

# The Role and Effect of Katakana Syllabary for Japanese Learners of English

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## Abstract

This article examines the function and impact of the katakana syllabary on Japanese language learners' acquisition of the English language. The research investigates how pronunciation, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension are affected by using katakana as a learning aid for English. The study strategy uses an existing dataset gathered from articles found on pertinent websites and takes a secondary qualitative method. The data are analysed using content analysis to find recurring themes and patterns pertaining to the impact of katakana on language acquisition. The results show that using katakana presents major pronunciation accuracy issues for Japanese learners. Because English and katakana have distinct phonetic systems, learners often have trouble effectively transferring English sounds, which causes pronunciation problems and decreased confidence in spoken English. Furthermore, the research suggests that students who excessively depend on katakana representations may overestimate the breadth of their vocabulary, which may impair their ability to employ words successfully in a variety of communicative circumstances. The continual switching between reading katakana and normal writing may slow down the reading process and reduce overall fluency, which can be detrimental to reading comprehension. When given in katakana style, learners may struggle to recognise homophones and homographs, which might cause problems in understanding. The results have significant ramifications for language teachers and curriculum developers. The research highlights the need to support a balanced approach to vocabulary training and offering tailored instructional help to alleviate pronunciation issues. Teachers are urged to help students smoothly transition from katakana-based reading to standard script reading so they may gain confidence in their ability to understand English literature. Additionally, educators must promote a pleasant and inclusive learning environment due to the cultural and societal ramifications of using katakana. In order to improve students' motivation and attitudes towards language study, instructors should encour-

age students to accept English as a universal language of communication. In conclusion, by examining the effect of katakana on Japanese learners' acquisition of the English language, this research offers important new knowledge to the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Communities) community. The practical suggestions based on the research's findings may help language teachers improve the results of language learning and foster linguistic proficiency among Japanese English learners.

## Keywords

Katakana, English Language Learning, Japanese Learners, Pronunciation Challenges, Vocabulary Acquisition, Reading Comprehension, Secondary Qualitative Research, Content Analysis, Language Educators, Curriculum Design

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Japanese speakers have long placed a high value on studying English because of how often it is used in a variety of international situations (Ananth, 2019). The need for English competence has increased as Japan's global reach grows, and educators are looking for creative ways to improve language instruction (Nishi, 2019a).

### 1.2. Research Question

The function and impact of the katakana syllabary, a Japanese writing system, in the acquisition of the English language is one area that has drawn attention in recent studies. The foundation of the research objective is the growing importance of learning English for Japanese speakers. Thus, to facilitate learning English, Japanese speakers are finding creative ways to facilitate English learning. However, the influence of katakana syllabary is causing some problems which are:

- Slow-down of the reading process and reduce fluency.
- Difficulty in understanding homophones and homographs (Garland, 2020).

Considering these issues, the purpose of this research is to look at how the use of katakana affects Japanese language learners' learning of English pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Ayeni, 2021). We will specifically look at how the use of katakana-based learning materials impacts learners' language development and if it poses particular difficulties or advantages in contrast to conventional teaching techniques.

### 1.3. Significance

In the subject of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), understanding how the katakana syllabary affects English language acquisition is of utmost importance. While hiragana and kanji are more widely used in Japa-

nese writing, katakana is regularly utilised for English phrases and foreign loanwords. Despite being widely used, little study has examined how katakana affects language acquisition.

#### **1.4. Purpose and Contribution**

This research seeks to close that knowledge gap and provide insightful information to educators, curriculum designers, and language policy makers. The difficulties that Japanese language learners could have might be better understood by looking at the function of katakana in the study of the English language (Adachi & Makino, 2022). It may also provide helpful advice on how to make use of katakana's special qualities to improve vocabulary learning and pronunciation abilities. Learning the intricacies of using katakana in language education may result in better pedagogical practices, which will eventually benefit learners and advance linguistic competency (Motohashi-Saigo & Ishizawa, 2020).

#### **1.5. Scope and Limitations**

It is crucial to recognise the reach and constraints of this investigation. The study will concentrate on a particular subset of Japanese students studying English at the intermediate level at a university or language school. Quantitative and qualitative data, including student performance on pronunciation exercises, vocabulary tests, and reading comprehension assignments, as well as insights from interviews or surveys, will be analysed for the inquiry.

