

Quest for the Identity of a Word: Play

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1. Introduction

The writer's quest for the word, play, originated in her experiences in which she was puzzled by the use of the word in the following contexts:

1. Play with this idea for a while.
2. Play with this theory.
3. Play with these exercises.

In the States, for example, study is not easy for a foreign student. To work with exercises is a serious problem. Even when she looks back on the learning experiences of English, play does not appear in her mind in those contexts. What she remembers are the following examples:

4. "Do you play baseball?" - - New Prince English Course 1, p. 27.
5. "Work while you work, play while you play."
- - New Prince English Course 3, p. 119.
6. "The actress playing the part of the servant was waiting behind the scene." - - The Senior English Readers 1, p. 41.
7. "..... a silence in the middle of a play would be unwelcome." - - *ibid.* p. 40.
8. "Does anyone play the piano?" - - English Conversation for Young People, p. 48.
9. "If there isn't anything good, we can play some records."
- - *ibid.* p. 50.

Play may have aroused in her some concept opposite to seriousness or earnestness.

One native speaker of English introduced this writer to some other examples of play.

10. I was playing around in the kitchen.
11. I was playing around in the room.
12. Will you play with the machine and fix it?

In these sentences, she meant "cooking," "cleaning," "writing letters," and "Do you try to do your best?" according to each situation. Do the Japanese use the same expressions in similar situations? It may be true that they will say, "Asa kara asonde imasu," or "Asobi ni kite kudasai," when they mean that they would ask the listener to come over to their house, or to visit them. Asobu will be the Japanese equivalent to the English word, play. The question arises whether or not play and asobu are identical in meaning and value. Furthermore, if the native speaker of English uses expressions like those in sentences 10 to 12, this writer receives a positive connotation from play. While asobu in some cases causes her to have a negative response, in some other cases it is simply the indication of a frozen polite style as in

"Asobi ni kite kudasai" or "Omeshi asobase." Is the writer's initial rejection related to these factors?

Taking advantage of the opportunity to teach an English etymology class, she started a small etymological study of play. The writer assigned a couple of reports for the students. But since etymology has its own methodological difficulties and limitations as an academic discipline, the present paper is an attempt to discover what can be done for the student in an etymology course and in a general sense the student of English language through the study of a word play. In other words the paper is also for the writer herself to find a way to teach the student vocabulary. This study goes beyond etymology into the study of culture and civilization. In due course, however, the approach will prove to be helpful for the student to learn how profound the meaning of a word is.

II. An Etymological Study of Play in the O.E.D.

Before the etymological study of play is attempted, it will be necessary for us to know what etymology means, because this has long been a problem. Traditionally, etymology has been a neglected subject among scholars since it necessarily jumps over time and space with no definite results. Kanehiko Yoshida calls it a sterile field in his article in The Asahi (Sept. 16, 1975). In "Pleasure of Etymological Studies," Hideo Kobayashi also writes that "Etymology is a cheap, no, an expensive play of a person who has much leisure."¹ This implies that etymology is a work of an amateur who has much knowledge of many languages in the strict sense, and who needs not always validate his statements with evidence in general sense. Kobayashi continues that the etymological knowledge of a word is of very little use to language study, and on the contrary, is an obstacle to it.² Is this really true? Although the O.E.D. has served as the reservoir of etymological information and other knowledge of the English language, it is generally accepted that there is no such dictionary in Japan.

Recently, however, interest in the origin and the etymological researches of the Japanese language has been booming. In this boom, to Yoshida's regret, there are no professional studies of word formation and etymology proper, because of the academic alienation of this field rather than the scholar's indifference. If there is any etymological research in the history of the studies of the Japanese language, it has been studies as a language system, but there have been few of word formation and the structure of meanings of words. Yoshida warns that not only journalists and publishers but professional scholars of the Japanese language should present material regarding the etymological studies of the language, so that linguists can share the data, and both can do a more effective study. In addition, he greatly emphasizes the necessity of careful study of each word.

