chigau no ka, sono taishoo ga ichiban senmei ni arawarearu no wa jidooshi no ukemi no baai daroo. Nihongo de wa, jidooshi de mo ukemi ga tsukawareru no de aru. (Anzai, 1983:187)
(The most clear-cut difference as to how and where the English and Japanese passives differ appears with intransitive verbs. In Japanese even intransitive verbs can take the passive form.)

The translator's task is to translate the function of the rhetorical question, not the form. Where appropriate, the underlying tentativeness may be expressed in an English declarative sentence by using phrases such as "might", "doubt", "suspect", "in all probability", "possibly" or "wonder". Rhetorical questions beginning with naze (why) can sometimes be converted into statements with "ought" or "ought not" or the imperative forms "do" or "do not". Omission of the rhetorical element may be the best strategy in some cases.

Though space does not allow a full discussion of all of the stylistic characteristics of Japanese, let us briefly mention a few other features that are of importance in Japanese-English translation. One is the Japanese preference for direct speech, combined with the blurring and shifting between direct and indirect speech, the loose attitude toward quotations, and the representation of dual viewpoints by means of "intermediate speech". Another is the broad use of quotation marks - to indicate not only direct quotations, but also irony or sarcasm, abstract concepts, catchphrases and slogans, neologisms, proper names, the use of a different register, metaphorical usage, clichés, specialist terminology and metalinguistic usage. Also characteristic of Japanese style is the abundant use of figurative language, and, on the more technical side, punctuation conventions that differ considerably from those of English.

Conclusion

I have outlined a few of the characteristics of Japanese "national style", and hinted at some cultural attitudes behind these language habits. Though these comments are generalizations, the collective tendencies mentioned here are supported by the literature and actual examples, and are sufficiently valid to act as broad guidelines for the Japanese-English translator. I
have repeatedly remarked on the need in informative translation to tone down or even omit altogether certain stylistic devices which are characteristic of Japanese but which may run counter to accepted standards of writing in English. Though stylistic infelicities in a translation usually have a less deleterious effect on communication than lexical errors, at best they disconcert the reader, and at worst they can distort the message.

It is vital to recognize, however, that rhetorical devices do play a role in signaling meaning. They are not merely decorative options - form and content are closely intertwined. The only justification for altering or omitting such devices is that doing so contributes to dynamic equivalence and to naturalness in the English text, which takes precedence over formal correspondence. The translator has to walk a fine line between over-translation - i.e. translating intact all of the indirectness, verbosity, superficial humility, etc. of the Japanese - and under-translation - i.e. omitting such elements in the interests of a more natural English text, but removing essential nuances in the process. There is a continual tension between the constraints imposed by the Japanese text and the requirements of English.

Though it may be difficult to determine whether the primary cause of differences in Japanese and English expression is linguistic or cultural, cultural differences that go beyond semantic skewing and lexical gaps are apparent. Different attitudes - e.g. toward interpersonal relationships - are reflected in how the language is used. Whether language determines one's world view (i.e. the Whorfian hypothesis) or the world view shapes linguistic usage has long been a much-debated issue. It seems to me that the most likely relationship between language and society is that the influence is bidirectional. Whatever the case, it is clear that social convention does favour certain manners of writing over others. We should, however, be wary of overgeneralizing these preferences.

I hope to have demonstrated that an awareness of the major stylistic differences between Japanese and English can lead to an improved translation product, and that contrastive studies need to go beyond the purely linguistic aspects to incorporate ethnolinguistic differences as well. In this sense, I believe that any theory of translation must have a strong sociolinguistic basis, and this is an area in which Japanese-English translation may be able to contribute to translation theory in general by broadening its outlook somewhat.

Notes
1. Anzai and Seidensticker (1984), however, point out that Tanizaki’s comments were based on Waley’s translations, which are wordy and add unnecessary explanations, and which are not typical of English writing.
2. The translations given in parentheses here lack context and are hence somewhat stilted. The purpose is simply to demonstrate the deleterious effect of a literal rendition of these constructions.
3. Wareware (we) is also another way of avoiding individualistic expression and submerging the self. Anzai (1983:22) also notes that the use of wareware in phrases such as wareware ningen (we humans) has the phatic function of creating a sense of intimacy between reader and writer.
4. Beekman and Callow (1974:241) comment that many rhetorical questions beginning with "why" "... reflect negatively upon the legitimacy of the purpose, reason for, or motive of another's actions or statements."

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