

Shima-kotoba:

A synchronic and diachronic study of the Hachijō language

Étienne Baudel – Séminaire des doctorants de l'Université Bordeaux
Montaigne

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Introduction

- This presentation is about my PhD topic: **the Hachijō (八丈) language** of Japan.



Traditional drummers
from Hachijō

(ANA)

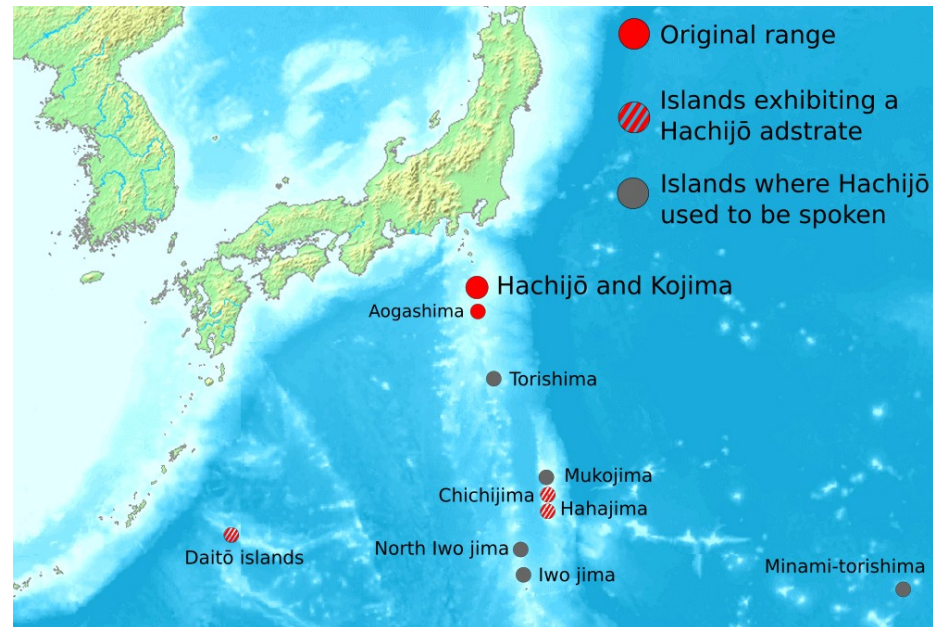
Introduction

- I will present Hachijō in 7 aspects:
 - **Geography**
 - **History**
 - **Current status**
 - **Classification**
 - **Varieties**
 - **Linguistic data and former studies**
 - **Grammatical peculiarities**

Introduction - What is Hachijō?

What is Hachijō?

- Hachijō is a **minority language of Japan**, spoken on several islands in the Pacific:



Distribution of
Hachijō

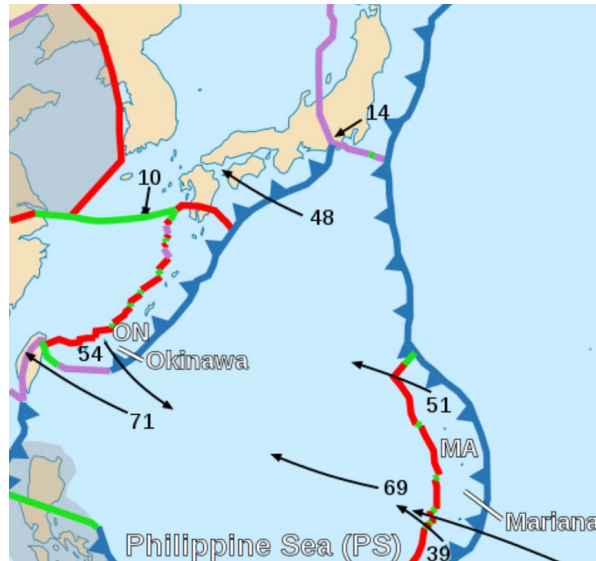
What is Hachijō?

- It is traditionally simply called ***Shima-kotoba*** 島言葉 'island speech' by its speakers.
- It got the name "Hachijō" **in the 19th century**, since Hachijō-jima is by far the most populated of the islands where it is spoken.
- An adjective '**Hachijoan**' also appeared in English in the 2010s (e.g. KUPCHIK, 2012; HAYWARD and LONG, 2013), on the model of 'Ryukyuan'.

(1) Geography

(1) – Geography

- Hachijō originates from 3 islands of the **Nanpō archipelago** (南方諸島), on the convergence of the Filipino and the Pacific tectonic plates:



Tectonic map of the
Philippine sea
(*wikimedia*)

(1) – Geography

- More precisely, it originates from 3 volcanic islands of the **Izu archipelago**.
- From north to south:
 - **Hachijō-jima** (62.52 km², 6878 inhabitants)
 - **Hachijo-kojima** (3.08 km², uninhabited)
 - **Aogashima** (5.97 km², 172 inhabitants)

