

A Contrastive Analysis of Some Words on Living in Japanese and English

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1. Aim

It is often pointed out in various fields of study that there are considerable differences and similarities in the ways people in various countries live with each other. These differences and similarities must surely be reflected especially in the conceptualization of words which are used for living expressions.

We can easily give many words which are semantically related to living expressions in Japanese. For example, *ie*, *uchi*, *sumai* in original Japanese, and *katei*, *kazoku*, *kakei* in Sino-Japanese. However, I can intuitively select some words among these which are considered to be basically more important than the others from the point of a semantic view. They can be *ie*, *uchi*, *sumai*, and *katei*. In English, I can pick up several words which are popular and listed in many dictionaries as the words roughly corresponding to the above selected Japanese words. They are house, home, residence, and family.

In the previous conference of Cross-Cultural Communication in Seoul, Prof. Yamada and I analyzed the words *ie* and *uchi* in Japanese, house and home in English, and defined the semantic domain of respective words. We showed the result of our research in the proceeding of the previous conference. This time, taking the results into consideration, I will mainly analyze the four newly added words, *sumai* and *katei* in Japanese, residence and family in English, by focusing on their semantic functions, and try to indicate the differences and similarities on living expressions in Japanese and English.

2. Collocability in Japanese

Before discussing the four Japanese words, I'd like to briefly touch on the words *ie* and *uchi* by summarizing our previous paper in Seoul. In the previous investigation, we took

a kind of multiple choice questionnaire. Therefore, we could clarify the differences of meaning between the two words. As the following examples (1) and (2), *ie* is often chosen rather than *uchi* when people want to express an objective building.

(1) gochikkushiki no (Gothic) ie (●) / uchi (X)*

(2) ie (O) / uchi(? X) ga atarashii. (...is new.)

[* The meaning of marks in examples is explained in the **Table of Contrastive Terms** at the end of the article.]

In addition, *ie* shows a public building even though the examples are very few.

(3) umi no ie (●) / uchi (X) (a seaside company clubhouse)

As the result, I can say that *ie* has the tendency to describe an objective and real space as its semantic function. On the contrary, *uchi* does not. It can be presumed that this fact paradoxically supports the supposition that *uchi* is comparatively easy for us to choose rather than *ie* when we'd like to express our emotional attachment on a certain building or space. The following example (4) indicates that we usually avoid to use *uchi* because we, ordinary people, do not know the prime minister individually and we do not feel any emotional attachment on his dwelling.

(4) shushoo no ie(O) / uchi (?) wa Tokyo ni aru.

(The prime minister's house is in Tokyo.)

Moreover, we could see the extension of the meaning on the word *uchi*. It is that *uchi* can be used as the first person pronoun like "my" or "our" as the following examples.

(5) uchi no kaisha (our company)

(6) uchi no hito (my husband), uchi no yatsu (my wife)

In addition, it was also found out that *ie* is mostly chosen for us to express continuity like a lineage.

This is the summary of the previous research. Next, I will mention the collocability of the four words, especially focusing *sumai* and *katei*, with various adjectives and verbs.

2.1 Physical Space

	ie	uchi	sumai	katei
(7) hiroi (spacious)	•	•	•	X
(8) nikaidateno (two-storied)	•	•	•	X
(9) ookii (big)	•	O	O	?X
(10) kojimarishita (modest)	O	O	O	?

In the examples from (7) to (10), where the adjectives usually modifying real or concrete things are used, we can see a big difference between the word *katei* and the rest of the words. We Japanese intuitively recognize that the word *katei* refers to a kind of space as its semantic function, but according to these example expressions, we have to say that it is an abstract space not a real one that *ie* and *uchi* refer to. This claim is also endorsed by the examples (11) to (15) and (30) to (35) which will be explained later. I guess that, in the examples (9) and (10), a kind of metaphorical usage of the adjectives, which expresses size of people, was accepted by about 30% of the informants to approve the co-occurrence of *katei* and those adjectives.

2.2 Empathy

	ie	uchi	sumai	katei
(11) koufukuna (happy)	○?	○?	?X	•
(12) tanoshii (pleasant)	○	○	○	•
(13) osoroshii (fearful)	?	?	?X	○
(14) sabishii (lonely)	○	○	○	○
(15) hitokenonai (deserted)	•	○	○	?

