

# An Analysis on Forms and Contexts of the Word 'When' in Japanese Language

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this research is to figure out the forms of the word “when” and describe its contexts in Japanese language. This descriptive-qualitative research employed a writing technique while the data are analyzed using a distributional method. The data consist of sentences containing the word ‘when’ context, word, when, Japanese language available in *Minna no Nihongo* textbook. The results of analysis show that there are various forms of the word ‘when’, such as the word *toki*, *sai*, *tokoro*, and others in Japanese Language based on contexts used in sentences.

**Keywords**—form, context, word, when, Japanese language

## I. INTRODUCTION

Japanese language is one foreign languages which has various letter forms, covering *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. One of difficulties faced by the Japanese language students at university in learning Japanese language is related to those letter forms in addition to the Japanese grammatical patterns. Grammar or sentence patterns consist of words when combined may form a sentence element, and then form a sentence. Not only on the grammatical structure which requires to be paid more attention by the language users not only to deliver the intended meaning to the hearers but also the meaning of each word contained in a sentence spoken by the speaker. The linguistic study which discusses meaning is called semantics. Semantics is a branch of linguistics which has an important role in language since the language basically used in communication is to convey those meanings. A linguistic unit also has a word meaning which relates each other called a meaning relation. One realization of meaning relation is synonym.

Synonym is a semantic relationship stating that there is a meaning similarity between one utterance and the others (Chaer, 2014:p. 297). There are many synonyms in Japanese language as it is considered as one language which is rich with grammatical structures and vocabularies. Many synonyms in Japanese language make the Japanese students feel that it is not easy to learn the language. Most Japanese language learners only know the meaning from the related vocabularies when translated to Indonesian language. Japanese language learners frequently do not understand that a certain word has synonyms when translated to Indonesian language and different meanings when used in different sentences. The word

‘when’ is the one which adequately has various synonyms in Japanese language that eventually result in students’ confusion in using those words. There are some similar researches conducted on the word *toki* and others included in the group of *keishiki meishi* in Japanese language. ([https://repository.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/87869/1/kg00025\\_001.pdf](https://repository.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/87869/1/kg00025_001.pdf)). However, a research employing a textbook as the data source, such as *Minna no Nihongo* has never been done before. Thus, the researchers consider that it is greatly necessary to conduct a research entitled “An Analysis on Forms and Contexts of the word ‘When’ in Japanese Language”.

## II. THEORETICAL BASES

### A. Semantics

Sutedi (2011: p. 127) explains that semantics or in Japanese language known as *imiron* is one linguistic branch discussing meaning. Semantics has an important role since the language used for communication is to convey meaning. For instance, when someone expresses his ideas or thoughts, the hearers directly understand the meaning of the delivered utterances. The object of semantic study includes the word meaning (*gonoimi*), meaning relation between one word and the others (*gonoimikankei*), phrase meaning (*kunoimi*), and sentence meaning (*bun no imi*).

Chaer (2014:297) explains that in linguistic unit, there are interrelated word meaning, in this case, in the forms of words, phrases, and sentences. This relationship is called meaning relation. The realization available in meaning relation includes homonymy (meaning relation between words written or spoken in the same ways, yet the meaning is different), synonym (between words, phrases, or sentences with the same or similar meaning), antonym (between words with opposite meaning), polysemy ( a word with more than one meaning), hiponymy (a form of utterance which meaning includes the others), ambiguity (multiple meanings resulted from different grammatical interpretation), and redundancy (the use of segmental elements in the hyperbolic utterances).

### B. Synonyms

Sutedi (2011: p. 145) states that synonym in Japanese language is called *ruigigo*. *Ruigigo* (synonym) is one object of semantic study. Synonym is several words with a closely

similar meaning. Krida laksana (in Aminuddin, 2008: p. 115) also defines that synonym is a linguistic form with a similar or the same meaning with the other forms as the similarity is applicable for words, a group of words or sentences, although only words are considered synonym.

Momiyama (in Sutedi, 2011: p. 145) recommends ways to identify a synonym, as follows:

- *Chokkanteki* (linguistic intuitive) for native speakers based on their life experiences. When listening to a word, the native speakers may directly feel that whether the word has synonyms or not.
- Some words when translated to the other foreign language may have the same meaning, such as the word *oriru*, *kudaru*, *sagaru*, and *furū* that in Indonesian language is equalized with the word *turun*.
- May occupy the same position in a sentence with a small meaning difference.
- In asserting a meaning, both may be use at the same time or at once. For instance, the word *hikaru* (光る) and *kagayaku* (輝く) which both mean „bersinar“ [shining], may be used at the same time, such as in *Hoshigahikari-kagayaiteiru* (星が光り輝いている) „Bintang bersinar cemerlang“ [The star shines brightly].

C. Class in Japanese Language Grammatical Patterns

In Japanese language, the word class is called *hinshi*.

