

A Study of Japanese Compound Verbs from Japanese Intermediate-level Prescribed Text

Khin Thuzar Myo¹

Abstract

While studying a foreign language, it is important for learners to understand the nature of the target language as well as that of their mother tongue. The present study highlights the ways the compound verbs in Japanese language are usually formed and the ways their meanings change based on the context they are used. In Japanese, compound verbs (Fukugo Dooshi) play a very fundamental role in terms of grammar and vocabulary. The descriptive method is used to give an account on the commonly used compound verbs which are formed with the verbs such as 'komu', 'dasu', and 'agaru' in Japanese language. It was found out that the new compound verbs sometimes mean nearly the same to the original words though there are some occasions in which the newly formed compound verbs have rather different meanings to the original sense.

Introduction

It is language that bridges between two persons in a community. As the civilization has developed, it is necessary to adapt to the language used in a community. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to apply different teaching aids and teaching methods to teach a language so as for the learners to be able to use different languages effectively. There are some unique characteristics in Japanese language which can sometimes pose problems for Myanmar learners of Japanese language to understand and learn the target language effectively. Compound verbs in Japanese are one of such characteristics since they are different from the nature of the verbs in Myanmar language. To be able to help the learners learn Japanese effectively, the meanings of the compound verbs which are common in everyday Japanese conversation are investigated in this paper through the examples.

Aim

The aim of the present paper is to investigate the ways compound verbs in Japanese language are usually formed.

Research Questions

1. How are compound verbs in Japanese formed?
2. In what situations do the compound verbs formed from the combination of the Japanese verbs 'komu', 'dasu' and 'agaru' with other verbs change in the meaning?

Literature Review

The present paper is the study of compound verbs in Japanese language in order to benefit Myanmar learners of Japanese as a foreign language to learn the target language efficiently. Both Myanmar and Japanese languages share the same nature of sentence structure, for example, verb usually comes at the end of a sentence. Verbs are generally regarded as the most important content words in a sentence, and most importantly compound verbs are common when constructing sentences in both languages. Therefore, some kinds of widely used compound verbs in Japanese are listed in this paper with reference to Japanese Intermediate level text books such as Tyuu kyuu kara manabu Nihongo, Tyuu kyuu nihon go, Nihongo no Fukugo dooshi Internet website to collect the compound verbs, to explore in what ways those compound verbs are formed, and how their meanings are likely to change.

¹ Daw, Lecturer, Department of Japanese, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages.

Material and Method

The data for the present research were collected with reference to the section of the usage and the formation of compound verbs in Japanese Intermediate level prescribed textbook “Tyuu kyuu kara manabu” which is used for teaching Japanese at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages.

Findings and Discussion

After the investigation of the compound verbs found in the intermediate level text book used to teach Japanese at MUFL, it was found out that in Japanese language, compound verbs are common in sentences and sometimes they are even used as a single verb instead of compound verbs in Japanese language. In some cases, they have almost the same meaning to their original verbs while in other occasions the meanings change depending on the words they are combined.

1. Compound verbs that one formed by combining two verbs

Japanese compound verbs are basically utilized as the main component of a sentence in Japanese. In this section, compound verbs which are usually found in everyday Japanese conversation are described with examples. At the same time, there are more examples to show the differences in meanings of the newly-formed compound verbs.

In Japanese Language a compound verb (Fukugo Dooshi) is a word or a phrase being formed from the combination of more than one word. For example, the verb ‘drink’ (nomu) is changed into the Japanese writing style (~masu) and the verb (nomi masu) also means ‘drink’.

1.1 Japanese Compound Verbs formed by combining Japanese verb ‘komu’ and other verbs

The verb ‘komu’ is a Japanese verb which gives the different meanings such as ‘to put something in/into’, ‘to enter a place’ and ‘do something intensively’. It was observed that the compound verbs formed by combining with that verb ‘komu’ and other verbs are mostly found in Japanese (Intermediate Level) Prescribed Text.

In combination of the verb ‘nomu’ (drink) mentioned above and the verb ‘komu’, the former one ‘nomu’ is firstly changed into ‘masu’ in Japanese writing sentence structure.

In the form of (nomimasu + komu), ‘masu’ of the first verb (nomimasu) is omitted. When the rest of the first verb (nomi) and (komu) are combined, it becomes (nomikommu) that is Japanese Compound verb (Fukugo dooshi).

E.g. - (nomu)

飲む (to drink) (aomubon)

- (komu)

- 込む

to enter/ get into something oibon/ twifodibon

- nomimasu + komu = nomikommu

- 飲みます + 込む = 飲み込む

to drink + to get into something = to swallow

aomubon + oibon twifodibon/ rison/ aomuvubon

It is studied that the compound verb ‘nomi komu’ means not only ‘drink and swallow’ but also ‘understand’. It is used only in the expressions of eating and drinking. The same compound verb is used with a different meaning (understand and comprehend) in some cases. This can be seen as in the examples below.

