Dialect Contact and Pronoun Uses of Japanese Plantation Immigrants in Hawai'i

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1. Second dialect acquisition

Second dialect acquisition (SDA) occurs in dialect contact situations. In this paper, we discuss the process of SDA among Japanese plantation immigrants in Hawai'i[1] based on existing oral history records. Our data concern the SDA of a group of adult immigrants from Fukushima and Niigata prefectures after they settled in Hawai'i. In his groundbreaking work on SDA, Chambers claims that "lexical replacements are acquired faster than pronunciation and phonological variants" (see Chambers 1992: 677), regardless of the speakers' age. In this paper, we will discuss SDA of lexical items, specifically, personal pronouns, which are a prototypical example of the grammatical categories that are expressed through morphology in Indo-European languages but are lexical in Japanese. Lexical items are salient linguistic features that are easily 'noticed' by speakers.

Japanese SDA studies are still relatively limited, but the available historical reports do discuss the age factor. For example, there are reports based on the data collected by the National Institute of Japanese Language (NINJAL) on children evacuated to their parents' hometowns in the Tôhoku dialect (TD) region, largely in Fukushima.[2] The evacuation took place during the onset of WWII, and the data were collected in subsequent years. Sibata (1958: 170) reports that those children who moved to the TD region before the age of six or seven acquired TD accent patterns almost perfectly over the course of five or six years. In contrast, children who moved to the same region at 14 years of age or older showed no significant adoption of TD accent patterns. Kitaura (1952) writes on the NINJAL data that the children's phonological acquisition was also influenced by their parents' places of origins based on the pronunciation of about 500 children, from elementary to junior high school ages (between six and 15), who were surveyed for the NINJAL project. All the children were born and raised in Tôkyô or Yokohama and their native dialect was Standard Japanese when they evacuated to the TD region of Shirakawa in Fukushima.

Children acquired TD phonology the most perfectly if both parents were from the Shirakawa area, followed by those whose mothers were from the area, and then by those whose fathers were from Shirakawa. In summary, reports on SDA (e.g., Chambers 1992; Kerswill 1994; Siegel 2003, 2010; Trudgill 1986) demonstrate a general principle that older speakers show more limits on their ability to acquire a new dialect than younger speakers (particularly in the acquisition of phonological features).

In Trudgill's (2004) discussion of linguistic accommodation, he argues that "which features speakers accommodate to in the speech of others can be accounted for by *salience*," and thus, "[i]n general, it is salient features…which are accommodated to" by speakers in an SDA situation (Trudgill 2004: 93, italics original). While salient features are most easily accommodated to, they can also easily become stigmatized forms due to their saliency. On this, Trudgill (2004: 153–154) comments, "one of the features that may produce salience is the fact that 'greater awareness attaches to forms which are overtly stigmatized'."

2. Japanese in Hawai'i

Most first generation Japanese immigrants who left their hometowns as plantation laborers were uneducated farmers and fishermen from rural areas who were monolingual in their regional dialect. Although some difficulties in communication among the different Japanese dialects existed, they were, for the most part, mutually intelligible. The Japanese immigrants actively worked to maintain their communities through their cultural practices, including language use, until the beginning of WWII (see Clarke 1994: 18; Hawaii Hochisha 2001: 53; Hiroshima City 2002: 1). Because of these tight-knit communities, immigrants from different dialect speaking regions interacted closely with each other.

Mufwene's (2001) 'Founder Principle' states that the first settlers in a new community create the basis for the language that is used by subsequent settlers. According to the Founder Principle, the order of arrival of early settlers is an important factor in the formation of a contact language. In the case of the Japanese immigrants in Hawai'i, Chûgoku immigrants not only were the first settlers, but they outnumbered other immigrant groups. The Tôhoku immigrants were both a minority group and latecomers. Given this sociolinguistic background, after their immigration the TD speakers were exposed to Chûgoku dialect (CD) more than to Standard Japanese (SJ)

through unavoidable social interactions. Furthermore, a number of the Tôhoku immigrants represented in the data mentioned dialect discrimination by the non-Tôhoku immigrants (mainly composed of Chûgoku immigrants). Several detailed reports on dialect discrimination against Tôhoku immigrants are also noted by Kimura (1988). Siegel (2003: 197) makes the important observation that "[w]hile SDA most often refers to acquisition of the standard dialect, there are also instances when a non-standardized regional or social dialect is the target." This comment is particularly pertinent to this study, as our discussion centers on the influence of a non-standard regional Japanese dialect, namely, CD, on the SDA of the Tôhoku immigrants. Although SJ eventually influenced general Japanese language use of all immigrant groups in Hawai'i through media, education or business, CD was the first dominant Japanese language in Hawai'i.

