

The New Meaning of “Bond” of *Jiban* in Chinese: A Study of Cultural, Accepted, and Social Dimensions*

YU Zihan, CHEN Yong

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China

Jiban, a term that means “fetter” in Chinese, is commonly used to denote the “bond between people” within a Chinese context. The meaning of “bond” of *jiban* is derived from the Japanese word *kizuna*. From a cultural standpoint, the association between the meanings of *jiban* and *kizuna* is interconnected on a cultural level. From an accepted perspective, the emergence of the new meaning of *jiban* encompasses various factors within the accepted context, and individuals gain a comprehensive understanding of the meaning “bond” through the cognitive processes of meaning, motivation, and aesthetics. From a societal viewpoint, the distribution of the original meaning and the new meaning of *jiban* differs significantly across various language environments. Furthermore, the acceptance of the new meaning of *jiban* is currently witnessing a growing trend among a specific group, necessitating attention and further investigation.

Keywords: *jiban*, *kizuna*, bond, culture, accept

Introduction

The term *jiban* (羁绊) in Chinese language refers to the state of being ensnared or constrained by external factors, symbolized by entanglement in one’s hands and feet. It conveys the notion of being fettered and restricted. As an illustration (in the given sentence, certain parts of speech are represented by abbreviations such as “attributive marker” (AM), “auxiliary word” (AW), “measure word” (MW), and “subject marker” (SM)):

(1)	不	受	网笼	之	羁绊	也。
	Bu	shou	wanglong	zhi	jiban	ye
	Not	receive	cylinder mould	AM	fetter	AW

(He is) not restricted by the net cage.

From Luo Guanzhong *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

* This article is part of the research results of Guangdong Province Philosophy and Social Science Planning General Project “The Study of the Role of Function Words in the Process of Constructionalization in Chinese” (Project number GD22CZY03) and General Project of the 2022 International Chinese Education Research Project of Center for Language Education and Cooperation “Research on the Teaching Mode of Chinese Second Language Vocabulary Based on the Mechanism of ‘Learn Together, Use Together’” (Project number 22YH22C). This article is the phased results of 2022 Guangdong Province Higher Education Teaching Reform Project of Undergraduate Teaching Quality and Teaching Reform Project (Guangdong Education Files [2023] No. 4).

YU Zihan, Post-graduate Student, School of Chinese Language and Literature, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China.

CHEN Yong (corresponding author), Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Chinese Language and Literature, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China.

(2)	容	不得	束缚	容	不得	羁绊。
	Rong	bude	shufu	rong	bude	jiban
	Allow	cannot	restrict	Allow	cannot	fetter
	(It is) not allowed to be restricted and not allowed to be fettered.					
	From Liu Chengzhang <i>Ansaiyaogu</i>					

The term *jiban* can be understood by analyzing its constituent morphemes. As documented in dictionaries like *Shuo wen Jie zi*, the morpheme *ji* denotes restraint, originally referring to the use of a leather network to secure a horse. On the other hand, *ban* signifies a net that ensnares an animal, preventing its escape, or an obstacle or entanglement encountered while walking.

In its verb form, the term *jiban* is frequently employed interchangeably with synonyms such as *shufu* (束缚) and *qianzhi* (牵制).

In recent times, the term *jiban* has increasingly been employed in Chinese to denote concepts such as “tie”, “connection”, “link”, or “bond”. For example:

(3)	缘分	深	了	就	会	产生	羁绊,		
	Yuanfen	shen	le	jiu	hui	chansheng	jiban		
	Lot	deep	AW	just	can	generate	fetter (bond)		
	而	羁绊	是	永远	不会	被	切	断	的。
	er	jiban	shi	yongyuan	buhui	bei	qie	duan	de
	but	fetter (bond)	is	forever	cannot	be done	cut	break	AW
	Deep lot will generate bond, but bond will never be cut off.								
	From <i>The Legend of heroes VI</i>								

(4)	(思念, 爱, 再遇)	人生	的	各种	羁绊,	不	都	是	这样	吗?
	Sinian, ai, zaiyu	rensheng	de	gezhong	jiban	bu	dou	shi	zheyang	ma
	Missing, love, reencounter	life	AW	various	fetter (bond)	not	all	is	this	AW
	(The missing, love and, reencounter) Aren't various kinds of bonds in life all like that?									
	From <i>Sohu</i> (Apr. 27th, 2022)									

