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Impactful beauty or serious disgust

Emphasizing with *katakana*

Abstract

The Japanese language utilizes primarily three writing systems; *Kanji*, *hiragana* and *katakana*. The latter two are known as *kana*. All three writing systems have their own unique role when writing in Japanese. Corresponding to their primary roles, there are various ‘sub roles’ as well. This paper will mainly be focusing on the *katakana* writing system’s lesser known role, emphasizing. Seven interviews have been conducted in order to find answers on this phenomenon.

The purpose of this paper is to find out how emphasizing with *katakana* is utilized, when it is used and by whom it is used. These questions are answered by four Japanese native speakers around the ages 20-21 and three Japanese native speakers that are around the age of 40.

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Conventions

This paper will transcribe Japanese words with the Latin alphabet according to a modified version of the Hepburn system. All Japanese words will be written in a cursive style.

Particles such as は, へ and を will further be referred to as “wa”, “e” and “o”. Vowels with longer pronunciations such as o or u will be marked with macrons, e.g. ショッピングモール becomes *shoppingumōru* ‘shopping mall’ and 先週 becomes *senshū* ‘last week’. However the long vowel i will not be marked with macrons, e.g. かわいい *kawaii* ‘cute’. The Japanese ん / ン character will be transcribed as *n*, therefore in cases such as ぜんぜん becomes *zenzen* ‘not at all’ or ウンテン *unten* ‘driving’. For describing palatalized words the character *y* will be added e.g. *ryo* and *kyu*, except for the cases of *sha*, *shu*, *sho*, *cha*, *chu*, *cho*, *ja*, *ju* and *jo*. Sounds that are represented by small つ / ツ ‘*tsu*’ indicates words with double consonants e.g. トピック *topikku* ‘topic’ and すごく *suggoku* ‘extremely’. Japanese words or place names that already have a conventional way of writing in English will be referred to in the respective way, therefore 東京 will be written as Tokyo without macrons and cursive style.

Examples taken out from reference will be altered according to this system, with the original edit marked with the reference’s corresponding footnote.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The contemporary Japanese writing system consists of three major writing systems (four including the Roman alphabet); *kanji*, *katakana* and *hiragana*. The latter two are known as *kana* which is a syllabary system. The former writing system, *kanji* are Chinese characters integrated into the Japanese language from arguably as early as 200AD.¹ These three writing systems have their own specific usage within the Japanese language. Because *kanji* has been used for centuries, it has been deeply rooted into the Japanese language and is used to express content words in contemporary Japanese.² *Katakana* and *hiragana*'s main purpose at the time when *kana* was formed was to aid readers to understand the Chinese characters in a way of abbreviating the Chinese characters.³ However in contemporary Japanese the two *kana* have different roles. *Katakana* is used more or less to express foreign loan words from mainly western languages, while *hiragana*'s function is to express grammatical function words e.g. particles and inflectional endings.

Even though the above mentioned writing systems have their own particular roles, *katakana* for example, has various alternative functions corresponding to its main function, a lot of which is focused on foreign loan words. Other alternative functions are expressing onomatopoeic words or expressions, some animals are also written with *katakana*. Also scientific taxonomies such as 'human' for example would be ヒト *hito*, whereas it would usually be written in *kanji*, 人. Another function *katakana* has is to put emphasis onto words.⁴

1.2 Purpose and methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to research about the emphasizing function *katakana* possesses. When searching for information about this phenomenon, I realized that detailed information was lacking and therefore I was uncertain whether or not this phenomenon exists. For that reason I decided to interview native Japanese speakers and ask them about their opinion

¹ Seeley (1991) p.3-12

² Frellesvig (2010) p. 404

³ Shibatani (2005) p. 126

⁴ Ibid, p. 128; Igarashi (2007) p.1;

http://www.blackwellreference.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631214816_chunk_g978063121481612_ss1-2

regarding this matter. It turned out that this phenomenon indeed does exist. What I intend to research is what specific grammatical items or expressions this emphasis can be used with. Also if there is any age group or gender that uses it more than the other, when or what type of texts it is used with, as well as if it is a more informal or formal way of expressing. To get answers on these questions I have conducted seven interviews with seven different informants, two males and two females with the age around 20-21, as well as three native speakers around the age of 40, one male and two females.

Young Japanese native speakers, tend to often use slang words and other unconventional expressions which are influenced by foreign loan words. Therefore I would like to know if the emphasizing phenomenon is utilized more by younger native speakers in comparison to an older generation of native speakers. For comparison I would need opinions from older native speakers, to see if this phenomenon is not only restricted to younger native speakers, as well as if there is a similar emphasizing function but rather used by older speakers.

1.3 Outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. In order to understand how emphasizing with *katakana* is utilized, it is important to know what *katakana* is in general, as well as how it came to be together with the other writing systems that contemporary Japanese utilizes. The following chapter explains the beginning of the Japanese writing system, from when only one writing system was utilized, until the evolution of *katakana* and *hiragana*. The third chapter continues on the evolution of *katakana* and *hiragana* as well as explaining the differences between them as they are being further developed. The chapter after that explains contemporary usage of the Japanese language as well as what impact foreign loan words has on the language. The fifth chapter continues to focus on foreign loan words and what relation it has to the *katakana* writing system. The sixth chapter gives a brief explanation on uncommon, but acceptable usages with *katakana*. The penultimate chapter describes the methodology that was used as well as presenting the results from the research. The final chapter shows the conclusion from the research and discussion.

2. The origin of the Japanese writing system

2.1 Ancient texts and origins

According to the *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* and *Nihon shoki (Chronicles of Japan)* from early 700 AD, Chinese characters were found in Japan around late 200 AD, it was the first writing system that was introduced in Japan. This means that the Chinese characters were used in a style of classical Chinese syntax. The Chinese way of writing was considered as a model for writing in Japan. Even though the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* states that the way Chinese writing was introduced in Japan was in the form of books, however, around the beginning of the 1st century, Chinese writings inscribed in Chinese artefacts was found in Japan. Even though the Chinese writing system was introduced in a physical form at the time, this does not mean that there is any actual proof of writing taking place in Japan, neither that the Japanese understood the writing system.⁵

The earliest texts to be proven to be Japanese were around the fifth century. These texts showed a distinct understanding of the writing systems utilization. The majority of written texts before 700 AD were usually written on metal and stone which is referred to *kinsekibun*. Even nowadays there is a practice of *kinsekibun*, however the only difference is that nowadays it is used with block letters. When *kinsekibun* was made at the time, various factors were to be taken into consideration, for example; various usage of characters, usage of abbreviations and the occurrence of errors made by either the craftsman or other technical problems.⁶

2.2 Chinese Influence

Influence from the Chinese writing system together with the native Japanese way of reading resulted in a new writing style, which follows the standard way of writing in Chinese to an extent and also linguistic influence of Japanese. This new way of writing, as Seeley calls it is a 'Hybrid' style. Hybrid text had a tendency to be either too heavily Chinese influenced or Japanese influenced, rather than having a balanced utilization. For example, the Yakushi nyorai, a statue in Hōryūji Temple, Nara, Japan, has a hybrid inscription which leans more on the Japanese than of the Chinese. As Seeley describes it "*a degree of Japanese-influenced word-order, and overt representation of Japanese elements*". 薬師像作 "make a Yakushi image",

⁵ Seeley (1991) p.3-12

⁶ Ibid, p.16

this part of the inscription shows a clear usage of the Japanese grammar system, in this case: object + verb. As for the “*over representation of Japanese elements*”, another part of the inscription shows: 大御身 “body”. The two first characters indicate usage of the Japanese honorific prefix.⁷

Due to such different environments in Japan, both linguistically and culturally, there were difficulties in employing a conventional Chinese writing style in Japan. Therefore the ‘hybrid’ writing system can be seen as a natural development from both Chinese and Japanese. The origins of the hybrid style is partly modified literary Chinese which is influenced by Japanese structure. The more the Japanese writing style influenced the Chinese way of writing the more it was seen as something revolutionary. Until around the middle of the seventh century, writing in Japan was mainly composed by the Chinese system or a ‘hybrid’ system which tended to lean more on the Chinese way of writing. However, The Japanese writing style started slowly to gain recognition and development. Chinese characters were utilized in a way to fit in with Japanese syntax, in a way to avoid writing in Chinese style.⁸

By the end of the seventh century, Japan was getting more dependent on writing, due to an increase in relations with China. There was a need for writing administrative texts and at the same time a need to write and understand Buddhist texts. To be able to study the Buddhist texts, the Japanese had to translate what was already written in Chinese to Japanese.⁹

2.3 Japanese writing evolves

The *Kojiki* were composed of several works which were either written in Chinese or hybrid style. A scholar and courtier by the name of Ō no Yasumaro had altered the way of writing in the *Kojiki* to a more simple way of understanding it in Japanese. Yasumaro himself explains in the *Kojiki* why he sought to write the way he did:

“However, in antiquity words and meanings were unsophisticated, and it was difficult to represent sentences and phrases in writing. If written entirely in characters used for their meanings, the words do not correspond to the sense, if written completely in characters used for their sound value, the text becomes much longer. For this reason, in some cases passages

⁷ Ibid, p.26-28 Translation by Seeley

⁸ Ibid, p.30-31

⁹ Ibid, p.40

*have been written by means of characters employed sometimes for their sound value and sometimes for their meaning, while in other cases the meanings only have been employed”.*¹⁰

The way Yasumaro explains the situation, employing a suitable way of writing in the *Kojiki*, which could be easily read and understood in Japanese. Yasumaro decided to write in a hybrid style which mainly utilized logography and used phonogram notation more frequently than former texts. Yasumaro also expanded on the usage of phonograms in the *Kojiki*, which meant that usage of nouns, particles, pronouns, adjectives and verbs became common. The way phonograms are used to an extent in Yasumaro’s writing makes the phonology more clear. Simultaneously, and ironically, Yasumaro’s writing style made the *Kojiki* complicated to understand, due to the fact that there was a frequent switch between logogram and phonogram orthography. However, Yasumaro was aware of this problem and therefore wrote notes in the text indicating what sequence of characters or what particular characters should be read in *on* reading. Notes on *kun* reading (*Kunchū*) were added to avoid confusion and to comprehend the *Kojiki* easier. The purpose of employing *on* and *kun* readings in the *Kojiki* was to write proper nouns. Yasumaro used three different writing styles to write the *Kojiki*. The prologue is used with a Chinese style, due to the fact that the texts in the preface of the *Kojiki* were mainly administrative documents addressed to government officials. The main part was composed by Yasumaro’s hybrid style. The final part was written in the Japanese style for the *Kojiki* songs.¹¹

The difference between *kun* and *on* reading is that *kun* reading is used for Chinese characters that expresses the sound value of the corresponding native Japanese translation e.g. 庭 *niwa* “garden”, *ni wa* (particles), while as *on* readings are Chinese character that expresses the sound value of Sino-Japanese reading. *On* readings give an approximate understanding of how characters are pronounced in Chinese, therefore modern Mandarin and Japanese word’s pronunciation might be slightly similar.¹²

On and *kun* readings had a major role in the *Man’yōshū*’s phonographic system. The *Man’yōshū* is a collection of Japanese poems composed around ca 759. The orthography is heavily Chinese influenced, with hybrid style to an extent. However, out of the two readings the *on* phonogram appears more frequently in the *Man’yōshū*, because the pronunciation of some characters in Chinese at the time had an ending consonant. It integrated into Japanese as

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid, p.42-46

¹² Ibid, p. 189-191

the *on* phonographic. The way *on* reading was adopted in Japanese was in two different ways. The first way was to drop the final consonant in Chinese, for example 天 “*t’ien*” in Chinese was remade into “*te*” in Japanese. The second way of adopting *on* phonograms was by adding a vowel to the final consonant. By doing this the character as a phonogram represents two syllables, for example 險 “*kem*” in Chinese was remade into “*kemu*” in Japanese.

