

Chinese and Sino-Japanese lexical items in the Hachijō language of Japan

Étienne Baudel – 34th Paris Meeting on East Asian Linguistics

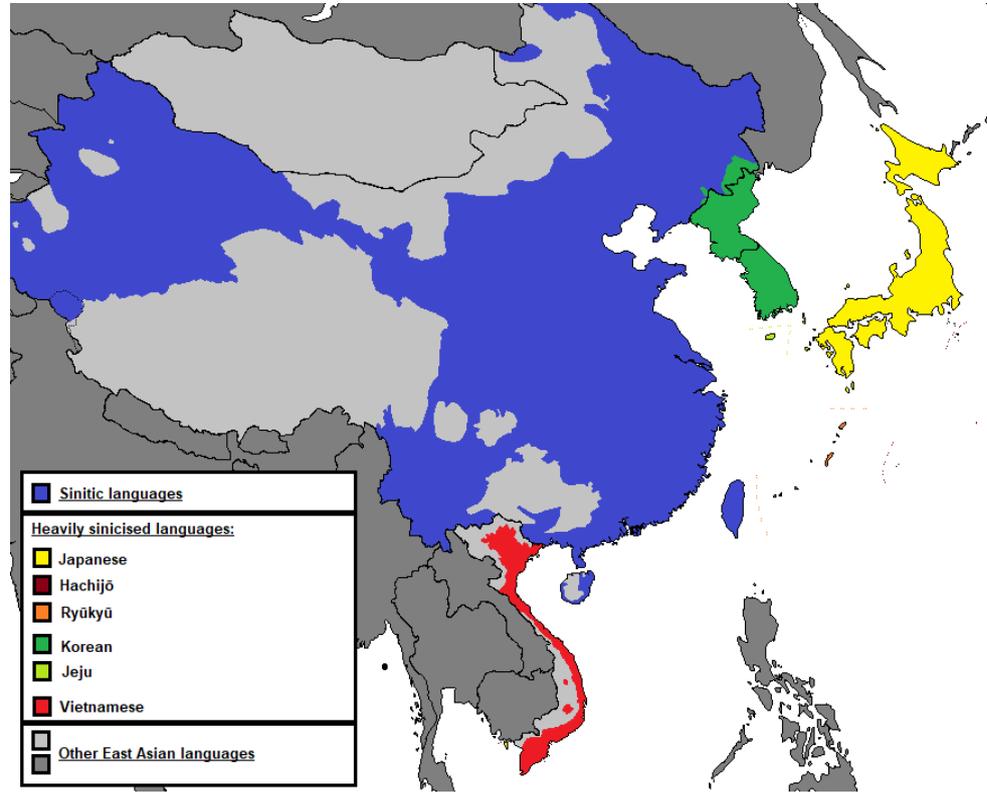
July 7th 2021

Introduction

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia

- Chinese civilisations have had a strong influence on neighbouring states for centuries.
- Various East Asian languages borrowed a lot of Chinese lexical items over time.
- These ‘Sinicised’ East Asian languages include almost all the languages of Japan, with the exception of Ainu.

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia



Map of the ‘Sinicised’ languages of East Asia

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia

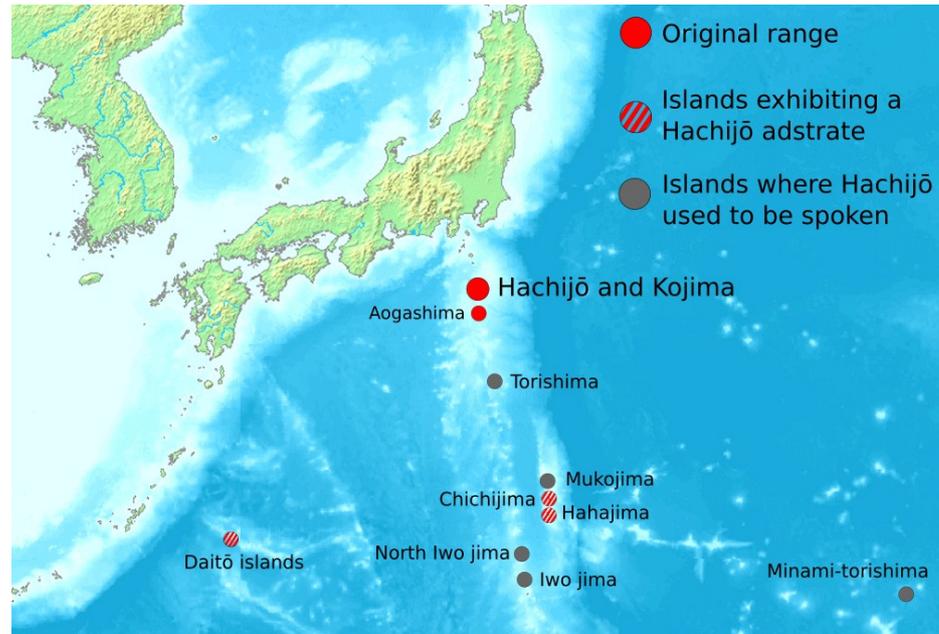
- Those Sinitic lexemes now form an important part of the lexicon of several East Asian languages.
- They underwent many evolutions.
- Many of them did not originate in China but were created abroad.

