

Stress of Compound Adjectives
in
Present-day English

「現代英語の複合形容詞の強勢について」

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This study is an investigation of the phonetic and phonological aspects of the stress patterns of compound adjectives in Present-day English. Compounds consist of two words (two elements), both of which can exist independently as English words. Compounds can be written separately, with a hyphen, or as one word. There is no systematic practice in the choice among these three ways, although there is a tendency for compounds with primary stress on the first element to be written as one word or with a hyphen, and for those with the primary stress on the final element to be written as two words. Primary stress in compounds is placed most commonly on the first element by Compound Stress Rule, e.g. ¹day|break, ¹glass|house, and in some cases this type of accentuation will distinguish compounds from more productive phrases, e.g. |glass ¹house. In Compound Stress Rule, primary stress is put on the first element of compounds, and then secondary stress is put on their second element. This is the pattern called ‘strong-weak’. Besides the stress pattern of strong-weak’, there are two other patterns, which means that there are three stress patterns for

compounds as follows:

- (1) ① weak-strong
- ② strong-weak
- ③ strong-strong

These are the stress patterns of compounds which appear in a dictionary. Although there are three stress patterns in a dictionary, the pattern ③ is an area of uncertainty. The investigation in terms of stress of compounds has been done using two dictionaries published in Japan: *Reverse Dictionary* and *New English-Japanese Dictionary* and two other dictionaries published in England: *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* and *Oxford English Dictionary* (second edition). The result showed that there are many examples of the pattern ③ in the Japanese dictionaries and only a few examples of the pattern ③ in the English dictionaries. Take Stress Shift into consideration, it seems that the stress pattern ③ is not appropriate. Stress Shift is an aspect of connected speech that the stress on the second element of a compound tends to move to a preceding syllable if the following word begins with a strongly stressed syllable as follows;

- (3) bad-¹tempered but a ₁bad-tempered ¹teacher
- half-¹timbered but a ₁half-timbered ¹house
- heavy-¹handed but a ₁heavy-handed ¹sentence

(Roach 1983:109)

When the stress pattern ③ is adopted to compounds, there are no possibilities for

the stress on the second element of a compound to move to a preceding syllable even if the following word begins with a strongly stressed syllable. That is the reason why the stress pattern ③ is not appropriate for compounds. In addition to the problem of the stress pattern ③, there is another problem of stress assignment of compounds. According to the research in the four dictionaries previously stated, stress of compounds varies from dictionary to dictionary, which leads to serious confusion for English learners who are non-natives of English. Therefore, the aim of this study is to conduct an investigation regarding these questions;

- (3) a. What kind of factor generates the stress pattern ③, which is common in Japanese dictionaries whereas uncommon in English dictionaries?
- b. In the case where two compounds have the same second element, does the first element determine the stress pattern?
- c. Dictionaries published in Japan carry the stress patterns ①, ② and ③, whereas dictionaries published in England carry only the stress patterns ① and ②. Which dictionary is correct in the notation of the degree of stress?

First, several previous studies by Roach, Koziol, Marchand and Japanese researchers such as Kageyama, Kubozono, Ota and Misono are overviewed in chapter 2. In chapter 3, function of word stress is studied followed by the difference between compounds and phrases in chapter 4. In chapter 5, function of stress in terms of compounds is discussed dealing with compound nouns, compound verbs and compound adjectives. In chapter 6, further investigation and analysis about function of stress of compounds have been done. Concluding with chapter 7, three points are

brought up:

- (4) a. The factor that generates the stress pattern ③ might be stress degree. There are several types of stress degrees existing in English. (i) is the type where primary stress and secondary stress are distinguished. (ii) is the type where primary stress, secondary stress and unstressed are described. (iii) is the type where primary stress, secondary stress, tertiary and unstressed are described. The stress pattern ①, weak-strong is sometimes described same as the stress pattern ③, strong-strong. With the use of different stress degrees, the stress pattern ① could be taken as the stress pattern ③.
- b. The first element of the compounds composed of the same word for the second element doesn't determine the stress pattern of the compounds, e.g. $\text{ }_1\text{coal-}^1\text{fired}$ and $^1\text{gas-}^1\text{fired}$ that have the same second elements but different stress patterns.
- c. Take Stress Shift into consideration, the stress pattern ③, that is strong-strong, is not a one in a dictionary. That is because dictionaries published in England carry only a few examples of the stress pattern ③. In conclusion, the dictionaries published in England are appropriate for English learners who are not native speakers of English.