

Japanese Compound Words Formed by The Lexeme ‘Ear’: A Morphological Study

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要約

日本語には、複合語でよく使われる漢字がいくつかある。そのひとつが「耳」という漢字で、これは「みみ」を意味する名詞であるが、他の語句と組み合わせられることで様々な形や意味を持つことがある。本研究の主な目的は、「耳」という漢字を含む日本語の複合語の形態と意味を調べることである。データは『筑波ウェブコーパス』の日本語コーパスから観察とメモの手法を用いて収集した。データ分析には同定法を使用し、日本語の複合語の構成と意味を分析するために Katamba (1993)、辻村 (1996)、影山 (2016) による形態素論を適用した。この研究の結果、「耳」を含む日本語の複合語には 20 種類が存在することが明らかになった。これらの複合語は「耳」が最初に現れるものと最後に現れるものに分類され、複合名詞 (N+N、V+N、および N+V)、複合形容詞 (N+ADJ および N+V)、および複合動詞 (N+V) に分けられる。意味に基づいて、複合語はエンドセントリック複合語とエキソセントリック複合語の 2 つのカテゴリーに分類できる。

キーワード: 言語学、形態学、複合語、日本語

Abstract

In Japanese, there are frequently used characters in compound words. One is the kanji character 耳 which reads "mimi" and can be translated into 'ear'. Although the lexeme "mimi" means 'ear' and functions as a noun, it can take on various forms and meanings when coupled with other lexemes. As a result, the main objective of this study is to examine the forms and meanings of Japanese compound words formed by the lexeme 'ear'. The data was collected from the Japanese corpus from Tsukuba Web Corpus using observation and note-taking techniques. Then the data was analyzed using the identity method. The theory used to analyze the construction and meaning of Japanese compounds is the morphology theory by Katamba (1993), Tsujimura (1996), and Kageyama (2016). The results of this research show that there are 20 Japanese compound words formed with the lexeme "mimi." These compounds consist of two lexemes, with "mimi" either appearing first, followed by different words, or at the end of the compound. The combinations include compound nouns (N+N, V+N, and N+V), compound adjectives (N+ADJ and N+V), and compound verbs (N+V). Based on their meanings, the compounds can be divided into two categories: endocentric and exocentric compounds.

Keywords: linguistics, morphology, compound, Japanese

1. Introduction

The word formation process is an important factor in developing and enriching vocabulary in a language. There are many word concepts in everyday life, yet the vocabulary is limited. By continually expanding words, it can generate new words using the process of word formation. One of the most common methods for creating new lexemes is compounding. It comprises lexemes combined to form larger words, in which one word modifies the meaning of the other word. A compound has a general semantic pattern in the form XY, which implies a Y has something to do with X, or vice versa, depending on the language (Booij, 2007:75).

Compound words are formed by combining two or more lexemes, words, phrases, or clauses that are combined to form a single construction (Kridalaksana, 2009: 184). A compound word is a word that consists of two or more lexemes, which are subject to phonological and morphological processes (Spencer, 2001). Yule (2016: 55) adds that compound words are a combination of two lexemes to form one new term and have a new meaning. The process of combining both the base (in the form of roots or affixed forms) to accommodate an idea that cannot be expressed in a single word.

It is important to understand the structure and meaning of words formed through the compounding process. In Japanese, compounding follows a different pattern. The word class of compound words is usually determined by the class of the final word (Akimoto, 2001, p. 85). For example, when combining the noun *mimi* “ear” with the adjective *tooi* “far” results in the compound word *mimi-tooi* which as a whole can be classified into an adjective. The next example is the noun *mimi* combined with the verb *tatsu* “stand” became the compound word *mimi-datsu*, which is a verb. Aside from changing word class, the compounding process can also undergo phonological modifications. When combining *mimi* and *tatsu*, the front consonant sound in the lexeme *tatsu* transforms into *-datsu*. This morphophonemic process is known as *rendaku*, which is a phenomenon that occurs when two words are combined in which the word at the front receives the influence of the rear sound, while the front sound of the word at the back undergoes sound changes.

