

## Research Article

**Tomaru Verb Polysemy in Japanese**

Elizabeth Ika Hesti Aprilia Nindia Rini\*, Alif Prasetyaningtyas

Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia

\*Email: [elizabethikahesti@lecturer.undip.ac.id](mailto:elizabethikahesti@lecturer.undip.ac.id)

Received: Sept 15, 2021; Revised: Nov 15, 2021; Accepted: Nov 23, 2021

Available online: Nov 27, 2021; Published regularly: Dec 2021

**Abstract**

Polysemy is the capacity for a word or phrase to have multiple related meanings. *Tomaru* verb is one of the polysemous verbs. This study aims to describe the basic meaning and the extended meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese. Data collection in this study used the method of observing with the note-taking technique. In addition, the data analysis in this study used descriptive and agih methods. As for the presentation of the results of the analysis in this study using informal methods. Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the verb *tomaru* has one basic meaning and seven extended meanings. The verb *tomaru* basic meaning is to stop. Meanwhile, the extended meaning namely something that comes out does not come out; something that flows becomes nonflowing; something sustainable becomes unsustainable; something that comes does not come; resting temporarily in a certain place; undetached, fixed in place; and what has been seen and heard leaves an impression.

**Keywords:** Intransitive; Polysemy; *Tomaru*; Verbs

**How to cite (APA):** Rini, E. I. H. A. N., & Prasetyaningtyas, A. (2021). *Tomaru Verb Polysemy in Japanese*. *IZUMI*, 10(2), 2021. <https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.10.2.372-379>

**Permalink/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.10.2.372-379>

**1. Introduction**

Language has its own uniqueness and becomes one of the identities of a country. As is the case with Japanese, many words are found in Japanese that have the same form but have different meanings. Semantics or *imiron* (意味論) is one of the branches of linguistics that studies meaning (Sutedi, 2011:127). The object of semantic study is in the form of meaning so that the meaning contained in each language has a meaningful relationship called a meaning relation. Meaning relations are semantic relationships that exist between language units (in the form of words, phrases, sentences) with one language unit.

*Tomaru* verb is one of the polysemous verbs. Most people interpret the verb as something that initially moves

to become immobile. However, the verb *tomaru* has a broader meaning. This is because the verb *tomaru* not only has a basic meaning, but also has an expanded meaning. The limited understanding of the expanded meaning resulting from the two verbs sometimes leads to confusion and errors when matching. Problems like this often arise when students are learning a foreign language. If the mother tongue system (B1) is used in a foreign language (B2), it will result in language errors. This is what then aroused the interest of the author to research in more depth.

Previous research by the first author was in the form of an article in the journal *Edu Japan* entitled "Analysis of the Meaning of *Tomaru* Verbs as Polysemy in Japanese" by Rahma et al. (2017) from the Indonesian University of Education. This

study aims to determine the basic meaning, extended meaning, and the relationship between the basic meaning and the extended meaning of the verb *tomeru*. The findings of this study showed that the basic meaning of the verb *tomeru* is to stop, whereas the extended meaning of the verb *tomeru* is to remove (stopping the pain), to hold (holding the cough), to prohibit (no entry), to prevent (prevent the departure), to pin (pin with needle), to nail (nailing with a safety pin onto the shirt), to note (recorded in memory), to stay (a one-night stay), and to give shelter (I was given a place to stay at home uncle). The relationship between those meanings can be described using two figurative languages: metaphors and metonyms. The difference between Rahma's research and this research is that the previous research used the verb *tomeru* as the object of research, while the object of this study was the verb *tomaru* (止まる・停まる・留まる) which is an intransitive verb.