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia

- Thus, they are not considered to be mere loanwords, but are considered hybrids.
- Following Samuel MARTIN (1953: 4), they are now often called ‘Sino-Xenic’.
- In Japanese, they are called 漢語 *kango* ‘Hàn words’.

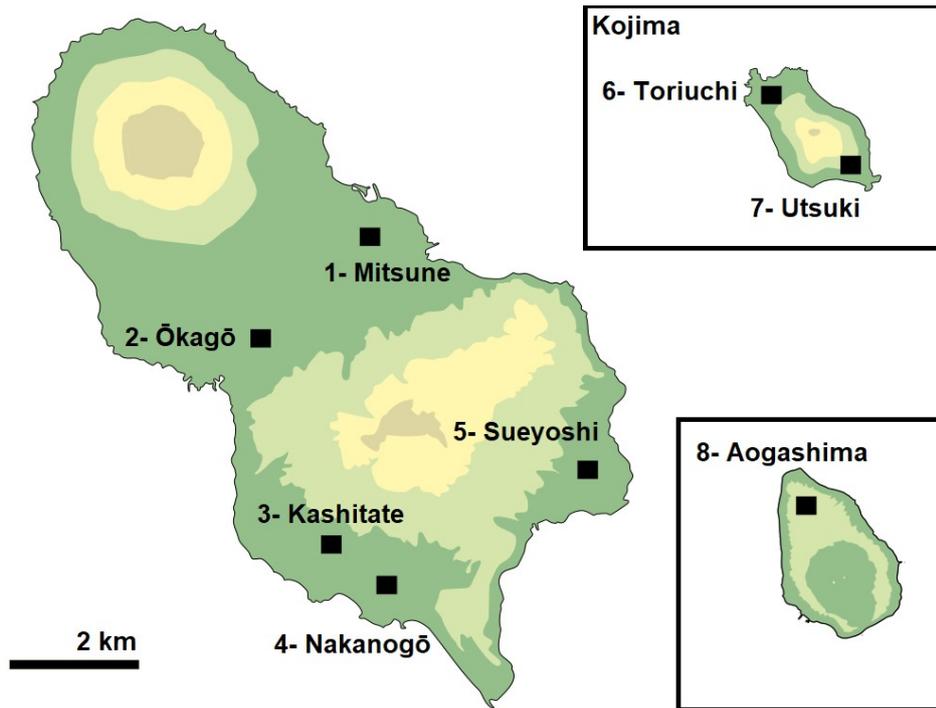
Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- The Hachijō language is a now-endangered minority language of Japan, spoken on volcanic islands in the south east of Tōkyō.



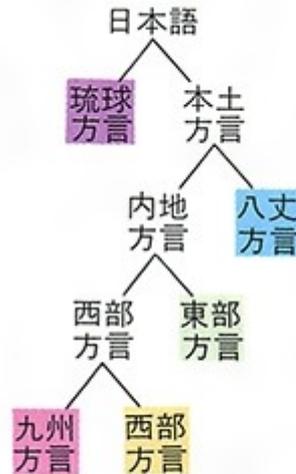
Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- There are eight recorded varieties of Hachijō:



Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- The classification of Hachijō is still a matter of debate.
- However, it is generally considered, since the 1930s, to be the descendant of Eastern Old Japanese (TACHIBANA and TŌJŌ, 1934:45).



