

JAPANESE COMPOUNDS WITH THE LEXEME “MOUTH”: WORD FORMATION AND MEANINGS

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Received: 23rd September 2024/**Revised:** 15th November 2024/**Accepted:** 18th November 2024

How to Cite: Sudipa, M. H. D., Meilantari, N. L. G., & Widiastika, I. W. W. C. (2024).
Japanese compounds with the lexeme “mouth”: Word formation and meanings. *Lingua Cultura*, 18(2), 177-184.
<https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v18i2.12227>

ABSTRACT

In Japanese, the lexeme ‘mouth’ can be written using kanji 口 read as ‘kuchi’. It is a commonly used character that includes idiomatic expressions and compound words. Although ‘kuchi’ means ‘mouth’ and functions as a noun, it can change into different forms and meanings. Therefore, this research analyzed the forms and meanings of Japanese compound words formed by the lexeme ‘mouth’. The data was collected from Japanese newspaper articles from Asahi Shinbun in sentences using various compounds with the lexeme ‘mouth’ through observation and note-taking techniques. Then, the data was analyzed using the distribution method with the expansion technique. The morphology theory by Kageyama (2016) and Katamba (2018) is used to analyze Japanese compounds’ construction and meaning. The results show that 120 Japanese compound words are formed by the lexeme ‘mouth’. There are three forms of compounds based on various word classes including compound nouns (consisting of noun + noun, adjective + noun, and verb + noun), compound adjectives (noun + adjective), and compound verbs (noun + verb). Based on its meaning, it can be classified into two categories, endocentric and exocentric meaning. By offering a thorough analysis of Japanese compound words containing the lexeme kuchi ‘mouth’, this research provides insights into Japanese morphosemantics by highlighting a single lexeme adopted within the compound, especially regarding forms and meanings of compound words. This research contributes to morphological theory application within Japanese studies and can be used for similar research in the future.

Keywords: linguistics, morphology, semantics, compound, Japanese

INTRODUCTION

Language, as a system of symbols and sounds, is inherently limited. Although it is used to communicate and share ideas, it cannot always capture the full depth or nuance of emotion or experience. New words and expressions are constantly needed to capture emerging ideas, describe experiences, or provide more precise meanings. The process by which languages create new arrays of words is known as word formation. Word formation allows languages to expand flexibly by instantiating new lexemes through processes like derivations and compounding (Audring & Masini, 2019).

There are many word concepts in daily life, but the number of vocabulary words is limited (Chaer, 2015). The idea is that human experiences, emotions, thoughts, and perceptions are often more prosperous and more complex than the words used to express them. For example, as technology and social media evolve, terms like ‘selfie’, ‘FOMO’ (fear of missing out), and ‘ghosting’ illustrate how digital communication practices contribute to the creation of new words that capture contemporary experiences and behaviors (Nishat, 2024). Without these word formation processes, language would struggle to keep up with cultural and societal changes, limiting people’s communication ability. By continually expanding

words, it can generate new words using the process of word formation (Booij, 2012).

Depending on the language, the word formation process can be different. Compounding is one of the most widely used methods for creating new words by combining two words or more in a different form that can create new meanings. It can be done if two or more morphemes or a simpler lexeme are joined as a word that has a new meaning based on the context of the sentence in which it appears (Taqiyyudin & Moehkardi, 2023). Typically, compounding is defined as the combination of two constituents, one of which acts as the head and the other word as the modifier. The meaning of a compound word is formed from the semantic relation between the two constituents (Booij, 2023). Compound words are built upon two or more lexical elements (i.e., roots, stems, or words) to accommodate a difficult concept to convey in a single word (Libben et al., 2020).

Understanding the forms and meanings of the compound word is not easy. In English, the compound can be formed by combining noun+noun (for example, 'newspaper'), noun+verb (for example, 'rainfall'), and adjective+noun (for example, 'blackboard') (Kalsum et al., 2021). In Indonesian, there are possible combinations of lexemes, for instance, noun+verb (*kapal terbang*, airplane), adjective+noun (*kuning langsung*, olive skin), noun+noun (*daya juang*, fighting power), and so on (Nugraha et al., 2022). Both languages use compounding to create new words by combining two or more lexemes. English compounds tend to favor a right-headed structure, while Indonesian compounds often have a left-headed structure and are more frequently written as separate words. Compound words differ from phrases, where compound words are morphological processes that form a new unity of meaning (Simpfen, 2021).