(1) – Geography

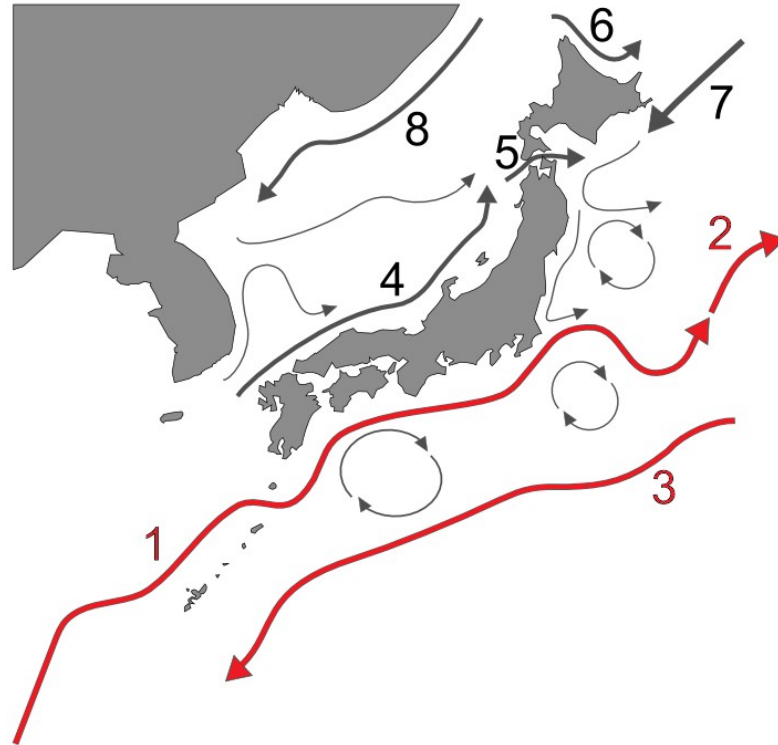
- Those islands are located in the **southern half of the Izu archipelago** (豆南 *zunan*), roughly 300-360 km south of Tokyo:



Map of the Izu archipelago
(*wikimedia*)

(1) – Geography

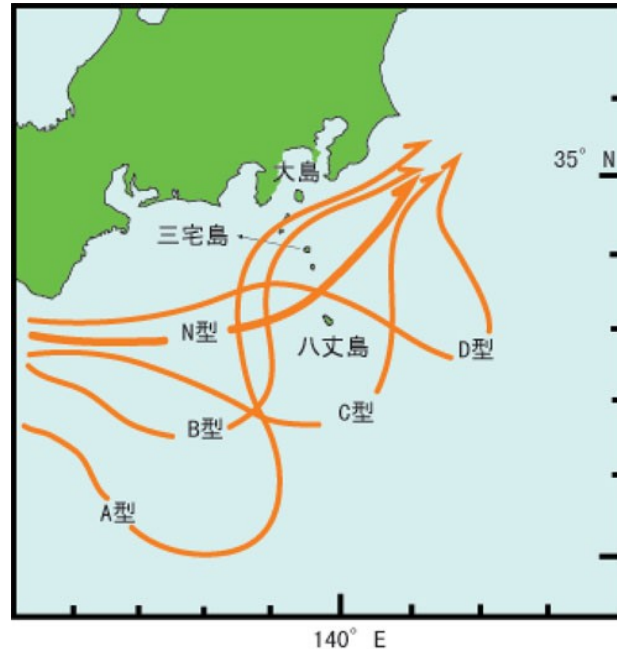
- This region is isolated by a strong current called **Kuroshio**:



Map of the ohe ocean currents surrounding the Japanese archipelago, with Kuroshio and its counter-current displayed in red (1-3) (*wikimedia*)

(1) – Geography

- This current isolates the islands both from the mainland and from one another:



