

A rule-application approach to Rendaku
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Abstract

Hirano (1974) pointed out that in compounds consisting of A+B, rendaku-forms occur when A modifies B (cf. Right-hand Head Rule). In dvandva forms, therefore, rendaku forms do not appear, because both A and B function as head. In addition, it was made clear that a nasal consonant triggers rendaku, which was set up immediately before B. The nasal consonant thus reconstructed internally is represented by the symbol *N and referred to as ‘ligateme’.

We shall now consider the function of rendaku. Rendaku serves to indicate:

- (1) that B is the head of compound A+B.
- (2) where B begins.

In a word, the structure of A+B must be transparent, which contributes to a full understanding of the meaning.

In relation to this, the following are observed in Old-Japanese.

- (3) A word does not begin with the CV in which the C is a voiced consonant except for nasal consonants, *r*, *w* and *y*. (The consonant at issue is represented by the symbol C_v .)
- (4) A word does not begin with rV morae. (V: vowels, rV: ra-gyoo on)

In other words, (3) and (4) indicate that a word does not begin with C_vV (C_v : b, d, g, z) and rV morae, where the boundary between A and B lies after them. Thus, it seems likely that B begins with a mora immediately after C_vV and rV morae, as in the environment $C_vV / rV + __$.

Keeping these points in mind, we shall formalize the derivations of rendaku forms and non-rendaku forms. Note that connectives like *no*, *ga* and *tu* also serve to block rendaku and [-R] represents a minor rule.

Table 1: compounds without the ligateme

UF	/#yama kawa#/ Rule A	/#ato saki#/ Rule B	/#oki no sima#/ PF
	—	—	
	—	—	
	[yamakawa]	[atosaki]	[okinosima]

Table 2: compounds with the ligateme

UF	/#ama N kasa#/ Rule A	/#kata N tataki#/-R/ Rule B	/#hito N tasuke#/ PF	/#ara N kawa#/-R/ PF
	amaNgasa	—	hitoNdasuke	—
	amagasa	katatataki	hitodasuke	arakawa
	[amagasa]	[katatataki]	[hitodasuke]	[arakawa]

(UF: underlying form, PF: phonetic form)

Reference

Hirano, Takanori (1974) Rendaku no kisokusei to kigen. *bungaku kenkyu* 71: 21-43. Fukuoka: Kyushu University.