DOI:10.21776/ub.icon_laterals.2016.001.1.46

The Understanding of Vocabulary Suffixed *-teki* by Japanese Based on Gender Background

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ABSTRACT

In many languages including Japanese, using a suffix is a common way to create new meaning. For that reason, the objective of this study is to examine the degree of understanding the suffix *-teki* among Japanese people based on gender. Terms of understanding are determined by three options of answers for each vocabulary followed by *-teki*: *understandable*, *doubtful*, and *difficult*. This research was conducted in the area of Hiroshima prefecture, Japan, by using a questionnaire as the method. The data analysis was done by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The subjects consisted of 34 persons, and were selected by using a random sampling technique. Findings from this research are: 1) for the understood words, there are no differences between males and females, 2) for words, the meaning of which the respondents were unsure about, there was no differences between males and females, and 3) for difficult words, male and female have no differences. The conclusion of this research is that gender has an effect for understanding certain vocabulary, such as *Kango*, *Wago*, *Gairaigo* and *Konshugo*.

KEYWORDS: suffix *-teki*, Japanese, gender

Most languages, have suffixes. For Japanese, there are many varieties of suffixes, in which every kind of suffix has its own rule regarding what kind of vocabulary it suffixes. Some suffixes can only be used with nouns, others with adjectives, etc. However, there is one particular suffix which does not follow rules, it

is *-teki*. Suffix *-teki* can be used with every kind of vocabulary, creating new meaning with each vocabulary it suffixes. Compared to other suffixes, *-teki* can make new vocabulary more easily. In addition, this suffix is used frequently in daily life. It can go with any word root starting with *Kanji*. Now it can go with *Wago*, *Gairaigo*, and even sentences. (Jin Yuan Yuan (2012: 235)

According to her article in *Japan Times*, Noguchi (2011, para. 7), stated that approximately since 10 years ago, Japanese young generation has started to use suffix *-teki* (的). In everyday conversation, coincidentally or not, this suffix is used with nouns, even with someone's name, such as *Yamada sensei-teki* which means "Yamada-sensei-like"; or *AKB48-teki* which means "AKB48-like"), correctness of grammar does not get attention.

Vance (2004: 138) stated that the process of making a vocabulary suffixed – *teki* are as follows:

Basic word + *-teki* (的)

Some examples:

- a. *akurobatto-teki* (アクロバットの): acrobatic (*akurobatto* means acrobat)
- b. *kagaku-teki* (科学的): scientific (*kagaku* means science)
- c. *ongaku-teki* (音楽的): musical (*ongaku* means music)
- d. *kouka-teki* (効果的): effective (*kouka* means effect)
- e. *seiri-teki* (生理的): fisiological (*seiri* means fisiology)
- f. *kihon-teki* (基本的): basically (*kihon* means basic)

The suffix *-teki* does not change the basic form of vocabulary, so the basic writting and the reading form do not undergo changes.

Moreover, Hara (1896) cited by Vance (2004: 139) stated that any word with *-teki*, could be translated as “like”, “according to, suitably with,” or “in affiliated, include” with the base word. Those statements support Noguchi (2011, para. 7) that since about 10 years ago, Japanese youngster started to use the suffix *-teki* (的). In everyday conversation, coincidently or not, this suffix used with noun, even someone’s name, such as Yamada sensei-*teki* which means “Yamada-sensei-like”; or AKB48-*teki* which means “AKB48-like”), correctness of grammar does not get attention.

Looking at how the basic word developed, every person seems to have a different perspective of understanding the *-teki* suffixed vocabulary item. Saussure (1988: 292-294) stated that, *“We often grasp the meaning incorrectly because the shape and meaning were not familiar, and habbit was also made it happen.....there are cases where a word receive new meaning, but the shape was not get a modification. Hence some people change the shape to make it suitable with another substence they know.”* *“The changes do not simply create basic differences between incorrect words.”* Hence, in the process of grasping the vocabulary meaning, some people are able to know the meaning immediately, but some people might encounter difficulties in understanding the meaning.

