

**THE NEWEST TRENDS IN WORD-FORMATION AS A
RESPONSE TO CURRENT SOCIETY REQUESTS (THE
EXAMPLE OF JAPAN)**

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Abstract: *The paper deals with the newest word-formation processes of the Japanese language, with the help of which the language adapts to the challenges of modern society. The paper is concerned with the following aspects: 1) morphological and lexical-syntactic methods of word formation that help to verbalize the category of political correctness as an important component of a civilized society; 2) the stylistic potential of the affixation method of the word-formation, through which the speakers create colloquialisms of pejorative or petty coloration; 3) the models of hybrid word formation with borrowed English components, coming to Japanese because of the understanding of the English element as something “fashionable” and “modern”; 4) the tendency of abbreviation of language units fulfilling the purpose of acceleration of communication tempo.*

Keywords: Japanese language, morphological method of word formation, the category of political correctness, pejorative affixes, hybrid word formation, abbreviation.

The modern society puts forward new requirements for the language used by. Accordingly, the language responds to the newest challenges of society by enriching its vocabulary, which occurs at the expense of the word-building potential of the language. The Japanese linguist Yonekava Akihiko considers that the main reasons for the emergence of new “fashionable” words are: social (for example, if there were no words in the language to denote or ridicule a particular situation or custom in a society, then, when a suitable word appears, it immediately becomes “fashionable”, and it is picked up by the mass media), psychological (for example, the broad masses catch a word that was heard from the celebrities, or the reluctance to lag behind the usage of a new word already used by others), linguistic (the word becomes popular due to its derivational potential, the interesting original structure, meaning and wide possibilities to use in everyday communication), linguistic-perceptual (interesting and pleasant sounding)¹. The challenges of the globalized

¹ 米川明彦, *新語と流行語* (東京: 南雲堂, 1989, p. 59-88.

society require language to accelerate the communication tempo, representation in the language the popularity of American culture and its newest ethical postulates. However against the background of insinuating American cultural markers into the national languages, the desire of the speakers to the originality of their own speech is observed, so that it stands out from the ignorant masses. All these processes are served by the modern word-formation. As an example, we took word-formation processes in the Japanese language because it is, on the one hand, sufficiently isolated from other languages without having closely related languages, and therefore, on its material, it is possible to observe independent, not imposed by neighboring languages processes; however, on the other hand, being the language of the US allied state it cannot but absorb the share of American culture, which is manifested in the word-making level as well.

Materials and methods

The following groups of contemporary Japanese vocabulary were the subject of the study: complex words containing morphemes 士 / 員 / 者, neologisms-euphemisms, colloquialisms containing affixes つぽ / つこ / くそ / ばか / いけ etc, hybrid Japanese-English complex words consisting of either English basis and Japanese affixes or vice-versa, as well as hybrid composites, and abbreviations included into the vocabulary of Japanese colloquialisms 「日本語俗語辞書」. The above mentioned units were studied on the base of both quantitative and qualitative approach, the first one to be used to find out the potential of abbreviation in formation of contemporary Japanese colloquialisms and the second one to present the nuances and details of the phenomena of political correctness in Japanese, stylistic word-formation as well as the nature of hybrid complexes. The main issue we are studying using qualitative methods is to understand the reasons of growing popularity of above mentioned vocabulary among native Japanese speakers lying in the latest trends of the modern Japanese society. Postulating the correlation between latest processes in word-formation and the shifts in society leads us to the social semiotic approach and multimodality giving an opportunity to interpret word-formation processes as socially shaped and connected with both culture tradition and global trends.

Results and discussion

Expression of political correctness at the word-formation level. Politically correct affixes.

The category of political correctness, undoubtedly, is one of the most urgent in the modern civilized society that has come to comprehend the inhumanity of discrimination and insult of personality, and it is not surprising that processes of displacement the incorrect linguistic units with their neutral counterparts began to appear in the languages of the world. According to the Oxford Dictionary, “political correctness is the avoidance of forms of expressions or actions that are perceived as those that can exclude, isolate or offend groups of socially disadvantaged or discriminated people”². Olena Kapyurova adds that the basis of political correctness is the decoding of speech by signs of anti-racism, ecology, tolerant attitude towards national and sexual minorities, and the fight against AIDS³. Oita Akihiko, a former director and producer of the Japanese broadcasting company “NHK”, now living in the USA, says that political correctness implies adequate respect for race, gender, religion, and other characteristics of the interlocutor in interpersonal relationships. If you translate this term into Japanese, it will be 「政治的な正しさ」. Nevertheless, it should be understood, first of all, as the “neutrality without any discrimination”⁴. The growth of the importance of the category of political correctness naturally causes changes in the vocabulary of the language, and the word-building level is one of the first responding to the need to create new politically correct units. Creation of new words, that would meet the requirements of society in the latest euphemisms, occurs in several methods. The simplest is borrowing from the English derivation model, for example, if in English the discriminatory component of gender-defective complex words such as *fireman* is replaced by neutral, receiving *fireperson*, then the Japanese word with the loaned component マン can undergo the same substitution: 営業マン *employee of the sales department* (trade + man) – 営業パーソン (trade + person), サラリーマン *employee of the company* (salary + man) – サラリーパーソン (salary +

² Political Correctness: English. Oxford Living Dictionaries. Available at: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/political_correctness

³ O. Kapyurova. “Realization of the Concept “Political Correctness” in the Discourse of Mass-Media”, in *Movni i kontseptual’ni kartyny svity*, 2013, vol. 43, no. 2., p. 137-146.

