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Relationship between area and human lives in the dialect formation

Humans cannot be free from the area in which they live. Humans live in an area, and make their community there. They communicate with each other using language. The language must be accessible in common to be used as a tool of communication. On the other hand, it does not need to be held in common between the people belonging to different communities, since they do not communicate with one another in everyday life. Suppose that there is an area divided in two villages and the people in the two villages used the same language but the villagers had not visited each other so frequently. As is known, language must change over an elapsed period of time, although the rate of change is not fixed. A language change may have occurred in one village while the language of the other village did not change. The co-occurrence of language change with stability of language results in a difference between the languages of the two villages in the area. This is how dialects are born.

As explained above, dialectal distributions should be related to actual human lives. There is a language map treating an honorific expression used to refer to one's father. It shows a random distribution at first glance. When the dialectal distributions are compared to distributions of family size based on a census data, there appears a clear relationship. Honorific expressions are used in areas where family sizes are small, and they do not appear so much in areas where family sizes are large. It is thought that the number of people included in each family relates to family system. Children leave from their birth family and make a new family after growth in small family systems. Since the father becomes a kind of additional family member in this type of society, father is designated with honorifics which are the same as those used toward a respected neighbour.

As the preceding example involving honorifics shows, society and language are mutually interrelated, and their relationships are reflected in geographical distributions. However, Japanese geolinguistics or language geography has traditionally had adopted a different viewpoint regarding the formation of dialectal distributions. This viewpoint is sometimes construed as unique to Japanese dialectology (SIBATA 1969, YANAGITA 1930), but in fact it bears resemblances to the wave model of J. Schmidt (LABOV 2007). Nevertheless it should be noted that the relationship between the order of historical change and geographic position assumed by Japanese dialect-

tology and the wave theory are the reverse of one another. Japanese dialectology assumes that new changes radiate gradually from social and cultural center to outer locations, so the features of language in peripheral regions are older. What is crucial is not the order of changes, but how the distributions formed.

There are two points, since the formation process shown at the beginning of this paper and the traditional views do not fit. The first is that areas of dialectal distributions were formed by the radiation from center to outer. The second is that areas of language changes expanded gradually with slow uniform motion.

As is known, two types of data are used to study language change. One of them is apparent time data, and the other is real time data. The study using apparent time data compares data of different generations, and the other researches a field at intervals of different chronological time. The former study focuses on the properties of data which involve a real change or life time change. The latter requires a long period to get data.

The same methods can be used to verify the process of dialect formation. One method is comparison of distributions of different generations. The other compares distributions at different times. Some maps or atlases treating different generations have already been published. They can be used for the former method. But there are few studies researched at different times, since the geographical research needs very large labors at just one point in time. Fortunately Japanese dialectology had made very many dialect maps between 1970s and 1980s. If we select well researched areas and research again the same areas, we can get data to compare through the real time.

Apparent time maps (for example SAITO 2000, KAMEDA 2010) show that some of them do not change at all, but others show that language changes spread to all at once, not gradually.

Real time studies show the same conclusions. Changes have not been captured in our research in the Shogawa-river basin comparing with SANADA 1976. But once a change happened, the new change spread very quickly in an area and it is difficult to recognize a center of diffusion: especially NAGASE 1976 shows a change just in five years.

These facts indicate that language changes diffuse at once in each area, not in the form of radiation, nor by gradual steps. When we analyse newly formed distribution areas in relation to human lives, using geographical data, we find that they overlap, with little variation. It means that language changes spread along the lines defined by human communities. But the areas of human communicative interaction are not constant. It is generally said that the boundaries of such areas form a 'cline', along which

the distribution of various linguistic units differs. In addition, since language, due to its nature as a tool of communication, does not change so readily, even if human daily life changes, language retains earlier forms. Thus language sometimes reflects the daily life of previous eras.

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