For some reason the etymology course has been disliked by the teachers at our university also. As a person who is involved in its teaching, the writer cannot but reconsider the course and dis-

cover a suitable way of handling it. As we see in the O.E.D., etymology comes from the Greek etumologos, and ultimately etumos which means "true." (The O.E.D. Vol. III, pp. 316-317)³ The writer presents the full definition as a summary of the ideas of Albert H. Markwardt in Introduction to the English Language.⁴

1. to decide the linguistic form and meaning from which a certain word was derived or borrowed.
2. to discover the oldest form of a word not only in a language but also among languages.
3. to study word formation.
4. to know the words made by popular etymology and folk etymology.

In the teaching situation, we cannot give indefinite statements about the oldest form or meaning of a word. In many cases at our university, prefixes, suffixes, and roots were taught, which belong to point no. 3 stated above. This way of teaching has its own merits. To strengthen the cultural background of the English language of the student, we can pay more attention to a dictionary. In a dictionary like the O.E.D., there are many difficult parts which we do not understand easily. Our knowledge of Greek and Latin is almost none, still less of other languages. Room is still left, however, to use the knowledge available to a fuller extent. We attempt to manage the etymology class in such a way that students are exposed to the cultural and intellectual history of a nation. It is from this angle that play is examined as presented in the dictionary and in uses in a book.

A dictionary is a resource book both for the student and the teacher. As Mitford M. Mathews states in the "The Freshman and His Dictionary," ".....it is one thing to find a word in a dictionary and quite another to understand fully the information there given about it."⁵ From the side of the teacher, Markwardt makes us reflect on a dictionary by saying that "there is one useful source of information about the English language which English teachers often fail to use to its fullest potential, namely the dictionary."⁶ If possible, it is good to go to the native informant to ask questions about the English language, because we have the idea that a dictionary may afford only limited and frozen information of a word. It seems to the writer, however, that it really gives more than we expect.

Let us see what we find for play in the O.E.D. According to the etymological explanation (Vol. VII, pp. 974-978), play as a verb is derived from OE plegan and its variants. A noun, play comes from OE plega, a derivative from a verb. Therefore the forms and meanings given for a verb will be mainly examined here. Plegan originally means "to dance, leap for joy, rejoice, be glad" (p. 974). "As to its relation to OS plegan, Du. plegen, Ger. pflegen 'to have the care of, take charge of, attend to, cultivate, to be in the habit of, to be wont or accustomed to' ..." (p. 974).

The O.E.D. continues to explain play as follows:

The primary senses under each of the following branches were already in OE, and the order of their development is more or less inferential; but all the uses of 'play' are seen to arise naturally from a primary notion 'to exercise, bestir, or busily occupy oneself', the line of development having been here determined by the recreative or divertive purpose of the exercise. In the miners' 'play', the sense of exercise or busy occupation disappears, and the word (sense 15; cf. Play sb. 13) comes to mean 'to cease work, to be idle'. The same primary notion, developed in quite a different line, accounts for the continental senses of plegen, pflegen, 'to have care of, take kindly charge of, cultivate', and 'to be in the practice or habit of', notions which evidently imply occupying oneself busily about a thing or a person, and habitually exercising oneself in an action. (pp. 974-975)

Judging from the above explanation and the senses which follow it, "to play" means "to act" and "to have free rapid movement," and in the line of development, "to have an action for diversion and amusement. These two meanings are exactly expressed in the meanings of the branches I and II in the O.E.D. If we consider "To do something which is not to be taken seriously but merely as done in sport or frolic; to trifle with" (p. 976), we may guess that play is opposite to seriousness, and play has the element of sport. "To abstain from work; to take a holiday" (p. 976) fits the meaning of sentence no. 5 in the introduction. Sentence no. 9 is an action for diversion and amusement. Note the following sentence:

13. Joe plays around too much. He is a play boy. Here the meaning of play, "to sport amorously" (p. 976) will be applicable. Today the word seems to have too stronger an erotic connotation. In this relation, the Japanese loan word プレイ (play) means "to go to the red line district and play around,"⁷ as Minoru Umegaki points out in his article, "The English Influence over the Japanese Words." Judging from these factors, the English word play seems to have taken on some kind of moral value and negative connotation for the Japanese which accounts for the writer's resistance to certain uses of play as in nos. 1 to 3.

