

Man angry at English on Japanese TV

29th June, 2013



A Japanese man is angry with Japan's television company NHK. He is tired of hearing so many English words on TV. Mr Hoji Takahashi, 71, says he is stressed every time he hears an English loanword on NHK. He is taking NHK to court. He wants the TV company to pay him 1.4 million yen (\$14,300) for his "mental distress". Mr Takahashi's lawyer told

the AFP news agency that Japanese TV is too "Americanised". Takahashi doesn't understand why NHK uses words borrowed from English instead of Japanese words. He said NHK should use Japanese and not loanwords for vocabulary such as "toraburu" (trouble), "risuku" (risk) and "shisutemu" (system). He said this would help protect Japanese culture.

Mr Takahashi started a small group called "The Treat Japanese as Important Association". He started it after he wrote to NHK but got no reply. He said NHK does not care about his opinions. Takahashi said older Japanese people often have problems with the many loanwords on NHK. He said they have trouble understanding what announcers on NHK say. He told reporters: "Young people can probably understand a lot of this stuff, but for older people like myself...I don't know what it means." The Japanese language has thousands of words borrowed from English and other languages. It uses a special alphabet called *katakana* to write them. It also changes the pronunciation to fit with Japanese phonics.

Sources: *The Japan Times* / *Japan Today* / *BBC*

Writing

English loanwords damage other languages and cultures. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

angry / tired of hearing something / loanword / mental distress / borrowed / culture / small group / no reply / have trouble / announcers / alphabet / pronunciation / phonics

True / False

- An Englishman is angry because of poor English on Japanese TV. T / F
- A man is taking a Japanese TV company to court to get money. T / F
- The man said Japanese is becoming too Americanised. T / F
- The man said he wants the TV company to talk about Japanese culture. T / F
- The man wrote to the TV company but it didn't write back. T / F
- The man said young people do not understand English loanwords. T / F
- There is a special alphabet in Japanese just for borrowed words. T / F
- The pronunciation of loanwords in Japanese is the same as in English. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. angry | a. pain |
| 2. tired | b. answer |
| 3. distress | c. presenters |
| 4. instead of | d. fed up |
| 5. protect | e. views |
| 6. reply | f. mad |
| 7. opinions | g. match |
| 8. trouble | h. rather than |
| 9. announcers | i. preserve |
| 10. fit | j. problems |

Discussion – Student A

- What are your favourite words in your language and why?
- Why do you think NHK did not reply to Mr Takahashi's letter?
- Should older people just understand that language changes?
- What do you think it's like to listen to the news and not understand many loanwords?
- Can loanwords help you understand more English words?
- Many languages might be half English in the future. Is this good or bad?
- What do you think NHK will say to Mr Takahashi?
- What questions would you like to ask NHK?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. He is tired | a. to court |
| 2. He is taking NHK | b. and not loanwords |
| 3. words borrowed | c. announcers on HHK say |
| 4. NHK should use Japanese | d. fit with Japanese phonics |
| 5. this would help protect | e. alphabet called <i>katakana</i> |
| 6. he wrote to NHK | f. of hearing so many English words |
| 7. trouble understanding what | g. understand a lot of this stuff |
| 8. Young people can probably | h. Japanese culture |
| 9. It uses a special | i. but got no reply |
| 10. changes the pronunciation to | j. from English |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of English words being used in your language?
- What do you think of Mr Takahashi's feelings?
- What stresses you about your language?
- Are you worried your culture is becoming Americanised?
- Why do you think Japanese TV chooses loanwords instead of Japanese?
- Are there any English loanwords in your language you love or hate?
- Is NHK helping to damage Japanese culture by using loanwords?
- What would you like to ask Mr Takahashi?

Spelling

- he is dsetessr
- He is taking NHK to rutoc
- Japanese TV is too "iercmdsaeinA"
- English sitdena of Japanese
- vyabalcuro such as "toraburu" (trouble)
- Japanese lecurtu
- "The Treat Japanese as Important ssaitcinAoo"
- NHK does not care about his snnooipi
- what unresnacno on NHK say
- tudhsason of words
- a special lhptbeaa
- It also changes the auioicnprtrno

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. a	4. h	5. i
6. b	7. e	8. j	9. c	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Mr Takahashi

You are angry that TV companies use so many loanwords. Tell the others 3 reasons why. You are worried young people will not speak Japanese properly. You think TV company bosses don't care about Japanese. You want people to stop watching TV until the companies stop using loanwords.

Role B – TV company boss

You think loanwords are great on TV. Tell the others three reasons why. Mr Takahashi is old and does not understand the modern world and new vocabulary. Tell Mr Takahashi that loanwords are Japanese words now. Tell him you will pay for him to study loanwords.

Role C – Young Japanese person

You don't like TV companies using so many loanwords. Tell the others three reasons why. You don't understand many of the words. You would understand the news better if there were no loanwords. You think your Japanese is poorer because of loanwords. Agree with everything Mr Takahashi says.

Role D – Japanese language expert

You think loanwords are totally normal. Tell the others three reasons why. Every language uses loanwords. Many Japanese words are used in English. Loanwords make Japanese more interesting. They can also help Japanese students learn English. TV is important to teach people new loanwords.

Speaking

Rank these and share your rankings. Put the things that make you angry most at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| • texting language | • bad grammar |
| • English loanwords | • untidy handwriting |
| • swearing | • new slang |
| • poor spelling | • forgetting easy words |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.