⁴ 老田章彦, “アメリカ人、差別批判が怖くてうかつに口を開けず”, *Japan Business Press*. Available at: <http://jbpres.ismedia.jp/articles/-/47893>.

person)⁵. Gender inequality becomes a precondition for lexical substitutions in order to comply with political correctness also in the vocabulary of the Chinese origin, activating **the affixation word-formation**. Some hieroglyphs in the name of the profession or occupation indicate gender, as 夫 / 男 (male) and 女 / 婦 (female gender) do. In order to avoid discriminatory speech, words with such morphemes must be replaced by neutral (without reference to the employee's gender): 漁夫 → 漁民, 漁船員 *fisher*, 鉞夫 → 鉞山労働者, 鉞員 *miner*, 線路工夫 → 保線員, 保線区員 *railroad inspector*, 潜水夫 → 潜水作業員 *diver, frogman*; 看護婦 → 看護師 or 看護師 *nursing staff*, 保母 → 保育士 *person caring for children*. These examples allow us to list the politically correct suffixes for the designation of a person that become widely used in today's affixation word-formation, satisfying the requirements of modern society in denoting respect for the individual and the avoidance of discrimination: -員, -者, -士. The replacement of morphemes may be due to the desire to avoid not only gender discrimination, but also contempt for the professional activity of the person, particularly, concerning the names of professions that contain the element of disrespect for someone else's work and people who are engaged in it. It is understandable that in modern Japanese democratic society, such a nomination is unacceptable and subject to a mandatory correction, which is actively carried out at the expense of word-building means. In particular, the tinge of disrespect and obsolescence is attributable to many lexical units with the suffix -屋, and therefore it is proposed to conduct a series of adequate replacements involving the above-mentioned politically correct affixes on the identification of the person: 土建屋 *constructor* → 土建業者 *builder, developer*, 建設業者 *construction contractor*, 郵便屋 *letter carrier* → 郵便配達員 *postman, post worker*.

In the field of **word-compounding**, the model of the transformation of complex words with the replacement of a politically incorrect component into a neutral one is primarily typical for the words of Japanese origin. For instance, in 2007, the Scientific Association of Japanese Ichthyologists changed the names of some fish according to this model: オシザメ (literally: Deaf Shark) on チヒロザメ (Pseudotriakis microdon); メクラウナギ (literally: blind eel) on ヌタウナギ

⁵ For more detail see: K. Komisarov. "Political Correctness as a Category of Linguopragmatics (the Data of Modern Japanese)", in *Visnyk Kyiv's'koho natsional'noho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka. Skhidni moy i literatry*, 2017, vol. 1, no. 23, p. 19-28.

(Eptatretus). Some unwanted associations with people with disabilities have been avoided in such way.

As seen, an incorrect element of a word can be not only a morpheme with discriminatory subtext, but also a simple word as a component of a compound, which for obvious reasons is replaced by another. Thus, the incorrect component of the compound word 特殊学級 *special class* – 特殊 with the semantic “specific” (“not like all”) – was replaced by a neutral in 2006, resulting in the complex word 特別支援学級 *class with special support*. The word 痴呆症 meaning persistent cognitive impairment as a result of organic brain damage was replaced by 認知症 *disorder of intelligence, dementia* in 2004, but not all Japanese now know that this word is relatively new because of quick and successful assimilation in the language. Consequently, if this stage of social development requires reflection of equality in the language, then, of course, it is necessary to work on it, always remembering, however, that a single replacing one word with others will not solve the problem being just a starting point⁶.

However, not only the morphological method of word formation addresses the needs of society to make its speech civilized. The necessity of expressing the category of political correctness unexpectedly turns a non-typical for Japanese language **lexical-syntactic method** into an efficient method of word formation, with a help of which stable phrases that have a single non-segregated meaning, similar to simple words, are created. So, stable phrases are formed instead of Japanese words through euphemisation in order to avoid disregard for physical and mental defects of a person (shifting thus the accent from injury to non-freedom): かわ → 身体の不自由な人, めくら → 目の不自由な人, つんぼ → 耳の不自由な人, おし → 口の不自由な人, びっこ (ちんぼ, いざり) → 足の不自由な人 literally: *people with disabilities (of the body, eyes, ears, mouth, legs etc)*. Such cumbersome formations commence to function in speech as words.

