

Is Hachijō a living descendant of Eastern Old Japanese?

Étienne Baudel – 17th EAJS International Conference (Ghent)

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Introduction

Introduction (1) – What is Hachijō?

- Hachijō (locally called 島言葉 *Shima-kotoba* 'island speech') is an endangered **minority language** of Japan, originally spoken in the **South Izu islands**:



Distribution of
Hachijō

Introduction (1) – What is Hachijō?

- It belongs to the **Japonic language family** (日流語族).
- It was long considered **a dialect of Japanese** (*Hachijō-hōgen*), but is now usually considered as **a separate language** (*Hachijō-go*).



Map of the Japonic languages (*Wikimedia*)

Introduction (1) – What is Hachijō?

- It was **included in UNESCO's *Atlas of the world languages in danger*** (MOSELEY, 2009), alongside 7 other languages of Japan:



Map of the 8 endangered languages of Japan

Introduction (2) – What is EOJ?

- “The appellation Eastern Old Japanese (EOJ) traditionally refers to the group of dialects spoken in Japan during the Nara period in the region called ***Azuma***” (Kupchik, 2011: 1)
- That is, **up to 268 poems** (Vovin, 2021) **from 12 provinces** corresponding to **modern-day Kantō and Tōhoku**.

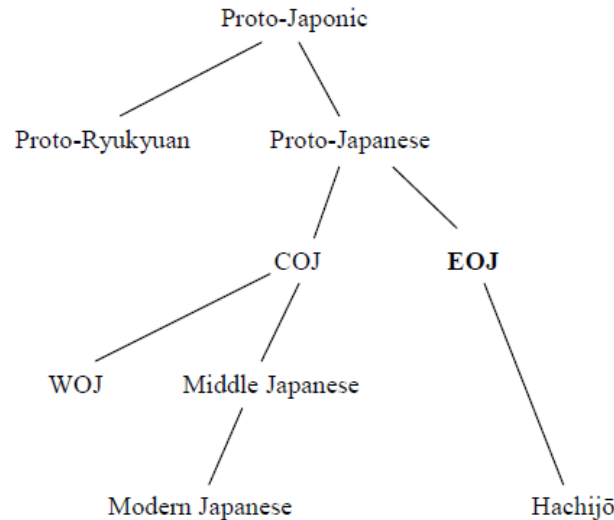


Map of the Azuma provinces
in the 8th century CE

(Kupchik, 2011: 2)

Introduction (2) – What is EOJ?

- EOJ is considered a '**dialect continuum**' (Vovin, 2021: 27), and a '**separate branch of the Japanese subgroup** of the Japonic language family' (Kupchik, 2011: 6).



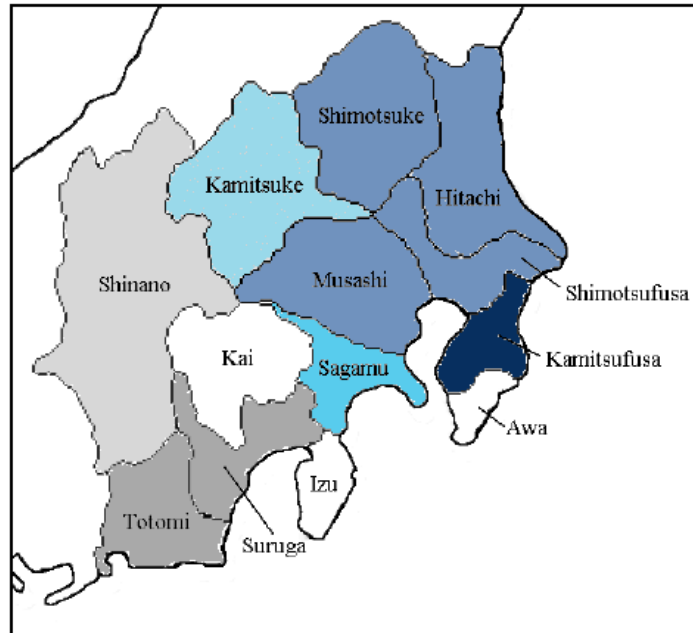
Model tree of the
Japonic languages
(Kupchik, 2011: 7)

Introduction (2) – What is EOJ?

