
Word formation with loanwords: A case of “Japanese English”

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1 Introduction

The topic of this paper is how English has been influencing contemporary Japanese lexicon and Japanese word formation, especially compounding. Many English words are used in daily communication among native speakers of Japanese, producing such compounds as in (1).

(1) a. *bakku-miraa* (lit. back-mirror) ‘a rear-view mirror’

b. *teeburu-supiichi* (lit. table-speech) ‘a dinner speech’ (Shibatani (1990: 151))

The Japanese lexicon consists of three types of words: native Japanese words, Sino-Japanese words, and foreign words (called *gairaigo* in Japanese), such as English words. The complex word *bakku-miraa* in (1a) is made up from two English words, *bakku* and *mirra*, for example. However, the expressions in (1) are not shared with native speakers of English and often labelled as “wasei eigo.” *Wasei* means ‘made in Japan’ and *eigo* means ‘English,’ so the literal translation of “wasei eigo” would be “Japanese English.” We use these terms exchangeably.

Similar phenomena are also observed in other languages than Japanese as a result of language contact with English. For instance, Renner and Fernández-Domínguez (2015) discuss the influence of English on Romance languages under the notion of False Anglicisms. Contact-induced expressions like “wasee eigo” are usually taken as wrong expressions in English. Irwin (2011) gives the compound *goo-sutoppu* ‘traffic light’ as an example of “wasee eigo,” which is composed of two independent English loanwords *goo* ‘go’ and *sutoppu* ‘stop.’ He takes it as a “semantically remodeled” compound, since a native speaker of English would interpret a hypothetical English compound *go-stop* as a state of stopping and starting, or juddering. Under this view, “wasei eigo” can be characterized as expressions occurring as a result of a deviant use and interpretation of English by non-native speakers.

In this paper, focusing on contact-induced compounds of *goo-sutoppu* type, we will argue that they are never anything like semantically remodeled expressions of English, and that their existence is a matter of morphology, but not semantics. Based on the notions of matter (MAT) and pattern (PAT) and their distinction in borrowing (Matras & Sakel (2007)), and the morphological difference between English and Japanese, we will answer the question of why Japanese speakers, but not English speakers, use such compounds, and how they are produced.

2 Matter borrowing in compounding in “Japanese English”

Compounding is a process of creating a new complex word by merging at least two lexemes. And they are right-headed in most languages. Although the compounds in (1) are not acceptable among native-speakers of English, it can be said that they satisfy the requirements for compounds. The loanwords in the compound in (1a), *bakku* and *miraa*, are independently used as nominal elements in Japanese lexicon. *Bakku* means the area of something that is furthest from the front, paraphrased as *koohoo*, ‘the back of something,’ and *miraa* means a mirror. Also, (1a) is interpreted as a kind of mirror, showing its right-headed property. Likewise, the constituents *teeburu* and *supiichi* in (1b) have the independent lexemic meanings of ‘table’ and ‘speech,’ respectively, and the complex expression *teeburu-supiichi* conveys the meaning consistent with the right-headedness of compounds.

We point out here that the considerations so far suggest that MAT borrowing is involved in the compounding in (1). It is a borrowing process in which only a phonological material or a surface form of an expression is borrowed from one language to another, and no grammatical or semantic aspects are transferred (see Sakel (2007), for example). If they are replicated in a recipient language, a borrowing process is identified as PAT borrowing. In the case of (1), only the phonological information or the surface word form of English words *back*, *mirror*, *table* and *speech* are replicated in Japanese, and they are exploited in compounding in Japanese lexicon. The compounds in (1) are formed conforming to the frame of Japanese lexicon and Japanese word formation, with only phonological features and MAT borrowed from English for phonological realization. Since there is no PAT borrowing involved in (1), it is rather difficult for native speakers of English to find the compounds acceptable.