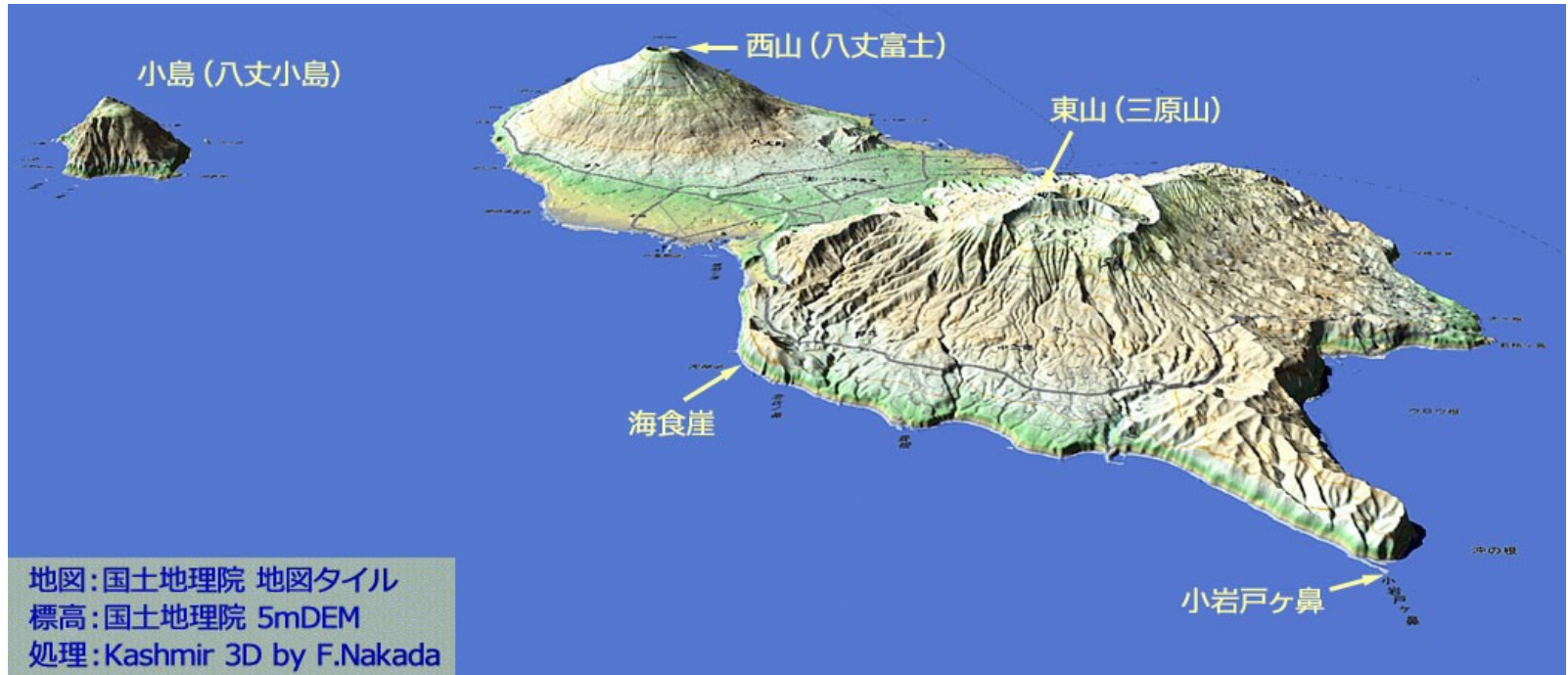
The Kuroshio current

(東京都島しょ農林水産総合センター)

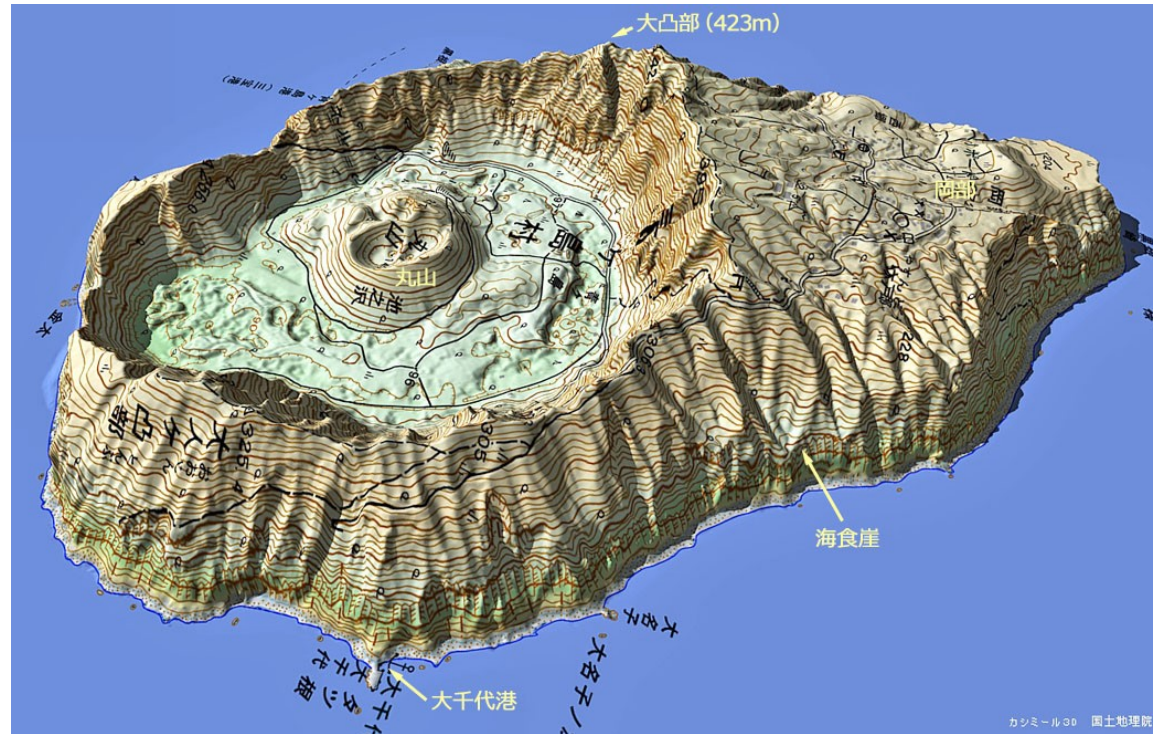
(1) – Geography

- Furthermore, these islands are **far away** from one another (Hachijō and Kojima are 78km south of Mikura-jima, and 64km north of Agashima).
- They have **steep rocky shores**, making them difficult to land.
- They are all **mountainous**, which used to make it very difficult to travel from one village to the other.

(1) – Geography



(1) – Geography



Modelisation of Aogashima's elevation

(© 日本の地形千景, <https://www.web-gis.jp>)

(2) History

(2) – History

- Hachijō-jima is inhabited at least since the **late Jōmon period** (ca 3500 BC), but sources are scarce on Kojima and Aogashima.
- Those islands seem to have been **part of Japan since ancient times**, and were already considered part of the empire in the Heian period.
- At that time, they played an **important role in the court religion**, as they were perceived as magical and protective margin territories (ALASZEWSKA, 2018).

(2) – History

- Later on, most of the medieval testimonies about the South Izu are related to **shipwrecks**.
- However, many legends exist, the most famous claiming that samurai **Minamoto no Tametomo** lived there.



Portrait of Minamoto no
Tametomo by Utagawa
Kuniyoshi

(© Tokyo Metropolitan
Library)

(2) – History

- In 1515, the Hōjō incorporated the South Izu to their territory and implemented a **silk tribute** that stayed in place until Meiji.
- The islands became an **exile territory** in 1603, and remained such until 1860.
- In 157 years, a total of **1887 convicts** was sent to those islands.