- However, it should be noted that **EOJ data is very scarce**:
 - few quality manuscripts
 - texts from only one highly codified genre (restricted lexicon & grammar)
 - strong dependence on old sources for interpretation
 - puzzling writing system
 - possible corruptions by WOJ speakers
- Therefore, **it is very difficult to get a clear picture of EOJ**.

Introduction (2) – What is EOJ?

- It is usually considered that EOJ has an **important inner diversity**:
- Kupchik (2011:852-858) distinguishes “**true EOJ dialects**” (**t-EOJ**) from neighbouring dialects, and considers that there are at least **4 different dialect zones of t-EOJ**:



Map of the oriental varieties of OJ,
According to Kupchik, 2011

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

- Resemblances between Hachijō and Eastern Old Japanese (EOJ) have been noted **since 1878**:

There is considerable difference between the language spoken in Hachijō and that of the nearest part of the Japanese mainland ...

Dickins & Satow,
1878: 464

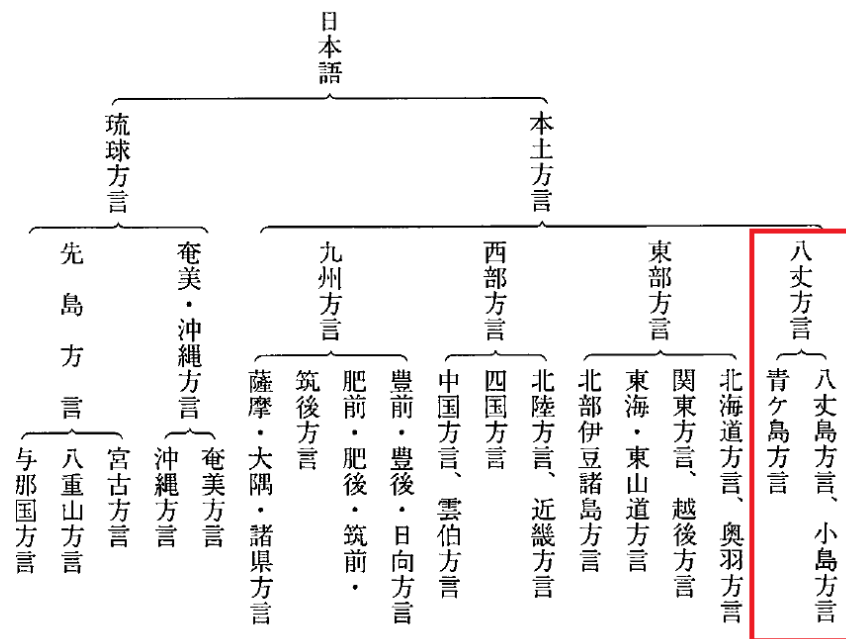
It presents some of the peculiarities of the ancient dialect of the eastern provinces

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

- Based on those resemblances, the idea that **Hachijō could be the descendant of EOJ** gradually became somewhat widespread:
 - TACHIBANA & TŌJŌ (1934:45)
 - HIRAYAMA (1965)
 - HATTORI (1968)
 - ŌSHIMA (1975:52)
 - KANEDA (2011:154); KANEDA & HOLDA (2018:1)
 - KUPCHIK (2011:6; 2016)

