

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

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Introduction

The terms *Haus* and *Wohnung* are generally used to express some meanings of the term *ie* in Japanese, among the words in German referring to a conception of a container as our private life. Those words are, therefore, taught as basic terms in classes. In addition to these two terms mentioned above, however, the terms *meine Familie* and *mein Zuhause* are also used to translate the expression *watashino ie* (my *ie*) in Japanese into German, depending on the situations. This fact shows that the German language has a lot of terms which have common semantic features with the term *ie*. At the same time, various kinds of Japanese expressions of dwelling are found, when the entries of the terms *Haus* and *Wohnung* are looked up in German-Japanese Dictionaries.

A study on the semantic domains of respective Japanese dwelling expressions is carried out in the preceding paper by Yoshikawa. In the paper, the term *ie* which covers almost all the semantic domains of house and home as a container of an individual or a family is discussed, in addition to the terms, *uchi*, *sumai*, and *katei*.

In this paper a research has been made on the semantic domains of the terms in German which approximately correspond to those of the Japanese terms discussed in Yoshikawa's paper. Especially, the terms *Haus*, *Wohnung*, *Zuhause* have been investigated in details with questionnaires, because of the frequent occurrence of these terms in colloquial German. Besides, the term *Familie* has been also investigated, comparing it with these terms, when necessary.

Based on the above investigation, an elaborate study of commonalities and disparities in the semantic domains of each dwelling term in German meaning a real or conceptual container of a private life will be made with reference to analyses in Yoshikawa's paper on corresponding Japanese expressions.

Finally, a contrastive analysis between German and Japanese will be carried out to

understand distinctive semantic features of each language.

2. Collocabilities

A contrastive analysis of these terms between German and Japanese will be carried out in the light of the intuition of native German speakers. Questionnaires were made in order to check collocabilities with attributive adjectival expressions and verbs. As for verbs, when the dwelling expressions such as *Haus*, *Wohnung*, etc. stand as a subject, collocabilities with present forms are checked, while, when they stand as an object, collocabilities with infinite forms are judged. First, of these sentences, the degree of acceptability was judged by five native German speakers. They were asked to make a judgment of whether they were fully acceptable or completely unacceptable, in addition to making a judgment of acceptabilities in contexts. In the course of this investigation, moreover, useful comments were sometimes made on the dwelling expressions under investigation.

2.1 Physical space

| | Haus | Wohnung | Zuhause | Familie |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|
| (1) groß/klein (large/small) | • | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| (2) länglich (long and narrow) | ○ | ○ | X | X |
| (3) hell (bright) | ○ | ○ | X | X |
| (4) zugig (drafty) | ○ | ○ | ? | X |
| (5) warm/kalt (warm/cold) | ○ | ○ | X | X |
| (6) kaufen (to buy) | • | • | X | X |
| (7) in --- eintreten (to enter) | ○ | ○ | X | X |
| (8) in --- umziehen (to move to) | ○ | ○ | X | X |
| (9) weiß (white) | • | ? | X | X |
| (10) zweistöckig (two-storied) | • | ? | X | X |
| (11) aus Beton (made of concrete) | • | X | X | X |
| (12) --- bauen (to build) | ○ | X | X | X |
| (13) --- errichten (to construct) | ○ | X | X | X |

The terms *Haus* and *Wohnung* have a good collocability with the verbs and adjectives in the examples from (1) to (8). The difference between these terms is not so apparent. But the acceptability of the term *Wohnung* decreases in the examples of (9) and (10). Moreover, using the term *Wohnung* in the contexts from (11) to (13) is not acceptable. In short, the term *Wohnung* doesn't usually co-occur with adjectives representing building materials, or outer appearances, nor does it occur with the verb meaning "to build". This leads us to the assumption that the term *Wohnung* has more limitation to the

range of its use than that of the term *Haus*. However, the above fact doesn't necessarily mean that the term *Haus* in German covers a wider semantic domain than that of the term *Wohnung*. The reason is that when someone is looking for a house to live in, if he or she uses the expression (a), he or she is intending to find a detached house, while if (b) is used, there is no implication like the sentence (a), and the place the person searching for may be an apartment, etc., as well as a detached house.

(a) *Ich suche ein Haus.* (I am looking for a *Haus*)

(b) *Ich suche eine Wohnung.* (I am looking for a *Wohnung*)

Thus it might be claimed that the term *Wohnung* is a superordinate term of the term *Haus*. And it seems that the term *Wohnung* focuses on the interior space for people to spend their life, not on a house as a building, in spite of the fact that it approximately means a place to live in. The semantic implication of the term *Wohnung* may be relevant to the fact that the term *Wohnung* refers to an apartment as one's home, while the terms *Haus*, *Wohnhaus* are used in referring to an apartment house itself.

