

Linguistic features in the "Buried *Issei* Japanese Voice" in the Americas

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This paper reports the first generation Japanese migrants' (or *issei* in Japanese) ways of speaking Japanese in the Americas through utilizing the 'buried voices' stored at University Libraries and Local Museums. A number of oral history interviews were conducted in such Japanese communities in the Americas as Hawaii, mainland US, Canada, Brazil, and so forth since late 1950s. The target speakers were the first generation of Japanese migrants whose age was about 80 years old. Since oral history interviews were recorded in Japanese in the reel-to-reel tapes, we can still have an access to the actual sounds although most of them are stored either libraries or museums for more than a half century. Problem today is that few local staff cannot understand Japanese language so that they do not know how to handle with them. Since 2010, I had a chance to investigate these materials in Hawaii, LA, Seattle, Vancouver, and Sao Paulo, and in fact managed to digitize 190 hours of reel-to-reel tapes, and cassette tapes.

This paper first renders (1) an overview of Japanese migration history, (2) a brief description of oral history studies in the Japanese communities in the Americas. This paper will claim the sociolinguistic significance to study the sound materials. After looking at previous studies in Japanese communities in those areas such as Higa (1974), Inoue (1971), Nagara and Tsuzaki (1972), Reincke (1969) and others, this paper will raise some linguistic features observed in the sound recording, and I will point out some dialectal features of the local Japanese (such as Hiroshima dialect) and some language contact phenomena such as Japanese and English code-switching, and language transfer from a host language (English, Portuguese) upon the local Japanese. Based on these analyses, this paper will discuss the nature of *issei* Japanese in these countries, and point out some further research topics.