“品詞は文中での統語的機能にもとづいて語を分類したものとされているが、統語的機能については前節で規定しておいた。すなわち、統語的構造のどの位置にくるかということで、語を分類すればよい”。(小泉, 1993:164)

*Hinshiwabunchūdenotōgo-tekikinōnimotodzuitegoobunruishita monotosareteiruga, tōgo-tekikinōnitsuitewazensetsudekitei shiteoita. Sunawachi, tōgo-tekikōzōno donoichinikuruka to iukoto de,-go o bunruisurebayoi* (Koizumi, 1993: p. 164)

The word class is defined as the classification of words based on the syntactic structure in the previously explained sentences. In other words, the position of this syntactic structure is adequate to classify those words” (Koizumi, 1993:164).

*Hinshi* in Japanese language has ten word classes which eight of those are included into *jiritsugo* and the other two classes are classified into *fuzokugo* (Sudjianto, 2004: p. 147). *Doushi* (Verb), *I-keiyoushi* (adjective-i), *Na-keiyoushi* (adjective-na), *Meishi* (Noun), *Rentaishi* (Pronoun), *Fukushi* (Adverb), *Kandoushi* (interjection), *Setsuzokushi* (Conjunction), *Jodoushi* (Auxiliary), *Joshi* (Particle).

III. RESEARCH TYPE

The type of this research is classified into a descriptive-qualitative research which describes forms and contexts of the word ‘when’ in Japanese language. The data were collected by

using a writing technique. A writing technique is a data collection technique by writing the results of the observed data (Kesuma, 2007: p. 45). The resulted data then were analyzed by a distributional method. Sudaryanto (in Kesuma, 2007: p. 54) states that distributional method aims at analyzing the data containing linguistic phenomena available in the related language.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researchers discuss the use of the word ‘when’ in Japanese language sentences available in Minna no Nihongo textbook. Most universities in Indonesia teaching Japanese language use that textbook as one major reference for teaching accompanied by the other references. The researchers conduct the analysis based on the use forms, meaning and whether or not the word “when” in Japanese language may replace each other within a sentence.

• Data (1)

国へ帰ったとき、かばんを買いました。

*Kuni he kaetta toki, kaban wokaimashita*

‘Ketika pulang ke negara, saya membeli tas’

[When going back to my country, I bought a bag]

(Minna no Nihongo shokyu I:192)

Based on data (1), the word *toki* follows the *futsuukei* verbs with past time signal (*kakokei*) that is *kaetta* ‘sudah pulang’ [having been back home]. *Futsuukei* is a basic form which may be equalized with the verb forms contained in the dictionary possessing the characteristics of word ending sound of *~u,~tsu,~ru,~bu,~nu,~mu,~ku,~gu,~su,~iru,~eru*, and verb *suru, kuru*”. The verbs with those ending sounds are presented in table 1:

Fig. 1. The example of *Futsuukei* verbs

Verb Group	Verb <i>Futsuukei</i>	Meaning
I	あう <i>Au</i>	<i>Bertemu</i> [to meet]
	かつ <i>Katsu</i>	<i>Menang</i> [to win]
	はいる <i>Hairu</i>	<i>Masuk</i> [to enter]
	遊ぶ <i>Asobu</i>	<i>Bermain</i> [to play]
	死ぬ <i>Shinu</i>	<i>Mati/meninggal</i> [to die]
	飲む <i>Nomu</i>	<i>Minum</i> [to drink]

	書く <i>Kaku</i>	<i>Menulis</i> [to write]
	泳ぐ <i>Oyogu</i>	<i>Berenang</i> [to swim]
	おす <i>Osu</i>	<i>Mendorong</i> [to push]
II	おきる <i>Okiru</i>	<i>Bangun</i> [to wake]
	ねる <i>Neru</i>	<i>Tidur</i> [to sleep]

III	来る <i>Kuru</i>	<i>Datang</i> [to come]
	する <i>Suru</i>	<i>Melakukan</i> [to do]

<sup>a</sup>. (<http://jakanaka8840.blogspot.co.id>)

Besides, in Japanese language, the *futsuukei* verbs may experience form changes based on time signal (a time signal word, such as contained in the verb 帰る *kaeru* ' pulang' [going back home] and if changed in past time, it may experience a changing process as presented in Diagram. 2:

(1)

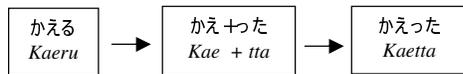


Diagram. 2. The changing Process of Futsuukei verbs

*Futsuukei* verbs with past time (*ta-kei*) have the characteristics marked by the presence of the form *~ta* and *~teiru/~teru* with the progressive time signal (*genzai-kei*) at the end of verbs. The changing pattern on each verb has its own criteria based on the following word ending letter. The *futsuukei* changing patterns on each verb are presented in table 2:

Fig. 2. *Futsuukei* verb changing patterns

Verb Group	Verb ending 普通形 (Futsuukei)	Past/ 夕形 (Takei) ~Ta	Progressive/ 現在形 (Genzaikei) ~Teiru/ ~Teru
I	う ( <i>u</i> )	った ( <i>tta</i> )	っている/ ってる ( <i>teiru/teru</i> )
	つ ( <i>tsu</i> )		
	る ( <i>ru</i> )		
	ぶ ( <i>bu</i> )	んだ ( <i>nda</i> )	んでいる/ nderu ( <i>ndeiru/nderu</i> )
	ぬ ( <i>nu</i> )		
	む ( <i>mu</i> )		
	く ( <i>ku</i> )	いた ( <i>ita</i> )	いている/ いてる ( <i>iteiru/iteru</i> )
ぐ ( <i>gu</i> )	いだ ( <i>ida</i> )	いでいる/ いでる ( <i>ideiru/ideru</i> )	
す ( <i>su</i> )	した ( <i>shita</i> )	している/ してる ( <i>shiteiru/shiteru</i> )	