There is also a previous study in the form of a thesis entitled "Analysis of the Use of *Tomaru* Verbs as *Doukun'iji* in Japanese Sentences" by Musta'anah (2020) from State University of Semarang. This study aims to determine the meaning of the verb *tomaru*; similarities and differences in the use of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese sentences; and find out whether the three kanji verb *tomaru* can replace each other or not in Japanese sentences. The verb *tomaru* (止まる) and the verb *tomaru* (停まる) can be replaced each other except with animate subjects, the five senses, objects collective and abstract objects. *Tomaru* verb (止まる) and *tomaru* verb (留まる) interchangeably with the subject of vehicles, uncountable objects, places living, animal, five senses. While the verb *tomaru* (停まる) and the verb *tomaru* (留まる) can replace each other only in sentences with the subject of vehicles, uncountable objects, and places of residence but change meaning. The difference between Musta'anah's research

and this research is that previous studies discussed the verb *tomaru* as *doukun'iji*, while this study discussed the verb *tomaru* as *tagigo* (polysemy).

## 2. Methods

There are three stages in this research. First, the stage of providing data obtained using the listening method and note-taking technique. The data that has been collected is classified by the author based on the meaning of three theories in the form of a dictionary, namely (1) *Sanseidou Kokugo Jiten* is a theory from Kindaichi, et al; (2) *Shin Reinboo Shougaku Kokugo Jiten* is Touki's theory; and (3) *Nihongo Tagigo Gakushuu Jiten Doushi Hen: Imeeji de Wakaru Kotoba no Imi to Tsukaikata* is Moriyama's theory. Second, the data analysis stage using descriptive and apportion methods. The data were analyzed by describing the meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese sentences based on the theory used. Third, at the data presentation stage, an informal method is used where the results of the analysis will be presented using ordinary sentences or words.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Kunihiro (1996) states that polysemy or *tagigo* is a word that has more than one meaning and each meaning has a link. To find out the meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese, a compilation of three theories was used in the form of a dictionary, namely (1) *Sanseidou Kokugo Jiten*, the theory of Kindaichi, et al; (2) *Shin Reinboo Shougaku Kokugo Jiten*, the theory of Touki; and (3) *Nihongo Tagigo Gakushuu Jiten Doushi Hen: Imeeji de Wakaru Kotoba no Imi to Tsukaikata*, the theory of Moriyama. Based on the theory used by the author, there are eight meanings of the verb *tomaru*. The eight meanings are divided according to the type of meaning, namely the basic meaning and the extended meaning.

One basic meaning of the verb *tomaru* is something that moves becomes

immobile or to stop. On the other hand, there are seven meanings in the extended meaning of the verb *tomaru*, namely something that comes out does not come out; something that flows becomes nonflowing; something sustainable becomes unsustainable; something that comes does not come; flying birds, insects, and so on resting temporarily in a certain place; undetached, fixed in place; and what has been seen and heard leaves an impression.

### 3.1 Basic Meaning

The basic meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese is something that moves becomes immobile or stop (動いていたものが) 動かなくなる).

- (1) 水車が止まる。(aozora.gr.jp)  
'The waterwheel stopped.'

Sentence (1) shows the meaning in which the state of the subject changes. The subject experiences a change in state from being initially moving to being immobile or stop. The subject, an inanimate object, namely a waterwheel, can rotate because they are pushed by the flow of water that makes them move. However, when there is no push from the water, the waterwheel has no power to turn.

- (2) 補導されたなんて、驚いて心臓が止まるかと思った！ (Shinkai, 2019:229)  
'I thought I would be shocked and my heart would stop if I was guided like that!'

If in the previous sentence the subject is an inanimate object, the subject in sentence (2) is also an inanimate object but is a part of the human body. Sentence (2) states the meaning of the subject in the form of body organs, namely the heart, that undergoes changes in movement due to disturbances in the body so that it cannot function properly or stop moving.

Watashi likened that if he received such guidance, his heart would experience a change in movement from one that was working to pump blood flow to one that was not.

- (3) カパニ・アツラというカフェ・リストランテの前に最後にバスは停まった。(www.aozora.gr.jp)  
'At the end the bus stopped in front of the cafe ristorante, which is called "Capanni Atsura".'

Sentence (3) shows the meaning in which the subject's condition changes from moving to not moving or stopping in front of a cafe ristorante.

