

## THE FORMATION OF PUNS IN DAJARE KARUTA PRODUCED BY ARTEC

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the formation of puns in the game of karuta. The data source for this research is the Dajare Karuta card game produced by Artec. The research method employed is descriptive with a qualitative approach. The findings reveal six types of pun formations based on the theory proposed by Dybala et al. (2012): adding mora at the beginning, adding mora at the end, homophones, shifting the pause, removing mora at the end, and adding mora in the middle. From the gathered data, it can be concluded that the most frequently encountered pun formation type is adding mora at the beginning, with 12 instances. Conducting this research can benefit foreign language learners by providing insights into various forms of pun.

**Keywords:** pun, dajare karuta, pun formations

### INTRODUCTION

Japan is a country situated in East Asia, boasts a populace exceeding 125 million as of 2020 and spans an archipelago covering an area of 377, 962 square kilometers. Its geographical layout comprises numerous small islands, forging a cohesive maritime nation. Renowned globally for its technological prowess, Japan hosts a myriad of industrial giants, epitomized by Toyota in the automotive sector (Respatiadi *et al.*, 2024). Even though it is advanced as a country, Japan has its own problems that it is currently being faced, such as the aging population. One of the main challenges linked to an aging population is the imbalance between retiring employees and new recruits. As individuals grow older, they eventually retire, creating vacancies within the workforce. However, there is presently a shortage of young individuals in Japan to fill these roles left by retirees. Consequently, vital sectors in Japan, like automotive and electronics, lack the necessary manpower to sustain their current levels of production

(Jack, 2016). That's why currently Japan is aggressively opening up job opportunities for foreign workers. Presently, as efforts are made to enhance the workforce of elderly nurses in Japan, deliberations are ongoing among advocates and detractors concerning the enlargement of the intake of foreign workers (Sudiono *et al.*, 2023). If it's like that, then there will definitely be lots of people who want to work in Japan. Especially for those in their country whose salaries are low. Based on my observations, while in Japan, Japanese people tend to assess our language proficiency based on various aspects, even including our sense of humor. They will tell jokes or puns and gauge our Japanese language skills based on our reactions. The vocabulary used in these jokes or puns can often be challenging to comprehend. That's why, I hope Japanese language learners will pay more attention to this aspect. Even though it may seem trivial, I believe that if you can keep up with the jokes, you will earn extra points and won't feel discouraged.

Previously, there had been several studies discussing puns in various media, such as Instagram accounts (Prakoso, 2018), product names in Japanese food and drink advertisements (Tresnasari, 2019), *anime* (Widianto, 2020), *karuta* (Azizah and Fanani, 2022), and *YouTube* channels (Akbar, 2023). Although there has been research examining the formation of puns in *karuta*, the research object used in this research is a different type of *karuta*, namely *dajare karuta* produced by Artec. All previous studies discussed the formation of puns, and no one has compared the results with each other. Therefore, this research aims to determine the formation of puns in *dajare karuta* to compare with the previous research.

Through this research, my goal is to open the awareness of Japanese language learners, especially those who are going to Japan, not to underestimate their types of jokes. because they will always test your Japanese language skills. so that you are not taken for granted and are recognized because you can be in line with their conversation. Through the card game *Dajare Karuta*, which involves searching for cards with the mentioned characteristics, I believe you can start with something easy and enjoyable like this game. Vocabulary mastery poses a challenge for Japanese language learners, especially at the beginner level, resulting in limited proficiency in Japanese communication (Fauzi and Rosliyah, 2020). *Dajare karuta* can also serves as an educational medium for Japanese language learners to enhance their understanding of puns and acquire new vocabulary.

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. From the final results of this research, 6 types of puns formation were found, with the form "adding mora at the beginning" being the highest. By identifying the most common forms and comparing them with previous research (as will be discussed in the following section), we can determine which forms are most frequently utilized by Japanese people. This provides Japanese language learners with a greater opportunity to understand the meaning of the jokes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Dajare

*Dajare* is a game of words where in the sentence uttered, several syllables sound similar in pronunciation and consist of the original word with a play on another word. *Dajare* means 'tsumaranai share' or 'tasteless joke' (Andarwati and Fransiska, 2020). *Dajare* itself consists of two words, namely *da* 駄, which means 'poor or bad', and *share* 洒落, which means 'play on words or joke' (Otake, 2010).