Japanese also has a word-formation process through compounding. The word class at the end of a compound word in Japanese affects the word class as a whole compound (Kageyama & Kishimoto, 2016). For instance, the combination of the noun *kuchi* 'mouth' with the verb *hashiru* 'run' results in the compound word *kuchibashiru*, which becomes a verb. The noun *kuchi* is combined with the adjective *katai* "hard" into *kuchigatai*, which is an adjective. Aside from derivation, compounding in Japanese can also have phonological changes. There are particular theories of the interaction between morphology and phonology (Bell, et al., 2021). When observing the compound *kuchigatai* formed, the front consonant sound in the lexeme *katai* transforms to *-gatai* after merging. This morphophonemic process is known as *rendaku* or sequential voicing, which is a morphophonological alternation found in compound words, where the initial obstruent of the second element becomes voiced (Salingre, 2020).

Compounding in Japanese can result in different meanings from those of the individual words or constituent parts (Sudipa, 2022). Understanding the meaning of words created by compounding is not

easy. For example, the compound word *hondana* "bookshelves" is a combination of the words *hon* "book" which provides additional information, and *tana* "cupboard" which acts as the head. It is resulting in the meaning "cupboard that can be filled with books". However, the compound *kuchihashiru* has the meaning "to blurt out". The word *kuchi* "mouth" is still related to the meaning of the compound, but the latter element, *hashiru* "run" is not related to the meaning of the compound as a whole. As a result, a more thorough examination of the compound is required, especially in Japanese.

This research analyzes the forms and meanings of Japanese compound words. Given a large number of compound words in Japanese, this research limits compound words formed with the body parts of the lexeme "mouth". Humans move their bodies every day to move, work, and do things, so compound words formed from words derived from human body parts are more numerous and varied (Pragasuri et al., 2020). The use of compound words is not only found in daily conversation but also appears in articles posted on the mass media. In Japanese the word 'mouth' can be written using kanji 口 or *kuchi* and is frequently used to form compound words. It has the literal meaning of 'mouth' and can also represent the meaning of 'entry point', 'opening', or 'origin'. Examples are *kuchizuke* 'kiss', *kuchibeni* 'lipstick', *kuchibue* 'whistle', and so on.

As stated previously, the lexeme "mouth" is often used as constituents in compounds. In English for example, the combination of the compound "foul mouth" means a tendency to use bad language and conveys a behavioral characteristic, giving an idiomatic and metaphorical meaning. Similarly, in Indonesian, the compound *mulut ember* (literally bucket mouth) metaphorically describes someone who likes to divulge other people's secrets. This phenomenon is also present in Japanese compounds. When combining the lexeme *kuchi* "mouth" with other lexemes, the resulting compounds can diverge significantly from the literal meaning of "mouth". For instance, the compound *kuchiguruma* "car mouth" has the metaphorical meaning of 'using flattery to manipulate someone'. The compound *kuchiguruma* shows an example of how Japanese compounds can carry metaphorical meanings that are not directly predictable from their elements. By analyzing compounds formed with the lexeme *kuchi* "mouth", this research can reveal how Japanese uses body-related lexemes to express both literal and abstract concepts.

Studies on Japanese compound forms have been conducted in the past. Lensun et al. (2023) conducted a research on Japanese compound word formation. They focused on the formation of compound nouns using data from Japanese textbooks, magazines, and newspapers. Their analysis has resulted in four compound word structures: noun + noun, noun + verb, verb + noun, and verb + verb. For meanings, they found that one noun can explain another (e.g., *takara* 'treasure' + *shima* 'island' = *takarajima* 'treasure

island') or form a new meaning (e.g., *mado* 'window' + *kuchi* 'mouth' = *madoguchi* 'ticket window'). There are also phonological changes in the process of forming the word. While Lensun's research analyzes the forms of Japanese compound nouns, this research aims to fill the gap by analyzing the forms of compound adjectives and verbs while also focusing on compounds formed using lexeme *kuchi*. Since compounds with lexeme *kuchi* often have meanings that diverge significantly from literal interpretations, analyzing these specific formations could provide a deeper understanding.