In the examples (11) to (14), we can find two remarkable tendencies. One is that the word *katei* generally shows a higher degree of co-occurrence with these emotional adjectives. The other is that, on the contrary to *katei*, the word *sumai* indicates a poor co-occurrence with them except (12) and (14). Since these adjectives are mostly used to express an emotional manifestation of a person, co-occurrence with them can give us a criterion to judge whether the modified nouns possess a semantic feature of the presence of people in their connotation or not. We can say, therefore, that *katei* has this connotation and *sumai* does not. However, if so, I have to explain the exceptional examples (12) and (14). In other cases, *tanoshii ie* (a pleasant ie) or *tanoshii uchi* (a pleasant uchi), we can intuitively imagine a situation that the people in those spaces have pleasant or joyful feelings caused by a certain reason that is not mentioned here. This means that these two space nouns are understood as not merely a real space but an abstract one. In the case of *tanoshii sumai* (a pleasant sumai), however, we primarily imagine its materialistic characteristic and then conceive that it has a nice appearance, good facilities, and is a good place to live in. We think, therefore, if we live there we can subsequently get a pleasant or joyful feeling. In the case of *sabishii sumai* (a lonely sumai), we only comprehend that, unlike the other examples, this *sumai* is located at a lonesome place,

and we do not imagine the presence of the people who are living there. Anyway, in both cases, *sumai* is understood as only a real and objective building and does not make us feel any emotional empathy. Example (15) also endorses our claim on the word *katei*.

2.3 Positivity

	ie	uchi	sumai	katei
(16) yoi (good)	•	•	•	•
(17) warui (bad)	O?	O?	?	O
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(18) atatakai (warm)	O	O	O	•
(19) tsumetai (cold)	O?	?	?X	O
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(20) tanoshii(pleasant)	O	O	O	•
(21) kanashii (sad)	?	?	X	?
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(22) shizukana(quiet)	O	O	•	O
(23) sawagashii (noisy)	O	O	?	O?

In the examples from (16) to (23), it can be said that every word shows better co-occurrence with the adjectives describing positive or affirmative meaning rather than the adjectives with negative meaning. This preference of positive to negative might be a general psychological reaction for human beings, but the gap in the case of *sumai* is so big that we cannot completely explain it by this preference. As I mentioned before, *sumai* is expected to have good qualities as a living place. Therefore, I think that we Japanese are apt to subconsciously avoid selecting the word *sumai* when we have to express a negative matter about housing.

	ie	uchi	sumai	
(24) ...ga kowaresu (...breaks down)	O	O	O?	
(25) ...ga taoreru (...fall down)		•	•	?

By the same reason, in examples (24) and (25), *sumai* is also difficult to use with the verbs which refer to a destruction. As a matter of fact, real estate agents in Japan always feel like using the word *sumai* in their dealing with the public. On the other hand, it is

said that in the English speaking world the word home is frequently used in real-estate advertisement because it is motivated by the semantic overtones of warmth, security and happiness. These overtones can provide an image of the presence of people, namely, the presence of a family to the purchasers. It is very interesting that Japanese agents give priority to construction and appearance in their advertisements rather than the warmth and happiness in a family which takes precedence in American advertisements. I think that we can presume that this contrast between Japan and America shows what is required for ideal housing in each country.

2.4 Continuity

	ie	uchi	sumai	katei
(26) furui (old)	•	•	O	?
(27) meimon no (distinguished)	•	O?	X	?
(28) ga sakaeru; (...is prosperous for a long time)	•	O?	X	?X
(29) ...o tsugu (to inherit);	•	•	O?	?X

The word *ie* can perfectly occur with the adjectives and predicates which have a semantic feature "continuation of time". It is noteworthy that this tendency is caused by the fact that Japanese people still subconsciously maintain the concept of the "ie seido" (the Japanese traditional family system) which was officially abandoned after World War II. In (26) and (29), it is possible to say that *sumai* is only related to its physical continuation as a building. The fact that the word *katei* is hardly permitted to occur with these adjectives and predicates perhaps shows that *katei* has a time limitation on its usage. I think that I can presumably say that a new *katei* usually starts at the time of marriage and finishes, at earliest, at the time when all of the children leave home and become independent of their parents in preparation for making their own *kateis* or, finishes at latest, just after the death of one of the old parents. Therefore, it can be claimed that *katei* never continues beyond a generation and never consists of only one person.