(2) – History

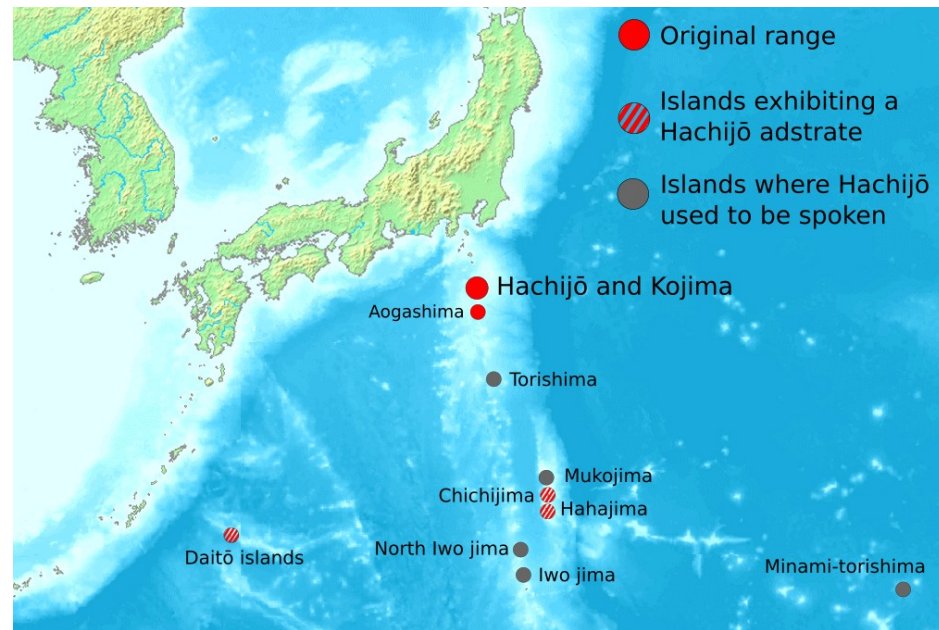
- **Traditional societies** remained in place for a long time in the South Izu (until late Meiji era for Hachijō, but until the 1950s on Kojima and Aogashima).
- Those societies were distinct from the mainland in many aspects (religion, gender roles, economy, arts & crafts, etc.), and are often considered to have been **remarkably archaic**.

(2) – History

- Finally, in the beginning of the Meiji period, the Hachijō language also spread to other islands:
 - in 1876, the emperor ordered the colonisation of **Ogasawara** and sent settlers from Hachijō
 - in 1888, **Torishima** was colonised by Tamaoki Han'emon
 - in 1896, **Minami-Torishima** was colonised by Mizutani Shinroku
 - in 1899, two of the **Daitō Islands** were colonised by Tamaoki Han'emon
- In all of those cases, Hachijō speakers formed the majority of settlers.

(2) – History

- Later on, several of those islands were abandoned, while other became inhabited by other linguistic communities, giving birth to **mixed languages**:



Distribution of
Hachijō

(3) Current status

(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 since 1945.
- Thus, it was **included in 2009 in UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in danger***.

(3) – Current status

- This recognition by UNESCO lead to **some local efforts** toward its preservation:
 - several **teaching materials** were created, especially targetting children (textbooks, talebooks, songbooks, videos, card games...)
 - **language classes** were opened with native speakers
 - a variety of **language-related events** were created, combining several approaches (theatre plays, drum shows, tournaments...)
 - the language was given more visibility in the urban landscape

(3) – Current status

- However, the language is still facing **various issues**, such as:
 - the pervasion of standard Japanese
 - the lack of teaching and of exposure for younger members of the community
 - a lack of visibility and accessibility (no unified spelling, no ISO code...)
- More generally, Hachijō still has **no official recognition** in Japan.

(4) Classification

(4) – Classification

- Like standard Japanese, Hachijō belongs to the **Japonic language family** (日琉語族 *nichiryū gozoku*).



Map of the Japonic language (*wikimedia*)

(4) – Classification

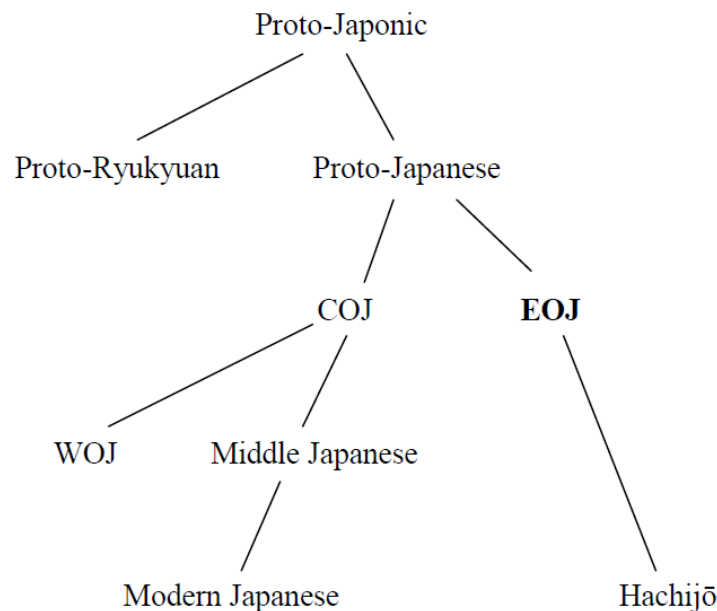
- Like other minority languages of Japanese, Hachijō was long considered simply a **dialect of Japanese** (virtually all articles and books before 2010 called it 八丈方言, with the exception of AOYAGI, 1972).
- However, it now tends to be considered a **different language**, even in Japan (KANEDA, 2009 & 2013; YAMADA, 2010; MIKI, 2016-2020).

