

## A cross-linguistic approach to *rendaku*-like compound markers, with special reference to Korean and Basque

Laurence Labrune, University of Bordeaux & CNRS (CLLE ERSS)

*Rendaku* undoubtedly constitutes the most extensively studied morphophonological process in Japanese linguistics. It is no exaggeration to say that it has been, and is still being scrutinized with respect to all its internal aspects: phonetic, phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, diachronic, acquisitional, and so forth, and research on *rendaku* has also contributed to theoretical and formal linguistics.

In this context, it is somewhat surprising to observe that the cross-linguistic and typological dimensions of *rendaku* have remained largely understudied. Yet, a number of languages exhibit morphophonological linking processes which closely resemble *rendaku* in several respects. Consider for instance the following sets of data:

(1) Japanese

yama + sakura → yamazakura ('mountain' + 'cherry tree' → 'wild cherry tree')  
waru- + kuti → warukuti / waruguti ('bad' + 'mouth' → 'calumny')  
de- + ha → deba / deppa ('go out' + 'tooth' → 'buck teeth')

(2) Korean (C' = tense consonant)

mul + koki → mulk'oki ('water' + 'meet' → 'fish')  
sai + sios → sais'ios / saisios ('interval' + 'the letter s' → 'intermediate s')  
pom + pi → pomp'i ('spring' + 'rain' → 'spring rain')  
pata + mul → patammul ('sea' + 'water' → 'sea water')  
u + os → utos ('over' + 'cloth' → 'jacket')

(3) Basque (/z/, /tz/ = [s], [ts])

lo + gailu → lokailu ('link' + 'tool' → 'a tie')  
su + bazter → supazter ('fire' + 'corner' → 'hearth')  
gurutz + bide → guruzpide / guruzbide ('cross' + 'way' → 'crossroad')  
begi + zulo → betzulo ('eye' + 'hole' → 'eye socket')  
ezkon- + egun → ezkontegun ('wedding' + 'day' → 'wedding day')

In this talk, I want to investigate and document the grammar of (what I shall provisionally label) "*rendaku*-like phenomena" from a cross-linguistic and typological point of view, with a special — but not exclusive — focus on Korean and Basque.

The purpose is to assert the existence and the typological relevance of a specific category of compound markers, the "*rendaku*-like markers", in the languages of the world, and to provide a definition and characterization of them. My claim is that this type of compound marker exhibits a set of specific, interrelated properties, which will be presented and discussed in the paper, and that they should thus be recognized in their own right alongside other types of compound markers such as the Germanic linking elements, and other kinds of linking devices.

It is hoped that this enterprise can bring new insights into our understanding of the Japanese data themselves. For instance, the fact that the manifestation of *rendaku* in Japanese consists in the appearance of the feature [+voice] is not relevant to the typological characterization of the phenomenon, but the fact that [+voice] is a laryngeal feature is relevant. Another notable and probably significant structural similarity is that in all three languages, the

mark is most commonly realized by a category of segment which is normally not allowed at the beginning of independent lexical native words (that is, voiced obstruents in Japanese, tense consonants in Korean, and voiceless obstruents in Basque).

At a more general level, a typological characterization of *rendaku*-like markers can also help provide greater visibility to a phenomenon which, probably because of its inherently inconsistent behaviour within individual languages, is generally not considered as deserving much descriptive and theoretical attention in current research (Japanese *rendaku* constituting, in this respect, a notable exception).