#### **1.6. Structure of the Article**

The article will first provide a general review of the pertinent background information and research topic before diving into the study results and analysis. The importance of the study will be emphasised, highlighting the need of comprehending how katakana affects the acquisition of the English language. To make the study's constraints and scope clear, the study's purpose will next be discussed.

### **2. Literature Review**

#### **2.1. Overview of English Language Learning in Japan**

Due to Japan's strong linkages to the rest of the world and its educational system, English language study has become a key component of Japanese education (Kinoshita & Verdonshot, 2019). The majority of Japanese students begin learning English in elementary school, and the value of English competence is emphasised throughout secondary education (Tengse & Gakkula, 2021). Nevertheless, despite this focus, learning Japanese may be difficult, especially when it comes to pronunciation and conversational fluency.

#### **2.2. The Role of Katakana in English Language Learning**

One of the three Japanese writing systems, katakana, is mostly employed for foreign names, onomatopoeic expressions, and loanwords. Katakana is widely used

to translate English words and phrases while learning the language (Hart, 2023). Language textbooks, instructional materials, and even casual interactions among students all make use of it. It is unclear how this use of katakana will affect the methods and results of language acquisition.

### 2.3. Previous Studies on Pronunciation

The link between Japanese language learners' use of katakana and English pronunciation has been examined in a number of research studies. Because Japanese and English have different phonetic systems, some research contends that practising pronunciation primarily with katakana may result in incorrect pronunciation (Cochrane, 2019). When using just katakana-based pronunciation instructions, learners may have difficulties with vowel sounds, consonant clusters, and stress patterns (Rose, 2019).

### 2.4. Vocabulary Acquisition and Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension and vocabulary development may be affected by the use of katakana in English language learning materials. While katakana makes it easier to recognise English words visually, it may make it more difficult for learners to comprehend the deeper meanings and context of those words (Zhang, 2019). Overreliance on katakana might result in learners just having a superficial comprehension of terminology, which would hinder their ability to correctly apply words to various situations.

### 2.5. Challenges and Benefits of Katakana-Based Learning

Katakana-based learning offers both advantages and disadvantages, according to research. On the one hand, katakana gives Japanese learners of English a comfortable and approachable script, making their first exposure to the language less intimidating (Kahramonovna, 2023). However, it could unintentionally encourage linguistic stuttering and impede learners' development towards fluent, genuine English conversation (Sava, 2022).

### 2.6. Integrating Katakana and Other Teaching Approaches

Researchers have recommended combining several teaching philosophies to meet the difficulties presented by katakana-based learning. A more balanced approach to language acquisition may be achieved by combining hiragana and katakana or by employing romaji (the Latin alphabet) with katakana (Miyagawa, Kato, Zlazli, Carlino, & Machida, 2023). Teachers may improve pronunciation and language understanding by focusing students on phonetic patterns and contextual use.

## 3. Role of Katakana in Language Learning and Its Potential Effects on Pronunciation, Vocabulary Acquisition, and Reading Comprehension

Before you begin to format your paper, first write and save the content as a separate text file. Keep your text and graphic files separate until after the text has

been formatted and styled. Do not use hard tabs, and limit use of hard returns to only one return at the end of a paragraph. Do not add any kind of pagination anywhere in the paper. Do not number text heads—the template will do that for you.

Finally, complete content and organizational editing before formatting. Please take note of the following items when proofreading spelling and grammar: Recent studies have shown a growing interest in the function of the katakana syllabary in language acquisition, notably in the context of Japanese speakers learning English. One of the three Japanese writing systems, katakana, is commonly used to translate words and phrases from other languages, including English (Arimura & Jiménez, 2021). The purpose of this section is to examine the function of katakana in language learning and its possible implications for reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, and pronunciation.

### **3.1. Katakana and Pronunciation**

The usage of katakana in textbooks and other resources for language instruction might affect how English words are pronounced by students. Because katakana is a syllabary with a limited number of phonetic symbols, one possible outcome is that may not effectively reflect the variety of phonetic sounds found in English (Poncelas & Htun, 2022). As a consequence, students may have trouble accurately duplicating true English pronunciation, particularly when trying to differentiate between consonants that are identical in English but absent in Japanese.

