

Meaning Comparison of the Words *Aijin* and *Mikake*, *Shoumi-kigen* and *Shouhi-kigen*, *Tengoku* and *Gokuraku*

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Abstrak

Kemiripan makna dalam kosakata bahasa asing yang dipelajari oleh seorang pemelajar acapkali meningkatkan beban belajar suatu bahasa asing. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk melihat contoh-contoh kata yang memiliki kemiripan makna dalam bahasa Jepang, yaitu kata *aijin* dan *mekake* yang berpadanan dengan kata *mistress* dalam bahasa Inggris, kata *shoumi-kigen* dan *shouhi-kigen* yang berpadanan dengan kata *best before* dalam bahasa Inggris, kata *tengoku* dan *gokuraku* yang berpadanan dengan kata *heaven* dalam bahasa Inggris. Tulisan ini menggunakan studi kepustakaan dan merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil analisis contoh-contoh penggunaan dalam kalimat menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kata-kata tersebut memiliki ekuivalen yang sama dan memiliki kemiripan makna, terdapat perbedaan halus yang menyebabkan kata-kata bersinonim tersebut tidak dapat menggantikan satu dengan lainnya secara mutlak. Dengan kata lain, tidak ada kata-kata yang bersinonim penuh.

Kata Kunci: sinonim, semantik, nuansa makna

Abstract

*The similarity of meanings in foreign language vocabulary a learner learns often increases the burden of learning a foreign language. This article aims to look at examples of words that have similar meanings in Japanese, namely the words *aijin* (愛人) and *mekake* (妾), which correspond to the word *mistress* in English, the words *shoumi-kigen* (賞味期限) and *shouhi-kigen* (消費期限) which correspond to the word *best before* in English, the words *tengoku* (天国) and *gokuraku* (極楽) which correspond to the word *heaven* in English. This paper uses literature studies and is qualitative descriptive research. The analysis of examples of use in sentences shows that although the words have the exact equivalent and have similar meanings, there are subtle differences that cause the synonymous words to be unable to replace each other. In other words, there are no entirely synonymous words.*

Keywords: synonyms, semantics, nuances of meaning

1. Introduction

Words that have similar meanings often confuse language learners. This makes it difficult for them, especially foreign language learners, to master a language. In linguistics, words that have similar meanings are given a term, namely synonyms. The relationship between the sense of synonymous words is called synonyms.

This article raises the phenomenon of synonymous in the Japanese language, especially synonymous words, such as *aijin* (愛人) and *mekake* (妾), *shoumi-kigen* (賞味期限) and *shouhi-kigen* (消費期限), *tengoku* (天国) and *gokuraku* (極楽). One way to detect

synonyms is to look at the equivalents or equivalents of words considered synonymous in other languages. The words *aijin* and *mekake* are the equivalent of *mistress* in English. The words *shoumi-kigen* and *shouhi-kigen* have equivalents to *best before* in English. The words *tengoku* and *gokuraku* have the equivalent of *heaven* in English.

Research related to synonyms has been carried out a lot, for example, *Constructing a Corpus of Japanese Predicate Phrases for Synonym/Antonym Relations* (Izumi, Shibata, Asano, Matsuo, & Kurohashi, 2014), *Synonyms of Three Levels in English and Japanese* (Eto, 2020), *Sinonim Adjektiva Utsukushii dan Kireida dalam Bahasa Jepang: Kajian Semantik* (Putri, 2023), *Penggunaan Dan Perbandingan Makna Adjektiva ‘Hidoi Dan Hageshii’ Dalam Sinonim Bahasa Jepang* (Widiastika, Meidariani, & Sari, 2024).

By knowing the different meanings of these synonymous words, Japanese learners can use the right words according to the context of the sentence.

2. Method

This paper uses a literature study method. Literature relevant to the topic is scrutinized to get the difference in meaning between synonymous words. Examples of usage in sentences for synonymous words are taken from *the Asahi Shinbun* page at (https://www.asahi.com/?iref=pc_gnavi).

3. Result and Discussion

The search results for the context of use and discussion of the three pairs of synonymous words are as follows.