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

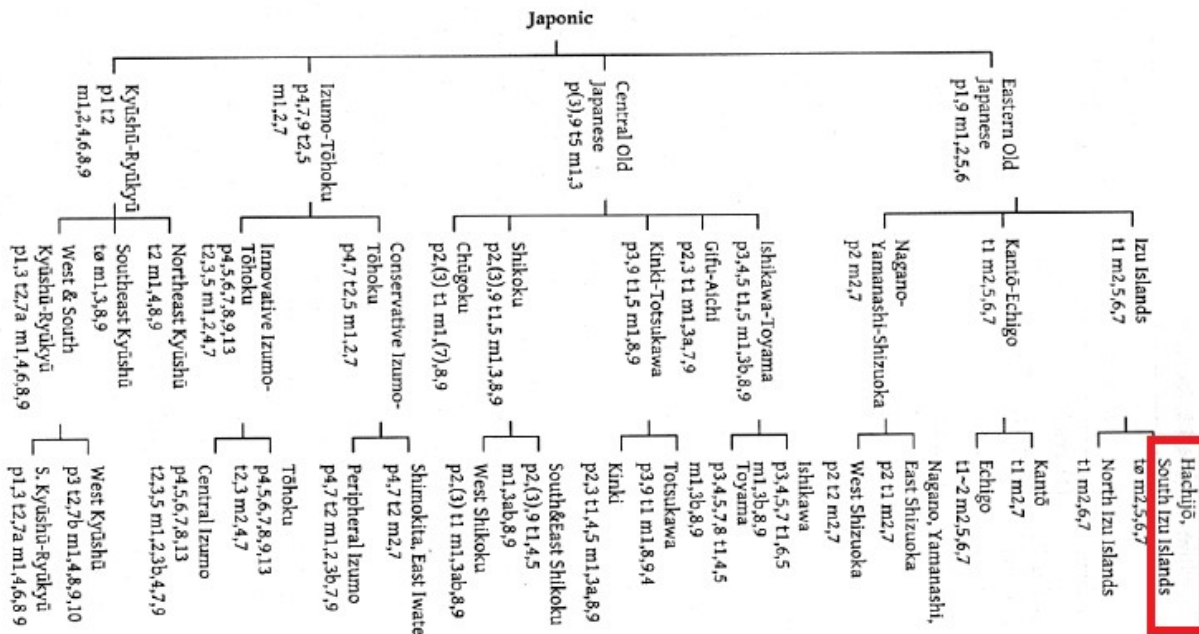
- According to the classical interpretation, Hachijō is supposed to be **the sole descendant of EOJ**, which would place it **on its own branch within Japanese**:



Classical tree of the Japanese dialects,
as found for instance in Izu Islands /
Ogasawara Islands Folklore Magazine
Compilation Committee, 1993: 664

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

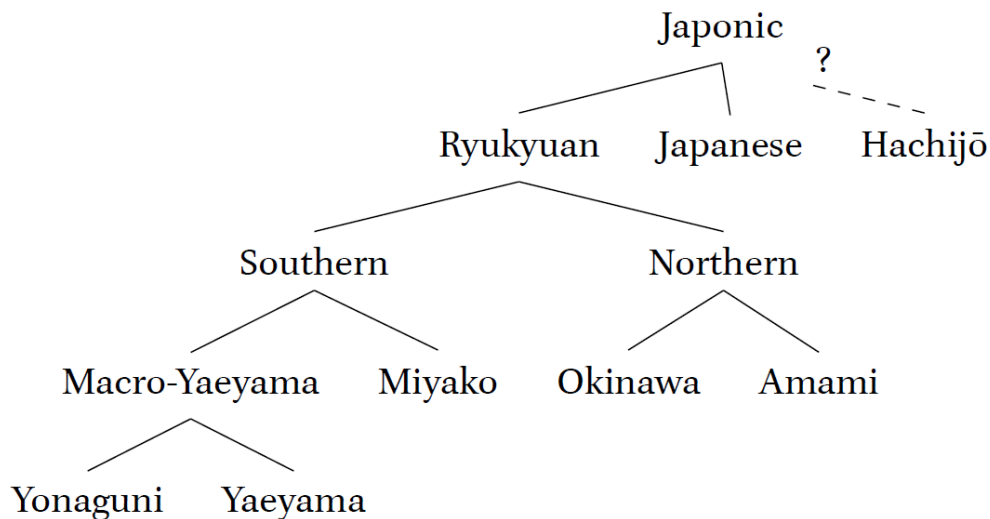
- A minority of scholars like Elisabeth de Boer (2020:28) consider **EOJ** to be the mother language of all Eastern Japanese dialects:



Tree of the Japonic languages,
from de Boer (2020:28)