### **3.2. The Interference of Katakana**

Japanese phonetic patterns may conflict with English pronunciation when using katakana-based pronunciation aids. Unintentionally translating English words into Japanese phonological principles may lead to mispronunciations and decreased understandability. For instance, the Japanese syllable structure is often simpler and syllable-timed, while the English rhythm is more intricate and stress-timed (Wydell, 2019). If katakana pronunciation is overused, it could be difficult to express the rhythm and stress patterns that are crucial for authentic English speaking.

### **3.3. Vocabulary Acquisition through Katakana**

Japanese language learners' exposure to English vocabulary is greatly aided by katakana. The process of visually translating English words into katakana exposes students to a new vocabulary written in a form they are already acquainted with (Sava, 2022). Nevertheless, depending entirely on katakana for vocabulary learning may restrict learners' comprehension of word meanings since they may not completely get the contextual use and subtleties of the terms (Zhang, 2019). As a result, students could find it difficult to utilise these terms correctly in various contexts.

Surface-Level Reading Comprehension: Katakana-based reading resources

may help students identify English words, but they may only improve their reading comprehension at the surface level. Students who read English books using katakana transcriptions may be able to recognise terms they have seen previously, but they may not understand the underlying meanings and complexities (Sava, 2022). As a result, students can find it difficult to understand the text's entire context and might overlook some of its more significant implications.

#### ***The Need for Balanced Approaches.***

Teachers and curriculum designers must use balanced strategies to reduce the possible drawbacks of katakana-based language acquisition. Learners may get a deeper knowledge of English pronunciation and vocabulary by integrating katakana with other writing systems, such as hiragana or romaji (Kutsuki, 2021). Teachers may nurture more correct pronunciation and boost vocabulary understanding by focusing students' attention on phonetic patterns and contextual use.

### **3.4. Challenges and Benefits of Using Katakana as a Learning Tool for English**

In educational studies, there has been interest in how Japanese learners of English use the katakana syllabary as a learning aid. This section examines the research already done on the difficulties and advantages of learning English using katakana (Kemp & Treiman, 2023). By looking at the study results, we may learn a lot about how katakana affects language learning and spot areas where language education could be improved. Challenges of Using Katakana for English Language Learning:

When utilising katakana as a learning aid for English, there are issues with pronunciation that have come up in a number of studies. The restricted selection of phonetic symbols used by katakana may make it challenging for learners to correctly reproduce the wide variety of English sounds (Nakayama, 2021). This may result in pronunciation errors and impair learners' capacity to communicate well in English, particularly when it comes to learning vowel sounds and consonant clusters that are different from Japanese phonology.

The stress patterns that are intrinsic to English are not conveyed by katakana, which might cause a misunderstanding of word emphasis and rhythmic rhythms in spoken English. Unnatural or monotonous speech might emerge from learners' inability to distinguish between stressed and unstressed syllables (Yoneyama, Kitahara, & Tajima, 2020). This ignorance of English stress patterns may make it more difficult for learners to understand the subtleties of spoken language and take part in real conversations.

While katakana makes it easier to recognise English words, learners may not have a strong grasp of vocabulary definitions and their use in context. This dependence on visual identification might result in just a cursory understanding of words without an understanding of their deeper implications (Saito, 2019). As a result, students may find it challenging to use newly learned language appro-

priately in varied situations, which may restrict their capacity for accurate and idiomatic communication in English.

According to studies, readers who only use katakana to read English literature may have trouble understanding the text's overall context and meaning (Stubbe & Nakashima, 2020). Although katakana may help with word recognition, learners may struggle to grasp sentence patterns, idiomatic phrases, and metaphorical language, which results in a scant comprehension of the text.

#### ***Benefits of Using Katakana for English Language Learning:***

For novices in particular, katakana provides a feeling of familiarity when encountering English terms. The comfort of recognising English terms written in katakana helps learners overcome their first apprehension while learning a new language (Garland, 2020). This comfort level might help learners gain confidence as they approach studying the English language.

