

The Construction and Meaning of Compound Verbs in the Short Stories “Baraumi Shōgakkō” and “Serohiki no Gōshu”

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Abstract. This research discusses the structure and meaning of compound verbs in Japanese short stories. Compound verbs are one of the most common types of words in Japanese sentence formation, and are formed by combining at least two words to create a unified meaning in the verb category. From their construction, the combinations include words that vary in origin and function, and can produce the same or different meanings as their constituent elements. This research aims to determine the structure and meaning of compound verbs in Japanese with a qualitative descriptive approach. The research data were collected from the short stories "Baraumi Shōgakkō" and "Serohiki no Gōshu" by Miyazawa Kenji. The data were collected using the listening method, then analyzed using the agih method and the direct element division technique. The results of the analysis are presented using informal methods. The results of this study will describe the forming elements and the meaning contained in the formation of compound verbs. The findings reveal 4 compound verb structures, with the V1+V2 structure being the most dominant, and the most common inter-structure meaning relationship found is the meaning related to aspect. This research is expected to contribute to understanding the structure and meaning of compound verbs.

Keywords: Derivative, Japanese Compound Verbs, Meaning, Construction.

1 Introduction

One form of literary work that can describe the life of a society at a certain time is a short story. Through short stories, writers can highlight the reality and social structure, and convey the character of a nation. When reading a literary work, readers can learn about the values of the society from which the work originates. However, not all literary works can be accessed by cross-linguistic readers, hence the need for translation, which plays an important role in bridging language and cultural differences. In the translation process, translators often face challenges, especially in translating words with complex structures, such as compound verbs. Compound verbs are not always easy to translate as they are often a combination of two or more words that form a new meaning. One example is the compound verb 思い切る (*omoikiru*), which is formed from the words 思う (*omou*) and 切る (*kiru*). The element 思う (*omou*) means ‘to think’ and 切る (*kiru*) means ‘to cut’. However, when the two elements are combined, they form a new

meaning, namely ‘to make a decision’, which is different from the original meaning of each element.

Compound verbs are not only a combination of two words that create a new meaning, but also illustrate the mindset of Japanese people and aspects of their culture [8]. Akimoto and Nitta divide the relationship between compound verbs into 4 forms, namely V1+V2, N+V, A+V, and AD+V [1, 5]. Meanwhile, Tsujimura divides the relationship between elements into 2 types, namely lexical and syntactic [8]. These three theories are used to analyse the meaning relationship of compound verbs.

Previous research relevant to this study includes a study entitled ‘Analysis of Word Formation and Function of Fukugoudoushi *~Dasu* in Japanese Sentences’ which discusses the function and word formation of compound verb *~dasu* using Hayashi's theory [2]. The results of this study concluded that word formation is only formed from V1+V2 and has 2 functions, including the function of starting an activity and moving an object from inside out. In addition, there is a previous study entitled ‘The Japanese Compound Verb *~Kakeru*: It's Meaning and Formation’ which aims to describe the structure and meaning of the compound verb *~kakeru* in Japanese sentences [7]. The difference between these two studies and this study is that they use different theories and analyse the overall structure of compound verbs, which is not limited to compound verbs *~dasu* and *~kakeru*.

Based on this background, this research aims to identify the structure and meaning relationships in compound verbs found in the short stories ‘Baraumi Shougakkou’ and ‘Serohiki no Goushu’.

2 Methods

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. In the data collection process, the observation method was applied, using the listening technique (*simak*) as the primary technique, specifically by observing the use of language that is the focus of the study—in this case, Japanese compound verbs found in the short stories “Baraumi Shogakko” and “Serohiki no Goshu”. This was followed by a note-taking technique as a secondary method, in which the identified compound verbs were recorded onto data cards and subsequently categorized based on their structure and semantic relationships.

In the data analysis stage, the *agih* method is used with the direct element division technique (BUL). The *agih* method is an analysis method that uses determining tools from within the language under study [6]. In this research, compound verbs act as a determining tool which is then analysed with the BUL technique, namely by dividing them based on the forming elements to find out their structure and meaning

relationships. The results of the analysis are then presented using the informal descriptive method, which is the presentation of the results of data analysis using ordinary words [6].

3 Result and Discussion

Table 1. Compound Verbs Structure Data

No.	Structure	Data
1.	V1+V2	53
2.	N+V	10
3.	A+V	1
4.	AD+V	8
Total		72

3.1 V1+V2

- (1) 落ち着く = 落ちる + 着く
Ochitsuku = *ochiru* + *tsuku*
 Calm = to fall + to arrive [3].

The compound verb 落ち着く (*ochitsuku*) is formed from the verb 落ちる (*ochiru*) and the verb 着く (*tsuku*). This compound verb belongs to the wago vocabulary type. It is characterised by the way the two constituent elements are read using the kunyomi reading method. The compound verb 落ち着く (*ochitsuku*) means ‘calm’. Lexically, each element has its basic meaning. 落ちる (*ochiru*) can be interpreted as ‘fall’ and 着く (*tsuku*) can be interpreted as ‘arrive’. However, when the two elements are combined, the lexical meaning of each element loses its meaning and forms a new idiomatic meaning, which is ‘calm’. The two elements merge into a unified meaning and can no longer be deciphered.

