

Genesis of the Japanese Compound Particles

The Japanese compound particles (e.g., *ni tai shite* ‘towards’, *ni totte* ‘for’, *wo motte* ‘by means of’, etc.) represent a salient feature of the modern standard Japanese language. They typically follow the pattern case particle + verb in a converbal (gerund) form and fulfill functions similar to the secondary prepositions in European languages, such as the English prepositions *about*, *against*, *along*, etc.

Ex.: *sensei-ni-mukat-te* *shitsurei-na koto-o* *iwa-nai-de kudasai*.
Teacher-DAT-head.towards-CVB rude-ADN matter-ACC say-NEG-CVB please
‘Please don’t say rude things **to** your teacher.’

However, this has not always been the case. There is a significantly lower number of these compounds present in older texts, which means that most of them clearly grammaticalized during the historical period. In this paper, their genesis throughout history will be tracked using the extant textual evidence and the major factors contributing to their proliferation will be discussed. Some of those compound particles were clearly influenced by certain Chinese constructions. The key to their genesis seems to be the traditional Japanese reading of Chinese texts - the so-called *kambun kundoku*. This seems to be true not only for compound particles containing morphemes of Chinese origin, but also for some purely Japanese compounds. The Chinese expressions on which they were patterned (some of which are used as coverbs even nowadays in Modern Chinese) will be presented and the grammaticalization clines explained with ample examples. The aim is to present a balanced view of the compound particles taking into account both the contact influence and the internal factors of the development of Japanese.

Selected bibliography

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