Further indication that shows heavy Chinese influence is the usage of certain words written in the *Man’yōshū*. For example the Chinese character 金 which means “metal”, read as “*kane*” in Japanese, combined with the character for “wind”, 風 or “*kaze*” in Japanese. Together they form “*kanekaze*” which makes no sense in Japanese, however the Chinese 金風 “*jin feng*” which means “autumn wind” makes more sense due to the fact that it is related to the Five Elements based on ancient Chinese philosophy and science.¹³

2.4 The development of *kana*

In early 800AD, the Japanese were able to develop their own writing system. This writing system expanded both phonetically and semantically from the established uses of Chinese characters in the Japanese language. The modern Japanese writing system is a simplification of the Chinese characters in two ways. Jointly with the Chinese characters, the Japanese were able to develop two syllabaries. These two syllabaries are known as *kana*. The first one, *katakana*, evolved from the simplification of Chinese characters. The second syllabary is known as *hiragana* and it derives from the Chinese character’s cursive style of writing.¹⁴ *Kana*, originally known as *karina*, was initially used as an aid for reading characters. It was written alongside with the characters. *Katakana* is distinguished from *hiragana* in a way that *katakana* characters have a “squarish” shape, whereas *hiragana* characters have round shapes.¹⁵ The formal writing method at that time, was the orthodox Sino-Japanese, or also known as *kanbun*. The *kana* system was believed to only be temporary, or as a mean of aid for reading characters. *Hiragana* on the other hand, was keenly used by women for literary purposes. However, allowing women to learn Chinese characters was discouraged. It was believed that such learning and official writings belonged only to men. Even though there was a gender separation,

¹³ Ibid, p.49-51

¹⁴ Shibatani (2005) p.120

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 126

the *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji), which was almost completely written in *hiragana* by Murasaki Shikibu, is known to be one of Japan’s most famous literary works.

2.4.1 Early functions of *katakana*

Due to a need to abbreviate Chinese characters the two *kana* syllabaries were formed. Out of the two syllabaries *katakana* was used as an aid to understand and read the *kuntenbun*, which is a collection of various texts composed in China, whether it is Buddhist texts or other secular Chinese texts. With the help of the Japanese syntax, *katakana* was used in what is called *kundoku*, in other words ‘*kun reading*’. The way *katakana* was formed was by isolating a part of a Chinese character and slightly make it cursive. For example 阿 > 𠄎 > ア *a*. Different documents had different abbreviated characters which varied from one another.¹⁶

Original Chinese Character	阿	伊	宇	江	加
<i>Katakana</i>	ア	イ	ウ	エ	カ
<i>Hiragana</i>	あ	い	う	え	か
Pronunciation	A	I	U	E	Ka

¹⁷(Examples on how *kana* was formed from Chinese characters)

There were two ways of creating the *katakana* phonograms. One was to take the first strokes of an already slightly cursive Chinese character, e.g. 伊 > イ. The other way was to take the final strokes of a slightly cursive Chinese character e.g. 須 > ス. Isolation of abbreviated Chinese characters became more or less exclusive to the *kuntenbun*, and in result within the *kuntenbun* abbreviated characters evolved.¹⁸

In regards of the second *kana* syllable, *hiragana*, detailed documents of how it was made has not been recorded or either gone missing. *Kuntenbun* which mainly consisted of “pre-*katakana*” characters, had some, albeit very few *hiragana* characters.¹⁹

¹⁶ Seeley (1991) p.62-67

¹⁷ Based on examples from Seeley (1991) .p194, edited and transcribed by me

¹⁸ Seeley (1991) p.68-69

¹⁹ Thomasson (2011) p.13

2.5 Differences between the two kana

Even though both of the syllabaries were used in the *kuntenbun*, eventually they were separated. *Katakana* was mainly used as an auxiliary method of reading certain Chinese characters. Meanwhile the cursive phonogram, *hiragana* was used more frequently in texts such as e.g. letters, poems and various prose texts. *Katakana* maintained functional in nature meanwhile *hiragana* was seen as something more aesthetic. Being able to write in *hiragana* during the Heian period in Japan was seen as an accomplishment and a reflection of the writer's personality. Especially in calligraphy, the *hiragana* writing style was preferred, due to its cursive and aesthetic appearance it has.²⁰

In the Heian period, *hiragana* was seen as a writing system written only by women. In Fujitsubo's work *Utsubo monogatari (Tale of The Hollow Tree)*:

*“Even the character for spring that I have written looks different in the various versions of
this poem.*

In ‘women’s hand’ there was written:

As yet unversed in the art of the brush

My script does not equal even the tracks of the plover.

Also:

When my writing equals that of the tracks of a bird

I shall be able to write far up into the sky.

Next, in katakana:

Through past, present and future my feelings for you

Remained unchanged

*Take heed lest you forget this”.*²¹

Fujitsubo does mention *katakana* which indicates clear usage of *katakana*, however she does not mention *hiragana*, instead she refers to it as ‘women's hand’. This way of thinking became more common as *hiragana* was used exclusively by women, whereas men used Chinese characters which was defined at the time as ‘men’s hand’.²²

According to Miller, references to different writing systems such as ‘women's hand’ or ‘men’s hand’ during Heian period should not be taken literally. Particularly the fact that only

²⁰ Seeley (1991) p.75-76

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid, p.77-78

men wrote with Chinese characters or that they only used characters to abbreviate Chinese characters in the *man'yōshū*, as well as correspondingly women only wrote in *hiragana*, and the fact that the *hiragana* writing system was developed by women. During the Heian period, Japanese education in writing and reading started with *hiragana*, however according to Miller, women rarely continued in their education after learning the *hiragana* system, meanwhile men continued to learn how to properly write and read Chinese characters.²³

²³ Miller (1967) p.124

3. Advancement from Heian-period to modern days

3.1 Orthographic conventions of the writing system develops

Around the ninth century, *kana* had provided a new way of comprehending Japanese writing, in a way that it avoided the need to abbreviate Chinese characters, as well as having a great influence on Japanese literature, both in prose and poetry. On top of that, *kana* was written together with Chinese characters which meant that *kana* functioned as either a logogram or a phonogram. *Kana* utilized these functions even in the *kuntenbun*. In the early stages of the *kuntebun* usage of logo-syllabic writings appeared to be common, used as notes on texts. These notes were more or less signs close to modern *kana* characters, but their function was to express Japanese particles. These phonograms were reduced in size and written slightly to the right of the centre text.²⁴

According to Seeley, the reason why the Japanese did not fully convert to use *kana* writing was due to the constant changes between *kana* scripts and the Japanese syllabic structure or due to changes in the Japanese vocabulary. At the beginning of *kana*, they represented either vowels or consonant + vowel.²⁵

During the Heian period, the amount of Sino-Japanese vocabulary started to increase. Around that time prose texts were mainly composed in *hiragana*, therefore expressing these new words in *hiragana* was most of the times seen as acceptable, although with the exception of the syllabic consonant, the “*n*” consonant. The Sino-Japanese word *taimen* ‘meeting’, *ta-i* could easily be written in *hiragana*, but the remaining “*men*” was seen as a difficulty. Japanese *kana* writing was still at its early stages therefore it had not developed a way to express syllabic consonants, there was no appropriate way to express characters with the “*n*” consonant. To overcome this difficulty, various symbols or characters were employed. This later developed in the Heian period and was also used to express meanings of various words and morphemes. This made *hiragana* type scripts even more common from the late 11th century and onwards.²⁶

3.2 Writing in the Kamakura-period and the Edo-period

In the Kamakura period the differences between the two *kana* syllables became more distinct. *Hiragana* was implemented sometimes into documents written in hybrid style. *Katakana* on

²⁴ Seeley (1991) p.90-91

²⁵ Ibid, p.96

²⁶ Ibid, p.97-98

the other hand was used as an auxiliary way to conjunct characters in literary texts. However, in some occasions both *hiragana* and *katakana* appeared in documents written in hybrid or Japanese style. Even though both of the *kana* syllables were used together sometimes, their main function was different. *Katakana* was used mostly by men who used it in dictionaries, commentaries and aid to write the *kuntenbun*, while *hiragana* maintained its aesthetic usage. However, during the Kamakura period the usage of hybrid writing was increasing. At the time, hybrid writing consisted more or less by Chinese characters which functioned as either logograms or both logograms and phonograms. At times *kana* characters were employed together in the hybrid text. This led to an increase of the *kana* usage in the future. In the Edo period for example, the hybrid style of mixing *kana* characters became well established, which meant that texts such as administrative and other government related texts were written with *kana* orthography. On top of that, there was an increase of publishing books. Reading these published books was seen as a difficulty for some readers, therefore *furigana* came into usage. *Furigana* are *kana* characters but reduced in size and employed to the side of Chinese characters to express their respective readings.²⁷ Due to their convenient functionality, *furigana* became common in the Edo period and in later years.

Texts during the Edo period were written in such way that it neglected the spoken aspect of the language and mainly focused on as Seeley describes “*one or another literary or conventionalised variety of the language*”. These varieties were more or less different from the Japanese at the time, however grammar, vocabulary and idioms did not vary from the contemporary conventions from that time. Generally texts were written in a hybrid style, therefore rearranging the order of written symbols when reading became necessary. Also because of the extensive usage of logograms, *kana* notations became important for readers to comprehend texts.

In the Kamakura period *kana* was used together with *dakuten*. *Dakuten* modifies *kana* syllables, for example the *hiragana* character か *ka* is altered into *ga*. It was done in such way that diacritics were added. Therefore the か character became かゝ.²⁸

²⁷ Ibid, p.99-102

²⁸ Ibid, p.133-134

3.3 Western influence and loanword integration

Around the end of 1860s, Japan came into contact with the West. This had a huge impact on not just social aspects of Japan, but also the language itself. There was a huge need to translate foreign objects, concepts, etc. which were introduced by the West. The way these new words were implemented into Japanese was with the help of Chinese characters. The process became a mixture of Chinese character's logogram and Sino-Japanese pronunciation, e.g. 電氣 *denki* 'electricity'. Another method was similar to the former way, however despite using Chinese character's logogram and the Sino-Japanese pronunciation, new compound forms for non-corresponding Chinese character's logogram were made, e.g. 壓 *atsu* 'press' + 力 *ryoku* 'power, strength' > *atsuryoku* 'pressure'. The latter method however was being used even before the 1860's, during the Edo period when the Dutch traded with Japan. However, rather than utilizing the former mentioned methods, occasionally words were directly borrowed, especially from English. At times the borrowed words were written in *katakana*, also a more recognizable Japanese expression of the borrowed word was employed as a notation next to the *katakana* writing, e.g. フリートレード (自由商売 *jiyūshōbai* 'free trade'). Other times Chinese characters were used to express the pronunciation of a borrowed word, e.g. 論事矩 *rojikku* 'logic', also *furigana* was employed next to the latter form to indicate pronunciation.²⁹

Translating English terms into Japanese semantically was done by using Chinese characters. This resulted in a Sino-Japanese way of comprehending translated English terms. The reason why this translation method was used was for upholding the traditional way of assigning semantically correct Chinese characters to foreign loan words. *Katakana* was used to represent the original pronunciation of the translated word. Thus resulting in every translated word being given both a Chinese character and a *katakana* reading. The characters were used to describe the meaning of the words, while *katakana* was used for pronouncing the words. After a while, a new system was used for translating foreign words. But at the same time the new system maintained both the character and the *katakana* aspects of translating. The only difference was that some foreign words were entirely translated by using characters, and were pronounced respectively to their character. Alternative foreign words were only translated by using *katakana*. Nevertheless, there were still a lot of words that were translated in both ways. This resulted in "doublets". In other words, some of these words now have a Sino-Japanese version and a phonetic foreign version, e.g. *kenchiku:biridingu* 'building', *techō:nōto* 'notebook'.