Pradhana et al (2023) also studied Japanese compound words in their research. Their research classified various formations of compound words (*fukugougo*) formed by morpheme *te* or hands in Japanese. Using a corpus from dictionaries, the research analyzes 200 lexemes through a qualitative descriptive approach. Based on the results, morpheme *te* 'hands' can be combined with verbs, nouns, and adjectives to form compounds with different meanings, such as 'person', 'place', or 'body part.' It depends on the context and the kanji reading. The similarity with this research is that both studied compound words formed using the body parts in Japanese. The research gap is in the types of body parts analyzed by Pradhana et al. (2023), which is morpheme *te* 'hands', while this research examines the compound word formed by lexeme *kuchi* 'mouth'. This research aims to fill the gap by analyzing compounds formed with other body parts lexemes and how *kuchi* "mouth" functions differently from *te* 'hands' in the Japanese compound.

Mangkerene et al (2023) studied the formation of Japanese compounds with the lexeme 'eye.' In Japanese, the lexeme 'eye' can be written in kanji 目 that can be read as 'me' or 'moku'. The theory used in their research is compound theory. Based on their findings, 19 data of Japanese compounds are constructed with 'eye' components. Both 'me' and 'moku' can be positioned at the beginning or the end of the compound. There are three types of form constructed with the lexeme 'eye' which are noun compound, verb compound, and adverb compound. Mangkerene's research and this research analyze how Japanese compounds are formed and used body parts as one of the lexemes. Mangkerene focused on the body parts 'eye' whereas this research analyzed compounds formed using the body parts 'mouth.' Similar to previous literature, this research aims to fill the gap by focusing on different body parts lexemes in Japanese to examine their structural forms and metaphorical meanings.

METHODS

This research is descriptive qualitative, which produces descriptive data in the form of written words that can be observed. The data source is from the Japanese language news website Asahi Shinbun Digital, a Japanese newspaper that has been expanded into a television, radio, and internet media outlet. Asahi

Shinbun Digital contains various of the latest Japanese news articles. This data source is chosen because it provides a wide range of Japanese phrases, resulting in many uses of compounds.

The data collection in this research utilized the observation method, which involves observing the use of words to be analyzed (Sudaryanto, 2015). The observation method is used in conjunction with a note-taking technique by writing the data that is relevant to this study (Sudaryanto, 2015). The data is presented sentences using Japanese compound words with *kuchi* found in news articles. Moreover, the data is collected, identified, and categorized according to the research problem. Using this method allows for gathering information directly and accurately from its source.

The distribution method, which refers to the associated language, is then used to analyze the data that had been gathered (Sudaryanto, 2015). The distribution method is used because it provides context that can clarify the meaning and relationship between the elements in a compound. This method is accompanied by expansion techniques, wherein specific components are used to expand the lingual unit. In this case, the sentences were expanded by lexeme *kuchi* based on the compounding theory (Kageyama & Kishimoto, 2016; Katamba & Stonham, 2018). This method takes advantage of the researcher's mental sorting abilities, which determine the form of compound words as compound nouns, compound verbs, and compound adjectives. Furthermore, the meaning of compound words is classified as the endocentric or exocentric compound.

Compound words differ from phrases because the words are formed from two basic constituents that can be categorized as nouns, verbs, or adjectives (Katamba & Stonham, 2018). The word class of a compound word is affected by the word attached at the end. Compound words in Japanese are divided into three types, namely *fukugoumeishi* (compound nouns), *fukugoudoushi* (compound verbs), and *fukugoukeiyoushi* (compound adjectives) (Kageyama & Kishimoto, 2016). For example, lexeme *kuchi* 'mouth' as a noun can be combined with the verb *hashiru* 'run' to become *kuchibashiru* 'to blurt out' and function as a verb.