The meanings listed under branch III in the O.E.D. are in some way related to the meaning, "To engage in a game,..." (p. 976). Branch IV also has a similar meaning, "To exercise oneself or engage in sword-play, fighting, or fencing" (p. 977). Both are related to a game whose significance will be amplified later by the discussion of Huizinga's book. "To play a game" implies rules. "To play fair" is developed from "To play a game according to rules, " and "to act honourably."

Branch V states the meaning, "To perform instrumental music" (p. 977). Sentence no. 8 can be understood in this connection. Since play is never applied to vocal music, however, the sense has been developed from the initial meaning of play, free, rapid move-

ment of fingers

The meanings listed under branch VI are related to the mimic action: "To perform dramatically; and derived senses"(pp. 977-978). Mimic action seems to be derived from the game element such as pretention or imitation of the reality. The following sentences, on the other hand, will be comprehended in relation to the continental meaning of play, 'to take charge of':

14. The committee played a great role in this decision.

15. The words of the language do not seem to play any role in one's mechanism of thought.

Sentence no. 6 can also be explained in this connection.

Now we move to consider how sentences 1 to 3 and 10 to 12 are explained within the limit of the meanings given in the O.E.D. Play in the first case implies "freedom" or "invitation to challenge or speculation." "Freedom" means "freedom to agree or deny ideas or a theory given. The invitation to challenge is found in the O.E.D., as "To stake or wager in a game ; to hazard at play" (p. 977).

We know it is an element of a game. If we consider sentences 10 to 12 in a similar manner, some jobs may be a pleasure or a burden. But when people express themselves in that way, it seems to the writer that the speaker is taking the action positively and voluntarily, which is also included in the game element.

We have seen so far how the meanings of play are related to each other in various ways. In short, the free movement and the game spirit are the essential elements of play. A dictionary gives us those primary meanings underlying the word.

Examining the reports of the students, however, we find they only copied down several of the meanings in the O.E.D. Some of them studied the meanings given for a noun. The choice between a verb and a noun was at random. Many of them did not think of the relations between meanings. In the writer's view, only four students out of 97 referred to the meaning, "free movement", which they realized for the first time. It is clear that a dictionary can be a more useful resource to the student in order to know the biography of a word. In addition, if we can find a book which adds more of the cultural background, the study of a word, etymological in a broader sense, will be much more helpful to the student's language learning.

III. A Historical and Anthropological Study of Play

Johan Huizinga's Homo Ludens, Man the Player, delineates the whole background of play elements by investigating play as a cultural phenomenon. His approach is historical and anthropological. To supplement the information given in the O.E.D., Huizinga's main ideas about play are introduced. As for the relation between play and a musical instrument, for example, he says that play is not necessarily confined to the playing of an instrument, although it implies the nimble and orderly movements of fingers. It is also applied to anybody who does tricks with knives or balls. Play with

the erotic connotation means for him not any erotic act, but the road thereto, the preparation for and introduction to "love", which is often made enticing by all sorts of playing. The reader will remember that play as a game also means "the invitation to challenge" as well.

As we have seen in the O.E.D., Huizinga also thinks that the primary meaning of play is the idea of rapid movement. But it is not always true that every language formed its idea of and expression for play in the same way, since word and idea are not born of scientific nor logical thinking but of creative language, the sparking between matter and mind. Therefore, it does not follow that the ideas of rapid movement are older than those of play. The O.E.D. states, for example, that both meanings coexisted in OE.

According to Huizinga, the play concept is very important in Greek life. Although a Greek distinguishes between contest and play linguistically, he is convinced of their underlying identity.

