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# HANDBOOK OF JAPANESE DIALECTS

NINJAL
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HANDBOOKS OF JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

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# 1 The classification and division of Japanese dialects

## 1 Dialect typology and research on the division of Japanese dialects

Research on the geographical division of dialects is included, in a broad sense, in the typology of dialects. As such, it is a topic applicable to any language. There are two dialectological approaches to the classification of dialects within a single language: Classification by "dialect typology" and a phylogenetic classification from a diachronic perspective.

The study of Japanese languages, including dialects, has developed anew since the end of the samurai era and the introduction of Western linguistics which followed the beginning of modernity in the Meiji era (1968). The study of dialects, on the other hand, began with a study of the geographical differences and historical relationships between the various dialects aimed at establishing the first national "standard" language, and thus developed independently before being influenced by developed anew Western linguistics.

Research on the geographical classification of dialects in Japan has been greatly influenced in recent years (since roughly 1900) by the "dialect division theory" of Tōjō Misao. Tōjō's dialect division theory was proposed both to capture concrete characteristics of the various dialects and their geographical scope, and also to systematically ascertain the mutual similarities between dialects (or their diachronic relatedness). The dialect division theory was the first theory in dialectology proposed by a Japanese scholar. Subsequent dialect research developed in parallel with Tōjō's division theory for some time. Regarding the question of whether the ideas behind Tōjō's division theory were diachronic or synchronic, each researcher had their own understanding, and the dialect division theory later developed in the form of a mixture of typological synchronic divisions and diachronic divisions. In this way, under the influence of Tōjō's theory, dialect division theory in Japan developed in a unique way, different from dialectology in the West.

In addition, parallel to the development of Tōjō's theory, a great number of studies based on Western research were also conducted, and, as a result, attempts were made to divide dialects by "isoglosses" and to classify them using the concept of "dialect regions".

In the first half of this chapter, I will introduce Tōjō's dialect division theory, which had an immense influence on dialect studies in Japan, as well as research proposing dialect divisions based on this theory. The latter half will describe representative isogloss studies and dialect regions located in the central part of Japan.

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Before getting into these topics, however, I will discuss past records concerning dialect divisions in Japan that form the background to Tōjō's ideas. These records, from before the modern era, influenced the diachronic thinking in the formation of Tōjō's proposal.

## 2 Awareness of dialect divisions (Preceding Tōjō's dialect division theory)

Dialectical differences were interpreted as geographically distributed 1,300 years before the proposal of Tōjō's dialect division theory, and these views also had an effect on the theory's development. This section will introduce some representative examples of this historical awareness of dialect divisions.

**Early classical period (Nara period)**

In the *Man'yōshū*, an eighth century poetry collection, there is a volume called *adzuma-uta,* 'eastern poems', that contains poems solely from the present-day eastern Japan region. Grammatical, phonetic, and lexical features that differ from the poems in other volumes can be found in these poems, allowing confirmation of the existence of an eastern Japanese dialect at the time (the Tōgoku dialect). Examples include characteristics that still remain in eastern Japanese dialects today, such as the use of the suffix *-ro* to form the imperative of monograde verbs (e.g., *mi-ro* 'look.at-IMP'), and use of the form **nafu*, considered to be the source of the modern negative verbal suffix *-nai*, as well as pronunciation of western Japanese /ti/ as /si/. Accordingly, awareness of a bipartite division can be identified in the partition of the country into eastern Japan, the scope of the *adzuma-uta*, which includes the area of today's Niigata, Nagano, and Shizuoka Prefectures and regions east of these (excluding a part of Niigata called Koshi no kuni), and western Japan as everything to the west.

**Late classical period (Heian period)**

The *Tōdaiji-fujumonkō*, a record kept by priests at Tōdaiji, a temple in Nara, in the early ninth century, contains fragments of manuscripts for *hōe*, sermons given at Buddhist ceremonies. These are labeled "Tōgoku (当国=our local country) dialect" (=dialect of today's western dialect areas), "Hida dialect" (dialect of today's Nagano region), "Tōgoku (東国=eastern country) dialect" (dialect of today's eastern dialect areas) and "Mōjin (Emishi) dialect" (=a particular characteristic eastern dialect), showing perception of a four-way dialect division.

**Medieval (Kamakura-Muromachi period)**

Around the fifteenth century, there was a proverb that read "*Kyō 'e', Tsukushi 'ni', Bandō 'sa'.*" '"E" in Kyōto, "ni" in Tsukushi (modern Kyūshū), and "sa" in Bandō (modern eastern Japan)', showing the different directional particles used in the different regions named, and demonstrating perception of a three-way dialect division. In addition, in the Muromachi *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam com Adeclaração em Portuges* 'Dictionary of the Japanese language with explanations in Portuguese attached' published in 1603–1604 by the Society of Jesus, Kyūshū forms are marked *shimo* 'below', indicating a recognition of the uniqueness of Kyūshū dialects. The dialects of several regions are also recorded in *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam*, a Japanese grammar book written in Portuguese by João Rodriguez for missionaries to study Japanese, published over the period 1604–1608, However, this subsumes forms from all eastern Japanese dialects under the term Bandō. From these two works, it is clear that in the latter half of the medieval period, there was an awareness of the Kyūshū dialects as having special characteristics.

**Early modern (Edo period)**

In *Butsuruishōko*, an Edo period collection of dialect forms from across Japan, Japanese dialects are divided into eastern and western, with the boundary between the two running along the borders between modern Shiga and Mie Prefectures and modern Gifu and Aichi Prefectures. In addition, there were numerous collections of dialect forms written in the Edo period. An interesting point is whether the dialect forms are translated into (glossed with) Kyōto or Edo (modern Tōkyō) forms. For example, until the mid-eighteenth century, the various dialect forms were glossed with Kyōto forms, but in the years following, they were glossed with Edo forms. This demonstrates that, from the latter half of the eighteenth century, the language of Edo had been spreading throughout the country.

The location of the east-west boundary in the *Man'yōshū* (seventh century), and that of *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam* (seventeenth century), coincide with the east-west boundary found in the Meiji period dialect studies to be described later (see Figure 1.1). This boundary line is the oldest recorded Japanese dialect boundary line. Because the line coincides with a line drawn from Itoigawa in Niigata Prefecture on the Japan Sea coast to Hamanako on the Pacific coast, it is called the "Itoigawa-Hamanako dialect boundary" (See section 5 for more details).

While this boundary is considered to be primary in most theories of dialect division, there is also an interpretation in which it is a secondary division. This latter interpretation takes into consideration the fact that phonetic and accent boundaries run further to the west, and the fact that the records in the *Man'yōshū* may not have shown a linguistic division but an administrative one.

# 3 The dialect division theory of Tōjō Misao

## 3.1 Background to the appearance of Tōjō's division theory

During the Meiji period, in order to establish a national standard language, the Ministry of Education and the National Language Investigative Committee (*Kokugo Chōsa Iinkai*) conducted a "Phonological Survey of Colloquial Usage" (*On'in Kōgohō Torishirabe*), publicizing the results in *Kōgohō Chōsa Hōkokusho* (Report of Survey on Colloquial Usage). The results showed an east-west boundary running along the eastern sides of modern Toyama, Gifu, and Aichi Prefectures (the so-called Itoigawa-Hamanako dialect boundary). Recognition of the fact that this coincided with the boundary in the *Man'yōshū* triggered the development of Tōjō's dialect division research.

## 3.2 Characteristics of Tōjō's dialect division theory

Tōjō proposed his dialect division theory as one field of dialectology in *Kokugo no Hōgen Kukaku* 'Japanese Dialect Division' in 1927. Tōjō defined dialect division as follows.

> Considering that Japanese can be divided into a number of dialects, that division is dialect division. This dialect division is completely different from the distribution of individual lexical phenomena. [. . .] Dialect division must be determined considering phonology, grammar, and vocabulary all together. (Kokugogaku dai-jiten: 857)

Tōjō stated that divisions should be established not on the basis of "individual colloquial language phenomena" but "considering phonology, grammar, and vocabulary all together". However, even looking at other works by Tōjō, he nowhere gives a clear definition of "division" or of a standard for "division". At the time when Tōjō published his division theory, surveys of the dialects of various areas had just begun, and insufficient information on dialects was available. Since research had not progressed to a stage where one could concretely show national-level dialect characteristics that would form a standard for division, in some ways, a lack of clarity was unavoidable. However, since theoretical ambiguity remained, there were many cases among researchers' subsequent proposals for division in which specific standards for division were not clearly stated.

Another characteristic of Tōjō's theory is that he considered not only the current distribution of dialects, but also introduced a diachronic interpretation, valuing a historical perspective (See Nakamata 1997). Furthermore, he also took into consideration the dialect awareness of the residents themselves. Tōjō himself made the following statements in various works (Underlining by author).

- When did Japanese divide into a number of dialects; I do not know when the period was, but it was probably a very long time ago. In ancient times in the Tōhoku region . . .. (Tōjō 1927: 8)
- Transfer of changes in Japanese through the ages unchanged to the region has produced the Honshū and Kyūshū dialects. (Tōjō 1927: 24)
- Research on dialects [. . .] has as its goal identifying differences in dialects and clarifying how the divisions involved occurred. (Tōjō 1953: 14)
- We must be able to compare dialects, examine the differences in their systems, determine their interrelationships, deduce the order of their division, and clarify the whole picture of the Japanese language in terms of geographical divisions. This is the theory of dialect division. (Tōjō 1953: 14)
- The factors that govern dialectal divisions are [. . .] one is geographical [. . .], another is social [. . .], and in addition, ethnic factors may be considered as a cause of the development of dialects. (Tōjō 1953: 14)

As can be seen from these descriptions, Tōjō believed that a geographical division map and a table of sequential division of dialects indicate a diachronic "differentiation process" within a single language, based on historical interpretation (see Nakamata 1997).

## 3.3 Outline of Tōjō's divisions

Tōjō's first proposal for division appeared in *Dainihon Hōgen Chizu* (1927), and a list of divisions was published in *Kokugo no Hōgen Kukaku* (1927). In addition to the differences in dialects, administrative divisions, topographical divisions, and interpretations of the history of the Japanese language were also given comprehensive consideration. After that, a second draft (*Nihon Bungaku Dai-jiten*, 1934: 671–674), in which some of the proposed divisions were revised, and a third (final) draft (*Nihon Hōgengaku*, 1953), in which the proposed dialect divisions and their list were revised again, were presented. The third draft is shown in Figure 1.1.