Jin Yuan Yuan (2012) stated that *Goshu* can be suffixed with *-teki*. *Goshu* itself is a term to classify vocabulary based on its root (Ogino (2007: 49)). There are four kinds of vocabulary in *Goshu*, namely: *Kango*, *Wago*, *Gairaigo*, and *Konshugo*, and Ogino (2007: 54).

The first is *Kango*. *Kango* is a vocabulary that comes from old Chinese or a new vocabulary made in Japan, but written in Kanji, which is derived from Chinese. Looking from the number of Kanji characters, *Kango* could be divided into four groups: 1) *Kango* consist of one Kanji character, such as *bun*, *hon*, *cha*, *shi*, etc; 2)

Kango consist of two Kanji characters, such as *kongetsu*, *reinen*, *kenkou*, etc; 3) *Kango* consist of three Kanji characters, such as *kunshikoku*, *zenchishiki*, *banzairaku*, etc; 4) *Kango* consist of four or more Kanji characters, such as *yuumei mujitsu*, *tenkou kokushoku*, *sanzen daisen sekai*, etc.

The second is *Wago*. *Wago* is a kind of vocabulary that genuinely made in Japan, created before other country's influence came accross Japan. *Yama*, *kawa*, *miru*, and *ugoku* are some of the examples.

The third is *Gairaigo*. *Gairaigo* is a vocabulary of foreign origin that came to Japan, got Japanized and is used frequently in daily lifes in Japan. Commonly, vocabulary that come from Europe and other countries aside from China are categorized as *Gairaigo*. However, not every foreign word come to be *Gairaigo*, because there are four basic criteria for selection words, such as 1) There are no vocabulary with the same meaning in Japanese, due to different culture, 2) The nuance could not be replaced by any Japanese vocabulary, 3) The items are considered efficient, and 4) The word itself is considered as word which bring good and harmony. Some of the example of *Gairaigo* are *arukooru* (from alcohol), *koppu* (from cup), *biiru* (from beer), etc.

The fourth and the last kind is *Konshugo*. *Konshugo* is a kind of vocabulary that combine at least two different kinds of vocabulary from different origin. For example, a combination of *Kango* and *Wago*, *Kango* and *Gairaigo*, or *Wago* and *Gairaigo*. Some of the examples are *Genchihanare* (*Kango*+*Wago*), *Norikumi-in* (*Wago*+*Kango*), *Ryoumen Kopii* (*Kango*+*Gairaigo*), *Tarento Shusshin* (*Gairaigo*+*Kango*), *Kami teepu* (*Wago*+*Gairaigo*), and *Konpyuutaa Miai* (*Gairaigo*+*Wago*). *Goshu* is one of the characteristics of Japanese and it has a clear definition. That is what makes it to be one of the main variables for this study.

In Japanese, gender plays an important role because the usage of vocabulary between male and female are really different, such as the word *watashi* which mean I, could be substituted by *atashi* for females, and *ore* for males. Different styles can influence someone's understanding through some vocabulary directly or indirectly. Jorden cited in Loveday (1986: 13) stated that women commonly use language more politely than men. The polite form which is only used in certain situations by males, could be used by females in ordinary conversation with colleagues and friends.

As for the number of vocabulary in Japanese, Kato Akihiko (1991) in his research, cited by Sudjianto and Dahidi (2014: 111-112), stated that someone's vocabulary increases in accordance with age and education. The table below shows the result of research done by Sakamoto Ichiro (cited by Kato, 1991:67):

Table 1
The Increase of Understanding Vocabulary by Japanese

Age	6~7	7~8	8~9	9~10	10~11	11~12	12~13
Men	6.142	7.186	8.689	11.248	14.940	20.212	25.928
Women	5.739	6.708	8.088	10.787	15.075	21.674	28.406
Age	13~14	14~15	15~16	16~17	17~18	18~19	19~20
Men	31.636	37.026	41.458	45.962	49.107	50.656	51.128
Women	33.478	37.783	41.191	43.382	44.770	45.400	45.489

According to Table 1, as someone gets older, their vocabulary also increase. Moreover, male and female vocabulary also differ. In this case, males have more vocabulary than females.