Katakana's visual nature might help students remember new words. When students come across English words written in katakana, they may connect the visual image with the matching pronunciation, which improves vocabulary retention (Breen, Baldwin, & Bond, 2021). The mnemonic effect may be very helpful for language learners who are just starting out.

Learners can quickly identify these terms in context since English words are commonly transliterated into katakana when employed as loanwords in Japanese (Tuptim, 2022). This simplified process of loanword detection may help with reading comprehension and language learning, especially when dealing with English terminology found in fields like technology, science, and popular culture.

By utilising katakana to represent English words, students who are already acquainted with katakana from their home tongue may be better able to see patterns and similarities between the two languages (Yoko, 2019). This link may make it easier to recognise words and help students make links between English and Japanese language.

## **4. Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role and significance of the katakana syllabary in the English language learning processes of Japanese students. The study used text analysis to glean useful information regarding the benefits and downsides of using katakana to learn English, with particular attention paid to the ways in which it may improve students' pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

## **5. Research Design**

The template is designed so that author affiliations are not repeated each time for multiple analysing already published information in papers that may be accessible on relevant websites is the "secondary qualitative research approach" employed in this study. To learn more about a topic that has already been tho-

roughly studied and documented by previous scholars, secondary research is highly beneficial (Kinoshita & Verdonschot, 2019). The study's overarching goal is to deepen and broaden our knowledge of how katakana influences English language learning for Japanese students. Secondary qualitative research allows the researcher to use already published data to address research questions without the need for original data collection. This strategy allows for the collection of data from several credible sources, including scholarly articles, online courses, and language-learning platforms (Moore, Oyama, Pearce, & Kitano, 2020). By drawing from a wide range of perspectives and experiences reported throughout multiple studies, the study may give a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of using katakana in English language learning.

### 5.1. Data Collection

Finding and choosing articles from relevant websites that address the function and impact of the katakana syllabary in English language acquisition is a necessary step in the data-gathering process. The researcher will utilise precise keywords and search phrases associated with the study subject to make sure the data are credible and reliable (Juratek, 2022). For example, the researcher will use the Boolean searching method for searching and collecting relevant data. In the Boolean searching method, the researcher will use Boolean expressions such as AND, OR and NOT to effectively search relevant pieces of literature online. Along with Boolean searching, keywords will be utilised accordingly for searching relevant papers. For example, the keywords for searching relevant papers for this study will be katakana syllabary, Japanese speakers' English learning, and impact of katakana syllabary. However, articles published in respectable publications, scholarly journals, instructional websites, and language-learning platforms will be the main emphasis of the inclusion criteria (Allen, 2022). Also, the journals considered will be peer-reviewed. For this, when finding the journal, the researcher will go to the websites of them. Then, the information related to the journals will be evaluated such as publication year, DOI, and journal publication processes. The authors of these papers, who are linguists, academics, and educators, will provide a range of viewpoints and insightful observations. The chosen articles will be scrutinised for their applicability to the study's emphasis on the effect of katakana on Japanese learners' acquisition of the English language (Hiramoto, 2023). Apart from these, the research objective will also guide the choice of relevant papers for reviewing for this journal. The researcher will carefully review each article to ensure that it meets the objectives of the study and is acceptable for content analysis. Relevant or duplicate articles won't be included in the research in order to guarantee the accuracy and integrity of the data.

### 5.2. Data Analysis

The preferred approach for analysing the articles obtained from pertinent websites is content analysis. A systematic and objective framework for analysing and interpreting textual data is provided by content analysis, which enables the re-



searcher to pinpoint recurrent themes and patterns connected to the acquisition of English through katakana.

### **1) *Data Preparation***

The collection of the chosen articles into a single dataset serves as the basis for analysis. We will carefully examine and analyse each article to see if it is appropriate for content analysis and whether it is relevant to the research issue. Articles that don't fit the objectives of the research or that are already in the database will not be added.

### **2) *Coding Scheme Development***

The researcher's next task is to create a coding system for the data. The taxonomy employed will be influenced by the study's goals and focal areas, which include pronunciation problems, vocabulary expansion, and reading comprehension. In order to make the systematic analysis of the data easier, codes will be developed to reflect the various themes and patterns observed in the articles. To take into consideration the objectives of the research and any nuances in the data, the coding system will be improved repeatedly. To make sure that all of the data offered in the chosen articles is recorded, the researcher will assess the breadth and depth of the coding categories.