Incidentally, the term *Zuhause* cannot co-occur with any verbs and adjectival expressions discussed in this subsection. Therefore, it may be concluded that the expression *mein Zuhause* cannot be used to refer to a house as a building itself.

2.2 Empathy

The place we live in is regarded not only as a literal container for our private life, or for some private group, but also as a symbolic container for representing the state of home and family, as is discussed in detail by Bollnow in his book *Mensch und Raum*, where he compares the interior space with the outer world. Accordingly, the terms for a place of living we are discussing now can be used metaphorically with some emotive meaning, in addition to the use as a metaphor representing a psychological state of the people who are living there. Besides, these terms are sometimes personified. The above properties can be found in German as well as in English. Now, let us study of the examples from (14) to (20).

| | Haus | Wohnung | Zuhause | Familie |
|---|------|---------|---------|---------|
| (14) kalt/warm (cold/warm) | ○ | ○? | ○ | X |
| (15) lustig (cheerful) | ○? | ? | ? | ○ |
| (16) traurig (sad) | ? | ? | ○ | ○ |
| (17) glücklich (happy) | ○? | X | ○ | ○ |
| (18) gesund (healthy) | X | X | X | ○ |
| (19) kinderlos (childless) | ○? | ? | ? | ○ |
| (20) --in dem/der sich Großvater befindet (with the grandfather) | ○? | X | ? | X |

Almost all of the expressions including the term *Wohnung* from (14) to (20) are felt to be unnatural. Although some informants pointed out that the adjectives *warm* and *kalt* can occur with the term *Wohnung*, the expressions can be construed as a physically warm or cold *Wohnung*, according to them.

As for the term *Haus*, according to the informants who judged the examples from (15) to (17) acceptable, using the term is possible only in the case where it can be regarded to be personified or to be used metaphorically. In any case, the term *Haus* has a higher acceptability than the term *Wohnung* in the above examples.

On the other hand, the term *Zuhause* has a higher collocability with the adjectival expressions in (14) to (20) than with those in subsection 2.1, which tend to co-occur with the expressions meaning a house as a building or space. Therefore, it may be claimed that the term *Zuhause* implies a conceptual container abstractly, rather than a real container or a house as a building for an individual or a group.

As for the examples from (15) to (19), it is natural that the term *Familie* collocate well with the adjectival expressions, since these are usually used to represent a certain condition of a person.

Incidentally, the examples (19) and (20) symbolize a present situation of a household in general, not the presence or absence of some of the family members at a certain moment. In other words, it may be claimed that these expressions represent a symbolic, or general situation in a container for a family life.

2.3 Positivity

| | | Haus | Wohnung | Zuhause | Familie | |
|------|---------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| (21) | gut (good) | O? | O | O | O | |
| (22) | schlecht (bad) | O? | O | O? | O | |
| (23) | fröhlich (cheerful) | O? | O | O | O | |
| (24) | traurig (sad) | | ? | O | O | O |

Despite the fact that fairly many informants responded to the expressions co-occurring with the adjectives *schlecht* and *traurig* as unnatural, it doesn't necessarily lead us to the conclusion that the nouns under investigation have a positive connotation. It cannot be said that these dwelling terms have a positive or negative connotation as far as the present investigation with questionnaires is concerned.

2.4 Continuity

In the subsection above, some symbolic aspects of the terms *Haus*, *Wohnung*, *Zuhause* and *Familie* have been discussed. Next, a study has been carried out on the collocational features of these terms with those symbolizing an inheritance or a temporal continuity or change.

Sato

| | Haus | Wohnung | Zuhause | Familie |
|--|------|---------|---------|---------|
| (25) --- blüht (is flourishing) | ? X | X | X | O |
| (26) --- gründen (to establish) | ? | X | X | O |
| (27) in ein(e) --- einheiraten (to be married into) | ?X | X | X | O |
| (28) --- erben (to inherit) | O | O | X | X |
| (29) --- übernehmen (to take possession of) | O | O | X | X |
| (30) --- vertreten (to represent) | X | X | X | O |

In the contexts from (25) to (27) the term *Haus*, *Wohnung* and *Zuhause* are hardly acceptable, though the term *Familie* is. Nevertheless, some informants have judged the use of the term *Haus* acceptable in the expressions (25) and (26). But they have added that it is permissible only in the cases where it refers to a genealogy of a particular family, like an aristocratic family, a royal family, etc. In these examples, however, if the term *Familie* is used instead of *Haus*, all the examples come to have high acceptability. It may be claimed that the term *Haus* is not used in standing for a family as a unit, as is also apparent from the fact that in the expression *in eine Familie einheiraten* meaning "to be married into a family" the term *Haus* is not a good substitute for the term *Familie*.

