

Adversative Conjunction *Kuseni* in Japanese Language

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Abstract

Kuseni is a conjunction used to connect contradictory clauses called as *gyakusetsu no setsuzokushi* in Japanese. This study aims to determine the structure and meaning of *kuseni* conjunction in Japanese sentences. The data source in this research is a sentence that contains a junction of conjunction, taken from several Japanese language websites. This study employs qualitative descriptive research. The result concludes that *kuseni* is an adversative conjunction that connects contradictory clauses containing criticism or reproach. *Kuseni* can be placed in the middle and the end of sentences and can be attached to the class of verbs, nouns, and adjectives in a sentence.

Keywords: *setsuzokushi*, adversative conjunction, *kuseni*

1. Introduction

Setsuzokushi (conjunction) is a word of class (part of speech) that has functions to connect words with words, clauses with clauses, or sentences with sentences, or also between paragraphs and paragraphs. From seven types of conjunctions in the Japanese language, conjunctions that express contradictory or called *gyakusetsu no setsuzokushi* in Japanese will be examined. There are several *gyakusetsu no setsuzokushi* in Japanese that have similar meanings, including *ga*, *shikashi*, *noni*, *temo*, *nagara*; therefore, Japanese language learners need to understand their usage properly. Hence, the author will discuss the *kuseni* conjunction to provide a clear description of its use in Japanese sentences.

Previous research that is relevant to this research is Wahidah's research (2016) titled, "Analysis of the Meaning of Conjunction *nagara*, *noni*, and *kuseni* in Sentences Expressing Opposition in Japanese." This study discusses the equation of the use of *nagara*, *noni*, and *kuseni* and analyzes whether the three conjunctions can be used interchangeably

in the same sentences or not. Their study concluded that sentences using *nagara* and *noni* conjunction could be applied to oneself or others, on the other hand, *kuseni* conjunctions can only be applied to other people. This study found that *nagara* and *noni* conjunctions can replace one another; on the other hand, *noni* and *kuseni* conjunctions can also replace each other but produce different nuances of meaning in sentences. The three conjunctions can replace each other depending on the context of the sentence. The relevance of this research to Wahidah's is the object (*kuseni* conjunction.) However, this study does not compare other conjunctions but only discusses *kuseni* conjunction in terms of structure and meaning in further details.

Another relevant research to this research is Novita Sari's study (2017) titled, "Analysis of Contrastive Meaning in the Conjunction of *Ga* and *Demo* in the Short Stories of Nagi Keishi's Work." Novita Sari's research aims to describe the different meanings of the conjunctions in the short story of Kusa Suberi by Nagi Keishi. The study found that *ga*

conjunction has three meanings: expressing and absolute contradiction, stating a comparison of meanings, and stating the differences between the meanings of the clause. The conjunction of the *demo* shows two meanings: the opposition to the ideational meaning with the previous sentence and the state of what the speaker is doing without any contextual influence from the previous sentence. The difference of this study over Novita Sari's research relies on the situation where the object is added to the *kuseni* conjunctions discussion to enrich the understanding of adversative conjunctions (contradictory conjunction.)

2. Methods

This research is qualitative research since it does not employ numbers or variables that must be proven by testing the hypothesis but through the answers. Data sources from this research are Japanese websites: www.yourei.jp; www.yomiuri.japan; www.j-nihongo.com; and www.aozora.gr.jp. The method used for data collection is a 'simak bebas libat catat' method by observing and understanding sentences which contain *kuseni* conjunctions. By using simak bebas libat catat's method, the researcher only acts as an observer in the use of language from the informants or written sources. After obtaining data from various sources, the next step is to record the use of *kuseni* conjunction using the 'catat' technique.

Analysis of the data in this study uses the 'agih' method. The 'agih (distribution)' method is an analytical method in which the determinant tool is part of the language itself (Sudaryanto, 1993:15). The basic technique used in 'agih (the distribution)' method is the BUL (Bagi Unsur Langsung) technique that divides the lingual unit of data into several parts or elements to identify its structure and meaning.

The presentation of research data uses 'informal' methods, where the result and discussion employ common and understandable words.

3. Result and Discussion

Yamada stated that '*setsuzokushi wa bun to bun no ronrikankei o meikaku ni shi, tekisetsuni mochiiru koto de kikite no rikai o tasukeru.*' This sentence means that conjunction is a class of words that clarifies the logical connection between clauses with proper use that will help the other people to understand the meaning of the sentence.