Japonic language tree
proposed by *kotobank.com*

(in Japanese)

Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- Hachijō's lexicon has been intensively studied, especially due to its supposed archaisms.
- However, because of a focus on native words, Sino-Japanese lexemes of Hachijō have **never been studied**.

Introduction (3) – Aims of this presentation

- In Japanese, *kango* is an important lexical category which “continues to form a separate lexical stratum with unique morpheme-structural, prosodic, and segmental characteristics” (ITO and MESTER, 2015: 289).
- Thus, our presentation aims at questioning the category of *kango* in Hachijō compared to Japanese.

Introduction (3) – Aims of this presentation

- For this, we will focus on two aspects of the question:
 - their frequency and productivity in various semantic fields
 - the history of their borrowing and of their evolutions

(1) The Frequency and Productivity of Sino-Japanese lexemes in Hachijō

(1) – Frequency and productivity

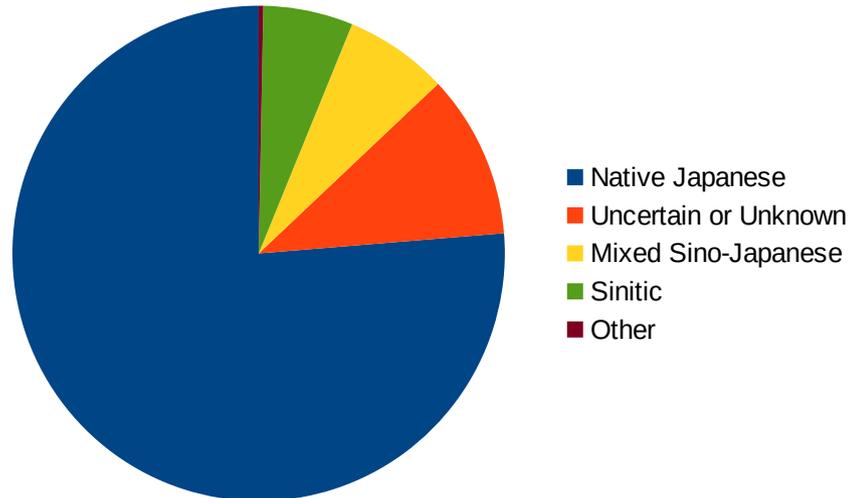
- In standard Japanese, *kango* make up around 60% of all lexemes (SHIBATANI, 1990:142)
- They make up around 18% of the lexemes in spoken speech (NINJAL, 2005).
- They are very frequent and highly productive, especially in some semantic fields, such as religion, law, sciences, etc. (SCHMIDT, 2009: 562).

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- In Hachijō, the frequency of *kango* seems to be lower:
 - Counting mixed-origin compounds, only around 13% of roughly 2000 lexemes are of Sino-Japanese origin in Hachijō's standard dictionary (ASANUMA, 1999)
 - In conversations, it seems that only between 7 and 10% of used lexemes are of Sino-Japanese origin
 - This number is even lower for folk tales and folk songs (4-5%)

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- It is possible that, due to several bias, our data slightly underestimates the frequency of Sino-Japanese words.
- But we can estimate that the composition of Hachijō lexicon is roughly as follows:



(1) – Frequency and productivity

- **Hachijō seems, in a way, 'less sinicised' than standard Japanese.**
- The frequency of Sino-Japanese words in Hachijō seems to be close to what LAWRENCE (2015: 168) estimates for Shuri Okinawan, another minority language of Japan belonging to the Ryūkyū branch.

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- However, *kango* are found in various semantic fields, such as:
 - **daily-life objects:** *hacchi* `bowl', *dōsoku* `candle', *yundō* `ashtray', etc.
 - **natural species:** *dēzu* `soybean', *renge* `pink wood-sorrel', etc.
 - **social concepts:** *bibbō* `poverty', *shōbē* `trade', etc.
 - **family sphere:** *kyōdē* `siblings', *kajoku* `family', etc.
 - **abstract concepts:** *ē* `love', *jiki* `strength', etc.
 - **religious concepts:** *nebbutsu* `prayer to Buddha', *yuhē* `mortuary tablet', etc.
 - **counting and dating:** *ippo* `one long object', *dēnen* `next year', etc.