Frequency in using vocabulary could influence someone's understanding through certain vocabulary. Hence, every single person has a different skill in grasping meaning. Endou Orie (1984) in his research titled "*Setsubiji "Teki" no Imi to Youhou*"

(The meaning and Usage of Suffix *-teki*) stated that from his searching through newspapers, magazines and essays, he found that *Kango*, *Gairaigo*, phrases and even sentences can be suffixed with *-teki*. Some of the examples for *Gairaigo* was *Muudo-teki* (ムード的), *Masukomi-teki* (マスコミ的), and *Makuro-teki* (マクロ的).

Jin Yuan Yuan (2012) in the research titled “*[-Teki] ni Kan-suru Ikkousatsu*” (Pemikiran Mengenai Imbuhan *-teki*) stated that *Goshu* suffixed with *-teki* were also found during his research, such as *sei-teki* (「性」的) from *Kango*, *yarase-teki* (「やらせ」的) from *Wago*, and *anchipatento-teki* (「アンチパテント」的) from *Gairaigo*. Moreover, Takahashi Katsutada (2005) in his research titled “*[-Teki] Ronkou*” (Suffix *-teki* in Japanese) acknowledged that some kinds of words could be suffixed with *-teki*, such as *Kango*: *Gutai-teki* (具体的), *Kagaku-teki* (科学的), *Chuushou-teki* (抽象的). *Gairaigo*: *Makuro-teki* (マクロ的), *Meruhen-teki* (メルヘンの), *Koperunikusu-teki* (コペルニクスの). *Wago*: *Kazamidori-teki* (風見鶏的), *Satsukiame-teki/ Samidare-teki* (五月雨的) and *Konshugo*: *Hatoha-teki* (ハト派的).

From the perspective of *Goshu*, the suffix *-teki* originally went with *Kango* and *Gairaigo* only (research finding in 1984), but it developed and broadened until at all kinds of *Goshu*, such as with *Kango*, *Wago*, *Gairaigo*, and *Konshugo* (research finding in year 2005 and 2012). Moreover, Yamashita (1999) in his statement cited by Takahashi (2005: 3) also stated that during the course of time, compared to other *Goshu*, the productivity of the *Kango* suffixed with *-teki* declined. The survey conducted by “*Chuuou Kouron*” magazine revealed that while *Kango* with two *Kanji* characters usage decline in the year of 1962 from 96.6% until 93.6% in 1992, the usage of *Kango* with three to four *Kanji* characters usage increased. *Gairaigo*, *Wago* and *Konshugo* also showed increase in productivity.

Hence, with this study, the writer wanted to know whether the use of *-teki* affects someone's understanding of a word or not. This study tries to examine two problems: 1), The way Japanese understand vocabulary suffixed with *-teki* based on difference of gender; 2) The similarities and differences for understanding vocabulary suffixed with *-teki* by Japanese speakers based on gender.

RESEARCH METHOD

Previously, the internet was used as a method to gather data sources, while the main source was obtained through a questionnaire. In making the questionnaire, first, vocabulary suffixed with *-teki* were collected from Google search engine. From 23 October 2014 to 30 May 2015, the data were obtained through browsing, resulting in a total of 1121 vocabularies. Due to this excessive amount, those vocabularies were reduced by re-checking three dictionaries (*Gyakubikijiten* dictionary, Electric *Gyakubikijiten* dictionary, and *Shinmeikai Kokugo Daijiten* 7th edition dictionary). Two principles were used to reduce the vocabularies. First, by checking whether those vocabulary suffixed with *-teki* were available in the dictionaries or not, e.g. *Keizai-teki* (経済的, means economically). This vocabulary is available only in one of the three dictionaries, hence it would not be used in the research. Second, whether with or without *-teki*, those vocabularies has meaning or not, e.g. *std::list-teki* (std::list的). "*std::list*" does not have any meaning, hence it would not be used in the research.