Based on its meaning, the compound in Japanese can result in different meanings from the individual words or elements that formed it. In this case, the dictionary meaning of the constituent does not explain the meaning of the whole compound. It is difficult to understand the meaning of words generated through the compounding process. In general, compound words are formed by combining two words, where one word affects the meaning of the other (Booij, 2007:75). Japanese compound words follow the righthand head rule, which means that the core of the compound word is on the right component (Tsujimura, 1996:156). Katamba (1993:304-305) categorizes compound words depending on the presence or absence of the head. Compound words that have constituents that function as syntactic cores and have a tendency for semantic relations between core and non-core are called endocentric, while compound words that do not have constituents that function as cores and have difficulty formulating meaning from their constituents are called exocentric. Tsujimura (1996) stated that in Japanese, there exist compound words where the two constituent are equivalent such that they both operate as a core, which is known as copulative. As a result, a more thorough examination of Japanese compound words is required. This study analyzes the construction and meanings of Japanese compound words that are formed by the lexeme *mimi* “ear”.

There has already been research that analyzes the Japanese compound word. Fitria (2020) studied a Japanese compound noun derived from kanji denoting “mouth” in her study titled "Proses Pembentukan dan Makna Fukugoumeishi dari Kanji Mulut". Morphological theory is applied according to Matsuoka (1981) and Akimoto (2002). Based on the results, 31

noun compound words from kanji *kuchi* were generated by combining N+N, V+N, and Adj+N. The Japanese kanji of *kuchi* produces the meanings “mouth”, “nouns in the shape of a door and a place”, “states the function of the mouth”, and “not linked to *kuchi*”. The commonality with this study is that they both analyze a Japanese compound word. The research gap is in the types of words investigated by Fitria, which is lexeme *kuchi* “mouth”, whereas this research examines compounds formed by the lexeme *mimi* “ear”.

Komarudin (2023) studies the idiomatic and lexical meaning of Japanese idioms produced from the element body parts in his study titled “Semantic Analysis: Japanese Idiom (Kanyouku) Using Part of Body Lexemes”. One of the body parts analyzed in this study is “*mimi*” (ear). Based on the analysis, Soidi identified 19 body parts in Japanese has idiomatic meanings. The lexeme “*mimi*” (ear) includes the phrase “*mimi ga itai*” which literally means “ear hurts” but idiomatically means “hearing unpleasant news.” Additionally, there are phrases like “*mimigakumon o suru*” (learning in an enjoyable way) and “*mimiyori*” (pleasing). Soidi's research and this study both focus on analyzing the meaning of the lexeme “*mimi*” in its usage in Japanese sentences. The research gap lies in the type of data used, with Soidi using phrases and this study using compound words.

2. Method

The primary data source utilized in this study as a data source is Japanese corpus. In linguistic terms, a corpus refers to a collection of texts that can be used to analyze language patterns, usage, and structure. The Japanese corpus used is the Tsukuba Web Corpus, developed by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) and the Lago Institute of Language. This corpus consists of texts collected from Japanese-language websites. This data source is chosen because it provides a wide range of usage of Japanese phrases, resulting in many compounds using the lexeme “ear”.

The next step is collecting the data using the observation method, which involves attentive listening to the target language (Sudaryanto, 2015:203). This method was chosen because the subject of study is text-based. The observation method technique was combined with a note-taking technique to obtain relevant data for analysis (Sudaryanto, 2015:205-206). The collected data consists of phrases with Japanese compound words formed by lexeme *mimi* “ear.” This step focuses on finding such data within the Tsukuba Web Corpus. The data was then identified and categorized based on its form and meaning.

The data was analyzed using the distribution method, which refers to the study of language structure (Sudaryanto, 2015, p. 18). This method involved expansion techniques, expanding lingual units with specific elements. In this case, lexemes were expanded using the *mimi* “ear,” based on the compounding theory by Katamba (1993), Tsujimura (1996), and Kageyama (2016). This study determines the forms of compound words, such as compound nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The meanings of compound words were classified as endocentric, exocentric, or copulative.

Finally, the analysis findings will be presented. This stage involves preparing reports using informal techniques, where the results are conveyed in plain language (Sudaryanto, 2015:241).

3. Result

Based on the results, 20 different compound words are formed by the lexeme *mimi* “ear”. There are three compound types according to their word classes: compound nouns, compound adjectives, and compound verbs. The lexeme *mimi* itself belongs to the noun word class, so the compound words tend to be nouns. The following presents the compound word data found in the Tsukuba Web Corpus in the table.