The agon in Greek life, or the contest anywhere else in the world, bears all the formal characteristics of play, and as to its function belongs almost wholly to the sphere of the festival, which is the playsphere. It is quite impossible

to separate the contest as a cultural function from the complex "play-festival-rite."⁸ (p. 31)

In Latin, contests are expressed by Ludus. Ludi denotes either the great public game which occupied so important a place in Roman life, or schools. Ludus, as the general term for play, left hardly any traces in the Romance languages. Though the concept is weaker in Roman civilization than in Greek, he admits that it existed there too. The meaning of "armed strife" (p.40) is common to all play-terms in all Germanic languages and in many others.

The following is a summary of the play-concept which Huizinga discovers in many European languages:

. . . play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is "different" from "ordinary life" (p. 28).

He continues:

Thus defined, the concept seemed capable of embracing everything we call "play" in animals, children and grown-ups: games of strength and skill, inventing games, guessing games, games of chance, exhibitions and performances of all kinds. We ventured to call the category "play" one of the most fundamental in life (p. 28).

In the above quotations, the conception of play as a cultural phenomenon is maintained in terms of a game and a contest rather than a rapid movement.

To discover an answer to the question why the writer reacted

against sentences like 1 to 3, we have to examine the conceptual antithesis of play. Huizinga points out that play lies outside the antithesis of wisdom and folly, of truth and falsehood, of good and evil, and of vice and virtue. He also states the relation between play and earnestness or seriousness as follows.

The need for a comprehensive term expressing "not-play," must have been rather feeble, and the various expressions (such as zeal, exertion, painstaking,) for "seriousness" are but a secondary attempt on the part of language to invent the conceptual opposite of "play" (p.44).

To discuss play-earnest antithesis, Huizinga emphasizes that these two terms are not of equal value:

. . . play is positive, earnest negative. The significance of "earnest" is defined by and exhausted in the negation of "play" - - earnest is simply "not playing" and nothing more. The significance of "play", on the other hand, is by no means defined or exhausted by calling it "not-earnest", or "not serious" (p.45).

The problem of this conceptual antithesis may have aroused in the writer some resistance in using play in certain contexts like sentences 1 to 3. Furthermore, the conception of asobu, the Japanese counterpart, is able to make some semantic overlappings and gappings with the concept of the English word play. Let us examine the images of asobu. A Japanese dictionary gives the following definitions:⁹

1. to spend time doing whatever one likes for recreation and diversion.
2. to spend time without working.
3. to go out of one's home and visit some place else for one's accomplishment; to travel

Like play asobu is an action for oneself, not for somebody else. But the meaning no. 3 differs from the meanings of play. The following Japanese sentences will explain asobu in contrast to isoshimu and hataraku.¹⁰ Isoshimu means that the person works not only with earnestness but also with pleasure. It is the word best representative of the hard working of the Japanese. Hataraku means nothing special except working in a general sense.

e.g. 1 "Onna o aiteni shigoto o shitari, seippai hataraita-ita." (She had been working very hard, sometimes by sewing with her maid near by.) Taken from Omoide no ki Joo, p. 16.

e.g. 2 "Imamade asobinagara yoosai gakko ni itteita, dakara, sonomama motte itte, mata asobinagara hatarakoo to omou." (I had been to a sewing school without any serious object. In a similar manner, I wish to work with an easygoing attitude.) Taken from Sooen, 1956, 4, p. 131.

Comments: Omoide no Ki no yooni nessin ni hataraita iru rei no hoo ga zutto ooi ga, "asobinagara hataraku" to iu yoo ni, nonbiri, funesshin ni hataraku baai nimo

kono kotoba wa tsukawareru.

From the above sentences and the comments, however, we learn that for the Japanese asobinagara means not-earnestly nor not-seriously as expressed by funesshin ni, and that hataraku connotes earnestness as expressed by seiippai or nessin ni. For the Japanese work/play antithesis or earnest/play antithesis seems to be possible.