### Formation of Dajare

To simplify the analysis of *dajare* forms, Dybala *et al.* (2012) use the terms base phrase and pun phrase. Base phrase refers to the expression of a phrase before being transformed into puns form. Meanwhile, pun phrase refers to a phrase after it has been transformed. Dybala *et al.* divide the formation of *dajare* into 12 types, namely:

#### 1) Homophones

In this form, the base phrase and pun phrase are words that have the same sound but have different meanings. The formation formula is:

{base phrase} = {pun phrase} Ex: **Kaeru** ga **kaeru** BP= a frog PP= come back

#### 2) Mora Addition

In this form the base phrase has the addition of one or more mora which can be done in the front, middle or back.

Formation based on mora position is:

##### a. Initial Mora Addition

The formation formula is:

[\*] + {base phrase} = {pun phrase} Ex: **suika** wa **yasuika** BP= watermelon PP= is it cheap?

##### b. Internal Mora Addition

The formation formula is:

{base+[\*]}phrase = {pun phrase} Ex: **kichin** to katazuita **kitchin** BP= thorough PP=kitchen

##### c. Final Mora Addition

The formation formula is:

{base phrase} + [\*] = {pun phrase} Ex: **kaba** no **kaban** BP= Hippo PP= bag

#### 3) Mora Omission

In this form there is a reduction or elimination of mora which can occur at the back or middle of the base phrase.

The division is as follows:

##### a. Final Mora Omission

The formation formula is:

{base phrase} – [\*] = {pun phrase} Ex: **sukii** ga **suki** BP= ski PP= to like

b. Internal Mora Omission

The formation formula is:

{base (-[\*]) phrase} = {pun phrase} Ex: **suteeki** ga **suteki** BP= a steak PP= nice

4) Mora Transformation

In this form, the mora contained in the base phrase undergoes changes to include vowels or consonants, making it a phrase. The division is as follows:

a. Consonant Transformation

The formation formula is:

{base phrase (cons. 1)} → {pun phrase (cons. 2)} Ex: **tomato** wo taberu to **tomadou** BP= a tomato PP= get confused

b. Vowel Transformation

The formation formula is:

{base phrase (vowel 1)} → {pun phrase (vowel 2)} Ex: **mezurashii**, **mizurashii** BP= peculiar PP= like water

5) Mora Metathesis

In this form, there is a change in the arrangement between one mora and another.

The formation formula is:

{base phrase (mora 1, 2)} → {pun phrase (mora 2, 1)} Ex: **dajare** wo iu no wa **dareja**? BP= a pun PP= who?

6) Morpheme Metathesis

In the previous form, what changes the composition is the mora, in this form what changes the structure is the morpheme.

The formation formula is:

{base phrase (morphemes 1, 2)} → {pun phrase (morphemes 2, 1)} Ex: **otoko** wo uru **omoide** BP=**omoide** wo uru **otoko** PP= otoko wo uru omoide

7) Change in Kanji Reading Methods

This form is produced by changing the standard way of reading kanji to a way of reading that is unusual or does not match the actual reading. The formation formula is:

{base phrase (reading method 1)} → {pun phrase (reading method 2)} Ex: **shokkingu** 食王 BP= 食 **shoku** PP=王  
Ou/king

8) Blend

In this form, it occurs by mixing elements of two different phrases into one that is still recognizable. Usually, the phrases used are famous phrases or proverbs. The formation formula is:

{base phrase (phrase 1, phrase 2)} → {pun phrase (phrase 1+2)} Ex: **oite wa koto wo shisonzuru** BP= **oite wa ko ni shitagae** PP= **seite wa koto wo shisonzuru**

9) Division

This form results from dividing one phrase into two phrases. The formation formula is:

{base phrase (phrase 1+2)} → {pun phrase (phrase 1, phrase 2)} Ex: yudetamago wo yudeta no wa mago BP= yudetamago PP= yudeta, mago

10) Riddles

In this form, dajare is found in the answer to the riddle. The formation formula is:

{base phrase (question)} → {pun phrase (answer)} Nicchuu, kuruma wo kowashite bakari iru hito tte dare deshou?  
Kotae: haisha

11) Mix of Language

This form is formed from mixing Japanese with foreign languages. The formation formula is:

{base phrase (language 1)} → {pun phrase (language 2)} Ex: souri daijin ga ayamatta: "aimu souri"

12) Pause Transference

This form is produced by moving the pause/comma when it is read. The formation formula is:

{base phrase (pause position 1)} → {pun phrase (pause position 2)} Ex: kane wo kure, tanomu. Kane wo kureta, nomu! BP= kure, tanomu PP= kureta, nomu