			<i>shiteru</i>
II	いる ( <i>iru</i> )	た ( <i>ta</i> )	ている/てる ( <i>teiru/teru</i> )
	える ( <i>eru</i> )		
III	来る ( <i>kuru</i> )	来た ( <i>kita</i> )	来ている/ 来てる ( <i>kiteiru/kiteru</i> )
	する ( <i>suru</i> )	した ( <i>shita</i> )	している/ してる ( <i>shiteiru/shiteru</i> )

<sup>b</sup>. (<http://jakanaka8840.blogspot.co.id>)

*Toki* contained in the utterance *kuni he kaettatoki* has the meaning 'ketika sudah pulang ke negara' [after going back home to the country], then followed with the utterance *kaban wo kaimashita* which means 'saya membeli tas' [I bought a bag]. That utterance is one event taking place after the activity of going back home to the country occurs. Thus, utterance 1 has its meaning after going back home to the country, then (I) bought a bag. Since the word *kaetta* shows that the activity has been completed. Furthermore, the use *toki* in utterance 1 directly spoken by the speaker with a formal language as marked with the use of verb in the form of *masu* contained in the word *kaimashita* at the end of the sentence.

- Data (2)

カーテンを変えたら、部屋が明るくなった。

*Kaatenwo kaetara, heya ga akarukunatta*

'*ketika* gorden diganti, ruangan menjadi terang'

[When the curtain changed, the room got brighter]

(Minna no Nihongo Chuukyu I: p. 51)

Data (2) shows that the second sentence is the result or impact of the undertaken first activity that the room got brighter when the curtain changed. The word *toki* follows the *futsuukei* verb in past time (*kakokei*) that *kaeta* replace that combined with *~tara* (conditional form, if/when), then is followed by a verb in the form of *~ta* (*lampau*) contained in the phrase *akaruku natta* (*menjadi terang* [got brighter]). The meaning contained in sentence *kaaten wo kaetara, heya ga akarukunatta* is that the room got brighter since there is an activity of changing the curtain. The expression *~tara* contained in data (2) shows an activity conducted toward the curtain in a room which newly results in a brighter room.

The discussion results of both data show that the word "when" in Japanese language has various synonyms, including the word *~toki, ~tara, ~sai, ~tokoro* and more. Those word forms are grammatically based on similar use and meaning in meeting the context of sentences in Japanese language. Meanwhile, the examples of the other researches with different studies show that the words classified into *keishiki meshi* when practically analyzed have different meanings as the word *~toki* may not be separated from the past time aspects, and may be used in all situational aspects. Meanwhile, the word *~tara* may be freely used in non-grammatical

forms. ([https://repository.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/87869/1/kg00025\\_001.pdf](https://repository.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/87869/1/kg00025_001.pdf)).

Sutedi, D. (2011). *Dasar-dasar linguistik bahasa Jepang*. Bandung: Humaniora.

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. The use forms of the word 'when'

- *Toki*

Following the word class in the use forms of noun, pronoun, adjective- *na*, adjective -*i* and verb *futsuukei* 'regular form'. The special for noun + *toki* is used to give particle *no* as conjunction. Besides, *toki* is flexible since *toki* may be used in both formal and non formal language form either in spoken or written.

- *~tara*

The word form of verb + *~tara*, which is then followed by a verb or adjective in the past form *~ta*, has a meaning that a sentence after the form *~tara* is "resulted" from the sentence action following the form *~tara*. Besides, this pattern has also a meaning that a sentence after the form *~tara* is a sentence to indicate "finding" something new.

### B. Meaning

*Toki* and *tara* are positioned as *meishi* (noun), that is, *keishikimeishi*. *Keishikimeishi* is a word class formally explaining its function without possessing the essential or real meaning as noun that it can be concluded that *toki* and *~tara* do not have a clear meaning if not attaching to the other word. The word *toki* and *tara* when translated to Indonesian language may have the same meaning including *waktu* [time], *ketika* [when], *saat* [while], yet the function of both word forms is slightly different. *Toki* and *~tara* has the function to explain time when an activity, event, and condition take place based on the sentence context. Besides, *~tara* has an addition meaning as *jokenkei*, or conditional.

### C. *Toki* and *~tara* Position

Based on the result of analysis conducted by the authors, *toki* and *~tara* may replace each other when both are related to time, activity, event, and condition, yet should be adjusted to the context of sentence and hearer. *Toki* may not replace *~tara* when followed by pronoun *kono* since resulting in different meaning, Meanwhile, *~tara* may not be replaced by *toki* when followed by adjective, a sentence referring to itself.

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