Based on the reduction process, 502 words were maintained. Those words cover 300 *Kango* (漢語) words, 67 *Wago* (和語) words, 122 *Gairaigo* (外来語) words and 13 *Konshugo* (混種語) words. These words are all used in the study based on questionnaire, and the final results got analyzed in order to be the source of this study.

The instrument for this study is a questionnaire. Overall, there were 502 vocabularies, divided into 8 parts of the questionnaire in which every part contained

61-63 vocabularies. Despite the divided parts, every respondent have to answer all of the 502 vocabularies, making 8 parts of questionnaire as a question for every respondent. Questionnaires was originally distributed to 60 persons, but the full-answered questionnaire was only from 34 persons. From 34 persons, the participants were 15 males and 19 females. Elements in the questionnaire were as follows:

① Sex (性別)

② Age (年齢)

Age was not asked specifically, just roughly categorized as 20's, 30's, etc.

③ Vocabulary (単語) and Mark (マーク), in order to comprehend the understanding for every single vocabulary from 502. These sentences was written in every part of the questionnaires:

All of these words, without *-teki*, could be found in the dictionary. However, when it gets the suffix *-teki*, the new form is not included in the dictionaries.

a. Does the availability of this suffix affect your understanding of vocabulary?

b. Can you comprehend this vocabulary with or without suffix *-teki*?

Please give a mark on every vocabulary below (○, Δ, or X)

○ means Understood; Δ means Unsure; and X means Difficult.

This study had been done by using a questionnaire. First, the questionnaire was distributed in the area of Hiroshima University which is located in Saijo city and its surrounding, including Nishitakaya city and Hiroshima city. The writer got help directly from the *native speakers* who lived in these areas. Some people took the questionnaire to be answered by themselves and some other just took it to distribute it to their friends. Second, after distributing the questionnaire, the writer gave the

participants 2-3 weeks time to finish all of the questions, because there were 502 words. The questionnaire itself was distributed on 16-30 July 2015.

The main study was analyzed statistically, using inferential statistics. First, a *t-test* was used in order to conclude that there were no differences between categories. Then, it was made sure that the data has a normal distribution/ equal. If the data was proved to be equal, it would be tested by the *t-test*. The *t-test* itself was used to draw a conclusion. There are F, sig F, t, and sig t in the *t-test* analysis. Those variables had a significant meaning for drawing conclusions. According to Norusis (2002: 281-282) and Sujarweni (2014: 99), value F has a significant meaning to decide whether the data is *equal* or *unequal*.

If Sig F > 0,05 the data is *equal*.

If Sig F < 0,05 the data is *unequal*.

For the final conclusion, t is the key.

If Sig t > 0,05 there are differences in understanding.

If Sig t < 0,05 there are no differences in understanding.

The conclusion would be taken in accordance to these results, based on every option of answers (Understood, Unsure and Difficult) for each vocabulary.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result is based on three kinds of answers: understood, unsure, and difficult. Starting from *Kango* to *Gairaigo*, *Wago* and *Konshugo*, the result will be presented. Result founds are presented in tables and charts.

Table 2

Kango

The result of *t-test* method for *Kango* suffixed with *-teki*

Variable	Equality test		t-test	
	F	Sig	T	Sig

<i>Kango-Understood</i>	.720	.402	.63	.534
<i>Kango-Unsure</i>	4.105	.05*	2.60	.018**
<i>Kango-Difficult</i>	1.714	.200	-1.96	.059

Note:

* Unequal

** Result from *unequal* analysis

According to Table 2, *Kango-Unsure* is the only answer having an unequal score. Its data sig t value shows the differences (due to $.018 < .05$). Hence, it could be concluded that: There is no significant difference in *Kango-Understood* answers between male and female. For *Kango-Unsure* answer, the unequal value proves that there are differences between male and female. Thus males have a higher degree of being unsure (see Figure 1). For *Kango-Difficult* answers, no significance differences was found between males and females. The graph below shows the average percentage for each answer.

