

# *Once upon a Time in South Izu*

*The expressions of time in the Hachijō folktales*

Étienne Baudel – Second Conference on The Endangered Languages of East Asia (Università Ca'Foscari Venezia)

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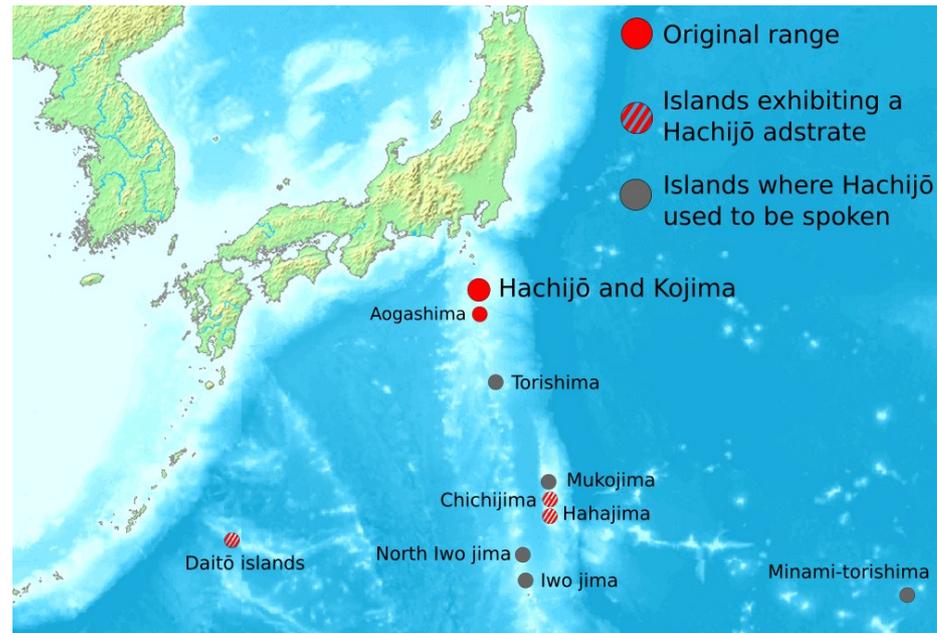
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In memory of Pr Alexander Vovin (1961-2022)

# Introduction

# Introduction (1) – What is Hachijō?

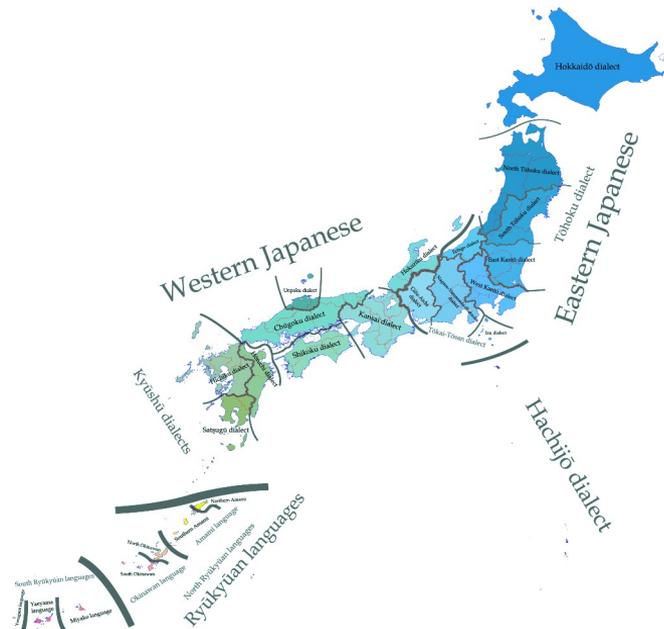
- Hachijō (ISO 639.6: hhjm) is a **minority language of Japan**, spoken on volcanic islands in the Pacific:



Distribution of Hachijō

# Introduction (1) – What is Hachijō?

- It belongs to the **Japonic language family**, like Japanese.
- Typologically, it is very similar to the other languages of this family (**agglutinative, SOV, mora-timed**, etc.).



Map of the Japonic language (*wikimedia*)

# Introduction (1) – What is Hachijō?

- It is traditionally simply called ***Shima-kotoba*** 'island speech'.
- It got the name "Hachijō" **in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**, since Hachijō island is by far the most populated of the South Izu islands.