- (2) 歌い始め = 歌う + 始める
Utaihajimeru = *utau* + *hajimeru*
 To start singing = to sing + to start [3].

The compound verb 歌い始め (*utaihajimeru*) is formed from two verbs: 歌う (*utau*), which combines with the verb 始める (*hajimeru*). This compound verb falls under the category of wago, as indicated by the use of kunyomi for both constituent elements. Lexically, each of these elements retains its own meaning: 歌う (*utau*) means ‘to sing’ while 始める (*hajimeru*) means ‘to begin’. When combined into 歌い始め (*utaihajimeru*), the basic meanings of the individual components remain intact. Therefore, the resulting meaning is non-idiomatic. Furthermore, 始める (*hajimeru*) also conveys the aspectual meaning of the beginning point of an event.

3.2 N+V

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|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (3) 泣き声出す | = 泣き声 + 出す |
| <i>Nakigoedasu</i> | = <i>nakigoe</i> + <i>dasu</i> |
| To let out crying voice | = crying voice + to let out [4]. |

The compound verb 泣き声出す (*nakigoedasu*) is formed from the noun 泣き声 (*nakigoe*) and the verb 出す (*dasu*). The compound word 泣き声出す (*nakigoedasu*) belongs to the wago vocabulary type. This is shown by the way the two constituent elements are read using the kunyomi reading method. This compound verb means 'to let out a crying sound'. Lexically, 泣き声 (*nakigoe*) means 'crying voice' and 出す (*dasu*) means 'to let out'. In this compound verb, 泣き声 (*nakigoe*) acts as the object that is subjected to the action of the verb 出す (*dasu*). The resulting meaning is therefore non-idiomatic as it corresponds to the basic meaning of the compound.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (4) 足踏みする | = 足踏み + する |
| <i>Ashibumisuru</i> | = <i>ashibumi</i> + <i>suru</i> |
| Stepping | = to step on + <i>suru</i> verb [4]. |

The compound verb 足踏みする (*ashibumisuru*) is formed from the combination of the noun 足踏み (*ashibumi*) and the auxiliary verb *suru*. This compound word belongs to the wago word type. It is characterised by the use of the kunyomi reading method by both constituents. Lexically, 足踏み (*ashibumi*) means 'to step on'. When attached to the auxiliary verb *suru*, it shows the action of stepping. The resulting meaning is therefore non-idiomatic.

3.3 A+V

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| (5) 近づく | = 近い + つく |
| <i>Chikaduku</i> | = <i>chikai</i> + <i>tsuku</i> |
| To approach | = near + to be [4]. |

The compound verb 近づく (*chikaduku*) is formed from the adjective 近い (*chikai*) and the verb つく (*tsuku*). The verb つく (*tsuku*) changes its sound to づく (*duku*). This compound word belongs to the wago vocabulary type, which is characterised by the use of kunyomi punctuation on both elements. The compound verb 近づく (*chikaduku*) can be interpreted as 'to approach'. Lexically, 近い (*chikai*) means 'near' and つく (*tsuku*) means 'to be'. Therefore, the resulting meaning is non-idiomatic as it corresponds to the basic meaning of the two constituents.

3.4 AD+V

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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (6) バタバタする | = バタバタ + する |
| <i>Batabatasuru</i> | = <i>batabata</i> + <i>suru</i> |
| Flapping | = to flap + <i>suru</i> verb [4]. |

The compound verb バタバタする (*batabatasuru*) is formed from a word that is a sound symbol or onomatopoeia, バタバタ (*batabata*) attached to the *suru* verb. This compound verb means ‘flapping’. バタバタ (*batabata*) is an onomatopoeia that imitates the sound of a bird flapping its wings. Therefore, when attached to the auxiliary verb *suru*, it shows that it performs an action that resembles the sound or movement imitated by the onomatopoeia. The meaning produced by this compound verb is non-idiomatic.

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|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| (7) がたがたする | = がたがた + する |
| <i>Gatagatasuru</i> | = <i>gatagata</i> + <i>suru</i> |
| Rattling | = rattling + <i>suru</i> verb [4]. |

The compound verb がたがたする (*gatagatasuru*) is formed from the combination of the onomatopoeic word がたがた (*gatagata*) with the auxiliary verb *suru*. This compound verb means ‘rattling’. がたがた (*gatagata*) is an onomatopoeia that imitates the sound or movement of something shaking. When attached to the auxiliary verb *suru*, it expresses the action of shaking. Thus, the resulting meaning is non-idiomatic.

4 Conclusion

In the short stories ‘Baraumi Shogakko’ and ‘Serohiki no Goshu’, 72 data of compound verbs were identified. Based on the data, the V1+V2 structure is the most common form, with 53 data. In the process of compound word formation, only one case of sound change was found.

The meanings formed from the combination of these elements can be grouped into three types: non-idiomatic meaning, semi-idiomatic meaning, and idiomatic meaning. Among these categories, non-idiomatic meaning is the most dominant, with 39 data identified. On the other hand, the most common meaning relationship found between elements is the meaning related to aspect, with 18 data.

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