### **3) *Data Coding***

The researcher will attempt to systematically code the data by applying the specified codes to pertinent portions of the articles after the coding scheme has been developed. This procedure entails reading the articles carefully to pick out significant phrases and paragraphs that speak to how katakana affects Japanese learners' ability to acquire the English language. To increase the validity and dependability of the results, the researcher will apply strict standards and open communication to the coding procedure. To ensure the uniformity and dependability of the coding, an independent coder may also be hired.

### **4) *Data Analysis and Theme Identification***

The researcher will examine the text after coding the data to find recurring themes and patterns in the articles. Themes might relate to how students perceive using katakana, difficulties with pronunciation, vocabulary growth, and reading comprehension, as well as the advantages or benefits of utilising katakana-based learning materials. The coded data will be combined and summarised as part of the analysis to find recurring themes and trends. To make sure that the analysis includes both the intended areas of interest and the emerging themes from the data, the researcher will use both inductive and deductive methods.

### **5) *Interpretation and Synthesis***

To reach insightful conclusions, the researcher will subsequently combine the data and evaluate the results. The researcher will get a greater grasp of how katakana affects language learners' learning experiences as well as the effects of its usage on language growth and acquisition via this approach. To further our knowledge of the practices used in language teaching, the synthesis results will be explored in relation to the body of current literature and pertinent theoretical

frameworks.

## 6. Findings

Several important conclusions emerged from the examination of the data gathered from the articles on the function and impact of the katakana syllabary in the acquisition of the English language among Japanese learners. With an emphasis on pronunciation, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension, the research examined learners' experiences, difficulties, and advantages connected to using katakana as an aid for English learning (Juratek, 2022).

### 6.1. Pronunciation Challenges

The results show that Japanese language learners have major difficulties while learning the English alphabet using katakana, especially in terms of pronunciation. Japanese loanwords and English idioms are often represented in katakana, which results in various phonetic systems and sounds (Vallauri, 2020). As a consequence, when encountering katakana representations, students often fail to appropriately translate English sounds. This phonological dissonance may make it difficult for learners to speak clearly, which can result in mispronunciations and a loss of confidence in spoken English. Japanese language students may have trouble telling apart certain English sounds that don't have exact translations in the katakana alphabet. For instance, the pronunciation of the English "r" and "l" sounds might be muddled since they are often represented by the same katakana letter (Weerarathne, 2021). The lack of certain English phonemes in katakana also makes it more difficult for learners to pronounce certain words since they may try to imitate these sounds with the katakana characters that are accessible.

### 6.2. Vocabulary Acquisition

Although English loanwords in Japanese are often written in katakana, their effect on students' vocabulary development in English is complicated (Wydell, 2019). On the one hand, when provided in katakana form, recognisable English terms may be recognized by learners, acting as a bridge between the two languages (Matthews, Lange, & Wiest, 2023). This recognition may assist in the initial comprehension of English vocabulary by learners and make it simpler to spot English loanwords in Japanese literature. On the other side, a heavy reliance on katakana for vocabulary may make it more difficult for students to understand the actual use and meaning of English terms. A restricted vocabulary depth may result from learners just having a cursory comprehension of words, concentrating more on their outward manifestation than their conceptual intricacies (Allen, 2022). According to the research, some Japanese language learners may find it difficult to distinguish between English terms that have similar katakana representations but different meanings and implications. Despite the fact that katakana may be a useful tool for initial word identification, this emphasizes that educators should encourage students to explore the deeper meanings and

applications of English vocabulary via more thorough language education (Rothgerber, 2020).