This usage is evidently influenced by the Japanese term *kizuna*, which has permeated the Chinese environment through various mediums such as literature, internet language, popular culture, movies, and TV dramas. This influence is particularly noticeable in literary works translated from Japanese and in internet language. A search of the term *jiban* through a microblog search engine reveals that the word is predominantly used to mean “bond” in the text, rather than its original meaning. This indicates that the new meaning of the word, derived from foreign languages, has been accepted and acknowledged to some extent by people.

Upon consulting authoritative dictionaries and periodical literature, it is observed that there is currently no specific explanation or discussion on the new meaning of *jiban*. The study of new meanings attributed to old words holds significant importance in understanding language development and in the compilation and revision of dictionaries.

The following analysis provides a brief examination of *jiban* and *kizuna*, followed by a discussion of the new meaning of *jiban* from three perspectives: culture, acceptance, and society.

Jiban in Chinese and *kizuna* in Japanese

In order to examine the new meaning of *jiban*, it is imperative to first explore the fundamental essence and interrelation of *jiban* in Chinese and *kizuna* in Japanese.

Jiban in Chinese

Traditional dictionaries provide a comprehensive interpretation of the terms *ji* and *ban*. For instance, the *Kangxi Dictionary* defines *ji* as the “horse tie”, referring to the belt fastened to the rear of the animal during transportation. *Zengyun* further distinguishes between the two terms, stating that *ban* refers to tying the feet, while *ji* implies colluding the head. It is evident that both words encompass the concept of restriction.

The term *jiban* first appeared in the *Han Shu: Xuzhuanshang*, where it is mentioned in conjunction with *jiangsuo* (纆锁), denoting the act of binding.

According to several authoritative Chinese dictionaries, the term *jiban* can be defined as a constraint or containment. The *Xiandai Hanyu Guifan Cidian* (2014) and *Hanyu Dacidian* (2015) both list constraint and contain as possible meanings for this term. Additionally, the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (2016) adds that *jiban* can also refer to being stuck and unable to escape, further emphasizing the notion of constraint.

By referring to the Chinese dictionary, it is evident that the current interpretation of the term *jiban* does not include the newly emerged meaning of “bond”. This indicates that the traditional dictionary continues to define “fetter” as the sole meaning of the term. The original meaning of “fetter” is commonly encountered in newspapers and other formal written contexts. For example:

(5)	一	个	阻碍	一切	民主	进步	的	羁绊
	Yi	ge	zuai	yiqie	minzhu	jinbu	de	jiban
	One	MW	hinder	all	democracy	progress	AM	fetter
	A hindrance to all democratic progress.							
	From <i>People's Daily</i> (Dec. 21st, 1956)							

Kizuna in Japanese

The term *kizuna* in Japanese, typically represented by the Chinese character “絆”, originally derived from the Chinese character “絆” which signifies a “rope net”. However, in contemporary usage, *kizuna* commonly refers to a “bond” or connection between individuals. For instance:

(6)	私たち	の	絆	を	見くびる	な		
	Watashi	no	kizuna	wo	mikubiru	na		
	we	AM	bond	AM	belittle	AM		
	Don't underestimate our bond.							

(7)	これ	が	あなた	と	わたし	の	珍しい	絆	だった
	Kore	ga	anata	to	watashi	no	muzurashii	kizuna	datta
	This	SM	you	and	I	AM	precious	bond	AW
	That is the bond between you and me.								

The original definition of *kizuna* can be traced back to the ten-volume edition of *Wanasyou* (和名抄), a historical text. The term “bond” is introduced as an extended meaning for *kizuna* in *the Story of the Ping’s* (平家物語), which is listed alongside *hodashi* (ほだし, it is equivalent to the *ban* in Chinese).

