

The role of morphology in Japanese clipping – Adam D Daniel, University of Calgary

This study examines the role of morphology in clipping processes of Japanese compounds and phrases. Although Japanese clippings have been well-studied in phonology (c.f. e.g. Itō 1990, Petrulyté 2015), there has yet to be a strong investigation of the clipping process from a morphological standpoint. As defined by Haspelmath and Sims (2010: 322), clipping is a method of word-formation creating shortened words that do not differ semantically from source words. However, Mel'čuk (2006: 310) classifies clipping as a diachronic, lexeme-creating word-creation device that does not express meaning and is therefore not a morphological process; my work will show that this is a misguided view.

Clipping is highly productive in Japanese and lexicalised clippings occur frequently in speech and writing (Kageyama and Kishimoto 2016, Kubozono 1993: 187, Nishihara et al 2001: 302). By examining clipping in Japanese, my work answers the questions: is morphology involved in the clipping process, and what are the respective roles of phonology, semantics, and morphology involved? In order to study Japanese clipping, I created a database with the aid of works like Prem (1993), the Jisho Online Dictionary (n.d), and Zokugo Dictionary Online (n.d). I then analysed the data and developed a typology for their description.

My analysis of the database shows that Japanese has three major clipping types: syntactic category-preserving clippings which retain affixes identifying verb and adjective (1), semantic category-preserving clippings which retain semantic classifications such as a type of person or law (2), and phonologically based clippings which have no marked morphological or semantic material to retain and use phonological rules to produce an output.

(1) Compound adjective clipping (Zokugo Online Dictionary, n.d.)

[**imo**_N] –[kusa]_{AFF} –i → imo-i

potato smelly/smacking of-ADJ

‘country bumpkin-esque/yokel-y’

(2) Compound noun clipping (Prem 1993: 112)

[**kô**_V–tsû_V–hi_{AFF}]_N [shoku_V–ji_N] –tsuki_{AFF} → kôshoku-tsuki

mix–commute–cost_{AFF} food–thing –provision_{AFF}

transportation –meal –provision_{AFF}

‘transportation and meal provided’

In (1), the affix which marks the clipping as an adjective is retained, while the head of the compound meaning ‘smacking of’ is removed. In (2), elements have been removed, such as *tsû* ‘commute’ and the semantic affix *–hi* referring to a type of ‘cost’, yet *–tsuki*, the affix conveying ‘provision’, remains. In these clippings, it does seem that it can be more important to retain classificatory information than crucial lexical information originally conveyed by the head of the full representation. Furthermore, due to common usage, it is evident that through clipping, some words have become lexicalised into affixes as in (3).

(3) Clipping lexicalised as an affix (Jisho Online Dictionary, n.d.)

[**dai**–gaku]_N > dai > –dai

‘big’ ‘school’ = ‘college/university’

In its new lexicalised state, *–dai* has become an affix capable of being attached to words and names to convey meaning a university or college, e.g. *Haabaado-dai* ‘Harvard University’.

Overall, my research concludes that morphology is a contributing factor in the clipping processes of Japanese, and that because the process is productive, it has the potential to influence language change.

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