3. Data and methods

For this study, we investigated data that were originally collected under the direction of Professor Edward Smith at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Thus, we refer to this corpus as the Smith Project Data (SPD). The SPD were recorded by students attending advanced Japanese language courses conducted by Professor Smith between 1973 and 1982. The recordings are mostly interviews between *issei* 'first generation' speakers and the students. Most of the students were ethnic Japanese who recorded their own grandparents or their grandparents' siblings or friends in the Japanese language. This means that the SPD data were collected by individuals who had good rapport with the *issei* speakers. The transcription and codification were conducted as part of a larger study of Japanese dialect contact in Hawai'i (see Hiramoto 2006). The data used for this paper, consisting of audio recordings collected between 1973 and 1982 from 11 TD and nine CD speakers, represent only a subset of the SPD's total speakers.[3] The length of the recordings for each speaker varies between 15 and 40 minutes.

In the data, one of the most noticeable SDA phenomena is a replacement of the TD personal pronouns among the Tôhoku immigrants. For example, the TD first person pronoun (1PP) is *ore/ora*, but in the SPD, we hear almost entirely the CD and SJ 1PPs, *washi* and *watashi*. A number of the speakers frequently pronounced the non-TD forms with the TD phonology, e.g., *wasu* (for the CD pronoun *washi*) and *wadasu/wadashi/watasu* (for the SJ pronoun *watashi*). Such phonological transfer suggests that the Tôhoku immigrants' SDA extended to the lexical

items (personal pronouns), but not to the non-TD phonology (see Hiramoto 2010 and In press for detailed SDA explanations on phonological vs. morphological/lexical features in SPD). Thus, these data support Chambers's (1992: 677) claim that lexical items are replaced faster than pronunciation and phonological variants.

4. Discussion

Both 1PPs and second person pronouns (2PPs) in our dataset were quantified for the analysis. The following forms were found of the 1PP singular: *watashi* (SJ default form), *washi* (CD default form), *atashi* (SJ feminine casual form), *ore/ora* (TD default form), *uchi* (CD feminine casual form), and *mî* (English loanword). The plural forms were formed with the *–ra* suffix as *watashira* (SJ), *washira* (CD), *atashira* (SJ feminine casual), *uchira* (CD feminine casual), and *mîra* (English). The TD forms *ore* and *ora* were not found in plural forms in the data. For the 2PPs, the following forms were included, for singular forms: *anata* (SJ default), *anta* (SJ casual), *omae* (SJ vulgar), and *yû* (English); for plural forms: *anatara* (SJ default), *antara* (SJ casual), *omaera* (SJ vulgar), and *yûra* (English). Japanese is known to drop pronouns, especially in colloquial speech, which accounts for the somewhat limited number of total tokens, especially in the 2PPs. Japanese also shows a strong sensitivity to politeness, and speakers are expected to account for a variety of social distinctions linguistically. Social distinctions among interlocutors may reflect relative age, kinship, social ranking, intimacy, and other social features, and one of the most important strategies for being polite is to avoid addressing people directly, especially with 2PPs (see Helmbrecht 2011). Because of this tendency for non-use of the 2PPs, tokens in this category were scarce in the data, and included no dialectal forms.

Table 1 shows the quantitative results of the uses of the 1PPs in SPD. Both singular and plural forms are combined in the tables and are categorized as '~ group' according to each form, e.g., '*watashi* group' represents the total usage of both *watashi* and *watashira*. Numbers in the parenthesis denote raw token counts.[4] The 1PP data in Table 1 show that both TD and CD speakers used SJ *watashi* the most, followed by the CD form *washi*.[5] The results also demonstrate that Tôhoku immigrants replaced their original dialectal forms *ore* and *ora* at a very high rate.

	watashi group (SJ)	*washi* group (CD)	*ora*/*ore* (TD)	*uchi* group (CD/fem.)	*mî* group (English)	others	Total
Tôhoku (n=11)	51.0% (130)	37.6% (96)	3.9% (10)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (18)	0.4% (1)	100% (255)
Chûgoku (n=8)	61.0% (130)	30.5% (65)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (7)	3.8% (8)	1.4% (3)	100% (213)

Table 1: 1PPs used by Tôhoku and Chûgoku immigrants in SPD

For TD speakers in Hawai'i, strong use of the CD form *washi* indicates post-migration SDA specific to their post-immigration linguistic ecology. At the same time, the fact that CD speakers did not use the Tôhoku forms *ore* and *ora*, while Tôhoku speakers themselves used these forms at a very low rate, suggests the strong influence of CD on Tôhoku immigrants.

