

The Use of Prefixes in Kessoku Band's Song

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Abstract. The evolution of time has influenced the arts, particularly music, including Japanese Pop songs. Songs play an essential role in conveying emotions, narratives, and messages through lyrics rich in meaning. In the Japanese, prefixes, or 接頭辞 (*settouji*), is one of the linguistic elements that enrich word meanings. Prefixes are affixes that are added to the front or base of a sentence. This study analyzes the use, affixation process, and the role of prefixes in the lyrics in Kessoku Band's songs. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method to identify the types of prefixes and affixation processes occurring in the song's lyrics. The data collection method used in this study is audio analysis. The data were obtained by analyzing and selecting excerpts from Kessoku Band's song lyrics that contain vocabulary with attached prefixes. These affixation process forms new vocabulary that supports the song's theme, such as 大暴走 (extremely unruly), 超奔放 (extremely free-spirited), 無情 (ruthless), and 不器用 (clumsy), etc. The study demonstrates that prefixes in Kessoku Band's song lyrics serve not only a morphological function but also enhance the emotional tone of the song. These findings are expected to assist Japanese language learners in understanding the use of prefix, the affixation process, and the prefix role to conveying songwriter's message in song.

Keywords: Music, Anime, J-Pop, Prefix

1. Introduction

The advancement of time has brought progress to various aspects of life, including the arts, particularly music. Music or songs have evolved significantly—from simple melodies and lyrics to compositions with rich melodies and complex lyrical content.

Songs have become a form of art capable of conveying emotions, stories, and messages to listeners. In terms of language, song lyrics possess the power to express profound meanings through word choice, sentence structure, and the use of specific linguistic elements, one of which is the prefix.

A prefix is an affix that is added to the beginning or root of a word (1). In the Japanese language, prefixes, or *settoji* (接頭辞), come in various forms and carry a range of meanings. The use of prefixes such as 不—(*fu—* or *bu—*), 大—(*dai—*), 無—(*mu—*), and 超—(*chou—*) can be found in various forms of media, one of which is the songs of Kessoku Band.

A prefix is part of a morphological process known as affixation. Affixation is the process of word formation by attaching affixes to a base form, either a simple or complex base. According to (2) affixation is a process that transforms a lexeme

into a complex word. Affixation itself is divided into two types: inflectional affixation, which does not change the basic meaning or word class of the root, and derivational affixation, which alters the meaning or grammatical category of the base word.

Research on the use of prefixes in the Japanese language has been conducted by several scholars. (3) in her study titled Cultural Meaning in Bikago Containing the Prefixes O- and Go- in Japanese, examined the use of the prefixes O- and Go- in bikago from an anthropological linguistic perspective. Similarly, (4) through her research titled Analysis of the Prefix お (御) in the Anime *Kamisama Hajimemashita* by Julietta Suzuki, focused on the formation and characteristics of words that can be prefixed with お (御). Meanwhile, (5) in her study titled Analysis of Negative Prefixes Mu- (無-), Fu- (不-), Hi- (非-), Mi- (未-

), and Han- (反-) in Japanese, explored the structure, meaning, and usage of these negation prefixes.

Although these three studies share a common focus on the use of prefixes, none of them specifically discuss the types of affixation processes that occur when a word is prefixed. Therefore, this study offers a novelty by examining the types of affixation present in the use of prefixes within the lyrics of songs by Kessoku Band and analyzing how these prefixes contribute to reinforcing the overall theme and meaning of the

songs.

2. Methods

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with an interpretive approach. Qualitative research is a type of study whose findings are not influenced by statistical data and instead focuses on how the researcher interprets events, interactions, or the behavior of subjects (6). This method is chosen because the focus of the study is to examine the use of prefixes, the types of affixation, and their role in reinforcing the themes of the songs. The primary data in this study were obtained from the songs of Kessoku Band. Meanwhile, the secondary data were collected from various books and scholarly journals. The primary data in this study were obtained by closely examining the lyrics of Kessoku Band's songs that have been released from 2022 to the present.