Kuseni is *gyakusetsu no setsuzokushi* (adversative conjunction), which is used to connect two clauses, namely the main clause and the subordinate clause that have a different connection. Shimomura (1988:63) states that 「前件から考えてそうするのが変だとかおかしいというような文があとに続く。のにより相手を非難したり軽蔑する意味が強く、改まった場合には ;使わない。」 which means: a sentence with *kuseni* conjunction considers what is stated in the subordinate clause; as a consequence, it becomes strange or funny to do things as stated in the main clause.

Asano (1994: 293) added that the *kuseni* conjunction showed an unexpected thing and had the nuances of the contradiction between main clauses and subordinate clauses that were stronger than sentences with *noni* conjunctions. Besides, compared to *noni* conjunction, *kuseni* has a stronger meaning to criticize and insult the interlocutor; hence it is not used in formal situations. In the Indonesian language, *kuseni* is paired with the word 'padahal.'

According to the KBBI (the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language of the Language Center), 'padahal' is a conjunction that shows a contradiction between the parts that are connected.

In terms of structure, *kuseni* conjunction can be placed in the middle or the end of sentences and can be attached to verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Also, a sentence with *kuseni* conjunction must be having the same subject.

3.1 *Kuseni* in the Middle of Sentences

According to Kawashima (1999: 82), *kuseni* conjunction in the middle of the sentence is used to show criticism against things that are contrary to the norms or habits in society. The following are examples of sentences containing *kuseni* conjunction in the middle of a sentence.

- a) 昨日まで見習いだったくせに大きいな口をきくな。(Makino, 1995:156)

Kinou made minaraidatta kuseni ookiina kuchi o kikuna.

“Jangan mulut besar, **padahal** (kamu) cuma peserta magang saja sampai kemarin.”

Do not be a big mouth when you were just a yesterday's apprentice.

- b) 彼は大学生のくせに、また母親に洗濯してもらっているんだって。(Kawashima, 1999:82)

Kare wa daigakusei no kuseni mata haha oya ni sentakushite moratteirundatte.

“Katanya dia masih meminta ibunya untuk mencuci pakaian, **padahal** (sudah) mahasiswa.”

Even though he is a college student, his mother is doing his laundry.

In the above samples, *kuseni* conjunction positions are in the middle of the sentence following the subordinate clause. *Kuseni* expresses criticism against things that are not following the norms or habits in society. In sample a), *kuseni* follows the *kinou made minaraidatta nominal kuseni* clause 'however he/she was only a yesterday's apprentice.' That sentence contained the meaning of critics upon the subject who acted arrogantly even though he had just completed yesterday's

internship implicitly. According to the speaker, an apprentice still did not have much experience, and it was not appropriate to have a big mouth. In sentence b), *kuseni* follows the nominal clause of *kare wa daigakusei no kuseni* 'even though he is a student.' Implicitly, there is a critic to the subject because the mother still assisted him in personal matters when an adult usually can take care of his business.

3.2 *Kuseni* at the end of the sentences

Kuseni conjunction at the end of the sentence is used to show the meaning of denouncing an unusual or strange thing to do. Examples of sentences are as follows:

- c) あなただつてできないくせに... (Chino, 2001:95)

Anatadatte dekinai kuseni.

“**Padahal** kamu sendiri saja tidak bisa.”

Still, you cannot do it.

- d) 何だ、何も知らないくせに ! (Kawashima, 1999:83)

Nanda nanimo shiranai kuseni.

“Apa, **padahal** (kamu) tidak tahu apapun!”

What, (you) know nothing, though!

For example, in sentences c) and d), *kuseni* conjunction is placed at the end of the sentence and shows the meaning of reproach. In sentence c), *kuseni* conjunction follows the verbal clause *anata datte dekinai kuseni* 'still you cannot do it by yourself.' In sentence d), *kuseni* conjunction follows the verbal clause *nanda nanimi shiranai kuseni* '(you) know nothing, though.' In sentences c) and d), even though the main clause is not said explicitly, the contents can be predicted.

According to the above explanation, *kuseni* conjunction is divided into two types in terms of structure position: *kuseni* in the middle of the sentence and *kuseni* at the end of the sentence. The following is examples of data analysis:

3.3 *Kuseni* Conjunction Located in the Middle of Sentence

- (1) 絵のことなんか知らないくせに、勝手なこと言わないで！
(www.aozora.gr.jp)

E no koto nanka shiranai kuseni kattena koto iwanaide!

“Jangan berbicara semaumu sendiri, **padahal** kamu saja tidak tahu apapun tentang lukisan.”

Do not say anything when you know nothing about painting!

