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A Linguistic Study on Abbreviations in the Japanese Language

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This paper is a linguistic analysis and a study of abbreviations in the Japanese language and the manner in which such abbreviations are effected. Abbreviations of Japanese terms that are used frequently, are a recent development for the convenience of daily use of the language. However, new abbreviations being included frequently pose a problem for the students learning Japanese as a foreign language since they are unaware of the reasons and the basis behind them. This paper is the outcome of a detailed analysis carried out to ascertain the types of terms that are abbreviated in order to identify the basis for abbreviation. This research was carried out by gathering details of abbreviations used in books and periodicals, comparing the original unabbreviated terms with the abbreviations and identifying the basis and manner in which the abbreviations have been done. The study basically revealed that original Japanese words as well as loan words had been condensed and appropriately abbreviated. In examining the data, it was observed that several methods had been applied in effecting abbreviations, as described in the paper. The analysis and the comparison also focused on identifying the methodology used in abbreviations and would undoubtedly be of immense value to students as well as teachers in gaining an insight of the basic concept of abbreviation of Japanese terms and the underlying principles.

Key words: abbreviations, language teaching, loan words, modern Japanese, original Japanese words