

THE CATEGORIZATION OF WORDS IN THE BOOK *FIRST WORDS JAPANESE: 100 JAPANESE WORDS TO LEARN*

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Abstract

Japanese uses more than one type of characters in their daily life. Based on the origin of the words, there are three types of words in Japanese, namely *wago* (vocabulary native to Japan), *kan'go* (vocabulary originated from China), and *gairaigo* (vocabulary from foreign languages). The study in this paper is about the categorization of words that appeared in the book entitled *First Words Japanese: 100 Japanese Words to Learn*, published in March 2018 in Australia. The target readers of this book are young travelers who want to travel to Japan. By knowing the categorization of words taught in the book, Japanese language teaching in Indonesia will also be able to gain insights about the basic vocabulary that should be given or learned first as needed for basic level communication. This study is a qualitatively descriptive study. The method used is an observation method with a note taking technique. The results of the study showed that there are three categorizations of vocabulary taught in the book, namely *wago*, *kan'go*, and *gairaigo*. Among the three categorizations, *wago* vocabulary is the most taught vocabulary, which is about 41%. Meanwhile, *kan'go* vocabulary is the least taught vocabulary, which is only about 19%. On the other hand, the vocabulary of *gairaigo* taught is about 40%. The interesting thing found is the insignificant difference in the number of words between *wago* and *gairaigo* vocabulary introduced and taught in this book. Therefore, it can be said that more and more loanwords are coming in and used by the Japanese people and this can be said to facilitate the learning of Japanese.

Keywords - Japanese language teaching, basic level communication, basic vocabulary

Introduction

Japanese use more than one type of characters in their daily life. Based on the origin of the words, Japanese vocabulary can be categorized into three categories, namely native Japanese words (*wago* 和語), *Sino-Japanese words* (*kan'go* 漢語), and loanwords (*gairaigo* 外来語). The way these foreign words are naturalized and divided into distinct categories is what makes absorption vocabulary in Japanese unique. Chinese words are grouped together in a vocabulary category called *kan'go*. Foreign words that are not of Chinese origin are placed into the *gairaigo* vocabulary category.

Kan'go vocabulary can be distinguished from *gairaigo* vocabulary from the characters used to write them. *Kan'go* vocabulary is written in Chinese characters (*Kanji* 漢字). While the *gairaigo* vocabulary is written in *Katakana* characters (Horie 2018). The original Japanese vocabulary itself or known as *wago* is usually written in *Hiragana* although it can also be written in kanji. To distinguish *kan'go* and *wago* which are both written using kanji characters is to listen to the pronunciation. When pronounced using *kun'yomi*, the word is *wago*. Meanwhile, when pronounced using *on'yomi*, the word is *kan'go* (Yinamoto 2010). These two ways of reading emerged as a result of the adaptation of the Chinese pronunciation when the Japanese adopted the Chinese writing system and applied it to their own language. *On'yomi* is

a way of reading that comes from Chinese pronunciation, while *kun'yomi* is a way of reading native to Japan (Dexter 2017).

The examples of *Hiragana*, *Katakana*, and *Kanji* characters, can be seen in Figure 1 below.

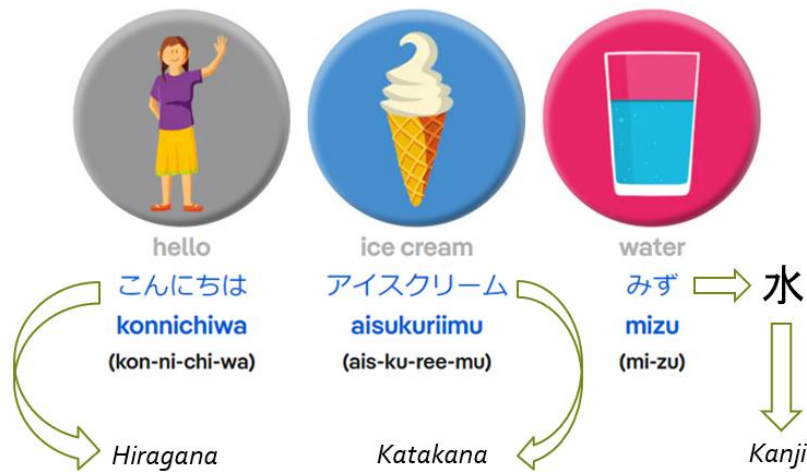


Figure 1. Three Types of Characters Used in Japanese Language

In Figure 1, the word *konnichiwa* ‘hello’ is written using *Hiragana*, the word *aisukuriimu* ‘ice cream’ is written using *Katakana*, and the word *mizu* ‘water’ is written using *Hiragana* but can also be written using *Kanji*. The pronunciation of /*mizu*/ is *kun'yomi* while the *on'yomi* pronunciation of this *Kanji* character will be /*sui*/. *Onyomi* pronunciation is usually used when a *kanji* character is combined with another *kanji* character.