If we accept Huizinga's judgement that what earnest and serious is to not-play, and what play is to not-earnest and serious are of different value in English, the problem of understanding the cultural background of play becomes much more complex and important. It becomes clear when Huizinga investigates play in the context of the development of culture and civilization. He asserts that law and order, commerce and profit, craft and art, poetry and wisdom are all rooted in the play spirit which has been explained to a great extent. Besides, he says that it was present and significant from the very beginning of Greek culture and elsewhere. For him ritual is the best representation of the play spirit.

. . . allowing the innate human need of rhythm, harmony, change, alternation, contrast, and climax, to unfold in full richness. Coupled with this play sense in a spirit that strives for honour, dignity, superiority and beauty. Magic and mystery, heroic longings, the foreshadowings of music, sculpture and logic all seek form and expression in noble play (p. 75). Thus the order of nature and life was played between belief and unbelief, the sacred and earnest, belief and fun.

Huizinga discusses the relations between play and war, lawsuit, knowledge, and poetry. The duel, one form of war, is very representative as a play-form. It has the orderly regulations regarding the manners of fighting, the spot, the weapons, and the victor. If a battle becomes a bloody violence of reality, it loses play elements. But the duel is experienced and enjoyed as a social and aesthetic fiction. Furthermore, he points out that some types of battle such as duels, tournaments, joustings, and the dubbings, as well as orders and vows, are vestiges of primaevial initiation-rites.

War can take the form of verbal competition as is found in the lawsuit, riddle-solving, and poetry. In the ancient times, before the clear conceptions of right and wrong were realized by the people, or before the positive conceptions concerning God were realized in the sphere of law and in the sphere of faith, a lawsuit was carried out in the form of ordeal or oracle. In both of them, we can find the elements of casting lots, shooting, and of the decision as to who will be the winner. Those elements are play elements which Huizinga discusses. An ordeal or oracle is a verbal battle. Even today the lawsuit may well be called a verbal competition.

Riddle-solving is another verbal competition. People compete in how much more they know than others. They ask cosmogonic questions such as the birth of the word or the phenomena of nature. The answer to those questions need not be logical, but must follow rules: grammatical, poetical or ritualistic. Symbols must be

understood between the competitors. If we follow Huizinga, a riddle, a totality, was developed in two directions, mystic philosophy and recreation, taking seriousness and playfulness on its own side respectively. This can be considered evidence that man had been accustomed to think of everything as cleft into opposites and dominated by conflict.

Marriage will present an interesting example with a game spirit, although it is only partially a verbal contest. Etymologically, "wedding" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon wed and originally from Latin vas. Vas means "'the pledge' or 'gage' with which one bound oneself to keep an 'engagement' already contracted" (p. 83). The wedding party functions as the race run for the bride. In this relation, Susumu Ono describes the Japanese word, yuinoo, property for an engagement. He states yui is originally a challenge to other men by marking the bride." Huizinga points out that the challenge can be that in knowledge and wit as well as in strength and courage.

Above all the relations between play and war, lawsuit, riddle-solving and poetry, Huizinga most stresses the culture-making capacity of poetry. In archaic cultures, poetry is closely related to "ritual, entertainment, artistry, riddle-making, doctrine, persuasion, sorcery, soothsaying, prophecy, and competition" (p. 120). The social urges, sometimes with or without the aesthetic purport, drive man to frenzy with the blessing of the new season or the intense rivalries of clans, families and tribes. Although poetry obeys a system of prosodic rules, the initial desire for poetic expressions are described and understood in terms of play. As examples, he gives the poetry of the Troubadors and haikai too. He is convinced that tension in poetry comes from conflict or love, or both, and both being derived from rivalry or competition.

Play rather than logic creates images. Poetry is the language of images. Huizinga states that the language of ideas wears down the image of words.

. . . the language of ordinary life. . . is continually wearing down the image--content or words and acquiring a superficial existence of its own (logical only in appearance) (p.133).

It is natural that he puts great emphasis on the image-creating capacity of poetry as play.

The play spirit is alive in various forms of art. Leaving those as they are, however, the writer comes to Huizinga's conclusions: Play is older than civilization, and civilization is played. Play is so basic to human life that it has never left civilization. Nevertheless the play spirit became very weak in the 19th century because of the development of science and the one-sided emphasis on logic. "Culture ceased to be 'played'" (p. 192).