By using the theory explained above, this research aims to describe the formation of puns using the theory put forward by Dybala *et al.* which is found in the *dajare karuta* produced by Artec.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Descriptive research is employed in this study because it aims to provide an overview, explanation, or validation of the phenomenon under investigation by describing research findings. Qualitative research is chosen due to its utilization of a theoretical framework to guide the research focus, and involves researchers who require analytical skills to interpret research results. The data source used is *dajare karuta* produced by Artec. The data collection method involves the use of the note-taking technique, wherein the author will read and record all the data from the *dajare karuta* produced by Artec for this research. Next, data analysis was carried out by dividing the linguistic units of a pun into several language elements. Subsequently, we determined which language elements are included in the base phrase and pun phrase categories. Finally, we analyzed the formation of puns based on the theory proposed by Dybala *et al.* The results, discussions, and conclusions will be derived from this data analysis.



## DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** the result of the formation of puns

| Number | Category               | Amount |
|--------|------------------------|--------|
| 1      | Initial Mora Addition  | 12     |
| 2      | Final Mora Addition    | 12     |
| 3      | Homophones             | 5      |
| 4      | Pause Transference     | 4      |
| 5      | Final Mora Omission    | 2      |
| 6      | Internal Mora Addition | 1      |
| Total  |                        | 36     |

Table 1 displays the forms of puns identified. By utilizing Japanese pun classification theory Dybala *et al.* the most frequently encountered form is the 'initial and final mora addition' with 12 instances recorded, followed by 'homophones' with 5 instances, 'pause transference' with 4 instances, 'final mora omission' with 2 instances, and 'internal mora addition' with 1 instance. The following is an explanation of each point based on the data found:

### 1) Initial Mora Addition

キリン<sup>BP</sup>がトイレですっきりん<sup>PP</sup>! (data 7)

In the data above, the base phrase キリン [giraffe] changes to the pun phrase すっきりん [relieved] by adding mora すっ in front of the base phrase so that キリン changes to すっきりん.

### 2) Final Mora Addition

いなか<sup>BP</sup>にはひとがいなか<sup>PP</sup> (data 2)

In the data above, the base phrase いなか [village] changes to the pun phrase いなかつた [none] by adding the mora った at the end of the base phrase so that いなか changes to いなかつた.

### 3) Homophones

せんにん<sup>BP</sup>がせんにん<sup>PP</sup> (data 14)

In the data above, the base phrase せんにん which means [old people] has the same sound as the word pun phrase せんにん which means [thousand people], so it is included in the homophone category.

### 4) Pause Transference

ようかい<sup>BP</sup>になにかようかい<sup>PP</sup> (data 38)

In the data above the base phrase ようかい [demon/spiritual being] changes to a pun phrase to become なにかようかい [is it necessary?] where there is a transfer of the pause when saying the word to なにかよう、かい?

5) Final Mora Omission

ひらめいた<sup>BP</sup> ひらめ<sup>PP</sup> (data 27)

In the data above, the base phrase ひらめいた [wide open] changes to the pun phrase to ひらめ [hirame fish] by removing the mora った at the end of the base phrase so that ひらめいた changes to ひらめ.

6) Internal Mora Addition

サボテン<sup>BP</sup> がさぼってん<sup>PP</sup> (data 11)

In the data above, the base phrase サボテン [cactus] changes to the pun phrase さぼってん [lazing around] by adding mora っ in the middle of the base phrase so that サボテン changes to さぼってん.

Table 2 puns combination forms

| Number | Category                                                         | Amount |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1      | Pause Transference + Final Mora Addition                         | 3      |
| 2      | Initial Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition                      | 2      |
| 3      | Internal Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition                     | 1      |
| 4      | Pause Transference + Initial Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition | 1      |
| 5      | Initial Mora Addition+ Mora Metathesis                           | 1      |
| 6      | Initial Mora Addition + Kanji Readings Change                    | 1      |
| Total  |                                                                  | 9      |

In Table 2, the data is presented in combination form, where each data point comprises multiple forms. The most frequently occurring combinations are 'Pause Transference + Final Mora Addition' with 3 instances, 'Initial Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition' with 2 instances, and the remaining combinations with 1 instance each. The following is an explanation of each point based on the data found:

1) Pause Transference + Final Mora Addition

トナカイ<sup>BP</sup> となかいい<sup>PP</sup>(data 20)

In the data above, there is a combination of moving the pause and adding mora at the end. The transfer of the pause occurs in the base phrase トナカイ [deer] changing to the pun phrase to となかいい [(with) good friends], where there is a transfer of the pause in the pun phrase, namely と、なかいい. Then the addition of mora at the end is where initially the base phrase トナカイ changed to the pun phrase となかいい, that is, there was the addition of the sound い.