Table 1. Compound Word With Lexeme Ear

Compound Word	Constituent 1	Constituent 2	Meanings
聞き耳 <i>Kikimimi</i> (N)	聞く <i>Kiku</i>	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	Straining one's ears
初耳 <i>Hatsumimi</i> (N)	初 <i>Hatsu</i>	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	First time hearing something
耳搔き <i>Mimikaki</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	搔く <i>Kaku</i>	Earpick
耳隠し <i>Mimikakushi</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	隠す <i>Kakusu</i>	Hairdo covering the ears
耳飾り <i>Mimikazari</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	飾る <i>Kazaru</i>	Earrings
耳擦り <i>Mimikosuri</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	擦る <i>Kosuri</i>	Whisper
耳朶 <i>Mimitabu</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	朶 <i>Tabu</i>	Earlobe
耳栓 <i>Mimisen</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	栓 <i>Sen</i>	Earplug
耳垂れ <i>Mimidare</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	垂れる <i>Tareru</i>	Ear discharge
耳鳴り <i>Miminari</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	鳴る <i>Naru</i>	Buzzing in the ears
耳元 <i>Mimimoto</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	元 <i>Moto</i>	Close to the ear, into someone's ear
耳輪 <i>Mimiwa</i> (N)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	輪 <i>Wa</i>	Earring (non-pierced)
耳聡い <i>Mimizatoi</i> (ADJ)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	聡い <i>Satoi</i>	Sharp-eared
耳遠い <i>Mimidooi</i> (ADJ)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	遠い <i>Tooi</i>	Hard of hearing
耳新しい <i>Mimiatarashii</i> (ADJ)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	新しい <i>Atarashii</i>	Novel, unfamiliar, hear for the first time.
耳障り <i>Mimizawari</i> (ADJ)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	障る <i>Sawaru</i>	Hard (on the ears), offensive (to the ear)
耳寄り <i>Mimiyori</i> (ADJ)	耳 <i>Mimi</i>	寄る <i>Yoru</i>	Welcome (news), inviting, encouraging, tempting, hopeful
耳立つ	耳	立つ	Sounds particularly clear

<i>Mimidatsu</i> (V)	<i>Mimi</i>	<i>Tatsu</i>	
耳慣れる	耳	慣れる	To be familiar
<i>Miminareru</i> (V)	<i>Mimi</i>	<i>Nareru</i>	
耳打ちする	耳	打つ	Whispering into a person's ear
<i>Mimiuchi suru</i> (V)	<i>Mimi</i>	<i>Utsu</i>	

4. Discussion

The results were divided into two sub-sections, which are types of compound words followed by meanings analysis. By its types of class words, compound words by lexeme *kuchi* consist of three types: compound nouns; compound adverbs; and compound adjectives. Compound nouns have the most data and variations, namely 12 data with three combined variations of the word classes noun + noun, verb + noun, and noun + verb.

Lexeme *mimi* has the meaning of “organs located on the left and right sides of the head that govern hearing and balance, to listen, to be heard” and can be translated into “ear” (Matsuura, 2014). Compound words formed with lexeme *kuchi* consist of the endocentric (headed) and exocentric (non-headed) compound. The majority of the data shows that the meaning of compound words formed was endocentric, which has a literal meaning. The following is the result of the data analysis in Tsukuba Web Corpus.

4.1 Compound Noun

Compound nouns are a combination of lexemes whose constituent at the end is a noun and functions as a noun in the sentence. Even though the initial constituent is a different class of word, the noun in the results in a compound noun. The compound noun with *kuchi* lexeme has the combinations of noun+noun, verb+noun, and noun+verb. Below is the usage of compound nouns in data along with the analysis results.

Data (1)

耳元で彼の声がする。

Mimimoto de kare no koe ga suru

‘I hear his voice **close to my ear.**’

耳元	=	耳	+	元
<i>Mimimoto</i>		<i>mimi</i>		<i>moto</i>
Close to the ear		ear		beginning
(N)		(N)		(N)

The compound word *mimimoto*, which is the combination of the noun (N) *mimi* “ear” and noun (N) *moto* “beginning, origin” is used in data (1). A compound noun is created when two nouns are combined into a compound. Based on the formation process, the lexeme *mimi* is followed by lexeme *moto* without any phonological change. In terms of meaning, the compound word *mimimoto* means ‘close to the ear’. There are other compound nouns with the formula N+N found in the Tsukuba Web Corpus: *mimitabu* ‘earlobe’, *mimisen* ‘earplug’ and *mimiwa* ‘earring’.

Data (2)

お酒で調理とは初耳です。
Osake de chōri to wa hatsumimi desu.