- (to eat) (pm;on)
- Nomu
 - 飲む
- (to drink) (aomufon)
- taberu + nomu = inshaku (pm;aomufon/ rtsou)
 - 食べる + 飲む = 飲食
 - eat + drink = swallow

In the above example, the verb 'inshaku' means 'swallow'. It is found out that although it is a compound verb, it is used as a new one-word verb.

Similarly, Japanese verbs such as 'kau + atumeru' (save) and 'taberu + sugiru' (overeat) seem to be compound verbs. However, it is observed that these verbs are used as new single verbs. The learners of Japanese Language will probably know that Japanese compound verbs are usually in the form of (v-masu + komu). However if the learners know the usage of the compound verbs and their meanings, they can check whether they are fully aware of those compound verbs and whether they have complete comprehension about them. As they become more proficient learners, they will understand the limitations of the meanings of some compound verbs in the target language.

1.2 Japanese Compound Verbs formed from the combination of Japanese verb 'dasu' and other verbs

In Japanese like the verb 'komu', there is also a verb 'dasu' which can be used together with other verbs to form compound verb.

The verb 'dasu' can have different meanings based on the verbs combined. Its original meaning is to take something out of something. Another definition is to send a letter. In the example 'tegami o dasu' (send a letter), the verb 'dasu' is used.

The following are some compound verbs which are formed from the combination of the verbs 'dasu' and other compound verbs.

Eg. noru + dasu = noridasu

乗る + 出す = 乗り出す

ride + take out = ride a vehicle pɔn + xkw, lon = pɔsɔn

The verb 'noru' means 'to ride a vehicle' when it is combined with the verb 'dasu', the new compound verb 'noridasu' can have different meanings.

In the example 'taiheiyoo ni noridasu' (sail in the ship on the Pacific), 'noridasu' does not mean 'to ride'. In another example, 'shin ji gyoo ni noridasu' (invest in the new business), the meanings of 'noridasu' has changed.

The verb 'noridasu' is also used in collocation with the body parts. But as it is shown in the following examples, the meaning of 'noridasu' does not mean as in the examples above.

E.g. - hiza o noridasu (to straighten one's knee out)

ひざを乗り出す。('tu qe xkwon)

- karada o noridasu (to bend one's body to listen to someone)

体を乗り出す。(cEmu fu a/2o xufjon)

There are also compound verbs which come from the combination of the verbs ‘uru’ and ‘dasu’.

- uru (sell) + dasu (take out) = uridasu (sell out) $a\&mi\ f\ on\ +\ x\ kw\ on\ = a\&mi\ f\ x\ kw\ on\$
- 売る + 出す = 売り出す

E.g. - His new CDs are already sold out. ($o\ n\ p\ d\ t\ o\ p\ on\ a\&mi\ f\ u\ e\ b\ on\ ;\ c\ h\ y\ d\$)

彼の新しいシーディが売り出された。

- All the new products are sold out. ($u\ e\ y\ p\ on\ ;\ t\ o\ p\ on\ a\&mi\ f\ u\ e\ b\ on\ ;\ c\ h\ y\ d\$)

新商品を売り出す。

To talk about a situation in which someone remembers a thing in the past, the verb ‘dasu’ can be used together with ‘omou’ to form a new compound verb.

- omou (think) + dasu (take out) = omoidasu (remember)
- 思う + 出す = 思い出す
- $aw\ f\ aw\ mon\ +\ x\ kw\ on\ =\ ow\ \&\ on\ ;\ at\ mu\ ar\ on\$

The Japanese verbs ‘uridasu’ and ‘omoidasu’ have new meanings which are nearly the same in the sense with their original one-word meaning. For the verb ‘noridasu’, it has various meanings depending on the verbs they are used together with. There are also some Japanese compound verbs which have different meanings to their original meanings. Examples of such kinds of compound verbs are as follow.

- sasu (rush) + dasu (take out) = stretch out
- 差す + 出す = 差し出す
- $w\ on\ +\ x\ kw\ on\ =\ qe\ x\ kw\ on\$

E.g. - ryoote o sashidasu (Stretch out your hands.)

両手を差し出す。 ($vu\ e\ p\ zu\ f\ qe\ x\ kw\ on\$)

- kanojo wa akushu o shiyoo to te o sashidashita shihaisha ni o sashidasu.

彼女は握手をしようと手を差し出す。

(She stretched out her hands to give big applause.)

$o\ ron\ v\ u\ c\ k\ w\ on\ ;\ m\ q\ y\ d\ vu\ e\ p\ zu\ f\ qe\ x\ kw\ on\ /$

- shootajiao o shashidasu (The invitation letter is sent.)