Figure 1. Chart for the Result of Understood *Kango* suffixed with *-teki*

Commonly, males and females have the highest average in the answer for *Kango-Understood*. Male has higher understanding, reaching 53% while female has 49%. There are deviation for 4% approximately. For *Kango-Unsure* answers, males have a higher mean with 21% in percentage. On the other hand, females have an average of about 11%. Judging from the 10% in deviation, it could be concluded that males tend to be more unsure than females. For *Kango-Difficult* answers, while males

have 26% in average, female has an average of about 40%. Due to the big difference, it could be concluded that females have less unsure about answering question, yet they tend to have more difficulties in grasping the meaning of *Kango* suffixed with *-teki*.

Table 3

The result of *t-test* method for *Gairaigo* suffixed with *-teki*

Variable	Equality test		t-test	
	F	Sig	T	sig
<i>Gairaigo-Understood</i>	3.033	.091	-.32	.752
<i>Gairaigo-Unsure</i>	4.182	.049*	2.39	.026**
<i>Gairaigo-Difficult</i>	2.425	.129	-.89	.379

Note:

* Unequal

** Result from *unequal* analysis

According to Table 3, *Gairaigo-Unsure* is the only answer that has an unequal value. Moreover, the Sig t proved that there are differences (because $.026 < .05$). Hence, it could be concluded that: For *Gairaigo-Understood* and *Gairaigo-Difficult* answers, there were no significant differences between males and females. But for *Gairaigo-Unsure* answer, there were differences between males and females. The graph below shows the average for each answer in detail.

Figure 2. Chart for the Result of Understanding *Gairaigo* suffixed *-teki*

Overall, the highest mean was found in the answers for *Gairaiigo-Difficult*. Females seem to have more difficulties, with 56% in percentage while male have 47%. This is a 9% difference. Similarly in understanding *Kango*, females have more difficulties in understanding *Gairaiigo*.

For *Gairaiigo-Understood* answers, there is a slight difference about 3%, yet females have a higher average, reaching more than 34%. As for *Gairaiigo-Unsure* answers, males have a tendency to be more unsure, reaching an average of 22%, while females have a 10% average only. In this case, deviation reached 12%.

Table 4

The result of the *t-test* for *Wago* suffixed with *-teki*

Variable	Equality test		t-test	
	F	Sig	T	sig
<i>Wago-Understood</i>	.938	.340	-.13	.898
<i>Wago-Unsure</i>	.027	.871	2.31	.027 **
<i>Wago-Difficult</i>	2.463	.126	-.88	.386

Note:

* *Unequal*

** Result from *unequal* analysis

According to Table 4, *Wago-Unsure* is the only answer which has unequal value. The sig t data also showed differences (.027<.05). Hence, it could be concluded that: There are no significant differences in *Understood* answers for *Wago* suffixed with *-teki* between males and females. Similarly, in *Difficult* answers, there is no significant differences between males and females. The graph below shows the average percentage for each answer.

Figure 3. Chart for the Result of Understood *Wago* suffixed with *-teki*

Overall, the highest percentage was found on *Wago-Difficult* answers. Both males and females have difficulties in comprehend *Wago* suffix with *-teki*; both of them have an average of more than 60%. While males have 64%, female have a 70% average.

For *Wago-Understood* answers, the differences between gender were only 1%. In this case, females have a higher average, reaching 21%. Yet, males and females tend to have differences in Unsure answers. Here, males have a higher tendency to be unsure than females. (see figure 3).