2) Initial Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition

やま<sup>BP</sup>のうえからあやまる<sup>PP</sup> (data 36)

In the data above, there is a combination of the formation of additional mora at the beginning and the addition of mora at the end. In the base phrase やま [mountain] changes to a pun phrase to become あやまる [apologize], there is an addition of mora at the beginning, namely the letter あ in あやまる, then there is an addition of mora at the end, namely the letter る in あやまる.

3) Internal Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition

ふとん<sup>BP</sup>がふっとんだ<sup>PP</sup> (data 28)

In the data above, there is a combination of adding mora in the middle and adding mora at the end. The base phrase ふとん [futon] changes to a pun phrase to become ふっとんだ [flying/blown by the wind] there is an addition of mora in the middle, namely the double sound っ in ふっとんだ, then there is an addition of mora at the end, namely the letter だ in ふっとんだ.

4) Pause Transference + Initial Mora Addition + Final Mora Addition

ルパン<sup>BP</sup>とたべるパンダ<sup>PP</sup> (data 41)

In the data above, there is a combination of moving the pause and adding mora at the beginning and adding mora at the end. The pause transfer occurs in the base phrase ルパン [Lupin] Changing to the pun phrase it becomes たべるパンダ [Panda who (is) eating] which if rearranged becomes たべる パンダ, there is a transfer of the pause between the words たべる in the letter る and パンダ in the letter パン. Then there is the addition of mora at the beginning of the base phrase, namely the letter たべ in たべる and there is the addition of mora at the end of the base phrase, namely the letter だ in パンダ.

5) Initial Mora Addition + Mora Metathesis

エビ<sup>BP</sup>がひえびえ<sup>PP</sup> (data 4)

In the data above, there is a combination of the addition of mora at the beginning and the metathesis of mora. The addition of mora at the beginning of the base phrase エビ [shrimp] changes the pun phrase to ひえびえ [cold], and there is the addition of mora, namely the letter ひえ in ひえびえ. Meanwhile, mora metathesis is found in the base phrase エビ which changes in the phrase to びえ in ひえびえ which is the opposite of the base phrase arrangement.

6) Initial Mora Addition + Kanji Readings Change

てんぐ<sup>BP</sup>がひゃくてんグー<sup>PP</sup>! (data 19)

In the data above, the base phrase てんぐ [Tengu] changes to a phrase to become ひゃくてんグー [Great Goo-d] because of the difference in how to read kanji between two different words, one of which is the English vocabulary, namely ひゃくてん which means "one hundred percent/steady" with グー which leads to the word "good". By reading two words which, if read aloud, will produce vocabulary that sounds similar to the base phrase.



Apart from that, in the base phrase there is an addition of mora at the beginning of the word before it can reach the target word and the pun phrase is "hyaku" in the word ひゃくてん.

Table 3 comparison with the results of other studies

|               | Youtube       | Karuta        | Intagram            | Anime               | Advertisement |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| This Research | Mora Addition | Mora Addition | Mora Transformation | Mora Transformation | Homophones    |
|               | <b>V</b>      | <b>V</b>      | <b>X</b>            | <b>X</b>            | <b>X</b>      |

From the data above, it can be seen that the formation with the addition of mora is the most commonly found. The reason for the prevalence of 'initial and final mora addition' is in Japanese, when creating a new word, there are many rules, most of which involve the addition of a suffix or affix (Win, 2020). These findings align with previous research on puns, including studies utilizing *YouTube* media (Akbar, 2023) and karuta (Azizah and Fanani, 2022). However, three other studies yielded different results: one focusing on *Instagram* (Prakoso, 2018) and *anime* (Rini and Widiyanto, 2021) found mora tranformation to be the most frequent formation, while another focusing on advertising media (Tresnasari, 2019) indicated that homophones were the most common. Overall, these findings, when considered alongside this research, suggest that mora changes are the predominant characteristic in the formation of puns.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the 'mora addition' form is the most commonly encountered, consistent with previous research. This insight allows Japanese language learners to better understand the prevalent jokes in Japan. Consequently, they can navigate such situations confidently, avoiding any potential belittlement and even earning admiration. This research aims to encourage future researchers to explore a wider range of subjects, allowing for a deeper investigation into the various forms of puns across different media. For instance, conducting direct interviews with Japanese individuals specifically focused on situations where jokes are best told, or recording the reactions of individuals engaging in humorous exchanges. By doing so, we can gain further insights into the cultural nuances and usage of humor in Japan.

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