The total numbers of the 2PP tokens were much smaller than of the 1PPs. Because of the low token counts, it is difficult to make a generalization from this set of data. Thus, we move onto another feature that exhibits the SDA of CD by TD speakers, which is a use of the plural *–ra* suffix. In CD, the plural *–ra* suffix may be used for a singular meaning. In other words, singular and plural distinctions remain grammatically ambiguous in CD in terms of pronoun usages with this suffix.[6] Example (1) shows this use of a pronoun with *–ra.*

> (1) Kayo (age 77, Hiroshima, female, recorded in 1975)
>
> *... ano **watashira** ano kochira e kuru tokiniwa, za, ano futon kaimashita ano ue e.*
>
> '… when **I** came here, zz, ah, (I) bought a futon, on top of that.'

Here the speaker is describing her own experience of traveling from Japan to Hawai'i, yet she is using a plural form, *watashira*, to refer to herself, rather than the singular *watashi*. This kind of use is actually quite common in colloquial CD speech.

In the SPD, the use of the *–ra* suffix with a singular meaning was also seen in TD speakers, although this usage is absent in the original TD—meaning that the *–ra* suffix is only used to mark a plural in TD. In Example 2, a female speaker remembers a difficult working environment in a sugarcane plantation field. She uses the CD plural form *washira*, but this pronoun refers only to herself.

(2) Ima (age 72, Niigata, female, recorded in 1975)

... ***washira*** *wa antâ aisu, aa, sungodo itte aisu kuidai omottemo….*

'**I** longed for ice cubes, you see, ah, (I) wanted to eat ice cubes badly at work…'

Example 2 shows SDA in this CD-style use of the *–ra* suffix by a TD speaker. Table 2 summarizes the usage of the *–ra* suffix for singular meaning in the SPD.

| Tôhoku (n=11) | 1st person pron. | | 2nd person pron. | | Total | |
Chûgoku (n=8)	Tôhoku	Chûgoku	Tôhoku	Chûgoku	Tôhoku	Chûgoku
–ra suffix as singular form	57	57	6	4	63	61

Table 2: Pronouns with *–ra* suffix for singular meaning in SPD

The quantified tokens in Table 2 suggest that TD speakers used the *–ra* suffix to mark a singular form at equally high rates as CD speakers despite the fact that the *–ra* suffix is not traditionally used in TD. In summary, from the data observed thus far we can conclude that the direction of SDA was from CD to TD—it was the TD speakers who adopted the CD singular pronoun form *washi* and not vice versa. Additionally, TD speakers also acquired the CD-specific feature of using a plural *–ra* suffix to mark a singular form.

5. Conclusion

This study examined changes in TD speakers' use of personal pronouns after they had migrated to Hawai'i. All speakers included in the quantified data in this paper moved to Hawai'i as sugar plantation laborers (including the ones who migrated as picture brides). Under their initial labor contracts, the Japanese immigrants lived in camps at their work locations that were separate from the camps of workers of other ethnicities. This helped to establish close Japanese communities composed of people from different regions of Japan. From the beginning, CD speakers were the dominant immigrant group, and their dialect became influential among Japanese immigrants in Hawai'i. On the other hand, not only were TD speakers in the minority, but TD was stigmatized among Japanese immigrants. Our examination of a dataset from the SPD indicates that adult Tôhoku plantation workers changed their original dialectal forms under social pressure in the newly established Japanese community in Hawai'i.

Pronouns are particularly salient features of Japanese regional dialects. As a result of an intense dialect contact environment, the salient TD 1PPs *ore* and *ora* were replaced with CD form *washi*, SJ form *watashi*, or English loanword *mî*. In addition, TD speakers acquired another CD feature related to pronouns, namely, use of the plural *–ra* suffix to mark a singular meaning. Our findings support Chambers's (1992) principle of SDA that lexical replacements are acquired faster than pronunciation and phonological variants. That is, TD speakers in SPD replaced their original pronouns *ore* and *ora* at a very high rate with non-TD forms while still showing traces of TD phonology in the non-TD forms. The data also provide strong support for the Founder Principle that arrival order of speakers in a new community influences dialect change.

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[1] The word 'Hawai'i' is spelled Hawai'i by default in this paper. However, it is spelled 'Hawaii' when reflecting the original orthography used in the original sources.
[2] Other than the NINJAL studies mentioned here, there are works by Asahi (2010), Matsumoto & Britain (2003), etc.
[3] The following criteria were used for selecting the speakers in the SPD: all conversations and monologues were casual; speakers hailed from a common rural farming environment and had minimum education; none had moved back to Japan for an extended period of time after their immigration; all speakers had been married to other same-dialect speaking *issei*; and conversation topics were limited to the speakers' memories of immigration and plantation life, visits to Japan, and their family members.
[4] The tokens used in quotative speech are excluded from the tables.
[5] The SPD of the control group speakers in Japan also suggests that non-immigrant TD and CD speakers adopted the SJ form *watashi* at high rates due to a general trend of language standardization.
[6] At the same time, such differences are not confusing among interlocutors, because whether the –*ra* suffix is used to mark a singular or a plural pronoun becomes obvious in speech contexts.