The third proposal included the following elements: 1) The Japanese language is first divided into two: mainland dialects and Ryūkyū dialects. Both of these are then subdivided into three: the former into eastern dialects, western dialects, and Kyūshū dialects, and the latter into the Amami dialect, the Okinawa dialect, and the Sakishima dialect. 2) The "east-west dialect boundary" between the eastern and western dialects is located in the western part of Niigata, Gifu, and Aichi Prefectures. (In the *Kōgohō Chōsa Hōkokusho* mentioned earlier, the east-west boundary line (the Itoigawa-Hamanako boundary line) was drawn along the eastern edges of Toyama, Gifu, and Aichi Prefectures.). 3) The Shikoku dialects were reorganized. 4) The Hachijō-jima dialect, which retains vestiges of the eastern dialect of the Nara period, was made independent as a subclass of the eastern dialect. In particular, the position of the "east-west dialect boundary" in (2) has

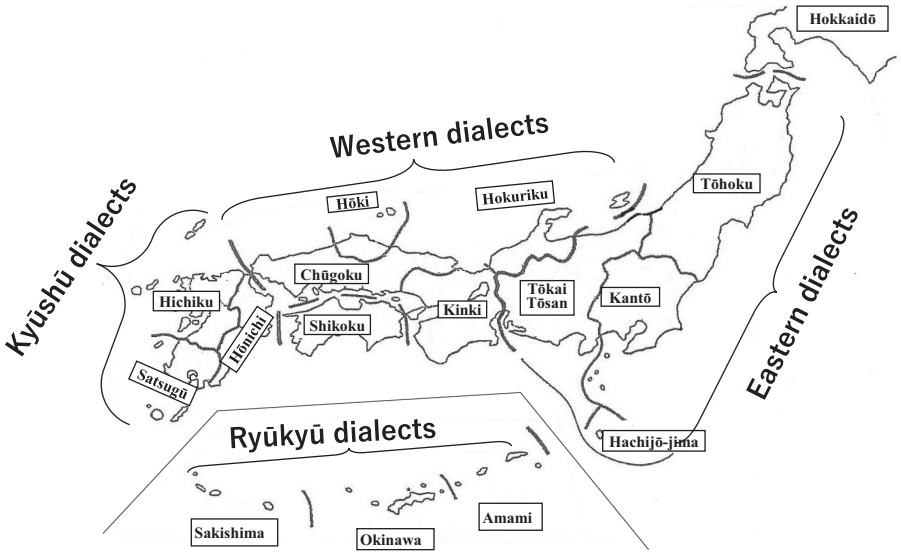



**Figure 1.1:** Tōjō's dialect divisions (third proposal) (From Katō 1977: 62, *Iwanami kōza Nihongo 11: Hōgen, Iwanami*).

been the subject of differing opinions in subsequent studies, depending on whether the boundary is based on phonetics and accent or on vocabulary and grammar.

# 4 Various dialect division proposals

The following is a list of the major dialect division proposals published after Tōjō.

## 4.1 Tsudzuku Tsuneo

Tsudzuku Tsuneo published a table of divisions four years before the third Tōjō proposal (Tsudzuku 1949), and Figure 1.2 was produced by Katō (1977) based on Tsudzuku's proposal. It is characterized by the following points: (1) The phonological and grammatical linguistic phenomena that form the basis for demarcation are clearly indicated. (2) Priority was given to differences in the language itself, not to the area or population of the region. (3) It was not bound by administrative units. As a result, the Tsudzuku proposal includes new demarcation lines and new divisions that make small areas independent (e.g., Hachijō-jima). Specifically, it has the following features.

- The boundary between eastern Honshu and western Honshu is set as the eastern borders of Toyama, Gifu, and Aichi.
- A distinction is made between the Northern Ōu dialect and the Southern Ōu dialect
- The northern Kantō region is included in the southern Ōu dialect.
- Some small regions are regarded as independent (Hachijō-jima, Totsukawa, and Kumano)

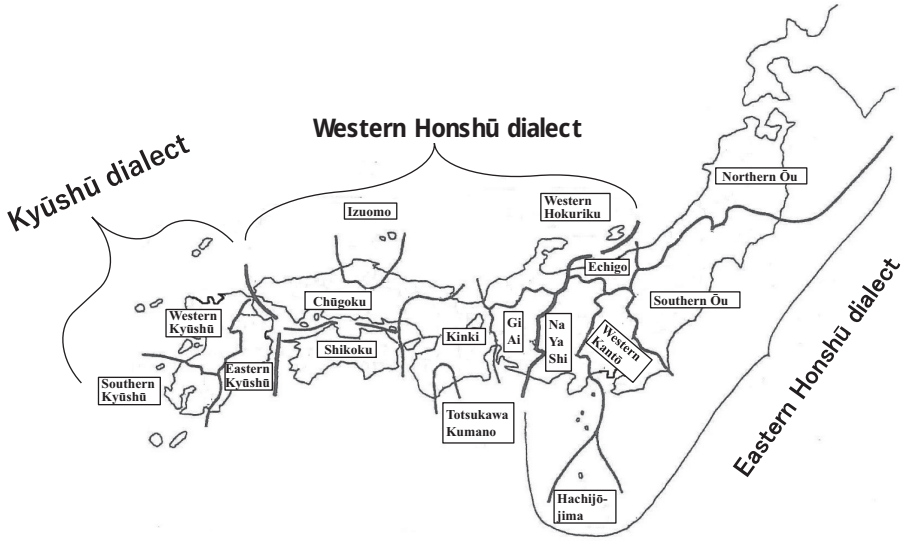



**Figure 1.2:** Tsudzuku Tsuneo's dialect divisions (From Katō 1977: 65, *Iwanami kōza Nihongo 11: Hōgen*, Iwanami).

## 4.2 Kindaichi Haruhiko

The proposals in Kindaichi (1955) and Kindaichi (1964) are proposals for dialect divisions that place particular emphasis on the distribution of accent systems (Figure 1.3). Kindaichi (1955) and Kindaichi (1964) divided Japan into four zones, Nai-rin 'inner ring', Chū-rin 'middle ring', Gai-rin 'outer ring', and Nantō 'southern islands' (the term *rin* means 'ring'). These four zones are distributed in concentric circles around the Kinai region, with the Nai-rin being the most recent, and the outer rings (Gai-rin and Nantō) being the oldest (the oldest Nantō dialect remains only on the southwest end). It is also characterized by a circumscribed (ABCBA) distribution in which widely separated areas in the east and west of the long and narrow Japanese archipelago belong to the same category. This is an original interpretation that applies Yanagita's theory of peripheral distribution of dialectal forms to dialect division (see Chapter 2 of this volume for Yan-

agita's theory of peripheral distribution of dialectal forms). Another characteristic is that, as the four areas of Nai-rin, Chū-rin, Gai-rin, and Nantō are distributed in concentric circles, there is no dividing line between east and west like the east-west dialect boundary line.

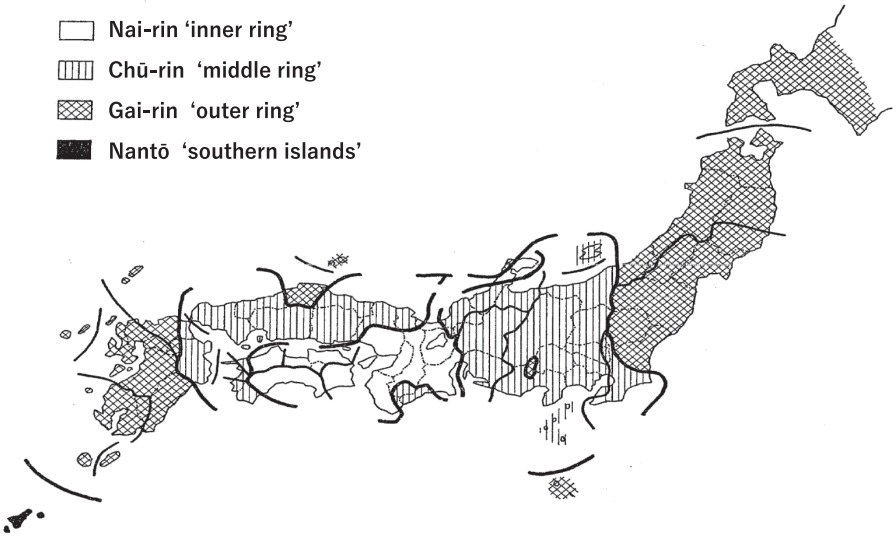



**Figure 1.3:** Kindaichi's dialect divisions (Original map: Kindaichi 1964: 72 [From Katō 1977: 62, *Iwanami kōza Nihongo 11: Hōgen*, Iwanami]).

## 4.3 Fujiwara Yoichi's theory of division: Kokeimyaku 'older lineage'

Fujiwara Yoichi believed that a diachronic perspective should be emphasized, and that dialects' historical development should be clarified accordingly. He considered dialectal lineages (called *bunpa* 'branches') and distinguished areas with particularly old characteristics by naming them "kokeimyaku" (horizontal line area in Figure 1.4). The "kokeimyaku" regions were also found to have older tendencies in other subsequent studies. In the case of the mainland dialects, the mainland dialects are divided into east and west included the Kyūshū dialect into the western region, while the Ryūkyū dialects are divided into Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama.

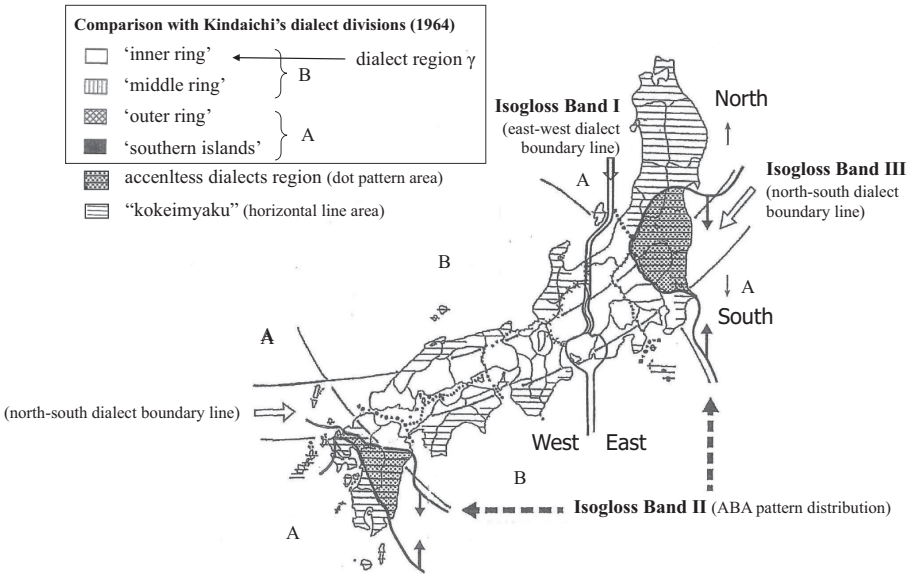



**Figure 1.4:** Fujiwara Yoichi's dialect "kokeimyaku" (horizontal line area) (based on Fujiwara 1962, *Hōgengaku*, Sanseidō) and the accenltess dialects regin (dot pattern area) (From Abe 2023: 78, *Gakushūin Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Nenpō* 69).

