

A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF JAPANESE SYNONYMS:

大切な、大事な、重要な

Urinboeva Sitora Abdufarrukhovna

Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies,
Amir Temur 20, Uzbekistan
sitoraaurunbaeva28@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the three synonyms of Japanese language, i.e. 大切な、大事な and 重要な, focusing on meaning in context and grammatical patterns. The source of data: LEARN Journal Language Education and Acquisition Research Network Journal, (10, Issue 2, 2017), Robert Frost (Life magazine, Dec.1 .1961), The new century Japanese-English Dictionary Senseido 1983, Weblio 国語辞典, 正しい日本語.com. It is discovered that these three synonyms share meaning in common, however, they are not interchangeable adjectives. The definite meaning and cases of using them differ. Furthermore, the corpus-based approach delivers additional data about each adjective's root meaning, thorough explanation and clear examples.

Keywords: *synonyms, interchangeable adjectives.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В этой статье исследуются три синонима японского языка, то есть 大切な、大事な и 重要な, с акцентом на значение в контексте и грамматические модели. Источник данных: LEARN Journal Language Education and Acquisition Research Network Journal, (10, выпуск 2, 2017 г.), Роберт Фрост (журнал Life, 1 декабря 1961 г.), The new Century Japanese-English Dictionary Senseido 1983, Weblio 国語辞典, 正しい日本語.com. Выявлено, что эти три синонима имеют общее значение, однако они не являются взаимозаменяемыми прилагательными. Определенное значение и случаи их использования различаются. Кроме того, корпусный подход предоставляет дополнительные данные о корневом значении каждого прилагательного, подробное объяснение и наглядные примеры.

Ключевые слова: *синонимы, взаимозаменяемые прилагательные.*

INTRODUCTION

“Life is tons of discipline. Your first discipline is your vocabulary; then your grammar and your punctuation” as proposed by Robert Frost(1961).It is generally

believed that vocabulary is a core of the entire language. Whether the learner of certain language owns advanced level grammar comprehension, without the wide range of vocabulary and knowing the proper use of lexicon, it is impossible to master the language. In this research, i am going to clarify the correpondence and distinctions between the Japanese adjectives, namely, 大切な、大事な and 重要な. Those people who are learning the Japanese as a second language, it is confusing for them to find the genuine meaning of the word that they are trying to use. Synonymy is one of the difficulties learners always find in vocabulary learning (Laufer, 1990). At first glance, these adjectives that have given above may give similar meaning, but result of research showed the proof that interpretational aspect of them indicate an adequate amount of distictions. Based on Associate Professor Dr.Supakorn Phoocharoensil's and assistant professor and lecturer Natthapon Petcharat's research on " A Corpus-Based Study of English Synonyms: Appropriate, Proper, and Suitable", studying these three synonyms systematically bu using dictionaries and corpus data as the major data sources (Natthapon Petcharat and Supakorn Phoocharoensil 2017 Thailand University).

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to examine the similarities and differences between 大切な、大事な and 重要な in terms of root meaning, thorough explanation and clear examples.

Strict and loose synonymy

Synonyms divided into two main types:

1. Strict (absolute) synonyms
2. Loose (relative) synonyms

Strict synonyms can be interchangeable in all context. Additionally, when it used in the sentence or in the speech, it goes smoothly, without changing the meaning, nor degree of formality. However, strict or real synonyms are hard to find or maybe even non-existent.

Loose synonyms cannot be interchangeable Palmer (1997). To exemplify, the English words "investigate" and "discover" can give the very same meaning but the distinction between them is seen in the example. According to the Advanced English Dictionary, the word "investigate" is a verb, means to try out the truth about something such as a crime, accident or scientific problem. The word "discover", to find someone or something, either by accident or because you were looking for them.

The state police are investigating the incident

The body was discovered in a field

Root meaning

1 大切な

大切な is the adjective which belongs to the adjective group of な形容詞.

Meaning of this word is mainly “important”. However, if to find the other synonyms of this word 大切な, the other translations, that will be mentioned below, come up as well.

Carefully

Necessary

Indispensable

Beloved

Dear

Valuable

Precious

Japanese Dictionary Takoboto

2 大事な

大事な is the adjective of な形容詞.

Meaning of this word is on the whole “important”. Here is the synonyms of this adjective.

Serious

Crucial

Valuable

Great thing

Major incident

Japanese Dictionary Takoboto

3 重要な

The adjective 重要な comes into the group な形容詞.

In most context it is translated as “important”. Below the translations of this adjective.

Essential

Principal

Major

Momentous

Japanese Dictionary Takoboto

Cases of Usage

1. 大切な

The adjective 大切な is mostly used when the emotions expressed. For instance, showing the feeling of support, gratitude, affection and value. Also, it is possible to identify the meaning of this adjective by looking at the meaning of two kanji of this adjective. 大 symbolizes the largeness and the 切 is approaching.

Example:

彼は私の大切な人だ

He is dear to me

健康はお金よりも大切だ

Health is more important than money

2. 大事な

The adjective 大事な used in serious situations. According to the meaning of kanji of this adjective. 大 means largeness and 事 is event, matter or thing. Combination of this two kanji means, taking the action seriously. Although, the meaning of 大切な and 大事な can be translated as English word “Important”. (大切な写真), (大切な手紙) or (大切記憶). Here is the subtle nuance between them. By using the word 大切な - we share emotional bond. According to the examples given above, it is crystally clear that “Important pictures”, may be no value to other people. But for some people it can be the thing that they can regard as a treasure. When it comes to, 大事な, if something is named as 大事な, if you lose it you cannot take it back and it is compared with 大切な、the adjective 大事な may sound slight informal.

Example:

成績は大事だが、それがすべてではない

Grades are important, but they are not everything

第一印象が大事である

First impressions matter

3. 重要な

Socially and objectively significant, these are the brief explanation of the adjective 重要な, is often used for things, which cannot be afforded to lose.

Example:

重要な行事

An important event

安全が最も重要なことである

Safety is the most important thing

CONCLUSION

In this paper, i discussed the difference of three adjectives of Japanese language, which can be translated as English word “important”.According to the theory of some linguists, strict (absolute) synonyms even do not exist that there is no identical word which can be used interchangeably. In addition, the research which had been conducted to discover the differences between three adjectives namely, “appropriate”, “proper” and “suitable” by Thailand university’s professional researchers, also showed the evedence that three of them can give a single meaning, but if the person discovers, the subtle distinctions start to appear.On the other hand, Japanese adjectives that i did research, most of non-native speakers of Japanese language cannot notice difference of adjectives 大切な、大事な and 重要な. Likewise, I believe that it is problamatic to find the word which can symbolize the very meaning, by taking into consideration the definite interpretation and situations of using the adjectives. In other words, nearly no one clearly distinguish them in Japanese language. Non-native speakers of Japanese language may ponder about the contrast of adjectives and can hesitate which one to use, however the native speakers of Japanese use these adjectives unconsciously, not paying great attention to details. By conveying this research, the more we study the root meaning of adjectives, the more new information come into view.I reckon that the best method to distinguish the difference is by deeply analyzing the sentences and culture of the language that we are learning. Here is also supplementary information that, the speech or the text which consist of the wide range of synonyms is found captivating and using synonyms are the best aid to avoid of dull context by taking into account the genuine meaning of the word.

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