2.5 Life Space

	ie	uchi	sumai	katei
(30) ...de kyouikusuru: (to educate a child in...)	•	O	?X	•

(31)	...de hanashiau; (to talk with someone in)	O	O	?	•
(32)	...de kutsurogu; (to take rest in...)	•	O	O?	•
(33)	...de ryoorisuru (to cook in...);	O	O	?	O
(34)	...de manabu; (to learn something in...)	O	•	O?	O
(35)	...de sodateru; (to bring up a child in...)	O	O	?X	O
(36)	...de taberu (to eat in...);	•	•	?	O?
(37)	...de neru(to go to bed in...);	•	•	O?	?
(38)	...de shinu (to die in...)	•	O	?	?X

On *ie* and *uchi*, we can see a stable co-occurrence with a group of verbs which describe people's action in a daily life as shown in (30) to (38). On the contrary, it is pretty difficult for *sumai* to co-occur with these kind of verbs except (32) and (37). I think this exception can be explained as follows. As I mentioned before, *sumai* is primarily associated with an objective building since it does not have the semantic feature "emotional" or "the presence of people" in its connotation. On the other hand, these two verbs make us imagine the necessity of an objective space. This correspondence manages to allow the slightly good co-occurrence in (32) and (37).

Katei shows a quite unique tendency in these examples. It is that *katei* can occur with the verbs from (30) to (35) but hardly in (37) and (38). I can say that the verbs in (37) and (39) refer to physiological actions that are indispensable for our daily life. On the other hand, the verbs from (30) to (35) describe rather abstract and sophisticated actions. The action of *taberu* (to eat) in (36) must be an indispensable and basic action for life, but when it is modified by an adverbial phrase *katei de* (in the *katei*), it can provide a symbolic or sophisticated feeling, that is, warmth and happiness caused by family members' eating together. So it is sometimes understood as a physiological action or sometimes as a symbolic and abstract action. We can recognize that this unique tendency is partly caused by the fact that *katei* means an abstract space rather than an objective space as I pointed out before. In addition to this, I think that it is also given by another semantic characteristic of *katei* as follows. We can claim that, like other similar actions,

these abstract and sophisticated actions are also conducted in a private space of our daily life and they can be classified into two groups. One is the group of the actions in examples (31), (32), (33), and maybe (36) which are done in order to provide refreshment in preparation for so-called "productive actions", for instance, working outside. Therefore, it can be said that *katei* has a semantic feature "reproductivity for labor force". The other group consists of the verbs used in the expressions (30), (34), and (35) which are related to education or discipline in a private space in contrast with a public space, such as schools. Therefore, we can add another semantic feature "normativeness" to the word *katei*.

In the Meiji period (1886 - 1913), Japan tried to satisfy a hunger for being a developed and industrialized country by importing Western civilization. Because most people were farmers, their homes and workplace were one-in-the-same. They could not become laborers of an industry. However, Japanese industry needed a constant labor force. The Japanese government, therefore, needed some new family system which separated the home from the work place and they expected that it would be a place to reproduce labor force. At the same time, a word which can stand for an English word home was being required in the field of translation. Then, a Chinese origin word *katei* was introduced by this political and literal demand. It can be said that, from the beginning, the word *katei* was given a duty to refer to an ideal model of a space which modernized family members live in. For this background, we can understand that it is natural that *katei* shows extremely adequate occurrence in an expression like (39).

- (39) kenzen na katei de kodomo o kyouikusuru
(to educate a child in a wholesome *katei*)

I think that it is possible to say that *katei* is one of the most important key words that clarify the modern Japanese family system which started about 120 years ago. This historical situation of this system will be partly discussed in Nishikawa's paper "Three Kinds of Ie(Houses) in Modern Japanese Literature."

3. Collocability in English

As I mentioned before, Professor Yamada and I had already investigated the English words house and home and presented several interesting results at the previous conference in Seoul. Therefore, I will briefly explain the semantic functions of these two words by summarizing our previous paper and then I will chiefly mention the words residence and family.

The word house usually seems to refer to a type of building. For instance, adjectives or adjectival phrases which express a style and color are usually followed by house rather than home in examples (40) and (41).

- (40) a Gothic style house(O) / home (?)
(41) He lives in a white house (O) / home(? X).

On the other hand, the word home refers to the place where people such as ego, his or her family, or friends live. We can say that the word home has a semantic marker of "emotional" and makes us imagine the presence of people there like the examples (42) and (43).

(42) to think of one's house (X)/ home (O)

(43) a childless house(?X) / home(O)

Home also implies hometown, his/her home village city, or country. This meaning typically appears when a person who used the word home is outside of his/her own town or country, like (44) and (45).

(44) I came back my old home after three years absence.

(45) He has married a beautiful Indian girl back home.

It is also interesting that the Japanese word *uchi* has a similar extended meaning.

