

## Hokkaido Ainu Dialects: Variation from the Perspective of the Geographical Distribution of Vocabulary

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The aim of this study was to generate geographical maps and to describe the variations in Hokkaido Ainu dialects. The Ainu language has three dialect categories: Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and Northern Kurils. It is well known that “for Hokkaido, there are some differences in vocabulary, phonology, word formation, and the like between northeastern and southwestern dialects” (Tamura 2000: 3). Regarding the Ainu dialects, the most important work on them was conducted by Hattori, Chiri, and their collaborators from 1955–1956. Currently, few native speakers of Ainu exist, and collecting sufficient words and sentences through fieldwork is difficult. My studies adopted geolinguistics for the Ainu language, referring to the audio and written materials that Hattori, Chiri, and other researchers have collected.

Nakagawa (1996) first suggested the geographical distribution and several patterns of Ainu, and in this article, I consider the following three types within Hokkaido Ainu dialects: Eastern-Western type, ABA type, and Saru-Chitose (and Sakhalin) type. First, in the case of the Eastern-Western type, a pseudo-phonetic correspondence is present: the Eastern /ca-/ versus the Western /pa-/, for example, *car* versus *par* for ‘mouth,’ *cas* versus *pas* for ‘run,’ and *can* versus *pan* for ‘thin.’ This is one of the reasons why the Hokkaido dialects are classified into Northeastern and Southwestern dialectal categories. Moreover, when vocabulary words in Eastern dialects are compared with those in Western dialects, the onset /h-/ is often deleted and regressive assimilation occurs in Eastern dialects. Second, the distribution of some interrogatives, for example, ‘who,’ ‘what’ and ‘how,’ demonstrates the Saru-Chitose (and Sakhalin) type. This distribution overlaps with that of the formation of words involving first- and second-person affixes. For example, in ‘I give you,’ the Saru and Chitose dialects use only a second-person plural prefix, *eci=kore* (2PL.O=give), although the other Hokkaido dialects attach a second-person singular prefix and a first-person singular/plural suffix to a transitive verb, thus forming a circumfix: *e=kore=an* (2SG.O=give=1SG.A) or *e=kore=as* (2SG.O=give=1PL.A). Third, the ABA type reveals an ABA distribution on a geographical map, where form B

is sandwiched with form A. For example, the interrogatives for ‘how many’ and ‘when’ and the basic word for ‘tongue’ are classified into this type. For ‘tongue,’ two forms exist, *aw* and *parunpe*, and the form B *aw* is distributed in Sakhalin; Kuril; the Northern Hokkaido dialects, Nayoro and Sōya; and the Western Hokkaido dialect, Yakumo. The words of the ABA type usually offer some clues as to how to describe the history of the words in the other type.