

Kamishibai in Dialect

Aiming to Inherit the Endangered Hachijo-jima Dialect

Yosuke Miki

1. Introduction

In this paper, as an example of how speech discourse materials can be used for language succession, I introduce the efforts made to create kamishibai written in Hachijo dialects. Hachijo dialects, spoken on Tokyo's Hachijo-jima island, was designated in 2009 by UNESCO as a "language in danger of extinction" and judged to be "definitely endangered" (UNESCO 2009). Additionally, it was said that if no measures were taken, the Hachijo dialects would disappear in 100 years. This announcement is a warning about the possibility of disappearance of minority languages and cultural diversity in the process of globalisation.

Language disappearance is equivalent to the loss of local culture and identity. Currently, there are about 500 people who can speak the traditional Hachijo language, most of whom are over 70 years old. Descriptive research, recordings and preservation are urgently required, and the need for language succession activities is also increasing. With the announcement by UNESCO in 2009, a movement to record and inherit Hachijo dialects is being promoted in Hachijo town under the guidance of the Board of Education.

Given this background, I am attempting to work in cooperation with the Hachijo Town Board of Education and the National Institute of Japanese Language to create discourse materials with voice data (hereinafter referred to as "speech discourse materials") given the critical need for language preservation. In addition, I aim to make the speech discourse materials available not only for preserving languages but also for linguistic succession activities and use in educational settings.

I created a kamishibai based on a folktale from Hachijo-jima Island (Miki 8–12) and documented and recorded the speaker's kamishibai performance on video. This paper discusses the adopted approach.

2. Outline of Hachijo-jima island

Hachijo-jima is an isolated island located in the eastern end of Far East Asia. It is located about 287 km south of Tokyo. It is a gourd-shaped island with the distance from the northwest to the southeast of the island is 14 km, and the distance from the northeast to the southwest is 7.5 km where the two volcanoes of Nishiyama (Hachijo-Fuji, 854 m) and Higashiyama (Mihara-Yama, 701 m) join, with an area of 69.11 km². It belongs to the Tokyo prefecture and forms one town that combines the two islands together with an uninhabited small island. It has an oceanic climate influenced by the Kuroshio Current, which is a warm current, and is also referred to as “the island of ever-spring”. The average annual temperature is 17.8° C, and the weather is hot and humid, characterised by strong wind and heavy rainfall throughout the year.

The town of Hachijo-jima is divided into Sakaue and Sakashita across the Osaka Pass, which used to once pose a difficulty for transportation. Furthermore, it is divided into five villages, namely Mistune, Okago of the Sakashita area and Kashitate, Nakanogo and Sueyoshi of the Sakaue area. The population of the entire island is less than 7,500 and comprises about 4,400 households, with the majority of the population concentrated in Sakashita. In the past, Sakaue area, Nakanogo and Kashitate formed the centre of the island, but now the centre has moved to Sakashita area’s Okago and Mitsune. The main facilities of the island, such as the town hall and the airport, are located in the Sakashita area.

You can travel by plane and ship to get to Hachijo-jima from the mainland (Tokyo). There are three flights a day from the Haneda airport to the Hachijo-jima airport, which are approximately 55 minutes in each direction. However, it is difficult to approach the Hachijo-jima airport, and given the weather conditions, cancellations are not unusual. A large passenger ship is operated once a day from the Takeshiba pier, but since the Kuroshio Current flows between Hachijo-jima and the mainland, it takes about 10 hours in each direction.

Hachijo-jima has been separated from the mainland for many years by the Kuroshio Current. Therefore, since the long-term banishment of Ukita Hideie to Hachijo-jima in 1600, Hachijo-jima became a place where political prisoners were expelled.

3. About Hachijo dialects

3.1 Outline

Hachijo dialects are spoken in six areas, namely the five villages in Hachijo town and the Aogashima village, but with its population of less than 170 people, the number of Aogashima speakers appears to be around 10 and most of speakers are in Hachijo-jima. According to Kaneda (2), there are no major differences in the grammars of the six dialects. Differences appear in phonology, but the main difference lies in how the vowels are fused. Although differences exist between the dialects, communication is possible, and there is no problem in conversing between the different dialects.