## 4.4 Okumura Mituo's "operating principles for dialect division"

In all the early dialect division proposals described so far, the criteria and procedures for creating divisions were rarely discussed, and even when the criteria for judging divisions were presented, they were limited to simple descriptions of some phenomena such as phonology and grammar. Okumura Mituo, on the other hand, pointed out that in earlier theories of division, objective criteria and fixed rules were not made clear, and proposed specific rules, the "quantity principle" (which concerns the number of phenomena) and the "quality principle" (which concerns the dialectal phenomena themselves), as working rules for division. Okumura proposed that dialects should be classified according to objective criteria (Okumura 1958). Okumura's argument later developed into a debate on which phenomena, phonetic, grammatical, lexical, or accentual, should be given priority, and also stimulated the use of quantitative classification methods.

## 4.5 Other dialect divisions

In addition to the above dialect division theories, there are other division theories, such as those based on phonological, accentual, grammatical, lexical, and other features, as well as those based on quantitative methods and dialect boundaries (maps are omitted for reasons of space).

(1) Phonology: The analyses that classified dialects by phonological characteristics include Kindaichi (1953) and Kindaichi (1963). Kindaichi (1953) divided dialects into the three categories of Omote-Nihon dialects (Southern Kantō dialects to Chūgoku and Shikoku dialects), Ura-Nihon dialects (Northern Kantō, Tōhoku, and Izumo areas), and the Satsugū dialects, together with their intermediate dialects. The Omote-Nihon dialects dialects are characterized by the fact that no east-west division is proposed.

(2) Accent: One proposal dividing dialects according to their accent systems is Hirayama (1968). Hirayama divided accent patterns into three regions: those with a clear accent system, in which distinctions were clear; those with an ambiguous accent system, in which distinctions were ambiguous; and accentless prosodic systems, in which there were no distinctions. He proposed that changes in accent systems were in the direction of clear > ambiguous > accentless. The category of clear accent systems included the Keihan-type accent systems, the Tōkyō-type accent systems, and the Special-type accent systems (two-pattern accent systems).

(3) Lexicon: There are several lexical dialect divisions depending on the vocabulary under consideration. For example, Tachibana (1936) divides Japan into three parts: eastern, western, and Kyūshū, with the middle part of the country belonging to neither the eastern nor the western part. Another characteristic is the designation of the Hachijō-jima dialect as unaffiliated. Gojō (1985) is unique in establishing five “dialectal regions” from north to south, namely Tōhoku, Kantō, Hokuriku, Kansai, and Kyūshū, and a “transitional dialect region” of an intermediate nature between east and west (between Kantō and Kansai). These two lexically-based division proposals have in common the establishment of a unique intermediate region between east and west.

(4) Grammar: One study dividing dialects by grammatical characteristics is Inoue (1986). Inoue divided Japanese dialects into three using mathematical linguistic methods: the mainland (Hondo) dialects, the Hachijō-jima dialect, and the Ryūkyū dialects. The mainland dialects were further divided into eastern (Tōbu) dialects and western (Seibu) dialects, and Ryūkyū dialects were divided into Amami, Okinawa, and Sakishima. The bipartite division of the Hondo dialects is similar to that of Tsudzuku (1949), in that Gifu and Aichi Prefectures are included in the western part. It is also similar to Hirayama (1968) in that the Hachijo-jima dialect is placed on an equal footing with the east and west Hondo dialects.

(5) Honorifics: Katō (1973) divides dialects into four categories viewed from the perspective of honorifics: "dialects with respectful expressions for in-group members", "dialects with respectful expressions for others", "dialects with polite expressions only", and "dialects without honorific expressions" with the dividing line running along the western side of Gifu and Aichi Prefectures. To the east, the honorifics are relatively simple, with only "respectful expressions for others", "polite expressions only", and "no honorific" dialects, and to the west, "respectful expressions for in-group members". This distribution shows the gradational development of honorifics, with honorifics well-developed in western Japan and underdeveloped in eastern Japan. Katō also pointed out that "superimposition of individual isoglosses is more persuasive in some respects because it reveals the [. . .] bases." Subsequent geolinguistic studies have emphasized the overlapping of dialect boundaries, as Katō pointed out.

(6) Systematic segmentation method: Sibata (1977) conducted a two-part subdivision method in which all dialect categories were repeatedly divided into two parts, "main" and "subpart", and presented a set of hierarchical partitions as follows: "Honshū (main) + Okinawa (subpart)" > "Honshū > western Japan (main) + eastern Japan (subpart)", and so on. A systematic historical interpretation can be seen in the divisions into "main" and "subpart" (differentiation of dialects).

(7) Quantificational methods

(7.1) Sibata and Kumagai's network method: Sibata and Kumagai (1985) and Kumagai (2002) used the network method to illustrate the degree of linguistic proximity between geographical points. The network method is a method of dividing a region by drawing a line connecting each geographical point with all other points on the basis of their similarity in specific linguistic features and displaying the network of points on a map.

(7.2) Inoue Fumio's division by cluster analysis and factor analysis: Inoue (2001) and Inoue (2002) showed a new way of looking at dialect divisions, using cluster analysis and factor analysis to measure the distance between points based on the usage rate of common word forms at each point.

(8) Geolinguistic studies using isoglosses: Abe (2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2023) identified several boundary bundles and the locations where lexical, phonological, and grammatical phenomena overlap particularly often. They showed that the boundary bundles were formed at different times, that the distribution of these bundles gradually became more complex as they were built up in stages historically, and that the overlapping of these boundaries of bundles at different times formed the dialect divisions in various regions. This will be discussed in detail in the next section.

# 5 Dialect division using isoglosses

## 5.1 Hirayama Teruo

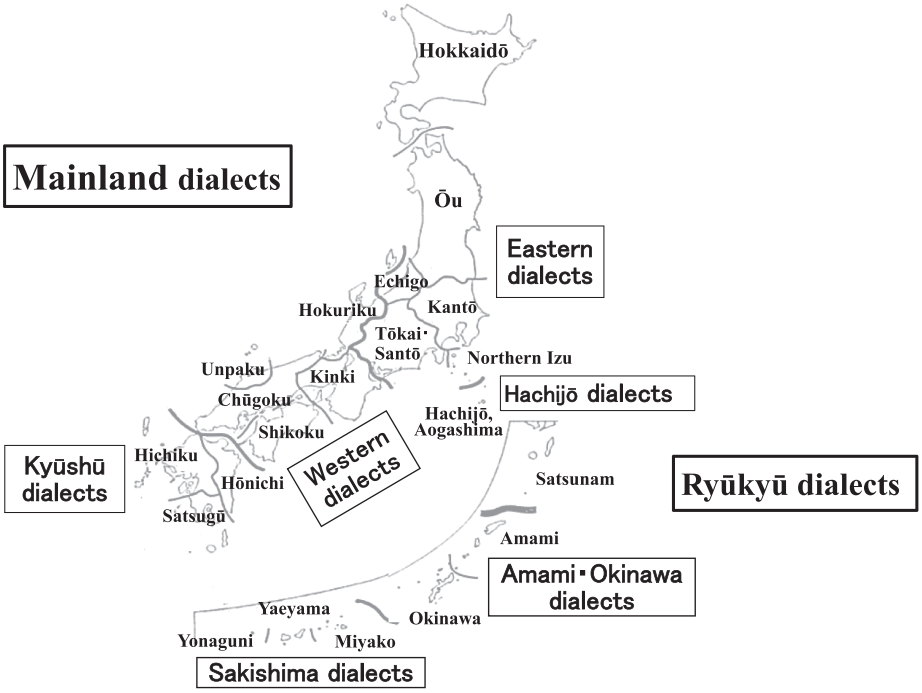



**Figure 1.5:** Hirayama's dialect divisions (From Hirayama 1968: 74, *Nihon no hōgen*, Kōdansha Gendai Shinsho).

Hirayama Teruo's proposal emphasizes a diachronic perspective, adding the Hachijō-jima dialect to the Tōbu 'eastern' dialects, Seibu 'western' dialects, and Kyūshū dialects, to create a four-division system. The Ryūkyū dialects are unique in that they are divided into two sections: the Amami-Okinawa dialects and the Sakishima dialects (Figure 1.5). At the boundary between eastern and western dialects, particular emphasis is placed on the results of Hirayama's accent research. In other areas, such as Hokkaidō, Tōhoku, Kantō, Chūgoku, Shikoku, and Kyūshū, old administrative divisional units are emphasized.

## 5.2 Geolinguistic studies using isoglosses

One feature of Western geolinguistics is the study of divisions based on the overlap of isogloss lines. Since World War II, the study of geographic divisions based on isogloss lines has also formed part of geolinguistics research in Japan. This has led to the following findings:

(1) There are several places in Japan where many isoglosses overlap (thick bundles).
(2) There are different geographic and topographical, including climatological, backgrounds to the overlapping (thick bundles) of isoglosses.
(3) There are various historical reasons and reasons for change leading to the formation of the overlapping isogloss lines.
(4) The overlaps of the isoglosses coincide with the main boundaries of the proposed dialect divisions proposed in the past.
(5) In light of (4), each overlap of isogloss lines can be interpreted as an important boundary in dialect division theory.

Below, in order to distinguish bundles of isoglosses from individual isoglosses, they will be termed "isogloss bands"; an overview of the major bands is presented below.

## 5.3 East-west dialect boundary line

In Japan, there is a dialect boundary line that divides the eastern and western dialects, called the Itoigawa-Hamanako dialect boundary (Figure 1.6). This is called "Isogloss Band I", and this boundary line has been pointed out by Kōgohō Chōsa Hōkokusho (1906), Ushiyama (1952), and others. This geographical region is characterized by large mountain ranges, large rivers, and a lake (Lake Hamana), suggesting natural topography as the main factor in the formation of dialect boundaries.

Table 1.1 lists the main linguistic phenomena divided by Isogloss Band I. For each phenomenon, Table 1.1 gives concrete examples from western and eastern dialects.

Of these, we already know from Nara period (710–794) documents (the *Man'yōshū*) that there were differences between the east and the west in terms of (1) the endings of the imperative form of monograde verbs and (4) the auxiliary verb for negation. However, since there is a lack of data on the geographical distribution of other phenomena, it is unclear from what period an east-west division has existed. In addition, the events delineated by this isogloss band include a wide range of qualitatively different phenomena (Kobayashi 2004: 613–647). As such, it is likely that as a result of topographical barriers impeding human interaction over a long period of time, different changes in language arose in the eastern and western areas respectively.

