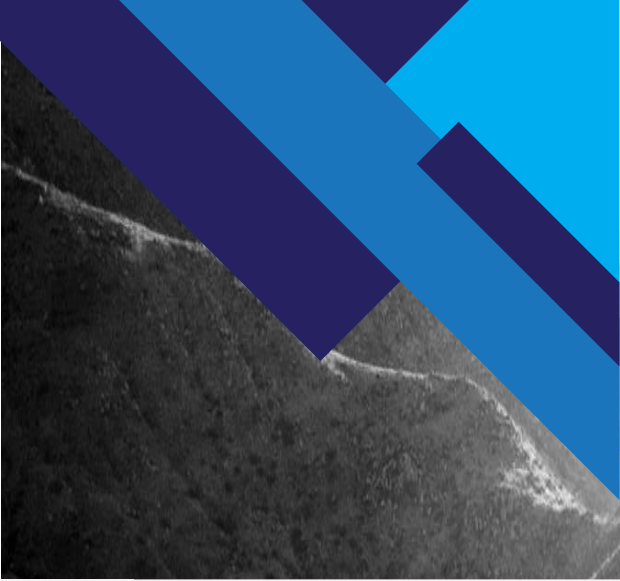


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A Cognitive Semantic Analysis of ROAD Concept in English and Japanese Expressions

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Outline



01 Why “ROAD”?

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— PATH schema

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and Japanese

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Why “ROAD”?

ROAD is one of the most common human experiences

ROAD concept words: **way**, **road**, **path**, **street**, **route**, and so on
道(michi / dō)、**路**(ro/ji)、**通**リ(tōri)

<abstract concepts>

- the **road** to success
- the **way** of life
- the **path** of learning



Japanese also has the same kind of abstract concepts

By examining *ROAD concept words*, we can see

- : how each language links **bodily experience** with **abstract thought**
- : how that connection is **shared** or **different** **between the two**

PATH Schema

Cognitive Semantics

- Our physical experiences shape how we think about the world.
- The way of thinking is reflected in our verbal expressions.
- ⇒ by analyzing language expressions, we can understand how people conceptualize their experience.



<PATH Schema>

Source → **Path** → **Goal**

Starting Point

He launched his career.



Process / Progression

He's on the right path.



Endpoint

He achieved success.



Our physical sense of movement through space serves as a conceptual foundation for **abstract thought** about **life, learning, and personal growth**.

English Road Words: Origins & Core Concepts



【*way*】

Original meaning: **to move**, to go

Focus: **Movement itself** — the actor in motion.

Now : The most **general** and **abstract**

Abstract : **manner** or **method** —the **way** of life, the **way** of thinking

Core: how something is done

【*road*】

Original meaning: a journey on horseback (**ride**)

Focus: The route prepared for travel

Now : A **constructed** route

Abstract: **progress toward a goal** —the **road** to the Olympic Games

Core: process and **achievement**

way to success: **the method or approach** to achieve it

road to success: **the milestones** toward a goal



English Road Words: Origins & Core Concepts

【*path*】

Original meaning: **footprints** or track made by walking

Focus: trail formed by repeated movement

Now : spontaneous, organic route

Abstract : individual process — *career path, life path*

Core: **personal development** and **progress**

【*route*】

Original meaning: cleared or **chosen** way

Focus: fixed course **chosen** or **designed** in advance (*evacuation route*)

Now : structured and **goal-directed** pathway

Abstract: planned and designated — *route of trade*

Core: **organization, planning, and destination**



English Road Words: Origins & Core Concepts

【course】

Original meaning: **running, flowing, or onward movement**

Focus: continuous, directed sequence

Now : institutional or programmatic route

Abstract : **ordered process** — *course* of study

Core: systematic progression and continuity

path: organic progress

route: planned movement toward a goal

course: an institutionalized and structured process

English Road Words: Origins & Core Concepts

【*trail*】

Original meaning: **a mark or trace** left by movement

Focus: trace of exploration — a way formed by those who went before

Now : exploratory path (*hiking **trail***)

Abstract : **following traces**, not defining a route— *leave a **trail**, paper **trail***