Consequently, due to the potential of morphological (in particular, affixation and word formation) and lexical-syntactic methods of word formation, the Japanese language verbalizes the modern challenges of society regarding the necessity to avoid discrimination and offensive definitions. Particularly, by the instrumentality of using word-building

⁶ “ポリティカル・コレクトネスとは「言葉狩り」は絶対必要だろ!”, コラム / 性差別, ヨッセンス. Available at: <http://yossense.com/political-correctness>.

means, a shift of emphasis is achieved, for example, from illness to person, avoiding unwanted projection per person's gender, etc.

Creation of stylistically marked colloquialisms through instrumentality of emotionally-expressive affixes as fulfilling requirements for expressing the speaker's originality and peculiarity.

Modern society requires from a person to be not only civilized, but also interesting, unorthodox, because extraordinary individuals stand out against the background of others and have greater chances to success. One can also distinguish oneself by communicative behavior, original idiolect, which can be reached by means of word formation. As Petro Dudyk notes, an extremely important role in the expression of the most diverse lexical meanings that are inherent in words and in many combinations of words belongs to the means of word formation, especially affixes. The word-forming affix is both lexical, morphological, and stylistic phenomenon, since each suffix or prefix gives the semantics of the root part of a word either a completely new lexical meaning, or an additional and special meaning, which supplements, modifies what is expressed by the root part of the word⁷.

It is well-known that in modern Japanese, affixation is one of the most relevant methods in the system of spoken word-formation. The large group of colloquial affixes performs the important role in the formation of a typically oral vocabulary. By origin, the absolute majority of colloquial affixes in Japanese belong to genuine Japanese lexicon (*wago*). If we talk about the emotional load of such affixes, then it comes down to the following: 1) casual or day-to-day character, expressiveness; 2) the intensification of the basic semantics of words, which often leads to a reduction of the stylistic tone of expression; 3) petty coloration or humorous-ironic character; 4) pejorativeness.

The main feature of most casual affixes is their polyfunctionality. This is primarily manifested in the potential possibility of a number of suffixes to be used with a rather different emotional load. For example, the suffixes *-keko*, *-ppo* can give a shade of ease (隅っこ *a little corner*, 尾っぽ *ponytail*), subjective assessment (安っぽい *cheap-looking*) or light pejorativeness (ちびっ子 *tubby person*). Grammatical polyfunctionality is expressed in the usage of one and the same affix for creating words of different grammatical categories. Thus, affix *-keko* can serve as a suffix of nouns, adjectives and verbs; the affix *-kuso* forms nouns and adjectives, able to become both prefix and suffix (くそ真面目 *serious to boredom*, 下

⁷ P. Dudyk. *The Ukrainian Language Stylistics: a Study-Book*. Akademiya, Kyiv, 2005.

手くそ *inept*). Multifunctionality of Japanese affixes can be illustrated in usage of the suffix *-ko*, *-keko* which, while maintaining the touch of ease, may indicate either act, process, or case: 駆けっこ *running race*, 睨めっこ *who won't burst out laughing at a partner's funny face* (children's game). Such examples also include colloquial units associated with emptying (うんこ and しっこ) originating from the onomatopoeia. It should be noted that some of the above-mentioned suffixes sometimes are added to monosyllabic words in order to facilitate their perception by hearing: 根っこ *root, rootlet*, 実っこ *fruit, berry*, 尾っぽ *ponytail / a small tail*. Thus, this is rather not about the emotional but the colloquial tone and one can even say that using suffixes in such cases is not expressive, but purely pragmatic, but the general tone of the expression becomes soft and easy. Typical intensifying affixes include phonetically expressive suffixes of adjectives *-keko*, *-kekoshi* / *-kekashi*, *-ta*, which enhance the meaning and transform neutral vocabulary into colloquial (usually with an emphasis on a negative evaluative component): 危ない – 危なっかしい *dangerous*; いやな – いやっらしい *nasty*; にくい – にくっらしい *disgusting*; 貧乏 *poverty* – 貧乏っらしい *poor*; 長い *long* – 長っらしい *very long / long as one's arm*; うそ and うそっこ *lie*; 慣れる *get used to* – 慣れっこ *the usual thing*; 根 and 根っこ *root*. The above-mentioned suffix has a homonymous prefix *ko-* that is used either to soften the intonation and give a petty tone (憎らしい *nasty* – 小憎らしい *odious*, さっぱり *tidy* – 小ざっぱり *pure / virgin*) or to express contempt (面 *face* – 小面 *ugly face*, 役人 *officer* – 小役人 *petty officer*). Phonetic version of the prefix 小 is 小っ-, which transformed due to the phonetic phenomenon of *sokuon* (促音), acquiring phonetically expressive characteristics: 小っ恥ずかしい *be terribly ashamed* (小 – + 恥ずかしい *be ashamed*), 小っ酷く *cruelly* (小 – + 酷く *cruelly*), 小っぱりつける *to stick* (小 – + はりつける *to stick*). The words formed due to this method, are mostly colloquial and primarily inherent in oral speech.

Especially large group is formed by pejorative affixes that express a wide range of negative tones: from a little disdainful to brutal-shy, as shown below.