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

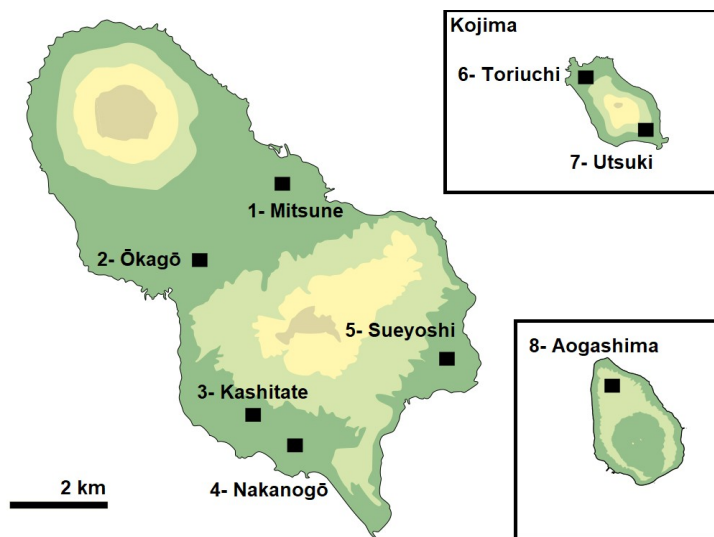
- Finally, other scholars like Pellard (2018:2) consider that **'[the] phylogenetic position [of Hachijō] has yet to be determined'**



Tree of the Japonic languages,
from Pellard (2018:2)

Introduction (4) – Our presentation

- Therefore, **our presentation aims at assessing the arguments for the classification of Hachijō, especially in regard to EOJ.**
- It will be ordered in three parts:
 - **1. Phonology**
 - **2. Morphology**
 - **3. Lexicon**



Map of the eight traditional varieties of Hachijō

(1) Phonology

(1.1) – Phonetic archaisms

- One of the main arguments given for the grouping of Hachijō with EOJ regards the **retention of PJ *e and *o**:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| *e | ‘good’ (ATTR) ‘long’ (ATTR) | yə <i>ki</i> nagaki | yə <i>ke</i> nagake | yoke nagake |
| *o | ‘mat’ ‘seal’ ‘to stand’ (ATTR) | mu <i>si</i> ro si <i>ru</i> si ta <i>tu</i> | *mo <i>si</i> ro *si <i>ro</i> si ta <i>to</i> | mo <i>sho</i> sho <i>shi</i> * ta <i>to</i> |
| *o | ‘cloud’ | kum <i>o</i> | kum <i>o</i> | kum <i>o</i> |

- These retentions have strong ties with morphology (*cf* after).

(1.1) – Phonetic archaisms

- However, methodologically, **shared archaisms cannot count as an argument in favour of genetic relatedness.**
- We need to take a look **only at shared innovations.**



(1.2) – Phonetic innovations

- Some EOJ innovations seem to be common with Hachijō:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| *ia | ‘stand-PROG-FIN’ ‘fall-PROG-ATTR’ | <i>tat-er-i</i> <i>pur-er-u</i> | <i>tat-ar-i</i> <i>pur-ar-u</i> | <i>tatara</i> <i>furoa</i> (<* <i>fur-aro</i>) |
| *əy | ‘to fall’ ‘to go down’ | <i>oti-i</i> <i>ori-i</i> | * <i>ote-e</i> * <i>ore-e</i> | <i>oteru</i> <i>oreru</i> |
| *ɾ | ‘would wait’ ‘boy-DIM’ | <i>matu-ramu</i> <i>se-ra</i> | <i>matu-namu</i> <i>se-na</i> | <i>matsu-nou</i> <i>se-na</i> |

This supposed treatment of *ia is also based on morphological considerations (*cf* after).

(1.2) – Phonetic innovations

- However, **most of these evolutions are exceptions in Hachijō**.
- Therefore, words in which they occur are **likely to be loanwords from an EOJ substrate**.
- Generally, **Hachijō agrees more often with WOJ than with EOJ**:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|-----|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| *ia | ‘home’ ‘to go home’ ‘sweat’ | <i>ipe</i> <i>kap<u>e</u>ru</i> <i>ase</i> | <i>ipa</i> <i>*kap<u>a</u>ru</i> <i>*asa</i> | <i>e</i> <i>kya:ru / ke:ru</i> < <i>*ka<u>e</u>ru</i> <i>ase</i> |
| *əy | ‘tree’ ‘baggage’ ‘to get up’ | <i>kī</i> <i>nī</i> <i>okī-</i> | <i>ke</i> <i>*ne</i> <i>*oke-</i> | <i>ki</i> <i>nī</i> <i>okiru</i> |
| *ɾ | ‘child-PLUR’ ‘to flow’ | <i>ko-<u>ra</u></i> <i>naga<u>ru</u></i> | <i>*ko-<u>na</u></i> <i>naga<u>nu</u></i> | <i>ko-<u>ra</u></i> <i>naga<u>ru</u></i> |