### 3.2 Extended Meaning

Extended meaning is the process of changing meaning that contains a special meaning, and finally experiencing an expansion of meaning to become general. There are seven meanings of the extended meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese, namely something that comes out does not come out ((出ていたものが) 出なくなる); something that flows becomes nonflowing (通じていたものが通じなくなる); something sustainable becomes unsustainable ((続いていたことが) 続かなくなる); something that comes does not come (来ていたものが) 来なくなる); flying birds, insects, and so on resting temporarily in a certain place ((飛んでいた鳥・虫などが) ある場所に一時静止する); not detached, fixed in place (はなれなくなる。ある場所に固定される); and what has been seen and heard leaves an impression (見た・聞いたものが) 印象に残る).

The following is an explanation of the meaning of the expansion of the verb *tomaru* which is described one by one based on its meaning.

#### 3.2.1 Something that comes out does not come out

- (4) 一昨年はマウンド上で鼻血が止まらなくなった。(r.nikkei.com)  
'Last year, on a small hill, the nosebleeds did not stop.'

In the sentence above, there is an extended meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese which states the meaning of something that comes out to not come out. However, the verb *tomaru* in the sentence is in the form of a negation therefore it means that something that comes out keeps coming out. What is meant by something that comes out is something that comes from the inside, then comes out to the outside. Sentence (4) states the meaning of something coming out, namely nosebleeds. Nosebleeds are blood that comes from the inside of the nose. When the inside of the nose is injured, blood will appear on the inner surface of the nose which then causes bleeding to come out of the nose.

- (5) その血が止まらない。  
(style.nikkei.com)  
'The blood does not stop.'

In sentence (5), the verb *tomaru* is also in the form of a negation therefore it expresses the meaning of something that comes out continuously. The sentence above states the meaning of the subject, namely blood, which comes out and lasts a long time. Blood in the form of liquid in the human body can come out when there is a scratch, impact, or other cause. Therefore, the sentence is considered to have the nuances of something that comes out.

### 3.2.2 Something that flows becomes nonflowing

- (6) 一つには水道が止まった上に、出火の箇所が多数に一時に発生して消防機関が間に合わなかったのは事実である。(aozora.gr.jp)

'It's a fact that the water supply stopped, besides that there were fires in several places at the same time and the fire brigade were too late to arrive.'

There is an extended meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese in sentence (6), which means something that flows becomes non-flowing. Flow is something in the form of water, liquid goods, air, and so on that moves or changes places. The sentence above expresses the meaning of something flowing, namely the supply of water. Water supply is generally channelled through pipes to the recipient of the water supply. Water supply activities can stop because of something that causes water to not flow to the water storage area.

- (7) 空気漏れが止まらず、5 日後に手術したが、その後も 2 カ月間で 2 度にわたって再発した。  
(style.nikkei.com)  
'The air leak (in the lungs) did not stop and surgery was done five days later, but after that it relapsed twice over two months.'

Sentence (7) states the meaning of air which is also something that can flow. In this sentence, the verb *tomaru* is in the form of a negation so that the meaning contained becomes 'does not stop' or 'continues to flow'. Therefore, something that flows continues to flow. In this sentence, the air continues to flow into a gap due to something

### 3.2.3 Something sustainable becomes unsustainable

- (8) 姉と弟と 3 人で話をしていると、非常に楽しく、たわいもないことで笑いが止まらなくなることもあります。(r.nikkei.com)  
'When talking, the three people with the older sister and younger brother

are so much fun and sometimes the laughter does not stop at silly things.'

Sentence (8) contains the verb *tomaru* in the form of negation so that the resulting meaning is something that is sustainable, will remain sustainable. Laughter is an expression of pleasure or feeling that something is funny. The laughter can go on and on when something really makes you happy or funny, like silly things.

- (9) 本当にショックで息が止まるかと思いました。(style.nikkei.com)  
'I wonder if my breath stopped from being completely shocked.'

Sentence (9) states the meaning that breathing as something that is continuous can become unsustainable if the respiratory tract is disturbed. The sentence above describes a situation that really makes a person startle until the breath seems to stop. No wonder the term stopped breathing is often used to express a feeling of surprise at seeing or hearing something unexpected.

