

Timespan comparison of dialectal distributions

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How relate time and space on dialects especially in distributions? Traditional Japanese dialectology has thought that dialectal distributions had been caused by the diffusions of language changes from central area. It is known as the dialect radiation theory since Yanagita 1930. If it is true, when we survey an area with a period e.g. 30 or 50 years, we can capture the radial changes of dialectal distributions. Since Japanese dialectology has published over 400 atlases and 30000 maps of dialectal distributions for 50 years, we have at least half a century's superior geolinguistic data both of all over Japan and narrow regions. We have researched the same area with the same ways of past geolinguistic surveys to compare the dialectal distributions with the 30 to 50 years timespan. We have offered two main results in this research. The first result is that changes of dialectal distributions are neither continual nor gradual. The diffusions have completed in one breath, and the new forms have covered each area very quickly. The second result is that dialectal distributions do not change so easily. We expected that more changes of dialectal distributions would be captured easily through this research, since the traditional Japanese geolinguistics had interpreted the dialectal distributions by the diffusions of continual language changes from the centrum. But many of the distributions have kept the past conditions. These results suggest the way and the reason of language changes and dialects formations. Dialect is a language to communicate each other; once a language change occurred, the change should spread in the community to hold the communication. It is better for language not to change, since the linguistic variations by language change block the smooth communications.