

Parental influence in dialect acquisition: the case of the Kagoshima dialect of Japanese

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This research presents the parental influence on dialect acquisition in the Kagoshima dialect of Japanese (KGJ). It has been reported that speakers with non-local parents do have prosodic properties of the Kansai dialect of Japanese (KJ), but do not fully master its phonological rules (Takemura 2010). In other words, their dialect sounds like the target dialect, but it is not identical to that of those speakers having locally born parents. Is this trend true for the other dialects of Japanese? In order to test this claim, we conducted the same survey in KGJ.

KGJ is a regional dialect and has a prosodic system that is quite different from that of Tokyo Japanese (TJ) or KJ. KGJ has four characteristics: (i) a syllabic system, (ii) a two-pattern tonal system, (iii) a compound tone rule, and (iv) a tone rule in minimal syntactic phrase (MSP). TJ has different features: (i) a moraic system, (ii) an accent pitch system instead of tones, and (iii) an accentual rule. KGJ has a two-pattern tonal system: Tone A and Tone B. The former has a High tone on the *penultimate* syllable, and the latter has a High tone on the *final* syllable. Words are fit into either one of these tones, irrespective of their length. The third and fourth feature of KGJ can be summarized as follows: the two-pattern tonal system is sustained even when a compound word (CW) or a MSP is formed. A MSP consists of a content word and one or more functional elements. Therefore, the first member of a CW or the first morpheme of a MSP determines the tone of the whole unit. Examples of traditional KGJ MSP tones and CW tones are given in (1). Examples of TJ accent are in parenthesis.

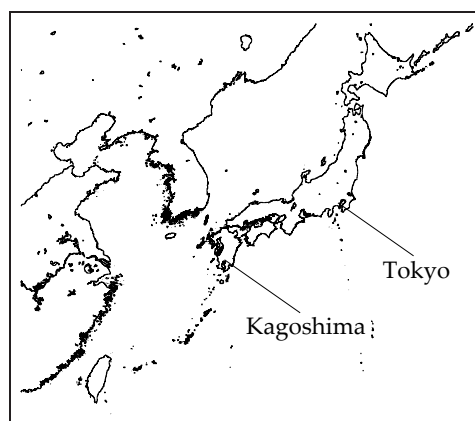


Figure 1: Japan

(1)	Tone A	ta.be. <u>mō</u> .no	(ta. <u>bē</u> .mo.no)	'food'
	MSP	ta.be.mo. <u>nō</u> -ga	(ta. <u>bē</u> .mo.no-ga)	'food-NOM'
	CW	ta.be.mo.no. <u>mōn</u> .dai	(ta. <u>bē</u> .mo.no.mon.dai)	'food problem'
	Tone B	no.mi.mo. <u>nō</u>	(no. <u>mī</u> .mo.no)	'beverage'
	MSP	no.mi.mo.no- <u>gā</u>	(no. <u>mī</u> .mo.no-ga)	'beverage-NOM'
	CW	no.mi.mo.no.mon. <u>dai</u>	(no. <u>mī</u> .mo.no.mon.dai)	'beverage problem'

According to our KGJ survey results, errors in the application of the tone rule are found among speakers with non-Kagoshima parents. Errors in (2) and (3) violate two constraints in KGJ.

(2)	Tone A:	ta.be. <u>mō</u> .no	Tone A MSP:	(a) ta.be.mo.no- <u>gā</u>	(b) ta.be. <u>mō</u> .no-ga
(3)	Tone B:	no.mi.mo. <u>nō</u>	Tone B MSP:	(a) no.mi.mo. <u>nō</u> -ga	

First, they violate the tone rule of KGJ. The High tone is supposed to move to either the penultimate or word-final position, depending on the first morpheme. However, we found that the High tone is placed on the other position, namely, MSP-final position (2a) or penultimate position (3a). Second, placing the High tone on antepenultimate syllable, as shown in (2b), is beyond the KGJ prosodic constraint. The eighteen informants with locally born parents show about 80% performance rate for the application of the tone rule to MSP, while eight informants with non-Kagoshima parents exhibit a 24.5% performance rate. As observed in KJ, it is clear from this survey that speakers with non-Kagoshima parents do not master the phonological rule, but speak 'pseudo-KGJ'. In this regard, the tonal errors observed in KGJ are deviational ones and are quite possibly indicating the influence of non-Kagoshima parents.

References

Takemura, Akiko (2010) Dialect acquisition in the view of parental origins: The case of Kansai dialect of Japanese. *Kobe Papers in Linguistics* 7, 78-90.