(4) – Classification

- As a matter fact, it seems to have **no clear mutual intelligibility** with standard Japanese, even though this is quite hard to assess with certainty (IANNUCCI, 2019: 100-106).
- In fact, IANNUCCI considers that the grammatical peculiarities of Hachijō *probably* make it unintelligible for mainland Japanese speakers (2019: 106-120).
- **I would like to conduct a study among native Japanese speakers to assess this claim.**

(4) – 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

(4) – Classification

- This putative classification is based on **old observations** (DICKINS & SATOW, 1878: 464), that were gradually expanded since.
- These observations show that Hachijō and EOJ have similarities in:
 - **phonetics** (e.g.: retention of PJ *e and *o)
 - **morphology** (e.g.: -o / -ke attributives, -ki / -si > -chi / -ji past tense, -ar- resultative...)
 - **lexical items** (e.g.: *ani* 'what', *tego* 'third daughter', *mama* 'cliff'...)

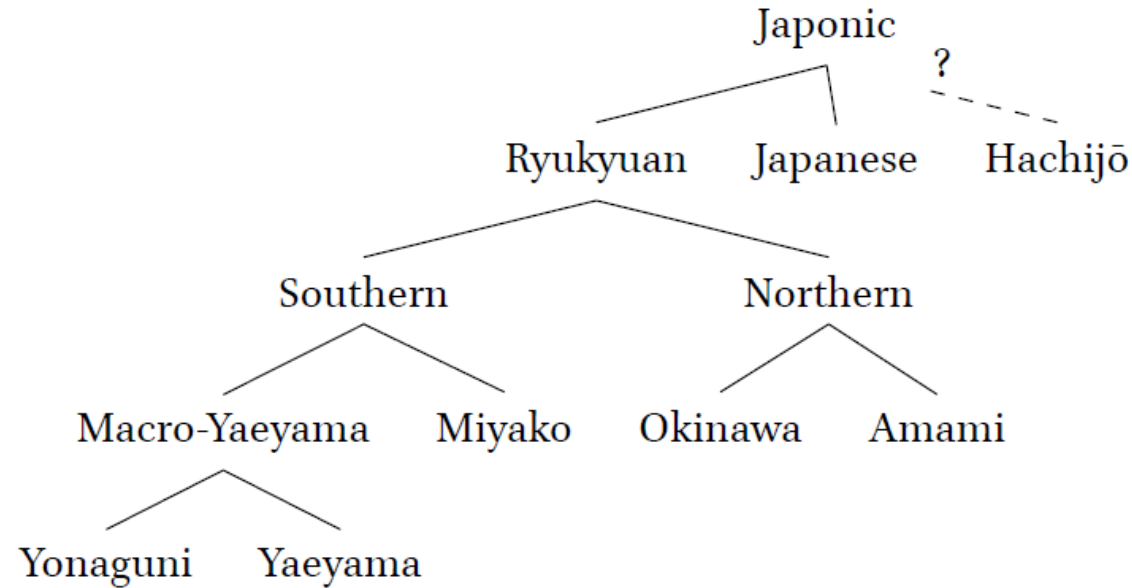
(4) – Classification

- However, **we are lacking data** to assess the regularity of several supposed evolutions.
- Furthermore, most of these shared features are **shared archaisms** and not **shared innovations**.
- Therefore, **they cannot be used as a criterium for classification.**

(4) – Classification

- Consequently, other scholars consider that **Hachijō is yet to be classified.**
- In this perspective, it can be putatively classified:
 - within **Japonic** (PELLARD, 2018: 2)
 - within **mainland Japanese** (dominant view among Japanese scholars, ex: HIRAYAMA, 1968; DE BOER, 2020: 50)

(4) – Classification



Japonic language tree proposed by
PELLARD (2018: 2)

(4) – Classification

- On the other hand, other similarities can be observed with:
 - Eastern Japanese dialects
 - Kyūshū dialects
 - Ryukyuan languages
- These similarities can also be analysed **spatially** in a **concentric circle model** (KANEDA & HOLDA, 2018).

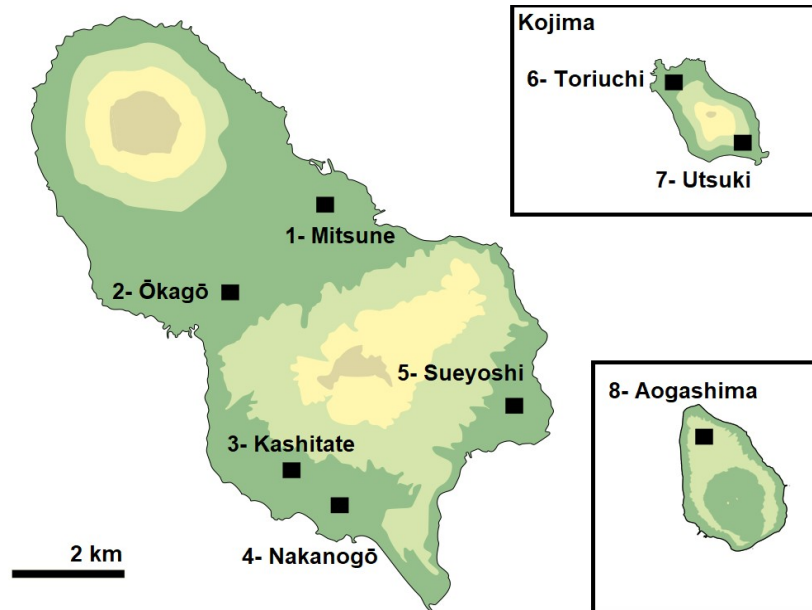
(4) – Classification

- In a nutshell, the question of the classification of Hachijō needs to be tackled **from various angles**.
- **It is an important question of my current research.**