招待状を差し出す。 $z\ w\ l\ um\ ;\ p\ mu\ ay\ ;\ y\ on\ /$

Although the meaning of the compound verb doesn’t change in the first and second example sentences, it can be seen that the meaning of the same compound verb changes in the third example.

1.3 Japanese Compound Verbs formed from the combination of Japanese verb ‘agaru’ and other verbs

In this section, compound verbs formed from the combination of Japanese verb ‘agaru’ and other verbs will be described with examples. Firstly, a list of various meanings of the verb ‘agaru’ is given as below.

1. to move a thing from a lower position to a higher position (物の全体の部分の位置を高いところへうつる。)
2. to move a watercraft onto land (水上、水中または船などから陸上へ移ること)
3. to emerge from the ground (地中から陸上にうえ出る)
4. to move into a city to make a living (田舎から上方へ行くこと)
5. to go against the windy direction (while talking about the directions) (北の方にあがりました。)
6. to join a school or to continue the study at a school (学校に入学すること、学校を続けること)
7. to talk about a weather condition in which the rain stops or the monsoon ends (雨の季節が終わる、雨があがること)

In Japanese, when the verb 'agaru' is used together with the other verbs, the meaning of the new word can vary. The examples are given as follow.

- okiru (get up) + agaru (rise) = Okiagaru (to get up)
- 起きる + 上がる = 起き上がる
- xonf + jri fonf wubnf = Eixonf xvufonf

E.g. He gets up from bed. (tɯf, mɾs xvufonf)

寢室から起き上がる。

- dekuru (be able to do something) + agaru (rise) = dekiagaru (to accomplish)
- できる + 上がる = 出来上がる
- vɯEifonf + wubnf = tvɯpɯpɯpɯonf

E.g. The project has been accomplished. (pɾɯEifonf ɯɯɯjɾmufonf / vɯɯpɯpɯpɯonf)

その計画が出来上がる。

As it can be seen in the examples above, the meaning of the new compound verbs carry new meanings which is quite different from the original meaning of the separate verbs.

In the next example to be described, the verb 'mesu' means 'eat or drink' although it has more than one meaning in original sense. Moreover, the meaning of the verb reflects polite form here. When it is used together with the verb 'agaru', the new compound verb 'meshiagaru' means 'Please help yourself.'

- mesu (eat) + agaru (rise) = meshiagaru (Please help yourself.)
- 召す + 上がる = 召し上がる
- pm;onf + jri wufonf = oɯaqmifonf / pm;oɯonf

E.g. Would you like to have some cake? ('ɯɯvɾɯɾɯɯ pm;rvm;/)

このケーキを召し上がりませんか。

To talk about a person getting recovered from an illness, a compound verb is usually used in Japanese.

- yamu (be ill) + agaru (rise) = yamiagaru (recover)
- 病む + 上がる = 病み上がる
- aeraumifonf+jrifonf = jyeɯnɯɯɯɯɯɯonf
- pɯvɯvɯɯɯɯɯɯonf emveɯɯonf

E.g. She has recovered from her illness.

彼女は病気から病み上がりました。(aeaumi fNyDcgp emveXlonf)

To describe a thing floating on the water, a compound word is used in Japanese.

ukabu (float) + agaru (rise) = float

浮かぶ + 上がる ⇒ 浮かび上がる

aygavmay: onf + jri f wu fon = aygavmay: vmonf

E.g. It is floating on the water. 水面に浮かび上がる。

a&ay: o aygavmay: onf

Conclusion

Through this study of compound verbs in Japanese, it was found that there are similarities and differences in the meanings of the newly-formed compound verbs, grammatically and semantically. When the learners become aware of the uniqueness in these compound verbs of the foreign language they are studying, the differences in their mother tongue and the target language will naturally become narrower. Consequently, it is helpful for the learners to compare and contrast the usages of their mother tongue and the target language. Therefore, it is hoped that the learners of Japanese will benefit from this paper concerning the compound verbs in Japanese language.

Reference

- Tyuu Kyuu kara Manabu Nihongo(2001).The Japan Foundation Japanese Languages Institute.
- Teema Betsu Tyuu Kyuu kara Manabu Nihongo(kai tei pann)(2003).Kenkyuusha.The Japanese languages Insitute.
- Tyuu Kyuu Nihongo(2002).Japanese Language Center for International Students.Tokyo University of Foreign Students.
- Nihongo Tyuu Kyuu Dokkai Nyuumon(1992).Introduction to Japanese Reading Skills.ALC Press Japanese Textbook Series.
- Shokyuu Nihongo (1992).Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku Ryuu Gakusei Nihongo kyouiku Center.