Satellite view of Hachijō-jima and Kojima

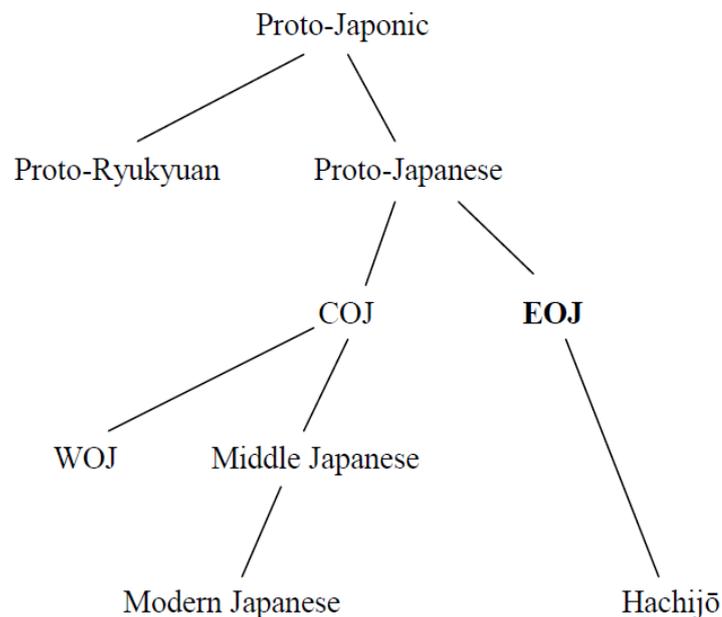
*(Wikimedia)*

# Introduction (2) – Classification

- Like other minority languages of Japanese, Hachijō was long considered simply a **dialect of Japanese**.
- However, it now tends to be considered a **different language**, even in Japan (YAMADA, 2010; KANEDA, 2013; MIKI, 2016-2020).
- As a matter fact, it does seem to have **no mutual intelligibility** with standard Japanese (IANNUCCI, 2019: 100-106).

# Introduction (2) – Classification

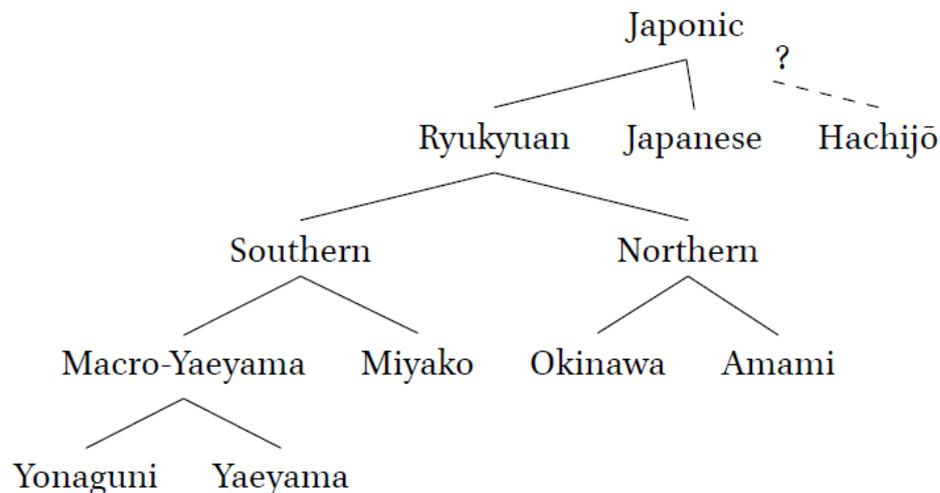
- The classification of Hachijō within Japonic is still a matter of debate.
- However, it is often theorised to be the **descendant of Eastern Old Japanese** (KUPCHIK, 2011:7):



Japonic language tree  
proposed by KUPCHIK

# Introduction (2) – Classification

- However, other scholars consider that **Hachijō is yet to be classified** (PELLARD, 2018: 2)