The suffixes *-keko*, *-ppo*, *-ppa*, *-chyō* are used to form nouns denoting people, usually giving a neutral and colloquial vocabulary some reduced-familiar style or a tone of slight neglect: ちびっ子 *a little child*, 娘っ子 *girlie*, ぐずっぺ *dawdler*.

The weak-pejorative affixes also refer to the suffixes for persons -*suke*, -*bo*-, -*ya*. Suffix -*suke* usually gives a neutral or spoken vocabulary a tone of slight neglect: 飲みすけ *soaker*, 寝坊すけ *sleepyhead*. Suffix -*to*: / -*mbo*: in the sense of “a person who is inclined to acts that are considered wrong or undesirable”, replaces the neutral suffix -*mono*, or is added to the words of different origins, giving them a familiar character and sarcastic tone: 忘れん坊 *absent-minded*, 朝寝坊 *sleepyhead*, 慌てん坊 *bustler*.

Among the expressive familiar affixes are semi-functional affixes *baka* and *kuso*, an intensive prefix *do*-, an abusive suffix -*me*. The affixes *baka* and *kuso* come from the full-fledged words “fool” and “shit” respectively, and as prefixes or suffixes are used with nouns or adjectives. Having a vivid expressiveness these intensify the meaning of neutral words and usually give them a pejorative color: くそ勉強 *cram*, くそ面白くない *not interesting at all*. The prefix *baka* can bring the meaning “excessive” to the neutral vocabulary and, accordingly, an element of emotional assessment without a tangible reduction in the tone of communication: ばか正直 *honest to senselessness*, ばか丁寧 *polite to aversion*, ばか高い *too expensive*. The prefix *kuso* is characterized by the introduction or intensification of the brutal-shy tone: くそ婆 *old bang*, くそ爺 *old fart*. It can be easily added to nouns and adjectives, intensifying the general expressiveness of the speech and giving the subject of the speech negative features. Such usage is typical for familiarly-lowered speech and, first of all, for male’s one. The prefix *do*- / *don*- signals the lowered tone of communication and enhances the expression of spoken vocabulary and not only: どん百姓 (poor) *peasants*; どん尻, どんじまい *the very end, the last place*. Suffix -*me* is always perceived as “abusive”, widely used with nouns and some personal pronouns, and transmits negative emotions aimed at the subject of speech, enhances the expression of swearwords: 馬鹿め *half-wit*, こいつめ *damned...* (functions as a pronoun of the 3rd person singular for lowered tonality of communication).

Considerable popularity in spoken language has recently acquired the pejorative prefix いけ- thus being recorded in the dictionary of modern colloquialisms⁸. It adds the meaning of “unpleasant”, “disgusting”, “annoying” to the original unit: いけしつこい *terribly obsessive*, いけしゃあしゃあ *horrible obsessive, unscrupulous shameless*, いけ好かない *hate, feel disgust*. But especially interesting is the homonymy of this

⁸ See: 日本語俗語辞書. Available at: <http://zokugo-dict.com>.

affix with another いけ – shortened basis of イケてる *be attractive* that brings to the original unit absolutely opposite meaning: イケメン *attractive man*, イケツラ *nice face*.

A group of humorous-petty and ironic affixes is represented by suffixes *-san / -sama, -chyan*, prefixes *o- / go-*, and also the suffix *-chikku*. Suffixes *-san / -sama, -chyan* can be used to mitigate the meaning of nouns that characterize a person, giving them a familiar, humorous, petty tone: おばかさん *silly Billy*, でぶさん *tubby*.

It turns out that even honorific prefixes *o- / go-* can transmit mockery, irony, if used in a some rethought meaning: お高くとまってる *high opinion about oneself*, かなり御熱い仲に見える *they obviously have a feeling of one another!*

The emotional load of such affixes, for the most part, implies an ease, enhanced expressiveness, intensification of the basic semantics of words, tenderness, humor, irony and pejorativeness. In this case, the active functioning of emotional and evaluating affixes is limited to the sphere of informal, intimate-familiar communication. For official and neutral speaking, the expression of evaluation in this way is not desirable, as it can lead to a significant decrease in stylistic tone.

Formation of hybrid linguistic units with “fashionable” English components to add to the speech some “stylish”, “youthful” marking.

John Dougill, James Stanlow and other researchers of modern Japanese note that the widespread use of English loans has become typical for the Japanese; these abound in the language of television, fashion magazines, advertising, the Internet, etc⁹. Such English borrowings are usually called “decorative English” or “ornamental English” because these do not carry semantic loading, but only create a modern / youthful / Western atmosphere and are used for mood and feelings, not value or information¹⁰. Accordingly, decorative English is kind of an answer to the psychological need for emotionality of the message, playing a role of, so to say, paralinguistic marker of emotion¹¹. Thus, the desire of the speakers to stand out, make their speech “more fashionable” and “stylish” pushes them to use loaned English units. The utmost manifestation of this trend

⁹ M. Ciubăncan. “Decorative English in Japan”, in *Concordia Discors vs Discordia Concors: Researches into Comparative Literature, Contrastive Linguistics, Translation and Cross-Cultural Strategies*. Inter Litteras Research Centre, STEFAN CEL MARE Publishing House, Suceava, 2012, p. 131; J. Dougill, “Japan and English as an alien language”, in *English Today* 93, 2008, vol. 24, no. 1, p. 20.