Next, I explain the features of Hachijo dialects. There are many dialects in modern Japanese, but Hachijo dialects are not similar to any of them. In Japanese dialect classification, they are an isolated language. In Japanese dialects studies, Hachijo dialects are treated as one of the subclassed dialects of Japanese, but UNESCO treats Hachijo dialects as an independent language different from Japanese because of its specificity. It is thought that owing to geographical conditions Hachijo dialects were isolated from the external world and did not interact with other dialects for a long time.

For that reason, even now, Hachijo dialects continue to retain features of an extremely old form of Japanese that was use in before the Nara period (A.D. 710–794), which has already disappeared in contemporary Japanese language. It maintains the grammatical features of the East-Japan area dialect of the period seen in the work “Man-yo-shu” (A.D. 759) from the Nara period (Hojo 184–87; Kaneda 3). In Japan, in A.D. 759, the central languages and the East-Japan area dialect had already diverged as different languages. The dialect of the East-Japan area at that time retained features of a form of Japanese that was older than the central language at that time. Hachijo dialects, which continue to retain the characteristics of the Japanese spoken at that time, are languages that offer hints to rebuild the Japanese language of an era that is older than the ancient Japanese language that is found in the oldest Japanese written document.

3.2 Hachijo dialects as an endangered crisis language

Currently, the number of speakers who can speak traditional Hachijo is much less than that of the population of Hachijo-jima, which is estimated to be about 500 older adults. The majority of speakers of Hachijo dialects have an average age of over 70 years. Most of the adults younger than this age group (those in their 50s) can understand Hachijo, but do not know how to speak it. It is also difficult for younger generations (those

under 40s) to understand Hachijo or to recognise the words of Hachijo dialects. In the following 10–15 years, the number of speakers will decrease by half, making language succession and maintaining the language even more difficult. In addition, the local communities comprising older adults who speak the same dialect, whose presence is important for maintaining the language, will soon disappear.

There is only a short time span in which the research and storage of Hachijo dialects can be done. Now, when we still have an adequate number of speakers, we urgently need to investigate, describe and save the language. In addition, the need for language succession activities is increasing.

4. Approach to preservation and inheritance

4.1 Local government's efforts towards preservation and inheritance

The Asahi Shimbun (newspaper) dated 20 February 2009 published an article entitled “World 2500 language annihilation crisis”, stating that “According to UNESCO, 8 languages are targeted in Japan”. The islanders thought that their language was a rural language that was only one of many Japanese dialects, and that its decline was inevitable. However, from an international point of view, they were shocked to know that losing their dialect represented a major loss for society.

After Hachijo Town learned about this fact, the Hachijo Town Board of Education became the centre for initiatives on the succession of Hachijo dialects from 2009. At the Board of Education, they surveyed all the elementary, junior high and high school students in the island to grasp the actual state of dialect use. The results revealed that children hardly use the dialects. Based on this, the Board of Education tried to incorporate dialect education into school education, etc., and efforts were made over four years.

This activity is described in detail in Motegi (88). In this paper, I introduce “Hachijo-jima-Kotoba Karuta” (a card game using island words), which was created through this activity.

Through their activities, the Board of Education identified that the dialect Karuta is effective for passing the dialect to the next generation, and created “Hachijo Jima-Kotoba Karuta.” This game has a reading card written in five regional dialects, and a CD that has recordings of how a speaker from each region sounds. The members of the Board of Education are not experts in dialects, so they hear the opinions of the speakers and make corrections. In addition, revised versions are also made as necessary, and the content has been updated. Karuta is sold at souvenir shops and tourist information centres, and anyone can easily access it.

Furthermore, events concerning Hachijo dialects have been organised. In addition to holding many events that use Karuta, information about them is also posted on the restaurants and hot spring rest areas on the island, so that the people on the island usually know about Karuta. The Board of Education also frequently hold events such as workshops for teachers and staff, the Hachijo dialect course, and the Carta tournament to promote awareness to the islanders. Although several other such activities are carried out as well, “Hachijo island word Karuta” offered a clue for the creation of kamishibai.