Incidentally, in (28) and (29) the terms *Haus* and *Wohnung* are only accessible in the meaning "to inherit a *Haus/Wohnung* as a building", not in the symbolic meaning "to inherit a tradition or a family property," though the corresponding Japanese expression *ie o tsugu* has the latter meaning, too. Therefore, it may be claimed that the terms *Haus* and *Wohnung* represent a house as a building, and not a house as a symbol which is related to the inheritance of property or a family tradition from generation to generation, as is observed in the term *ie* in Japanese.

In addition, *ie o daihyosuru* in Japanese can hardly translated into *ein Haus vertreten* as is seen in the example (30), while it may be translated into *eine Familie vertreten*. It may be necessary, therefore, to study in more detail, the similarity of the meaning between the term *Familie* in German and the term *ie* in Japanese. In any event, it may be claimed that the term *Haus* in the present day German cannot be used referring to a family which continues to exist from generation to generation, except for the cases in which a particular distinguished family genealogy is referred to.

2.5 Lifespace

| | Wohnung | | Zuhause | Familie | Haus |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|---------|---------|------|
| (31) in -- wohnen (to live in) | O | O | ? | X | |

| | | Sato | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| (32) in -- übernachten (to stay) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | X | X |
| (33) in -- zusammenleben (to live together) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | X | X |
| (37) in -- schlafen (to sleep in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | ?X | X |
| (38) in -- essen (to eat in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | X | X |
| (39) in -- kochen (to cook in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | ?X | X |
| (40) in -- arbeiten (to work in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | ?X | <input type="radio"/> |
| (41) in -- Karten spielen (to play cards in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | ?X | ? |
| (42) ein Kind in -- großziehen (to raise children in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | X | <input type="radio"/> |
| (43) ein Kind in -- erziehen (to educate children in) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | X | <input type="radio"/> |

Both the terms *Haus* and *Wohnung* have stable collocational relations with the verbs from (31) to (43), in which contexts, the terms mean a living space for spending a private life.

On the other hand, the reason the term *Zuhause* hardly co-occurs with the verbs may be attributed to the derivational constraint of the term *Zuhause* rather than to that of a characteristic of its meaning. That is, the reason of the low acceptability of the term *Zuhause* in these contexts may be that the term *Zuhause* itself is considered to be an adverbial phrase which is unnatural in those contexts when a noun usually occurs. This claim is substantiated by the fact that using *zu Hause* instead of *in einem Zuhause* in some contexts above often makes the expressions more acceptable. Incidentally, it was pointed out by some informants that if some attributive adjective occurs with the term *Zuhause* in the context *in einem Zuhause*, it is acceptable.

As for *Familie*, it is worth noting that the examples (34),(35),(40),(42) and (43) have a high acceptability. These expressions represent a private domain in contrast with a public one. The expressions *ie de₂ uchi de* and *katei de* are used to refer to a private domain in Japanese. It has been shown in Yoshikawa's paper that the term *katei* is the most natural among these in the contexts we are now discussing. It may be, therefore, asserted that the term *Familie* discussed in this part has some common semantic features to the term *katei* in Japanese.

3 Conclusion

So far, semantic commonalities and differences of the terms *Haus*, *Wohnung* and *Zuhause* within German itself have mainly been discussed. As for commonalities and differences between the terms of dwelling in German and in Japanese, the following

points are clarified. [Refer to the table of contrasting Japanese and German terms at the end of this article.]

The term *Wohnung* is the most common word which is usually used to refer to a house as a container for private life. It means a house to live in as a place, and it is felt unsuitable when it is personified. This property is similar to the term *sumai* in Japanese discussed in Yoshikawa's paper. It is usually the case that the term Haus is translated into *ie*, and the term *Wohnung* into *sumai* in the first entry of most German-Japanese Dictionaries.

As was mentioned in subsection 2.1, however, the term *Wohnung* has a distinctive difference from the term *sumai* in Japanese, in that the former refers to a place or space, not a house as a building, while the latter only refers to a house as a building itself. The term *Wohnung*, moreover, collocates well with expressions referring to a place for everyday or private activities, with which the term *sumai* cannot, as was discussed in subsection 2.5. The term *Wohnung*, therefore, may cover the meaning of "a place or space for living", while the term *sumai* covers only the meaning of "a house as a building."

