

INTERACTIVE ARTICLE COVER

RUPKATHA JOURNAL

ON INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN HUMANITIES



About the Journal

Journal DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha
Journal Home	www.rupkatha.com
Indexed by	Scopus Web of Science: Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) DOAJ
Journal Metrics	CiteScore 2020: 0.2 SJR 2020: 0.162 SNIP 2020: 0.193 JCI 2020: 0.50

About the Issue

Themed issue	Volume 4, number 1, 2022 (January-March) Contemporary East and Southeast Asian Literary and Cultural Studies
Guest Editors	Dr Jeremy de Chavez & Dr Zhang Yue, University of Macau, China
Issue DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n1
TOC	https://rupkatha.com/v14n1.php
Peer Review	Under the responsibility of the Guest Editors

About the Review

Title	<i>Translingual Words: An East Asian Lexical Encounter with English</i> (2019) by Jieun Kiaer
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Author ID	https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0325-4634
Funding	Not applicable
Article DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n1.22 Pages: 1-4
Abstract	https://rupkatha.com/v14n122
Full-text PDF	https://rupkatha.com/V14/n1/v14n122.pdf
Article History	Complete review received: 16 Mar 2021 Revised review received: 9 June 2021 Accepted: 22 Oct 2021 First Published: 05 February 2022
Review Impact	Check Dynamic Impact
Copyright	Aesthetics Media Services
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Book Review

***Translingual Words: An East Asian Lexical Encounter with English* by Jieun Kiaer**

Publisher: Routledge

Date of Publication: 2019

Language: English

ISBN: 9780367607517

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The book examines the history and reasons for the development of the translingual process, its two-way influence on culture and the lexicon of both parties combined with clear interpretations of linguistic terms. The first chapter lays a theoretical foundation for the following two parts, which respectively introduce two formation pathways of the words. The author strives to raise awareness of translation theories beyond Europe and promotes the legitimacy of translingual words.

The author Jieun Kiaer is a Korean linguist who is currently the Associate Professor of Korean Language and Linguistics at the University of Oxford, UK. Kiaer's research interests lie in theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics as well as Korean and East Asian linguistics. Before this book, Kiaer has published works in relevant fields, such as *The History of English Loanwords in Korean* (2014) and *Hybrid Words in Korea and Japanese: A strange Brew or an Asset for Global English* (2017). Based on previous research, this work expands the topics to East Asia. Familiar with both European and Asian culture, Kiaer gives down-to-earth examples of translingual words and analyzes them from linguistic, cultural and sociopolitical perspectives.

In terms of methodology, the online database Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is used as a criterion for tracing translingual words and defining their degree of fusion in English culture. The book also includes a large amount of content analysis of social media, such as how the words are used in the context of local culture, which also provides examples used in the book. Google Trends and Google N-gram are deployed for tracing the use of English words for both inner and outer English speakers.

Basics of Translingual Words

The author considers terms like "borrowed words" or "loanwords" inappropriate given that English has a global identity and does not grant ownership to anyone. Therefore, Kiaer introduces and clarifies the definition of related terms, such as "foreign words," "hybrid words," "subcultural

words” and “translingual words” in the four chapters of the first part. This is crucial because these terms are referred to throughout the book. Translingual words include the former three terms, and they can be English words in the form of Eastern languages or the romanization of Eastern languages.

Kiaer introduces the lexicon interaction model and the sunflower model to show how words’ meanings are negotiated and transformed between cultures, emphasizing the function of English as Lingua Franca (ELF). A large number of examples in Chinese, Korea and Japan are used to explain terms and theories. The author compares the translingual process of the three countries, revealing how socio-political and historic factors can affect the speed and way of lexical integration. Colonization was identified as the initiator of translanguaging, and words flow mainly from European countries to Asian countries in the earlier historical stage, though the distinction between foreign words and native words is blurred in the age of globalization and digitalization. According to ELF, the existence of hybrid words is justified since they are integrated into local culture (p. 20). This kind of words faces prejudice, though they are “an indispensable part of a multilingual society and may even be the greatest asset of our future lexicon” on the way to “a new world order in languages” (Graddol, 2006, p. 23) along with globalization. Subcultural words, the once considered short-lived words, are valued for allowing people of international backgrounds to communicate on the internet, especially in Japan and Korea, where non-English words enter the English lexicon despite the prejudice they receive in reality. Emoji is compared with translingual words since they both have shareability and semantic value.