(5) Local varieties

(5) – Local varieties

- There are **at least 8 recorded varieties** of Hachijō, corresponding to 8 villages:



Map of the Hachijō varieties

(5) – Local varieties

- Their differences can be illustrated with some simple sentences (YOSHIMACHI, 1952: 41):

Japanese	<i>Kono mikan ha</i>	<i>suppai kara</i>	<i>suteyō!</i>
Aogashima	Kono mikan yo wa	suppake n te	buc-charo wa !
Toriuchi	Kono mikan wa	suppake n te	buc-charo wa yo !
Utsuki	Kono mikan wa	suppake n te	buc-charo e !
Mitsune	Kono mikan wa	suppake n te	buc-charo gon !
Ōkagō	Kono mikan wa	suppake n te	buc-charo wa !
Kashitate	Kono mikan wa	suppake i te	buc-charo gwan !
Nakanogō	Kono mikan wa	suppake n te	buc-charo gan !
Sueyoshi	Kono mikan wa	suppake n te	buc-charo ō !

(5) – Local varieties

Japanese	<i>Muzukashii hon de ha</i>	<i>yome nai ga</i>	<i>kana tsuki nara</i>	<i>watashi de mo yomeru.</i>
Aogashima	Mutsukashike hon yo wa	yomennō ga	kana ga tsuttaru hon daraba	are ni mo yomerō wa.
Toriuchi	Ezuke hon dō to wa	yomennō ga	kanō tsukereba	are ni mo yomeru nō wa.
Utsuki	Etsuke hon de wa	yomennō ga	kana-tsuki dō to	are n mo yomero wa.
Mitsune	Etsuke hon ja	yomennō ga	kana-tsuki dāba	are n mo yomero wa.
Ōkagō	Muzukashike hon wa	yomennō ga	kana nosokō hon wa	w are ni wa yomeru nō wa.
Kashitate	Kowake hon de	yomenn <u>owa</u> ga	kana-tsuki daraba	w are ni mo yomeru nō wa.
Nakanogō	Etsuke hon de wa	yomenako n te	kana ga tsuttareba	are ni mo yomeru darō .
Sueyoshi	Mutsukashī hon de wa	yomennake dō mo	kana ga tsuttareba	are ni mo yomeru darō .

(5) – Local varieties

- The clearest differences between Hachijō varieties are **lexical**.
- However, **a few sound correspondences can also be observed** (YAMADA, 2010):

SJ	Aogashima	Toriuchi	Utsuki	Mitsune	Ōkagō	Kashitate	Nakanogō	Sueyoshi
<i>oboeru</i>	obēru	obēru	obēru	obēru	obēru	obīru	obīru	obīru
<i>daikon</i>	dēko	dēko	dēko	dēko	dēko	jāko	dyako	dēko
<i>kawa</i>	kō	kō	kō	kō	kō	kuwā	koa	kā

(5) – Local varieties

- Based on those lexical and phonetical correspondences, it is often considered since NINJAL (1950), that there are **five independent branches** of Hachijō:
 - **'downhill Hachijō'** (Mitsune & Ōkagō)
 - **'uphill Hachijō'** (Kashitate & Nakanogō)
 - Sueyoshi
 - Aogashima
 - Kojima varieties (among which Utsuki appears particularly innovative)

(5) – Local varieties

- However, this classification does not seem very satisfactory to me, as it tends to take into account both **shared archaisms** and **shared innovations**.
- It also lacks **relative chronology** for the observed evolutions, and fails to consider that some varieties might be **transitional dialects**.
- Finally, only **few sound correspondences** have been suggested, and they are often **highly irregular**.

(5) – Local varieties

- Therefore, **the diachronic and spatial comparison of Hachijō varieties will be an important part of my research.**
- However, some questions might not be possibly answered, as **some varieties are very sparsely attested** (especially the Toriuchi variety of Kojima).

(6) Linguistic data

(6) – Linguistic data

- 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...)

