

Tonal variation in Kagoshima Japanese and factors of language change

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The aim of this paper is to get a detailed picture of tonal variation of Kagoshima Japanese (KJ), which is mentioned in some previous studies such as Kubozono (2006) and Takemura (2010), by focusing on the speech of the younger generation. KJ allows only two types of tone patterns for lexical items. Tone A is the 'accented' tone which is pronounced with a pitchfall on the penultimate syllable of a word. And Tone B is the 'unaccented' (i.e., with no pitchfall) tone. This tonal system has brought about sharp discrepancies of tone contour (i.e., the placement of H/L tone) between KJ and other varieties, such as Standard Japanese (SJ) or Tokyo Japanese (TJ).

(1) Tonal patterns of TJ/SJ and KJ

	accented (with pitchfall)	unaccented (no pitchfall)
Standard or Tokyo Japanese	<i>momiji</i> (HLL) 'autumn leaves'	<i>kaede</i> (LHH) 'maple'
	Tone A (with pitchfall)	Tone B (no pitchfall)
Kagoshima Japanese (Traditional)	<i>kaede</i> (LHL)	<i>momiji</i> (LLH)
Kagoshima Japanese (Innovative)	<i>momiji</i> (LHL)	<i>kaede</i> (LLH)

Kubozono (2006) claims, as shown in (1), that the younger generation in Kagoshima is using similar (but not totally identical) tone contours to that of SJ or TJ to resolve this discrepancy. However, other studies suggest that they still keep using the traditional lexical tones quite well. This disagreement may be caused by the difference of research methodology; the results in Kubozono and Takemura, which mainly examined the tones of compound words, are based on the data collected by the tasks of reading words aloud, but as many variationist research results showed in the past, a multi-dimensional perspective is required to see how a language change is being embedded in the speech community. In this paper, by observing tonal variations of simple words

in some stylistic contexts such as reading aloud words and sentences, scripted conversation, and, possibly, spontaneous discourse, we will discuss whether Kubozono and Takemura's results can be supported and how far this tonal change is diffusing. In addition, we will investigate what language internal and external factors are relevant to this variation.