Words from East Asian to English Lexicon

As is mentioned above, translanguaging can be carried out in both directions, from East Asian to European, and vice versa. The second part of the book focuses on the analysis of East Asian words in English. The author starts from the history in the chapter “First Arrivals,” then analyzes various media platforms with case studies to explore the settlement of the words and examines attitudes of the locals towards translingual words.

Kiaer sorts out the sequences of major historical and political stages that affect the process and differentiates degrees in which Chinese, Japanese and Korean enter the English lexicon. Graphs and statistics are used to demonstrate the difference in amount and categories of settled words from the three languages. Problems in defining East Asian words are carried out since most of them are of Sinitic origin, making it hard to categorize which one of the three countries the words come from. East Asian words’ popularization through Southeast Asian English is identified as a shortcut to translanguaging, but the author does not include a large number of ethnic Chinese as a possible explanation.

Content and data analysis in registers such as OED (dictionary), magazines and newspapers, and social media platforms are then used to discuss the settling patterns of the words. The three categories of media have incremental tolerance for translingual words. The author suggests that the conventional attitude of OED to translingual words should be shifted given that English is entering a “multilingual era” (p. 83). Case studies on *The Times*, *New York Times*, and *The Economists* show the life span and diverse preferences of Asian-born words in

different press or countries. Social media platforms are where Asian words are treated as part of the English lexicon and used in daily life by the general public. Hashtags are used to trace the variation of Romanisations and the combination of the words. The former results from the unsmooth procedure (p. 89) and controversial pronunciation adaptation methods. Kiaer uses graphs to show the declining frequencies of "special treatment" (p. 93) to selected Asian words, which indicates their integration into the English lexicon in time.

To explore the effect of translanguism in the socio-linguistic field, the author takes a survey among British native university students and concludes that young British are open to translingual words and are more familiar with Japanese words. However, it should be noted that this result does not reflect the general attitude of young British, since education level may be a variable to openness to Asian words and culture.

Words from English to East Asian Lexicon

The last part is about the existence of English words in East Asia. Kiaer introduces the directly imported words which closely link with history in the chapter, analyzes the formation mechanism and attitudes towards localized English words in the next chapter, and eventually identifies global words.

To analyze why and how the words are directly imported, the author introduces the linguistic landscape shift from Chinese (Sino-centric) to English in Korea and Japan, which results in the increasing familiarity of English rather than Chinese among citizens. Following Japan, Korea and China start to accept English as a language which brings in western culture and modernity. The expansion of the usage of words originated from English from science to genuine lexicon of daily life, from culture borrowing to westernization of local words can be observed and studied through media, where the author generalizes the way language usage pattern changes. Kiaer refers to survey results in Japan and Korea to conclude that the use of English words results simply from convenience with little prejudice towards the English words, though some scholars argue that the phenomenon reflects "flunkeyism towards the West" (Shin, 2009, p. 104). Linguistic experts believe it is beneficial for communication, though it raises awareness of the negative influence on the native lexicon.

Compared with Korea and Japan, China is much slower in exchanging lexicon with English words. Lexical exchanges are visible mainly on brand and shop names, in which semiotic values are adopted. The "non-sensical" (p. 134) use of English words in Taiwan is justified because of this. Kiaer refers to terms and theories in word-formation to explain the patterns of locally made word formation in Japanese and Korean as well as difficulties to hybrid Chinese with English. Four categories of global words are chosen for exploration and analysis: food words, fashion and cosmetic words, socio-cultural words and foreign branding. The author introduces their evolution and impact on the international lexicon, in which process the meaning of words expand.

The overall structure of the book is clear, presenting a complete view of the translanguaging phenomenon between the western and eastern worlds throughout history. The book shows the influence of history, politics, culture and language on each other, the fact that language is dynamic and is always negotiated by people, and forecasts the future trend of further

translinguism. Terms and theories of linguistics are introduced with adequate frequency, plain explanation and examples, making the book both academic and friendly to newcomers. Nevertheless, the third part seems to be flooded with examples, making the logic harder to follow than previous chapters. The way of interpretation in this book respects the countries or regions mentioned in the book and the author puts the languages and their hybrid versions in equal positions. Kiaer sees the translingual process from a global view, which may result from her positive attitude towards translingual words, though it should be noted that the effect should be viewed more critically concerning its influence on local culture, education, and ideology. The book uses unsophisticated language to show research data and examples, which makes the book easily understood, even for those unfamiliar with Asian languages or without linguistic background.

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Yi Xuan, Jia is currently finishing her bachelor's degree at the University of Macau. Jia is especially enthusiastic about linguistics, cultural studies and education, where she wishes to continue her graduate studies.