²⁹ Ibid, p.136-137

Integrating loan words into contemporary Japanese is done by imitating the representative phonetic pronunciation of a word by using *katakana*. Thus maintaining the three writing system's basic functions: Chinese characters for Sino-Japanese words, *hiragana* for native grammatical words and *katakana* for non-Chinese foreign loan words.³⁰ When foreign words become "*katakanaized*" the original pronunciation is in general circumstances altered. All the *katakana* characters except for /N/ end in a vowel, which means that whenever a foreign word is altered into *katakana* it undergoes significant changes in form of consonants and vowels, e.g. *strike* becomes *sutoraiku*. This way of changing words comes with consequences. A lot of Japanese words that have English origin are completely unrecognizable for native English speakers.³¹

3.4 Conventional reforms during the early 1900's

Around the end of the 19th century, there was a call for several reforms of the Japanese language. Some people suggested that Japanese should only be written in *kana*, while others that were influenced by the west proposed that the Roman alphabet should be the only utilized writing system. Most importantly the question of reforming or reducing Chinese characters was the main concern. There was huge support for restricting the Chinese characters, both by those who sought that as a goal and by those who previously wanted either an all *kana* orthography or a Romanised Japanese. The Education Ministry responded to the reactions and therefore introduced new adjustments of teaching written Japanese on a primary level. These adjustments consisted of; having a limited amount of standardized *kana* characters, reducing the amount of Chinese characters taught in primary school to roughly 1200 characters, and the final adjustment was to change the *kana* usage from the deeply historically rooted system to a system based on pronunciation. The first two adjustments were accepted without any resistance, however the final adjustment was not. For example this new *kana* usage regarded only Sino-Japanese words, and Sino-Japanese words containing the pronunciation of *ō*. In the former historically system it was written in six different ways, but the new system changed it into only be written as おー. Even though the teaching of this new usage of *kana* was aimed at primary school students, it appeared quite confusing for them due to the reason that native Japanese

³⁰ Shibatani (2005) p.149-150. Original edit: *kentiku, tetyoo, nooto*

³¹ Ibid, p.150

words were not affected by the new *kana* adjustment, and therefore it was difficult to differentiate Sino-Japanese words from Japanese words.³²

Due to the fact that they were met with a lot of resistance, the Education Ministry abolished the adjustments made for *kana* usage regarding Sino-Japanese words. This meant that at the time improving the writing system had a temporary setback. Still, there was a huge support backing the idea of improving and simplifying the contemporary writing system. For example, obtaining a university degree in Japan took roughly two or three years more than in the west. Reducing the time to complete an education was a demanded subject that needed to be reformed, and with the help of simplifying the Japanese writing system, that could be achievable. Moreover, different newspaper companies were also supporting the idea of a simplified writing system. Because from the early Meiji period, Chinese characters that were used in the newspaper could only be read by a small amount of people. Therefore in order for readers to fully comprehend what was written in the newspaper, *furigana* was employed. Eventually the *Jōyō kanjihyō* “List of Characters for General Use” was formed. This list’s purpose was to indicate necessary characters when writing ordinary Japanese texts, the amount of characters were 2108. However, this list was not seen as absolute therefore it underwent some changes in how many characters should be reduced and which should be used. But yet again, the Japanese writing systems development was forced on a setback, due to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Nationalism started to grow in Japan, and with the growth of nationalism and conservatism, the improvement of *kana* was set on halt. However during the war *kana* received a new task, because the Japanese army recruited a lot of soldiers that were unable to understand uncommon Chinese characters, weapons and other military associated equipment and concepts were written in *kana* for easier comprehension.³³

3.4.1 Reforms of the writing system after WWII

After the war the perception of the Japanese language usage changed. The nationalistic and militarized formed Japanese writing system was met with a lot of resistance and demand of change. What seemed to be lacking previously was taken as a main topic once again, the restriction of Chinese characters and the usage of *kana*. On 16 November 1946 the *Tōyō kanjihyō* “List of Characters for Current use” was made. Also on the same date, Cabinet of the *Gendai kanazukai* “Modern *Kana* Usage” was formed. These two establishments succeeded in

³² Seeley (1991) p.138-144

³³ Ibid, p.145-151

what previous proposals could not achieve. Together they had a huge influence on the simplification of Japanese scripts. Yet, there were still some areas that needed improvement. Usage of *on* reading and *kun* reading was seen as confusing at the time, therefore to clarify the usage an official list of *on* and *kun* readings, *Tōyō kanji onkunhyō* “List of *On* and *Kun* Readings for The Characters in Current Use” was made. Besides *on* and *kun* readings, another area that needed reform was the form of Chinese characters. Some characters were slightly different depending on if it they were written or printed, also some were used correspondingly with each other, e.g. 叙/敍/敘 *jo* ‘relate, narrate’. To solve the problem the *Katsuji jitai seiri ni kansuru kyōgikai* “Committee on The Printed Form of Characters” was formed, which main purpose was to standardize characters of printed forms and also try to reduce the difference between printed characters and written characters.³⁴

³⁴ Ibid, p.152-156

4. Contemporary Japanese

4.1 Impact of loanwords

The 1980's seemed to be the decade where the Japanese language was influenced the most by western foreign loanwords. The increase of loanwords, according to Seeley has two major reasons; first being that of various reforms in the 1940's caused a minor decrease of usage of Chinese characters, while some words were written in *kana* instead. Secondly, an increase of loanwords at that time meant that *katakana* was utilized on a higher scale.³⁵

According to Frellesvig, the majority of loanwords used in Japanese are from English. Because of this, learning English has become remarkably easier than before for the Japanese, as well as recognizing English on a higher extent than before. However, it can be difficult to perceive what an actual loan word from English is or what a phonologically similar English word is. There are rules for spelling English words in *katakana*, because of this English words are assimilated into written Japanese. This assimilation according to Frellesvig causes a stylistic effect.

Different people have different knowledge about English therefore how it is utilized by people is also different, especially among younger Japanese people. The word *sekushuaru harasumento* 'sexual harassment' is abbreviated into *sekuhara*. Modifying and abbreviating the pronunciation and sometimes meaning of the original English word can be seen as, according to Frellesvig, something amusing. Another example of these kinds of occurrences is the word *bākodo* 'comb-over' which derives from the English word *barcode*. The combination and modification of English words in Japanese is an uncommon phenomenon among native English speakers. Another such example is the word *ōeru (OL)* 'female office worker', whereas the *OL* stands for *office + lady*, or *sukinshippu* 'physical contact' < *skin + -ship*. There is however one English word that is coined in Japanese that is recognized worldwide, *kamukōdā* or *camcorder* in English.³⁶

The Japanese word for foreign loanwords is *gairaigo*, however *gairaigo* words are different from "loanwords". Primarily, *gairaigo* words are referred to recent, obvious, mainly borrowed from European languages. Even though there is already a Sino-Japanese vocabulary, it is different from *gairaigo* words. The Sino-Japanese words are considered to be deeply rooted in the Japanese language therefore they are not referred to as *gairaigo*. Also, *gairaigo* words are

³⁵ Ibid, p.179

³⁶ Frellesvig (2010) p.411-412

often written in *katakana* and are occasionally mentioned as Frellesvig expresses: *katakana-go* 'katakana words'.³⁷

4.2 Contemporary writing system

Both *kana* writings *katakana* and *hiragana* consists of 48 characters. These characters are divided into two sequences, *kana* vowels (*a, i, u, e, o*) and *kana* consonants (*k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, w*). Each of the basic 48 characters represents what is called *mora*, which is a short syllable. Some words that require a long vowel are counted as two *mora* and are therefore expressed by two *kana* characters. Besides the 48 basic characters, there are different divergences in pronouncing them, which in turn alters the *kana* character itself. For the consonant characters, two diacritics are applied next to a character to differentiate between voiced and unvoiced consonant characters. Also, adding a small circle to the characters from the *h* column alters the pronunciation into a *p*- sound. The *kana* character for *tsu* is employed in a smaller scale next to a full-sized character to indicate a double consonant sound. Another combination is combining the *ki, si, ni, hi, mi* and *ri* characters together with characters from the *y* column. Employing a *y* character in a smaller scale next to a full-sized character from the formerly mentioned columns, for example combining *ni* with *ya* would result in a character that is pronounced [nja] or [ñã]. Conclusively, there are 102 *kana* syllables when used together in the various combinations.³⁸

The contemporary Chinese characters in the Japanese language are called *kanji* and are used for content words, whereas *hiragana* and *katakana* serve different purposes. *Hiragana* is used to express grammatical function words, e.g. particles and inflectional endings. *Katakana* is used to express non-Chinese foreign loan words, telegrams, and certain onomatopoeic expressions.³⁹ In situations where *kanji* or *hiragana* is commonly used, it is possible to use *katakana* for emphasis, such as exclamations or making advertisements more noticeable.⁴⁰ The usages of foreign loan words from various languages are occasionally centred on specific fields. German loanwords focuses on words and terms in areas of medicine, philosophy, mountain climbing and outdoor sports, e.g. *karute* (< *Karte*) 'medical file'. French loan words are mostly

³⁷ Ibid, p.404

³⁸ http://www.blackwellreference.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631214816_chunk_g978063121481613_ss1-5

³⁹ Shibatani (2005) p.128,
http://www.blackwellreference.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631214816_chunk_g978063121481612_ss1-2

⁴⁰ Igarashi (2007) p.1

regarded to matters in art and fashion, e.g. *atorie* (< *atelier*) ‘*artist’s studio*’. Also Italian loan words are often used for musical terms, e.g. *piano* (< *piano*).⁴¹

4.2.1 Sub Functions of loanwords

There is an alternative usage for foreign loan words which tends to be overlooked, particularly advertisement and commercial messages. In this extent there is a possibility of encountering expressions like *mekanikkuna dijitaru kurokku* ‘*mechanical digital clock*’. Whole phrases can be completely expressed in loan words except inflectional endings, particles and other function words. These types of advertisements, jointly with foreign loan words develop a psychological effect that is directed towards potential buyers. Buyers are often attracted to what is new and might associate it accordingly to loan words, even if the buyers do not entirely comprehend the meaning behind the words. These commercials have a significant role in contemporary Japanese, being the reason that they are occasionally being expressed in *katakana*.⁴² There is however statistical evidence throughout the course of the twentieth century which indicates an increased usage of *kana* instead of *kanji*. There are speculations claiming that this increase might be decreasing, due to the aid of word-processing technology. Being the reason that there is an infinite amount of characters stored in computer softwares.⁴³

⁴¹ Shibatani (2005) p.149

⁴² Ibid, p.152-153. Original edit: *mekanikku-na dizitaru kurokku*

⁴³ http://www.blackwellreference.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631214816_chunk_g978063121481612_ss1-2

5. *Katakana's* relation to foreign loan words and the consequences

5.1 Consequences caused by *gairaigo*

Yuko Igarashi specifies in her research that there has been a significant increase of *katakana* usage, due to the fact that there is an increase of loan words. This increase is viewed as a problem for foreign learners of Japanese. Particularly, people who are studying Japanese are now sensing an obligation to learn more foreign loanwords than ever before. Simultaneously, native speakers experience the same difficulties. Native speakers claim that a number of loanwords are difficult to comprehend. Recently introduced loanwords are being continuously used in writings where former deeply rooted loan words were being used. This causes confusion for the readers that cannot comprehend these new words.⁴⁴ In recent years, the Japanese government has started a promotion to internationalize the Japanese language. This internationalization, according to Igarashi, is one of the factors that makes the Japanese government realize that there are problems regarding foreign loan words. The government's solution to this problem is an establishment called *Gairaigo Inkai* "Loanword Committee" in the National Institute for Japanese Language. The committee's objective is to investigate, and if possible, try to comprehend further increase of foreign loan words. They are also translating unfamiliar foreign loan words into a more familiarized native fashion. In that way it can be easily understood by readers, which means instead of using *katakana*, the words are expressed in *kanji*, giving the words meaningful characters.⁴⁵ Besides the Japanese government, media has also brought up the topic of increasing foreign loan words and the consequences it causes. The newspaper, *Yomiuri*, states that this increase has induced difficulties for their company. *Yomiuri* indicates that the average reader finds it difficult to grasp the meaning behind recently integrated foreign loan words that have been used in the newspapers.⁴⁶