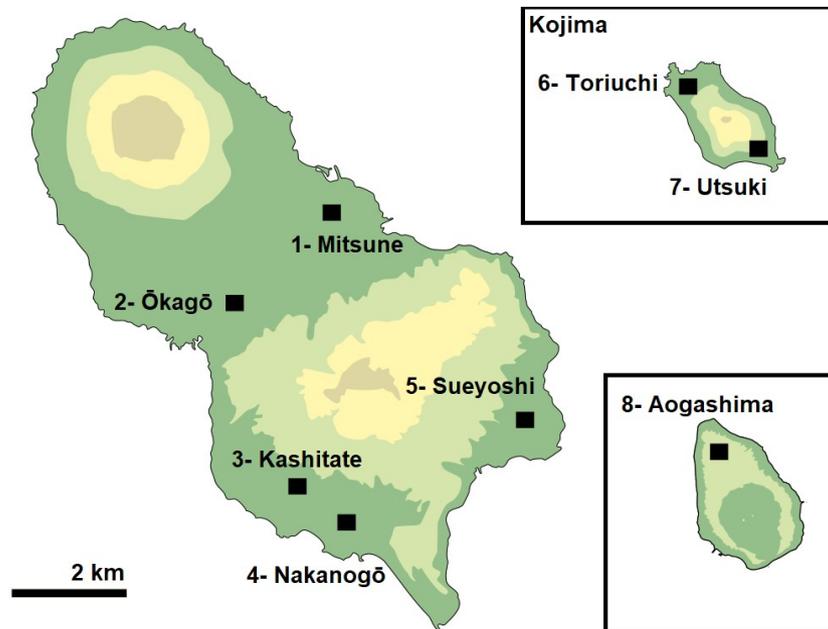
(1) – Frequency and productivity

- They are especially common in anthroponyms, for instance in numeral given names:

Character	Standard Japanese	Hachijō
太郎	Tarō	Tarō
次郎	Jirō	Jō
三郎	Saburō	Sabō
四郎	Shirō	Shō
五郎	Gorō	Gorō
六郎	Rokurō	Dokurō
七郎	Shichirō	Shicchō
八郎	Hachirō	Hacchō
九郎	Kyūrō	Kucchō
十郎	Jūrō	Jicchō

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- They are also frequent in toponyms, including the very name of the largest island, Hacchō-jima (standard Japanese Hachijō-jima).



(1) – Frequency and productivity

- Finally, a few Sino-Japanese words are productive, like the prefix *hon* (本) 'real':
 - *hon + ko* → *hon-ko* 本子 'real child' (i.e. 'biological child', in opposition to 'adopted child')
- Some were also grammaticalised in similar ways as SJ, like *chū* (中) 'middle' → 'while' or *hō* (方) 'side' → comparative particle

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- Some were also integrated through suffixation in the native lexicon of Hachijō, for instance:
 - *jōri* 料理 ‘food making’ (SJ *ryōri*) became a verb *jōr-u* ‘to cook’
 - *dēji* 大事 ‘important’ (SJ *daiji*) became an adjective *dēji-kya* ‘pretty’
 - *chōchō-me* ‘butterfly’ (SJ *chō* 蝶) received the almost ubiquitous animate suffix *-me*