In sentence (1), *kuseni* is attached to the negative verb *shiranai* 'know nothing' in the verbal clause *e no koto nanka shiranai kuseni* 'when he does not know anything about painting.' *Kuseni* in sentence (1) is located in the middle of the sentence and connects subordinate clauses *e no koto nanka shiranai* 'know nothing about the painting' with the main clause *kattena koto iwanaide* 'do not say anything at all.' *Kuseni* in that sentence has an implied meaning in the form of criticism against a subject who said something about a painting frivolously; what makes the speaker feel annoyed is the subject does not understand anything about the painting.

- (2) 就職したことがないくせにそんなことを知っているのが不思議でならない。
(yourei.jp)

Shuushoku shita koto ga nai kuseni sonna koto o shitte iru no ga fushigi de naranai.

“Sangat mengherankan dia mengetahui hal seperti itu, **padahal** dia belum pernah bekerja.”

It is strange that you know such things even though you have not had a job.

In sentence (2), *kuseni* is attached to the verbal clause *shuushoku shita koto ga nai kuseni* 'even though he has not worked.' *Kuseni* connects the main clause *sonna koto o shitte iru no fushigi de naranai* 'it is very surprising that he knows such things' with the subordinate clause *shuushoku shita koto ga nai kuseni* 'even though he

has never worked.' The *kuseni* conjunction in sentence (2) shows the speaker's surprise over the subject who can understand such things even though he has never worked.

- (3) 彼はお金がたくさんあるくせに、全然ごちそうしてくれない。

(www.j-nihongo.com)

Kare wa okane ga takusan aru kuseni zenzen gochisoushite kurenai.

“**Padahal** dia punya uang banyak, tapi sama sekali tidak pernah mentraktir.”

Even though he has a lot of money, he has never given us treat at all.

In sentence (3), *kuseni* is attached to the verb *aru* 'exist' in verbal subordinate clauses *kare wa okane ga takusan aru kuseni* 'even though he has much money.' *Kuseni* connects the main clause *zenzen gochisoushite kurenai* 'never gave us treat at all' with subordinate clauses *kare wa okane ga takusan aru* 'he has a lot of money.' *Kuseni* in sentence (3) shows the meaning of criticism of subject *kare*. This sentence contained criticism against the attitude of the subject *kare* who is considered stingy despite having much money.

- (4) 私は日本人のくせに日本語の文法が大嫌いだ。(http://www.j-nihongo.org)

Watashi wa Nihonjin no kuseni nihongo no bunpou ga daikiraida.

“**Padahal** orang Jepang, tapi saya sangat membenci tata bahasa Jepang.”

I hate Japanese grammar despite the fact that I am Japanese.

In sentence (4), *kuseni* is attached to the noun 'Japanese' *nihonjin* in the nominal clause *watashi wa nihonjin no kuseni* 'even though I am Japanese.' *Kuseni* is in the middle of the sentence and connects the subordinate clause *watashi wa nihonjin* 'I am Japanese' and the main clause *nihongo no bunpou ga daikiraida* 'really hates Japanese grammar.' *Kuseni* in sentence (4) contains the meaning of self-criticism. The subject's statement is contradictory; Japanese people should not hate Japanese

grammar since they are Japanese native speakers.

This sample contradicts Wahidah's previous research stating that *kuseni* could not be intended for oneself.

(5) 先生こそ婦人科が専門のくせに、そんなこと御存じないんですか。
(yourei.jp)

*Sensei koso fujinka ga senmon no **kuseni**, sonna koto gosonji naindesuka.*

“**Padahal** spesialisasi dokter adalah ginekologi, Apakah (anda) tidak mengetahui mengenai hal itu?”

Even though you are a doctor who specializes in gynecology, do you not know about that?

In sentence (5), *kuseni* is attached to the noun *senmon* 'specialization' in the nominal clause *sensei koso fujinka ga senmon no kuseni* 'even though you are a doctor who specializes in gynecology.' *Kuseni* is placed in the middle of the sentence and connects the subordinate clause *sensei koso fujinka ga senmon* with the main clause *sonna koto gosonji naindesuka* 'do (you) not know about it?' Sentence (5) implies critics to the doctor who does not know what the speaker is talking about although he specializes in gynecology. According to the speaker, like gynecology, the subject should understand about his specialization.

(6) あの女は五十に近いくせに、寝るときに化粧なんかしているんですからね。
(www.yourei.jp)

*Ano onna wa gojuu ni chikai **kuseni**, neru toki ni keshou nanka shiteirundesukara ne.*

“Karena wanita itu ketika tidur dalam kondisi berdandan, **padahal** umurnya (sudah) mendekati 50 tahun.”