### 3.2.4 Something that comes does not come

- (10) 7 日間の暴力削減期間でも攻撃がすべて止まったわけではなく、テロによって 20 人以上が死亡した。(r.nikkei.com)  
'Even though the period of reduction in violence is seven days, it does not mean that all attacks have stopped and more than twenty people have died from terror.'

In sentence (10) there is an expanded meaning of the verb *tomaru* which means something that comes to not come. Coming is an activity that originates from a point and then moves to the destination point. The sentence above shows the meaning of an event where

there is an effort from one place to the target place to fight. The attacks were carried out by both parties involved; where there is one side that attacks then there must be one side that is attacked, or both parties attack each other. When the goal or what is desired has been obtained, then the attack stops. Therefore, in this sentence there is a nuance of something coming to not come in the word 'all attacks stop'.

- (11) サイレンがビルの下で止まる。  
(Shinkai, 2019:252)  
'The sirens stopped under the building.'

In sentence (11) there is an expanded meaning of the verb *tomaru*, that is, something that comes does not come. Coming is an activity that originates from a point and then moves to the destination point. The sentence above states the meaning of sound as something that comes. The sound is something that comes from a device, namely a siren. The sound of a siren is related to the direction of approaching a point or place. Sirens will sound when there is danger, emergency matters, or to signal that everything is safe. The sound of the siren comes from a point where the siren starts, then moves towards the point of destination.

### 3.2.5 Flying birds, insects and the others rest temporarily in a certain place

- (12) その上に鴉が一羽止まっている。  
(aozora.gr.jp)  
'A crow perched on top of it.'

Sentence (12) contains the extended meaning of the verb *tomaru* which means that something that flies rests for a while in a certain place. The sentence above is about a crow that stops on something. Stop in question is perched or where the bird perched after flying. A bird that is



flying in the air will rest for a while somewhere to restore its strength.

- (13) 壁に、どうしたものかたくさんの  
蠅が止まっている。(aozora.gr.jp)  
'What should (I) do with a lot of flies  
perched on the wall.'

Sentence (13) states the meaning of something that flies and then rests for a while in a certain place. In this sentence, the insect that flies and then lands are a fly. The fly then rests somewhere, namely on the wall.

### 3.2.6 Not separated, fixed in place

- (14) バックルで留まる。  
(ejje.webl.io.jp)  
'Fasten with buckle.'

*Tomaru* on the meaning of this expansion, when combined with other words, cannot be matched into the word 'stop' in Indonesian. Undetached or fixed into place, can be said to have the nuance of stopping because the thing that is detached remains in position. Sentence (14) expresses the meaning of something separate. Something separate here means that the state is not tight or loose. Therefore, buckles are used to connect or fasten something that is loose.

- (15) 「肩幅や袖丈でジャケットを選ぶ  
と、胸のボタンが留まらない」と  
打ち明けるのは、会社員の林礼子  
さん (32)。(style.nikkei.com)  
'「If you choose a jacket based on  
shoulder width and sleeve length, then  
the buttons on the chest will not be  
tied」', said Reiko Hayashi, a  
company employee (32 years old).'

Sentence (15) contains the verb *tomaru* in the form of a negation so that the meaning is something that is not installed in its place. To close the part of the jacket that must be closed, a button is

used. However, due to the selection of the wrong jacket size, the buttons could not be attached. Buttons as something that is loose or moving are not fixed in place, causing buttons that should be used to cover parts of the jacket cannot be.

### 3.2.7 Something that has been seen and heard leaves an impression

- (16) すこし足を進めると、ビーズカー  
テンで区切られた部屋の奥の、ソ  
ファーが目に留まった。(Shinkai,  
2019:40)  
'When I took a few steps, the sofa at  
the back of the room separated by a  
beaded curtain caught my eye.'

