

An Investigation into ‘ Word Formation using Prefixes in Japanese Language ’

Win Win Than¹ , Zaw Min Win²

Abstract

This paper presents the structure of words in the Japanese Language, especially the word formation by adding prefixes from the affixation system prior to a morpheme. Describing word formation in the Japanese Language, the word formation in terms of adding prefixes in the Japanese Language is presented with examples. By means of this relating to word formation using prefixes in Japanese Language, it could be revealed that the types of word formation using prefixes, and whether word classes and meanings of the original morphemes are changed by adding prefixes.

Keywords: prefixes, word-formation, word classes, meaning, structure of words

Introduction

This paper is about the word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese Language. In describing this , word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese Language, word formation by adding prefixes of Chinese words, word formation by adding prefixes in Loanwords are presented.

Literature Review

Different definitions on prefixes by Japanese researchers can be found. Prefix means “It is a part of word-formation”, “A part which changes the meaning of morpheme”, and “a part in a group of words”. In fact, the specifications of Japanese language’s prefixes are most of the prefixes in Japanese Language are dependent, but other independent words are also used as prefixes, there is no grammatical change in morpheme by adding prefixes, and there are many words which can be used as prefixes.

Most of the Japanese language’s nature and grammatical structures are similar with that of Myanmar. In terms of adding prefixes, different nature can be seen unlike with Myanmar. So, it is necessary for Japanese language teachers to comprehend the specifications of Japanese language that are different from their mother tongue. Thus, teaching different nature of Japanese language that is different from mother tongue of the learners can reinforce their understanding towards the language they learn.

Aim

It is aimed to convince that the meanings of words are more emphasized by the word formation by adding prefixes in the structure of words in Japanese Language, changing to another meaning, and the grammatical types of original morphemes remain originally.

Research Question

What characteristics relating to changing grammar types and meanings of the original morphemes can be seen in the word formation by adding prefixes from word formation of Japanese Language?

What special features can be seen in the structure of words?

¹ Daw, Associate Professor, Head of Department, Department of Japanese, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages

² U, Lecturer, Department of Japanese, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages

Materials and Method

This paper employed analytical descriptive method in finding out how words are changed in word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese Language from the structural, grammatical, semantic point of view.

A Study on Japanese Language and Word formation

Word formation means forming a new word by adding affixes to a morpheme or by doubling the morpheme. In terms of this, form of the original morpheme and/or the meaning are changed. The grammar types are sometimes changed, but neither of them occurs in some cases. In changing a word of a certain grammar type to another one, it can be formed from a verb to a noun, from a noun to an attribute of a noun, from an attribute of a noun to an attribute of a verb, from a noun to a verb. The types of word formation are as follow;

1. Class changing word formation
2. Non-class changing word formation

Class changing word formation means the formation of new word by means of affixation system or another one. In forming like this, the grammatical category of a new word changes from the original morpheme.

Non-class changing word formation means the formation of a new word by means of affixation system or another one. In forming like this, the grammatical category of new word does not change from the original morpheme. It was found that word formation can be done by two systems and it can only be revealed in Japanese Language. They are-

1. affixation
2. doubling

These two main systems can be found in word formation of Japanese Language.

Word formation by affixation in Japanese Language

Affixation means new word formation by adding prefix, suffix, and infix to a morpheme. In Japanese Language, there are three systems of word formation by adding affix. They are-

1. Word formation by adding a prefix
2. Word formation by adding an infix
3. Word formation by adding a suffix

This paper presents the part of word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese Language. It is generally divided into three parts. They are-

1. Word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese Language
2. Word formation by adding prefixes to Chinese words
3. Word formation by adding prefixes in Loanwords

Word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese Language

By adding Japanese prefixes in front of noun, verb and adjective morphemes, the new words which change meaning of the original morpheme can be formed. From semantic point of view, it can be categorized as following. They are-

1. prefixes offering another meaning
2. prefixes emphasized by meaning of original morphemes
3. prefixes that do not change meanings
4. prefixes that convey polite meaning