According to the authoritative Japanese dictionary, the term *kizuna* is defined as follows:

Nihon Kokugo Daijiden (1976) defines *kizuna* as a net used to restrain horses, dogs, eagles, and other animals, as well as a metaphorical representation of an unbreakable connection between individuals. *Daijisen* (1995) further elaborates on this concept, emphasizing the inextricable bond between people that is difficult to sever. Additionally, it highlights the similarity between *kizuna* and the term *en*, which conveys the notion of fate. *Shin Kangolin* (2004) adds to the understanding of *kizuna* by describing it as a net used to tie a horse’s feet and as a metaphorical force that binds things together, including the restriction of freedom. *Meikyo Kokugo Jiden* (2013) reinforces the idea of an unbreakable bond between individuals, noting that the original meaning of *kizuna* is the net used to restrain animals.

In the definitions provided by various dictionaries, the concept of *kizuna* is elucidated in both its original and extended meanings. Originally, *kizuna* referred to a rope net used for tethering animals, but it has evolved to signify the unbreakable connection between individuals, commonly referred to as a “bond”. This latter meaning has become the prevailing and fundamental interpretation of the term, to the extent that certain dictionaries designed for non-native Japanese speakers solely include the definition of “bond”.

The metaphorical extension of the term *kizuna* from its literal meaning of “rope net” to “bond” is significant. In Chinese culture, the concept of rope is associated with the idea of restraining and imprisoning individuals, thus carrying a negative connotation. Both the terms *ji* and *ban* in Chinese language imply restriction and are derogatory in nature. In contrast, the Japanese interpretation of rope emphasizes its ability to bind people and objects together, suggesting a positive connotation. The expanded meaning of *kizuna* is rooted in the notion of invisible ropes and connections between individuals, representing concepts such as bond, fate, and love.

In the commonly used Japanese-Chinese comparison dictionaries, the Chinese translation of the term *kizuna* typically employs the words *niudai* (纽带) or *qingsi* (情丝), while attempting to avoid using *jiban* as a translation. Conversely, in Chinese-Japanese dictionaries, the Japanese translation of *jiban* often utilizes *hodashi* or *kihan*. This indicates that *jiban* and *kizuna* are not equivalent in formal contexts. However, in recent years, it has become common to employ the Chinese term *jiban* to convey the concept of a bond derived from the Japanese term *kizuna* in literary works, online communication, oral discourse, and other formal and informal settings. This usage frequently takes the form of “*jiban* between somebody and somebody”, such as:

(8)	虽然	我	与	她	之	间	的	羁绊	很	深。
	Suiran	wo	yu	ta	zhi	jian	de	<i>jiban</i>	hen	shen
	Although	I	and	she	AM	middle	AM	fetter (bond)	very	deep

Even though the bond between me and her is deep.

From Morimi Tomihiko *Taiyo no To*

(9)	也许	青豆	和	老妇人	之	间
	Yexu	Qingdou	he	laofuren	zhi	jian
	Maybe	Aomame	and	old lady	AM	middle

产生	了	什么	个人	的	羁绊。
chansheng	le	shenme	geren	de	jiban
generate	AW	what	individual	AM	fetter (bond)

Maybe there was some kind of personal bond between Aomame and the old woman.

From Haruki Murakami *1Q48*

The significance of the term *jiban* in Chinese, specifically its connotation of “bond”, is progressively gaining prominence due to Japanese influence. This development warrants the attention of Chinese and Japanese translators, as well as language standardization professionals.

The New Meaning of *Jiban* in Cultural Perspective

The reason why the term *jiban* is commonly understood as “the bond between people” is primarily due to its translation from Japanese to Chinese. Among various languages, there are generally only two accepted translations of the Japanese term *kizuna*: “bond”, as seen in English and Korean (Yudae, 유대); and “connection”, as seen in French (le lien), Spanish (vinculo), Russian (с добеч), German (link), and Latin (ligament). It is possible that *jiban* was chosen as the Chinese translation for *kizuna* because there is no Chinese word that accurately captures its meaning and essence. However, it is evident that translating the positive connotation of *kizuna* as the negative connotation of *jiban* is not the most appropriate approach.

