

# Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?

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- *From:* [hrrubin@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:hrrubin@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) (Herman Rubin)
  - *Date:* 4 Jan 2006 14:50:34 -0500
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In article <877j9gvlee.fsf@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Lee Sau Dan <danlee@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:  
>>>>> "Herman" =3D=3D Herman Rubin <hrrubin@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> writes:

> Colin> What may be confusing you is that Japanese extensively  
> Colin> borrowed Chinese words, and the way of writing them.=3D20

> >> Doesn't that sound like the relationship between Latin and  
> >> English?

> Herman> Not really. Latin words taken directly into English are  
> Herman> pronounced much as they are in Latin.=20=20

>Really? How do people pronounce "fungus"? Or "July"?

The vowels in "fungus" have been anglicized, but not the consonants. And the Latin is not "July", but "Iulius", or possibly some other case ending.

> Herman> This applies to other languages.=20=20

>I don't think so. What has "station" become in Spanish and Italian?

> Herman> I do not know of anyone who will read "quod erat  
> Herman> demonstradum" (sp?) as "what was to be demonstrated",

>Many people say "cue ee dee". And that sounds like Latin?

And they will say "eff bee eye" instead of "Federal Bureau of Investigation" when reading the abbreviation.

> Herman> although that is its meaning, or "et cetera" as "and so  
> Herman> on".

>I was taught to pronounce "e.g." as "for example" and "i.e." as "that  
>is", although I've encountered many native speakers would pronounce  
>them as "ee jee" and "eye ee". None of these sound like Latin.

Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?

Given the abbreviations, yes; I would pronounce the names of the letters when reading an abbreviation; that is not reading the words. The Latin words are rarely spelled out for these, and many others.

> Herman> But written Chinese words were used for Japanese words of  
> Herman> the same or similar meaning, but not similar sounds.

>They are, if you're talking about Sino-Japanese words. There are also  
>frequently used Japanese-native words that are written with Kanji.  
>But Sino-Japanese words are very numerous.

>Of course, "sounding similar" has to take into account of historical  
>sound changes in both language systems, as well as the sound  
>adaptations as those Sino-Japanese words entered Japanese. Comparing  
>Cantonese and Japanese pronunciations reveals more similarities than  
>comparing Mandarin and Japanese, because Mandarin sound very  
>differently from Middle Chinese. Words like "denwa" (Japanese) and  
>[din22 wa35] (Cantonese) sound alike and are written identically.  
>"loku" (J) and [lUk2] (C) sound alike and are written identically.  
>"kantan" (J) and [kan35 tan55] (C) sound alike and are written  
>identically. Even "mama" (J), which has no Kanji's, and [ma22 ma35]  
>(C) have similar meanings -- perhaps just a coincidence.

>--=20

>Lee Sau Dan =A7=F5=A6u=B4=B0 ~=  
>{ @nJX6X~ }

>E-mail: danlee@xx

>Home page: <http://www.informatik.uni-freiburg.de/~danlee>

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This address is for information only. I do not claim that these views are those of the Statistics Department or of Purdue University.  
Herman Rubin, Department of Statistics, Purdue University  
hrubin@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Phone: (765)494-6054 FAX: (765)494-0558  
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• *Follow-Ups:*

◆ *Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?*

◇ *From:* Peter T. Daniels

• *References:*

◆ *Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?*

◇ *From:* Lee Sau Dan

Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?

◆ ***Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?***

◇ *From:* Herman Rubin

◆ ***Re: why is Japanese (spoken) nothing like Chinese?***

◇ *From:* Lee Sau Dan

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