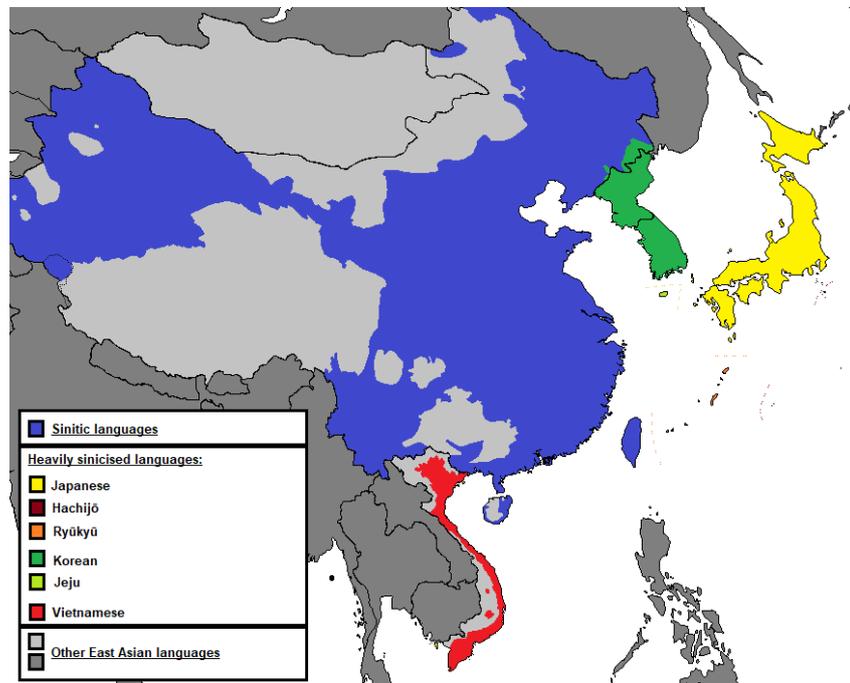
(1) – Frequency and productivity

Thus, though they are less frequent than in standard Japanese, Sino-Japanese items still form an important and iconic part of Hachijō's lexicon.

(2) The History of Sino-Japanese lexemes in Hachijō

(2) – History

- Being isolated from China, all Sino-Japanese words in Hachijō were obviously borrowed through mainland Japanese.



(2) – History

- In Japanese, intensive Chinese borrowings occurred several times throughout centuries, giving birth to several layers of Sino-Japanese words:
 - prehistoric loans (like *fumi* 'letter' 文), now considered native
 - Old Sino-Japanese, during the 5th and 6th centuries (like 仏教 *bukkyō* 'Buddhism')
 - Classical Sino-Japanese, from the 7th to the 9th century, by far the most numerous category (for instance, *annai* 案内 'information')
 - Middle and Modern Sino-Japanese, mostly from the 13th century onward (like 行灯 *andon* 'paper lantern')

(2) – History

- Even though many alterations occurred, these layers can still be observed through the various readings of some *kanji* :

Character	Go'on	Kan'on	Tōsō'on
行	ギョウ [gjo]	コウ [ko]	アン [ãN]
明	ミョウ [mjō]	メイ [me]	ミン [mjĩN]
団	ダン [dãN]	タン [tãN]	トン [tõN]

(2) – History

- Thus, even though various evolutions blur the lines between them, we can also observe several layers of Sino-Japanese in Hachijō:
 - nativised prehistoric loans: *jene* ‘coin’ (SJ *zeni* 錢)
 - old Sino-Japanese: *kyōdē* ‘siblings’ (SJ *kyōdai* 兄弟)
 - classical Sino-Japanese: *kabutsu* ‘orange’ (SJ 果物 *kabutsu* ‘fruit’)
 - newer Sino-Japanese: *chōchin* ‘bell’ 提灯 (identical to SJ)

(2) – History

- Regarding those lexemes, we can also observe that Hachijō often preserve archaic forms, that were lost with reanalyses in standard Japanese:
 - *sechi-bu* 節分 'last day of winter', SJ ***setsubun*** (mixed *go-on* / *kan'on* reading)
 - *shintē* 心底 'sincerity', SJ ***shin-soko*** (mixed Chinese / Japanese reading)
 - *binchō* 鰯長 'albacore', SJ ***bin-naga*** (*id.*)

(2) – History

- On a semantic level, when an evolution occurred in Sino-Japanese, Hachijō usually features it as well, for instance:
 - 料理 (Mandarin *liàolǐ*) means 'to arrange' in Chinese, but SJ *ryōri* and Hachijō *jōri* both mean 'cooking'
 - 邪魔 (Mandarin *xiémó*) means 'demon' in Chinese, but SJ *jama* and Hachijō *jaba* both mean 'bothering'
- **So far, I found no compelling example of a semantic archaism in Hachijō's Sino-Japanese lexemes.**

(2) – History

- On the other hand, semantic evolutions frequently occurred in Hachijō, for instance:
 - *baku* 獺 means 'elephantiasis' in Hachijō, but 'tapir' in SJ
 - *hyōtan* 瓢箪 means 'pot-bellied' in Hachijō, but 'gourd' in SJ
 - *yundō* 印籠 means 'ashtray' in Hachijō, but *inrō* means 'seal box' in SJ

(2) – History

- Finally, regarding when those words were borrowed *from mainland Japanese to Hachijō*, we can also distinguish several layers. As a matter of fact:
 - some Sino-Japanese words underwent typical Hachijoan phonetic alterations and constitute an **old layer of Sino-Japanese words**
 - other have a phonology that does not conform to Hachijō's phonetic history and are therefore likely **recent loans from mainland Japanese**