Japonic language tree proposed by PELLARD

# Introduction (3) – Current status

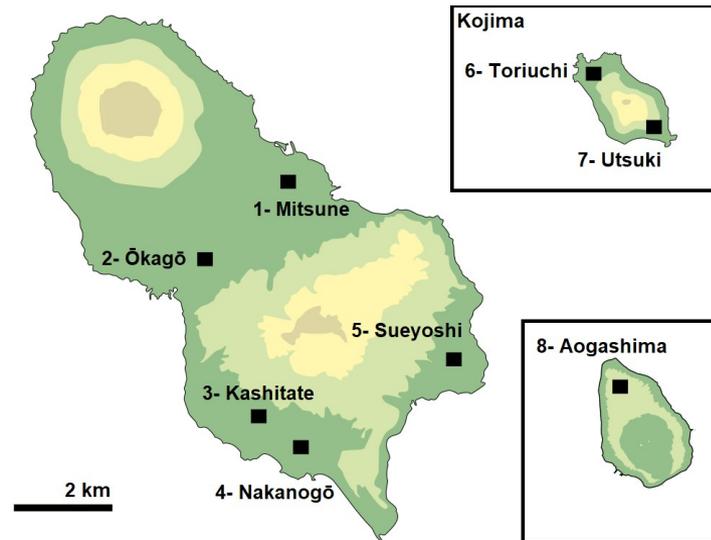
- Due to the diffusion of standard Japanese, Hachijō now probably has a **very low number of native speakers** (but no census is available).
- Virtually all native speakers are **elderly** and **bilingual**, and the transmission of the language is almost non-existent.
- Thus, it was included in 2009 in UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in danger*.

# Introduction (3) – Current status

- The recognition of Hachijō by UNESCO lead to **some local efforts** toward its preservation.
- However, the language is facing **various threats** (pervasion of standard Japanese, lack of teaching, of exposure to the language, of standardisation, of modern adaptations, etc...)
- Most importantly, Hachijō still has **no official recognition** in Japan.

# Introduction (4) – Local varieties

- There are **at least 8 recorded varieties** of Hachijō:



- However, those are **very unequally attested**.

# Introduction (5) – This presentation

- This presentation is about the **expression of time in Hachijō** and how it is affected by the type of discourse.
- But, since it is impossible to be exhaustive on such a topic, we will focus on one example: **the expression of time in Hachijō folktales.**

# Introduction (6) – Hachijōan folk literature

- Hachijō is traditionally an **unwritten language**.
- However, it does have rich **literary oral traditions**, which include:
  - a high variety of **songs**
  - several forms of **poems**
  - a few traditional **theatre plays**
  - a rich corpus of **folk tales**
  - **and more!** (prayers, proverbs, riddles...)

# Introduction (7) – Hachijō folktales

- Hachijō folktales have been attested since the eighteenth century, and are **one of the main sources** for the description of Hachijō.
- They are also perceived as **highly emblematic** cultural productions and used as a **tool toward the revitalisation of the language** (MIKI Yōsuke, Komazawa University):



Kawakami Ayako  
reading a Hachijō  
folktale  
for Youtube

© Hachijō-jima Styles,  
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# Introduction (7) – Hachijō folktales

- About 60 Hachijō folktales were published by ASANUMA (1963) and about 20 by KANEDA (2002).
- However, only the ones published by KANEDA are entirely **narrated in Hachijō**.
- Thus, we will focus on those ones in this presentation.

# Introduction (7) – Hachijō folktales

- Those folktales are narrated in the **Mitsune variety**:



# (1) Time in Hachijō

# (1a) – Expressions of time

- Like all languages, Hachijō has various ways of expressing time, that is (KLEIN, 2010: 40-41):
  - through **lexicon**
  - through verbs and their **tense-aspect-mood system** (TAM)
  - through the **construction of the discourse** itself
- Let's give some examples and see how the style of folktales influences that system!

# (1b) – Temporal Lexicon

- In Hachijō, time can be expressed by various lexical items, namely:
  - **adverbs**, e.g.: *kine*: 'yesterday', *man* 'now'...
  - **temporal nouns**, which can also behave like **adverbs**, e.g.: *mwkaci* 'past / in the past', *toki* 'time / when'...
  - a few **particles** can also have temporal meaning, e.g.: *to* 'with / when', *ka*: 'from', *na*: 'when', *i* 'intensive / present'...
  - etc.

## (1c) – TAM system

- Hachijō also has an elaborate TAM system that opposes **past** and **non-past** for both verbs and adjectives.
- Though it looks fairly similar to Japanese, **the temporal, aspectual and modal values of Hachijō tenses differ from those of the standard** (KUDŌ, 2000), especially regarding evidentiality (KANEDA & MARTIN, 2005).
- A highly simplified version of the tense system (based on KANEDA, 2001) looks like this:

# (1c) – TAM system

	Past 1	Past 2	Non-past	Conjunct
Consonant verb	nom <b>arara</b> nom <b>ar</b> oa	nom <b>ara</b> nom <b>a</b> oa	nom <b>u</b> nom <b>o</b>	non <b>de</b>
Vowel verb	mi <b>tarara</b> mi <b>ta</b> roa	mi <b>tara</b> mi <b>t</b> oa	mi <b>ru</b> mi <b>r</b> o	mi <b>te</b>
Copula	/	dar <b>ara</b> dar <b>a</b> oa	dar <b>a</b> dar <b>o</b> a	<b>de</b>
Adjective	/	naga <b>karara</b> naga <b>ka</b> roa	naga <b>kja</b> naga <b>ke</b>	naga <b>ku</b>
Negative copula 1	/	/	n <b>aka</b> n <b>o</b> a	n <b>aku</b>
Negative copula 2	/	/	nak <b>kja</b> nak <b>ke</b>	n <b>aku</b>