Prefixes offering another meaning

By adding Japanese prefixes in front of noun and adjective morphemes, the new words which changes meaning of the original morpheme can be formed. The following prefixes are those which can mean purity or plain status on the meanings of original morphemes. The examples are as followed.

| | | | | |
|--------|---|------------|--------|-----------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | —————→ | Noun |
| 生 | | 糸 | | 生糸 |
| Ki | | ito | | kiito |
| - | | ချည်မျှင် | | ချည်မျှင်စစ်စစ် |
| 素 | | 足 | | 素足 |
| Su | | ashi | | suashi |
| - | | ajcaXmUf | | ajcAVm |
| 真 | | 心 | | 真心 |
| Ma | | kokoro | | magokoro |
| - | | စိတ်နှလုံး | | စိတ်ရင်း |

These examples show that the word classes are not changed though the meanings are changed.

It was found that new words can be formed by adding prefixes describing quantity (few or many). The examples are as follow;

| | | | | |
|--------|---|--------|--------|--------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | —————→ | Noun |
| 大 | | 雨 | | 大雨 |
| Oo | | ame | | ooame |
| - | | မိုး | | ရိပ်မိုး |
| 小 | | 犬 | | 子犬 |
| Ko | | inu | | koinu |
| - | | ခွေး | | ခွေးကလေး |
| Prefix | + | adj | —————→ | adj |
| 小 | | うるさい | | 小うるさい |
| Ko | | urusai | | kourusai |
| - | | ခက်ခဲ | | တင်ဖိ, ခက်ခဲ |

Prefixes emphasized by the meaning of original morphemes

By adding prefixes in front of noun, verb, and adjective morphemes, the new words emphasized by the meaning of original morphemes can be formed. The examples are as follow;

| | | | | |
|--------|---|--------------|--------|---------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | —————→ | Noun |
| ど | | 肝 | | 度肝 |
| Do | | kimo | | dogimo |
| - | | အိမ်ထောင်ရေး | | အိမ်ထောင်ရေး |
| Prefix | + | verb | —————→ | verb |
| 差し | | 押さえる | | 差し押さえる |
| Sashi | | osaeru | | sashiosaeru |
| - | | ပိသည့် | | အရမ်းပိထားသည် |
| Prefix | + | adj | —————→ | adj |
| いち | | 早い | | いち早い |

| | | |
|------|----------|----------------|
| Ichi | hayai | ichihayai |
| - | jreəom | t&rtjreəom |
| ず | 太い | ず太い |
| Zu | futoi | zubutoi |
| - | 0aom | rsuEñajymi əom |
| いナ | 好かない | いナ好かない |
| Ike | sukanai | ikesukanai |
| - | rButuəom | v#OrButuəom |

The aforementioned instances show adding prefixes to noun, verb, and adjective morphemes does not change the word class, but they emphasized by the meaning of the morphemes, and change the meaning of the words. It was found that new words can be found in this way.

Prefixes that do not change meanings

In forming new words in terms of adding Japanese prefixes, the prefixes /sa/ and /ka/ are specific. Normally, adding prefixes changes the original morpheme as a new word emphasized by the original meaning or a new word bearing a new meaning. Adding prefixes /sa/ and /ka/ change the morphemes into new words without changing the meaning. The examples are as follow;

| | | | | |
|--------|---|------------|---|------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | → | Noun |
| さ | | 枝 | | さ枝 |
| Sa | | eda | | saeda |
| - | | သစ်ကိုင်း | | သစ်ကိုင်း |
| さ | | 庭 | | さ庭 |
| Sa | | niwa | | saniwa |
| - | | yeflchl | | yeflchl |
| Prefix | + | adj | → | adj |
| か | | 弱い | | か弱い |
| Ka | | yowai | | kayowai |
| - | | t̄m;enfaom | | t̄m;enfaom |
| か | | 細い | | か細い |
| Ka | | hosoi | | kahosoi |
| - | | ဝိန်သေ | | ဝိန်သေ |

Though adding prefixes /sa/ and /ka/ to a noun or an adjective can form new words, word classes are not changed and they are not used in spoken Japanese language. It was found that this kind of word formation is used only in written Japanese language at present.