The complexity of characters used in Japanese language is one of the problems that Japanese language learners have to deal with. In March 2018, Lonely Planet Book Publisher had published a beginner level Japanese book for young travelers. By looking up the content of this book, an insight about basic words that should be taught to beginner level of Japanese learners can be achieved. In other words, by knowing the categorization of words taught in the book, Japanese language teaching in Indonesia will also be able to gain insights about the basic vocabulary that should be given or learned first as needed for basic level communication. This knowledge is important to give a basic foundation for Japanese language literacy. In the world of education in Japan, the concept of "literacy" is understood as *yomikaki nouryoku* (ability to read and write), while in non-educational contexts, "literacy" is understood as the ability to decode scripts (Ingulsrud & Allen 2009).

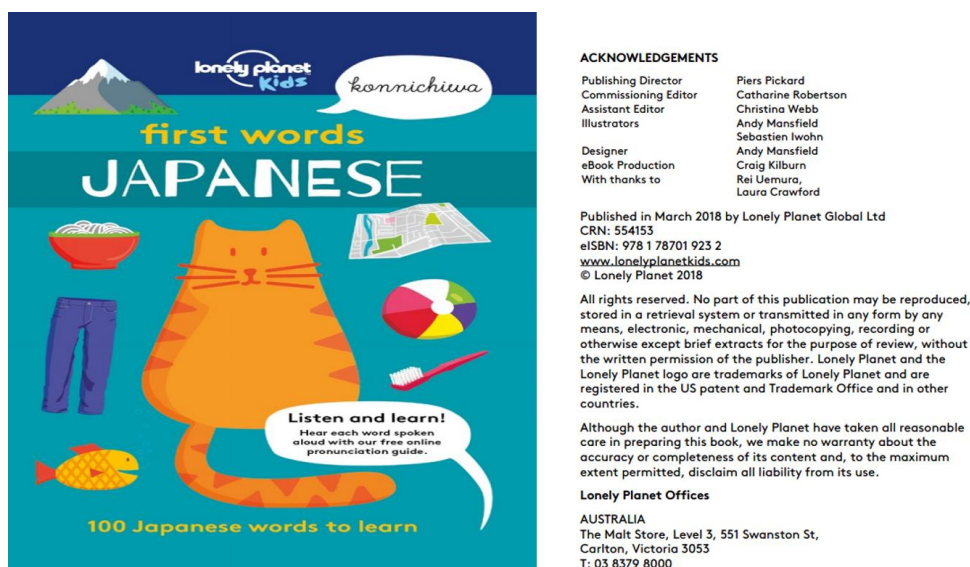
In Indonesia, Japanese words has gradually introduced to Indonesian people as Iwai's study shows (2021). Words such as *karaoke*, *emoji*, *manga*, *sushi*, *tempura*, *sumo*, *karate*, *judo*, *kamikaze*, etc. have been commonly used as loanwords in Indonesian mass media.

In this paper, three problems were investigated. First, the categories of vocabulary that can be found in *First Words Japanese: 100 Japanese Words to Learn*. Second, the genres of words that can be found in *First Words Japanese: 100 Japanese Words to Learn*. Third, the implications of these findings for learning Japanese.

Methods

The data was taken from a book entitled *First Words Japanese: 100 Japanese Words to Learn*. This book was published in March 2018 in Australia. The target readers of this book are young travelers who want to travel to Japan.

This study is a qualitatively descriptive study. The method used is an observation method with a note taking technique. Words found in the book, were classified according to the Japanese vocabulary categorization, namely *wago*, *kan'go*, and *gairaigo*. Total number in each category were counted and compared to determine the most taught vocabulary in the book. To answer the second problem, words found in the book were classified according to their genres. There are 14 genres found in the book, such as foods and drinks, place name, clothes, etc. Finally, interpretation based on the findings was made to answer problem number three.