There is factual evidence which showcases a moderate increase of foreign loanwords in Japanese. Kawaguchi and Tsunoda, in their work *Nihongo wa darenomonoka* "Whom is Japanese for?" explains that they have conducted an examination of foreign loan words in a popular Japanese dictionary, the *Koujien*. This examination shows that the third edition published in 1983 was made up of 8.5% of foreign loan words. The fourth edition that was published in 1991 contained 9.2% of foreign loan words. Finally, in 1998, the fifth edition was

⁴⁴ Igarashi (2007) p. iii-iv

⁴⁵ Ibid, p 3-4

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.4

published, containing 10.2% foreign loan words.⁴⁷

5.2 Various aspects of foreign loanwords regarding the Japanese writing system

According to Ishiwata in his work *Gairaigo no sōgōteki kenkyū* “The study on loanwords”, there are six different characteristics of loanwords. The first characteristic is how loanwords are used to describe new ideas and introduced objects from various cultures. The next one Ishiwata claims, is loanwords describing expressions that already exists in the language, however with a different nuance. For example, the native way of saying ‘inn’ is *yadoya*, while as if one would say *hoteru*, would convey the same meaning as the English ‘hotel’. Fundamentally both represent and express the same idea, however with a different nuance. The third characteristic of *katakana* is how various argots are used in different areas, e.g. computer science and chemistry. These argots are often used by those who specialize in an area of expertise, however these kind of argots can receive public attention by media. This would result in that the general population of media users can become familiarized with such expressions. An example, the chemical compound that is used to describe finishing wood is called urethane. In Japanese it is called *uretan*. The fourth one is similar to the second characteristic by the impression of expressing different nuances, still this characteristic focuses on an international aspect. For example, when writing an article, the author might choose the English word for ‘delegation’, rather than the Japanese *senshudan*. This describes the idea that the delegation appeared at an international event. Fifth, *katakana* can also be used to describe matters regarding to euphemism. For example, the Japanese corresponding word for ‘pubic hair’ would be *inmō*. However, saying *hea* ‘hair’, would also be referring to ‘pubic hair’. Finally, compared to Japanese, some English words are simpler and because of that *katakana* can be used instead. In the area of computer science, the word IC, meaning ‘Integrated Circuit’, is used more often than the native *shūsekikairo*.⁴⁸

Textbooks generally state that *katakana* is used with foreign loan words, except from Chinese loan words. To be able to understand *katakana* in its entirety, learners must get acquainted with these six characteristics that were mentioned before. However even so, learners might encounter complications, due to the fact that words might bear resemblance to each other,

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.4

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.148-149, Original edit: *Gairaigo no sougouteki kenkyuu, inmou, shuuseki-kairo*

although the original meaning of a word might have been altered from the initial language. English words coined in Japanese should also be taken into account.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.149-150

6. Other functions of *katakana*

6.1 More than expressing foreign loan words

As mentioned before the primary role *katakana* possess in the contemporary Japanese language is to express western foreign loan words. However there are occasions where *katakana* is used for other reasons than expressing foreign loan words. Terry Joyce, Bor Hodošček and Kikuko Nishina explains briefly other uses of *katakana* than foreign loan words or foreign names. *Katakana* as mentioned before, can be used to emphasize an expression or express onomatopoeia, as well as indicating various scientific taxonomies. An emphasizing example they mention is *itai-itai* 'painful', writing it in *katakana* rather than its intended way of writing expresses emphasis. *Sakusaku* 'crunchy, crisp' is an onomatopoeic expression that can be written with *katakana*. Writing *hito* 'man, person' in *katakana* can indicate scientific taxonomy, which gives the idea that *hito* resembles 'homo sapiens' in a context where scientific taxonomy is needed.⁵⁰

Katakana can sometimes be used to express utterances from foreign characters with a minor role in manga books. In the manga "Durarara!!" (デュラララ!!), a character named Simon has his utterances expressed only in *katakana*. Where usually Japanese words are written with *kanji* or even *hiragana* it is replaced by *katakana*, e.g. オニイサンヒサシブリ *oniisanhisashiburi* 'long time no see young man', ヤスクするヨ *yasukusuruyo* 'I'll do it cheaper' and ケンカヨクナイヨ *kenkayokunaiyo* 'Fighting isn't good you know'. The second utterance has the irregular verb *suru* 'to do' written in *hiragana*. It might be the case that the author wanted to clearly indicate the verb without altering too much of the conventional Japanese writing so that it would not be unrecognizable for the readers.⁵¹

6.2 Unconventional usage of *katakana*

Terry Joyce, Bor Hodošček and Kikuko Nishina analysed the usage ratio of various types of grammatical items and words written in different orthographic forms based on results from the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ). Analysis was conducted in two forms, a short unit word (SUW) table and a long unit word (LUW) table. Both tables consist of a noun, verb, adjective and an adverb. The noun in the SUW table is *tamanegi* 'onion',

⁵⁰ Joyce, T, Hodošček, B, & Nishina, K (2012) p. 258

⁵¹ Narita (2009) p.21, Narita (2010) p.111. Own translation

the adjective is *omoshiroi* 'interesting', the verb is *kikitoru* 'catch (words)' and the adverb is *zenzen* 'not at all'. However the LUW table's results will not be mentioned in this paper due to the lack of *katakana* orthography variations.

According to the results, *tamanegi* written in both *kanji* and *hiragana*, (玉ねぎ, first character is *kanji* and the latter two *hiragana*) gave 1,026 search results, *tamanegi* written only in *katakana* (タマネギ) gave 446 search results whereas fully *hiragana* (たまねぎ) gave 345 search results. The adjective *omoshiroi* written in both *kanji* and *hiragana* (面白い, first two characters represents *kanji* and the final *hiragana*) had 8,006 search results, written only in *hiragana* (おもしろい) gave 3,770 search results whereas written only in *katakana* (オモシロイ) gave 38 search results. The verb *kikitoru* written only in both *kanji* and *hiragana* (聞き取る, first and third characters represent *kanji* and second and fourth represents *hiragana*) gave 397 search results, written only in *hiragana* (ききとる) gave 18 results. The *katakana* variation was not examined or there were no results. The adverb *zenzen* written fully in *kanji* (全然) gave 4,869 search results, written only in *hiragana* (ぜんぜん) gave 906 search results, and finally written only in *katakana* (ゼンゼン) gave 34 search results.⁵²

⁵² Joyce, T, Hodošček, B, & Nishina, K (2012) p.271

7. Methodology and results

7.1 Methodology

What is the attitude towards emphasizing with *katakana*, are there any particular rules? Is it affected by gender and age? Could it be used in a formal occasion or is it more of a casual expression? How is it related to the conventions of contemporary Japanese? Is this phenomenon even widely used among native speakers? Is context necessary, or a certain type of text? Questions like these are something I would like to know about this particular usage of *katakana*. Is it something related to the shape of the characters, due to their “sharpness” or “straightness” that could make native speakers associate *katakana* with emphasis, while *hiragana* is softer and rounder which could instead perhaps make an expression seem non-threatening.

To answer these questions I have decided to conduct interviews with seven different native Japanese speakers. The reason why I decided upon an interview is that answers are clearer than e.g. questionnaire. If there would be a case where I could not understand the informant clearly then I could just ask them to repeat themselves, whereas in a questionnaire it would be difficult. Also discussing the topic rather than just answering questions straightforwardly could improve the quality of the answers in my opinion. However would I have conducted a questionnaire, I could have gotten more opinions, but as mentioned, during interviews there are chances where one could clear up misconceptions with the informants.

The way I am going to present the answers is by comparing the informant’s answers with my questions, rather than writing down a whole interview. This I believe is better because some informant’s answers might be similar to one another, and to avoid repetition I am going to compare all seven informant’s answers with my questions.

The interview is divided into two parts. The first part is where I ask general questions about *katakana* and questions about emphasizing with *katakana*. The second part includes 15 different sentences in Japanese whereas usually *kanji* or *hiragana* would be written, instead it has been changed into *katakana* to see what kind of reaction the informants will have. More specifically, the words that have been altered to *katakana* are; adjectives (written in *katakana* only, as well as a version with *hiragana*’s inflection), nouns, pronouns, adverbs, verbs (written in *katakana* only and as well as a version with *hiragana*’s inflection), exclamation, quoting, ending particles (also with copula) and modality. When both parts were finished I would ask the informants if they have anything else they want to say about emphasizing with *katakana* that they came up with during the interview. However I also asked “follow-up” questions to

what informants answered on my questions, although not all of the informants were asked the same questions, I did this to get a more specific answer or a deeper understanding about how they feel about this matter. For example, questions such as “How would you feel if this particular word was written in *hiragana* instead”, etc. Also worth mentioning is that the interviews were conducted mainly in English, but at times the informants felt like they could express themselves better in Japanese, which lead to interviews partly in Japanese and partly in English. Before the interviews I asked the informants if I could record the conversation and they all agreed. I felt this was essential in case the situation arose where an informant would express themselves in Japanese, and I would not be able to comprehend it entirely. Recording the interview enables me to look up the language used in such cases.

7.2 Informants

The informants that have been interviewed are divided into two age groups, 20-21 and 40+, two males and two females in the former group and one male and two females in the latter group. The four informants in the first group are exchange students from various parts of Japan, which might influence how much they use the *katakana* emphasis or if they even use it at all. The majority of informants from the second group are Japanese teachers or were once Japanese teachers. Because they are very familiar with the conventions of the Japanese language, the possibility for them to use emphasis with *katakana* might vary from the first group.

Informant 1 is a 21 year old female exchange student from a university in Tokyo. Informant 2 is a 20 year old male exchange student from a university in Kyoto. Informant 3 is a 40 year old female Japanese university teacher. Informant 4 is also a 20 year old male exchange student from a university in Kyoto. Informant 5 is a 40 year old female that used to be a Japanese high school teacher in Sweden. Informant 6 is a 42 year old male Japanese university teacher. Finally, informant 7 is a 21 year old female exchange student from a university in Fukuoka.

The reason for interviewing two different age groups is that younger native speakers might tend to use different vocabulary than an older native speakers, therefore the possibility for the younger speakers to use *katakana* is higher, which means that they might emphasize with *katakana* a lot more than the older speakers. However if that is the case, the second group might have different opinions toward emphasizing with *katakana* or *katakana* in general. Also asking the informants from the second group if they used something similar when they were at the age of the first group might be an interesting comparison.

7.3 Results from the first part

When the informants were asked about what their image of *katakana* is, informants 1,4,6,7 said that they associate *katakana* with particularly western foreign loan words. Informant 2 and 7 mentioned that certain onomatopoeic expressions are written with *katakana*. Informant 1, 3 and 7 mentioned as well that the appearance of *katakana* is more “straight” or “colder”, whereas *hiragana* is more “curvy” and “softer”. Informant 5 felt that *katakana* is something that she uses a lot with her friends or if there are people with lacking *kanji* knowledge they might use it a lot as well.

Informant 1 further explained that she uses *katakana* in casual online chatting conversations, taking notes as well as writing it in more formal documents however she would rather use more native words with *kanji* instead of foreign loan words used with *katakana*. Informants 2, 5, 6 also mentioned that they find themselves using *katakana* when writing to their friends online via mail or chatting. Informant 3 said that she does not use it frequently but use it to express onomatopoeia or foreign loan words, however if it is possible she would rather use *kanji* and *hiragana* instead of *katakana*. She further revealed that she would use *katakana* when taking note, because it is faster to write *katakana* than complex *kanji*, also *hiragana* would seem “childish”. 4, 5 and 6 just as informant 3, they also use it to write foreign loan words or even foreign names, however informant 4 further continued explaining that *katakana* can be used to write a word if the writer does not know the appropriate *kanji*, also *hiragana* would seem “childish” in these types of occasions. Informant 7 mentioned that she would write unfamiliar words in *katakana* or to express a specific pronunciation of a word, also she does not use *katakana* when writing to friends that often, she would rather use *hiragana*. However she further explained that when taking notes she often uses *katakana*. Also just like informant 5, she feels like people who do not know a lot of *kanji* might use *katakana* more. Informant 2 and 5 said that they feel like *katakana* is not used, but rather avoided in essays or thesis.