### 6.3. Reading Comprehension

The results imply that learners' reading comprehension may be hampered by the usage of katakana in English literature. Although katakana gives English loanwords a visual familiarity, learners' ability to read and understand English literature written in regular script may be hampered by the dependence on katakana representations (Tabata-Sandom, Banno, & Watanabe, 2023). Constantly moving between scripts may increase cognitive burden, which can impede reading and decrease fluency in general. Japanese language learners can find it challenging to go from reading English writings written in normal script to reading literature written in katakana. Learners must modify their cognitive functions and language recognition techniques throughout this shift (Hiramoto, 2023). The research discovered that even when unknown English words are written in conventional character and may be recognized in katakana form, learners may have trouble interpreting them. Additionally, when taught in katakana, learners could struggle to distinguish between homophones and homographs, which might make understanding difficult (Hopkins, 2023). For instance, it might be difficult for learners to distinguish between the meanings of the English terms "there," "their," and "they're" without context since these words all have the same katakana symbol.

### 6.4. Pronunciation Improvement with Instructional Support

The research also discovered that specialized instructional help might lessen the difficulties that come with pronouncing katakana. When students received detailed instruction on English phonetics and pronunciation norms, as well as practice exercises aimed at reducing the effect of katakana, their pronunciation accuracy considerably increased (Gakkula & Tengse, 2021). This shows that via focused interventions and pedagogical tactics, educators may play a critical role in assisting learners in overcoming the pronunciation challenges associated with katakana. Teachers may create exercises that help students to practice certain English sounds and tell between phonemes that have similar katakana representations. Teachers may provide a supportive and interesting learning environment that encourages proper pronunciation by adding communicative and interactive pronunciation activities (Rose, 2019).

### 6.5. Limited Awareness of Vocabulary Depth

Another interesting observation is that students who extensively depend on katakana representations often overestimate the breadth of their knowledge. Although many English loanwords may be seen in katakana form, learners might not completely understand the subtleties of these words or their context-specific meanings (Oyama et al., 2023). It may be difficult for learners to employ words

successfully in a variety of communication contexts, which can negatively impact their total language competency. Teachers should urge students to go deeper into the rich vocabulary of English than what can be seen at first glance using katakana. This may be accomplished by doing context-specific vocabulary exercises, reading real English books, and having meaningful discussions that encourage the use and depth of vocabulary (Michaloski, 2021).

### 6.6. Balanced Approach to Language Instruction

The results highlight the need of employing katakana in English language acquisition in a balanced manner, taking into consideration both its advantages and disadvantages. While katakana may be a helpful tool for the first identification of English words, educators must add in-depth vocabulary training and phonological teaching to this strategy to promote appropriate pronunciation and a deeper grasp of English terms (Hart, 2023). Teachers may assist students in building a solid foundation in the English language by balancing comprehensive language education with katakana-based word identification. The ability to successfully communicate in a variety of linguistic circumstances may be improved by integrating different language learning approaches (Adachi & Makino, 2022).

### 6.7. Cultural and Social Implications

Katakana use in English language instruction has cultural and societal repercussions as well. Because English is written in katakana, learners may link it with a foreign identity, which may affect their motivation and attitudes toward the language (Martens & Wang, 2021). Furthermore, a heavy dependence on katakana symbols may promote the idea that English is a difficult and distant language to acquire, which might affect learners' motivation to interact with the language (Cochrane, 2019). Teachers should create a welcoming climate in the classroom that promotes English as a worldwide language of communication rather than just a second language. The interconnection of languages and cultures may help learners become more open-minded and responsive to learning the English language (Aburto-Gutierrez et al., 2022).

### 6.8. Implications for Language Learning

The results of this research have important ramifications for pedagogy and language acquisition, especially in the context of teaching English to Japanese students. Educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers may learn more about successful techniques to improve language learning outcomes by having a better understanding of the drawbacks and advantages of employing katakana in English language learning (Tuptim, 2022). First of all, teachers need to be aware of the possible pronunciation difficulties caused by the effect of katakana and provide specific instructional help to solve these problems. Learners' pronunciation accuracy may be increased by giving them specific teaching on English phonetics and pronunciation norms, as well as chances for practice and feedback (Nishi,

2019b). Teachers may progressively offer real English texts to help students transition from katakana-based word recognition to regular script reading. With this methodical technique, students may gain confidence in their ability to understand English without having to depend exclusively on katakana representations (Ferries, 2022).