3.1 *aijin* (愛人) and *mekake* (妾)

The word *mekake* is defined as *a (kept) mistress, a concubine, a kept woman*. Meanwhile, *aijin* is defined as *a (one's) lover*. In its use as a phrase *aijin o kakou* (愛人を囲う) ‘keep a mistress’ have translation similarities with phrases *mekake o kakou* (妾を囲う) ‘keep (set up) a mistress (concubine)’ (Takebayashi, 2002). The verb *kakou* has a connotation 妻以外の女性を密かに別宅などに住ませる *tsuma igai no josei o hisoka ini bettaku nado ni sumawaseru* ‘keep a mistress’.

3.1.1 *Aijin*

In the context of its use in sentences, examples of the use of the word *aijin* are as follows.

(プレミアシート)「フェラーリ」 男らしさの脆さと限界

(2024/07/05)

会社の共同経営者である妻ラウラとは冷え切った関係のエンツォには、密（ひそ）かに子をなしている愛人がある。ライブルにスピード記録を破られ、大手メーカーに資本提携を迫られたエンツォはイタリア最大の公道レース「ミッレミリア」にすべてをかける。



Figure 1. The use of the word *AIJIN* in an article titled *Otokorashisa no Morosa to Genkai*

(Source: Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/XCQ4V>)

(1) *Kaisha no kyoudou keieisha de aru tsuma Raura to wa hiekitta kankei no Enzo ini wa, hisoka ni ko wo nashite iru aijin ga iru.*

‘with my wife, who is a co-owner of the company Enzo, with whom he has a cold

relationship, has a **mistress** with whom he is secretly having a child’

(Asahi Shinbun Article: *Otokorashisa no Morosa to Genkai*)

驚きの国防相交代 ポストだけでは見誤るプーチン流人事の注目点

(2024/05/17)

ロシアは森林火災や洪水などの自然災害が多い国ですが、非常事態省はそういう時に真っ先に飛んで行って住民を助ける仕事。ショイグ氏は「ピンチの時に助けに来てくれる人」として人気もありました。国防相の前任だったセルジュコフ氏は愛人問題が絡む汚職で解任されたのですが、その後任が国民受けのいいショイグ氏でした。プーチン氏と一緒に夏の休暇を過ごすほど仲がよいことが知られています。忠実な子分で、「ハイパーイエスマン」という印象です。そういう意味ではプーチン氏の信頼も厚い人なんだと思います

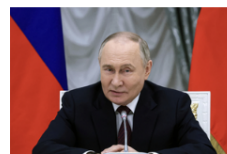


Figure 2. The use of the word AIJIN in an article titled *Odoroki no kokubousoukoutai Posuto dake de wa miayamaru Putin*

(Sumber Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/XCQ4V>)

(2) *Kokubousou no zennin datta Serdyukov-shi wa **aijin** mondai ga karamu oshoku de kainin sareta No. desu ga, sana kounin ga kokuminuke No. ii Shoigu-shi deshita.*

‘Mr. Serdyukov, the previous Minister of Defense, was dismissed due to corruption related to his **mistress**, but his successor was Mr. Shoigu, who was popular with the public.’

Based on the observation of the use of *the word aijin*, it can be seen that *aijin* refers to a condition of a physical relationship between a man who is married to another woman who is not his wife. This applies to both men and women [Yamada, 2005]. In other words, the title *aijin* can be given to men or women.

3.1.2 *Mekake*

「寅子」モデルの母校創設に貢献 世の女性を励ました裁判官の判断

(2024/05/27)

同邸を運営する住民団体がパネル12枚を使い、横田の人となりや、審理を担当した裁判が社会に与えた影響、初めて女性弁護士となった三淵ら3人の人生の歩みを伝えている。中でも、詳しく解説しているのは、横田が大審院の裁判長として、審理のやり直しを命じた、ある地裁判決とその後の経過についてだ。男性は浮気をしたり、妾（めかけ）を持ったりしても、法的に何の罪にも問われない一方、女性側には姦通（かんつう）罪が適用され、貞操を守る義務を負わされていた時代だった。



Figure 3. The use of the word MEKAKE in an article titled “Torako” Moderu No. bokousousetsu ini kouken yo no jousei wo hagemashita saibankan no handan

(Source: Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/Q1cLt>)

(3) *Dansei wa uwaki wo shitari, **memake** wo mottari shitemo, houteki ini nan No. tsumi ini mau towarenai ippou, joseigawa ini wa kantsuuzai ga teiyousare, teiketsuwo mamoru gimu wo owasarete ita jidai datta.*

‘While men are not legally charged with any crime even if they have an affair or have a **concubine**, women are subject to the crime of adultery and are required to maintain chastity.’