The Chinese term that closely corresponds to the concept of *kizuna* is *yuan* (缘). *Yuan* encompasses the emotions and interpersonal connections between individuals, as exemplified by terms such as *qingyuan* (情缘), *qiyuan* (奇缘), *youyuan* (有缘), and *bu jie zhi yuan* (不解之缘), which encapsulate the profound sentiments experienced in the realm of the underworld. Within the context of Buddhism, *yuan* is regarded as a fundamental principle that symbolizes the intricate threads of destiny, acknowledging the inherent and enduring bond between human beings and the natural world. Consequently, in the Chinese language, *yuan* serves as the most fitting and evocative translation for *kizuna*, surpassing alternatives such as *niudai* (纽带) and *lianxi* (联系).

There are several factors that contribute to the translation of *kizuna* as *jiban*. Firstly, the two terms share a close resemblance, making it convenient for readers to understand the connection between them. Directly translating *kizuna* as *ban* in Chinese would not align well with expression habits, hence the adoption of a disyllable word containing *ban*. Secondly, the original meanings of *kizuna* in Japanese and *ban* in Chinese exhibit little difference. *Jiban* also encompasses the meaning of *ban*, allowing the translator to extend the meaning through homology. Lastly, other words with similar meanings either lack specificity or have overly obvious color connotations. Terms such as *niudai*, *qingyi*, *qian'gua*, and *lianxi* all possess subtle semantic differences from *kizuna*. By translating *kizuna* into *jiban*, a verb that is highly expressive and relatively uncommon in written language, the translation avoids imposing a heavy cognitive burden while simultaneously creating a contrasting and complementary effect.

In fact, the semantic association between the term *jiban* meaning “fetter” and the term *kizuna* meaning “bond” is rooted in cultural exchange and cultural development. The meaning of “bond” can be seen as an imported concept into Chinese culture subsequent to the development of the morpheme *jiban* in foreign cultures. Similarly, the meaning of “leader” in the Chinese word *lingxiu* (领袖) has also undergone a process of transmission from the Japanese environment to the Chinese language. In a broader sense, the meaning of “bond” in *jiban* is derived

from the extended meaning of “fetter”, but it has been influenced indirectly by foreign cultures. The specific ways of derivation are as follows:

Ban in Chinese (The rope to tie the animal) → *Kizuna* in Japanese (The net to tie the animal) → *Kizuna* in Japanese (The relationship between people and people) → *Jiban* in Chinese (The relationship between people and people).

The relationship between the original and new meanings of the term *jiban* exhibits a cross-language and cultural extension. The interpretation of “bond” as a meaning for *jiban* is supported by a certain rationale, and it should not be dismissed as merely a “language disease” or “foreign culture invasion”. Consequently, while *jiban* may not be the most accurate translation for *kizuna*, there exists a potential connection between the two terms, which is indicative of the cultural affinity between the two languages.

The New Meaning of *Jiban* in Accepted Perspective

An empirical study was carried out to investigate the immediate connotations associated with the term *jiban* among a sample of young adults aged 18 to 30 enrolled in three Chinese universities. Participants were asked to indicate their initial interpretation of the word, selecting either “fetter” or “bond” as the most salient meaning. The findings of the survey are presented below.

Table 1

Survey Results on the Considered Meaning of Jiban

	Fetter		Bond	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
College A	9	28.1%	23	71.9%
College B	5	17.2%	24	82.8%
College C	12	31.6%	26	68.4%

Approximately 26.3% of the participants in the study perceived the term *jiban* to have its original meaning as “fetter”, while the majority, accounting for 73.7%, associated it with the meaning of “bond”. Some individuals who selected “bond” acknowledged that they were aware of the term *zhong'er*, which conveys a sense of awkwardness, unnaturalness, or embarrassment in expressing the concept of “bond” through *jiban*. However, they have gradually adopted this meaning due to its frequent usage. This observation suggests that while *jiban* is predominantly employed to denote “fetter” in formal contexts, among many young people, it is more commonly encountered with the meaning of “bond”.

The utilization of the term “bond” in the context of *jiban* is experiencing a gradual rise in popularity among Chinese users, particularly among the younger generation. This phenomenon can be attributed to certain factors that contribute to the comprehension and recognition of this meaning by the recipient. The subsequent discussion will explore the pertinent elements of the accepted context that facilitate the recipient’s understanding of the term “bond” in relation to *jiban*, as well as the varying degrees of comprehension that arise due to different accepted contexts.

