

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

Both *dake* and *bakari* express limitation. In (1), *dake* and *bakari* express that “in that cage there was no other component than what was the explicit component, i.e., the lion.”

(1) A: *Sono ori ni wa nani ga imashita ka* ‘What was in that cage?’

B: a) *Raion dake imashita* ‘There were only lions.’

b) *Raion bakari imashita* ‘There were only lions.’

The noun “lion” represents a species in Example (1). The difference between B-a) and B-b) becomes clear when we use a noun that represents individuals.

(2) A: *Sono kyōshitsu ni wa dare ga imashita ka* ‘Who was in the classroom?’

B: a) *Tarō dake imashita* ‘There was only Taro.’

b) *Tarō bakari imashita* ‘There were all Taros.’

In (2) B-a), *dake* may express that there were multiple Taros, but usually it means there was only one Taro. On the other hand, *bakari*, as in B-b), means there were a number of people all of whom were named Taro.

(3) *Saikin, karee dake tabete iru* ‘Lately I’ve been eating curry only.’

(4) *Saikin, karee bakari tabete iru* ‘Lately I’ve been eating lots of curry.’

Sentence (3) means that the speaker has not been eating anything but curry. Sentence (4) may mean that the speaker eats curry frequently but that s/he may also eat other things. That is, the primary meaning of *bakari* is not to limit the category to “not eating anything but curry.” The speaker’s emphasis is on describing that, upon reflecting on recent days, s/he has eaten curry often and too much. The secondary effect that this expression brings up is that components that are in contrast to the explicit component (i.e., possible components other than the explicit component to bring about the phenomenon) were few or non-existent in the observed range. Restrictive interpretation seems to derive as a result of describing a repeated phenomenon.

(5) *Konogoro, ame bakari furu ne* ‘It rains a lot these days.’

(6)?*Konogoro, ame dake furu ne.*

In (5) and (6), *dake* is unnatural since it is used to limit the category, but *bakari* is natural because the speaker uses *bakari* to first describe her/his observation of a certain situation, and, based on her/his experiential knowledge, s/he goes on to describe the phenomenon that s/he judges to be “more than usual.”

→とりたて Focus (2-I), ダケとシカー限定のとりたて *Dake* and *Shika*: Focus of Limitation (2-I)

● References

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