女たちの本当の敵は 波乃久里子・渡辺えり・水谷八重子 劇団新
派「三婆」 (2023/06/01)



十万馬力の明るい時代だった。一方、未婚でいたり、出稼ぎで水商売をしたり。
「家」なき人への世間の目は今より冷やかかった。アポロが月に着く時代になっ
ても、帰れない女たち。「本当はいるのに、いえない、いない存在にされて。お妾 (めかけ) さんがそう。

Figure 4. The use of the word MEKAKE in an article titled Onna-tachi no hontou no teki wa
NAMINO Kuriko, WATANABE Eri, MIZUTANI Yaeko Gekidan Shinha “Miba”

(Source: Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/Q1cLt>)

- (4) *O-mekake san ga sou.*
'This is the case with **concubines.**'

Based on the observation of the use of *the word mekake*, it can be seen that *mekake* refers to a financially supported woman who is not the man's wife.

Therefore, it can be seen that the similarity between *aijin* and *mekake* is that both are outside of a legitimate relationship. The difference is the word *aijin* can refer to men or women, while the word *mekake* is only for women. Another difference is that *mekake* lives a domestic relationship, like between a man and a woman who are their legal wives in terms of finances, while *aijin* is not because *aijin* is only based on feelings of love.

3.2 *shoumikigen* (賞味期限) and *shouhikigen* (消費期限)

The words *shoumikigen* and *shouhikigen* are commonly found on food products in Japan. Usually, the word *shoumikigen* is found in foods such as milk, cans, and so on. Meanwhile, the word *shouhikigen* is found in foods such as *bento* (Japanese rice box), meats, etc. So, what is the difference between the two words commonly found in these food products?

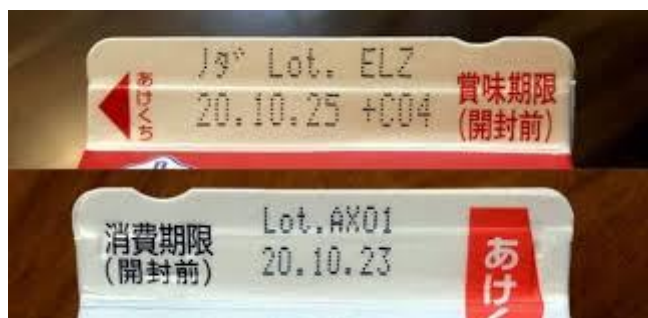


Figure 5. Use of the Words *SHOUMIKIGEN* and *SHOUHIKIGEN* in Beverage Products

(Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/aoCUR5pkETgGf8FQ6>)

3.2.1 *shoumikigen*

The word *shoumikigen* means 'the time limit to be eaten with good taste (*oishiku taberareru kigen no koto*)'. The word *shoumikigen* consists of the word *shoumi* (賞味) 'appreciate; relish; enjoy; taste with' and the word *kigen* (期限) 'a time limit'.

3.2.2 *shouhikigen*

The word *shouhikigen* means 'to mark foodstuffs with a quality assurance date of five days or less, including the date of manufacture. (*seizoubi o fukumeta hinshitsu hoshou kigen ga itsuka inai no shokuhinrui ni kisareru no koto*)'. The word *shouhikigen* consists of the word *shouhi* (consumption) 'consume; use (up)', and the word *kigen* (期限) 'a time limit'.

消費期限	賞味期限
安全に食べられる期限	品質が変わらずに美味しく食べられる期限
サンドイッチ、おにぎり、パン、お弁当、お刺身、惣菜、生めん、ケーキなど	スナック菓子、カップ麺、チーズ、缶詰、ペットボトル飲料、卵、加工肉など
期限内に食べた方がよい	期限を過ぎてもすぐに食べられないわけではない

Figure 6. Comparison of the Difference in the Meaning of the Words *SHOUMIKIGEN* and *SHOUHIKIGEN*

The explanation in Figure 6 shows that *shouhikigen* recommends that the food or beverage product be consumed before the time stated has expired. Meanwhile, even though the time limit stated according to *shoumikigen* has passed, the food or beverage product is not necessarily unconsumable.



