

Reconsidering the classification of Hachijō:

A glimpse from historical phonology

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Introduction

Introduction (0)

- This presentation is a follow-up to a broader presentation I gave at the EAJS conference on August 19th 2023. (It will soon be available on my personal website).
- Its title was 'Is Hachijō a living descendant of Eastern Old Japanese?', and it was organised in three parts:
 - phonology
 - morphology
 - lexicon
- This time we will focus solely on phonology.

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?

- Hachijō 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**.

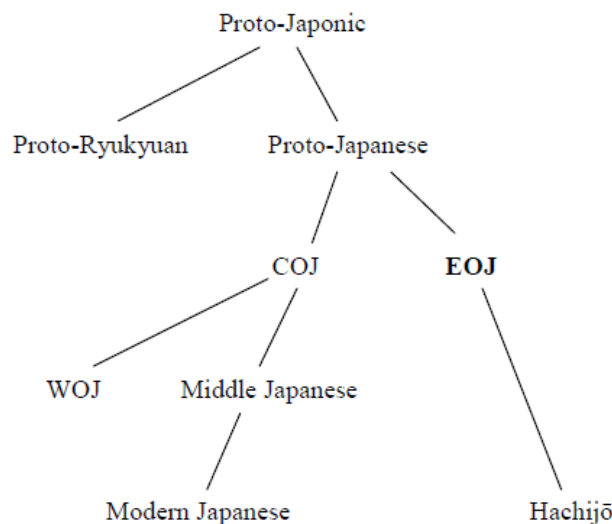


Map of the Azuma
provinces in the 8th
century CE

(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).



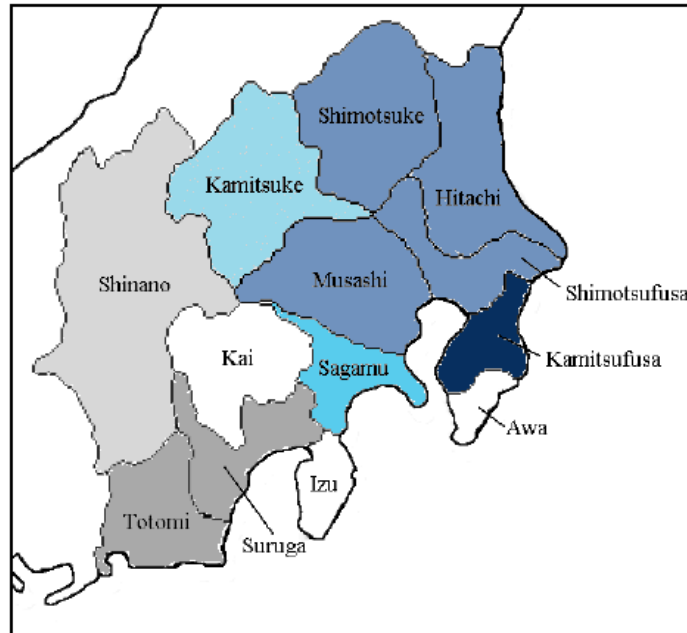
Model tree of the
Japonic languages
(Kupchik, 2011: 7)

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 ...

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

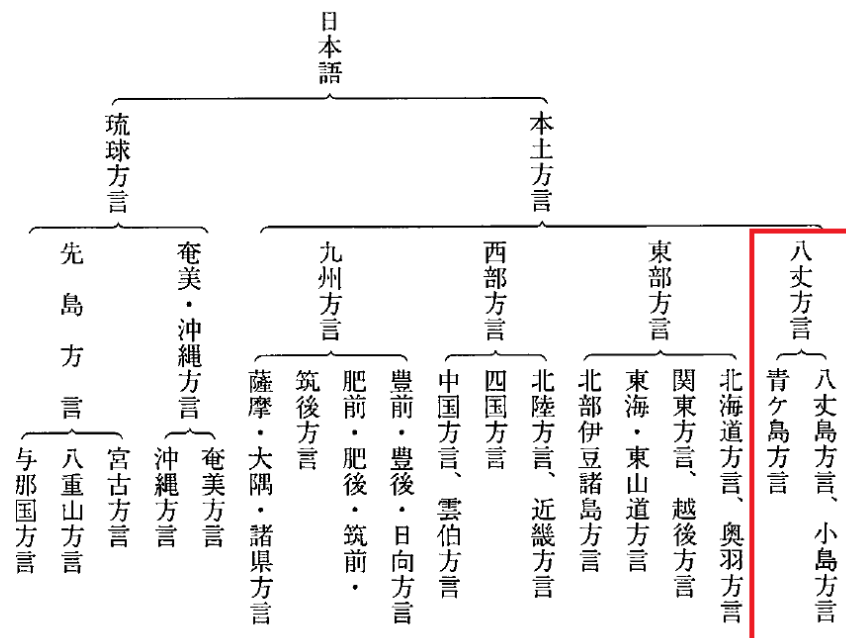
Dickins &
Satow, 1878:
464

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**:

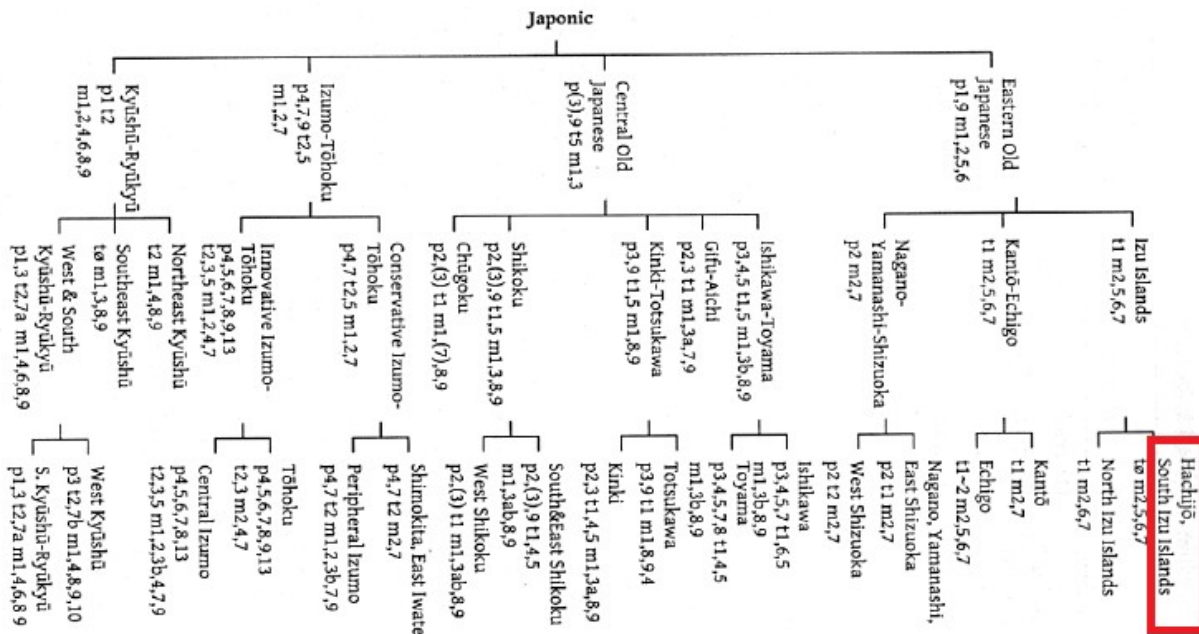


Classical tree of the Japanese dialects,

as found for instance in Izu Islands / Ogasawara Islands Folklore Magazine Compilation Committee, 1993: 664

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

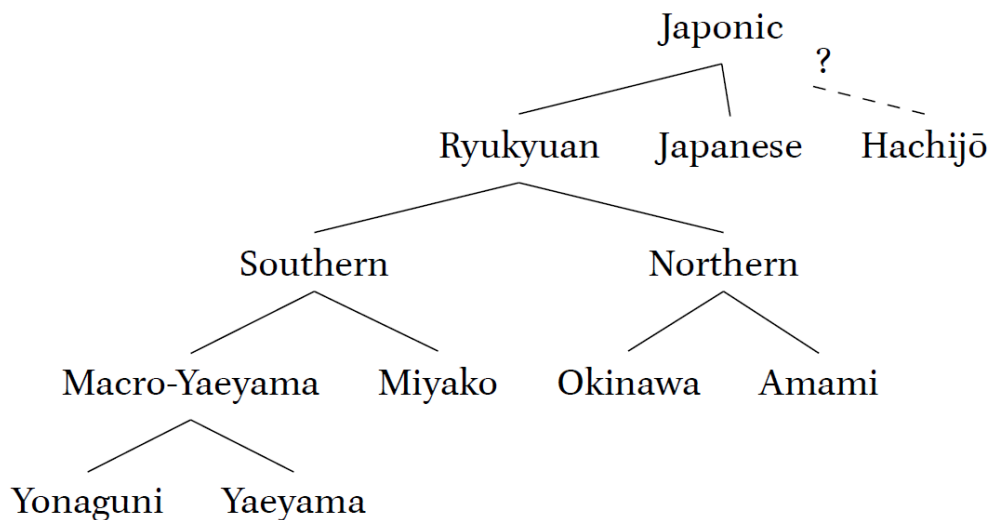
- A minority of scholars like Elisabeth de Boer (2020:28) consider **EOJ to be the mother language of all Eastern Japanese dialects:**