For *Wago-Unsure* answers, males have a higher average, reaching 16%, and the differences between males and females were 7%.

Table 5

The result of the *t-test* for *Konshugo* suffixed with *-teki*

Variable	Equality test		t-test	
	F	Sig	T	Sig
<i>Konshugo-Understood</i>	.029	.866	.27	.789
<i>Konshugo-Unsure</i>	3.637	.066	.93	.359
<i>Konshugo-Difficult</i>	.620	.437	-.69	.494

Note:

* Unequal

** Result from *unequal* analysis

According to Table 5, all of the answers for *Konshugo* has an equal value. The Sig t of the data proves that there are no differences (because $.789 > .05$, $.359 > .05$, $.494 > .05$). Hence, it could be concluded that: There are no significant differences between males and females for understood *Konshugo* suffixed with *-teki*, be it *Understood*, *Unsure* and *Difficult* answer. The graph below shows the average percentage for each answer.

Figure 4. Chart for the Result of Understood *Konshugo* suffixed *-teki*

Similarly to *Gairaigo* and *Wago*, in *Konshugo*, the highest average was also found in *Konshugo-Difficult* answers. Both males and females have difficulty in comprehending *Konshugo* suffixed with *-teki*. In this case, females have a higher average, reaching 66%, with 6% in differences with males. For *Konshugo-Understood* answers, males have a higher average, with 26% in percentage, they just have a differences 2% with females. For *Konshugo-Unsure* answers, once again, males have a higher average. They have a 14% average, while females just have a 10% average.

According to the tables above, differences of understanding between gender just occur on unsure answers in *Kango*, *Gairaigo* and *Wago* suffixed with *-teki*. In this case, males have a tendency to answer unsure more often than females. This is a bit different from Kato's research (1991) which found that males understand more vocabulary than females. Being more unsure does not mean that males can not comprehend the meaning of the word. There is a possibility that males are hesitant to

execute the meaning, whether they could accept the word to be suffixed with *-teki* or not.

Lady Yurica Rizky (2014) in her research titled “Penggunaan Wakamono Kotoba “Yabai” Berdasar Gender di Kalangan Anak Muda Jepang (Studi Kasus Mahasiswa Kanazawa)” studied the difference in using vocabulary “yabai” between males and females in Kanazawa through a questionnaire with multiple choice answers. In her research, she found out that:

In the frequency of using, females tend to use the word “yabai” more often than males. For the variation, “yabee” were used often. The word “yabee” was originally used by males only, but now females tend to use it too.

Rizky (2014) in her research found that *yabai* was used more often by females. The same tendency could occur with the suffix *-teki*. Hence, females have no difficulties to answer Understood or Difficult. Aside from Unsure answer, females and males do not have any significant differences. This result was also in accordance with Rizky’s (2014) that even if female used word *yabai* more often, there were nearly no differences in vocabulary using between males and females.

CONCLUSION

After doing the study by using questionnaire and distributing it in the Hiroshima area, some conclusion was drawn according to three kinds of answers (Understood, Unsure and Difficult). The conclusions are: (1) For *Kango* suffixed with *-teki*, both males and females had a good understanding. They had a high average in understanding answer; (2) On the contrary, they had difficulties in understanding *Gairaigo*, *Wago*, and *Konshugo* suffixed with *-teki*. There were significant differences

too between them, where males tended to be more hesitant in understanding *Kango*, *Gairaigo* and *Wago* suffixed with *-teki*.

The lesson learnt from the results is that Japanese users would learn to pay some attention when using suffix *-teki*. *Kango*, *Gairaigo*, *Wago*, and *Konshugo* could be suffixed with *-teki*, but *Kango* is the only kind which has high percentage of Understood answer. Hence, it would be good to use *Kango* words to be suffixed with *-teki*, and avoid using *Gairaigo*, *Wago* and *Konshugo* to be suffixed with *-teki*.

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