(1.2) – Phonetic innovations

- Furthermore Vovin (2021:28) putatively distinguishes EOJ from WOJ based on the **treatment of diphthongs**.
- Here as well, **Hachijō usually agrees with WOJ**:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| *ay | ‘hand’ ‘boat’ | <i>tē</i> <i>pune</i> | <i>ta</i> <i>puna</i> | <i>te</i> <i>fune</i> |
| *oy | ‘fire’ ‘behind’ ‘stone’ | <i>pī</i> <i>siri</i> <i>*esoy > isi</i> | <i>pu</i> <i>siru</i> <i>*osoy > osu</i> | <i>hi</i> <i>shiri</i> <i>ishi</i> |
| *uy | ‘god’ ‘moon’ | <i>kamī</i> <i>tukī</i> | <i>kamu</i> <i>tuku</i> | <i>kamī</i> <i>tsukī</i> |

(1.2) – Phonetic innovations

- Finally, **PJ *e an *o** are also usually raised in Hachijō, like in WOJ:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|----|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| *e | ‘dog’ ‘finger’ | <i>inu</i> <i>yubi*</i> | <i>*enu</i> <i>*yobe</i> | <i>inu</i> <i>ibi</i> |
| *o | ‘to sing’ ‘medicine’ ‘water’ | <i>utapu</i> <i>kusuri</i> <i>midu</i> | <i>otapu</i> <i>*kusori</i> <i>mido</i> | <i>utou</i> <i>kusuri</i> <i>mizu</i> |

- Overall, **the phonology of Hachijō is not special compared with other Japanese dialects.**

(1.3) – Conclusion

- In most cases, **Hachijō phonology does not agree with putative ‘true EOJ’.**
- In spite of its reputation, **Hachijō appears to share more phonological innovations with WOJ or with Tōkyō Japanese than with EOJ.**
- Innovative elements of Hachijō that agree with EOJ only appear in **specific morphemes and lexemes**, making EOJ appear more like a **substrate**.

(2) Morphology

(2.1) – Attributives

- Morphological resemblance is actually what was first noted by Dickins & Satow:

The adjectives for the most part take *ke* as the termination of the attributive form...

thus *yoke ko*, a pretty girl, *bôke fune*, a big ship. Mr. Aston has pointed out to us that this termination *ke* of adjectives occurs in some poems in the *Manyôshû*, collected in the eastern provinces of Japan ten centuries ago.

Dickins & Satow,
1878: 470

(2.1) – Attributives

- The correspondence of the attributive forms does seem striking:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| *-e | ‘good’ (ATTR) ‘long’ (ATTR) | <i>yəki</i> <i>nagaki</i> | <i>yəke</i> <i>nagake</i> | <i>yoke</i> <i>nagake</i> |
| *-o | ‘to be’ (ATTR) ‘to stand’ (ATTR) | <i>aru</i> <i>tatu</i> | <i>aro</i> <i>tato</i> | <i>aro</i> <i>tato</i> |

- Their preservation in Hachijō is **phonetically irregular**, which is puzzling.
- However, **shared archaisms still cannot be used for classification**.
- The same is true, for instance of the **imperative marker -ro** (EOJ *rə*, WOJ *γə*).

(2.1) – Attributives

- These archaic attributive forms are also attested in a least **one other unrelated Eastern dialect** (MASE, 1980: 37-38):
- Therefore, it seems likely that they are due to an **EOJ substrate** in both those regions:



Map of Akiyamagō and Hachijō
(approximate distance: 400km)

(2.2) – Progressive / Past

- The existence of the *-ar-* past in Hachijō could be a stronger evidence:

| PJ | Examples | WOJ | t-EOJ | Hachijō |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| *-i-ar- | ‘stand-PROG-FIN’ ‘fall-PROG-ATTR’ | <i>tat-er-i</i> <i>pur-er-u</i> | <i>tat-ar-i</i> <i>pur-ar-u</i> | <i>tatara</i> <i>furoa</i> (<* <i>fur-aro</i>) |

- However, it must be noted that ***-i-ar- > -ar- is also attested in WOJ** (*n-arū*).
- Given the fact that usually **ia* > *e* in Hachijō (*cf supra*), I consider this suffix likely to be **either a parallel development, or a borrowing from an EOJ substrate**.