(2) – History

- For instance, the phoneme /r/ is highly unstable in intervocalic position in Hachijō, leading to several syncopes, visible for instance in numeral given names:

Character	Standard Japanese	Hachijō
太郎	Tarō	Tarō
次郎	Jirō	Jō
三郎	Saburō	Sabō
四郎	Shirō	Shō
五郎	Gorō	Gorō
六郎	Rokurō	Dokurō
七郎	Shichirō	Shicchō
八郎	Hachirō	Hacchō

(2) – History

- Older texts and remote varieties usually concord on this syncopated form.
- However, some syncopated forms also have a non-syncopated variant, such as:
 - *Shō ~ Shirō*
- **This, in my opinion shows a tendency of the contemporary language to adopt forms closer to the standard.**

(2) – History

- In other cases, we can also observe variants, but it is difficult to assess whether they are due to synchronic free variation or to diachronic re-borrowing, such as:
 - initial r~d: *Rokurō* ~ *Dokurō* '6th son' (SJ *Rokurō* 六郎)
 - initial i~yu: *indō* ~ *yundō* 'ashtray' (SJ *inrō* 印籠)
 - ubiquitous z~j: *kazoku* ~ *kajoku* 'family' (SJ *kazoku* 家族)
- **The second forms are perceived as more 'local' and tend to disappear in the modern language.**

(2) – History

- Thus, in a lot of cases it is impossible to know whether a Sino-Japanese word in Hachijō is an old or a recent loan from mainland Japanese.
- **Further research is needed to establish a more precise relative chronology of the borrowing of Sino-Japanese lexemes in Hachijō.**

Conclusion

Conclusion

- While Hachijō's lexicon has been investigated many times, Sino-Japanese lexemes were never considered.
- They are less frequent than in standard Japanese.
- However, they make up an important part of the language and of the culture it conveys.

Conclusion

- Furthermore, the study of Sino-Japanese lexical in Hachijō is important in several aspects:
 - they occasionally keep remarkable archaisms lost in the mainland
 - they illustrate very clearly the language's inner and outer isoglosses
 - they can help investigate the complex relationship between Hachijō and standard Japanese, and particularly the strong influence of standard Japanese.

Dō mo yōi!

/ Thank you very much!

References

- ALASZEWSKA, Jane, KANEDA Akihiro & OKUYAMA Kumao. 2005. *Hachijō-jima koyō – Okuyama Kumao no uta to taiko: CD bukku*. Tōkyō: Kasama shōin.
- ASANUMA Ryōji. 1999. *Hachijō-jima no hōgen jiten*. Tōkyō: Asahi Shimbun publishing service.
- IRWIN, Mark. 2011. *Loanwords in Japanese*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company (Studies in Language Companion Series, 125).
- ITŌ, Junko and MESTER, Armin. 2015. “Sino-Japanese phonology”, in KUBOZONO Haruo (ed.), *Handbook of Japanese Phonetics and Phonology*, 7, pp. 289-312. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
- KANEDA Akihiro. 2002a. “Hachijō hōgen no danwa shiryō to bunpō kaisetsu”, in SANADA Shinji (ed.), *Shōmetsu ni hin shita hōgen gohō no kinkyū chōsa kenkyū*, 1, pp. 115-226, 2002.

References

- KANEDA Akihiro. 2002b. *Hachijō hōgen no minwa shiryō to bunpō kaisetsu*, in SANADA Shinji, *Shōmetsu ni hin shita hōgen gohō no kinkyū chōsa kenkyū*, 2, 185-264, 2002.
- LAWRENCE, Wayne. 2015. “Lexicon”, in HEINRICH Patrick, MIYARA Shinsho and SHIMOJI Michinori (eds) *Handbook of the Ryukyuan Languages*, pp. 157-173. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
- NINJAL, 1995. *Terebi Hōsō no Goi Chōsa 1*. Tōkyō: Shūei publishing.
- SCHMIDT, Christopher. 2009. “Loanwords in Japanese”. In: Haspelmath, Martin and Tadmor, Uri (eds). *Loanwords in the World’s Languages A Comparative Handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 545-574.
- SHIBATANI, Masayoshi. 1990. *The Languages of Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- TACHIBANA Shōichi & TŌJŌ Misao. 1934. “Izu shotō hōgen”, in *Honshū tōbu no hōgen*, Kokugo kagaku kōza, VII, pp. 42-55, Tōkyō: Meiji shōin.