I asked them what they think about *katakana* used as a way of expressing emphasis, they more or less answered the same, that it is an expression that is used between friends when writing to each other via texting or other online chatting programs. Informant 1 said that she never thought about it, she just uses it naturally without thinking, also that the person who uses the emphasis is more likely to be emotionally moved by what they are emphasizing on rather than the reader. Informant 3 mentioned that she feels that there are some words, particularly nominal adjectives that she emphasize more naturally than other words in *katakana* e.g. *hima* ‘free time’, *kirei* ‘beautiful/tidy’ or *suteki* ‘lovely’, however she feels that there are some

adjectives in general that feel weird emphasizing in *katakana*, e.g. *atsui* ‘hot (temperature)’ or *samui* ‘cold (temperature)’. She further explained that nouns such as *keitai* ‘mobile phone’ can be written in both *kanji* and *katakana* without having the sense that it is an error, however it would give a different nuance to the noun depending on the context it is used in. Informant 4 mentioned that emphasizing with *katakana* is something that often appears on Japanese TV shows, e.g. *イタイ!* *Itai!* ‘Ouch!’ appears often to leave an impact on the audience. He further explained that words such as *kirei* have complicated *kanji* and *katakana* would be more appropriate and more likely to leave an impact on the audience, also *hiragana* is more “beautiful” while *katakana* is “strong”. Both informant 2 and 4 mentioned that commercials use *katakana* a lot. Informant 5 said that she uses *katakana* emphasis a lot and feels the need to correct herself sometimes because she tends to use it too much, although she feels as if it is easier to understand than *hiragana*, e.g. if *sugoi* ‘amazing’ is written in *katakana* it makes it even more “amazing”. Similar to informant 4, informant 5 also mentioned that *katakana* appears a lot in Japanese TV shows. Informant 7 however feels that words written in *katakana* have the ability to express irony in a way that the writer is trying to ironically imitate somebody. She further mentioned that depending on the meaning behind a word, *katakana* or *hiragana* would give it a different nuance, for example the word *kimoi* ‘disgusting’ in *katakana* would feel more serious than in *hiragana*, also the word *kawaii* ‘cute’ would be more suiting in *hiragana* to express that something is more “cute” due to *hiragana*’s aesthetic appearance.

When asked if there is a similar way of emphasizing a word or an expression in a formal occasion, the informants felt like they would use more *kanji*. Informant 1 said that she would also replace words with ones that have a more profound meaning. Informant 3 said that there must be a given reason why *katakana* should be used on occasions where *hiragana* or *kanji* would be used, e.g. names, animals or plants, there needs to be a reason for writing *suteki* in *katakana* on a thesis. Informant 4 and 5 felt that they would use intensifiers to express emphasis such as *hontōni* ‘really’ or *totemo* ‘very’. Informant 6, as informant 1 would rather choose more profound words or even use adverbs as *hijōni* ‘exceedingly’. He would also use expressions such as *hitsuzetsunikuchigatai* which would be equivalent to the English’s ‘*beyond description*’.

I further asked them if they felt like a specific age group uses this emphasizing method more than another age group, and they all felt that younger native speakers from around 10-20 years use it significantly more than older native speakers. Informant 1 and 2 mentioned that Japanese seniors tend to not use *katakana* in general, except for older foreign loan words that they might recognize. Informant 2 further explained that using more English words that are coined in

Japanese are seen as something “cool” among younger native speakers, therefore words such as アジェンダ *ajenda* ‘agenda’, トピック *topikku* ‘topic’ and ディスカッション *disukasshon* ‘discussion’ are used more by younger native speakers rather than older native speakers. Informant 4 mentioned that he has an image that younger people might use *katakana* more in general. He mentioned that younger people often shorten longer words for example *akemashite omedetō* ‘happy new years’ would become *ake ome*. Because younger native speakers tend to sometimes use *gyaru-moji* (a way of combining different symbols and characters to form Japanese characters), Informant 7 felt like they would also emphasize with *katakana*.

All informants felt like there is no gender difference when it comes to using emphasizing with *katakana*, however informant 1, 2 and 3 said that there is a difference in choice of words women and men use. Informant 5 mentioned that even though both genders use it she feels as if older men would not use it, only younger boys whereas with women it is not as restricted.

All informants except informant 7 said that they sometimes emphasize with *katakana*. I further asked the informant if she had used *gyaru-moji* before and she said that she has never used it, also because she likes calligraphy she would rather choose to write in *hiragana* because it is more “aesthetic”. Informants 1 and 2 mentioned that they do not emphasize all words in *katakana*. Informant 1 said she uses *kirei* in *katakana* a lot whereas informant 2 uses *kimoi* and *uzai* ‘annoying’ a lot. Informant 1 further explained that she uses this emphasizing method because writing in *kanji* might look “too much” and she feels as if *katakana* is recognized easier and that *hiragana* would make an expression look weaker. Also informant 2 said that with *kimoi* he would sometimes use both *katakana* and *hiragana* at the same time e.g. キモい where the first two characters are written in *katakana* and the final character in *hiragana*. Informant 4 said that he uses this phenomenon without thinking about it. He mentioned that words such as *itai* or *sugoi* would have more impact if written in *katakana*. Nouns such as fruits written in *katakana* would give him the impression that they have been imported.

When asked if they might know somebody else or particular types of people that might use emphasis with *katakana* they said that they could not really think about someone specific however informant 1 felt like characters in Japanese comic books, manga, would use it quite a lot. Informant 2 said that light novels, blog writers or even “youtubers” would use *katakana* to emphasize because it would attract attention.

7.4 Results from the second part

A full list and corresponding translations for the sentences which have been examined will be provided in the appendices section of this paper. Also the sentences were shown to the informants without the underlines, the reason why I added them is so that readers can understand easily.

All of the informants felt that the altered adjective in the first example was natural, although Informant 3 mentioned that if the final inflectional *hiragana* けい would have been written in *katakana* then both *kireina* and *wanpiisu* would seem like one word. Informant 4 felt as if it was “default” to write *kirei* in *katakana* in this context because *hiragana* would give the idea that the “one-piece” is “clean”. Informant 6 said that the altered adjective is not strange but he does not feel that there is an emphasis, however he further mentioned that if *kirei* would have been written in only *hiragana* or in *kanji* then it would give him a different feeling.

Informant 4 said that the altered noun *kuruma*, in example two feels weird having it written in *katakana* because the respective *kanji* is quite simple. Informant 5 mentioned that it gives her the impression that the car is great and the teacher is rich, however informant 7 felt as if the sentence is ironic, she further mentioned that writing *kuruma* in *katakana* seems familiar however she would rather write it in *kanji*, informant 1 also felt that it is not strange but *kanji* is used more instead. Informant 2 said that *kuruma* written in *katakana* is not weird but other nouns such as *densha* ‘train’ or *hikōki* ‘airplane’ written in *katakana* would seem weird. Informant 4 felt the opposite about this and said that all three given nouns would not be strange in *katakana*. Informant 2 further mentioned that because the car is a foreign invention he feels that *katakana* can be used. Informant 3 and 6 did not see the sentence as unnatural.

About the third example, all of the informants except informant 6 said that the adverb *hayaku* is weird if it is written in *katakana*. Informant 6 meant that he feels as if a mother is really upset or speaking loudly with a strict voice. Informant 5 said that the adverb *hayaku* is written next to *gakkō* ‘school’, gives the impression that the school is called *hayaku*, also if there would be an exclamation mark after *hayaku* then it might be acceptable.

All of the informants felt that the “enduring state-of-being” past tense of the verb *suiteta* ‘to be hungry’ from the fourth example felt weird. Informants 1, 2, 3 and 4 said that the second verb with “enduring state-of-being” *tsukareteiru* ‘being tired’ is weird, whereas informants 5, 6 and 7 felt that it might be acceptable, albeit a little weird. Informant 6 further applied that he can feel the emphasis to some extent. Informant 4 also mentioned that both verbs should be written in *kanji* because if the majority of the sentence consist of *hiragana* it would be difficult

to read. I further asked the informants if the intensifier *suggoku* 'very' from the fourth example could be used together with the word *kirei* in *katakana* when expressing emphasis. The informants said that it would not be weird but if both *suggoku* and *kirei* would be written in *katakana* then it would appear strange. However informant 2 mentioned that if there would be a case where the conjunction (*ku*) from *suggoku* would be in *hiragana* then it is acceptable. Informant 3 and 4 said that if both are in *katakana* then it feels like one word.

On example five all informants felt that the adjective *takai* 'tall' written in *katakana* in this context is weird. Informant 3, 4 and 5 said that *takai* written in *katakana* next to *biru* 'building' made it seem as if it was one word. I further asked the informants if it would be weird quoting an emphasis that somebody mentioned. They all felt that it would not be strange. Informant 1 said that if somebody would quote something only in *katakana* it would appear "dramatic" however it is quite uncommon.

The informants felt that the exclamation *itai!* 'Ouch!' from example 6 felt quite natural written in *katakana*. Informant 3 feels that *itai* in this case imitates a sound and therefore it is acceptable to write it in *katakana*. Informant 4 feels as if *itai* is emphasized more in *katakana* however informant 6 said the opposite, he means that emphasizing with *katakana* does not apply in this context.

The informants had different opinions on example 7 where the final ending particle *yone*, having only the final *ne* written in *katakana*. Informant 1 said that she felt as if the final *ne* made the sentence more "charming" and that this type of writing might appear in girl's conversation in Japanese manga. Informant 2 also mentioned that girls might tend to use this way of writing more, and it appears particularly in manga. Informant 3 felt that it was weird due to only the final *ne* being in *katakana*, if *yo* would also be in *katakana* then it would not be strange. Informant 4 felt that it is quite weird and unfamiliar, and that it is "girlish". However he further explained that even girls do not use it that often. Informant 5 and 6 did not think that the final ending particle was weird. Informant 7 said that she felt that it was strange and it would have been better if *yo* and *ne* were both written in *katakana*.

All seven informants said that the adjective *kimoi* 'disgusting' in *katakana* from example 8 felt natural. Informant 2 said that in his opinion *kimoi* should be written in *katakana* as a default. Informant 3 said that because it is a short word and a "spoken word", she thinks that writing it in *katakana* is acceptable. Informant 4 said that *kimoi* is a good word to emphasize in *katakana*, he further mentioned that the adjective *daikirai* 'hate' in the same example, if would *dai* be written in *kanji* and *kirai* in *katakana* then it could also be a way to emphasize one's own dislike. Informant 5 said that it is very familiar to her, together with other words such as *uzai* and *kusai*

'stinky'. She further mentioned that when somebody expresses their own feelings, thoughts or impressions with positive or negative words while emphasizing them with *katakana* is quite common. Informant 6 mentioned that the final "i" in *kimoi* could be written in *hiragana* to express the grammatical inflection. He further mentioned that slang words such as *shibui* 'cool' or *nau* 'hip' are usually written in *katakana* but the conjunction (final "i") is usually written in *hiragana*.

On the ninth example, all the seven informants felt that the adjective *isogashii* 'busy' and the modality *kamoshirenai* 'might' written in *katakana* is weird and unfamiliar. Informant 3 said that because *isogashii* is a so called "i-adjective" or simply adjective it is weird, however emphasizing with what is a so called "na-adjective" or nominal adjective would be better according to her. She further explained that *kamoshirenai* has no need to be written in *katakana*. According to informant 4, having *isogashii* in *kanji* would express emphasis in this context. Informant 5 and 6 said that the sentence feels "robotic", also informant 6 further mentioned that he feels the emphasis of *kamoshirenai* written in *katakana* but it is still weird and unnatural.