4.2 What you need to save the language

I have been involved in the educational activities to describe, save and inherit Hachijo dialects since 2014, working in collaboration with the Board of Education and the speakers of the dialects. Currently, I am engaged in activities to preserve and maintain natural discourse as voice data. In order to save the language, it is necessary to have a dictionary, a grammar book and discourse materials. Discourse materials correspond to textbooks for language learning, meaning that speech discourse material is a set of textbooks and recording materials.

There is an excellent grammar book written about Hachijo dialects, such as Kaneda (2001). Also, non-researcher islanders have created a collection of materials that collect vocabulary and expressions of Hachijo dialects (Asanuma 1999; Yamada 2010). On the other hand, there are very few speech discourse materials and recorded materials. In order to preserve and utilise the speech data of the natural discourse of Hachijo dialects, I transcribed the natural discourse speech as characters, created a text, and created an appendix of the research information to develop as discourse material with sound.

Such materials can be used not only for preserving the Hachijo dialects but also in various fields such as teaching materials and research materials, and can greatly contribute to academic research and language succession activities. If speech discourse materials are available, it will become easier to gather new researchers and collaborators with this as a mediator, and it will become easier to hand down and preserve activities in collaboration with such researchers and collaborators. Additionally, in response to the requests of the local community, by returning research results to the local community, the dialects can be extended and the extinction can be delayed.

Preserving Hachijoku languages contributes to preventing the diversity of the area from being lost in globalisation and maintaining diverse cultures.

4.3 Problems when collecting Hachijo dialects data

The current form of Hachijo dialects is different from the pure, traditional Hachijo dialects because it has been mixed with standard Japanese language. Therefore, even in the natural discourse between the older adults on the island, it is very difficult to collect discourse that adequately reflects the expression of traditional dialects.

As the first step of describing the language, I record natural speech as it is. And I transcribe the speech to the texts. In the second step, I verify with the speaker who listens to the recording to ensure that the written text is correct. We then correct it to a more traditional version of the Hachijo dialects. The following is an example of such a correction.

Correction example (1)

Originally, in the verbs and adjectives of the Hachijo dialects, the attributive form and the conclusive form are distinguished by different word forms, but there are examples where confusion is occurring now. The following example sentences have the same meaning both before and after correction, but since the grammar form has become the standard Japanese one, I changed it to the traditional grammar form.

Before correction — tonosamaga hitoyasumi siyaru tokide

After correction — tonosamaga hitoyasumi siyaro tokide

Meaning — When the Majesty is taking a break ...

Correction example (2)

Some speakers sometimes omit a particle and pronounce, but this omission is an influence of common Japanese. Traditionally, it is rare (Kaneda 33–35) to speak without a particle, so I supplemented the particle as follows.

Before correction — bene osiroi_ cukete

After correction — bene osiroio cukete

Meaning — Apply lipstick and Oshiroi (Japanese traditional foundation) ...

Correction example (3)

Common Japanese vocabulary (*ine*) was used instead of Hachijo dialects. Because there was no fusion of particles, which is a feature of Hachijo dialects, I corrected to traditional vocabulary (*tabu*), and the particle was modified to a fused form (*tabu+wo=tabu:*) ([:] is a long vowel).

Before correction — *kono ineo. cumede sigoitōQtei*

After correction — *kono tabu: cumede sigoitōQtei*

Meaning — Squeeze this rice with a nail ...

By applying these corrections to the text, I can create a sophisticated dialect text. Unfortunately, the text and recorded speech do not match. Additionally, if you rerecord the sound based on the modified text, it sounds unnatural. Because it is not spontaneous, just reading a sentence. As such, it will be unnatural and of low quality as speech discourse material.

To reconcile these issues, I adopted a “storytelling” style using topics from folk tales, asked the speakers to speak based on the modified text, and decided to record them. By doing this, I figured that I could save the traditional Hachijo dialects text and the sound based on it. Such “storytelling” using text might not be a natural discourse, but it is a better approach than reading the text aloud.

Additionally, in order to make it easily applicable to language succession activities, I painted pictures so that children could understand as well. This is an important point for conveying meaning. The picture helps the speaker speak, even if the speaker cannot tell the story well. Additionally, listeners can infer from the picture even if they do not know the dialect. Thus, I came up with the idea of creating a *kamishibai*.