¹⁰ Ciubăncan, *Ibid*, p. 134-135; Dougill, *Ibid*.

¹¹ Ciubăncan, *Ibid*, p. 138.

at word-formation level is the creation of mixed, hybrid units consisting of both Japanese (*wago* or *kango*) and loaned English components. The analysis of examples of such units shows that the loaned components can be either word-formation morphemes, which are added to the genuine Japanese word, or the roots, which are supplemented with Japanese affixes. Let us overview each example in more detail.

The use of loaned affixes belonging to the lexical layer of *gairaigo* is undoubtedly the latest trend in the Japanese word formation, which emerged as a response to the globalization processes and the dominance of American pop-culture in the modern world. This type of affixation is quite exotic and alien to the Japanese derivational tradition, but functions actively, for example, in slang:

困リング *a problem*, 眠リング *sleepy* (suffix -**イング** derived from English -*ing*, by means of which nouns are created);

根拠レス *unreasonable*, 元気レス *sluggish* (suffix -**レス** derived from the English -*less* that introduces “lack” of something into the newly created unit);

乙女チック *maiden, chaste*, 漫画チック *comic* (suffix - **チック** derived from the English -*tic* forms adjectives of colloquial nature with humorous or ironic tones mainly on the basis of genuine Japanese vocabulary and *kango* words).

Affixation using non-typical affixes loaned from English reflects the desire of the speakers to make the word sound like English speech, make it “fashionable” and “youthful”.

However, the most widespread way to form hybrid language units is combining the loaned root and genuine Japanese word-formation suffix, through which a foreign word is adapted to the morphological features of the Japanese language and acquires grammatical characteristics of a particular part of speech.

Let us take a look at examples of such mixed units found on the pages of the fashion magazine “Cosmopolitan Japan” and in the texts of popular songs by MAGIC BOYZ, AISHA, Idol College: チョイスして, ストックして, ケアすれば, カバーする, ミックスした, トライした, Flyしたい (all verbs are derived from a foreign word by adding to it the verb suffix **する** according to Japanese grammar); lady**の**, daddy**の** (the formation of generic case from foreign nouns with the help of the Japanese case formant **の**); クリーンな, フィットな, セクシーな, ナチュラルな, キュートな, エレガントな, ピュアな, ラフな (formation of the semi-predicative adjective on the basis of a foreign-

language adjective according to the rules of Japanese grammar); MAXに, イージーに, スピーディに (formation of an adverb from a borrowed one by adding Japanese formant に to it). Formation of hybrid units is also possible due to prefixing method and composition: 高ポイント, 超リアルな (derivation of the word using prefixation method by adding the Japanese prefix to the English word), ラブ運 (creating a new word from Japanese and English non-derived words by means of composition).

Such units can be found on the pages of the fashion magazine “Cosmopolitan Japan”, where the foreign-language element is always closely interwoven with the Japanese text, giving it a “fashionable” marking (as it belongs to the fashion magazine). Here are some examples of using hybrid words in magazine articles:

人気OVER40セレブ11人の、ヘルシー食生活を大調査！奇跡の若さ！年々若返っていくようなセレブたちは、どんな方法でスタイルをキープしているの？ – English-Japanese morphological hybrid language units セレブたち *celebrities* and キープしている *to keep*;

10頭身の美ボディを持つモデルの香川沙耶さんに、毎日のバスタイムでのフェイス&ボディケアについて質問！ – mixed language unit 美ボディ *a beautiful body* formed by a hybrid composition;

セクシーなことも、性的なことなかったんだ。頬と唇にピュアな血色感をプラス – hybrid linguistic units – semi-predicative adjectives セクシーな *sexual* and ピュアな *pure*, derived from loaned adjectives セクシー and ピュア with the addition of the Japanese suffix for semi-predicative adjectives;

フードマイスターの村山彩さんおすすめの、今すぐ買って常備しておきたいヘルシーおやつをご紹介。自分用にストックしておくもよし、フィットな友達へのギフトにとっても喜ばれるはず！ – the hybrid verb ストックして *to stock* (the borrowed base + Japanese verb suffix する for forming verbs from *kango*-nouns), as well as the semi-predicative adjective フィットな *fit* formed according to the rule described above;

オーダーメイドの「カスタムバービー人形」が超リアル！ – hybrid language unit 超リアル *super real*, formed from the foreign language basis リアル by means of prefixing.

Popular singers also like using “fashionable” mixed units, which is quite natural, because they seek as much popularity as possible, especially among young people, which do love everything “Western”:

エイ baby you know how we do

言わせないぜオレを誰々風？

門限あっても定めない限界

物差しじゃ計り知れないくらいFlyしたい？(the song of the group “Magic boyz”; hybrid verb Flyしたい);

生まれたての

ピュアな気持ち

指で触れて感じて (the song of the group “Idol College”; hybrid adjective ピュアな).