3. Result and Discussion

In this study, at least 12 vocabulary items were identified within excerpts of Kessoku Band's song lyrics that are affixed with prefixes. Among these 12 items, there are 7 distinct vocabulary containing 4 different prefixes: 大— (*dai—*), 超—

(*chou—*), 無— (*mu—*), and 不— (*fu— or bu—*). The following is an analysis of the attached prefixes and their roles within the songs.

3.1. 大— (*dai—*)

Lyrics	Prefix	Affixation Type	Role
打ち鳴らせ痛み の先へどうしよ う!大暴走癡猛な 鼓動を Song: 青春コンプレッ クス (2022)	大— (<i>dai—</i>) Meaning: Big, great, huge, very, serious (7)	inflectional Affixation (does not change the meaning of the root word 暴走 (<i>bousou</i>))	The prefix 大— (<i>dai—</i>) is attached to the noun 暴走 (<i>bousou</i>), which means “rampage” or “uncontrollable behavior.” The prefix 大— (<i>dai—</i>) intensifies the meaning, indicating an extreme and overwhelming level of wildness or lack of control.
大都会空に向か って伸びていく ビルに夕焼け Song: ひとりぼっち東京 (2022)	大— (<i>dai—</i>) Meaning: Big, great, huge, very, serious (7)	inflectional Affixation (does not change the meaning of the root word 都会 (<i>tokai</i>))	The prefix 大— (<i>dai—</i>), meaning “large” or “great,” is attached to the noun 都会 (<i>tokai</i>), which means “city” or “urban area.” The addition of the

			prefix 大— results in the meaning “big city” or “metropolis,” emphasizing the scale or magnitude of the urban setting.
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3.2. 超— (*chou—*)

Lyrics	Prefix	Affixation Type	Role
打ち鳴らせ嘆きのフォルテどうしよう? 超奔放 凶暴な本性を Song: 青春コンプレックス (2022)	超— (<i>chou—</i>) Meaning: Very (in extreme levels) (7)	Inflectional Affixation (does not change the meaning of the root word 奔放 (<i>honpou</i>))	The prefix 超— (<i>chou—</i>) is attached to a na- adjective (形容詞 , 奔放 (<i>honpou</i>), which means “free- spirited” or “uninhibited.” The prefix 超— (<i>chou—</i>) intensifies the meaning, conveying a sense of extreme or excessive freedom.

3.3. 無一 (*mu* 一)

Lyrics	Prefix	Affixation Type	Role
無情な世界を恨 んだ目はどうし ようもなく愛を 欲してた Song: 青春コンプレッ クス (2022)	無一 (<i>mu</i> 一) Meaning: No, less (7)	Derivational Affixation (involves a change in meaning, as seen in the transformation of the kanji 情 (<i>jou</i>), meaning “emotion” or “feeling,” into 無情 (<i>mujou</i>), meaning “cruel” or “heartless”)	The prefix 無一 (<i>mu</i>—), which conveys the meaning of “without” or “lacking,” is attached to the kanji 情 (<i>jou</i>), meaning “emotion” or “feeling,” forming the word 無情 (<i>mujou</i>). The prefix無一 (<i>mu</i>—) adds a negative nuance, resulting in the meaning “emotionless” or “cruel.”
		Derivational Affixation	The prefix 無一 (<i>mu</i>—), which means “without” or “lacking,” is attached to the kanji

最高最強無音になるとき Song: ドッペルゲンガ — (2024)	無一 (<i>mu</i>—) Meaning: No, less (7)	(involves a change in meaning, as seen in the transformation of the base word 音 (<i>oto</i>) meaning “voice” into 無音 (<i>muon</i>) meaning “silence”	音 (<i>oto</i>), meaning “sound,” forming the word 無音 (<i>muon</i>). The prefix 無一 (<i>mu</i>—) adds a negative or absence-related nuance, resulting in the meaning “silence” or “soundlessness.”
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3.4. 不 (*fu*— or *bu*—)