Even though her age is close to fifty years old, she wears makeup while sleeping.

In sentence (6), *kuseni* adheres to the adjunctive clause *ano onna wa gojuu ni chikai* 'even though she is close to 50 years

old.' *Kuseni* connects the main clause *neru toki ni keshou nanka shiteirun desukare* 'because she wears makeup when she sleeps' with the subordinate clause *ano onna wa gojuu ni chikai* 'she is close to 50 years old.' The use of *kuseni* conjunction in sentence (6) implies the meaning of the astonished speaker who does not expect an older woman was wearing makeup before sleeping. Generally, an elderly does not care much about her physical appearance, especially during sleep.

(7) 私なんかよりもっと大きなくせに、それ随分出来ない娘がいるんですもの。

(www.asahi.com)

*Watashi nanka yori motto ookina **kuseni**, sore zuibun dekinai musume ga irundesumono.*

“Karena mempunyai anak perempuan yang lumayan tidak bisa melakukannya, **padahal** ia lebih besar daripada saya.”

I have a daughter who cannot do much, even though she is bigger than me.

In sentence (7), *kuseni* is attached to the adjunctive clause *ookina* 'big' *watashi nanka yori motto ookiina kuseni* 'even though she is bigger than me.' *Kuseni* is located in the middle of the sentence and connects the main clause *sore zuibun dekinai musume ga irundesumono*

'I have a daughter who cannot do much' with the subordinate clause *watashi nanka yori motto ookiina* 'she is bigger than me.' *Kuseni* in the sentence expressed the speaker's strange feelings towards his daughter, who could not do things that should have been done by girls as big as her.

3.2. *Kuseni* Conjunction Located at the End of the Sentence

(8) 自分で世話もできないくせに...
(www.yomiuri.jp)

*Jibunde sewa mo dekinai **kuseni**...*

“**Padahal** (kamu) saja tidak bisa mengurusnya sendiri...”

Even though he cannot take care of it by himself...

In sentence (8), *kuseni* is attached to the negative verb *dekinai* 'cannot' in the verbal clause *jibun de sewa mo dekinai kuseni* 'even though he cannot take care of it by himself.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence following the subordinate clause of *jibun de sewa mo dekinai* 'cannot take care of it.' In sentence (8), the main clause is omitted, but the overall meaning of the sentence can be predicted. *Kuseni* in sentence (8) shows the implied meaning of insults to subjects who are considered unable to take care of something but keep commenting on people's work.

(9) そしらぬ顔をして、しってる**くせに!**
(www.yomiuri.jp)

*Soshiranu kao o shite shitteru **kuseni!***

“**Padahal** (kamu) tahu kan, tapi menunjukkan wajah pura-pura tidak tahu!”

You show an innocent face even though (you) know!

In sentence (9), *kuseni* is attached to *-teiru* form verb *shitteiru* 'know' in the verbal clause of *soshiranu kao o shite shitteiru kuseni* 'even though (you) know, you pretend like you don't know anything.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence and follows the subordinate clause of *soshiranu kao o shite, shitteru* 'knows but shows a face of not knowing.' *Kuseni* in the sentence implies the speaker's strange feeling about the subject who is pretending not to know even though he knows the truth.

(10) 寝不足が聞いて呆れるよ。ゆうべはあんなにグウグウ眠ってた**くせに!**
(www.yourei.jp)

*Nebusoku ga kite akireru yo. Yuube wa anna ni guu guu nemutte ita **kuseni!***

“(Saya) terkejut ketika kau mengatakan kurang tidur. **Padahal**

tadi malam (kamu) tidur lelap sambil mendengkur.”

I am amazed when I hear you suffer from lack of sleep. Even though last night I heard

You were snoring!

In sentence (10), *kuseni* is attached to the *-te ita* form verb *nemutte ita* 'deep sleep' in the verbal clause *yuube wa anna ni guu guu nemutte ita kuseni* 'even though last night (you) slept well and snored.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence and follows the verbal subordinate clause *yuube wa anna ni guu guu nemutte ita kuseni* 'even though last night (you) were snoring while sleeping.' *Kuseni* in the sentence means the speaker's strange feeling to the subject who said that he lacked sleep, whereas the speaker knows the subject was snoring while sleeping.

(11) 借金をすると僕に後始末を頼む**くせに...** (www.yourei.jp)

*Shakkin o suru to boku ni atoshimatsu o tanomu **kuseni.***

“**Padahal** kalau meminjam uang, (kamu) meminta padaku untuk menyelesaikannya.”

When you go into debt, you ask me to clean it up...