A slightly different mechanism for hybrid verbs formation exists in slang: here these are created mainly by adding Japanese verb formant -る to the borrowed basis (often abbreviated), which, unlike the above する, is typical not for *kango*-verbs, but for genuine Japanese verbs (*wago*):

タクる *to go by taxi* (shortened version of loaned タクシー + formant -る), マクる *to eat in McDonald's* (abbreviated version マクドナルド + formant -る), オケる *to go to karaoke* (shortening from カラオケ formed by cutting the first part of the word +る), コンパる *to be a sociable person* (from コンパニオン + る), ミスる *to make mistake* (ミステイク + る), ググる *to google* (Google + る), コピる *to copy* (コピー + る). The most well-known verb of this type, the use of which has already gone beyond the purely youth environment, is サボる *to skip* (formed from adding formant -る to the abbreviated form of サボタージュ). The newest hybrid verbs that enrich the lexicon of the youth should also be mentioned. These are: 1) フィバる *to go crazy* (the English word *fever*, entering the lexicon of Japanese youth, first gained verbal characteristics by joining the formal verb -する to it, which has formed the colloquialism フィーバーする, later shortened to フィバる); 2) ディスる *to hate*, formed from auxiliary morphemes – English prefix *dis-* with the meaning of negation and Japanese verb suffix -る; 3) コスる *to play cosplay*, created by shortening the loaned word コスチューム *costume* and genuine Japanese verb formant -る¹². The method of creating mixed words appeared in the second half of the Meiji era (1868-1912) (in 1903 novelist

¹² For more examples see: 日本語俗語辞書. Available at: <http://zokugo-dict.com>.

Kosugi Tengai became the first to use hybrid verbs エンビる *to envy* and バイオる *to disturb*¹³, when all the “Western” was just coming into fashion, being here to stay ever since.

Such hybrid word-formation can be applied also to the class of adjectives. The ending of genuine Japanese predicative adjectives -い can form a hybrid unit, being added to some borrowings: ナウい *modern* (*now* + い); エモい *amazing* (*emotion* + い). Furthermore, hybrid word-formation in slang has spread to create nouns from loaned words using Japanese noun suffixes: ワイルドさ *wildness* (borrowed adjective *wild* + Japanese noun suffix さ), クレイジーさ *madness* (borrowed adjective *crazy* + Japanese noun suffix さ). We consider that the popularity of these hybrid mixed units among youth indicates their high stylistic potential and once again proves the idea that the Japanese percept American culture as prestigious, modern and longing for. Certainly the use of hybrid language units helps the Japanese to feel more fashionable, more progressive, to realize their belonging to the global “Western” world.

Abbreviation (shortening) as a response to the need to accelerate the pace of communication.

The informational society and the modern rhythm of life challenges the language to maximum information for minimal time consuming, and these trends are reflected in the word-formation level, increasing the productivity of abbreviation (shortening) as an effective way of using language economy, which makes it possible to significantly increase the speech tempo. The change in the rhythm of life of a modern man and his psychological state in a modern society becomes the main extra-linguistic factor forcing the spread of abbreviations *ryakugo*, and the mechanism of gradual lexicalization of abbreviations has become one of the trends of modern Japanese language¹⁴.

Probably, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the abbreviation as a special kind of morphological word-formation has already deeply penetrated into the Japanese language. For example, abbreviations カラオケ *karaoke* (formed from the compounding of words 空 *empty* and オーケストラ *orchestra* with further shortening of the last word), タマゴチ *tamagochi* (from 卵 *egg* and final morpheme of 友達 *friend*), ポケモン

¹³ 米川明彦, *新語と流行語* (東京: 南雲堂, 1989, p. 112.

¹⁴ T. Kudoyarova. *Word-Formation Processes in Contemporary Japanese as on the Example of the RYAKUGO Abbreviations' Lexicalization*. PhD diss., State University of Saint-Petersburg, 2009.

pokemon (shortening for words ポケット *pocket* and モンスター *monster*), コスプレ *cosplay* (the initial parts of the コスチュームプレイ *costume play*), アニメ *anime* (abbreviated アニメーション *animation*) are known far beyond the borders of Japan and can be categorized as brand names, key word markers due to which Japan is known abroad and with which it is consistently associated among people who are far from Japanese studies. Thus, it turns out that the abbreviation in Japanese is of such great importance that even typical representations of Japan abroad are verbalized in shortened words.