Second, it's crucial to teach vocabulary in a balanced way. Although katakana may be an effective tool for initial word identification, educators should place a strong emphasis on acquiring a wide range of vocabulary to help students grasp word meanings, context-specific use, and idiomatic phrases (Wydell, 2019). The development of more complex language abilities is aided by encouraging students to investigate the subtle meanings and implications of English words. Thirdly, language teachers need to think about how katakana use in English language instruction will affect culture and society (Motohashi-Saigo & Ishizawa, 2020). Positive attitudes and motivation for language study may be fostered by encouraging students to see English as a universal language of communication rather than as something that is only associated with being alien. In order to assist students perceive language study as a doorway to understanding and appreciating many cultures, educators should encourage a feeling of cultural awareness and curiosity in their students (Hiramoto, 2023).

## 7. Discussion

The study's results, which attempt to shed light on the function and impact of the katakana syllabary in English language acquisition among Japanese learners, are thoroughly interpreted and analysed in the discussion part. The relevance of these results for language educators and curriculum development is discussed, and their ramifications are analyzed in the context of previous work. The debate also discusses the study's weaknesses and suggests alternative research avenues.

### 7.1. Interpretation and Analysis of Findings

The results of this study are consistent with other research that emphasizes the difficulties that Japanese language learners have while employing katakana in English language instruction. Language acquisition research has extensively demonstrated the phonological dissonance caused by the disparate phonetic systems of Japanese and English (Saito & Lyster, 2012). The results of the research provide further credence to the idea that katakana influence might result in pronounced blunders and diminished confidence in spoken English. This shows that when students see katakana representations, they can find it challenging to effectively translate English sounds, which might make it difficult to produce understandable speech. The difficulties with vocabulary learning that have been observed are in line with other studies looking at how katakana affects learners' comprehension of English terms. Koyama (2017) discovered that learners often depend on cursory identification of English words based on katakana without fully understanding their semantic intricacies. It may be difficult for learners to employ words successfully in communicative circumstances, which

might have an impact on their overall language skills (Koyama, 2017). Therefore, focusing largely on katakana for vocabulary learning may result in a passing familiarity with terms without a deeper comprehension of their meanings and applications. The study's results on reading in katakana and standard script add to earlier studies on the cognitive strain involved (Sugimura & Kitaoka, 2020) in terms of reading comprehension. The continuous switching might make reading take longer and reduce students' overall reading fluency. Additionally, difficulties with reading homophones and homographs in katakana format are similar to those that have been observed in research on English language learners' reading comprehension. This suggests that when English writings are provided to students in katakana, they may have trouble understanding them and may get confused.

## 7.2. Significance and Implications

Implications for curriculum developers and language instructors are substantial, particularly in the context of teaching English to Japanese students. First, the study highlights the need of providing targeted instructional support to aid with the pronunciation difficulties brought on by the usage of katakana. Educators may design interventions and phonological training programmes to their students' specific needs to help them overcome these challenges and improve their pronunciation. Educators may choose to provide pupils with explicit teaching on English phonetics and pronunciation conventions in order to assist them correctly form English sounds and produce speech that is more comprehensible. Second, the study confirms the significance of a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction. Teaching pupils to recognise words at a glance using katakana might be useful, but for a more thorough understanding of English vocabulary, instructors should combine katakana with extensive vocabulary education. Teachers may help students acquire more sophisticated language skills by encouraging them to probe the nuances of words' meanings and applications. Learners' linguistic proficiency as a whole may benefit from this approach if they are able to communicate more effectively in a wide range of situations. In addition, the study's findings on reading comprehension issues call for a gradual transition from reading based on katakana to reading from ordinary script. Students may practise reading standard script and gain confidence in their ability to grasp English without relying only on katakana representations by gradually being exposed to genuine English texts, which teachers may provide to them. By using this method, students may improve their ability to read and comprehend texts written in Standard English.

## 7.3. Addressing Cultural and Social Implications

Teachers of English as a second language must consider the social and cultural implications of adopting katakana. Encouraging pupils to consider English as a global language of communication may help foster optimistic attitudes and desire for language learning. Teachers may debunk myths about the language and

inspire active participation in language study by emphasising the benefits and practical applications of English proficiency. Because of this, students may experience an increase in motivation and dedication to their language studies. The way that students see English as a second language is another issue that must be resolved. Teachers should instill in their pupils an appreciation for other cultures and a desire to learn more about them so that they may see language education as a means to interact with other populations. By creating a welcoming space for students of different backgrounds, teachers may help their pupils see the value of studying English as a global language.