The tenth example received different opinions from the informants. Informant 1 felt that the adverb *zutto* 'all the time' written in *katakana* is weird, whereas the adverb *zenzen* 'not at all' is not weird. The noun *gakkari* 'feel disappointed' in *katakana* is natural. The verb *chigau* 'to be different' and the past form of the adjective *tsumaranai* 'boring' written in *katakana* is strange. Informant 2 mentioned that he has never seen *zutto* in *katakana* before, and that *tsumaranakatta* feels weird, but would the inflectional ending (*katta*) be written in *hiragana* then it might be acceptable. He further mentioned that *gakkari* in *katakana* in this context is acceptable as well. Informant 3 mentioned that *tsumaranakatta* is a long word therefore difficult to read in *katakana*. Informant 4 explained that *zutto* should be in *hiragana*, *gakkari* has more impact in *katakana*, *zenzen* and *chigau* feels strange having it written in *katakana* and that *tsumaranakatta* should be written in *hiragana*. Informant 5 mentioned that having both *zenzen* and *chigau* written in *katakana* next to each other makes them look like one word therefore they should not be written in *katakana*. Informant 6 said that *zutto* written in *katakana* is unfamiliar, however would it be written in *hiragana* as *zutto*, it would have a same type of emphasizing effect. He further explained that *gakkari* in *katakana* is natural, the emphasizing effect on "*zenzen chigau*" feels "robotic". *Tsumaranakatta* also feels weird and "robotic". Informant 7 also said that *zutto* in *katakana* is weird and that *gakkari* in *katakana* is not strange. "*zenzen chigau*" feels weird but she mentioned that she has seen *chigau* in *katakana* before in a novel. She does not know if *tsumaranakatta* in this context expresses irony or emphasis, but it is unusual to have it written in *katakana*.

On example 11 the informants mentioned that the pronoun *watashi* 'I' written in *katakana* is not unusual however their opinions varied. Their opinion on the past tense adjective *tsurakatta* 'was harsh' also differed. Informant 1 mentioned that *watashi* can sometimes be uttered or written without the *w*, which would make it into *atashi*. *Atashi* is written more in *katakana* and *watashi* more in *kanji* in her opinion. She further mentioned that the past tense adjective *tsurakatta* written fully in *katakana* would give the impression that the situation is more "emotional". Informant 2 said that he had seen *tsurakatta* written in this way before, where *tsura* is in *katakana* and the inflectional ending *katta* in *hiragana*. He also said that *watashi* in *katakana* is not often used but it is familiar with him. Informant 3 said that because the inflectional ending in *tsurakatta* is written with *hiragana* it is easier to understand, but because it is an "i-adjective" she feels that emphasizing with that particular word is weird. She further mentioned that *watashi* written in *katakana* needs a specific reason for it to be written in that way. Informant 4 said that depending on which writing system *watashi* is written with gives a different nuance or is written differently according to a given situation, e.g. *kanji* in documents, *hiragana* normally, however he felt as if *katakana* would be unusual but not weird. Also *tsurakatta* written in *katakana* makes him understand the emphasis more than if it were written in *hiragana*. Informant 5 said that writing *watashi* in *katakana* is something common between friends, using *kanji* or *hiragana* would make it feel a bit "hard" in her opinion. Informant 6 and 7 explained that both *watashi* and *tsurakatta* feels natural to them. Informant 6 further explained that writing *watashi* in *hiragana* would potentially reflect the writer's personality or their writing style. Informant 7 said that she would rather use *kanji* when writing *watashi* instead of *hiragana* or *katakana*.

The pronoun *ore* 'i' (used by males) written in *katakana* in example 12 was not seen as weird except by informant 7, she felt that writing *ore* in *katakana* is unfamiliar. Informant 1 said that the copula *da* combined with the sentence ending particle *yo* written in *katakana* felt "charming". Informant 2 and 6 said that the *dayo* written in *katakana* was not weird. Informant 2 also mentioned that *ore* is suiting for *katakana* because the shape of the *katakana* characters give *ore* a stronger impression. Informant 3 said that *ore* is fine in *katakana* due to it being more of a "spoken word", and that *dayo* is strange. Would *da* be written in *hiragana* and *yo* in *katakana* it would be acceptable. However informant 4 felt that *dayo* should be fully written in *hiragana*. Informant 7 felt that *dayo* written the way it is in this context is fine, but otherwise quite uncommon.

All informants said that the polite form of the past tense compound verb *kandoushimashita* 'to be moved emotionally' written in *katakana* in example 13 did not express any emphasis,

and that it is strange. Informant 2 said that if the context is in a manga book where a foreign character would utter *kandoushimashita* then it might be acceptable. Informant 5 and 7 said that instead of emphasis it expresses irony. Informant 5 also mentioned that because it is written in a polite way, it could also indicate a lie. Informant 7 imagined it to be very “monotonic”.

On example 14, all informants except informant 5, felt that the compound verb *untensuru* ‘to drive’ and its “enduring state-of-being” polite form in negative tense *untenshiteimasen* written in *katakana* as weird. Informant 5 however felt as if the utterer in this context expresses their dislike by emphasizing *unten* in *katakana*. She further mentioned that if one wants to express something one is unable to do then expressing or emphasizing it with *katakana* is acceptable.

Kitabakari ‘just came’ (verb past tense + *bakari* indicates that someone has just done something or something has just happened) from the final example was considered weird having it written in *katakana* by all informants, except informant 5. She believed that in this given context it is fine, the possibility of emphasis in this case also varies on who emphasizes. Informant 3 mentioned again that there has to be a specific reason for it to be written in *katakana*.

7.5 Additional opinions on emphasizing with *katakana* and *katakana* in general

In this part opinions and various thoughts from the informants about emphasizing with *katakana* or *katakana* in general will be presented. After the informants shared their opinions on the example sentences that I conducted, I asked them if they had anything else they would like to say about the matter at hand.

Informant 1 mentioned that she feels as if the emphasizing is used more with adjectives, regardless if they are regular adjectives or nominal adjectives, however whether emphasis can be applied or not is dependent on the meaning of the word. This according to her appears only in casual/informal occasions. She further mentions that characters of foreign origin that tries to speak Japanese in manga, is usually written in *katakana* to express their “broken” Japanese.

Informant 2 also mentions that *katakana* can be used to express foreigners “misusage” of the Japanese language in manga books. He feels that it is quite difficult to determine when to use or when not to use emphasis, it also depends on the type of books or texts. Japanese people according to him might not know the specific rule on how to use this type of emphasis they just use it naturally. He also mentioned that when a word does not have a corresponding *kanji* then it is more forgivable to write it in *katakana*, which in turn is more likely to be emphasized

in *katakana*. Also, a text written only in *katakana* would be difficult to read in his opinion, he means that there needs to be a balanced usage between the three writing systems.

Informant 3 further applied on her thoughts about the sentence ending particles *yone*. She continued to explain that because these types of ending particles are only used in spoken language, they could potentially appear in online chatting or texting with friends which makes it more acceptable to write *yone* in *katakana*.

Informant 4 said that younger people are more likely to use *katakana* than *hiragana* and *kanji* or that people who do not know *kanji* very well tend to use a lot of *katakana* as well. Emphasizing with *katakana* appears a lot on the internet or online chatting in his opinion. He feels that the emphasizing function of *katakana* has both positive and negative aspects. Positive because it is easier to comprehend the writers feelings and thoughts. Negative because newer foreign loan words are replacing native words. The informant himself has not thought about this particular usage of *katakana* until asked during the interview, but he feels that there needs to be a balance when using the three writing systems.

Informant 5 said that *hiragana* can be used to make a sentence or an expression softer, therefore when emphasizing with *hiragana*, adverbs that are used as intensifiers need to be added, e.g. *suggoku*, *meccha* ‘very’ (Kansai dialect) or *chou* ‘extremely’, but with *katakana* the words that want to be emphasized can sometimes be written in *katakana*.

Informant 6 had never heard about emphasizing with *katakana* before. He explained that in some Japanese text there is what is called *bōten* which is similar to “underline”. *Bōten* is used to express emphasis in vertical texts, in such way that dots are juxtaposed to the word that needs to be emphasized. He also mentions that interjections in the Japanese such as “*Eh*” or “*Waa*” are often written with *katakana*. The informant mentioned that there is an “eye-catching” effect when a phrase or expression usually written in *hiragana* is instead written in *katakana* or vice versa. Unlike informant 5, informant 6 did not feel as if *hiragana* is used to make sentences softer, however *katakana* gives an “edgy” touch when used in advertisements, etc. in his opinion. Also depending on the word, the image or feeling it conveys might differ depending on what writing system is used, for example *kimoi* in *hiragana* would have him imagine a soft slimy grotesqueness. The informant much like informant 4 felt as *hikōki* can be written in *katakana*, e.g. ヒコーキ the “ー” sign is used to express vowel extensions, in this case the *ō* from *hikōki*. He also mentioned that the possibility for using emphasis with *katakana* are higher when the meaning of the word or adjectives are “emotional”.

Informant 7 said that depending on the situation, a noun that is not usually written in *katakana* can be written in *katakana*, whereas verbs would depend on the context. Expressing something that usually is not written in *katakana* feels “stronger” and can be seen as rude sometimes according to the informant. The informant herself does emphasize with *katakana* when writing to her friends. However, when she feels the need to make a sentence “softer” she uses *hiragana*.

8. Discussion

8.1 Conclusion

In conclusion and according to the results, there is no concrete way of emphasizing with *katakana*. It would seem that the way this emphasis is used varies depending on the person, age or even gender. Depending on the person that emphasizes, not all words can be used to emphasize with. The words *kimoi* ‘disgusting’ and *kirei* ‘beautiful’ were two of the most accepted and familiar words to be emphasized in *katakana* according to the informants. The words that are emphasized in *katakana* should indicate either “seriousness” or have an impact effect. Regarding gender, according to informant 1, 2 and 3 the frequency of some words are uttered more by one gender than the other, in other words some words tend to be used more by women rather men or vice versa. However it was indicated by the informants that the majority of users who emphasize with *katakana* are younger native speakers, because they either have insufficient *kanji* knowledge or because it is “trendy”. The older informants did not use *katakana* in that way when they were younger, due to the fact that online chatting was not available during their younger days. Emphasizing with *katakana* occurs on internet, chatting/texting with friends or on Japanese television shows. It is a casual style of emphasizing an expression in Japanese in contrast to emphasizing a phrase or expression in “formal” Japanese. Should the need arise for emphasis in a formal situation, words with “deeper” meaning, or adverbs such as *totemo* ‘very’ or *hijōni* ‘exceedingly’ should be used.

It is yet unclear if there is an explicit rule that needs to be kept in mind when emphasizing with *katakana*, due to the rules being an abstraction of the principle the speakers use unconsciously. Informants had various opinions, among which the words they choose to emphasize with varies from each other. Informant 7 mentioned that she would rather use more *hiragana* than *katakana* when texting with friends and that if she would have to emphasize a phrase or expression she would use *hiragana*. *Katakana* used unconventionally gives the idea that the utterer is being ironic or “cold” according to the informant. Informant 5 thinks that one’s own personal thoughts or personal feelings are most commonly emphasized with *katakana*. Adjectives such as *uzai* ‘annoying’, *kimoi* ‘disgusting’, *kirei* ‘beautiful’ or *kawaii* ‘cute’ are such feelings or thoughts that are most likely to be emphasized with *katakana*.

Personally, I agree with informant 5’s opinion on this matter, by conducting these interviews I got the impression that emphasizing with *katakana* is somewhat personal and how it is used is also personal. There seems to be an “unwritten subtle rule” that Japanese native speakers

who use this kind of emphasis follow. To emphasize with *katakana* varies a lot depending on situation and context, as well as personal preference. Some native speakers might understand the emphasis while other native speakers might misunderstand the emphasis as irony.