(6) – Linguistic data

- **This material is currently expanding**, thanks to several initiatives, like the ones by MIKI Yōsuke, Komasawa University:



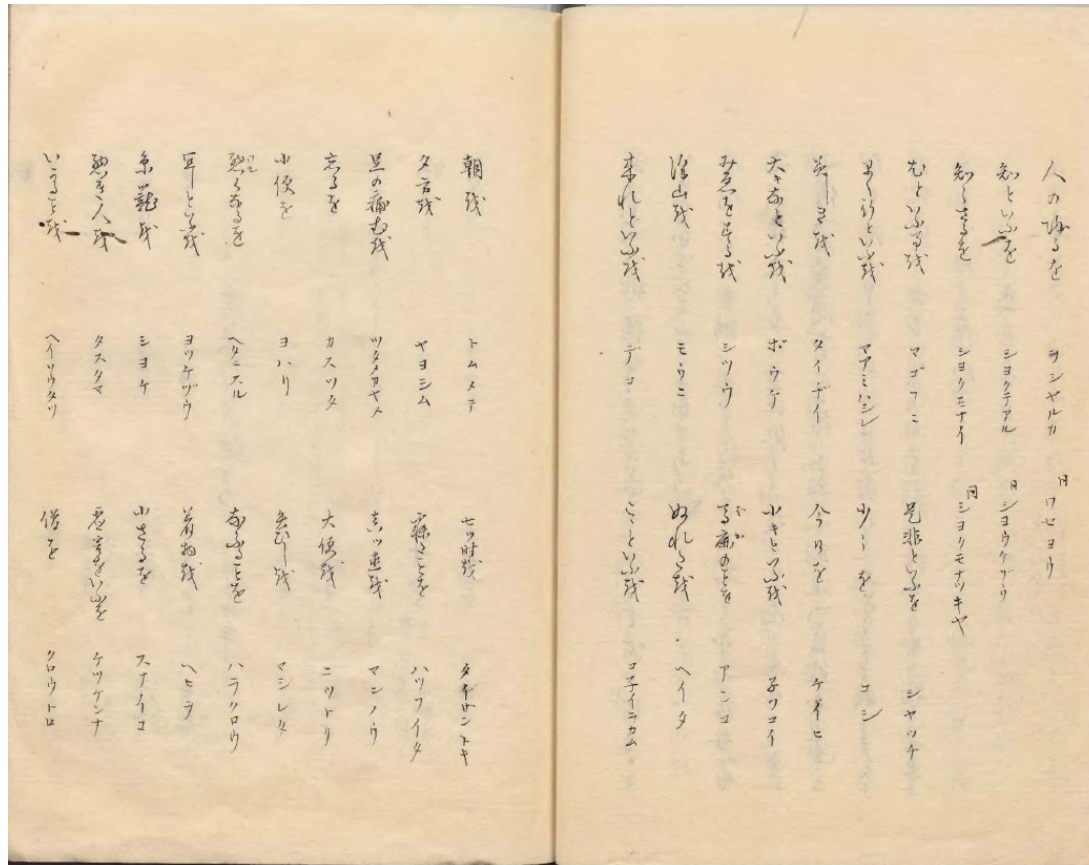
Kawakami Ayako
reading a Hachijō
folktale
for Youtube

© Hachijō-jima Styles,
2021

(6) – Linguistic data

- The first attestations of Hachijō date back from the **end of the Edo period** (1781-1858), in chronicles and travel books.
- So far, I identified **11 pre-modern wordlists** from that period.
- The first text written in Hachijō dates back from the 1848 *Yatake no nezamegusa* 八丈の寝覚草.

(6) – Linguistic data



An example of a
Hachijō wordlist from
the Edo period:

Hattori Yoshitaka,
Hachijō kiriko-ori, pp.
77-78 (1811)

© Edo Tokyo museum

(6) – Linguistic data

- Later, Hachijō was studied several times, most notably by:
 - **HOSHINA Kōichi** (1899-1900)
 - **NINJAL** (1950)
 - **NHK** (1959-1970)
 - **ŌSHIMA Ichirō & SUGIMURA Takao** (1964-1994)
 - **AOYAGI Ayako & AOYAGI Seizō** (1972-1988)
 - **KANEDA Akihiro** (1990-2018)
 - **NINJAL** (2013)

(6) – Linguistic data

- People integrated in the local communities also got involved in the language documentation:
 - **ASANUMA Ryōji**, from Sueyoshi (1961-1999)
 - **NAITŌ Shigeru**, who lived in Sueyoshi (1981-2002)
 - **OKUYAMA Kumao**, from Mitsune (1990-2011)
 - **YAMADA Heiemon**, who lived in Mitsune (2010)
 - etc.

(6) – Linguistic data

- One of the objectives of my research is to **gather** material from all those primary and secondary sources and to **harmonise** them into a **comprehensive corpus**.
- In a second time, I wish to gather **new data** on the field from local informants.
- My hope is that this corpus will allow a better understanding of the Hachijō language in its diversity (**diachronic, diatopic, diagenic, diastratic...**).

(7) A few grammatical peculiarities

(7.1) Phonology and phonetics

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- Hachijoan phonology is quite similar to standard Japanese:
 - **5 short vowels:** *a, i, u, e, o* with long counterparts *ā, ī, ū, ē, ō* and various diphthongs
 - roughly **14 consonants:** *p, t, k, b, d, g, h, s, z, m, n, y, r, w,* + **11 palatals** *py, ty, ky, by, dy, gy, hy, sy, my, ny, ry* + **4 geminates** + **1 moraic nasal** *n*
 - no affricate / unaffricate opposition (二つ仮名)

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- However, the following peculiarities can be noted:
 - Hachijō has **no pitch-accent**
 - plain /p/ can occur, even word-initially: ***p**ēru* `get wet'
 - /w/ can occur before /e/: *ka**w**ēshikya* `cute' (rare)
 - /ss/ is treated as /tts/ (exc. in Sueyoshi): *he**tt**so* `navel'
 - diphthongs are treated very differently, depending on the variety (*cf* slide n°42)

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- Furthermore, some phonemic oppositions are not quite clear, depending on the generation, and on the variety:
 - /sʲ/ ~ /hʲ/: **hito** ~ **shito** 'person'
 - /d/ ~ /r/: **ranpu** ~ **danpu** 'lamp'
 - /z/ ~ /zʲ/: **zōsē** ~ **jōsē** 'rice gruel'
 - /i/ ~ /yu/: **igoku** ~ **yugoku** 'move'

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- On a phonetic level, most realisations are also quite similar to standard Japanese:
 - /i/ **palatalises** the preceding stop, and causes /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/ to affricate
 - /u/ is realised as [ɯ], triggers the **affrication** of /t/ and retains a labial realisation [ɸɯ] when following /h/
 - /i/ and /u/ are **depleted** between voiceless stops
 - /b/ and /g/ are **lenited** in intervocalic position...