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

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

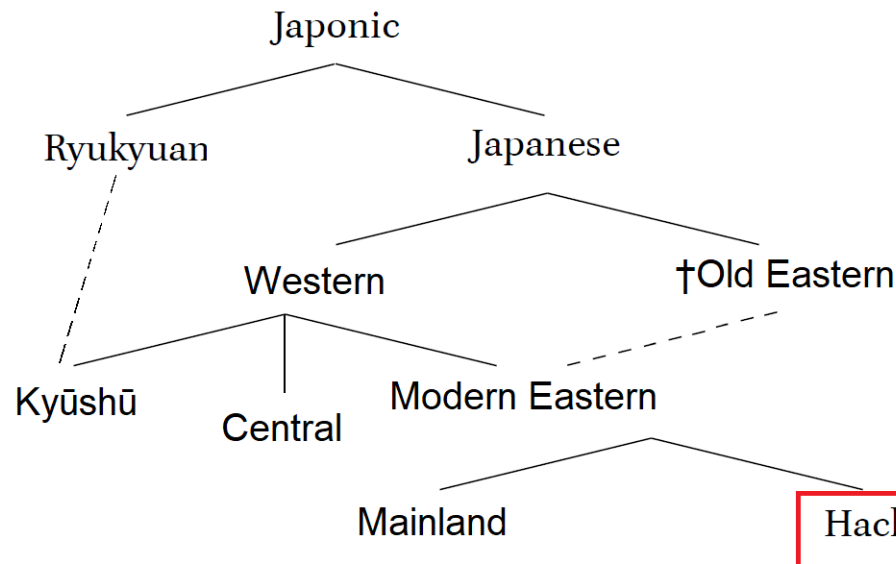
- Finally, other scholars like Pellard (2018:2) consider that **'[the] phylogenetic position [of Hachijō] has yet to be determined'**



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

Introduction (3) – EOJ & Hachijō

- As for me, I tend to see Eastern Old Japanese as a substrate of Eastern Japanese dialects: (hyphenated lines indicate substrates)



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

(1) Phonology

(1.1) – PJ *e

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

PJ	Examples	WOJ	t-EOJ	Hachijō
*e	‘good’ (ATTR) ‘long’ (ATTR)	<i>yāki</i> <i>nagaki</i>	<i>yāke</i> <i>nagake</i>	<i>yoke</i> <i>nagake</i>

(1.1) – PJ *e

- However, this retention is mostly confined to adjective attributive forms in EOJ (only 4 non-attributive occurrences), and is unattested elsewhere in Hachijō.
- On the other hand, Hachijō has a frequent secondary backing of *i and *i to *e* (mostly after labial), as in:
 - *hege* `beard'
 - *menna* `all'
 - *zene* `coin'
- Thus, we cannot exclude that adjectival *-ke* is secondary in Hachijō.

(1.2) – PJ *o

- Similarly, the **conditional retention of PJ *o** is also often noted:

PJ	Examples	WOJ	t-EOJ	Hachijō
*o	‘mat’	<i>musiro</i>	<i>*mosiro</i>	<i>mosho</i>
	‘seal’	<i>sirusi</i>	<i>*sirosi</i>	<i>shoshi*</i>
	‘to stand’ (ATTR)	<i>tatu</i>	<i>tato</i>	<i>tato</i>
*o	‘cloud’	<i>kumo</i>	<i>kumo</i>	<i>kumo</i>

(1.2) – PJ *o

- However, this retention is, again, mostly confined to morphology.
- As a general rule, **PJ *o is usually raised to *u*** in Hachijō, like in WOJ:

PJ	Examples	WOJ	t-EOJ	Hachijō
*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>

- Out of roughly 9000 lexical items, so far I listed only **a dozen possible exceptions.**

(1.2) – PJ *₀

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



(1.3) – Phonetic innovations

- Very few EOJ phonological innovations could 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-i</i> * <i>ore-i</i>	<i>oteru</i> <i>oreru</i>
*r	‘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 linked with morphology, and we cannot rule out that Hachijō innovated secondarily.

(1.3) – Phonetic innovations

- Generally, **these evolutions are exceptional in Hachijō.**
- **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>as<u>e</u></i>	<i>ipa</i> <i>*kap<u>a</u>ru</i> <i>*as<u>a</u></i>	<i><u>e</u></i> <i>kya:ru / ke:ru < *ka<u>e</u>ru</i> <i>as<u>e</u></i>
*əy	‘tree’ ‘baggage’ ‘to get up’	<i>k<u>i</u></i> <i>n<u>i</u></i> <i>ok<u>i</u>-</i>	<i>ke</i> <i>*ne</i> <i>*oke-</i>	<i>k<u>i</u></i> <i>n<u>i</u></i> <i>ok<u>i</u>ru</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>

(1.3) – Phonetic innovations

- Finally, 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>

Conclusion

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 likely to be a **substrate**, rather than a **mother language**.

おかげさまで！
/ Thank you very much!

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