# (1c) – TAM system

- This system allows an **explicit** expression of time, for instance:

*man=kara sigoto=ni ik-o=wa*

now=ABL job=LOC go-NON-PAST.ATTR.=FIN

'I'm going (/ I'll go) to work now' (ASANUMA, 1999: 217)

- *kine:=wa ojo:=e oj-ara*

yesterday=TOP elsewhere=DEST go.HON-PAST.FIN

'You went somewhere else yesterday' (ASANUMA, 1999: 55)

# (1d) – Time in the discourse

- However, in a lot of cases, the temporal meaning is to some extent **implicit**, and is clarified by the composition of the discourse itself, e.g.:

*mi-n-na:=**ma**=ni bo:-kw **nat-te** kibi=ga wari:*

see-PRE.NEG-NEG.ATTR=**interval**=LOC big-ADV

become.BOUND-**CONJ** feeling=SUBJ weird.IRR

'[You] **grew** up a lot since we've **seen** each other. That's crazy!' (ASANUMA, 1999: 76)

## (2) The Hachijō folktales

## (2a) – Traditional narrative way

- Traditionally, Hachijō folktales were **memorised** by heart and **recited** by elders to their audience in a **non-interactive** way.
- As a consequence, they rely entirely on the storyteller's memory, and therefore involve several **mnemotechnical** tools, such as:
  - **stereotypical formulas** (especially for opening and closing formulas, or around dialogue)
  - a whole range of **connecting elements** (adverbs, conjunctions, verb endings...)

## (2b) – Time building

- Moreover, Hachijō folktales are all located in the same temporality:
  - they depict a timeless **traditional society** in a **voluntarily archaic** style
  - they are all narrated in the **past tense** on a **hear-say mode**
- This style settles the action in an imaginary past, that "stand[s] in metaphoric relation to the 'real' [historical time]" (CONRAD, 2014: 334)
- This general composition has several consequences on the TAM system. **Let's take an example:**