IV. Conclusion

As previously stated in the introduction, this study of the word play began from the intellectual curiosity aroused by the writer's puzzle about certain English usages of play and has contin-

ued through the etymological study to the historical and anthropological study of the word. The writer's original question has been answered. It is clear now that she was not familiar with the cultural implications of play and the word was taken by her as the play-seriousness antithesis, or as a word with moral value, which way of thinking is not always right according to Huizinga. The reference to the Japanese word, asobu, will also be helpful in understanding her resistance. We should not neglect the profound contents of one word in English language education.

To examine if the present writer is the only one who has fallen into such a maze, she made a study of the images of a word play and asobu. The following procedure was taken:

subjects: A questionnaire were distributed to 100 students of Etymology Class. They are Sophomores, the English Department, Notre Dame Seishin University. 53 students returned the questionnaire.

method: The semantic differential of seven scale was used. It includes 17 items. Items 1 to 10 (+side) on the figure 3 are play elements. Items 11 to 17 are elements discussed against play elements.

See the result.
figure 1

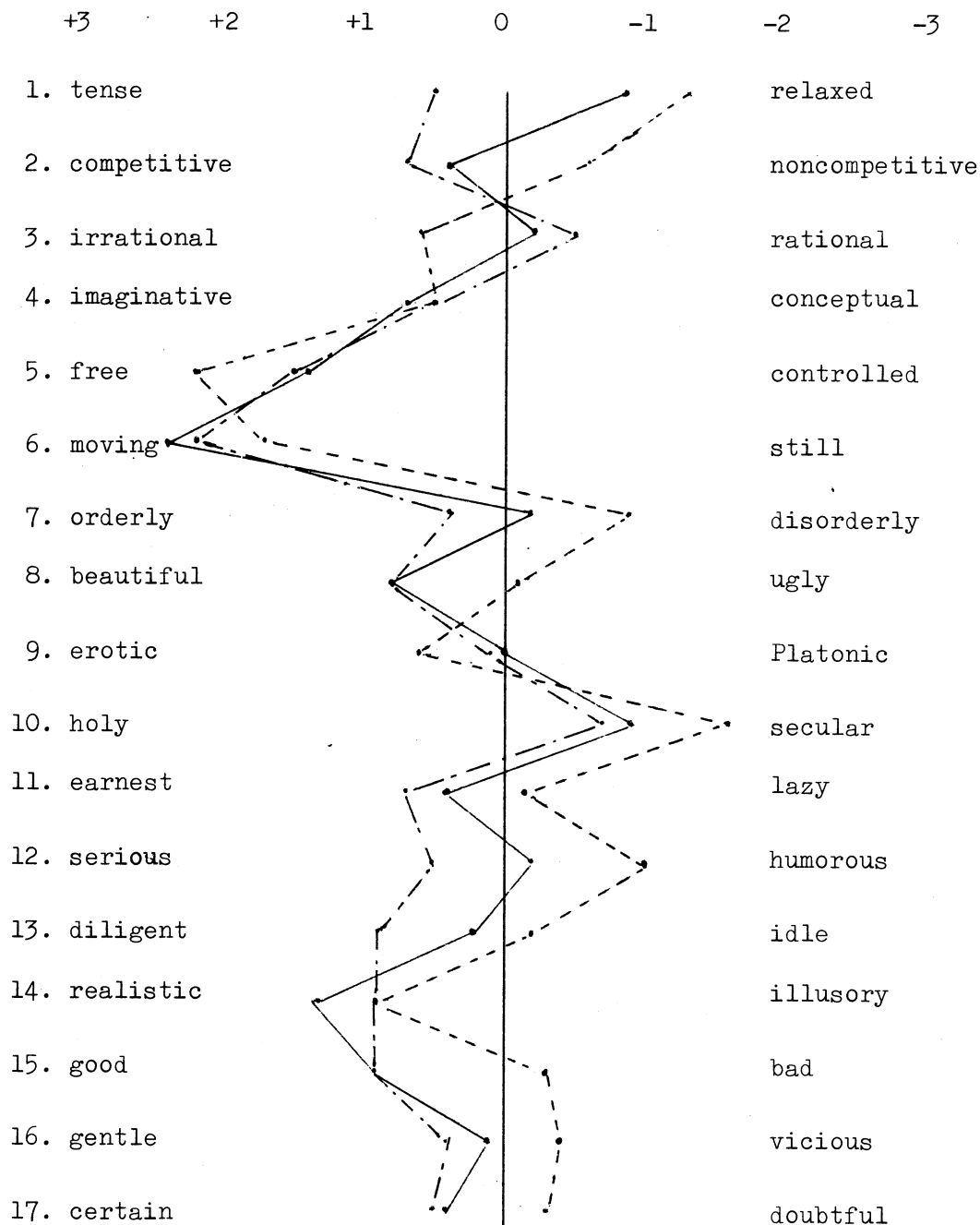
play