3 A problem

The MAT-PAT distinction enables us to give a straightforward explanation for the compounds in (1). They are formed through compounding with only MAT borrowed from English. So native speakers of English do not use them, while they are natural for native speakers of Japanese. Turning our attention to the compound *goo-sutoppu* which Irwin (2011) gives, the situation does not seem to be so simple. As he mentions, its meaning shared among Japanese speakers is ‘traffic light.’ While the right-headedness of compounds is easily identified in (1), based on their meanings, the right-headedness of *goo-sutoppu* does not seem to immediately follow from its meaning, and it is not determined at this point that it has a structure of compounds. The questions to be addressed are thus as follows:

- (2) a. Is such an expression as *goo-stoppu* a compound?
- b. Why is there a difference in its acceptability between English and Japanese speakers?

4 Dvandvas in Japanese

We will pursue the possibility here that the complex expression of *goo-sutoppu* type is a coordinate compound, more specifically, a dvandva compound. Assume that dvandvas are headless. We can then take *goo-sutoppu* as a headless compound, if it is proved to be a member of dvandvas. Before a detailed discussion about whether it is a dvandva, let us summarize the background knowledge about dvandvas and their classification relevant to our discussion.

4.1 Theoretical background

Bauer (2008) gives five types of coordinated compounds, and one of them is called a dvandva. The typical example in Japanese is *eda-ha* (lit. branch-leaf) ‘branches and leaves.’ According to him, “the dvandva is understood as being a new unity made up of the whole of the two entities named. (Bauer (2008:2))” *Eda-ha* thus means the union of branches and leaves, each of which is referential.

Bauer further subdivides dvandvas into five types. Three of them, which are relevant to the discussion below, are listed in (3).

- (3) a. Additive types

<i>eda-ha</i>	(lit. branch-leaf)	‘branches and leaves’	(Japanese)
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- b. Co-hyponymic types

<i>bas-kaar</i>	(lit. bus-car)	‘vehicles’	(Punjabi)
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- c. Co-Synonymic types

<i>đường sá</i>	(lit. road street)	‘roads’	(Vietnamese)
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The additive type in (3a) is understood as the union or sum of the sets denoted by the constituents, as mentioned above. Note that the constituents with opposite meanings can also be combined to form this type of dvandvas. In Japanese, for example, the word *sa* ‘left’ can form the additive type with the opposite word *yuu* ‘right,’ as shown in *sa-yuu* (lit. left-right) ‘a left side and a right side.’ The constituents have the different meaning, but they can be regarded as a member of the same set. The branch and the leaf are both parts of a tree, and the notions of left and right are both related to the direction.

The co-hyponymic type in (3b) denotes more abstract concepts than what each constituent denotes. The constituents of the compound *bas-kaar* means ‘bus’ and ‘car,’ and they are instances of vehicles. Then the compound itself convey this more general meaning of ‘vehicle.’ It can be said that the meaning of the co-hyponymic type is extended as a result of conceptualization. Note that we can observe a similar phenomenon in the additive type as well. The additive type *eda-ha* in (3a), for example, can refer to ‘trivial things.’ Both the branch and the leaf are not the trunk and the main part of a tree, inducing the meaning extension.

The co-synonymic type in (3c) is a compound composed of the constituents with the identical meaning, contrasting with the additive type and the co-hyponymic type. Though the constituents are identical in meaning, this type has no emphatic or repetitive interpretation.

4.2 MAT borrowing for producing dvandvas

Remember that considering its headedness, the issue is whether *goo-sutoppu* is a compound or not and how it is interpreted as a traffic light. Our claim is that it is a dvandva compound of additive type, which broadens the interpretive possibility. There are five reasons to believe that this analysis is on the right track.

First, the constituents *goo* ‘go’ and *sutoppu* ‘stop’ are both notions related to movements or traffic affairs, and can be considered to be in the same set. This membership property of the constituents is needed for forming dvandvas, and the expression *goo-sutoppu* satisfies it.