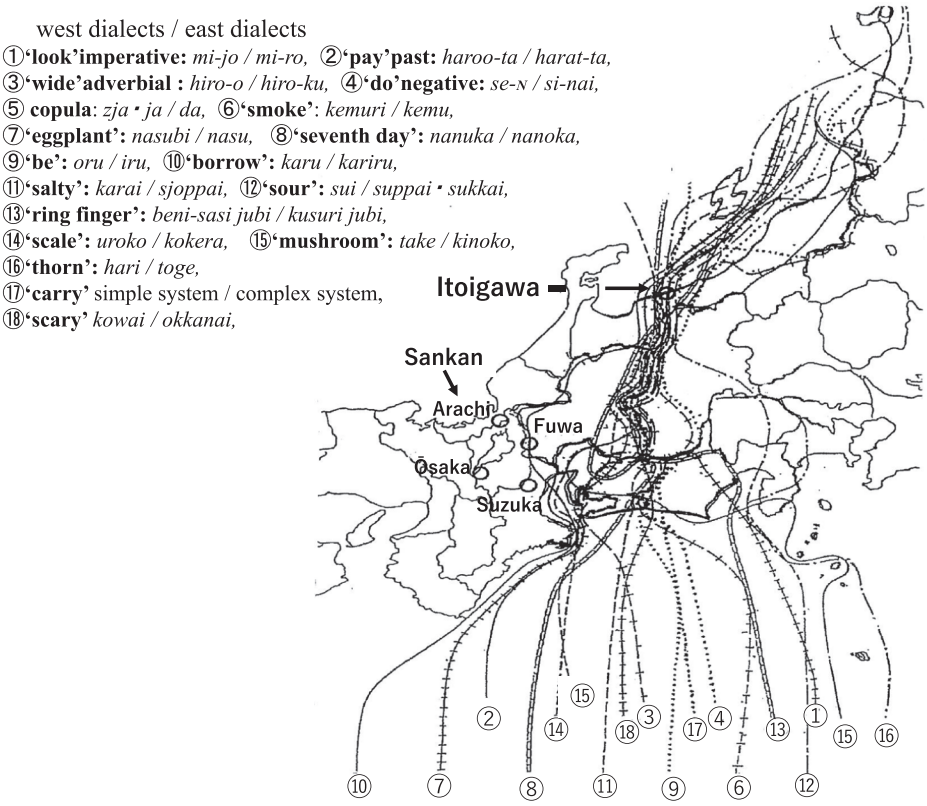



**Figure 1.6:** Isogloss Band I east-west dialect boundary line (Created based on Tokugawa 1981: 347, 350, 353, *Nihongo no sekai*, Chūōkōronsha).

**Table 1.1:** Linguistic phenomena oppositions across the east-west dialect boundary line.

| Genre | Isogloss number in Figure 1.6 | Linguistic phenomenon | Western dialects | Eastern dialects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phonology | | Vowel devoicing | Devoicing rare | Devoicing common |
| Grammar | ① | Imperative suffix for monograde verbs | *mi-jo, mi-i* 'look-IMP' | *mi-ro* 'look-IMP' |
| | ② | Stem variations of quintigrade verbs ending in V-*u* before PST and GER | *koo-ta* 'buy-PST'<br>*juu-ta* 'say-PST'<br>*haroo-ta* 'pay-PST' | *kat-ta* 'buy-PST'<br>*it-ta* 'say-PST'<br>*harat-ta* 'pay-PST' |
| | ③ | Adverbial form of adjective | *hiro-o* 'wide-INF' | *hiro-ku* 'wide-INF' |
| | ④ | Negative verbal suffix | *-ɴ, -nu* 'NEG' | *-nai* 'NEG' |

**Table 1.1** (continued)

| Genre | Isogloss number in Figure 1.6 | Linguistic phenomenon | Western dialects | Eastern dialects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ⑤ | Conclusive auxiliary verb (copula) | *=zja, =ja* | *=da* |
| Lexicon | ⑥ | 'smoke' | *kemuri* | *kemu* |
| | ⑦ | 'eggplant' | *nasubi* | *nasu* |
| | ⑧ | 'seventh day, seven days' | *nanuka* | *nanoka* |
| | ⑨ | Animate subject existence verb, aspect marker | *oru* | *iru* |
| | ⑩ | 'borrow' | *karu* | *kariru* |
| | ⑪ | 'salty' | *karai* | *sjoppai* |
| | ⑫ | 'sour' | *sui, suii* | *sukkai, suppai* |
| | ⑬ | 'ring finger' | *benisasi jubi* | *kusuri jubi* |
| | ⑭ | 'moss' | *uroko* | *kokera* |
| | ⑱ | 'frightening, scary' | *kowai, etc.* | *okkanai* |

## 5.4 Isogloss bands between "gai-rin" and "nai-rin and chū-rin"

### 5.4.1 Peripheral distribution of dialectal forms ("ABA pattern")

Another isogloss band, Isogloss Band II, is shown in Figure 1.7 and Table 1.2. Bands dividing Japan into a central region B (Southern Kantō, Tōkai, Chūbu, Kinki, Shikoku, Chūgoku, northeastern Kyūshū) and the periphery area A surrounding it (north of the Tone River and south from southwest Kyūshū, including Okinawa) form a peripheral distribution of dialect forms (an ABA distribution), in which the central area B is surrounded by the peripheral areas A. The location of these boundaries coincides with the boundaries proposed by Kindaichi between his "gai-rin dialects" and his "chū-rin and nai-rin dialects". The characteristic feature of this distribution is that the forms in the A region are older and the forms in the B area are innovative. Taking up one example, boundary line 1 in Figure 1.7 shows the words for 'cow, ox'. The A regions display forms with *bee*, while the B region displays *usi*. The former form, based on the sound the animal makes, is a simple way of naming, and can be considered older. Later, as the use of oxen in agriculture spread, the form *usi* spread from the central cultural region to the periphery as the proper name for this animal, a process that projected the ABA distribution. If we look at the forms for *keihan* 'ridge (between fields)', the A region form

for boundary line 5, *kuro,* can be used to refer to a geographical feature dividing a field from a variety of other things, but the B area form, *aze*, tends to be limited to referring to a geographical feature dividing rice paddies. The B region is that in which rice culture first spread from the Yayoi period, which relates to the range of the form *aze*.

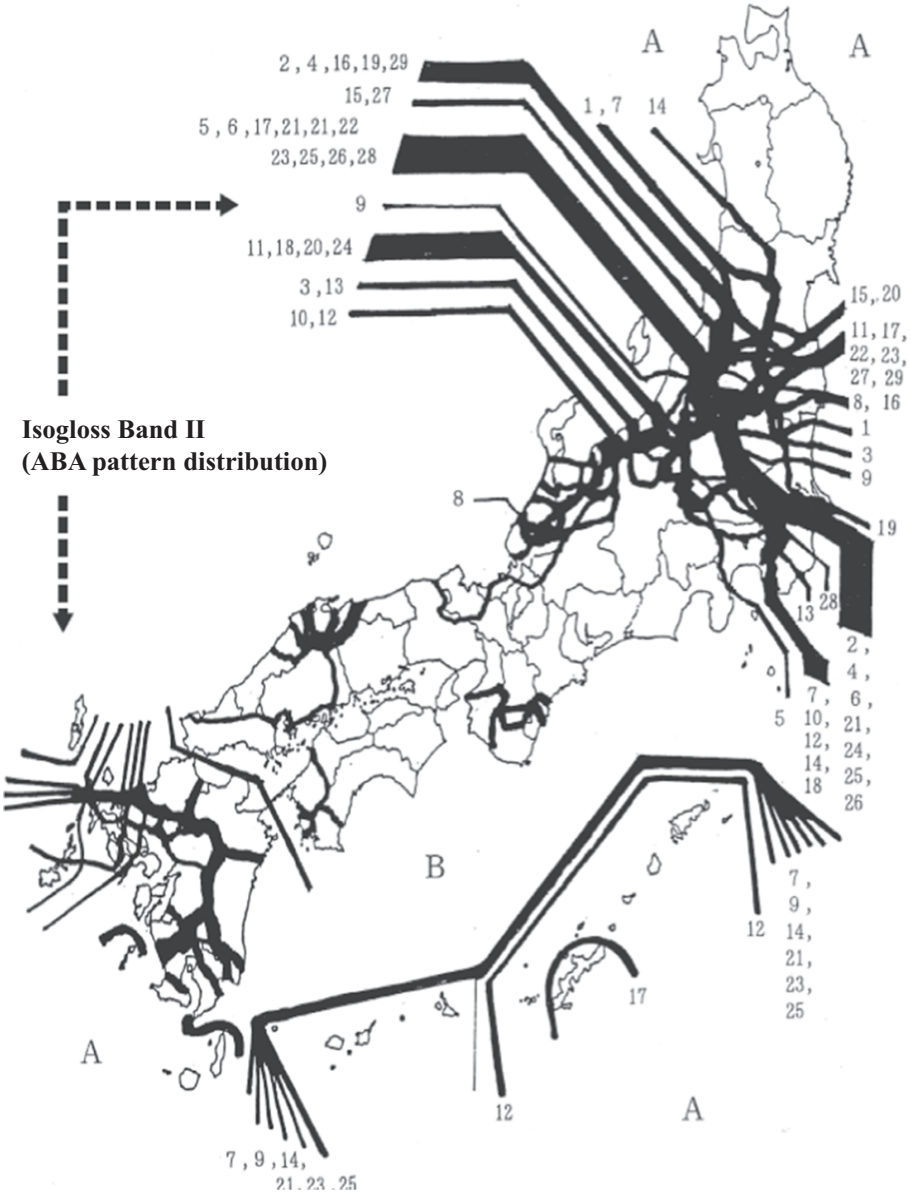



**Figure 1.7:** ABA (gai-rin versus chū-rin and nai-rin) boundary lines (from Abe 2008: 156, *Shirīzu hōgengaku 1: Hōgen no Keisei*, Iwanami).