The concept of accepted context is established and operates within the framework of acceptance. The construction of the verbal communication environment presents two issues: the potential factors that contribute to it, and its realistic form. These two aspects are interconnected, as the potential factors serve as the material sources for the formation of the realistic form, which in turn is shaped by the interaction between verbal communication behavior and the potential factors (Sun, 2009). Consequently, the significance of the “bond” within the accepted context can be examined from the perspectives of both potential factors and realistic form.

Potential Factors in Accepted Context

Understanding a word by receivers encompasses three essential elements: its semantic interpretation, the reasons for its usage, and its rhetorical or pragmatic purpose. The potential factors within the accepted context can be condensed into five categories, as outlined below:

(1) Textual factors (both written and spoken), such as:

(10)	那	是	有	怎样	羁绊	与	牵挂
	Na	shi	you	zenyang	jiban	yu	qian'gua
	That	is	have	what kind of	fetter (bond)	and	care
	What kind of fetters and concerns are there?						
	From Hanyuba. com						

In order to comprehend the significance of the term *jiban*, it is imperative for the recipient to carefully analyze the preceding and subsequent texts, as well as the parallel and contrasting elements with the word *qian'gua*. By examining the emphasized content in these texts, it becomes evident that the intended meaning of *jiban* in this context refers to the interpersonal connection between individuals.

(2) Language knowledge factors, such as:

(11)	好	喜欢	兄弟	之	情	和	公主	的	羁绊
	Hao	xihuan	xiongdi	zhi	qing	he	gongzhu	de	jiban
	Good	like	brother	AM	emotion	and	princess	AM	fetter (bond)
	I love the brotherhood and the bond with the princess.								
	From Microblog (Apr. 8th, 2023)								

Based on the receiver's understanding of the language, it was determined that the term *xihuan* should not be interpreted as “restraint of princess”, as it did not align with the combined elements of *xiong di zhi qing*. Consequently, the receiver disregarded the connotation of “fetter” associated with *jiban* and instead inferred the meaning of “bond”, concluding that the sentence conveys the idea of “affectionate love between brothers and their relationship with the princess”.

(3) Situational factors, such as:

In the movie, *Dragon Horse Spirit*, clips about Jackie Chan and Chitu bring me to tears, Chitu accompanied Lao Luo from the bottom of his career to return to the set.

(12)	一	人	一	马	之	间	的	羁绊	
	Yi	ren	yi	ma	zhi	jian	de	jiban	
	One	people	one	horse	AM	middle	AM	fetter (bond)	
	已经	让	他们	成为	家人	般	的	存在	
	yijing	rang	tamen	chengwei	jiaren	ban	de	cunzai	
	already	let	they	become	family	-like	AM	existence	
	The bond between people and horse have already made them family.								
	From Microblog (Apr. 8th, 2023)								

This analysis pertains to a film review of *Cuilei* (bring Me to Tears), wherein the reviewer employs terms such as *dongrong* (moving) to convey their perception of the film as authentic and profoundly affecting. The author’s overall stance towards the film is positive. It is important to note that the term *jiban* should not be interpreted in a derogatory manner as “fetter”, but rather as a positive connotation of “bond”, both semantically and emotionally.

(4) Sociocultural factors, such as:

(13)	华晨宇	和	他	的	人	永远	相互	羁绊
	Hua Chenyu	he	ta	de	ren	yongyuan	xianghu	jiban
	Hua Chenyu	and	he	AM	people	forever	to each other	fetter (bond)
	There is always a bond between Hua Chenyu and his people.							
	From Microblog (Apr. 8th, 2023)							

The term *jiban*, derived from the Japanese word for “bond”, has gained popularity in the realms of manga, animation, games, and entertainment. Its connotation differs from its primary definition of fetter in formal contexts. This usage is relatively recent, and individuals can grasp and embrace the alternative meaning of *jiban* only by assimilating into the relevant social and cultural milieu and embracing the informal style associated with it.

(5) Psychological factors:

In contrast to the prevalent concepts of *guanxi* and *yuanfen*, the occurrence of *jiban*, denoting a bond, is relatively less frequent. The utilization of *jiban* has the potential to pique the recipient’s curiosity and emphasize the distinctiveness and significance of the bond.