Prefixes that convey polite meaning

In Japanese Language, new words bearing polite meaning can be formed by adding /o/, /on/, /mi/ in front of verb, noun, and adjective morphemes. The examples are as follow;

| | | | | |
|--------|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | → | Noun |
| 御 | | 茶 | | 御茶 |
| O | | cha | | ocha |
| - | | a&aEGMurt | | a&aEGMurt |
| 御 | | 行き | | 御行き |

| | | | | |
|--------|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| Mi | | yuki | | miyuki |
| - | | c&D&O&H;jci f | | c&D&O&H;jci f |
| 御 | | 身 | | 御身 |
| On | | mi | | onmi |
| - | | cEimU# f | | cEimU# f |
| Prefix | + | adj | → | adj |
| 御 | | 暑い | | 御暑い |
| O | | atsui | | oatsui |
| - | | yaom | | yaom |

Among aforementioned prefixes which convey polite meaning, it can be seen that only /o/ prefix is used widely in today spoken and written language. /o/ prefix is used as the polite usage in dealing with elders, parents, teachers and in the context of ceremonies, and meetings.

Word formation by adding prefixes of Chinese Words

There are socio-historical relations between one language and another since prefixes of Chinese Words are also used to form new words, not only using prefixes in Japanese Language.

By adding prefixes in Chinese Language to verb, noun, and adjective morphemes, new words that change the original meaning can be formed. Depending on the meanings of the new formed words, they can be divided as follow;

1. prefixes emphasized the meaning
2. prefixes conveying negative meaning
3. prefixes conveying polite meaning

Prefixes emphasized by the meaning

It was found that new words with emphasized meaning can be formed by adding a noun and an adjective in front of morphemes.

| | | | | |
|--------|---|------------|---|-------------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | → | Noun |
| 旧 | | 式 | | 旧式 |
| Kyuu | | shiki | | kyuushiki |
| - | | y#H | | y#H [mi f |
| 再 | | 利用 | | 再利用 |
| Sai | | riyoo | | sairiyoo |
| - | | tO#jy#ci f | | jyefvnt o#jy#ci f |
| Prefix | + | adj | → | adj |
| 大 | | 好きな | | 大好きな |
| Dai | | sukina | | daisukina |
| - | | Bu#U#faom | | t&rfBu#U#faom |
| 大 | | 嫌な | | 大嫌な |
| Dai | | kiraina | | daikiraina |
| - | | r#faom | | t&rf#faom |

Although abovementioned prefixes in Chinese Words do not have original meaning and are not used as separate words, it was found that they turn into a new word emphasized the original meaning by adding them noun, and adjective morphemes with a great effect.

Prefixes that convey negative meaning

The specific thing relating with prefixes in Chinese Words is forming negative words. The examples are as followe;

| | | | | |
|--------|---|---------------|---|-----------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | → | Noun |
| 不 | | 満足 | | 不満足 |
| Fu | | manzoku | | fumanzoku |
| - | | aʊɛyʃiʃ | | raʊɛyʃiʃ |
| 非 | | 公式 | | 非公式 |
| Hi | | kooshiki | | hikooshiki |
| - | | w&m;Oif | | w&m;Oif [kwʃiʃ |
| 無 | | 作法 | | 無作法 |
| Mu | | sahoo | | musahoo |
| - | | ʊsi ɔwʃ | | ʊsi ɔwʃ&ʃiʃ |
| 未 | | 登録 | | 未登録 |
| Mi | | touroku | | mitouroku |
| - | | rʃwʃwʃiʃiʃ | | rʃwʃwʃiʃiʃ |
| Prefix | + | adj | → | adj |
| 不 | | 自由な | | 不自由な |
| Fu | | jiyuuna | | fujiyuuna |
| - | | vʃwʃvʃaom | | rvʃwʃvʃaom |
| 非 | | 科学的な | | 非科学的な |
| Hi | | kagakutekina | | hikagakutekina |
| - | | oʃenʃvʃʃuʃaom | | oʃenʃvʃʃuʃaom |

According to the above examples, in forming words of negative meaning, Chinese words prefixes are used. In forming new words by adding these prefixes, morphemes bearing positive meanings are changed into negative but the word classes are the same. It can be seen that most of the root morphemes are noun morphemes.