	very	pretty	a little	not either	a little	pretty	very	
1. earnest	2	7	18	13	8	4	1	lazy
2. diligent	3	6	11	16	12	4	1	idle
3. realistic	7	20	12	10	4	0	0	illusory
4. erotic	0	8	7	25	6	4	3	Platonic
5. beautiful	5	9	12	25	1	1	0	ugly
6. serious	2	4	11	9	17	9	1	humorous
7. holy	0	2	6	12	16	10	7	secular
8. tense	2	4	7	2	18	12	8	relaxed
9. free	10	19	14	3	5	1	1	controlled
10. irrational	0	3	10	21	13	5	1	rational
11. competitive	3	5	18	15	7	5	0	noncompetitive
12. good	5	10	15	19	3	1	0	bad
13. gentle	3	2	12	22	9	4	1	vicious
14. moving	31	16	5	0	0	1	0	still
15. orderly	2	4	12	15	9	7	4	disorderly
16. imaginative	3	12	12	13	11	1	1	conceptual
17. certain	1	8	10	25	8	1	0	doubtful

figure 2

		遊				ぶ		
		非常に	かなり	やや	どちらでもない	やや	かなり	非常に
1.	熱心な	4	4	1 2	8	1 2	8	5 不熱心な
2.	働いている	4	8	4	1 5	7	1 1	4 何もしていない
3.	現実的	9	1 2	1 3	6	8	5	0 幻想的
4.	性愛的	1	9	1 8	1 8	5	1	1 純愛的
5.	美しい	0	2	7	3 1	1 2	0	1 醜い
6.	真面目な	0	2	3	8	2 1	1 7	2 不真面な
7.	神聖な	0	0	1	6	1 3	2 5	8 世俗的な
8.	緊張感のある	1	2	7	1	1 2	1 8	1 2 緊張感のない
9.	自由な	2 2	2 4	5	0	1	1	0 束縛された
10.	非合理的な	2	1 2	1 1	2 0	4	4	0 合理的な
11.	競っている	0	3	7	1 8	1 1	9	5 競っていない
12.	善い	0	3	1 0	1 9	1 4	6	1 悪い
13.	有徳な	0	2	4	2 7	1 3	6	1 悪徳の
14.	動的	1 7	1 4	1 5	3	3	0	1 静的
15.	秩序のある	0	1	6	1 2	1 7	1 4	3 秩序のない
16.	想像的	0	1 3	1 6	1 5	5	3	1 概念的
17.	確実な	0	3	6	2 3	1 8	2	1 疑わしい

figure 3



— play.

- - - 遊

- . - . - loan word, play

The Images of "Play" and "Asobu"

On the figure 3 a loan word play was examined with Japanese meanings in a similar manner as the other two cases.