**Table 1.2:** Linguistic phenomena in peripheral isogloss line opposition.

| Genre | | Linguistic phenomenon | A region (Tōhoku, Kyūshū) forms | B central region forms | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lexicon | 1 | 'cow, ox' | ◎*bee-, -bee* | ★*usi* | LAJ 206 |
| | 2 | 'eye' | *ma-na-ko, ma-na-ku* | *me* (<ma+i) | LAJ110 |
| | 3 | 'ash, ashes' | ◎*aku* | ★*hai* | LAJ270 |
| | 4 | 'solar plexus' | ◎*-otosi* | *-otɕi* | LAJ130 |
| | 5 | 'ridge' | ◎*kuro* | ★*aze* | LAJ187 |
| | 6 | Meaning of the verb *ociru* | Both 'deboard' and 'fall' | ★only 'fall' | LAJ94 |
| | 7 | 'smell (st)' | ◎*kamu, kamaru, kabjuɴ* | ★*kagu* | LAJ86 |
| | 8 | 'thread, cotton thread' | *kana* | ★*ito* | LAJ153, 155 |
| | 9 | 'spider' | ◎*kubo, kubu* | *kumo* | LAJ233 |
| | 10 | *kowai* 'tired' | ◎ has this meaning | ★does not have this meaning | LAJ43, 44 |
| | 11 | *kowai* 'frightening' | ◎ does not have this meaning | ★has this meaning | |
| | 12 | 'face' | ◎*cura* | *kao* | LAJ106 |
| | 13 | 'sour' | *su(k)ka-i*(<*sukwa-) | *Suppa-i, su-i, su-i-ka(*words newly created based on su 'vinegar') | LAJ41 |
| | 14 | 'snore' | ◎*hana -* | ★*ibiki-* | LAJ89 |
| | 15 | 'eyebrow' | *kao no ke* (facial hair) | ★*majuge, etc.* | LAJ111 |
| | 16 | Suffix added to names of rivers *-tani* | ◎*-tani* does not have distribution | *-tani* has distribution | Kagam1958 |
| Grammar | 17 | Subject marker | Tōhoku: zero form, Kyūshū: *ga, no* | ★*ga marking* | LAJ98 |
| | 18 | conditional | ◎*kake-ba* 'write-COND' | *kak-jaa* 'write-COND' | GAJ 128 |
| | 19 | Reduplication of verb adverbial form | No: (*jomi-gatera* 'read-SIMULTANEOUS' ) | Yes: (*jomi+jomi* 'read-SIMULTANEOUS') | GAJ41 |
| | 20 | Honorifics | Tōhoku: no in-group honorifics, Kyūshū: has in-group honorifics | ★Most have in-group honorifics | Katō 1977 |
| | 21 | Adjectival conjugation | ◎ No conjugation | ★Fully conjugated | GAJ136~144 |

**Table 1.2** (continued)

| Genre | | Linguistic phenomenon | A region (Tōhoku, Kyūshū) forms | B central region forms | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phonology | 22 | Central vowel | Yes: (/i/, /u/ not distinguished; pronounced as [ɨ] or [ʉ]) | ★No: (/i/ and /u/ distinguished) | SDJD |
| | 23 | /si/ and /su/ distinguished | No: (unified as /sɨ/ or /sʉ/ ) | ★Yes | Katō 1975 |
| | 24 | Distinguish /zi/, /di/, /zu/, /du/ | Tōhoku: no distinction, Kyūshū: 2-, 3-, and 4-way distinction | ★2-, 3-, and 4-way distinction | SDJD |
| | 25 | Distinguish the vowels /i/and /e/ | Tōhoku: No (both [e]), Kyūshū: Yes | ★Yes | Katō 1986 |
| | 26 | Voicing of intervocalic /k/ | ◎Yes | ★No | SDJD |
| | 27 | Voicing of intervocalic /t/ | ◎Yes | ★No | Katō 1975 |
| | 28 | On-glide nasalization of /z, d, b/ | Tōhoku: Yes, Kyūshū: No | Generally no, but present in some parts | SDJD |
| | 29 | Distinguish [g] and [ŋ] | Tōhoku: Yes: (word-initially /g/, intervocalically /ŋ/), Kyūshū: Yes, in parts | ★Yes: (No in some parts) (word-initially /g/, intervocalically /ŋ/) | Hirayama 1968 |
| | 30 | Special mora (mora nasal, vowel length mora, gemination mora) | do not count as 1 mora | ★count as 1 mora | Kindaichi 1953 |

Note: ◎: Distributions south of Kyūshū included in peripheral distribution. ★: indicates a characteristic more distinctive in the B region than in the A region (See 5.3.2). LAJ: *Linguistic Atlas of Japan*. GAJ: *Grammar Atlas of Japanese Dialects*. SDJD: *Nihon hōgen daijiten.*

The geographic factors that created the eastern isogloss band are the Tone River, a large river in the east, a large deep inlet (the "ancient Oku-Tōkyō Bay") which existed in ancient times (in the Jōmon period, the oblique line area on the seaward side of Figure 1.8 shown in section 5.3.3 was still ocean), and a mountain range to the north (the gray area inland in Figure 1.8). The western boundary band is a mountain range in central Kyūshū, but part of the boundary is between Kyūshū and Okinawa (the ocean). The latter is a part of the central Kyūshū boundary that has historically expanded and moved southward.

### 5.4.2 Characteristics of Isogloss Band II (ABA pattern distribution)

The characteristics of Isogloss Band II are as follows.

(1) The dialectal features of A are found in Tōhoku and south of Kyūshū, forming a peripheral distribution overall.
(2) There is a tendency to express meanings in an "integrated and comprehensive" manner in the peripheral area A, and in a "specific and limited" manner in the central area B. This is the case with the examples marked with ★ in Table 1.2.
(3) The regional differences in Isogloss Band II cover a wide range of phonological, grammatical, and lexical aspects, and are more diverse than in isogloss band I (east-west type).
(4) Many of the phenomena in Isogloss Band II show a historical transition from an old phenomenon in peripheral A to a dialectal phenomenon in central B. (However, the reverse is a few.) These are briefly explained below.

Examples of changes from A to B
Lexicon
A. Increased specificity and restrictions in naming
(1) 'Cow, ox': A is a simple name derived from the sound of a cow, while B is a name derived from a foreign word (Chinese or Korean) ((3) 'Ash' *hai* is also likely to be the Sino-Japanese reading of the Chinese character for 'ash'.).
Similarly, there are cases where names change from direct descriptive naming to restrictive naming: (14), (15).

B. Increased specificity and restrictions on meaning
(3) 'Ash': *aku* distributed in A means 'ashes, lye, dust' and other broad meanings, while *hai* distributed in B means 'cinders' only.
(5) 'Ridge': *kuro* in A is used not only for boundaries between rice paddies and fields, but also for hedges and various other boundary objects, while *aze* in B tends to be limited to the boundary between rice paddies (rice farming).
(6) Meaning of the verb *ociru*: In A, it has the meaning of 'to fall' and 'to deboard', but in B, it has the meaning of 'to fall' only.
Other cases where the meaning is similarly restricted from the broad meaning of A to the narrow meaning of B: (7), (8), (10), (11), (12), (13).

C. Acceptance of words originating in other languages
(16) Suffix to river names *-tani*: A has no distribution of *-tani*, while B does. The etymology of *-tani* is thought to be of foreign origin (same as Korean *tan*). This *-tani*, originating from a foreign language is distributed through B.

Grammar

(17) Subject markers: A (Tōhoku) does not use particles; B and A (Kyūshū) do. Historically, this projects a change from the stage of not using particles to the stage of using them in subject marking.

(19) Honorifics: A (Tōhoku) has underdeveloped honorifics; B and A (Kyūshū) have well-developed honorifics. This projects a gradual historical development of honorifics from an undeveloped stage.

(20) Adjective conjugation: A is unconjugated, B is fully conjugated. Conjugation of adjectives was underdeveloped in Old Japanese, and the history of the Japanese language suggests that adjectives originated in nominal forms in ancient times and gradually developed their conjugation. (In some cases, the phenomenon of simplified conjugation is found in the periphery.)

Phonology

(24) Distinction between vowels /i/ and /e/: It is theorized that the vowel /e/ did not exist in ancient Japanese, but arose in later periods. The fact that a distinction between /e/ and the high vowel /i/ has not developed can be interpreted as a vestige of this characteristic.

(18) Conditional: 'If/provided one writes' in A is *kake-ba*; in B, it is *kak-jaa*. The sounds fused from A's *kake-ba,* changing to B's *kak-jaa*.

Example of a change from B to A

(21) Distinction between vowels /i/ and /u/ (same applies to 22 and 23): A (Tōhoku) has no distinction between the vowels /i/ and /u/, while B and A (Kyūshū) do. The change proceeded from B, which has the distinction, to A (Tōhoku), where it was lost.

### 5.4.3 Characteristics of the Kantō side of Isogloss Band II

There is an interesting coincidence between the distribution of archaeological sites and the Kantō side of the Isogloss Band II.

Area B corresponds to the area where Yayoi period archaeological sites (e.g., square trench tombs, a type of grave in the Yayoi period) appear.

Figure 1.8 shows the north-south difference in archaeological sites in the Kantō Plain during the middle Jōmon period, about 6,000 years ago, and the size of the "ancient Oku-Tōkyō Bay" (oblique line area). The ○ and ● symbols indicate different archaeological sites. The distribution of archaeological sites differs between north and south, with the ancient Oku-Tōkyō Bay (oblique line area), and rivers and mountains (gray areas) as boundaries. The difference in the distribution of the sites is thought to indicate a difference in the communities, and this difference in the communities suggests a difference in their languages (dialects). The boundary of this site and the ABA Isogloss Band II on the Kantō side in Figure 1.7 are almost coincident.

This suggests that the Kantō Isogloss Band II in Figure 1.7 is a remnant of different dialects in the ancient community, or that the influence of these dialects may have persisted into later generations. In other words, the linguistic phenomena in area B in Figure 1.7 are post-Yayoi period features, and it is highly likely that old Jōmon period features remained in A, with newer post-Yayoi phenomena expanding in B.

As corroboration, the Kashiwazaki-Chōshi line (dotted line in Figure 1.9) and the boundaries of "river names" and "lake names" (Figures 1.10 and 1.11), which are said to retain old linguistic features, exist near the Kantō side of the line in Figure 1.8. The existence of cultural boundaries, including language, at this location supports the possibility that they have existed for a substantial period of time.

**Figure 1.8:** Distribution of sites with large numbers of flaked stone axes (●) and sites with clustered storage pits (○) in the Kantō region about 6,000 years ago (middle to late Jōmon) (based on Imamura 1999: 91, Jōmon no jitsuzō o motomete, *Rekishi Bunka Raiburarī*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan), and "ancient Oku-Tōkyō Bay" (oblique line area) (From Abe 2003: 113).

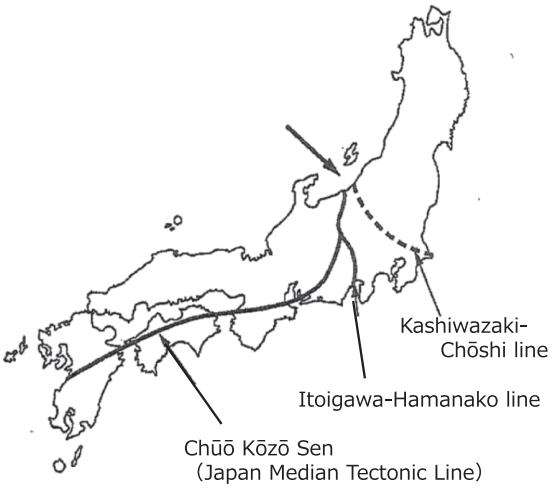



**Figure 1.9:** Kashiwazaki-Chōshi line (Dotted line: Topological structural line between the Tone River and Kashiwazaki, Niigata Prefecture) (From Maekawa 1977: 23, *Nihon no shokubutsu kukei*, Tamagawa daigaku shuppanbu).