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Figure 2. *First Words Japanese: 100 Japanese Words to Learn*

Finding and Discussion

a. Findings

Three categorizations of Japanese words were discovered based on observations of the words taught in the book *First Words Japanese: 100 Japanese Words to Learn*. Those three categorizations are *wago* (original Japanese vocabulary), *kan'go* (Japanese vocabulary originating from China), and *gairaigo* (Japanese vocabulary from foreign countries other than China). The following tables list the words based on their categorizations.

Table 1. *Wago* Vocabulary

No.	Word	Meaning	No.	Word	Meaning
1.	<i>konnichiwa</i>	hello	2.	<i>mizu</i>	water
3.	<i>neko</i>	cat	4.	<i>inu</i>	dog
5.	<i>kamo</i>	duck	6.	<i>sakana</i>	fish
7.	<i>hashi</i>	chopsticks	8.	<i>ukiwa</i>	rubber ring
9.	<i>oishasan</i>	doctor	10.	<i>ringo</i>	apple
11.	<i>mushi</i>	worm	12.	<i>ichiba</i>	market
13.	<i>kutsu</i>	shoes	14.	<i>kuruma</i>	car
15.	<i>ie</i>	house	16.	<i>sara</i>	plate
17.	<i>hon</i>	book	18.	<i>hai</i>	yes
19.	<i>iie</i>	no	20.	<i>omawarisan</i>	police officer

21.	<i>kagi</i>	key	22.	<i>kippu</i>	ticket
23.	<i>sushi</i>	sushi	24.	<i>ame</i>	rain
25.	<i>yuki</i>	snow	26.	<i>ki</i>	tree
27.	<i>hana</i>	flower	28.	<i>sakuranbo</i>	cherry
29.	<i>tori</i>	bird	30.	<i>tamago</i>	egg
31.	<i>kasa</i>	umbrella	32.	<i>okane</i>	money
33.	<i>nezumi</i>	mouse	34.	<i>isu</i>	chair
35.	<i>yama</i>	mountain	36.	<i>saru</i>	monkey
37.	<i>kumo</i>	spider	38.	<i>gohan</i>	rice
39.	<i>mado</i>	window	40.	<i>tsuki</i>	moon
41.	<i>hoshi</i>	stars	42.	<i>hagaki</i>	postcard
43.	<i>kitte</i>	stamp	44.	<i>fune</i>	boat
45.	<i>sayounara</i>	goodbye			

Table 2. *Kan'go* Vocabulary

No.	Word	Meaning	No.	Word	Meaning
1.	<i>hikouki</i>	<i>aeroplane</i>	2.	<i>jitensha</i>	<i>bicycle</i>
3.	<i>kuukou</i>	<i>airport</i>	4.	<i>denwa</i>	<i>phone</i>
5.	<i>yuubinkyoku</i>	<i>post office</i>	6.	<i>gyuunyuu</i>	<i>milk</i>
7.	<i>boushi</i>	<i>hat</i>	8.	<i>densha</i>	<i>train</i>
9.	<i>eki</i>	<i>station</i>	10.	<i>tokei</i>	<i>clock</i>
11.	<i>entotsu</i>	<i>chimney</i>	12.	<i>eigakan</i>	<i>cinema</i>
13.	<i>kouen</i>	<i>park</i>	14.	<i>taiyou</i>	<i>sun</i>
15.	<i>ginkou</i>	<i>bank</i>	16.	<i>tebukuro</i>	<i>gloves</i>
17.	<i>byouin</i>	<i>hospital</i>	18.	<i>haburashi</i>	<i>toothbrush</i>
19.	<i>hamigakiko</i>	<i>toothpaste</i>	20.	<i>hiyakedome</i>	<i>sun cream</i>
21.	<i>chizu</i>	<i>map</i>			

