

■ *Dake* and *Shika*: Focus of Limitation

Dake and *Shika* both possess the function of limitation. When we compare (1)a and (1)b, *dake* and *shika* seem to have the same function at the simple sentence level.

- (1) a. *Tarō wa wain dake nomu* ‘Taro drinks wine only.’
b. *Tarō wa wain shika nomanai* ‘Taro only drinks wine.’

In a context shown below, only one of them is appropriate.

- (2) A: *Aisukōhii arimasu ka* ‘Do you have iced coffee?’
B: *Sumimasen. Hotto shika oitenai n desu* ‘I am sorry, all we carry is hot coffee.’
B’: *Sumimasen. #Hotto dake oite iru n desu* ‘I am sorry, it is our policy to have only hot coffee.’

There are instances when *dake* and *shika* are used simultaneously, as in (3).

- (3) *Kyō wa, hirugohan dake shika tabete inai* ‘I have had only lunch today.’

We must examine each context and contemplate the speaker’s intention as to why s/he chooses a specific form.

The differences between *dake* and *shika* ... *nai* are listed in (a) through (c).

(a) *Dake* is used with the antecedent in a conditional sentence to express the component of the sufficient condition, but *shika* ... *nai* does not have this function.

- (4) *Sore dake areba jūbun da* ‘If we have that much, it will do.’

(5) **Sore shika nakereba jūbun da.*

(b) *Shika* ... *nai* is not readily used in expressions of demand and request. It requires a specific context.

- (6) *Kodomo dake wa tasukete kudasai* ‘If no one else, please at least spare the children.’

(7) #*Kodomo shika tasukenaide kudasai* ‘Please spare no one but children.’

(c) *Shika* may be suffixed to a rounded number or an indefinite quantity, but *dake* sounds unnatural in this usage.

- (8) *Kyō wa okane o ikuraka shika mottenai* ‘I am carrying only a little money today.’

(9) ?*Kyō wa okane o ikuraka dake motte iru.* ‘I am carrying just a little money today.’

The differences shown above indicate the speaker’s intention to use one or the other and the difference in grammatical levels of *dake* and *shika*. *Dake* is used when the speaker wants to limit the category to what is discussed in the particular context. The explicitly expressed component is obvious to the speaker. That is why rounded numbers and indefinite quantities are not appropriate.

On the other hand, the speaker uses *shika* when s/he acknowledges the realized situation quantitatively, and wants to express that the reached quantity does not meet her/his estimate or expectation which s/he had before the situation was realized. Thus, *shika* may be used with rounded numbers and indefinite quantities, but it is not readily used in sentences that express a sufficient amount, demand or request. When *dake* and *shika* are used simultaneously, together they express both limitation and insufficiency.

→とりたて Focus (2-I), ダケとバカリ – 限定のとりたて *Dake and Bakari: Focus of Limitation (2-I)*

● References

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