Prefixes that convey polite meaning

New words bearing polite meaning can be formed by adding Chinese Words prefixes /gyo/ and /go/. The examples are as follow;

| | | | | |
|--------|---|--------------|---|----------------|
| Prefix | + | Noun | → | Noun |
| 御 | | 家族 | | 御家族 |
| Go | | kazoku | | gokazoku |
| - | | rɔm;pk | | rɔm;pk |
| 御 | | 衣 | | 御衣 |
| Gyo | | i | | gyoi |
| - | | tɔwʃt pm; | | tɔwʃt pm; |
| Prefix | + | verb | → | verb |
| 御 | | 案内します | | 御案内します |
| Go | | annaishimasu | | goannaishimasu |
| - | | vʃʃnɛɔnʃ | | vʃʃnɛɔnʃ |
| Prefix | + | adj | → | adj |
| 御 | | 親切な | | 御親切な |
| Go | | shinsetsuna | | goshinsetsuna |
| - | | ʃiɛmaom | | ʃiɛmaom |

Aforementioned prefixes conveying polite meaning are used widely not only in spoken language also in written alternative. The prefix /go/ is employed extensively in Japanese community and /gyo/ for the royal clans' usage.

Word formation by adding prefixes in Loanwords

It was found that new words can be formed by adding prefixes in Loanword morphemes in Japanese Language. The examples are as follow;

| Prefix | + | Noun | → | Noun |
|--------|---|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| マイクロ | | バス | | マイクロバス |
| Micro | | bus | | microbus |
| - | | bwɸiʊm; | | bwɸiʊm; tao; |
| ミニ | | バイク | | ミニバイク |
| Mini | | bike | | minibike |
| - | | armɸawmɸiʊ fu, f | | armɸawmɸiʊ fu, f tao; |
| キロ | | メートル | | キロメートル |
| Kilo | | meter | | kilometer |
| - | | မီတာ | | ကီလိုမီတာ |
| ミリ | | リットル | | ミリリットル |
| Milli | | liter | | milli-liter |
| - | | လီတာ | | မီလီလီတာ |

According to previous examples, it was seen that new words emphasized the original meanings can be formed. The root morphemes are noun morphemes. Moreover, new words can be formed in front of measurement unit. By adding prefixes, new words emphasized the original meanings are maintained though the word classes are the same.

Findings

According to previous examples, it was shown that there are many types in forming new words by adding prefixes in Japanese Language. It was investigated that new words by adding prefixes are emphasized the original meaning, forming a new meaning, and maintaining the original morphemes. In forming words conveying polite meanings, not only Japanese language prefixes but also Chinese Words prefixes are employed.

Discussion

In studying word formation in Japanese language, affixation is widely deployed. In forming new words by adding prefixes, it can be reflected as the following from grammatical point of view. Prefixes are extensively used with noun, verb and adjective morphemes, and there are myriads of prefixes. New words formed by adding prefixes change the meaning of original morphemes, weight the meaning of original morphemes, and point out the meaning of original morphemes. However, adding prefixes does not change grammar type of the root morphemes. Hence, in forming new words by adding prefixes in Japanese Language, there is only non-class changing word formation. It is reflected that class changing word formation does not exist in Japanese Language.

Conclusion

In studying word formation by adding prefixes in Japanese language, it revealed the types of prefix and the specification of adding prefix system. Depending on these findings, it is

advisable for the teachers for inventing more comprehensive teaching systems and using the comparative study on Japan and Myanmar word formation.

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