‘This is the **first time hearing** of cooking with alcohol.’

初耳	=	初	+	耳
<i>Hatsumimi</i>		<i>hatsu</i>		<i>mimi</i>
First time hearing something		first time		ear
(N)		(N)		(N)

In data (2), there is the use of the compound word 初耳 *hatsumimi* which consists of the combination of the noun *hatsu* 'first time' and the lexeme *mimi* 'ear'. In terms of its formation, the lexeme *mimi* in the compound word can also appear as the second constituent. The lexeme *mimi* is also a noun word class, therefore the final result of the compounding process is a compound noun. In terms of meaning, the compound word *hatsumimi* means 'to hear something or a story for the first time'.

Data (3)

男はちよいと聞き耳を立てた。
Otoko wa chōi to kikumimi o tateta

‘The man **listened** a little.’

聞き耳	=	聞く	+	耳
<i>Kikumimi</i>		<i>kiku</i>		<i>mimi</i>
Straining one's ears.		hear		ear
(N)		(V)		(N)

In data (3), there is the usage of compound word *kikumimi* which is a combination of the verb *kiku* “hear” and the noun *mimi* “ear”. *Kikumimi* is a compound word that combines a verb and a noun resulting in a noun as a whole. In its formation, the verb *kiku* changes to the infinite form *kiki-* before being combined with lexeme *mimi*. The compound word *kikumimi* means ‘straining one's ears’.

Data (4)

耳かきを変えて、交互に行う。
Mimikaki o kaete, kōgo ni okonau.

‘Change **earpicks** and alternate between them.’

耳飾り	=	耳	+	搔く
<i>Mimikaki</i>		<i>mimi</i>		<i>kaku</i>
Earpicks		ear		to scratch
(N)		(N)		(V)

In data (4) there is the usage of the compound word *mimikaki* which consists of the lexeme *mimi* 'ear' and the verb *kaku* 'to scratch'. The verb *kaku* undergoes a nominalization

process by changing into *kaki* which is a continuative form (*ren'yokei*). The verb *kaku* changes by replacing the final vowel /u/ into /i/. Although the final constituent is a verb, the compound word *mimikaki* is classified as a compound noun. This is because continuative verbs have the same function as nouns. Other examples found within the Tsukuba Web Corpus are *mimikaki* “earpick”, *mimikakushi* “hairdo covering the ears”, *mimikosuri* “whisper”, and *miminari* “buzz”,

4.2 Compound Adjective

In addition to compound nouns, lexeme *mimi* can also produce compound words that function as adjectives. Adjectives in Japanese, called *keiyoushi*, are a class of words that undergo final conjugation changes like verbs and can be divided into two groups, *i-keiyoushi* and *na-keiyoushi*. The two groups have differences in terms of conjugation. Adjectives can also be placed before nouns to modify their meaning.

Data (5)

馬は耳聡い動物、要はかしこい動物とされていました。

Uma wa mimizatoi dōbutsu, yōha kashikoi dōbutsu to sarete imashita

‘Horses were considered to be intelligent animals, with **keen hearing**.’

耳聡い	=	耳	+	聡い
<i>Mimizatoi</i>		<i>mimi</i>		<i>satoi</i>
Keen hearing		ear		clever, smart
(N)		(N)		(ADJ)

In data (5), there is the usage of the *mimi* in the compound word *mimizatoi* “keen hearing”. This compound word consists of a combination of the noun *mimi* “ear” and the adjective *satoi* “clever, smart”. The lexeme *satoi* has a morphophonological change (*rendaku*) into *-zatoi* after being combined with lexeme *mimi*. The initial consonant changes from being voiceless consonant /s/ to voiced /z/. This is caused by sound assimilation, in which both phonemes are produced using both the lower lip and the upper lip. As stated by Kageyama (2016) the type of compound word is influenced by the element on the end. As a result, the compound word *mimizatoi* belongs to the adjective class specifically *i-keiyoushi*. Another example of a compound adjective is *mimidooi* “hard of hearing” (*mimi* “ear” + *tooi* “far”), and *mimiatarashii* “first time hearing” (*mimi* “ear” + *atarashii* “new”)

Data (6)

皆さんに耳寄りな情報です

Minasan ni mimiyori na jōhō desu.

‘This is **welcome** information for everyone.’