Not all grammar items can be emphasized with *katakana*. Adjectives, particularly “i-adjectives” are most commonly used when emphasizing with *katakana*. As mentioned before, depending on the meaning behind a word, in this case adjective, the meaning determines if the adjective can be emphasized with *katakana* or not, although even that varies from person to person. If the inflectional ending of an adjective is written in *hiragana* it can have minor significances, while at other occasions it might determine the subtle boundary between emphasizing and a mistake. Adverbs with intensifying meanings can be emphasized with *katakana* as well. Such words are e.g. *suggoku* ‘very’, *meccha* ‘very’ (Kansai dialect) or *chou* ‘extremely’. According to the results, emphasizing nouns with *katakana* is based on personal preference, context and situation, however it is not impossible or strange to emphasize nouns, but again depending on one’s personal feelings, context and situation, readers might understand the emphasis the utterer expresses or can misinterpret and comprehend the meaning as irony or something different. Writing an exclamation in *katakana* is not incorrect, because it refers to sounds, the same rule applies to interjections. To quote what somebody has said word-by-word, even if the person included emphasis with *katakana* is also accomplishable. Modalities emphasized with *katakana* is either unnatural or seen as “robotic”, therefore emphasizing modalities in *katakana* is avoided. Verbs, such as modalities fall in the same category, unnatural or “robotic”, however depending on personal preference, situation or context, emphasizing verbs with *katakana* is somewhat forgiving and acceptable. Unlike adjectives, the verbs inflectional ending written in either *hiragana* or *katakana* has no significance when emphasizing. Sentence ending particles written in *katakana* give the impression that the utterer is a younger female. Although it is not widely used by younger females it still gives the “girlish” impression. If the sentence ending particle was accompanied by another sentence ending particle that was not written in *katakana*, it would have minor or major significance depending on personal preferences, however the emphasizing function would not be lost. Applying a sentence ending copula written in *katakana* next to a sentence ending particle written in *katakana* as well, is acceptable. Depending on personal preference, it is acceptable to express the copula in *hiragana* and the particle in *katakana*. Generally, grammatical items conventionally written in *hiragana* such as verb past tense + *bakari* indicates that someone has just done something or something has just happened, are unacceptable written in *katakana*. However it could also be a personal preference to regard it as acceptable or as an error.

Pronouns are quite personal preference based as well as situational and contextual, it is acceptable to write pronouns in a “non-conventionalized” way such as *hiragana* and *katakana*, although it might have a different nuance and feeling, but it is an acceptable way of expressing.

As mentioned before, what is considered emphasis or error is subtle. Not only that but it is based on personal preference, situation and context. These three aspects determine the emphasis. Emphasizing in this way is also individual, meaning that emphasizing what others think or feel is unlikely, however quoting word-by-word is acceptable. Although there was no concrete answers that support this because all the examples that were given to the informants were based on emphasized feelings or thoughts by the utterer and not by anyone else. Therefore in a situation where Christopher Potts mentions, “*Sue believes that that bastard Kresge should be fired*”.⁵³ From this example one might get the idea that it is either Sue that believes that Kresge is a bastard or the utterer believes that Kresge is a bastard. When emphasizing with *katakana* one is usually emphasizing one’s own thoughts or feelings therefore such situations that Potts mentions might be acceptable, as long as it is the utterer themselves that uttered the phrase or expression and not somebody else. If the same sentence would be in Japanese, *Sū wa ano Kuresuge yarō ga kubi ni natta hōga ii to omotteiru*.⁵⁴ If the emphasis would be put on “bastard” then it would be an acceptable usage of emphasizing with *katakana*. The noun “bastard” itself is rather informal or casual, therefore depending on personal preference, emphasizing *yarō* ‘bastard’ in *katakana* in this sentence is acceptable, as long as the utterer themselves feels that Kresge is a bastard.

8.2 Discussion

The results according to me give a basic understanding of what emphasizing with *katakana* is, and how to utilize it. The results are rather abstract in my opinion, nothing is quite certain but simultaneously there is an “unwritten rule” that is followed, unfortunately I was unable to identify the “unwritten rule”. Personal preference, context and situation are aspects that determine if a certain phrase or expression can be emphasized in *katakana*.

The older informants are or were Japanese teachers, therefore they could give a clear explanation why at some points emphasizing with *katakana* is an error. However their opinions differed from each other, which makes me believe that even though this *katakana* emphasis is conventionally wrong the three aspects that were mentioned before have a great significance

⁵³ Potts (2007) p, 170

⁵⁴ Own translation

on what can or cannot be emphasized with *katakana*. Informant 6 has never heard about it, informant 1 and 2 never really thought about this phenomenon, but they find themselves using it. It may be the case that a group of people interpret the emphasis better than another group of people which potentially might misinterpret the emphasis that is expressed. Regarding age, the frequency of using this emphasizing method differs, while the frequency of chosen words vary depending on gender.

When researching this phenomenon, I could not find sources that had relativity or in depth explanation. It felt as if this emphasizing method did not exist, therefore to get a deeper understanding or even confirmation that it is possible to emphasize with *katakana*, I decided to conduct a research via interviews. The original plan was to interview eight people, four males and four females divided into two age groups. However a fourth male over 30 years willing to be interviewed could not be found, therefore unfortunately only seven informants were questioned. I feel that I should have asked more Japanese native speakers, as well as asking even younger native speakers than 20 years old in order to get more concrete results, however I was unable to do so. However, contacting Japanese native speakers from Japan via email would have been a reliable option, but as there were a lot of questions it would have been difficult to find somebody who would find time to answer the questions. Response would have been via email, therefore the possibility of receiving a concrete answer would not be likely in my opinion. Regarding the questions, there should have been more variety of situations and context, however the interview might have been longer. The conducted interviews were around 35-45 minutes long, if there would have been even more questions the interviews would have become longer which the informants would probably decline. However if there had been a case where there had been more informants, then possibly questions could have been divided in a way where some informants would have answered a set of questions and other informants answer another set of questions, or even combining the questions.

Japanese has a variety of pronouns, mostly male dominant ones. In the example questions the two pronouns that were examined are *watashi* (neutral/feminine) and *ore* (vulgar, masculine). Questions with more pronouns should have been included in the interview, to receive more concrete answers. Such pronouns are *atashi* (informal, feminine), *boku* (masculine) and *watakushi* (neutral/formal). These pronouns are used differently depending on a situation, and judging by the results, the informants' opinions on emphasizing these pronouns in *katakana* might vary as well in my opinion.

The informants in general felt as if too much *katakana* in a sentence would be difficult to read, or if there is too much *hiragana*. They feel that there needs to be a balance when writing

sentences, of course depending on the type of text the writing systems are utilized differently. Words that are not usually written in *katakana* were by some informants difficult to recognize, because some words were unfamiliar or that two words resembled one word when written next to each other. According to a research done by Yamada, J, Mitarai, Y, & Yoshida, T, *kanji* words are easier to identify than *katakana* words. In their research they asked 24 undergraduate students from Hiroshima University, 20 males and 4 females who were divided into two groups. A “Word” and a “Nonword” group, the term “nonword” in the research indicates *katakana* or *kanji* characters, whereas “word” indicates words written in *katakana* or *kanji*. The “Word” group was given 70% and 30% words and nonwords, whereas the “Nonword” group was given 20% and 80% words and nonwords. The result shows that, 2 *kanji* words were identified by 82.7% while, 2 *kanji* nonwords were identified by 31.0%. 2 *katakana* words were identified by 46.1% while 2 *katakana* nonwords were identified by 30.4%. However with 4 *kanji* words and nonwords the result was 64.2% and 13.3% while the respective *katakana* result of 4 words and nonwords was 45.5% and 15.1%.⁵⁵

As the informants mentioned *katakana* is used widely among younger native speakers, therefore there could be a chance that younger Japanese speakers are more familiar with words usually written in *hiragana* or *kanji* to be instead written in *katakana*. This could possibly indicate another reason that personal preference is one of the aspects that determines emphasis with *katakana*.

When I asked my informants if it is possible to exchange emphasized *katakana* words with *hiragana*, they responded that it is possible, however it would give a different “touch” or nuance to the sentence. The informants had various opinions on this, they said it depends on the situation, because if one would write a whole sentence, or send a text to their friends in just *hiragana* that might seem “childish”. However words like *kirei* or *kawaii* written in *hiragana* feel natural and gives the impression that what has been expressed is softer and cuter, whereas *katakana* is sharper and gives more impact to the expression. Informant 4 mentioned that if *kirei* would be written in *hiragana* he might also get the impression that something is *tidy/clean*.

“*Kvinnlig hand, Hiragana genom tiderna*” is a research written by Elvira Thomasson on *hiragana*, particularly if Japanese women use *hiragana* as much nowadays as before. Thomasson quotes in her introduction that “*Many young girls will make an effort to write using hiragana more than kanji, due to the cute, soft appearance that hiragana has*”.⁵⁶ According to

⁵⁵ Yamada, J, Mitarai, Y, & Yoshida, T (1991) p. 137-138

⁵⁶ Thomasson (2011) p.7

my informants opinions they seem to agree with what Thomasson has quoted. My informants felt that the appearance of *hiragana* characters are softer and cuter due to their curvy shape. Thomasson continues to write about a phenomenon called *gyaru-moji* which she calls *girl-characters*. *Gyaru-moji* can be used with various different characters not only restricted to Japanese but for example Greek or mathematical symbols. These characters or symbols are combined to form either *kana* or *kanji* characters. Thomasson mentions these following examples; the *hiragana* り becomes L: or the *kanji* 好 becomes 女子. She further writes that the newspaper company Yomiuri Shimbun asked a couple of Japanese girls some questions regarding *gyaru-moji*. The girls said that if they write or receive texts from each other only written in *kanji* or *hiragana* the text would feel “harder”.⁵⁷ Some of my informants felt that coming up with new ways of writing in Japanese is something younger native speakers would do, however it is not limited to a specific gender. *Gyaru-moji* and emphasizing with *katakana* is similar in a way that they both try to put an emphasis on a certain part of a text, however the majority of *gyaru-moji* users might be younger Japanese girls, whereas emphasizing with *katakana* is not restricted to gender. Although not restricted to gender it is more based on what words are chosen, according to informant 2, he feels that both girls and boys use *katakana* emphasis equally but the words they choose are different, e.g. women tend to use *kawaii* a lot more than men, and men use words such as *kakkoi* ‘cool’ or *iinee* ‘that’s good’ a lot more than women.

As for Thomasson’s research, she conducted two interviews, one interview with two native Japanese females from the age 20-21 who studied at Lund University at the time. The second informant was an elderly native Japanese woman around her 60’s who was teaching Japanese at the time

The first interview begins with Thomasson asking the two Japanese native speakers what word they associate *hiragana* with, they answered that they felt like words such as *shitasimiyasui* ‘friendly’, *kawaii* ‘cute’ and *yawarakai* ‘soft’ are words they associate *hiragana* with. They also mentioned that at some occasions, *hiragana* can be seen as “childish”. The first informant told Thomasson that if she would use *hiragana* instead of *kanji* that would most likely be if she would write to her friends online via chatting or even sending cell phone texts. The reason for this they mentioned was that it gives the text a “cuter” and more “girlish” feeling. Both informants said that they feel like women or girls tend to use this way of writing more than boys or men do, because according to them this way of writing is “girlish”. According to

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.25-26

Thomasson, there is a subtle boundary that determines if *hiragana* is cute or overused. The informants further explained that they felt as if younger female native speakers tend to use this more than older female native speakers, due to the fact that younger people do not know as much *kanji* as adults do. They feel as if *kanji* is more academic, while *hiragana* could be associated with poetry or children's books. One of the informants further explained that using the pronoun あたし *atashi* instead of its original way 私 *watashi* would feel more casual, as well as exchanging the particle は *wa* to the *hiragana* character わ *wa* and combining it with あたし would give a "girlish" impression, e.g. あたしわ. Lastly the informants told Thomasson that *hiragana* characters feel more round and *kanji* feels more "squarish" and that could be one of the reasons why *hiragana* is used more by women or girls.⁵⁸