Second, from the semantic point of view, its interpretation seems to involve conceptualization or metonymy. *Goo-sutoppu* does not simply mean going and stopping. But it refers to a signal, a device controlling a traffic condition, showing when we must go and when we must stop. It can be said that the meaning of a traffic light is equipped to this expression through conceptualization. This strongly suggests that it is a dvandva compound.

Third, there are so many examples in Japanese similar to *goo-sutoppu*, as shown in (4).

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| (4) a. <i>hamu-eggu</i> | (lit.) ham-egg | ‘ham and egg, bacon and egg’ |
| b. <i>appu-dau</i> | (lit.) up-down | ‘ups and downs’ |
| c. <i>macchi-pompu</i> | (lit.) match-pump | ‘a person who intentionally causes trouble and settles down’ |
| d. <i>T.P.O.</i> | (lit.) time-place-occasion | ‘taking the time, the place and the occasion into consideration’ |
| e. <i>D.P.E.</i> | (lit.) developing-printing-enlargement | ‘a photo shop’ |
| f. <i>inkamu-gein</i> | (lit.) income-gain | ‘capital gains’ |

The English counterparts of *Hamu-eggu* in (4a) and *appu-dau* in (4b) have the coordinate structure with the conjunction *and*, as shown in their translations. This indicates that the complex expressions without *and* in (4a) and (4b) are dvandva compounds. Simultaneously, this implies that they are produced through MAT borrowing, but not PAT borrowing. Only the phonological materials are borrowed, without the coordinate structure involving *and*. As for (4c) and (4e), meaning extensions are observed, as shown in their translations. (4f) is an example of a co-synonymic dvandva. Its constituents are identical in meaning. (4) thus

indicates that dvandvas like *goo-suttoppu* are rather productive. Other Languages can be a donor language. The examples in (5) are produced through MAT borrowing from French.

- (5) a. *figu-noa* (lit. fig-nut) 'bread mixed with figs and nuts'
b. *furomaaju-figu* (lit. cheese-fig) 'bread mixed with cheese and figs'

These expressions are often found in bakery shops in Japan. *Figu, noa* and *furomaaju* in (5a) and (5b) come from the French words *figue* 'fig,' *noix* 'nut' and *fromage* 'cheese,' respectively. The phonological materials are borrowed from French, suggesting that dvandvas are naturally formed with foreign words in Japanese through a process of MAT borrowing.

Finally, our proposal accounts for why native speakers of English feel difficulties in interpreting the complex words of *goo-suttoppu* type. Bauer (2008) points out that the coordinated compounds to be labeled with the term "dvandva" are much more limited than generally assumed. Typological studies, such as Arcodia et al. (2010), point out that most of the European languages resist dvandva formation in principle. A morphological frame of dvandvas are not in English lexicon and its native speakers do not analyze them in Japanese.

5 Final remarks

We have shown that both headed-compounds like (1a) and (1b) and non-headed dvandva compounds like *goo-suttoppu* are formed in Japanese lexicon with MAT borrowing. Native speakers of English thus feel these expressions to be deviant.

Finally, I will make a brief remark on parametric variations in the occurrence of dvandvas. If dvandva formation is a system in the lexicon, they should be morphological in nature. Kastovsky (2006) suggests that word-basedness and stem-basedness are key notions to consider parametric variations of languages. If English is a word-based language and Japanese is a stem-based language, it is highly likely that dvandvas are licensed only in stem-based languages. Given that Kastovsky characterizes Old English as a stem-based language, dvandvas are expected to be found in OE. Interestingly, even our rough dictionary search has found many instances of co-synonymic type of dvandvas in OE. A few of them are listed in (6).

- (6) a. *ellencraeft* 'strength, power' (*ellen* 'strength, power' + *craeft* 'power, strength')
b. *friþowaru* 'protection' (*friþu* 'protection' + *waru* 'protection')

Thorough research from this perspective thus seems to be necessary.

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