Hence, when considering the interpretation of the term “bond” in relation to *jiban*, it is essential to take into account various factors within the accepted context. These factors encompass the text itself, the individual’s knowledge of the language, the specific situation in which the term is used, the sociocultural background, and the psychological aspects involved.

Realistic Form in Accepted Context

Accepted context refers to the cognitive understanding and interpretation of a text. Zhu (2020) categorizes accepted context into three levels based on their practical outcomes: meaning context, motivational context, and aesthetic context. The meaning context level pertains to the activation of textual factors, while the motivational context level involves the activation of knowledge factors. Lastly, the aesthetic context level encompasses the activation of socio-cultural and situational factors. It is only when recipients comprehend the meaning of “bond” in the context of *jiban* that they can effectively explore the reasons for its existence. Furthermore, by grasping the underlying rationale, they can identify its rhetorical value. As the recipient interprets the concept of *jiban* as a bond, the accepted context it relies on naturally progresses from a lower level to a higher level through the deepening of interpretation. Such as:

Aomame was the only one in the family who escaped the witness meeting. In their words, it was betrayal. It’s a break from the family. It’s been almost 20 years. There was no sign of contact with the Aomame. First of all, we can make sure there is no possibility of collusion with Aomame.

(14)	这	个	女人	十一	岁	的	时候	切	断
	Zhe	ge	n üren	shiyi	sui	de	shihou	qie	duan
	This	MW	woman	eleven	years of age	AM	time	cut	break
	了	与	家族	的	羁绊,	从	那	之	后
	le	yu	jiazu	de	jiban	cong	na	zhi	hou
	AW	and	family	AM	fetter (bond)	from	that	AM	later
	一直	独立	生活						
	yizhi	duli	shenghuo						
	all the time	independent	live						
	The woman cut her bonds with her family when she was 11 and has lived independently ever since.								
	From Haruki Murakami <i>1Q48</i>								

The recipient initially engages with the level of meaning context, where they interpret the phrase “break from the family” to imply a connection between individuals. Subsequently, the recipient proceeds to the level of motivation context, utilizing their linguistic knowledge and other factors to establish a logical relationship between “cutting off bond” and “live independently”. Finally, the recipient transitions to the aesthetic context level, perceiving the distinctive rhetorical impact of *jiban* in the sentence compared to other synonymous terms.

Accepted psychology is considered to be the primary determinant of context (C. Q. Zhang & Y. L. Zhang, 2004), and the act of verbally accepting something is contingent upon the subjective volition of the individual. The subjective volition of the recipient serves to transform the various potential factors in a static state into a tangible form, thereby elevating the level of acceptance from a lower to a higher state (Zhu, 2020). Consequently, the recipient undergoes a progression through three levels of accepted context before ultimately attaining a comprehensive comprehension of *jiban*, which denotes bond.

The New Meaning of *Jiban* in Social Perspective

In the current Chinese dictionary, the term *jiban* is not listed as a synonym for “bond”. Nevertheless, there have been numerous instances where *jiban* has been used to refer to a bond, which has garnered the interest of certain individuals, including language enthusiasts who engage in discussions on platforms such as Zhihu and Bilibili video network. Language research should not solely focus on normative language phenomena, but also take into account seemingly irregular language phenomena that exist within society.

In order to determine whether a language phenomenon is normative, it is important to consider not only its internal motivation but also its acceptability in actual usage. The reasons and acceptability of a language phenomenon can be analyzed from the perspectives of culture and acceptance. However, it should be noted that the high frequency of a language phenomenon does not necessarily indicate its widespread acceptability in society as a whole, and its distribution across different fields of discourse should be investigated. Normative linguistic phenomena are typically found in discourse activities, while non-standard linguistic phenomena are limited to specific pragmatic domains.

If a linguistic phenomenon is observed in both written and spoken contexts in large numbers, it can be considered to conform to the norm. Conversely, if it is predominantly found in informal environments such as online communication and oral discourse, its standardization is questionable.