(2.3) – Diminutive -*na*

- The diminutive -*na* in Hachijō is **extremely rare** (4 occurrences at most!) and **unproductive**.
- The clearest example *se-na* 'boy' ('eldest son' in Hachijō), is also attested in many Eastern dialects (Shōgakukan, 2007).
- Therefore, it is very likely to be **a loan from an EOJ substrate**.

(2.4) – Tentative -*namu*

- The tentative marker *-nou* < *-namu* is usually described as a particle rather than a suffix in Hachijō.
- It seems to be attested in some parts of Yamanashi and Shizuoka prefectures as well (Shōgakukan, 2007).
- Since Hachijō usually preserves PJ *r, I consider it **likely to be an EOJ loan** as well.

(2.5) – Other innovations

- Finally, Hachijō features several morphological innovations that are common with **modern Japanese**:
 - a **refection of morphological categories** (bigrade verbs > monogrades ; *aru* → quadrigrade)
 - a **potential/spontaneous in -eru** (ex: *nom-eru*), from passive *-y-* + *-aru*
 - an **adjective negative copula** *nea/nakkyā*, cognate with SJ *-nai*
- These elements seem to point toward a **classification alongside other Japanese dialects**, rather than on its own branch.

(2.6) – Conclusion

- The retention of **-ke*, **-o* attributives in Hachijō is remarkable, but **cannot be used to classify it as a descendant of EOJ**.
- Past morpheme *-ar-* and tentative marker *nou* are more relevant, but **they are phonetically irregular**.
- Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that they **might be borrowed from an EOJ substrate**.

(3) Lexicon

(3.0) – Lexemes

- Finally, a few lexical items are often observed to be shared between EOJ and Hachijō, but not by WOJ, like:
 - ***ani*** ‘what’
 - ***mama*** ‘cliff’
 - ***tego*** ‘(3rd) girl’
- These correspondences are **extremely few**, especially given the **huge lexical differences between WOJ and EOJ** (Vovin, 2021:31-38).

(3.1) – Distribution

- In fact:
 - ***ani*** is also attested once in WOJ (MYS 10.2140) and could be an archaic form (Vovin 2005:311-312). Also, it is not only attested in Hachijō, but also in several other Eastern dialects (Shōgakukan, 2007)
 - ***mama*** might also have one occurrence in WOJ (MYS 10.2288) and is attested in many Eastern dialects beside Hachijō (Shōgakukan, 2007)
 - ***tego*** also has a few occurrences in WOJ (although in allusion to *Azuma*), and might be attested in several Eastern dialects with a form *teko* / *tego* (Shōgakukan, 2007)

(3.1) – Distribution

- Thus, **none of these forms is truly specific from Hachijō.**
- They all seem to point toward an **EOJ substrate common to all Eastern dialects** of Japan.



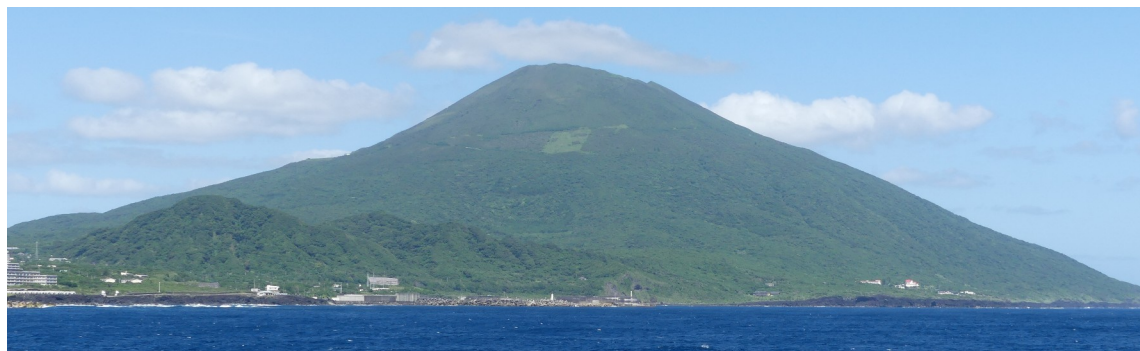
Map of the Japonic languages (*Wikimedia*)