Whereas the extra-linguistic causes of the spread of abbreviations in Japanese are quite obvious, the linguistic ones still need to be clarified. The first thing that can be assumed is the interconnection between the productivity of abbreviation as a method of word-formation with the average length of words in a language: the longer an average word is, the sooner speakers will use abbreviation to save speech efforts and maintain a rapid tempo of communication. For example, the research of the average length of words in English showed that it is only 4.74 signs¹⁵; accordingly, the shortening of words in this language will not be a productive method of word-formation. Studies on the material of the Russian language gave a result of 7.9 signs¹⁶, which gives more prerequisites for the spread of abbreviations. As for the Japanese language, the problem of determining the average length of words is connected with the problem of determining words' limits. In other words, there is lack of consensus concerning the linguistic status of case formants, complex composites *kango* etc. The ambiguity of the interpretation of these units complicates the ability to calculate the average length of Japanese words to explain the internal causes for the spread of abbreviations. For example, Jin Mingzhe, having studied the average length of words in the novels of several Japanese novelists, claims it to be of one sign¹⁷. However, this does not prove that almost Japanese words are short, but rather that the researcher also took into account case formants. Our subjective observations nevertheless show a significant length of Japanese words, much larger than in English. Thus, it seems to us that the tendency to save language resources is urgent for Japanese, and speeds up the spread of abbreviation as a method of

¹⁵ V. Levitskii. *Semasiology: a Monograph* (2nd issue). Nova Knyha, Vinnytsya, 2012.

¹⁶ I. Merkulova. "Quantitative Characteristics of Russian Vocabulary on the Background of Other Slavic Languages", in *Vestnik VGU. Lingvistika i mezhkul'turnaya kommunikatsiya*, 2014, no. 3, p. 100-107.

¹⁷ 金明哲, "日本語における単語の長さの分布と文章の著者", *Sapporo Gakuin University*, 1996, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 14.

word-formation. So, according to our calculations of 2536 neologisms-colloquialisms included in the online dictionary of modern Japanese colloquialisms 日本語俗語辞書¹⁸, 968 units (38%) came to be abbreviations (shortenings) of different types (see Figure 1), which indicates the extraordinary power of this method of word-formation in modern Japanese.

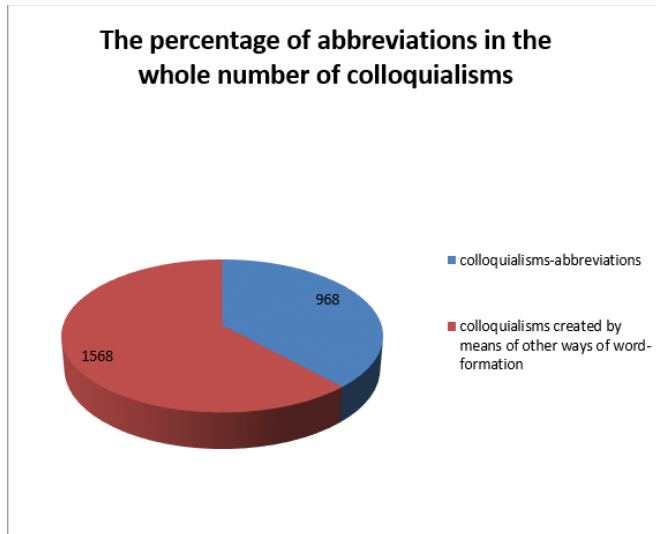


Figure 1: Percentage of abbreviations in colloquialisms

Once we supposed that the abbreviation typical only for lexical sectors *kango* (words of Chinese origin) and *gaijigo* (loans from European languages) would eventually penetrate into the sector of genuine Japanese vocabulary *wago*¹⁹, and came to be right, as in modern Japanese word-formation abbreviations are widely spread among the words of all typological segments of vocabulary:

- *wago*, for example, きもい *terrible* (気持ち *mood* and 悪い *bad*); なるはや *as quick as possible* (from なるべく早く); キモタク *terrible otaku* (気持ち悪い *terrible* + オタク *otaku*); きも可愛い *weird, but cute* (abbreviated phrase 気持ち悪いけど、可愛い having an even shorter version – きもかわ); もいもいさい *heavy, terrible and stinking* (重い *heavy*

¹⁸ See “日本語俗語辞書”. Available at: <http://zokugo-dict.com>.

¹⁹ T. Komarnytska. “Abbreviation in Japanese: a Problem of Nominating and Classifying”, in *Visnyk Kyivs'koho natsional'noho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka. Skhidni moy i literatury*, 2012, no. 18, p. 21-25.

+ きもい *terrible* + くさい *stinking*); かつぺ *redneck* (shortened from 田舎っぺ); ムカ男 *too sexy man* (from 無駄に格好いい男);

- *kango*, for example, 喫茶 or 茶店 *cafe* (from 喫茶店); 家教 *private tutor* (from 家庭教師); 就活 *job searching* (from 職業に就くための活動); 完徹 *studying all night long* (from 完全徹夜); 韓流 *fashion for Korean pop-culture* (from 韓国大衆文化流行); 駐禁 *no parking* (from 駐車禁止);

- *gairaigo*, for example, セクハラ *sexual harassment* (from セクシュアル・ハラスメント); イベコン *a girl promoting products at exhibitions* (from イベントコンパニオン); セレブ *celebrity* (from セレブリティ); バイ *bisexual* (from バイセクシュアル);

- mixed units, for example, えもい *an unpleasant guy that considers himself sexy* (from エロチック and きもい); パーペキ *ideally* (from パーフェクト and 完璧); バイナラ *goodbye* (from バイバイ and さよなら); かちよもい *very heavy* (かなり+超+重い); ヒャクパ 100% (from 百パーセント); チョッパズ *terribly ashamed* (超+恥ずかしい); イカ東 *nerd* (shortening from いかにも東大生 *like a student of Tokyo University*); アク禁 *access denied* (アクセス禁止).