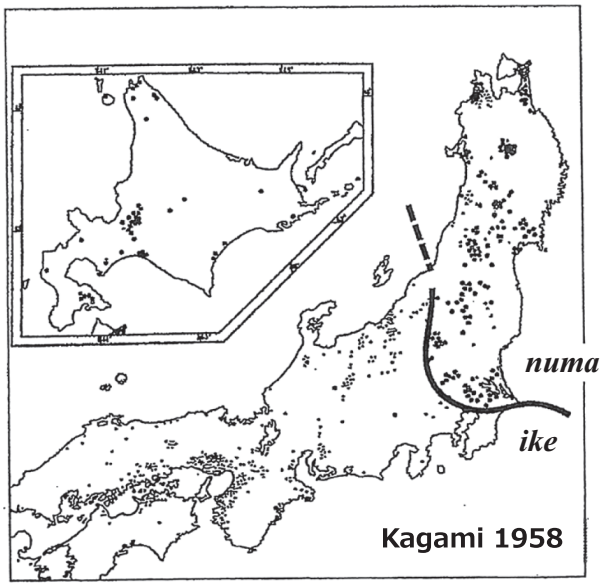



**Figure 1.10:** Suffixes in names of lakes and wetlands *-ike* and *numa* (From Kagami 1958: 18).

**Figure 1.11:** River names with the suffix *-tani* (Original map: Kagami 1958: 14 [From Suzuki 1978: 135]).

## 5.5 Isogloss bands making north-south divisions (North-south dialect isogloss bands)

### 5.5.1 Climatological background to north-south isogloss bands (Isogloss Band III)

The third isogloss band is Isogloss Band III (Figure 1.12), which extends horizontally from east to west and divides the dialects into south and north. Sibata Takesi was the first to identify such a north-south dialect boundary. Although Figure 1.12 presents five boundaries, there are currently about 30 such phenomena across all lexical, phonetic, accentual, and grammatical domains (see Abe 2013a, 2013b, 2014 for details). Typical north-south differences can be summarized as follows:

a. Phonetics: differences in labial sounds and vowels between north and south.
b. Lexicon: names for phenomena unique to cold regions in the north.
c. Grammar: many residual *aru* 'be' verbs in the north, with older verb forms differing in their penetration and persistence between southern and northern regions.
d. Accent: influence of vowel height on accent in the north.

Examples of each are given below.

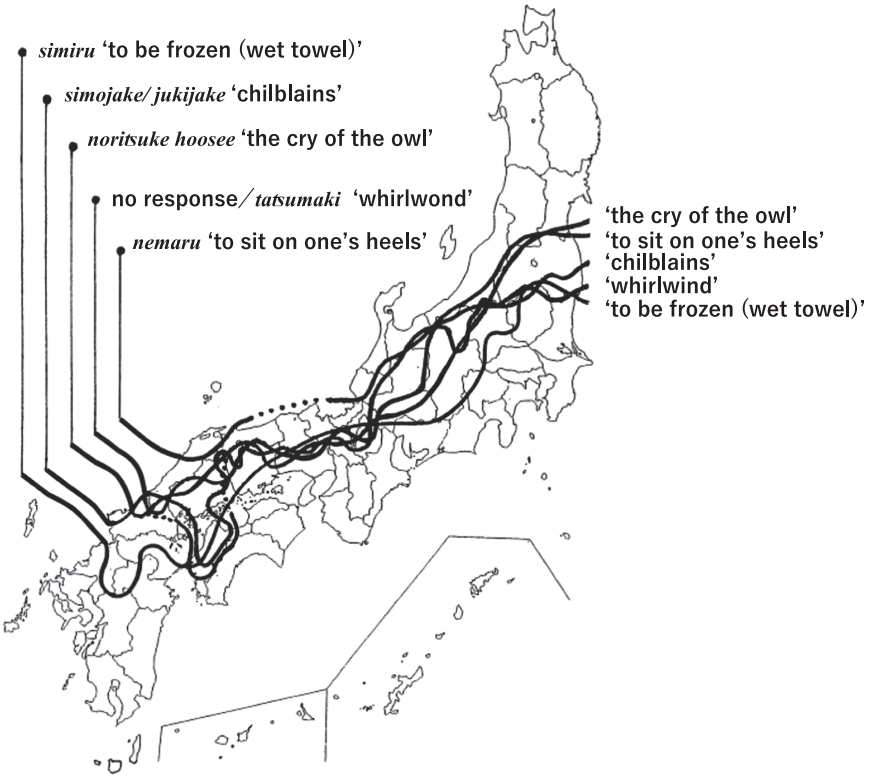



**Figure 1.12:** Isogloss band III "North-south isogloss band" (From Abe 1999: 14, *Tamamo* 35).

List of north-south boundary dialect phenomena

(In the following, southern and northern distribution areas are indicated as ▲ and ▼, respectively.)

a. Phonetics (many cases are related to phonetic phenomena such as labialization, palatalization, and laryngealization)

a1. bilabial /b/: vowels /o, u/ (labialized in the north).

Phonetic 1: 'chase' ▲ *bou (<*wou<ou)*-▼ *ou* (LAJ147 'playing tag', 189 'scarecrow') (Abe 2008)

Phonetic 2: 'place name' ▲ *budo (<*wudo<udo)*-▼ *udo, uto* (Abe 2008)

a2. palatal / **k**<*kw/: bilabial /p<*kw / (palatal enhancement in the north).

Phonetic 3: 'chest' ▲ *kicu* (<*kw) -▼*hicu* (<ɸ<*p<*kw) (Abe 2009)

Phonetic 4: 'sour (taste)' ▲*sukka-i* (<*kw) -▼*suppa-i* (<*p<*kw) (LAJ41) (Abe 2009)

Phonetic 5: 'wheel' ▲*akudo* (<*kw) -▼*a(hu)do* (<h<ɸ<*p<*kw) (LAJ129) (Abe 2009)

Phonetic 6: 'dandelion' ▲ *kuzina, guzina* (<*kw) -▼*huzina* (<h <ɸ<*p<*kw) (LAJ241)

a3. palatalization of /se/, /ze/.
Phonetic 7: ▲*hje, he* - ▼*se* (from map in "Phonology of Japanese Dialects")

a4. palatalization and glottalization of /hü/: /hi/ (LAJ241).
Phonetic 8: 'east' ▲*hügasi* -▼*higasi* (LAJ11) (Kagami 1984)
Phonetic 9: 'mustache' ▲ *hüge* -▼*hige* (LAJ12) (Kagami 1984)

a5. distinction between /zi/, /zu/, /di/, /du/ (four Kana) in Muromachi period Japanese (palatal enhancement in the north).
Phonetic 10: ▲/zi/ (one Kana, [zɨ]or [zʉ]) - ▼/zi//zu/(/dzi//dzu/) (two, three, or four Kana-way distinction) (palatal enhancement in the north) (Figure from "Phonology of Japanese Dialects")

a6. two types of "long o" vowels (*kaion* 'open' and *gōon* 'fused') in Muromachi period Japanese (open vowel enhancement in the north).
Phonetic 11: ▲ Distinction between [aː] and [oː], or [ɔː] and [oː] - ▼ Distinction between [oː] and [uː]. (Figure from "Japanese Dialect Phonology")

a7. palatalization of /e/.
Phonetic 12: ▲je (Tōhoku/Kyūshū) - ▼e (other than Tōhoku/Kyūshū)

In terms of speech sounds, there is a tendency towards the following north-south oppositions. These factors include labiality, roundness, palatalization, strength of aspiration, position of articulation, and vowel height.

| **NORTH:** | **SOUTH** |
|---|---|
| Consonants *kw: | p (phonetics 3, 4, 5, 6. More rounded and stronger aspiration in the north.) |
| Consonants bo, bu: | o, u (phonetics 1, 2, labial in the north, enhanced aspiration.) |
| Vowel *ü: | i (phonetics 8, 9 Vowel position changes in the north.) |
| Vowel *ü or * ï: | u, i (phonetics 10 Vowel position changes in the north.) |
| Vowel je: | e (palatalized in the north.) |

b. Lexicon (especially related to cold weather. (The asterisk (*) on the far right indicates words related to cold weather.))
Lexical 1: 'chilblains' ▲ *juki-jake*-▼ *simo-jake*. (In the south, *juki-jake* means "sunburn from sunlight reflected off snow") (LAJ127) (Sibata (LAJ127) (Sibata 1963)*
Lexical 2: 'whirlwind' ▲no response, or substitute *tacumaki* for 'tornado'. (LAJ264) (Sanada 1979)*
Lexical 3: 'the cry of an owl' ▲ *noricuke hoosee, noricuke hoosoo* meaning (Since the weather will improve). ('starch the laundry and hang it out to dry') (LAJ298, 299) (Satō 1986)*
Lexical 4: 'to be frozen (wet towel)' ▲ *simiru*. (LAJ97) (Katō 1995) *

Lexical 5: 'to be frozen' ▲ *sibareru.* (Drawing by Abe based on "Nihon hōgen dai-jiten")
Lexical 6: 'snowstorm' ▲ *huki* -▼ In the south, *huki* means 'wind'. (Abe 2001, Abe 2014, SDJD drawing by Abe)
Lexical 7: 'ice, icicle' ▲ *siga*, *suga.* (LAJ261, 262) *
Lexical 8: 'monsoon' ▲ *ajunokaze.* (from a diagram in Sanada 1989)
Lexical 9: 'place name for "reservoir"' ▲ *-cucumi.* (Kagami 1984)
Lexical 10: 'place name' ▲ *ara-maci* (「荒町」under developing towen &「新町」newtown)) -▼*ara-maci* (「新町」newtown). (Kagami 1985)
Lexical 11: 'selected song lyrics' ▲ *tɛnno kamisama* -▼*kamisama* (God). (Ishii Seino 2003)
Lexical 12: 'inspirational words' ▲ *saasa, sai.* (Sawamura 2011)
Lexical 13: 'thread, cotton thread' ▲ *kana*-▼ *ito.* (LAJ153, 156)

Typical examples of the north-south dialect boundary in terms of the lexicon are cases where a word form common to both north and south is used in the north with a meaning specific to cold regions. For example, the word for 'wind' in the south has the meaning of 'snowstorm' in the north (Lexical 6: *huki*), and the word for 'sunburn caused by sunlight reflecting from the snow' in the south, *juki-jake*, has the meaning of 'frost-bite due to cold' in the north (Lexical 1: *juki-jake*). These are examples of meanings that have been changed and fixed to phenomena specific to low temperatures and things affected by the cold environment, a result of the northern climate, with its long periods of cold weather.

c. Grammar (in the north, there is a strong tendency for "*aru* 'be' type verbs" to remain. By contrast, in the south, there is a tendency for "lower bigrade verbs with stems ending in /u/ or /e/" to remain)
Grammar 1: 'to sit on one's heels, to sit cross-legged' ▲ *nemaru* (**nemu*+*aru* 'to sleep+be' < **nemu* < **nebu* ). (LAJ51, 52) (Abe 1999)
Grammar 2: 'birth' ▲ *ogaru* (< **ogu*+*aru* 'be born+be'; *o*$^{n}$*gu* <**o*$^{n}$*bu* <**opu* (生ふ) 'be born'). (Abe 2014)
Grammar 3: 'place name' ▲*kakuma* (< **kakumaru* < **kakomu*+*aru* 'surround+be'). (Kagami 1958)
Grammar 4: 'lower bigrade verb with stem ending in /u/ or /e/' ▼retention of lower bigrade verbs with stems ending in a vowel as old conjugation system. (Hirayama 1968, Abe 2013b)

In terms of grammar, there is a marked tendency in the northern part of the country to retain word forms compounded with the old morpheme *aru* to form verbs. For example, *nemaru* (Grammar 1), which means 'to sit on one's heels, to sit cross-legged', and *ogaru* (Grammar 2), which means 'to live'. Verbs with the compound ending *ru*<**aru* are distributed in the north. These are the same verbs that Fukuda (1972) identified about eleven cases of in the Nara period Adzuma dialects, including **kap-aru* (< **kapu*) 'to

exchange', *sap-aru* (< **sapu*) 'to be an obstacle', **kak-aru* (< **kaku*) 'to suspend', etc.), which are considered to be verb forms characteristic of older northeastern dialects.