(3.2) – Other innovations

- On the other hand, Hachijō seems to share several structural lexical innovations with modern Japanese dialects:
 - **demonstratives** *ko-*, *so-*, *u-* (EOJ *kə-*, *sə-*, *ka-* / *wote*)
 - **interrogatives** *dai*, *itsu*, *doko* (EOJ *ta*, *idu*, *itu*)
 - **honorifics** (cf Kaneda, 2001: 340), ex: 'to go': *me:ru* / *mya:ru*, *iku*, *wasu*, *ojaru* (SJ *mairu*, *iku*, *irassharu*)

(3.3) – Conclusion

- **More research is needed** in order to get strong statistics.
- However, it can be said that generally, **Hachijō lexicon is closer to standard Japanese than it is to EOJ.**
- EOJ words in Hachijō can be linked to an EOJ substrate, which is also visible in some **Hachijō toponyms** like *Fuji* (*'volcano') < EOJ *pu* 'fire' + *nusi* 'master' (Vovin, 2018: 85-86).



Hachijō-Fuji

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Hachijō does in some cases offer **striking parallels with EOJ**.
- However, most of the structural similarities between EOJ and Hachijō appear to be due to **shared archaisms**, which cannot be used for classification.
- On the other hand, a lot of **sporadic correspondences** are common between Hachijō and other Eastern dialects, and seem to point toward an **EOJ substrate influence**.

Conclusion

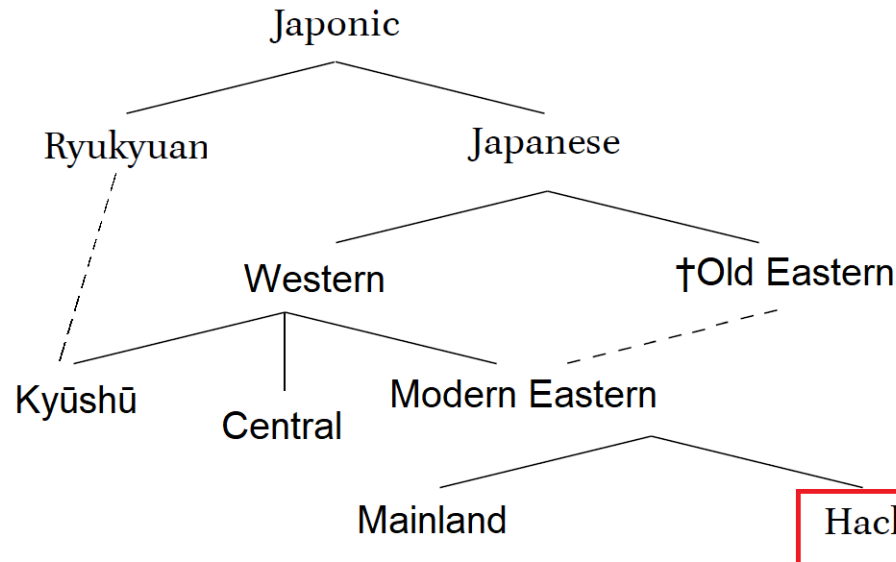
- Therefore, in my opinion, unless we redefine what characterizes EOJ as a branch, **there is not enough evidence to consider Hachijō a descendant of EOJ.**
- On the other hand, unless we assume the correspondences of Hachijō with WOJ and Tokyo Japanese to be due to later convergence, I consider them likely to be **on the same branch** of Japonic languages.

Conclusion

- Given the peculiar phonetic and lexical innovations that characterize EOJ, I do not consider it to be the mother language of any Eastern Japanese dialect, and consider its branch to be **extinct**.
- However, I do consider EOJ **an important substrate** that characterizes Eastern Japanese dialects as a whole.
- Therefore, I assume that there was some kind of **language shift** from EOJ to WOJ (or EMJ) in the Azuma provinces at some point in Japanese history.

Conclusion

- Here is a model of how I would classify Japanese dialects (dashed lines indicate **substrates**):



Language tree of the Japanese
dialects
(on the model of Pellard, 2018:2)

おかげさまで！
/ Thank you very much!

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