Similar to the first interview, Thomasson asked the third informant what words she associates *hiragana* with. The informant said that she associates *hiragana* with native Japanese words, as well as words with "softness" or "accessibility". The informant explained that she would associate *kanji* with words such as; university, studies and duty. She further revealed that she often uses more *hiragana* than *kanji*, particularly when composing literary works or poetry. Depending on what writing system is used to compose poetry the effects vary in her opinion. Using primarily *hiragana* would give the text a "lighter" feeling whereas in contrast, *kanji* would give it a "darker" feeling. She further mentioned that too much *hiragana* can make the text difficult to read, therefore there needs to be good combination between *hiragana* and *kanji*. Even when writing emails, she explained that she would use *hiragana* consciously to make the message less threatening, which *kanji* can accomplish according to the informant. The informant believes that women tend to use *hiragana* more to make the sentence "softer" as well as writing in a more "narrative" way than men do. Men according to her, write in a "descriptive" way. The informant mentioned that, during her younger years, she tended to use more *kanji* instead of *hiragana* to brag about how well she knew *kanji*. Nowadays she is more familiar with the writing systems and she has formed a personal way of writing. She would often get positive responses from readers that read her poems, praising her to be writing in a soft and narrative way, which she tries to accomplish by using *hiragana* with native Japanese words. Thomasson asked the informant what texts she would associate *hiragana* with. She mentioned that she would associate *hiragana* with texts such as children's books or classic Japanese literature such as "*Genji Monogatari*". Whereas she would associate *kanji* with texts written by male authors such as Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki. The informant explained that until the

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.28-32

Meiji-period, men and women had the same mentality towards writing as in the Heian-period, meaning that women tended to use more *hiragana* whereas men used more *kanji*. She feels as if this mentality remains to some extent even nowadays. Lastly, the informant mentioned that during her younger years, girls had to make an effort to write more clearly whereas for boys it did not matter as long as what they wrote was readable.⁵⁹

The information my informants gave me about *hiragana* is in some ways similar to the three informants Thomasson interviewed. *Hiragana* like *katakana* can be used differently from its conventional purpose, however that occurs most likely in texts such as online chatting, poetry, internet, Japanese television shows, commercials, etc. Depending on situations, applying *hiragana* or *katakana* to words or phrases that are usually not written with those writing systems can result in an “eye-catching” effect which grabs the reader’s attention. However when both *kana* syllabaries are used unconventionally in informal or casual situations they get a role based on their shape as characters. Just as the informants that Thomasson interviewed and the majority of informants that I interviewed feel that due to *hiragana*’s “curvy”, “round”, “sweet” shape it can make a text feel “lighter” in contrast whereas *katakana* would feel more serious or impactful. Using either too much *hiragana* or *katakana* in a text, would make it appear as childish or that the writer has insufficient *kanji* knowledge. It would seem that emphasis used with *hiragana* is possible, but it gives an “opposite” effect in contrast to emphasizing with *katakana*. Whereas emphasizing with *katakana* is to make a phrase or expression “stand out” or leave an impact, *hiragana* has the function to make a phrase or expression seem unserious, nonthreatening and “soft”.

There are still some questions that are unanswered regarding emphasis with *katakana*. Is it acceptable to emphasize with *katakana* in situations such as in the example that was given by Potts where “Sue feels that Kresge is the bastard” and not the utterer themselves. As well as other questions such as in what specific situation or context emphasizing with *katakana* is acceptable and when it is not. But the most important question in my opinion is a concrete explanation on how emphasizing with *katakana* is utilized. The results give an abstract explanation on the usage of this phenomenon which is heavily based on the informant’s personal thoughts or image towards how it is actually used. In some cases they had similar opinions and in other cases they varied from each other, the most acceptable case judging by the results is putting emphasis on words such as *kirei*, *kawaii*, *kimoi*, *uzai*, *itai*, *gakkari*, etc. The shared attribute of these words is that they represent feelings and thoughts. These words

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.32-34

do not seem to be heavily determined by personal preference, situation or context as much as other words or expressions do. It is an “unwritten” rule that determines if these words are acceptable to be emphasized in *katakana*.

8.3 Closing words

This paper has processed the evolution of not only *katakana* but *kanji* and *hiragana*, as well as their functions from the period they were developed until their contemporary state. Various roles have been added or removed, and the language itself is still evolving. Loan words had and still have a huge impact on the language, whether it be words from Chinese written in *kanji* or modern loan words from western countries. Japanese maintains a balance between the old and the new without being “one-sided”.

Apart from conventional writing, determining the feeling or the sense of a text by the applied writing system is rather fascinating in my opinion. Researching about the matter at hand gave me an insight of the uniqueness the writing systems possess. Emphasizing with *katakana* is an unconventional usage of *katakana*, therefore determining what is acceptable is dependent on personal preference. A certain group of people might emphasize a certain word in *katakana* and consider it acceptable while another group of people might feel that that certain word feels unacceptable to emphasize in *katakana*.

Before beginning this paper I suspected that this phenomenon does not exist, however via the interviews I found out that this alternative usage of *katakana* indeed exists. I might not have found the answers I was hoping for, but I can surely state that emphasizing with *katakana* is an acceptable usage of the language, although the instructions are quite abstract.

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Appendices

The interviews will be divided with their respective questions and follow up questions in this section. Follow up questions will be marked with “-“. The questions are listed in the order they were asked. Finally a list of the 15 example sentences will be provided with a Romanised version as well as a translated version. The emphasized word or expression will be underlined.

Interview 1

Age?

What is your image towards *katakana*?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

What do you think about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Is it a casual expression?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

Do you emphasize in *katakana*?

- Why do you emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you know anybody else who emphasize in *katakana*?

- Why do you think it is used naturally?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Interview 2

Age?

Have you heard about the emphasizing function *katakana* possess?

Can *hiragana* be used to express “softness” in a sentence?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

Is it a casual expression?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

Do you emphasize in *katakana*?

- Why do you emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you know anybody else who emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you think it is easier to recognize *kanji* rather than *katakana*?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Interview 3

Age?

What is your image towards *katakana*?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

What do you think about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Is it a casual expression?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

Are adjectives more likely to be emphasized in *katakana*?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

- Was there a similar expression when you were younger?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

Do you emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you know anybody else who emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Interview 4

Age?

What is your image towards *katakana*?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

What do you think about emphasizing with *katakana*?

- Do you think *hiragana* has a similar attribute?

Is it a casual expression?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

Do you emphasize in *katakana*?

- Is it different to emphasize “na-adjectives” or “i-adjectives” in *katakana*?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

- Do you think older native speakers use a similar expression?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

Do you know anybody else who emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

- Do you think older native speakers use older foreign words rather than newer ones?

Interview 5

Age?

What is your image towards *katakana*?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

- Did you use *katakana* a lot when you wrote school papers when you were younger?

What do you think about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Is it a casual expression?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

- Was there a similar expression when you were younger?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

Do you emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

- Do you think that there is a rule on how to use this type of emphasis?

Do you think *hiragana* can be used to soften an expression?

- Why do you think so?

Interview 6

Age?

Have you heard about the emphasizing function *katakana* possess?

- Have you heard about something similar to this phenomenon?

Is it a casual expression?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

What is your image towards *katakana* in general?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

What do you think about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

- Why do you think so?
- Was there a similar expression when you were younger?
- Do you think this type of emphasis might appear in Japanese comic books?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

Do you use this emphasizing method?

Do you know anybody else who emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Do you think it is easier to recognize *kanji* rather than *katakana*?

Do you think *hiragana* can be used to soften an expression?

Interview 7

Age?

What is your image towards *katakana*?

- What do you think about the appearance of *katakana* and *hiragana* characters?

When or with what type of texts do you usually use *katakana*?

- Do you use *katakana* when you write to friends?
- Do you use *hiragana* or *kanji*?

What do you think about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Is there a similar expression but formal?

Do you think a certain age group use this type of emphasis more than another age group?

Do you think a specific gender use this type of emphasis more than another gender?

- Do you think that *gyaru-moji* is used more by girls?

Do you emphasize in *katakana*?

- Have you ever used *gyaru-moji* before?
- Do you think there is a difference when writing *kawaii* in *hiragana* or *katakana*?
- Do you think there is a difference when writing *kimoi* in *hiragana* or *katakana*?

Do you know anybody else who emphasize in *katakana*?

Do you think that there is a rule on how to use this type of emphasis?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about emphasizing with *katakana*?

Example sentences

1. 昨日、友達と一緒にショッピングモールに行って、キレイなワンピースを見た。
Kinō, tomodachi to issho ni shoppingumōru ni itte, kireina wanpiisu o mita.

Yesterday, I went to the shopping mall with my friend and saw a beautiful dress.

2. あんなクルマを持っているなんて、田中先生はきっとお金持ちだ。

An'na kuruma o motteiru nante, Tanaka sensei wa kitto okane mochi da.

With a car like that, there is no doubt that teacher Tanaka is rich.

3. 千秋! ハヤク学校へ行きなさい!

Chiaki! Hayaku gakkō e ikinasai!

Chiaki! Hurry up and go to school!

4. 俺は一日中おなかがスイテタから、やる気がないし、すっごくツカレテイル。

Ore wa ichinichijū onaka ga suiteta kara, yaruki ga naishi, suggoku tsukareteiru.

I have no motivation and I'm really tired because I have been hungry the whole day.

5. トムさんは東京に行ったときたくさんタカイビルを見ることができたと言っていました。

Tomusan wa Tokyo ni itta toki takusan takai biru o miru koto ga dekita to itteimashita.

Tom said that when he went to Tokyo, he was able to see a lot of tall buildings.

6. (Scenario, someone bumps their head into the wall and says :) イタイ!

Itai!

Ouch!

7. 先週の映画館で見た映画は面白かったよネ?

Senshū no eigakan de mita eiga wa omoshirokatta yone?

The movie we saw last week at the cinema was interesting, wasn't it?

8. 私は虫がだいきらい。虫はキモイ!

Watashi wa mushi ga daikirai. Mushi wa kimoi!

I hate bugs! Bugs are disgusting!

9. Person A: 明日のパーティーに来るだろう? 人が多いほうが楽しいよ。

Person B: 明日俺はイソガシイけど、もし用事が早く終わったら、行けるカモシレナイ。

Person A: *Ashita no pātī ni kuru darō? Hito ga ōi hō ga tanoshii yo.*

Person B: *Ashita ore wa isogashii kedo, moshi yōji ga hayaku owattara, ikeru kamoshirenai.*

Person A: You are coming to the party tomorrow right? It's more fun if there are a lot of people you know.

Person B: I'm busy tomorrow, but if I finish my errand quickly I might be able to go.

10. ズット見たかった映画が昨日見れた。ガッカリだった! 予告編とゼンゼンチガウ! 5分経ってもうツマラナカッタ。見ないほうがいい!

Zutto mitakatta eiga ga kinō mireta. Gakkari datta! Yokokuhen to zenzen chigau! 5 fun tatte mō tsumaranakatta. Minai hō ga ii!

I was able to watch the movie that I wanted to watch for a long time. It was a disappointment!
It was totally different from the trailer. It did not even take 5 minutes and the movie got
boring. It is better not to watch it!

11. ワタシは昨日朝寝坊しちゃって、先生に怒られて、とてもツラかった。

Watashi wa kinō asa nebōshichatte, sensei ni okorarete, totemo tsurakatta.

Yesterday I accidently overslept and got the teacher angry, it was really painful.

12. Person A: お前の弟は何歳?

Person B: オレのブラザーは16歳ダヨ。

Person A: *Omae no otōto wa nansai?*

Person B: *Ore no burazā wa 16 sai dayo.*

Person A: How old is your brother?

Person B: My brother is 16 you know.

13. 部長のスピーチは素晴らしかった。私はカンドウシマシタ。

Buchō no supīichi wa subarashikatta. Watashi wa kandōshimashita.

The chief's speech was fantastic. I was moved.

14. ウンテンするのは怖いので、全然ウンテンしていません。

Untensuru no wa kowai node, zenzen untenshiteimasen.

I don't drive at all, because driving is scary.

15. 警察が来たかどうか、僕は分からない。僕はここに来たばかりなんだよ。

Keisatsu ga kita ka dōka, boku wa wakarani. Boku wa koko ni kita bakarai nan dayo.

I do not know if the police came or not. I just came here you know.