The term *jiban* was examined in two sections of the BCC corpus, namely literature and newspapers, resulting in a total of 1746 instances. Out of these, only 57 occurrences of *jiban* were found to signify “bond”, with the majority being translations from Japanese literary works. Conversely, the remaining instances denoted “fetter”. Between December 10 and 30, 2022, a search for the term *jiban* was conducted on Microblog and Douban, yielding approximately 4361 instances, the majority of which conveyed the meaning of “bond” rather than “fetter”. This indicates that although the usage of *jiban* to signify “bond” is prevalent in online and other contexts, it has not been fully assimilated as a formal sociolinguistic phenomenon in formal discourse.

Language and society are intricately intertwined and cannot be separated. The emergence of a new meaning for the term *jiban* cannot be regulated through language policies, nor can it be disregarded as a growing phenomenon. From a societal perspective, it is crucial to closely monitor the evolving meaning of *jiban* in Chinese and continuously observe changes in its usage, range, and frequency. Language is a dynamic entity, and it is imperative for individuals to establish a unified understanding and fixed standard for the modern Chinese interpretation of *jiban*. Once the new meaning of *jiban* becomes widely adopted by the population, language policies should promptly and accurately reflect this development, such as by incorporating the new meaning into dictionaries.

As the current situation stands, there is an increasing distinction between the formal and informal usage of the term *jiban*. Individuals who typically do not pay much attention to linguistic phenomena may assume that *jiban* has only one meaning, while others may believe it solely refers to a fetter or a bond. However, with the widespread use of internet language, the group of individuals accepting the meaning of “bond” for *jiban* is growing larger. Consequently, there is a possibility that the meaning of “bond” may eventually become the officially recognized semantic category for *jiban* in the coming years, replacing “fetter” as its primary meaning. Therefore, from a societal perspective, the meaning of *jiban* holds significant research value and warrants ongoing attention.

Conclusion

The term *jiban* in Chinese is typically defined as “fetter” in the dictionary. However, it is more commonly used in the Chinese translation of various Japanese literary works and in informal language settings to mean “bond”, which is derived from the Japanese word *kizuna*. Through an analysis of a corpus from a network platform and a questionnaire survey, it has been observed that many young people have acknowledged and embraced the meaning of “bond” for *jiban*. From a cultural standpoint, *jiban* may not be the most appropriate Chinese translation for *kizuna*, but the shared meaning of “bond” between the two terms has a cultural significance. From the perspective of acceptance, the new meaning of *jiban* can be attributed to various contextual factors, and individuals gain a comprehensive understanding of the meaning “bond” through the cognitive process of meaning, motivation, and aesthetic appreciation. From a societal perspective, the distribution of the original meaning and the new meaning of *jiban* varies across different language environments, and the group of individuals accepting the meaning “bond” is expanding, which warrants attention.

Hence, it is imperative for us to confront the actuality of *jiban* in contemporary Chinese and approach it in a manner akin to other novel terms and connotations that impact the Chinese language via foreign languages. One potential approach could involve incorporating a comprehensive depiction and elucidation of this phenomenon within the new word dictionary or online lexicon, thereby facilitating comprehensive, precise, and profound linguistic inquiry.

References

- Akira, M. (1995). *Daijisen*. Tokyo: Toppan Printing Co. Ltd.
- Dictionary editing Room, Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. (2016). *Modern Chinese dictionary* (7th ed.). Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Hua, J. M. (2015). *Hanyu dacidian* (2nd ed.). Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House.
- Kamada, T., & Yoneyama, Y. (2004). *Shin Kangolin* (2nd ed.). Tokyo: Daishoukan Shoten.
- Kitahara, H. (2013). *Meikyo Kokugo Jiden* (2nd ed.). Tokyo: Daishoukan Shoten.
- Li, X. J. (2014). *Xiandai Hanyu Guifan Cidian*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Nihon Daijiden Publishing Association. (1976). *Nihon Kokugo Daijiden*. Tokyo: Shogakukan.
- Sun, C. Y. (2009). *The study of contextual mystery*. Yinchuan: Ningxia people's Publishing House.
- Xu, S. (1963). *Shuo wen Jie zi*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Zhang, C. Q., & Zhang, Y. L. (2004). Accepted psychology: The dominant factor of context. *Contemporary Rhetoric*, 23(3), 52-54.
- Zhang, Y. S. (2001). *Kangxi dictionary*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Zhu, L. (2020). *A study of “degree adverb + noun” combinations*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press.