When constructing a compound word, sometimes a phonological change can occur. This phenomenon is called *rendaku* which refers to a morphophonemic phenomenon in Japanese. In a prototypical case, an alternating morpheme appears with an initial voiceless obstruent as a word on its own or as the initial element in a compound but with an initial voiced obstruent as the second element in a two-element compound (Vance, 2021). There is a phonological change in compound *kuchibashiru* 'to blurt out' which the first consonant of *hashiru* 'run' changed from fricative /h/ to plosive /b/ became *-bashiru*.

Furthermore, compound words can be classified depending on the presence of the head (Katamba & Stonham, 2018). Compound words with constituents

that function as syntactic cores and have a tendency for semantic relations between core and non-core are called endocentric, while compound words that do not have constituents that function as cores and have difficulty interpreting the meaning from their constituents are called exocentric. This agrees with Beratha (2023), who stated that there are two types of compound words. First is compound words that are joined together and may have completely different meanings from the compound called exocentric. Second is a compound word that carries the meaning combination of the words, which is endocentric. This type is usually denoted by the head found in the rightmost part. For example, an endocentric compound like *hirokuchi* ‘wide mouth’ consists of the elements *hiroi* ‘wide’ and *kuchi* ‘mouth’, where the meaning is directly related to its parts. In contrast, an exocentric compound like *kuchisabishii* (literally ‘lonely mouth’) has a metaphorical meaning: ‘longing to have or put something in one’s mouth’.

After the data is analyzed, the analysis results are presented utilizing formal and informal methods. The formal method provides the results of data analysis using symbols or tables, while the informal method is provided in ordinary words (Sudaryanto, 2015). The formal and informal methods are used because they are compatible with qualitative research in presenting the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the results, 120 compound word data are formed the lexeme *kuchi*. Most compounds found using lexeme *kuchi* are noun class with 108 data, adjectives class with 9 data, and verbs class with 3 data. The results are divided into two subsections: forms of compound words and meanings analysis. The forms were analyzed using Japanese morphology theory (Kageyama & Kishimoto, 2016). The meanings of the compound word were analyzed using the compound classification theory based on the appearance of the head (Katamba & Stonham, 2018). It can be summarized that Japanese compound words have several characteristics.

First, Japanese compounds combine two lexemes, namely inflective forms (adjective and verb) and non-inflective (noun) forms. It can also be a combination of different word classes, such as noun and verb (N+V), verb and noun (V+N), adjective and noun (A+N), and so on. The final lexeme tends to determine the word class of the compound word.

Second, *Rendaku* is a phenomenon in Japanese compounds that can change phonologically in the final vowel of the initial lexeme and the initial consonant of the final lexeme.

Third, if the initial constituent is an inflective form, it can change morphologically, such as removing the suffix *-i* in adjectives and changing verbs to an infinitive form.

By its types of class words, compound words by

lexeme *kuchi* consist of three types: compound nouns, compound adverbs, and compound adjectives.

Compound nouns are a combination of lexemes whose constituent at the end is a noun and functions as a noun in the sentence. Even though the initial constituent is a different word class, the result is a compound noun. The compound noun with lexeme ‘mouth’ has the combinations of noun + noun, verb + noun, and adjective + noun (see Table 1). Compound nouns have the most data and variations.

Table 1 Compound Nouns

| No | Lexeme 1 | Lexeme 2 | Compound |
|----|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Hige</i> (N) | <i>Kuchihige</i> (N) |
| 2. | <i>Kizu</i> (N) | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Kizuguchi</i> (N) |
| 3. | <i>Amai</i> (Adj) | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Amakuchi</i> (N) |
| 4. | <i>Muda</i> (Adj) | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Mudaguchi</i> (N) |
| 5. | <i>Iru</i> (V) | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Iriguchi</i> (N) |

There are several examples of compound noun usage in a sentence followed by the analysis of the compound.

- (1) *Seito wa masuku no shita ni kuchihige o kakusu to iu semete mo no teikō o misete ita.*

‘The students showed at least some resistance by hiding their **mustaches** under their masks.’