耳寄り	=	耳	+	寄る
<i>Mimiyori</i>		<i>mimi</i>		<i>yoru</i>
Welcome		ear		approach
(ADJ)		(N)		(N)

In data (6) there is the usage of the compound word *mimiyori* which is a combination of the lexemes *mimi* 'ear' and *yoru* 'approach'. The noun *mimi* is combined with the verb *yoru* which changes into a continuative form to *yoru*. The compound word *mimiyori* as a whole function as an adjective, namely the *na-keiyoushi*. This is proved by the occurrence of the particle "na" in the formation of the noun phrase "*mimiyori na jōhō*". In terms of meaning, the compound word *mimiyori* means 'something worth hearing'.

4.3 Compound Verb

In Japanese, compound verbs or *fukugoudoushi* are numerous and varied compared to other types of compound words. Morita (1978) states that 40 percent of the current Japanese verb classes are compound verbs. Compound verbs are formed when both lexemes are verbs, or the end lexeme is a verb, which has a grammatical meaning as one verb in a compound word (Niimi, 1987:1).

Data (7)

耳慣れない方も多いかと思えます。

Miminarenai kata mo ōi ka to omoimasu.

‘I think many people are **not familiar** with this term.’

耳慣れる	=	耳	+	慣れる
<i>Miminareru</i>		<i>mimi</i>		<i>nareru</i>
To be familiar		ear		To get used to
(V)		(N)		(V)

In data (7) the compound *miminarenai* is the negative form of *miminareru*, which is the combination of the noun *mimi* "ear" and the verb *nareru* "to get used to". Since the part at the end of the compound is a verb, the compound *miminareru* is a type of a compound verb. *Miminareru* has the meanings of “something became no longer unusual because hear it many times”. Another example of a compound verb form by *mimi* is *mimidatsu* “sounds particularly clear” (*mimi* “ear” + *tatsu* “stand”) and *mimiuchi suru* “to whispers” (*mimi* “ear” + *utsu* “to hit”).

4.4 Meanings of the Compound

Compounding consists of a combination of two constituents, one of which modifies the meaning of another (head). The meaning of compound words is formed from the semantic relationship between the two constituents (Booij, 2010:75). Compound words can be divided into endocentric and exocentric types based on the existence of the head. Based on the findings, 10 compound words indicate endocentric meanings and 10 indicate exocentric meanings. Below is the finding of types of compounds found in Tsukuba Web Corpus.

Data (8)

チェーン式の耳飾りをしている。

Chēn-shiki no mimikazari o shite iru

‘He wears chain **earrings**.’

In data (8), the compound noun *mimikazari* is a combination of lexemes *mimi* and *kazari*. The noun *mimi* means “ear” and the noun *kazari* means “ornament”. After both lexemes are combined, it forms the compound word *mimikazari* which means “ornament for the earlobe”. By its structure, the head of the compound word *mimikazari* is *kazari* and *mimi* acts as a modifier to add additional meanings to the head. Therefore, *mimikazari* is considered as endocentric compounds which are compound words consisting of a head in its structure. The majority of Japanese compounds tend to use the right-hand head rule, namely the head is in the right-hand constituent (Tsujimura, 1996:156).

Data (9)

これは何も耳新しいことではありません。

Kore wa nani mo mimiatarashī koto dewa arimasen

‘This is nothing new to hear.’

In data (9) there is the usage of compound *mimiatarashii* which is formed by the combination of lexemes *mimi* "ear" and *atarashii* "new". If we look at the meaning of each lexeme, the compound word *mimiatarashii* means "new ears." However, when used in sentences, *mimiatarashii* means "something that has just been heard." Therefore, this compound word is of the exocentric type because their respective lexeme does not display the compound meaning as a whole. Exocentric compounds are compound words that do not have a head in their construction. The meaning of compound words can become unclear and It is difficult to calculate the meaning of an exocentric compound word from its constituents (Katamba, 1993).

5. Conclusion

According to the analysis, there are 20 different compound words formed with the lexeme *mimi*. These compounds can be categorized into three types: compound nouns (with combinations of noun+noun, verb+noun, and noun+verb), compound adjectives (with combinations of noun+adjective and noun+verb), and compound verbs (with combinations of noun+verb). Regarding their meanings, compound words with the lexeme *mimi* can be classified into two types: endocentric and exocentric compounds. The meaning of an endocentric compound can be predicted based on the meanings of its elements, particularly the meaning of its head. In contrast, the meanings of exocentric compounds cannot be deduced from their elements and are therefore unpredictable.

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