Core: discovery and pursuit

【*track*】

Original meaning: **footprints or wheel marks left on the ground**

Focus: **repetition and following a line** — a path already set

Now : marked or **guided route** (*train **track**, race **track***)

Abstract: **systematic, guided progress** rather than free exploration

—*career **track***

Core: regulated progress within a system

English Road Words: Origins & Core Concepts

More concrete words are **less likely to be metaphorically extended**.

street, avenue, boulevard: specific urban spaces

[street]

Original meaning: **paved way**

Focus: **social spaces** where people walk, live, and interact (***street market***)

[avenue]

Original meaning: an **approach** or **access way** to a destination

Focus: **broad, organized street**

[boulevard]

Original meaning: a **wide, fortified road** around a city

Focus: **large, scenic roads** symbolizing **scale and elegance**

Japanese ROAD Words: Origins & Core Concepts

【道 (michi / dō)】

足 (to walk) + 首 (head): **carrying a head while walking for purification**

→ eventually general 'way' (the most typical word)...**way**

⇒ 人生の道 (the way of life), 茶道 (the way of tea)



【路 (ro / ji)】

足 (foot) + 各 (to arrive): **the path one walks to reach a destination**

✕the origin is common with **path**

→ designated or institutional routes...**route**

⇒ 通学路 (school route), 進路 (career path)

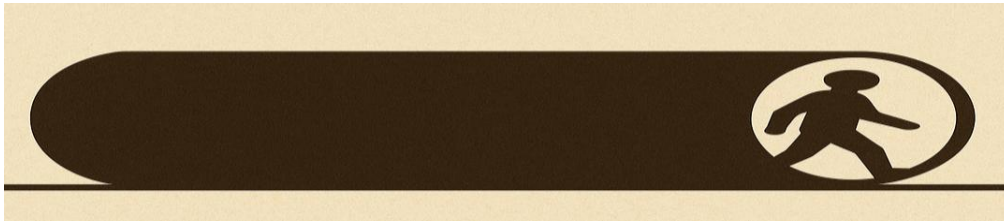


Japanese ROAD Words: Origins & Core Concepts

【通り (tōri)】

走 (to walk) + 筒 (hollow tube): to walk through a **hollow tube**

→ something that **allows movement through**, especially in social space



⇒ 目抜き通り (main street), 裏通り (backstreet)... ***street, avenue***

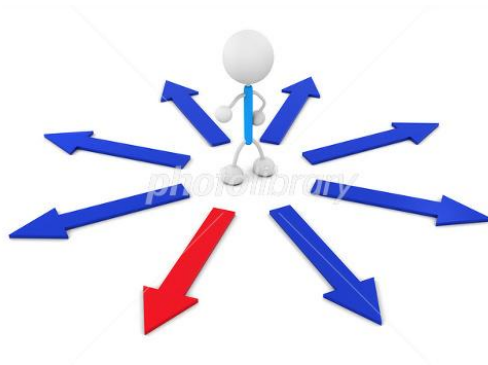
English vs Japanese Lexicalization

English and Japanese lexicalize the Road concept differently.

【 English 】

road
way
path
street
route
trail
avenue

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·



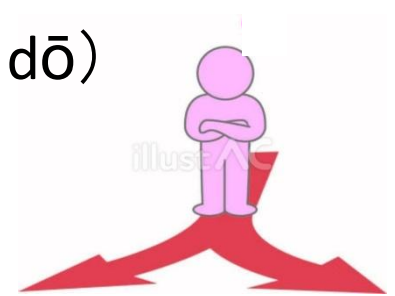
diversifies meaning across many
fine-grained words
→ Precision

【 Japanese 】

道 (michi / dō)

路 (ro/ji)

通り (tōri)



consolidates it into small but
flexible system
→ Compactness

Conclusion

Main Findings

- Both English and Japanese conceptualize “ROAD” based on the embodied PATH schema.
- **English** expresses it through **many fine-grained terms** (way, path, route...), showing an analytic tendency.
- **Japanese** condenses it into **a few flexible morphemes** (道・路・通り), reflecting a holistic and contextual approach.
- These differences reveal **how each language links physical experience to abstract thought** in culturally distinct ways.

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**Thank you very much
for your attention.**