Conversely, in the southern region, lower bigrade verbs with stems ending in a vowel are retained as the old form. These phenomena suggest that there used to be a difference in the types of verbs that proliferated in the South and the North.

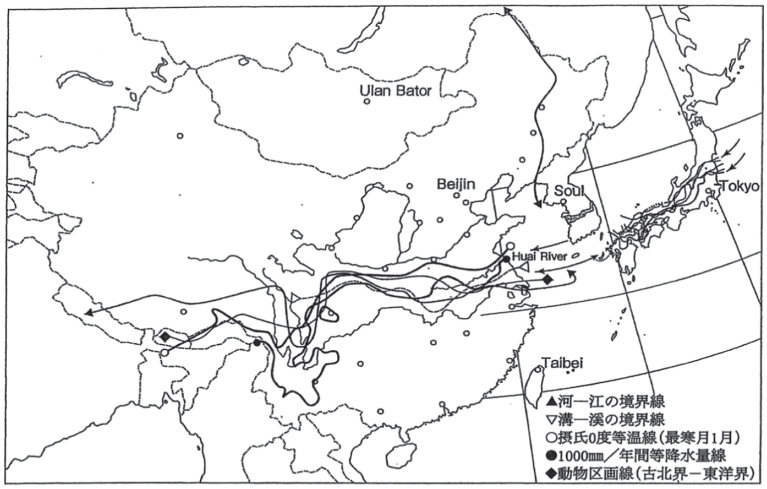
d. Accent

Accent 1: ▲ accent changes according to vowel height ▼ accent does not change. (Sanada 1989)

In the northern area, accent changes according to vowel height. Differences in vowel height affect the differences between northern and southern dialects, as is the case with phonetic phenomena.

The "north-south isogloss band" has the following geographic, climatic, and anthropological characteristics.

(1) The geographic location of the boundaries coincides with the boundaries of climatic phenomena, especially in terms of annual temperature and precipitation (Figure 1.13).
(2) The geographic location of the boundaries coincides extremely well with north-south boundaries of cultural phenomena. These include north-south boundaries of plant and animal distributions, differences in food and food processing, and differences in ethnological traditions (Abe 2006a, b).
(3) It is contiguous in latitudinal position with the East Asian (Chinese) isogloss band.
(4) It also shares the same climatological phenomena (temperature and precipitation) (Figure 1.13).
(5) Based on these points, it can be inferred that the significant difference in climatic conditions between north and south is a direct factor, and that the static food and processing technologies and the static ethnographic and cultural phenomena between north and south have resulted in the restriction of human mobility (stable areas of settlement in the north and the south), which led to the formation of north-south differences in dialects over the long term (Abe 2006a).
(6) In view of the above characteristics, Isogloss Band III can be interpreted as the earliest isogloss band formed. The cultural characteristics of (2) above, archaeological remains, ethnographic features, etc. point to the fact that differences in communities and lifestyles emerged between the north and south before the Jōmon period at least.




▲—▲ North-south dividing line for the use of "he 河" and "jiang 江" in river names of China
▽—▽ North-south dividing line for the use of "xi(chi) 渓" and "gou(kou) 溝" in river names of China
○—○ Isothermal line at 0 Degrees Celsius (coldest month: January)
●—● Isohyetal line at 1000 mm per year
◆—◆ Faunal realm (palaearctic realm - oriental realm)

**Figure 1.13:** Composite borders of languages, culture, and climate in Asia (From Abe 2013a: 509, *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyū* 15).

### 5.5.2 Characteristics in common between the north-south dialect isogloss band and the Asian north-south dialect isogloss band

The north-south dialect isogloss band can be considered a dialect boundary formed by the influence of climate and natural phenomena on human life, which created regional differences in communities. The same can be identified in mainland China, which shows a western extension of the north-south dialect isogloss band.

As shown in Figure 1.13 above, the positions of the north-south boundary between the Chinese words for 'river', *he* (河) and *jiang* (江), the north-south boundary between words for 'mountain stream', *xi (chi)* (渓) and *gou (kou)* (溝), the isothermal line at 0 degrees Celsius (coldest month: January), the location of the isohyetal line at 1000 mm per year, and the boundary of the faunal realms (palaearctic realm—oriental realm) are almost coincident. In both Japanese and Chinese, we can see that the boundaries of dialects, differences in climatic conditions, and the north-south boundaries of cultural phenomena are on a contiguous line connecting east and west. In other words, it can be inferred that climatic conditions have created differences in the distribution of plants and animals, as well as differences in ethnological characteristics such as human migration, settlement, and the formation of communities, which have resulted in the formation and maintenance of differences between northern and southern dialects over a long period of time.

# 6 The centrally-distributed dialect region: The nai-rin dialect region

In addition to the three bundles of isoglosses (isogloss bands) described in section 5, there is also an isogloss band surrounding the Keihan-type accent area. I will call this area the "nai-rin dialect area" because it corresponds to the "nai-rin dialect" area in Kindaichi's dialect division proposal (Figure 1.3). The boundaries surrounding this area do not overlap with the three Isogloss Bands I, II, and III described above – the "east-west dialect isogloss band", the "peripheral isogloss band", and the "north-south dialectal isogloss band". This means that we need to consider the factors that led to the formation of this dialect area.

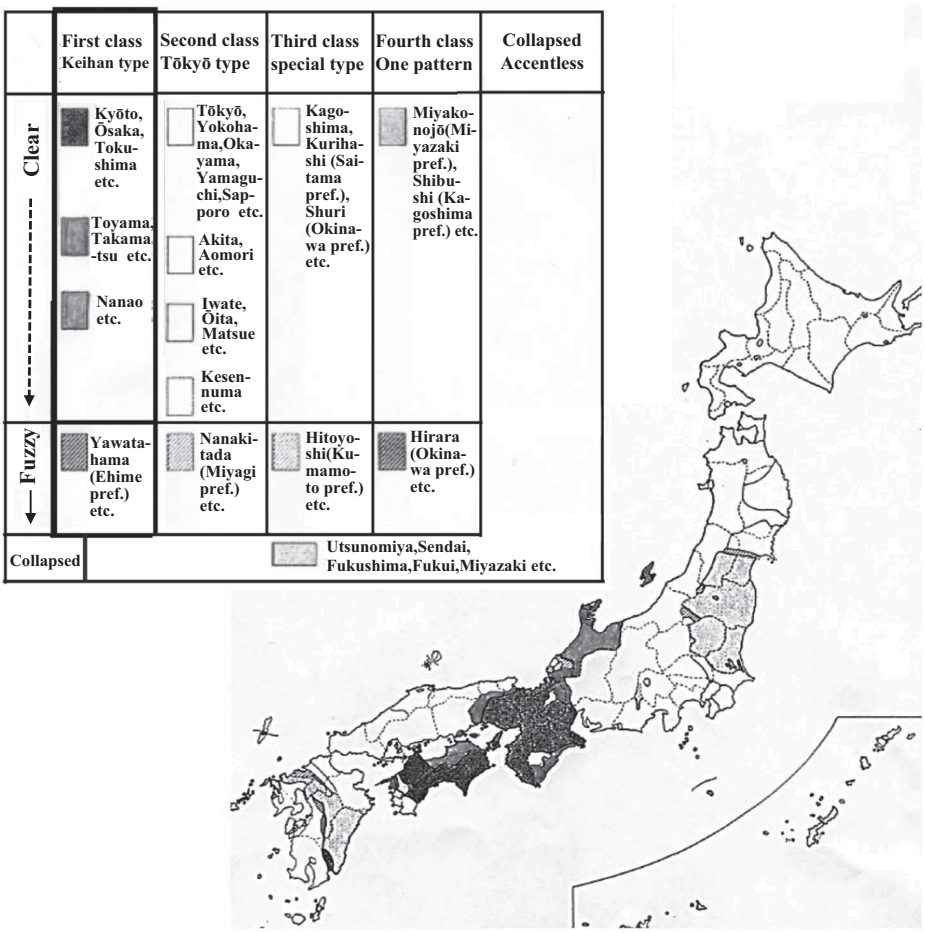



**Figure 1.14:** Distribution of accent types across Japan (From Hirayama 1960: Appendix, *Zenkoku akusento jiten*, Tōkyōdō).