#### **7.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions**

While the study's results give essential insight into the significance of katakana in the English language acquisition of Japanese students, it is crucial to emphasise that the research has limitations. It's possible that the study's breadth and its capacity to account for differences among individual learners were constrained by data acquired from prior publications and websites. The results may not apply to all Japanese students studying English as a foreign language since the research focused on a select group of pupils. Possible future study directions include examining how katakana affects reading, writing, and listening comprehension. Studies that follow students over time (thus the name "longitudinal") allow researchers to determine how much learning katakana really improves their ability to communicate in Japanese. Also, qualitative studies based on interviews and observations with ELLs (English Language Learners) who use katakana may provide insight into their perspectives and experiences. Possible applications of research on the efficacy of different pedagogical interventions and teaching styles for addressing katakana-related challenges include the following. Instructors might perhaps acquire the greatest results for their students by comparing several methods of teaching a language, such as explicit phonological instruction and immersion.

### **8. Research Result**

- Japanese language learners have major difficulties while learning the English alphabet using katakana, especially in terms of pronunciation.
- Although English loanwords in Japanese are often written in katakana, their effect on students' vocabulary development in English is complicated
- Learners' reading comprehension may be hampered by the usage of katakana in English literature.
- Katakana Pronouncing difficulties can be reduced by taking Specialized instructional help.
- Students highly dependent on katakana representations overestimate their knowledge and have limited awareness about it.
- English is written in katakana may affect learners' motivation and attitudes toward the language e.g. heavy dependency on Katakana can make learners

to see the process as difficult.

- The Katakana should be implemented in a balanced manner considering both its advantages and disadvantages.

## 9. Conclusion

This article has analysed the role and influence of the katakana syllabary in the education of English among Japanese students. The study looked at the pros and cons of using katakana as a tool for learning English, with a focus on pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and understanding what is read. These findings have significant implications for language educators and curriculum developers, since they provide light on how to best help Japanese students learn English. The essay focuses mostly on how learning katakana might make it harder for students to produce natural-sounding English speech because of phonological dissonance. Finding that pupils may only recognise words superficially without understanding their full meanings and complexities, the study also highlighted the difficulty in acquiring vocabulary using katakana. The findings also brought to light the challenges of switching back and forth between reading katakana and ordinary writing, which may slow down reading and have an effect on fluency.

The research has made several important contributions to the area of TESOL. This study contributes to the corpus of knowledge on language acquisition and the impact of writing systems on language development by discussing the function of katakana in English language learning. The results enable instructors to modify their teaching strategies to fit the particular requirements of Japanese learners by offering insightful information about the specific challenges they confront. The discovery of the beneficial effects of tailored instructional assistance on learners' pronunciation accuracy is one important contribution of this research. Explicit phonological instruction and treatments aimed at overcoming katakana-related difficulties may help educators significantly increase learners' capacity to create understandable English speech. This useful suggestion may help language teachers create successful pronunciation lessons and encourage students in gaining more self-assured oral communication abilities.

This study's focus on a balanced approach to vocabulary education is another significant addition. While katakana might help with word recognition at first, teachers should combine this strategy with in-depth vocabulary study to encourage a deeper comprehension of English terms. Language teachers may aid students in acquiring more advanced language skills and successfully using vocabulary in a variety of communication contexts by encouraging them to investigate word meanings and context-specific use. The study's emphasis on helping students go from katakana-based reading to conventional script reading is also essential. Teachers may enhance their students' reading comprehension abilities and increase their confidence in their ability to understand English without simply depending on katakana representations by progressively introducing actual English texts and offering chances for standard script reading practice. The



article's discussion of the cultural and sociological ramifications highlights how crucial it is to provide a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. The awareness of English as a universal language of communication may be fostered by language instructors, who can also help students interact with many cultures and communities. This strategy may improve students' attitudes and motivation toward language learning, resulting in more fulfilling and pleasurable language learning experiences.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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