Table 3. *Gairaigo* Vocabulary

No.	Word	Meaning	No.	Word	Meaning
1.	<i>aisukuriimu</i>	<i>ice cream</i>	2.	<i>suupaamaaketto</i>	<i>supermarket</i>
3.	<i>shoppingu kaato</i>	<i>trolley</i>	4.	<i>basu</i>	<i>bus</i>
5.	<i>wanpiisu</i>	<i>dress</i>	6.	<i>banana</i>	<i>banana</i>
7.	<i>takushii</i>	<i>taxi</i>	8.	<i>tiishatsu</i>	<i>t-shirt</i>
9.	<i>raamen</i>	<i>noodles</i>	10.	<i>puuru</i>	<i>swimming pool</i>
11.	<i>chiizu</i>	<i>cheese</i>	12.	<i>booru</i>	<i>bowl</i>
13.	<i>biichi</i>	<i>beach</i>	14.	<i>juusu</i>	<i>juice</i>
15.	<i>resutoran</i>	<i>restaurant</i>	16.	<i>hoteru</i>	<i>hotel</i>
17.	<i>chokoreeto</i>	<i>chocolate</i>	18.	<i>sangurasu</i>	<i>sunglasses</i>
19.	<i>chikin</i>	<i>chicken</i>	20.	<i>toire</i>	<i>toilet</i>
21.	<i>beddo</i>	<i>bed</i>	22.	<i>zubon</i>	<i>trousers</i>
23.	<i>suutsukeesu</i>	<i>suitcase</i>	24.	<i>naifu</i>	<i>knife</i>
25.	<i>fooku</i>	<i>fork</i>	26.	<i>supuun</i>	<i>spoon</i>
27.	<i>konpyuutaa</i>	<i>computer</i>	28.	<i>mausu</i>	<i>mouse</i>
29.	<i>sandoitchi</i>	<i>sandwich</i>	30.	<i>menyuu</i>	<i>menu</i>
31.	<i>pasupooto</i>	<i>passport</i>	32.	<i>keeki</i>	<i>cake</i>
33.	<i>booru</i>	<i>ball</i>	34.	<i>panda</i>	<i>panda</i>
35.	<i>mafuraa</i>	<i>scarf</i>	36.	<i>kooto</i>	<i>coat</i>
37.	<i>teeburu</i>	<i>table</i>	38.	<i>raion</i>	<i>lion</i>
39.	<i>pen</i>	<i>pen</i>	40.	<i>doa</i>	<i>door</i>
41.	<i>kaaten</i>	<i>curtain</i>	42.	<i>tento</i>	<i>tent</i>
43.	<i>tomato</i>	<i>tomato</i>			

Furthermore, they can be classified into 14 categories based on the types of words as can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. Words Categorization Based on Word Genre

No.	Category By Word Genre	Total	Words
1.	Foods and Drinks	16	<i>Aisukuriimu</i> ‘ice cream’, <i>Mizu</i> ‘water’, <i>Banana</i> ‘banana’, <i>Raamen</i> ‘noodles’, <i>Chiizu</i> ‘cheese’, <i>Ringo</i> ‘apple’, <i>Juusu</i> ‘juice’, <i>Gyuunyuu</i> ‘milk’, <i>Chokoreeto</i> ‘chocolate’, <i>Chikin</i> ‘chicken’, <i>Sandoitchi</i> ‘sanwich’, <i>Sushi</i> ‘sushi’, <i>Keeki</i> ‘cake’, <i>Tamago</i> ‘egg’, <i>Gohan</i> ‘rice’, <i>Tomato</i> ‘tomato’
2.	Place Name	16	<i>Suupamaaketto</i> ‘sepermarket’, <i>Puuru</i> ‘swimming pool’, <i>Biichi</i> ‘beach’, <i>Kuukou</i> ‘airport’, <i>Ichiba</i> ‘market’, <i>Yuubinkyoku</i> ‘post office’, <i>Resutoran</i> ‘restaurant’, <i>Hoteru</i> ‘hotel’, <i>Eki</i> ‘station’, <i>Toire</i> ‘toilet’, <i>Ie</i> ‘house’, <i>Eigakan</i> ‘cinema/movie theater’, <i>Kouen</i> ‘park’, <i>Ginkou</i> ‘bank’, <i>Byouin</i> ‘hospital’, <i>Yama</i> ‘mountain’
3.	Clothes	10	<i>Wanpiisu</i> ‘dress’, <i>Tiishatsu</i> ‘T-shirt’, <i>Kutsu</i> ‘shoes’, <i>Boushi</i> ‘hat’, <i>Sangurasu</i> ‘sunglasses’, <i>Zubon</i> ‘trousers’, <i>Suutsukeesu</i> ‘suitcase’, <i>Mafuraa</i> ‘scarf’, <i>Tebukuro</i> ‘gloves’, <i>Kooto</i> ‘coat’
4.	Travel Needs	10	<i>Pasupooto</i> ‘passport’, <i>Kagi</i> ‘key’, <i>Kippu</i> ‘ticket’, <i>Kasa</i> ‘umbrella’, <i>Okane</i> ‘money’, <i>Haburashi</i> ‘toothbrush’, <i>Hamigakiko</i> ‘toothpaste’, <i>Hiyakedome</i> ‘suncream/sunscreen’, <i>Tento</i> ‘tent’, <i>Chizu</i> ‘map’
5.	Animals	10	<i>Neko</i> ‘cat’, <i>Inu</i> ‘dog’, <i>Kamo</i> ‘duck’, <i>Sakana</i> ‘fish’, <i>Tori</i> ‘bird’, <i>Panda</i> ‘panda’, <i>Nezumi</i> ‘mouse’, <i>Raion</i> ‘lion’, <i>Saru</i> ‘monkey’, <i>Kumo</i> ‘spider’
6.	Transportation Facilities	7	<i>Basu</i> ‘bus’, <i>Takushii</i> ‘taxi’, <i>Hikouki</i> ‘airplane’, <i>Jitensha</i> ‘bicycle’, <i>Kuruma</i> ‘car’, <i>Densha</i> ‘train’, <i>Fune</i> ‘boat’
7.	Cutlery	7	<i>Hashi</i> ‘chopsticks’, <i>Booru</i> ‘bowl’, <i>Sara</i> ‘plate’, <i>Naifu</i> ‘knife’, <i>Fooku</i> ‘fork’, <i>Supuun</i> ‘spoon’, <i>Menyuu</i> ‘menu’
8.	Weather	5	<i>Ame</i> ‘rain’, <i>Yuki</i> ‘snow’, <i>Taiyou</i> ‘sun’, <i>Tsuki</i> ‘moon’, <i>Hoshi</i> ‘stars’
9.	Stationary	3	<i>Hon</i> ‘book’, <i>Pen</i> ‘pen’, <i>Hagaki</i> ‘postcard’
10.	Greetings	2	<i>Konnichiwa</i> ‘hello’, <i>Sayounara</i> ‘goodbye’
11.	Plants	2	<i>Ki</i> ‘tree’, <i>Hana</i> ‘flower’
12.	Jobs	2	<i>Oishasan</i> ‘doctor’, <i>Omawarisan</i> ‘police officer’
13.	Communication tools	2	<i>Denwa</i> ‘phone’, <i>Konpyuutaa</i> ‘computer’
14.	Others	8	<i>Beddo</i> ‘bed’, <i>Hai</i> ‘yes’, <i>Iie</i> ‘no’, <i>Booru</i> ‘ball’, <i>Isu</i> ‘chair’, <i>Teeburu</i> ‘table’, <i>Doa</i> ‘door’, <i>Mado</i> ‘window’