In sentence (11), the *kuseni* is attached to the verb *tanomu* 'beg' in the verbal clause *shakkin o suru to boku ni atoshimatsu o tanomu* 'if you owe money, you ask me to settle it.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence following the subordinate clause *shakkin o suru to boku ni atoshimatsu o tanomu* 'begging me to settle if you go into debt.' *Kuseni* in sentence (11) means an insult to the subject who is arrogant; when he is experiencing difficulties, he begs someone to help.

(12) お前なんか、まだ歯も抜けていないガキの**くせに...** (www.asahi.com)

*Omae nanka mada ha mo nuketeinai gaki no **kuseni...***

“**Padahal** kamu itu anak kecil nakal yang giginya saja masih belum tanggal.”

However, you are just a kid who has not lost any teeth yet.

In sentence (12), *kuseni* is attached to the noun *gaki* 'naughty boy' in the nominal clause *omae nanka mada ha mo nuketeinai kaki no kuseni* 'however, you are just a bad boy whose teeth are still not fixed in place.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence and follows the subordinate clause of *omae nanka mada ha mo nuketeinai kaki* 'bad boy whose teeth are still not settled.' *Kuseni* in sentence (12) means an insult to the subject *omae* 'you.' In sentence (12), it is implied that the speaker is underestimating a person who is considered a naughty child with a runny nose; therefore, he is not eligible to interfere with an adult's business.

(13) おかしいわ、男のくせに。

(www.yourei.jp)

Okashii wa, otoko no kuseni.

“Aneh ya, **padahal** (dia) seorang laki-laki.”

It is funny to the habit of a man.

In sentence (13), *kuseni* is attached to the noun *otoko* 'laki-laki' in the nominal clause of *okashiiwa, otoko no kuseni* is 'weird, even though (he is) a man.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence and follows the subordinate clause *okashiiwa, otoko no kuseni* 'strange, even though (he is) a man.' *Kuseni* in sentence (13) means an insult to the subject who does things that are not normally done by a man.

(14) オレから見ればほんのまだ赤ん坊のくせに！ (www.yourei.jp)

Ore kara mireba hon no mada akanbou no kuseni!

“**Padahal** dari sudut pandang saya (dia) benar-benar masih bayi.”

However, from my point of view, he is just a baby!

In sentence (14), *kuseni* is attached to the noun *akachan* 'baby' in the nominal clause

of *ore kara mireba hon no mada akanbou kuseni!* 'However, from my point of view (he) is a baby.' *Kuseni* is located at the end of the sentence and follows the subordinate clause of *ore kara mireba hon no mada akanbou no kuseni!* 'However, (he) is just a baby from my point of view.' *Kuseni* in sentence (14) means an insult to the subject; the speaker thinks the opponent is still 'a baby' or immature to do things as he had done.

(15) 自分の恋には臆病なくせに... (www.yourei.jp)

Jibun no koi ni wa okubyouna kuseni...

“**Padahal** (kamu) seorang pengecut dalam percintaanmu sendiri.”

In fact, you are timid in your love

In sentence (15), *kuseni* is attached to the adjective *na okubyouna* 'timid' in the adjectival clause *jibun no koi ni wa okubyouna* 'you are timid in your love.' *Kuseni* follows the clause of *jibun no koi ni wa okubyouna* 'timid in your love.' *Kuseni* in sentence (15) implies an insult to the subject who comments about people's love but is not brave enough for his love. 'Timid' or 'coward' is an insult intended for people who are hesitant or timid about doing something that might get a negative response from others.

(16) 本当は、怖いくせに。 (www.yourei.jp)

Hontou wa, kowai kuseni.

“**Padahal** sesungguhnya, (dia) takut.”

In fact, he is scared

In sentence (16), *kuseni* adheres to the adjective *i kowai* 'fear' in the adjective clause, *hontou wa kowai* 'you are actually afraid.' *Kuseni* follows the subordinate clause of *hontou wa, kowai kuseni* 'in fact he is afraid.' The *kuseni* in sentence (16) implies an insult to the subject who acts as if he was brave when he was actually scared.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis, *Kuseni* conjunction is a conjunction whose position can be placed in the middle or end of a sentence. This conjunction can be attached to word class of verb (-ru) (-te iru), (-ta), (-te ita), (-nai) + *kuseni*, adjective-i + *kuseni*, adjective -na + *kuseni*, and nouns + *no* + *kuseni*.

Kuseni conjunction states the meaning of contradiction because there is a mismatch between subject behaviors and habits or norms that exist in society. Sentences with *kuseni* conjunctions express criticism or reproach of unusual or strange habits perceived by the speaker.

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