Figure 7. Examples of Product Differences Using *SHOUMIKIGEN* and *SHOUHIKIGEN*

Figure 7 also makes it clear that food and beverage products that use the words *shouhikigen* and *shoumikigen* are fundamentally different or distinguishable, namely between perishable (*itamiyasui shokuhin*) and non-perishable (*itaminikui shokuhin*). Perishable food and beverage products must be consumed immediately, while food and beverage products that are not easily perishable do not have to be consumed immediately.

3.3 *Tengoku* (天国) and *Gokuraku* (極楽)

3.3.1 *Tengoku*

「背中押してくれた」亡きコーチに捧げる一打 坂出商・矢野隼希 主将 (2024/07/20)

田中さんは「甲子園絶対行けよ」と、やはり背中を押してくれた。その2カ月後、チームメートから訃報を聞いたとき、しばらく信じられなかった。それからは一日一日の練習を大切に過ごしてきた。「甲子園に行き、天国にいる田中さんに恩返したい」。そんな思いも抱え、夏の大会に臨んでいた。この日の相手は、初戦で強豪の尽誠学園を破り、勢いに乗る丸亀。試合は3-0で敗れた。悔しさで涙が止まらなかった。「緊張と重圧もあったけれど、『田中コー



Figure 8. The use of the word *TENGOKU* in an article titled “*Senaka oshite kureta*” *naki koochi ni sasageru ichida Sakaideshou, YANO Hayaki Shushou*

(Source; Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/6NWbI>)

(5) “*Koushien ni iki, tengoku ni iru Tanaka-san ni ongaeshitai*”

“I want to go to Koushien and give back to Mr. Tanaka, who is in **heaven**.”

(いいね！探訪記) 哀しみを包み込む、神の気配 遠藤周作文学館 長崎市 (2024/07/13)

外海観光ガイド協会長の松川隆治さん（84）によると、山中にある岩陰で祈りの言葉である「オラシヨ」をひそかに口伝し、信仰を守ってきたという。キリシタンであることが藩に知られれば、激しく拷問され、殺されることもあった。なぜそこまでして信仰を守ったのか。松川さんに問うと、「死んだら天国に行けるといふ教えが、土地によく合ったんでしょね」。外海は貧しい村だった。山ばかりで水田は作れず、漁も、海が荒れやすいので沿岸漁業を細々と続けるしかなかった。重



Figure 9. The use of the word *TENGOKU* in an article titled *iine! tanbouki kanashimi wo tsuzumikomu, kami no kihai ENDO Shusaku Bungakukan Nagasaki-shi*

(Source: Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/6NWbI>)

(6) *Matsukawa-san ni tou to, “shindara tengoku ni ikeru toiu oshie ga, tochi ni yoku attan deshou ne”*.

‘When I asked Mr. Matsukawa, he said, “The teaching that you can go to **heaven** when you die probably suited the area well.”’

The word *tengoku* is taken from the holy book, namely the Bible. In Christianity, *the tengoku* is a happy place that God bestows only on his people who believe in Christ [Yamada, 2005].

3.3.2 *Gokuraku*

浄土宗850年、法然が修行した比叡山青龍寺で法要 9日から知恩院 (2024/04/08)

南無阿弥陀仏と唱えれば、阿弥陀如来に導かれ、極楽往生できる。こう説いた法然（1133～1212年）が平安末期、浄土宗を開いてから850年。総本山・知恩院（京都市東山区）による慶讃（けいさん）法要が7日、始まった。初日は、法然が修行した比叡山の青龍寺（京都市



Figure 10. The use of the word *GOKURAKU* in an article titled *Jodoshuu 850-nen, Honen ga shuukou shita Hiei-san Seiryuu-ji de houyou kokonoka kara Chion-in*

(Source: Asahi Shinbun: <https://shorturl.at/V1SFU>)

(7) *Namu Amida Butsu to tonaereba, Amida Nyourai ini michibikare, Gokuraku-oujou dekiru.*

‘If you chant *Namu Amida Butsu*, *Amida Tathagata* will guide you, and you will be able to attain **paradise**.’

The word *gokuraku* refers to a place with happiness (*koufuku no aru tokoro*). *Buddha Amida Butsu* helps and leads everyone to the *gokuraku* in *Buddhist teachings*.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of examples of use in sentences shows that although the words have the exact equivalent and similar meanings, there are subtle differences that cause the synonymous words to be unable to replace each other. In other words, there are no entirely synonymous words.

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