Data (1) shows that the combination of the lexeme *kuchi* and *hige* forms a compound word *kuchihige* that means “mustache”. Lexeme *kuchi* means “mouth” and *hige* means “beard” or “facial hair”. Since both lexemes are nouns, *kuchihige* acts as a compound noun. Both lexemes remain in the same form after the combining process as compound words. In this compound, the *kuchi* “mouth” element acts as the initial constituent of the compound. The compound word *kuchihige* refers to the hair that grows above the upper lips, or mustache.

- (2) *Fukaku sasu to kizuguchi wa hirogaru.*

‘If you stab it deeply, **the wound** will widen.’

There are other compounds with the formula noun + noun found. For instance, in data (2) there is usage of *kizuguchi*, which combines the noun *kizu* ‘wound’ and *kuchi* ‘mouth’. The element *kuchi* ‘mouth’ is located in the second constituent of this compound. In addition, the voiceless consonant /k/ in the *kuchi* has changed to the voiced consonant /g/ in the *-guchi* after being combined with the initial lexeme. When combining two words, the front word is influenced by the back sound, while the front sound of the back word changes. This phenomenon is called *rendaku*. The compound *kizuguchi* means “an opening of a wound”.

- (3) *Kodomo-tachi wa tokusei no amakuchi karē ya shokuryōhin nado o egao de uketoru.*
 ‘Children receive special **sweet taste** curry and groceries with smiles.’

In data (3), the compound word *amakuchi* is formed by combining the adjective *amai* “sweet” and the noun *kuchi* “mouth.” The compound word *amakuchi* is a combination of an adjective and a noun, which results in a compound noun. In its construction, the adjective *amai* became *ama-* after combining it with the lexeme *kuchi*, resulting in the compound noun *amakuchi*. This compound describes something (especially food) with a “sweet taste”.

- (4) *Hotondo mudaguchi o iu koto wa naku, asaban ya kitaku-ji no aisatsu gurai de shita.*
 ‘We hardly ever had **chatter**, just said hello in the morning and evening, and when we came home.’

The compound word *mudaguchi* is a combination of the lexemes *muda* ‘useless’ and *kuchi* ‘mouth’. Similar to data (3), this compound is formed by combining adjectives and nouns. However, since it ends with *kuchi* as a noun, the compound word is classified as a noun. *Mudaguchi* means ‘useless or boring conversation, chatter’.

- (5) *Kōen no mawari ni 6-kasho no iriguchi o setchi shita ga, nagai retsu ga dekita.*
 ‘Six **entrances** were set up around the park, but there were long lines.’

There is the usage of the compound word *iriguchi* “entrance” in this data (6), which is a combination of the verb *iru* “to enter” and the noun *kuchi* “mouth”. *Iriguchi* is a compound word that combines a verb and a noun resulting in a noun as a whole. In its construction, the verb *iru* changes to the infinite form *iri-* then combined with the lexeme *kuchi* becomes the compound noun *iriguchi*. This compound refers to doors or gates that people or objects can enter.

Table 2 Compound Adjectives

| No | Lexeme 1 | Lexeme 2 | Compound |
|----|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Oshii</i> (ADJ) | <i>Kuchioshii</i> (ADJ) |
| 2. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Katai</i> (ADJ) | <i>Kuchigatai</i> (ADJ) |
| 3. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Sabishii</i> (ADJ) | <i>Kuchisabishii</i> (ADJ) |
| 4. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Kitanai</i> (ADJ) | <i>Kuchigitanai</i> (ADJ) |
| 5. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Heta</i> (ADJ) | <i>Kuchibeta</i> (ADJ) |

Next, compound adjectives are compound words formed from a combination of other adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs that function as adjectives

(see Table 2). Adjectives in Japanese or *keiyoushi* are a word class that can undergo various conjugation changes at the end of the word similar to verbs. In Japanese, adjectives are classified into *i-keiyoushi* and *na-keiyoushi*. *I-keiyoushi* typically ends in *-i* and can undergo various conjugation changes, while *na-keiyoushi* does not change form but adds *-na* before a noun to modify its meaning (Sutedi, 2019). Based on the results, there are limited compound adjectives that can be constructed using the lexeme *kuchi*.

