

## Contact dialectology in Japanese contexts

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Dialectology and ‘traditional’ sociolinguistics have rendered a number of sociolinguistic descriptions of the ongoing linguistic change in a given speech community. Their contributions surely enabled us to have a better understanding on the dynamism of the linguistic change, and to provide sociolinguists in the world with opportunities to conduct sociolinguistic surveys of any languages so as to discuss both universality and uniqueness in the linguistic change.

Since the end of the 1960s, we have witnessed a rapid, drastic change of the society. Nowadays, it has become difficult for sociolinguistic studies to be made in urban areas such as a large city, as the structure of the society become by far diverse. This means, at the same time, that sociolinguistic research methods need to be improved in accordance with a nature of the communities. This is highly due to the fact that sociolinguist and especially dialectologists tend to treat the speech community more as homogeneous, stable, non-mobile, and well-organised than as heterogeneous, mobile, and highly complicated. On the other hand, the reality of the contemporary society is characterised by an increase of social mobility and a decrease of the ‘native’ speakers.

This workshop aims to propose a new discipline in dialectology to struggle with more diverse areas where a number of dialects are in contact. Contact dialectology pays a close attention to the categorisation of the sociolinguistic settings, and its research method is designed based on the nature of the settings.

In order to explain what contact dialectology aims to do, I shall explain some of the research outcomes of my previous studies conducted in the Japanese-speaking, immigrants communities both inside and outside of Japan. At the same time, relevant studies on Japanese sociolinguistics will be raised to render the categorisation of the sociolinguistic settings. Based on the case studies, I will claim that this approach would make a breakthrough of the sociolinguistic study of the urban communities.