Sonderdruck aus

Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Congress of Linguists

Berlin/GDR, August 10-August 15, 1987

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Dialect Image and the Diffusion of New Dialect Forms Fumio Inoue

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1. Age and Area Survey of Dialects

A kind of linguistic innovation will be discussed in this paper, taking examples from a field-survey in Japan. Seven native-born informants from each age-group were selected in 71 localities along a railway line stretching for about 600 kms. The results are shown in the form of "glottograms". The vertical axis shows geographical location, and the horizontal axis shows ages of informants. The data were all put into a large computer and the method of the so-called automatic cartography was executed.

New dialect forms were defined as linguistic phenomena which satisfy the following three qualifications (Inoue 1983a, 1983b). 1) More users are found among younger people than among older people, 2) users themselves know that the forms are informal or non-standard; 3) forms are different from those of the standard (or common) language. They are modern materialization of linguistic changes in progress.

2. Examples of New Dialect Forms

In judging whether the linguistic forms in question are the new dialect forms, it is necessary to ascertain usage by age and by style. The glottogram is a convenient method to grasp the age difference in large (linear) areas. Differences in style can be found F. Inoue 1509

conveniently by asking informants to answer in two supposed situations: in our case, informal conversation with friends or family members, and a supposed interview situation with a television announcer.

Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of an auxiliary verb of conjecture after the adjective II — (good). Figure 1 shows at least two changes. One is a change from the dialectal -zura to the newer -daraa which must have been born as a result of contamination between -zura and the standard -daroo. Another is the diffusion of -zyan among younger people from central part of the area (Sizuoka Prefecture) to eastern Japan. In contrast, Figure 2 (for TV interview) shows only a few instances of these new forms. Standard Japanese -daroo is used instead and other forms including the polite expression -desyoo are used in this formal situation. -daraa and -zyan represent typical cases of the new dialect forms.

3. Psychological Background of New Dialect Forms

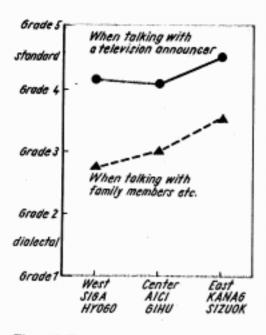
Many reports show that new dialect forms are observed in every part of Japan including Tokyo. Previous studies showed that users of new dialect forms are psychologically different from those of standard Japanese (Inoue 1986a, 1986b).

Here we add two other conditions which influence the use of new dialect forms. One is appropriateness for informal situations. FIGURE 3 shows average numerical values for subjective usage of dialect and standard for informants of three areas. Grade 5 means full use of standard Japanese, grade 3 half and half use of dialect and standard, and grade 1 full use of dialect. Most of the informants think that their daily speech in informal situation (when talking with friends or family members) is not standard. In contrast, almost all informants answered that they would (try to) use standard Japanese in speaking with a television announcer. This shows a kind of code-switching, bidialectalism or styleshift between dialect and standard. Dialect functions as a speech-style showing close psychological distance. Dialect is thus used vigorously in these appropriate, informal situations.

A second background factor of new dialect forms is a kind of provincialism or localism. A kind of linguistic localism can be observed as "dialect image". According to a previous study, dialects of western Japan are characterized as emotionally superior, while dialects near Tokyo are characterized as intellectually superior. Thus, for our study of glottogram, two representative adjectival expressions were selected: "close to standard Japanese" as intellectual and "elegant" as emotional factors.

Figure 4 shows intellectual ranking (closeness to the standard language) of four major cities of the area investigated. (A figure for emotional ranking is not shown here. Almost all informants assessed the speech of Kyoto, the old capital of Japan, as emotionally the highest (most elegant). The speech of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya follow in this order. Informants are unanimous as to the utmost position of speech of Tokyo. But judgements about three other cities are different according to areas of residence. Those informants in the east and the center (near Tokyo and near Nagoya) think that Nagoya is the second, and those in the west (near Kyoto and Osaka) think that Kyoto is the second. This disagreement reflects their love for home regions. It is shown that each dialect has its own sentimental value for the speakers.

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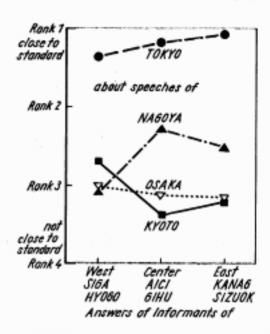


Figure 4 Rank of Closeness to Standard Japanese of 4 Major Dialects

4. Conclusion

The study above showed, that new dialect forms are modern examples of linguistic changes in progress, and that the motive of diffusion can be partly explained by the appropriateness of dialects for informal situations, and partly by the localism of speakers.

Acknowledgements

The field data was gathered with the assistance of students of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. The computational program used is a package program named GLAPS (Generalized Linguistic Atlas Printing System) developed by Prof. Ogino. Scientific funding from the Ministry of Education of Japan was helpful for this study.

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