- (6) *Moji de tsutawaranai no ga kuchioshī ga, intonēshon ga heitan na noda.*
 ‘I am **annoyed** that the text does not convey this, but the intonation is flat.’

In data (6), there is the usage of the *kuchi* in the compound word *kuchioshī* “annoying”. This compound word is a combination of the noun *kuchi* “mouth” and the adjective *oshī* “regrettable”. As a result of using the adjective at the end, the compound word *kuchioshī* belongs to the adjective class. The meaning of compound *kuchioshi* is to convey the feeling of a person’s frustration over something that could not be attained.

Then, compound verbs are formed from combinations of lexemes that function as verbs as a whole (see Table 3). Although the lexeme *kuchi* was originally a noun, after going through compounding, it can be changed into a verb. This process happens because the constituent at the end is a verb.

Table 3 Compound Verbs

| No | Lexeme 1 | Lexeme 2 | Compound |
|----|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Komoru</i> (V) | <i>Kuchigomoru</i> (V) |
| 2. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Susamu</i> (V) | <i>Kuchizusamu</i> (V) |
| 3. | <i>Kuchi</i> (N) | <i>Hashiru</i> (V) | <i>Kuchihashiru</i> (V) |

- (7) *Odayakana hazu no jūmin no ōku ga, saishū shobun-ba mondai ni tsuite wa kuchigomoru.*
 ‘Many of the residents, who are supposed to be calm, **mumble** about the final disposal site issue.’

In data (7) the compound *kuchigomoru*, which means mumble is formed by combining the noun *kuchi* “mouth” and the verb *komoru* “seclude”. Since the part at the end of the compound is a verb, the compound *kuchigomoru* is an example of a compound verb. *Komoru* also undergoes a phonetic change in the consonant sound /k/ to /g/ after being combined with the noun *kuchi*. The compound *kuchigomoru* conveys the person’s hesitation while speaking or mumbling due to nervousness or uncertainty.

The meaning of compound words is formed from the semantic relationship between the two

constituents (Booij, 2023). Compound words can be divided into endocentric and exocentric structures based on the existence of the head. By its meanings, the lexeme *kuchi* can be translated into “mouth, opening, gate, and speech”. Compound words formed with lexeme *kuchi* consist of the endocentric (headed) and exocentric (headless) compound. The following describes the meanings of Japanese compound words formed from the lexeme *kuchi* in more detail.

Endocentric compounds are compound words consisting of a head in its structure. The characteristics of the endocentric compound have a lexeme that functions as a syntactic core; syntactic properties of the head category spread throughout the compound. The head is on the right, and there is a tendency for the semantic relationship between the head and the non-head to be modified (Katamba, 2018). Most Japanese compounds tend to use the right-hand head rule, namely the head is in the right-hand constituent (Kageyama & Kishimoto, 2016). Endocentric compound words are made up of two or more words combined to create a new meaning. The compound word's overall meaning is related to the last constituent, with the first constituent serving as a complement. Table 4 shows the list of compounds followed by the use of the endocentric compound found in Asahi Shinbun Digital newspaper articles.

Table 4 Endocentric Compounds

| No | Compound | Lexeme 1 | Lexeme 2 |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Kuchizuke</i> 'to kiss' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Tsukeru</i> 'to attach' |
| 2. | <i>Kuchiyakusoku</i> 'promise' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Yakusoku</i> 'promise' |
| 3. | <i>Kuchibue</i> 'whistle' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Fue</i> 'whistle' |
| 4. | <i>Kuchihige</i> 'beard' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Hige</i> 'beard' |
| 5. | <i>Kuchigenka</i> 'argument' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Kenka</i> 'argument' |
| 6. | <i>Kuchiurusai</i> 'nagging' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Urusai</i> 'nagging' |
| 7. | <i>Kadoguchi</i> 'gate door' | <i>Kado</i> 'gate' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'door' |
| 8. | <i>Kizuguchi</i> 'open wound' | <i>Kizu</i> 'wound' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'opening' |
| 9. | <i>Hirokuchi</i> 'wide mouth' | <i>Hiroi</i> 'wide' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' |
| 10. | <i>Nigeguchi</i> 'escape door' | <i>Nigeru</i> 'escape' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'door' |

- (8) *Hirokuchi de teire mo kantan to iu.*
'The **wide opening** also makes it easy to clean.'

