Morphological Process of Euphemisms for Nativity, Marriage, and Mortality in Japanese

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Abstract. Humans experience three phases in life, namely birth, marriage, and death. Nativity symbolizes the beginning of life, the moment when a new human being begins to breathe the air of the world. It is an event that brings great joy to the family and community, a symbol of hope and the future. Marriage as a symbol of the celebration of love and union is an important phase in a person's life when two individuals commit to support and love each other throughout life. Mortality is a symbol of the end of the life cycle, the moment when a person leaves this world. This study aims to find the morphological process and meaning of euphemism words for birth, marriage, and death in Japanese. The use of euphemisms can replace words that are considered unfavorable and soften the meaning of a word. The data used are sourced from articles, and various online magazines that contain topics on the words birth, marriage, and death. This research is descriptive qualitative research with an agih method and direct element sharing technique. The results of this study found the formation of euphemisms in the words birth, marriage, and death, such as the following data, *shibou* (死亡) comes from the word *shinu* (死ぬ) 'die'. The word *shibou* (死亡) means to pass away for living beings. *Tanjou* (誕生) comes from *umareru* (生れる) which means birth. The word *tanjou* (誕生) is used to express birthdays which indirectly refers to birth. The word *kekkonshita* (結婚した) refers to being no longer married.

Keywords: Eufemisme, Word, Morphological Process, Japanese

1 Introduction

The Japanese language has a characteristic that is related to the culture of its people, namely having a feeling of sympathy for the interlocutor. One form of sympathy is an expression of smoothing meaning called euphemism or *enkyoukuhyougen*. The use of Japanese euphemisms is closely related to the expression of indirectness or a more subtle way, to avoid the impression of being rude, offensive, or too vulgar. Euphemisms are often used in various situations to show politeness and respect. The use of euphemisms in this study focuses on words containing birth, death, and marriage.

Humans must experience the phases of birth, death, and marriage. However, when expressing these words, Japanese people replace them with other expressions and phrases. This is so as not to hurt the feelings of the interlocutor. This study aims to

examine the formation of euphemisms charged with birth, death, and marriage. The data used in this study are sourced from articles, and various online magazines that contain topics on the words birth, marriage, and death.

The use of euphemisms reflects the psychological complexity of Japanese speech. These euphemisms help maintain harmony and manners in everyday communication in Japan, reflecting Japanese cultural values that value politeness and avoidance of confrontation. Euphemisms are used in invitations, refusals, or statements that are uncomfortable to hear. According to Sunarni and Johana, Euphemisms or enkyoku hyougen in Japanese include subtle speech acts to soften the speaker's statement to consider the feelings of the interlocutor [6]. The formation of euphemism words cannot be separated from the morphological process both in form and meaning.

Euphemisms in Japanese are also used to avoid things that are considered taboo. Japan is known as a modern society, but it still upholds traditional values. For example, during a wedding, it is forbidden to say the words *owari* '終り' which means finish, and *kiru* '切る' which means cut. These words should not be said because they are considered to bring a bad impression, especially to the bride and groom. Therefore, Japanese people replace these words with *akeru* '開ける' or *hajimaru* '始まる' which means starting a new life.

Research on euphemism has been conducted by Wedayanti entitled The Cultural Value of Taboo Expressions in Japanese Wedding Ceremonies. the study analyzed the taboo expressions of Japanese society at the wedding ceremony. [8]. Similar research was also conducted by Aini entitled Euphemism in Anime 'Akagami No Shirayuki Hime' [1]. The difference between this research and the previous ones is that the researchers focus on morphological changes in words containing birth, marriage, and death.

2   Methods

The method used is the observation method with the technique of free-flowing observation technique and continued with the recording technique. The listening method is used to listen to the language that will be used. For the free listening technique, the researcher only listens or only sees the material that will be studied later. The note-taking technique is used to record the object of research material. Research data sourced from news media and articles. At the data analysis stage, using the agih method whose determinants and devices come from the language itself. The basic technique for direct elements, namely dividing lingual data units into several

parts or making the data into smaller elements. The author presents the results of data analysis informally and uses simple language rules so that it can be understood by readers. [6]

3   Result and Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, several forms of euphemism were found in words containing birth, death, and marriage. The form of euphemism can be analyzed morphologically by using the theory of Nitta and Akimoto. The meaning contained in the euphemism word can also experience an expansion of meaning [2]. The following is the analysis of euphemism words in each content:

3.1   Euphemisms for Words Related Nativity

Humans must pass through a birth phase, where they experience life for the first time. The word 'birth' in Japanese is *umareru* (生まれる). However, the word can be softened by replacing the words *tanjou* (誕生) and *shussan* (出産). Based on Nitta's theory, both words are compound words [5]. The following table shows the discussion of each euphemism.

Tabel 1. Discussion Table of *Tanjou* Words (誕生)

Word	Meaning	Meaning Type	Word to Word Meaning
誕生	Birth	Basic Meanings	*Tairitsukankei*
誕生　→　誕　＋　生 Tanjou　　　　tan　　　　jou Birth　　　be born　　　birth N　　　　　N　　　　V			

The word 誕生 is formed from the word *tan* (誕) which is a noun and the word *jou* (生) which is a verb. The combination of the two morphemes forms a noun compound word with the construction N + V. Based on its origin, the compound word 誕生 belongs to *kango*, because the reading of the morpheme tan (誕) and the morpheme *jou* (生) is *onyomi*. The meaning of the compound word *tanjou* (誕生) comes from both morphemes, so the meaning of the compound word *tanjou* (誕生) is birth. The use of *tanjou* (誕生) is used when speaking formally, besides that, it is used in writing official documents.