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- However, some **archaic** phonetic realisations can also be seen:
 - /e/ is often realised as [j^he]: *sensei* ~ ***shenshei***
 - /h/ is sometimes realised as /ɸ/ before /a/: *ha* 'leaf' [ɸa] (Nakanogō)
 - voiced stops are sometimes prenasalised: *yondare* 'drool'

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- **Phonetic innovations** can also be observed, but they **are usually variety-specific**; ex:
 - /nD/ can be realised as [DD] in most varieties: *yondare* ~ *yoddare*
 - /ē/ and /ō/ respectively can be realised as [ɪ:] and [ʊ:] in Kashitate and Nakanogō
- In this perspective, Utsuki and Kashitate varieties appear to be by far the most innovative.

(7.2) Syntax

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- In general, Hachijō syntax is quite similar to standard Japanese:
 - **(S)OV**
 - **head-final**
 - **left-branching**
 - **topic-prominent**
 - **without explicit subject...**

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- However, several archaisms that were lost in standard Japanese can still be seen in the Hachijō syntax, for instance:
 - in the **particle system** and the **case marking** (ex: *=no*, *=ga*, *=i*, *=gē*; etc.)
 - in the **verbal 'extension' system** (ex: conjectural *=nō*)
 - in several uses of the **attributive or the final form** (in exclamation, interrogation or in *kakari-musubi* 係り結び)

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- The Hachijō morpho-syntax also exhibits **several innovations**, for instance:
 - the refection of final forms with the = ***wa*** declarative particle
 - a systematic vocalic lengthening before quotative = *te*
 - the coalescence of several particles together (*nya, shan, ja*)
 - the coalescence of case particles with the preceding noun, creating a **declension-like pattern** (ex: *matsuri, matsurya, matsuryo, matsurin*)

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- However, **more research is needed on this topic.**
- Indeed, not unlike several other languages, **syntax is the least studied aspect of Hachijō.**

(7.3) Morphology

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- The most-commented feature of Hachijō is its **conservative morphology**, especially the preservation of the *rentaikei* / *shūshikei* opposition for both verbs and adjectives.
- This is an **almost unique feature** in Japan (some traces can be seen in Ryukyuan, and in a Nagano dialect called Akiyama-gō).
- It was compared with **Eastern Old Japanese**.

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- The attributive/final opposition in verbs looks like this (ASANUMA, 1999: 107 & 194):
 - (1) ſeki=ga der-**u**
sneeze.SUBJ go.out-**FIN**
“[I am] sneezing.”
 - (2) e: der-**o** toki=wa...
house.ACC go.out-**ATTR** time=TOP...
“When I leave home...”

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- And in the past tense (ASANUMA, 1999: 104 & 19):
 - ɬo:tɕw:jo nom-**ara**
shōchū.ACC drink-PAST.**FIN**
"I drank *shōchū*."
 - ɬima-zake: nom-**a:*** da:=jan
island-(REND.)alcohol.ACC drink-PAST.**ATTR** cop.ATTR=EXCL
"That's because I drank *shima-zake* !"

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- This opposition also exists for adjectives (ASANUMA 1999: 129 & 273):
 - (1) $\text{ɕima=no mugi-zo:ɕi:=wa unma-kja}$
island=GEN porridge=TOP tasty-**FIN**
“The island porridge is tasty!”
 - (2) $\text{unma-ke mugi-zo:ɕi:=ga ni-te aro=wa}$
tasty-**ATTR** porridge=SUBJ boil.CUNJ COP-ATTR=FIN
“Some tasty porridge is boiling.”

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

- Other morphological peculiarities of Hachijō were abundantly commented, such as:
 - the copula ***dara / doa***
 - the two negative copulas ***-naka / -noa*** and ***-nake / -nakkyā***
 - the ***-(t)ara*** and ***-(t)arara*** past tenses
 - the ***-chi / -ji*** retrospective tense
 - the treatment of *-ku / -gu*, and *-su* verbs in participle: *kaku* → ***katte*** (SJ *kaite*), *oyogu* → ***oyonde*** (SJ *oyoide*) ; *dasu* → ***dēte*** (SJ *dashite*)
 - etc.

(7) – Grammatical peculiarities

	Past 1	Past 2	Non-past	Conjunct
Consonant verb	nom arara nom aroa	nom ara nom oa	nom u nom o	non de
Vowel verb	mi tarara mi aroa	mi tara mi toa	mi ru mi ro	mi te
Copula	/	dar ara dar oa	d ara d oa	d e
Adjective	/	naga karara naga karoa	naga kja naga ke	naga ku
Negative copula 1	/	na karara na karoa	na ka no a	-a zu
Negative copula 2	/	na karara na karoa	nak kja nak ke	na ku

Conclusion

おかげさまで！

/ Thank you very much!

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