# (2c) – Consequence on the TAM system

mukaci-mukaci ow-mukaci so=no mata-mukaci=no mata-mukaci	past-past big-past medial=GEN again-past=GEN again-past	昔々、大昔、その又昔の又昔、	A long time ago, a really long time ago; even a longer time ago before this long time ago,
nubw-rjo:=no teppen=ni ikw zu:-nin=de kakon=de=mo kakom-i kir-i-n=no:=gon=do: φwto:-ke ki=ga ar- <b>ara</b> <b>tte</b> :=ga	Nuburyō-summit=GEN=LOC a.few ten-people=CIRC surround-CONJ=CONC surround-CONV cut-CONV-PRE.NEG-ATTR.NEG=CAP=copula.ATTR thick-ATTR tree=SUBJ be- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -ADV	登竜の天辺に、何十人で囲んでも囲みきれないような太い木があったそうだが。	It is said that at the top of Nuburyō ridge, there was a tree so thick that even a chain of dozens of people could not surround it.
naka=no jo:-ke menarabe=to wake:-caw=ga ar- <b>ara</b> = <b>tte</b> :=ga	relationship=GEN good-ATTR girl=COMIT young-folk=SUBJ be- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -ADV medial=GEN two.people=SUBJ possible-ATTR person=AGENT see-PASS-PRE.NEG=ATTR.NEG place=CIRC meet-ATTR=EXHOR=QUOTE say.bound- <b>CONJ</b> medial=GEN tree=GEN below=CIRC meet-ATTR way=LOC do- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -ADV	仲のいい娘と若者がいたそうだが。	And there were a young girl and a young boy who got along well.
so=no φwtari=ga naruta-ke cito=ni mir-are-n-no: tokoro=de a-o=gon=te t-te so=no ki=no cita=de a-o koto=n ci- <b>t-ara</b> = <b>tte</b> :=ga	this=CIRC two.people=CIRC there.DIRECT climb- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -ADV	その二人が「なるべく人に見られないところで会おう」といって、その木の下で会うことにしたそうだが。	The two of them said "Let's meet in a place where people won't be able to see us!", so they met under this tree.
soi=de φwtai=de soke: nubur- <b>ara</b> = <b>tte</b> :=ga	either=INTERR quick-ATTR arrive-ATTR.PAST=ADV already come-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV.PR.QUOTE=QUOTE say.bound= <b>CONJ</b> medial=GEN tree=GEN turn.ACC turn- begin- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -ADV again after=CIRC go-ATTR.PAST people=ID come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV.PR.QUOTE=QUOTE say.bound- <b>CONJ</b> medial=GEN tree=GEN turn.ACC turn-CONV begin- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -ADV	それで、二人でそこへ登ったそうだが。	So the two of them went up.
dottci=ka haja-kw tsuk-o:=ga ha: kur-o hazu do:=ga:=te t-te so=no ki=no mo:rjo mo:r-i hazime- <b>t-ara</b> = <b>tte</b> :=ga	two people=COMIT already come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV.PR.QUOTE=QUOTE say.bound- <b>CONJ</b> a.few-PLUR tum-CONJ=CONC medial=GEN tree=SUBJ extent thick-ATTR=CIRC meet.PRE.NEG-DUR.NEG=LOC me dial=GEN state=LOC become- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -INT.PREQUOTE	どちらか、「早く着いたのがもう来るはずだが」といって、その木の周りを回りはじめたそうだが。	But one of them said: "I arrived quickly, but he must have arrived already", and she started to turn around the tree.
no: ato=de ik-o: cito=mo ki-te ar-o hazu do:=ga:=te t-te so=no ki=no mo:rjo mo:r-i hazime- <b>t-ara</b> = <b>tte</b> :=ga	two people=COMIT already come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV.PR.QUOTE=QUOTE say.bound- <b>CONJ</b> a.few-PLUR tum-CONJ=CONC medial=GEN tree=SUBJ extent thick-ATTR=CIRC meet.PRE.NEG-DUR.NEG=LOC me dial=GEN state=LOC become- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -INT.PREQUOTE	また、あとで行った人も、「来ているはずだが」といって、その木の周りを回りはじめたそうだが。	Then, the one who arrived later said "She probably arrived already", and he started to turn around the tree as well.
φwtai=de ha: ki-te ar-o hazu do:=ga kit-e ar-o hazu do:=ga:=te t-te ikw-ra mo:-te=mo so=no ki=ga anmai φwto-ke=de aw-a-zw=ni so=no mama=n nar- <b>ara</b> = <b>tte</b> :=zo:	two people=COMIT already come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV come-CONJ be-ATTR ought to copula.ATTR=ADV.PR.QUOTE=QUOTE say.bound- <b>CONJ</b> a.few-PLUR tum-CONJ=CONC medial=GEN tree=SUBJ extent thick-ATTR=CIRC meet.PRE.NEG-DUR.NEG=LOC me dial=GEN state=LOC become- <b>PAST=HEARSAY</b> -INT.PREQUOTE	二人で、もう「来ているはずだが、来ているはずだが」といって、いくら回っても、その木があまりに太いので、会わずに、そのままになったそうだが。	No matter how many times they turned around saying "He probably arrived! She probably arrived!", the tree was so large, that they ended up not meeting.
=te=no hanaci	=QUOTE=gen story	という話。	So says the story!

## (2c) – Consequence on the TAM system

- The **non-past** tense is absent from folktales narration. In other texts, occasional exceptions occur before a temporal =*to* or a causal =*de* / =*n-te*.
- Due to almost ubiquity of the hear-say particle =*ttē* with which they are incompatible according to KANEDA (2007), some past forms are **completely unattested**.
- This creates a clear contrast between the narration and the dialogues, where those forms can occur.

## (2c) – Consequence on the TAM system

- On the other hand, conjunctive forms in *-te* are **extremely common**, as well as adversative particles such as *=ga*.
- According to KANEDA (2007), this indicates that these folktales form **one single utterance**, i.e. **one single** (and sometimes extremely long) **sentence**, that always has the same formulaic start and ending.

# Conclusion

# Conclusion

- Though not different **in nature** from the average spoken language, the language of Hachijō folktales is **highly codified**.
- Thus, since folktales are one of the main sources for the description and revitalisation of the language, we should be careful not to assume that some peculiarities specific to folktales are representative of the average spoken language.

# Conclusion

- In addition, it should not be forgotten that most of the Hachijō folk tales were provided by **only one informant**, OKUYAMA Kumao (1916-2011).
- Therefore, **more research is needed** to understand the system more clearly.

おかげさまで！

/ Thank you very much!

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