In sentence (16) there is an extended meaning of the verb *tomaru*, that is, something that is seen leaves an impression. The verb *tomaru* here cannot be matched as 'stop' into Indonesian because it has been joined or attached to the word '目 / me' which means 'eye'. The two words are joined and inserted by the particle *to* to become '目に留まった'. However, the equivalent of these words does not stop the eye, but attracts attention. That is, something that is being looked at stops at the eye because it attracts attention. When you see something interesting, striking or different from usual, it will leave a strong impression. In the sentence above, something that leaves an impression is a sofa. The sofa gives a distinct impression to the viewer because it has special things (natures) that other sofas don't have.

- (17) やがて、心に留まった絵画が描か  
れた場所へ行ってみたくなった。  
(r.nikkei.com)  
'At last, I want to go to a painting  
whose paintings have made an  
impression on my heart.'

Sentence (17) states the meaning of something that is seen leaves an

impression on the heart. The verb *tomatta* in the sentence above is not translated separately from the previous word but is translated into one. The translation of 'kokoro ni tomatta' is not 'stop in the heart', but 'impressive in the heart'. Something that is seen can leave an impression on the heart when something has an impression that touches the heart. A painting is something that remains in the memory of those who see it. This is because of the beauty created from the painting or because of the circumstances or feelings of a person depicted in the painting.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the meaning of the verb *tomaru* in Japanese can be divided into two meanings, namely the basic meaning and the extended meaning.

The verb *tomaru* in Japanese has a basic meaning, which is (something that moves) to be motionless. Meanwhile, in the extended meaning, the verb *tomaru* in Japanese has seven meanings, namely something that comes out does not come out; something that flows becomes nonflowing; something sustainable becomes unsustainable; something that comes does not come; flying birds, insects, and others resting temporarily in a certain place; undetached, fixed in place; and what has been seen and heard leaves an impression.

#### References

- Arina Musta'anah. (2020). *Analisis Penggunaan Verba Tomaru sebagai Doukun'iji dalam Kalimat Bahasa Jepang*. Skripsi. Unpublishe. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Semarang: Semarang.
- Bunkacho (Agency for Cultural Affairs). (1975). *Gaikokujin no Tame no Kihongo Yorei Jiten - Dictionary of Basic Japanese Usage for Foreigners*. Tokyo: Okurasho Insatsukyoku (National Government Publication), Showa 50.
- Chaer, Abdul. (2007). *Linguistik Umum*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Chaer, Abdul.(2009). *Pengantar Semantik Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Dahidi dkk. (2017). *Analisis Makna Verba Tomeru sebagai Polisemi dalam Bahasa Jepang*. Edujapan, 1(2), 159-170.
- Izuru, Shinmura dkk. (1998). *Koujien*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Kemdikbud. (2016). *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Kridalaksana, Harimurti. (2001). *Kamus Linguistik*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kunihiro, Tetsuya. (1996). *Imiron no Houhou*. Tokyon: Taishukan Shoten.
- Kyousuke, Kindaichi, dkk. (1974). *Sanseidou Kokugo Jiten*. Tokyo: Sanseidou.
- Makoto, Shinkai. (2019). *Tenki no Ko*. Tokyo: Kadokawa.
- Masaaki, Touki. (2001). *Shin Reinboo Shougaku Kokugo Jiten*. Tokyo: Gakken.
- Shin, Moriyama. (2012). *Nihongo Tagigo Gakushuu Jiten Doushi Hen: Imeeji de Wakaru Kotoba no Imi to Tsukaikata*. Tokyo: ALC.
- Sudaryanto. (2015). *Metode dan Aneka Teknik Analisis Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Sanata Dharma Universitas Press.
- Sutedi, Dedi. (2011). *Dasar-Dasar Linguistik Bahasa Jepang*. Bandung: Humaniora Utama Press.

Tanjung, Ariani. (2010). *Polisemi : Tomeru 「とめる」*. Jurnal Bahasa dan Seni, 11(1), 11-16.

Electronic Referral:

<https://www.aozora.gr.jp> [downloaded in 26/6/2021]

<https://ejje.weblio.jp> [downloaded in 7/7/2021]

<https://r.nikkei.com> [downloaded in 22/6/2021]

<https://style.nikkei.com> [downloaded in 30/6/2021]