At the same time, some shortened units undergo complicated shifts, so that it is practically impossible to connect these with the original words. For instance, the abbreviation ちょいオタ *conquering the girl's heart by hinting her that you are otaku* comes from the words ちょっと *a little* and オタク *otaku*, but it is impossible to understand this from the structure of the unit. Similarly, slang word 連れション *going to the toilet together* is very difficult to connect with 連れる *to accompany* and 小便 *piss*, because the last component underwent phonetic misrepresentation by reading ションベン before being shortened.

The analysis of the features of modern Japanese abbreviations led us to the idea that these tend to combine the trends of the rhythm of modern society and, at the same time, the Japanese national tradition with its attraction to pun, associations and stylistic figures built on the basis of these. Thus, modern abbreviations built in such a way as to create stylistic effect by association with another word (or words) are replacing the traditional *kake-kotoba* 掛詞. In this case, as well as in *kake-kotoba*, such associations appear due to the homonymy of words (full or partial). The typical way to create pun in the abbreviation is to shorten one of the words included in the full nomination to the degree it will resemble another word.

For example, the word nominating a popular dish **にくじゃが** *meat with potatoes* was formed by compounding words **肉** *meat* and **じゃがいも** *potatoes* with the subsequent shortening of the latter one in a way to create an association with the name of the lead singer of the rock band “The Rolling Stones” Mick Jagger due to phonetic similarity. A similar mechanism is observed in the shortening **痛車** *otaku car* (posted with images of characters of video games and anime) (abbreviation of slang **痛い** *to feel shame for someone* + **車** *car*); the unit was shortened in such a way to create association with another abbreviation **イタ車** *an Italian car* that is homonymous to the first one. Another interesting abbreviation is **パソ婚** *wedding as a result of dating through the Internet*, which in its phonetic composition is identical to another, a more conventional reduction **パソコン** *personal computer* and, obviously, acquired this form precisely because of its homonymy. Creating a “double” meaning for abbreviated unit can be even more sophisticated. For example, shortening **アルバイシユン** formed from the words **アルバイト** *side job* and **売春** *to sell oneself* can be translated as *she who sells her youth for additional income*²⁰. It is obvious that with such meaning the word is already stylistically marked. However, it also has an additional stylistic effect due to the homonymy of the components **バイ** in the words **アルバイト** and **売春**, which means that the word **アルバイシユン** can be interpreted as *any whore* or *selling herself for additional income*.

Besides homonymy the stylistic effect of abbreviations can also be based on paronymy. For example, a slang shortening **ガリア人** *boyfriend* is derived from the word **したがりや** *object of desire* in a way to create an association with the word **ケーリア** *a career*, i.e. **ガリア人** means *a prestigious boyfriend*. A similar example is **食みにケーション** (or **ノミニケーション**) *communication during drinking*. The word is created by composing **飲み** *drinking* and **に** *for* with the shortened **ケーション**, which is most likely a shortened **コミュニケーション** *communication*; accordingly, the structure of the newly formed unit resembles **コミュニケーション**, gaining association with that word. Shortened slang **テクシー** *going on foot* was formed from the roundabout of the abbreviation of the phrase **てくてく歩く** *drag the legs* and **タクシー** *a taxi*.

²⁰ A. Radionov. “The Non-Traditional Usage of Katakana”, in *Yaponiya. Yazyk i kul'tura: Almanac*, edited by Vladimir Alpatov. Muravei, Moscow, 2002, p. 138-147.

Units containing pun can either belong to the literary language, or to be on its periphery, being used mostly in the youth environment. But in any case, we believe that the creation of such modern colloquialisms is a peculiar tribute to the Japanese stylistic tradition and combining both traditional and innovative in the modern derivation.

The latest processes in Japanese word-formation show the growing role of American culture in Japan. Thus, due to the morphological and lexical-syntactic methods of the word-formation in Japanese, the category of political correctness that originates from the USA is verbalized. Furthermore, the morphological method of word-formation in Japanese has acquired a new form due to the involvement of loaned English elements, resulting in the creation of hybrid linguistic units being comprehended as “fashionable” and “modern”. The global tendency to accelerate the tempo of communication and save linguistic efforts is reflected in the Japanese word-formation due to the growing productivity of shortenings (abbreviations). Abbreviated units already make up 38% of all colloquialisms included in the dictionary 日本語俗語辞書. The tendency to increase the role of stylistically marked affixation in spoken language is explained by the aspiration of the speakers to make their speech original and emotional, which is especially important in communicating by means of electronic communication devices, for which it is not possible to directly see the emotions of the interlocutor.