Tabel 2. Discussion Table of *Shussan* Words (出産)

Word	Meaning	Meaning Type	Word to Word Meaning
出産	Childbirth	Expansion Meaning	*Shuushokukankei*
出産 → 出 + 産 Shussan shutsu san Childbirth out native N V V			

The word *shussan* (出産) is formed from the verb *shutsu* (出) and the verb *san* (産). The two morphemes combine to form a noun compound word with a V + V construction. Based on its origin, the compound word 出産 belongs to *kango*, because the reading of the morpheme *shutsu* (出) and the morpheme *san* (産) is *onyomi*. The meaning of the compound word *shussan* (出産) comes from one of the morphemes, san (産) 'native'. The use of *shussan* (出産) is used when speaking formally, but it is also used in writing official documents, especially those related to language.

Tabel 3. Discussion Table of *Gokainin* Words (ご懐妊)

Word	Meaning	Meaning Type	Word to Word Meaning
ご懐妊	Pregnancy	Basic Meanings	*Shuushokukankei*
ご懐妊 → ご + 懐 + 妊 Gokainin go kai nin Pregnancy - feelings pregnant N Prefiks A N			

Next is the word *kainin* (懐妊) which means pregnancy. The word *kainin* (懐妊) comes from the adjective *kai* (懐) meaning feelings and the noun nin (妊) meaning pregnant. Based on its origin, the compound word *gokainin* (ご懐妊) is a *kango*, as both morphemes are read *onyomi*. The meaning is derived from one of the words, *nin* (妊) 'pregnant'. The word *kainin* (懐妊) can be replaced by the word *gokainin* (ご懐妊). The addition of the word *go* 'ご' is a form of keigo used to honor the interlocutor. The word *gokainin* (ご懐妊) is used by medical personnel explaining to their patients.

3.2   Euphemisms for Words Related Marriage

This phase is where the vision and mission of a household come together. Weddings in Japan are commonly referred to as *kekkonshiki* (結婚式) which means wedding ceremony. In general, the Japanese word for marriage is *kekkon* (結婚). When stating that someone is married, the word *kekkonshiteiru* (結婚している) is used, with the ~ ている pattern indicating an ongoing state. Divorce in Japanese is called *rikonsuru* (離婚する). However, when someone is divorced, Japanese people will not say the word *rikonsuru* (離婚する). Because the word is considered too frontal to say. So it can be replaced with a more subtle word, *kekkonshita* (結婚した) 'married'.

Tabel 4. Discussion Table of *Kekkonshita* Words (結婚した)

Word	Meaning	Meaning Type	Word to Word Meaning
結婚した	Married	Basic Meanings	-
結婚した → 結 ＋ 婚 ＋ した Kekkonshita ketsu kon shita Married to tie marriage past tense V V N bound morpheme			

The word *kekkonshita* (結婚した) is formed from the verb ketsu (結), the noun kon (婚), and the bound morpheme *shita* (した). The combination of the two morphemes forms a verb compound word with the construction V + N. Based on its origin, the compound word *kekkonshita* (結婚した) belongs to *kango*, because both morphemes are read *onyomi*.

In addition, there is a taboo word about marriage that Japanese people believe in. During the wedding ceremony, it is forbidden to say the words *owari* '終り' which means to finish, and *kiru* '切る' which means to cut. These words should not be said because they are considered to bring a bad impression, especially to the bride and groom. Therefore, Japanese people replace these words with *akeru* '開ける' or *hajimaru* '始まる' which means starting a new life.

3.3   Euphemisms for Words Related Mortality

Death is something that every living being must experience. The Japanese word for 'death' is *shinu* (死ぬ). The word *shinu* (死ぬ) is an impolite word to use when expressing someone's death. Therefore, Japanese people replace it with *shibou* (死亡) or *nakunaru* (亡くなる).

Tabel 5. Discussion Table of *Shibou* Words (死亡)

Word	Meaning	Meaning Type	Word to Word Meaning
死亡	Death	Basic Meanings	*Shuushokukankei*
死亡 → 死 ＋ 亡 Shibou shi bou Death die deceased N N V			

The word *shibou* (死亡) is formed from *shi* (死) and *bou* (亡) which are verbs. The two morphemes combine to form a noun compound word with a V + V construction. Based on its origin, the compound word *shibou* (死亡) is a *kango* because both morphemes are pronounced *onyomi*. The meaning of the compound word *shibou* (死亡) comes from both morphemes, so the meaning of the compound word *shibou* (死亡) is death. The use of shibou (死亡) is used when speaking formally, and it is also used in writing official documents.

Besides *shibou* (死亡), *nakunaru* (亡くなる) also means passing away. The word *nakunaru* (亡くなる) is a verb and is a free morpheme. Based on its origin, the word nakunaru (亡くなる) is a *wago*, because it is pronounced *kunyomi*. The word *nakunaru* (亡くなる) is used in less formal situations, and is found in both spoken and written forms.

4   Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, there are several forms of euphemism in words containing birth, marriage, and death. The forms of euphemism are indirect expression, replacing with other words, and *keigo*. Euphemisms are also used to replace taboo vocabulary that is considered unfavorable by Japanese society.

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