Lyrics	Prefix	Affixation Type	Role
届けてみよう 不器用でも Song: 光の中へ (2023)	不 (<i>fu</i>— or <i>bu</i>—) Meaning: Ugly, bad, not (7)	Derivational Affixation (involves a change in meaning, as seen in the transformation of the base word 器用 (<i>kiyou</i>), meaning “skillful,” into 不器用 (<i>bukiyou</i>), meaning “clumsy” or “awkward”)	The prefix 不 (<i>fu</i>— or <i>bu</i>—), which indicates negation or opposition to the base word, is attached to a na-adjective (な形容詞), 器用 (<i>kiyou</i>), meaning “skillful” or “dexterous.” The addition of the prefix 不 (<i>fu</i>— or <i>bu</i>—) to 器用 results in 不

			器用 (<i>bukiyou</i>), which conveys the meaning of being clumsy or socially awkward, suggesting an inability to adapt or adjust smoothly.
不協和音に居場所を探したり Song: あのバンド (2022)	不 (<i>fu— or bu—</i>) Meaning: Ugly, bad, not (7)	Derivational Affixation (involves a change in meaning, as seen in the transformation of the base word 協和音 (<i>kyouwaon</i>) meaning “consonance” into 不 協和音 (<i>fukyouwaon</i>) meaning “disonance”	The prefix 不 (<i>fu— or bu—</i>), which conveys negation or opposition, is attached to the noun 協和音 (<i>kyouwaon</i>), meaning “consonance” or “harmony.” The addition of the prefix 不 (<i>fu— or bu—</i>) gives a negative nuance to the base word, forming 不協和音 (<i>fukyouwaon</i>), which means “dissonance” or “discord.”

Kessoku Band is a fictional band featured in the anime Bocchi the Rock!, which tells the story of Gotou Hitori, an extremely introverted girl who struggles with social interactions and hopes to make friends in high school by learning to play the guitar. Based on the data presented in the table above, the use of prefixes in certain vocabulary found in the song lyrics plays a role in reinforcing both the themes of the songs and the overall narrative of Bocchi the Rock!. In Data 4, the prefix 不— (*fu— or bu—*) in the word 不器用 (*bukiyou*), meaning “clumsy” or “awkward,” reflects Gotou Hitori’s difficulty in socializing and her tendency to become uncomfortable around others. Similarly, in Data 1, the prefix 大— (*dai—*) expresses how intensely Gotou Hitori’s heart races when interacting with other people. Data 3 illustrates how Gotou Hitori, in the song 青春コンプレックス, views the world as cruel, as represented by the use of the prefix 無— (*mu—*). In Data 7, a lyrics from the song ひとりぼっち東京 depicts how Gotou Hitori perceives the metropolis landscape of Tokyo (大都会 - *daitokai*) as she tries to overcome her feelings of loneliness.

Meanwhile, in Data 2, the vocabulary found in the lyrics of the song 青春コンプレックス, which is affixed with the prefix 超— (*chou—*), illustrates the inner struggle of Gotou Hitori—despite being extremely introverted and shy, she desires to make friends and behave freely like most teenagers. In Data 5, the prefix 不— (*fu— or bu—*) in the word 不協和音 (*fukyouwaon*) reflects how Kessoku Band strives for harmony amid internal conflicts within the group. Lastly, in Data 6, the prefix 無— (*mu—*) in 無音 (*muon*) represents the song’s attempt to portray how a person can possess two personalities: one shown to the outside world, and another known only to oneself.

4. Conclusion

Based on the prefixes used, it can be concluded that the songs by Kessoku Band frequently employ prefixes that express magnitude, extremity, and negation. This aligns with the overall theme of the songs, which depict the youth and inner struggles of Gotou Hitori—an extremely introverted girl who has difficulty socializing and is a member of Kessoku Band, the fictional band in the anime Bocchi the Rock!. Furthermore, the vocabulary found in the song lyrics, which includes prefixes such as 不— (*fu— or bu—*), 大— (*dai—*), 無— (*mu—*), and 超— (*chou—*), supports the themes of adolescence, filled with emotional complexity and personal growth. This demonstrates that both inflectional and derivational

affixation processes in song lyrics play a significant role in conveying the songwriter's intended message to the audience.

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