3.1 Physical Space

	house	home	residence	family
(46) a white	•	? X	O ?	X
(47) two storied	•	•	O	X
(48) which has a basement	•	O	O	X

In the examples from (46) to (48), house and residence can easily co-occur with adjectives and an adjectival phrase which are usually used for modifying objective things. It can be said that both words express more objective space than other two words do. The word family is hardly chosen when people try to show a real and concrete space or building. A few native speakers approved the expression a white family, but in this case they understood that it meant a white person's family.

3.2 Empathy

	house	home	residence	family
(49) a warm	O	O	? X	O
(50) a sad	O	O	?	O
(51) a nostalgic	O	O	? X	O
(52) ...with grandparents	O	O	? X	•
(53) a deserted	•	O	O	? X

Like the Japanese word *sumai*, it is somewhat difficult for the word residence to co-

occur with the adjectives or adjectival phrases which express an emotional feeling or the presence of people in the examples (49) to (52). Therefore, we can infer from this result that residence is primarily recognized as a kind of an objective building. On the contrary, the word family can be easily followed or preceded by these modifiers. Moreover, family hardly occurs after the adjective deserted. These two conditions endorse the intuition of English native speakers that they obviously feel an empathy and imagine the presence of people when they speak or hear a word family.

3.3 Positivity

		house	home	residence	family	
(54)	a good	•	•	○	•	
(55)	a bad	○	○	○?	•	
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(56)	a quiet	•	•	•	•	
(57)	a noisy	○		○	•	○

It is hard to say that, like the Japanese word *sumai*, residence shows a considerable difference in its co-occurrence between the adjectives with a positive meaning and those with a negative one as we can see in examples (54) to (57). It is quite different from my expectation on residence. I expected that residence has positivity in its semantic connotation. However, we might infer from examples (58) and (59) that residence at least has a semantic marker "bigness", while house and home are neutral in this kind of semantic connotation. I am not sure but "bigness" might be a positive meaning.

		residence	house	home
(58)	a modest	○	○	?
(59)	a stifling	○	○	? X

3.4 Continuity

We can find in the dictionaries that house expresses continuity like the following example.

- (60) The House of Hapsburg, to spring from an ancient house

However, in Yoshikawa and Yamada(1986), I already mentioned that our informants, especially Americans, were apt to avoid using the word house in the case of continuity. They claimed that house was too old-fashioned for them to express a lineage. In the new investigation, I couldn't get a significant result either. This will be the question to work on later, including the improvement of the questionnaire.

3.5 Life Space

	house	home	residence	family
(61) to bring up a child in	O	O	? X	•
(62) to educate a child in	O	O	? X	O
(63) to learn something in	O	O	?	O
(64) to talk with someone in	O	O	O?	O
(65) to eat in	O	O	O	O
(66) to take a rest in	O	O	?	?
(67) to cook in	O	O	O?	X
(68) to go to bed in	O	O	?	X
(69) to die in	O	O	?	? X

As I discussed before, the word residence rarely has the semantic marker "the presence of people". And so it is natural that we hardly imagine that people do something there. I think I can say that the response of the native speakers in these examples is reasonable and shows a similar tendency to that of Japanese speakers with the word *sumai*. For the word family, I cannot explain that it can co-occur with the verb eat though it cannot with the verb cook. But in the examples (61) to (64) where the verbs are describing educational and sophisticated actions, we can find family to show a very similar tendency to the Japanese word *katei*. It shows a different result in (65) to (69) from *katei*. I think, therefore, it can be claimed that the word family cannot be a space for reproduction where a constant labor force is provided. I presume that American people recognize that family is only a private space and is considered in contrast with the public space. It can be, therefore, a space where people, especially, children are brought up, educated, or trained to become adults who are able to adjust to the given society.

4. Conclusion

I think I can claim that the word *sumai* is only understood as an objective space and is given the semantic feature positivity. On the other hand, it can be presumed that the word *katei* is recognized as a symbolic space and for better or for worse, it has been playing a big role to stabilize Japanese society because of its semantic features "normativeness" and "reproductivity for labor force". In the English version, it can be claimed that the word residence has a similar semantic structure to the Japanese word *sumai* though we can see some differences between them on "continuity" and "positivity". It might be appropriate to say that the semantic domain of the word family is approximately close to that of the Japanese word *katei* though it does not possess "reproductivity for labor force" as its semantic feature. The other four words *ie*, *uchi*, house and home are not mentioned because they were already explained in our previous paper in Seoul. For easy understanding of my investigation, I'll include the table of the contrasting Japanese and English terms discussed in this paper. I believe that this kind of contrastive investigation will contribute to language education and some understanding of each culture and nation.

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