The term *Zuhause* doesn't mean a place for a living or a house as a building but it represents a place symbolically co-occurring with expressions having emotional, psychological, or social implications, as is pointed out above. It may be claimed that it has the highest similarity to the term *katei* among the words Yoshikawa discussed before. Nevertheless, as is understood from the following examples, the two terms in German and Japanese do not necessarily have the same meaning.

(c) Er hat im Altersheim ein wahres Zuhause. (He felt a really homey atmosphere in his retirement home.)

(d) Seit dem Tod seiner Eltern ist er ohne richtiges Zuhause. (Since the death of his parents, he has never really felt at home.)

In (c) the term *Altersheim* represents an actual place or building for living. A place can be called *Zuhause* for the first time when an empathy is felt with the place. The expression (d) doesn't imply that he doesn't have a place for living, but it shows that, even if the person is living in the same place, he no longer feels an empathy with the place, the connotation of which the term *Zuhause* has. In the examples (c) and (d), a clue can be found for understanding both the difference and similarity between the term *Zuhause* in German and the term *katei* in Japanese. From the example (d), the term *Zuhause* has a common semantic feature with the term *katei*, since the term in German implies the importance of the ideal state of a family, or that of the ideal of how a family should be, as is understood from the cooccurrence with the term *richtig* which means "right". The Japanese term *katei* also has this semantic feature, as is explained by Yoshikawa. Nevertheless, we don't say *risoutekina katei o mitsuketa* (I have found an ideal *katei*), even if we have felt an atmosphere like that of an ideal home. That is to say, there is a semantic difference from

the term *katei*, in that the term *Zuhause* can express homeyness even in retirement home. The term *katei* in Japanese is the word implying a stereotypical place which may be called a "social framework", namely, a place for a family as the smallest unit in a society. The term *Zuhause*, on the other hand, is used to refer to a place where people are protected against the outer society and the world. The term in German, therefore, results in implying the place when people can live with some psychological stability.

As for the term *Haus*, it has a possibility of expressing a house as a container for a family conceptually, as can be seen from the fact that the expression *ein warmes Haus* is used metaphorically, depending on the contexts, at the same time that it can represent a real place for living, including a house as a building without any restrictions. The term *Haus*, in the present-day German, nevertheless, implies a more concrete building for living than the terms *ie* and *uchi*, which are said in Yoshikawa's paper to have a more semantic connotation of "objectiveness" than *katei*. This can be understood by the fact that, of the expression *ein warmes/kaltes Haus*, most of the informants regard it as a physically warm and cold house, unless it is used in the contexts when a metaphorical interpretation is preferable.

According to informants, moreover, the term *Haus* cannot be used to mean a family as a unit, except for the cases of talking about aristocratic or royal families, despite the fact that the term *ie* in Japanese has a meaning of a family as a unit, as was mentioned in subsection 2.4. In German language dictionaries, however, there is an expression *der Freund des Hauses* (the friend of the house), for instance, in which the term refers to a family as a unit. Besides, the term *Haus* used in the following proverbs means a family as a unit, as well.

Es ist leichter im fremden Hause dienen, als ein eigenes zu regieren.

(Lit. It is easier to serve some other family than to control your own family)

Wenn ein Haus arm wird, erkennt man den guten Sohn.

(Lit. A wise son will be found in a poor family.)

These examples show that the term *Haus* used to mean a family as a unit. In Japan, until the end of World War II, there used to exist a family system called *ie seido*, which has resulted in leaving a trace of a connotation related to a pre-war family system in one of the meanings of the term *ie*. In German language speaking areas, on the other hand, a family unit might have been called a *Haus* in older times. Until about the 19th century an extended family was made up of real family members in the present-day sense, as well as, sometimes, of their servants, as is described in Weber-Kellermann(1974). The term *Haus* was used to mean a family in that period of time. Diachronically speaking,

therefore, it may be asserted that differences in the degrees of a historical change in the idea of a family in each area are still reflected in some of the terms for living. This can be understood from the fact that a connotation related to a family system in older days is left in the term *ie* in Japanese, while in German, there is little trace of a connotation of a family system in older days. Consequently, the necessity of a further study will arise about a diachronic change in the meanings of the term *Haus* with reference to the historical change of the family system in German language speaking areas. It will become possible for us to find that some of the disparities in the meanings between the term *Haus* in German and the term *ie* in Japanese are attributed to some degree to a historical change in the meanings, and at the same time to cultural differences in each language speaking area.

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