b. Discussion

As can be seen from Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3, there are three categorizations of vocabulary taught in the book, namely *wago*, *kan’go*, and *gairaigo*. Among the three categorizations, *wago* vocabulary is the most taught vocabulary, which is about 41% (45 words). Meanwhile, *kan’go* vocabulary is the least taught vocabulary, which is only about 19% (21 words). On the other hand, the vocabulary of *gairaigo* taught is about 40% (43 words). The interesting thing found is the insignificant difference in the number of words between *wago* and *gairaigo* vocabulary introduced and taught in this book. O’Neil (2021) states that foreign loanwords have come to form a substantial portion of the contemporary Japanese vocabulary. Nowadays, more and more

English vocabulary is enriching Japanese vocabulary as part of this *gairaigo*. It is understandable as English is one of the most used international languages. The use of it will increase the prestige of its speakers. These loanwords have entered many contexts including the culinary content on Instagram as studied by Rasiban et.al. (2021). Therefore, it can be said that more and more loanwords are coming in and used by the Japanese people and this can be said to facilitate the learning of Japanese especially the knowledge of English vocabulary. The more English vocabulary mastered by a Japanese learner, the easier for him/her to master *gairaigo* vocabulary.

The use of *kan'go* vocabulary is low in this book. This phenomenon can also be understood due to the *kan'go* vocabulary tends to be used in technical terms and formal expressions while *wago* vocabulary are often found among basic words and everyday language (Ivarsson in Burman 2020).

Conclusions

As the conclusions, there are three conclusions that can be drawn. First, there are three Japanese vocabulary categories that can be found in the book. The *wago* vocabulary is the most taught although the different in number with *gairaigo* vocabulary is merely 2 words (1%). Second, there are 14 types of words that were found in the book with the words regarding “foods and drinks” together with “place name” category as the most taught types. Third, the importance of knowledge on *gairaigo* has increased significantly especially among young learners. Therefore, Japanese learners in Indonesia should also gradually increase their *gairaigo* vocabulary knowledge.

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