The result shows as you see from the figure 3 that the students have for play images, "moving," "free," "realistic," "beautiful," "good," and "imaginative." Asobu gives them images such as "jiyuuna," "dooteki," "sezokuteki," "kinchoo no nai," and "chitsujo no nai." It is desirable that "free" and "moving" are selected. As was expected, "tense," "competitive," "irrational," "orderly," and "holy" indicate the students' low attention. Elements of "realistic" and "good" are highly valued. Play has more positive elements than asobu. A loan word play does not go between the lines of play and asobu. It goes rather parallel with the line of play, and even more positive than play in English. As to "serious", the line runs into minus side. At the same time, asobu connotes "bad", while play in English connotes "good".

It is good for the students to know "freedom" and "moving" in play. The writer still wonders, however, if they have understood the essence of play. For they answered negatively when the writer questioned them if asobu is an equivalent to English play:

yes: 22

no : 31

The students who answered "no" gave the following reasons.

The word play in English is most associated with "to do some sport" (13 students), "to do something," (6) "to play some musical instrument" (5). For them "freedom" and "movement" may mean physical movement and freedom to do some physical action, not necessary mental.

We can not but feel that even a single word is rooted deep in the history of thousands of years of life of a nation. Our understanding, including students, for example, depends on the very short history of only eight to ten years of a foreign language situation, not of life itself.

In the language teaching situation, what can we do with this gap? This is only one example of learning a word. But the same is true in treating vocabulary. The teacher of English language should know that the first introduction of students to words is vital and the meaning of the words is long kept in their mind and heart just as the first impression of a person. At the first meeting of a word, moreover, one or two concrete meanings are taught to the student. If we take "imagination", for example, we tend to give the Japanese equivalent, "soozooryoku" any time and any place. We say we should not judge a person with his first impression alone. In a similar manner, we should try to know a variety of meanings of a word for its identity. It may be a meaning of higher abstraction, but it seems necessary for us to learn some common meaning which underlies a variety of meanings.

Although it is often said that a dictionary can give only limited and frozen information concerning a word, we can utilize

profound information hidden in a dictionary such as the O.E.D. We can trace the development of meanings and find some common features to them. If we compare the information given in the O.E.D. and the information given in Homo Ludens, we discover more similarities than differences in the basic concept and meaning of the word. The play concept underlies the usages of play. As Albert H. Markwardt comments in his article, "The Dictionary as an English Teaching Resource," English dictionaries are sometimes more helpful than grammar books or textbooks. For a dictionary treats a language as totality. If, in addition, we encounter a book like Homo Ludens which endeavours to explain the conception of one word, play, to such an extent, our pleasure of the study of the biography of a word would be the greater. In a broader sense, it is hoped that the etymology class can make a meaningful contribution to English language education.

Notes

1. Hideo Kobayashi. Watakushi no Jisho. Tokyo: Marusen, Shoowa 49, p. 33.
2. *ibid.*, p. 32.
3. All the quotations and references from the O.E.D. are indicated with the volumes and pages in parentheses in the paper.
4. Albert H. Markwardt. Introduction to the English Language, Translated by Ichiroo Fujimori. Tokyo: Yashio Shuppan Sha, 1972, pp. 176-180.
5. Mitford M. Mathews. "The Freshman and His Dictionary," in Readings in Applied English Linguistics. Ed. by Harold B. Allen, Second Edition. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964, p. 435.
6. Albert H. Markwardt. "The Dictionary as an English Teaching Resource," in TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 77, No. 4, 1973, p. 371.
7. Minoru Umegaki. Kokugo ni Oyoboshita Eigo no Eikyoo. Tokyo: Shin Eibei Bungaku Sha, Shoowa, 8, p. 5.
8. Johan Huizinga. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Beacon Press, 1970, p. 31. All the quotations from this book are indicated by the page number in the paper.
9. Shin Meikai Kokugo Jiten.
10. Tatsuo Miyajima (ed.). Dooshi no Imi Yoohoo no Kijutsuteki Kenkyuu. Tokyo: Shuuei Shuppan, Shoowa 47. Examples and comments are written on page 487 of this book.
11. Susumu Oono. Nihongo o Sakanoboru. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975, p. 41.

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