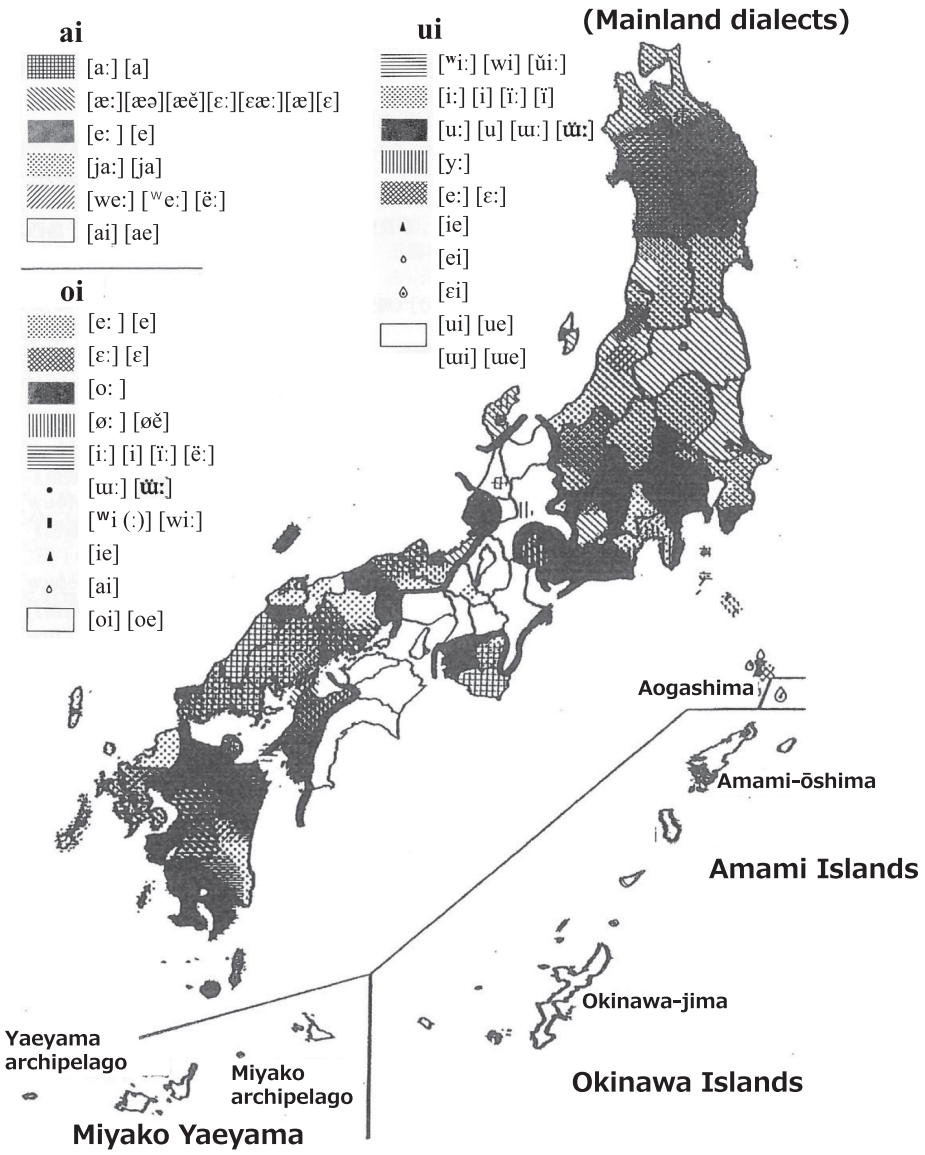



**Figure 1.15:** Fusion of vowel sequences (Three superimposed maps from Uwano (ed.) 1989: 3, 10, 15, *Nihon hōgen on'in sōran,* Shōgakukan).

One of the phenomena that characterizes the nai-rin dialects is the Keihan-type accent, which is found in the Kinai region, most of Shikoku, and parts of Hokuriku (dark gray tone areas in Figure 1.14). The accent in this region has two tonal registers and is interpreted as a "tone accent" in the broad sense ("α" region in Figure 1.17). In addition, the

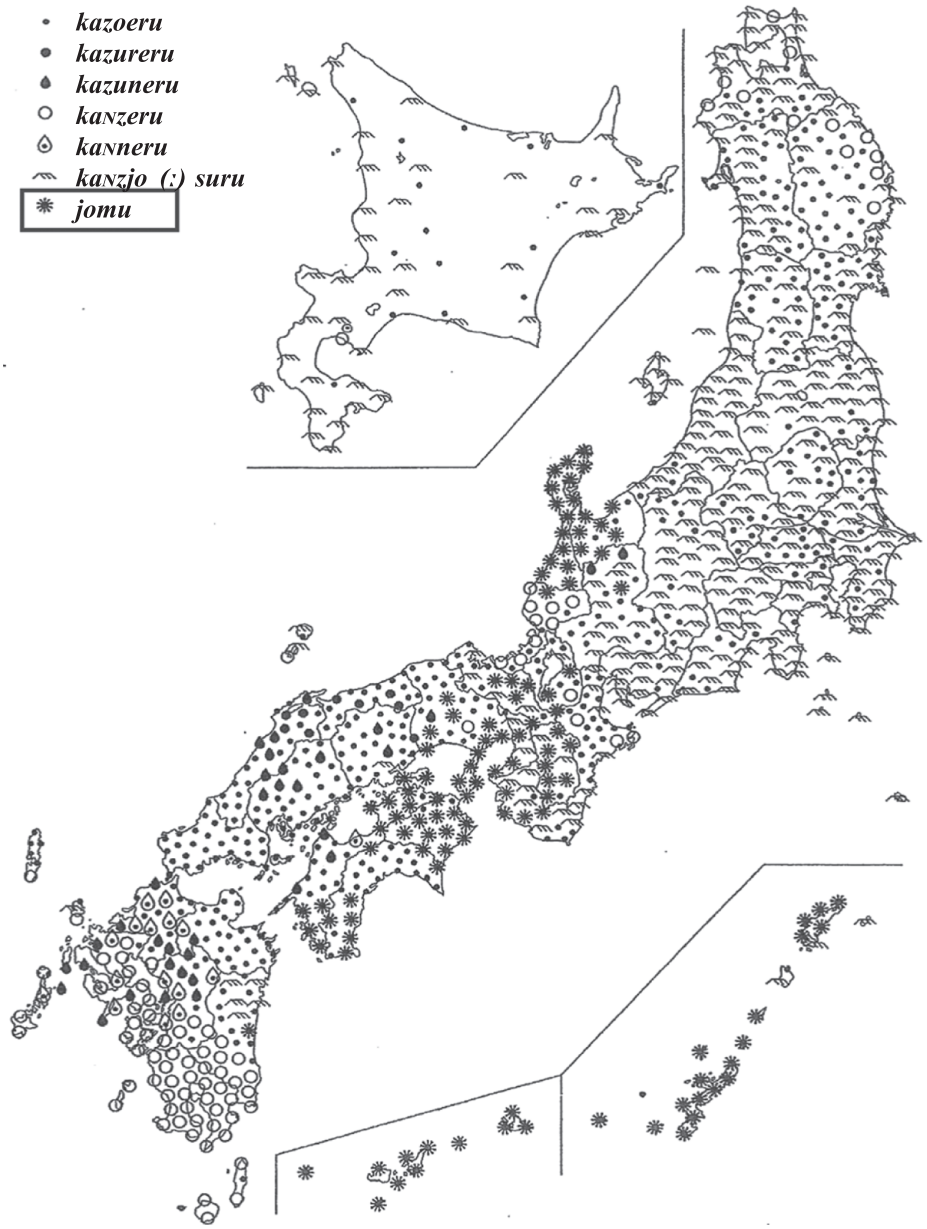



**Figure 1.16:** Distribution of forms meaning 'to count' (From Satō (ed.) 2002: 129, *Okuni-kotoba o shiru: Hōgen no chizuchō*, Shōgakukan).

nai-rin dialects are characterized by the lack of fusion of vowel sequences (Figure 1.15) and by the lengthened pronunciation of monomoraic words. ("α" region in Figure 1.17)

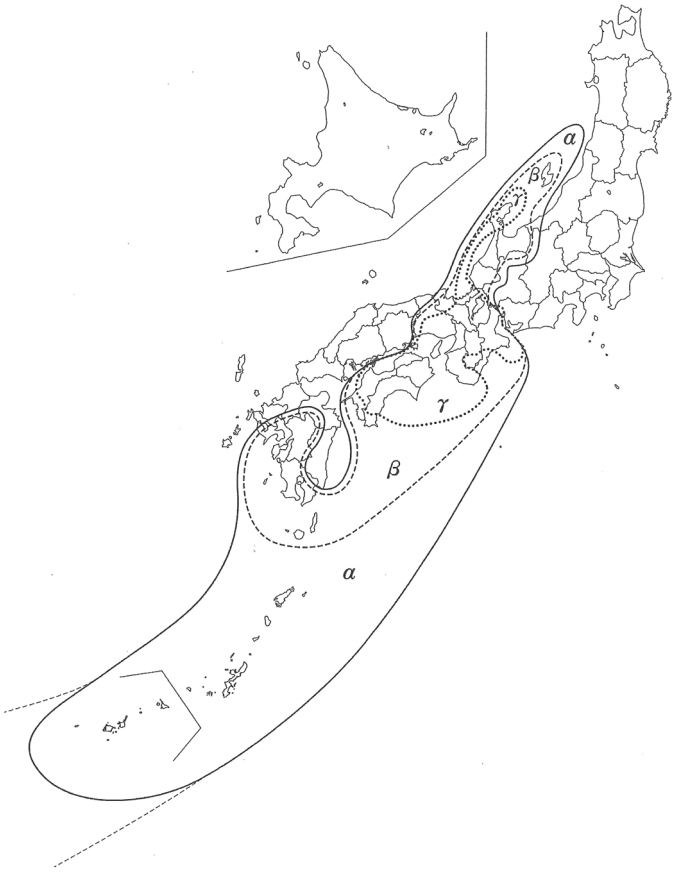



**Figure 1.17:** Distribution of the nai-rin dialect region (γ), and *yomu* 'to count' (α) and the lengthened pronunciation of monomoraic words (α) (From Abe 2023: 76, *Gakushūin Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Nenpō* 69).

Unanswered questions regarding the nai-rin dialects include (1) why the Kinai region was able to form and maintain a commonality of accent, phonology, and syllable structure (vowel sequences) with Shikoku across the sea rather than with the neighboring, land-linked, Chūgoku region, and (2) how can we interpret the relationship between the three bundles of isoglosses mentioned above and the historical context in which they were formed (Abe 2013a). The following phenomenon may provide a clue to this issue.

The phenomenon of using *jomu* in the sense of 'count' is distributed across approximately the same range as the nai-rin dialect area (Figure 1.16). *Jomu* meaning 'count' is an old feature found in the Nara period (the age of this form is also corroborated by the fact that it is found in Kyūshū and Okinawa today). In the Nara period (710–794), *jomu* was used for reading numbers (*ichi, nii, san*), calculating numbers, reading characters, chanting *waka* poems, and describing the boundaries of sounds and phrases, as well as the units for determining such boundaries. Thus, it represented advanced cultural char-

acteristics such as calculation, composition, song, and *waka* literature. This meaning of *jomu* is presumed to have been formed somewhere before the Nara period, after a certain cultural stage had been reached, and to have spread throughout this area. In addition, *jomu* meaning 'count' extends both north and south across the north-south dialect isogloss band. It can be interpreted as a dialect area formed across the north-south isogloss band, probably later than the north-south isogloss band itself.

## 7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the study of Japanese dialects, focusing on the history of Tōjō 's "dialect division theory". Three important dialect isogloss bands in Japanese dialects and the factors that led to their formation were described and compared. One of these, the "north-south dialect isogloss band", is contiguous with the continental Asian dialect isogloss band.

In traditional dialect division proposals, little importance has been attached to Isogloss Bands II and III. This is because conventional dialect division proposals mainly focus on synchronic interpretation and do not emphasize a diachronic perspective. In light of the above problems, the following issues should be addressed in future geolinguistic studies of Japanese dialects.

1. Historical interpretation of the three isogloss bands presented in this chapter.
2. Interpretation of the "North-South dialect isogloss band" and the phonological phenomena found in common in the isoglossic zones of Asian languages (Chinese and Korean) (see Abe 2013a).
3. Research on the factors that led to the formation of the nai-rin dialect area.
4. Synthesizing all of the above, a reexamination of Tōjō 's "dialect division theory" as a diachronic study.

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