In data (8), the compound word *hirokuchi* is a combination of the lexeme *hiroi* and *kuchi*. The lexeme *hiroi* is an adjective that means “wide” and

the noun *kuchi* refers to “an opening.” Based on its structure, *hiroguchi* is a right-headed compound where the noun *kuchi* is the head, while the adjective *hiroi* is the modifier describing the type of something. The compound *hirokuchi* means “wide opening,” in this case, it is used to describe a kettle. *Hirokuchi* is an endocentric compound because the whole meaning is centered on the noun *kuchi* “mouth” as the head and *hiroi* “wide” as the modifier.

- (9) *Kuchizuke o suru hito mo ita.*
'Some people were **kissing** each other.'

In data (9), there is another example of an endocentric compound. The compound *kuchizuke* consists of lexeme *kuchi* and *tsukeru*. The noun *kuchi* means “mouth” and *tsukeru* is a verb that means “to attach”. *Kuchizuke* is also an example of the right-headed compound, where *tsukeru* refers to the act of attaching something, and *kuchi* indicates that something. As a whole compound, *kuchizuke* means “attaching with the mouth, kiss.” Since the compound meanings are still centered on the action of attaching something and involving the mouth, it is an endocentric compound.

Exocentric compounds are compound words that do not have a head in their construction. In this case, no lexeme functions as a head that is modified by other lexemes. It does not have aspects that function as semantic heads that modify non-head aspects. The meaning of compound words can become unclear. It is not easy to calculate the meaning of an exocentric compound word from its constituents (Katamba & Stonham, 2018). Japanese exocentric compounds have metaphorical meanings. This means exocentric compounds have special meanings that cannot be found in the literal meaning of their respective constituents (Kageyama & Kishimoto, 2016). Exocentric compound words result from a metaphorical interpretation of the combined words (Lusekelo, 2019). For example, Indonesian compounds *kaki gunung* and *kaki meja* have analogies like the human foot. Then, in English compound, snail mail is a kind of mail that moves to look like a snail, and a windmill is a kind of mill that is activated by wind (Loe, 2019).

A metaphor is a meaning that compares one thing with another thing (Khkalay & Turabi, 2019). Metaphors can be divided into three types: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor, and ontological metaphor. Structural metaphors are concepts that are formed metaphorically through the use of other concepts. Moreover, structural metaphors can be defined as metaphors that express abstract concepts in concrete. Orientational metaphors relates to space and places that can be determined through human physical experience, such as up-down, inside-out, front-back, and so on. Ontological metaphor transforms an event, activity, idea, and emotion into an entity. Table 5 shows the usage of exocentric compounds found in Asahi Shinbun Digital newspaper articles.

Table 5 Endocentric Compounds

| No | Compound | Lexeme 1 | Lexeme 2 |
|-----|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Kuchiguruma</i> 'to be deceived' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Kuruma</i> 'car' |
| 2. | <i>Kuchibashiru</i> 'blurted out' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Hashiru</i> 'to run' |
| 3. | <i>Kuchioshii</i> 'annoying' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Oshii</i> 'regrettable' |
| 4. | <i>Kuchiatari</i> 'taste' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Ataru</i> 'to hit' |
| 5. | <i>Kuchigatai</i> 'discreet' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Katai</i> 'hard' |
| 6. | <i>Kuchisabishii</i> 'want to eat' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Sabishii</i> 'lonely' |
| 7. | <i>Kuchigitanai</i> 'foul-mouthed' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' | <i>Kitanai</i> 'dirty' |
| 8. | <i>Hatarakiguchi</i> 'employment' | <i>Hataraku</i> 'to work' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' |
| 9. | <i>Mudaguchi</i> 'chatter' | <i>Muda</i> 'futility' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' |
| 10. | <i>Madoguchi</i> 'receptionist' | <i>Mado</i> 'window' | <i>Kuchi</i> 'mouth' |

- (10) *Sukunakutomo boku wa sono yō na kashikoku shinken'na hito-tachi no kuchiguruma ni notte, kōkai nado shitaku wanai.*

'At least I don't want to be persuaded by such smart and serious people and then regret it later.'

