

A century of linguistic change in progress - The diffusion of new dialect forms in Tsuruoka

FUMIO INOUE
NINJAL

This is the first report on the new dialect forms in the Tsuruoka repetitive surveys. The spread of linguistic change from below was observed in progress both in real time and apparent time. Geographical backgrounds were made clear.

[METHODS] Four large scale surveys of language standardization were conducted (in 1950, 1971, 1991 and 2011) in Tsuruoka City by the National Institute. Additionally, repetitive surveys (in 1950, 1976, 1991 and 2006) on the outskirts of Tsuruoka City were conducted. Related surveys of linguistic geography were also executed in the surrounding districts. The main survey items of the Tsuruoka survey were concerned with standardization. However, new dialect forms in grammar and lexical items were also included in the survey. The new dialect forms are examples of endogenic changes of dialects and anti-standardization showing the vitality of dialects in the future.

[RESULTS] The main results showed that the linguistic change forms an S-shaped curve, and that at least three generations are necessary for a linguistic change to complete. In addition, the speed of geographical diffusion was less than 1 km per year when social differences existed between localities. Analysis of real and apparent time of age differences showed that there are two types of new dialect forms: the "local new dialect" which shows mild age differences and slow diffusion and the "nationwide new dialect" which shows steep age differences with fast diffusion.

[DISCUSSION] The rate of change and speed of diffusion of the new dialect was ascertained and historical and geographical backgrounds were analyzed. As for the local new dialect forms, influence from the modern administrative center was influential. As for the nationwide new dialect forms, influence from colloquial Tokyo speech was crucial. Thus, a combination of sociolinguistics and linguistic geography was effective in elucidating the process of linguistic changes in progress.