In data (10), the compound word *kuchiguruma* is formed by the combination of lexemes *kuchi* "to say" and *kuruma* "car." When both lexemes are combined into a compound, their respective meanings do not display the compound meaning as a whole. This means *kuchiguruma* is an exocentric compound because it produces the metaphorical meanings "to be persuaded" or "to be deceived by clever words". This metaphor is a structural metaphor, in which the words spoken by someone are compared to a moving car. This compound word is also often followed by the sentence pattern *ni noru* 'ride (a vehicle)' which shows as if people are riding other people's words like they are riding in a car.

- (11) *Renshū-go ni sensei dōshi de hanashiteru toki, boku ga totemo hidoi kotoba o kuchibashitte shimatta.*

'When the teachers were talking to each other after practice, I blurted out something really bad.'

In data (11), the compound word *kuchibashiru* is a combination of lexeme *kuchi* "mouth" and *hashiru* "to run." Based on its meaning, the compound word *kuchibashiru* has an idiomatic meaning. The lexeme *kuchi* "mouth" refers to acts of saying something,

and then *hashiru* "to run" indicates doing something quickly and cannot be easily stopped. The compound *kuchihashiru* means "to say something carelessly" or "to blurt out." The compound *kuchibashiru* refers to speaking without control, which is not explicitly mentioned in the two constituents. Thus, *kuchibashiru* is an exocentric compound.

- (12) *Sono aima no kuchisabishii toki ni kigaru ni tsumamemasu.*

'You can easily snack on it when you feel like eating something in between meals.'

In data (12), the compound *kuchisabishii* is formed by the lexeme *kuchi* "mouth" and *sabishii* "lonely". The compound word *kuchisabishii* literally means "lonely mouth," but metaphorically, it means "the desire to eat or eat something". The adjective *sabishii* refers to the concept of "loneliness" in the *kuchi* 'mouth.' In this instance, *kuchisabishii* depicts the desire to eat something not because one is hungry but because one's mouth feels "lonely." Therefore, the compound word *kuchisabishii* has an ontological metaphorical meaning indicated by the emotional state of humans expressed through physical sensations in the mouth.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study of Japanese compound words with the lexeme "mouth" reveals a variety of forms and meanings of these compounds. Based on their forms, there are three types: compound verbs with the combination of noun+verb, compound adjectives with the combination of noun+adjectives, and compound nouns with the combination of noun+noun, adverb+noun, and verb+noun. There are two different types of meanings related to compound words that contain the lexeme *kuchi* which are endocentric and exocentric compounds. An endocentric compound's meaning can be predicted from the meanings of its constituents, particularly the modifier and head. However, the exocentric compound's meanings cannot be seen by its constituents and become unpredictable. The majority of the exocentric compounds have metaphorical meanings. This study is limited to a single Japanese lexeme *kuchi* "mouth", which narrows the focus of analysis. This limits the generalization of the findings to other lexemes and may not represent the full range of variations or exceptions present in the Japanese, especially in the compound.

This research provides more insights into morphosemantic studies in Japanese, particularly explaining how morphological transformations and metaphorical meanings interact within compound structures. Future research could also explore compound words formed with other body parts in Japanese or other languages to offer a comparative perspective on how body parts are used literally

and metaphorically. Additionally, a cross-linguistic study comparing Japanese compounds with those in other languages could provide further insights into typological differences in compounding strategies and metaphorical language in other cultures. Compounding provides an intriguing basis for studying the formation of words and cultural expression in a language. Studying diverse lexemes to form compounds can provide insight into the phonetic, semantic, and historical layers that form these combinations of lexical units.

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