4.4 Advantages of folk tales

Nobuhiro (1–3) notes that it is possible to capture the actual state of dialects that cannot be easily captured using the ordinary question-answer method investigation by storytelling. Folklore involves copying the form as it is. Old expression forms are retained in folk tales, and words that are nearly no longer spoken in everyday conversation and old grammatical forms continue to remain.

There is a tool for picking rice from rice panicles called *Nade:shi*, but the vocabulary has been forgotten because the tool itself is no longer used. However, these vocabularies

continue to exist in folk tales. In order to preserve and inherit such vocabularies, it is beneficial to make folklore the theme.

5. About the kamishibai

5.1 Outline

Next, I will discuss in detail the Hachijo word picture show. As mentioned previously, on Hachijo-jima, there is an excellent “Hachijo-Jima-Kotoba-Karuta” (Hachijo Town Board of Education) made by the Board of Education. Five kinds of reading cards are prepared for the Hachijo dialect Karuta, taking into consideration the differences in the dialects of the five areas. Therefore, I decided to prepare five kinds of kamishibai texts.

5.2 About the folklore recorded in the kamishibai

Currently, I am making some kamishibai based on the folk tales passed down to Hachijo Island. Many folk tales have been transmitted to Hachijo-jima, such as “Benezjara-Kakezjara”, “Momotarou”, “Zenkooji meeri”, “Hitosute ana”, “Tanabata-sama” and “Yasoyaegaki-hime.” Among these, I chose some folk tales that were of a suitable length to make a kamishibai, and which had a relatively easily understandable development of the story, a topic for which it was easy to draw pictures.

5.3 How to make a kamishibai, especially about the text

Next, I will explain how I created kamishibai in Hachijo dialects. First, while recording the voice in which the speaker is narrating folk tales, I convert the voice to characters, write and create the text. Next, I show the text to the speaker, listen to the recording, ask the questions, and make corrections, and the text is rewritten into the traditional Hachijo dialects based on the introspection of one’s self as the speaker. However, there are only a few speakers who can narrate folk tales. Therefore, the current, besides using past descriptions (Kaneda 2001, etc.), is created by translating the folk tale written in standard Japanese into the dialect (Asanuma 2016). I paid attention to collecting the natural sounds. My role is to use linguistics knowledge to guide the speaker in order to bring out the speaker’s old Hachijo dialects memories. This collaboration is important. In the course of working on making corrections to the

text, the speaker recalls the old Hachijo dialect and corrects to a more natural form, thus approaching as closely as possible the natural Hachijo dialects according to one's own sense of the dialect. Currently, I am working mainly on the Mitsune and Sueyoshi dialects. I started work on the Mitsune dialect because there is high-quality text written in the Mitsune dialect that can be referred. Additionally, an analysis of Kibe (97–238) revealed that the old dialect continues to exist in Sueyoshi, thus I am proceeding working here as a priority ahead of other locations. Ultimately I aim to align all the texts of the five dialects of Hachijo, and I am conducting surveys and preparations to expand the quality and quantity of contents.

5.4 Format of kamishibai

The kamishibai was created in the following three formats. It was important that the kamishibai should be easy to use for general islanders, and also easy to distribute.

1. Similar to traditional kamishibai, the text is written on the back of the picture.
2. The parts with pictures are in the PPT format. The text is prepared with data. I plan to release it online later.
3. A video recording of a speaker demonstrating a kamishibai.

Needless to say, it is best to see the speaker demonstrating the kamishibai, but if there are visuals, the kamishibai can be used more easily at any time. Merely preparing a kamishibai offers limited opportunities to play it, which subsequently results in even few opportunities for the general public to see.

Additionally by preparing the kamishibai itself as a PPT file data, we made it possible to transport and distribute it. People who are interested can actually perform using this data, and they can also print and utilise them individually. Similar to the oral discourse materials with sound, the aim is to eventually publish it online.

5.5 About subtitles

When making videos demonstrating kamishibai, subtitles were added to the whole storytelling part. The video has Hachijo dialects text and the subtitles offer the common Japanese translation. The subtitles are arranged in two columns; the top row arranges the text transcribed with Hachijo dialects in kana (Japanese phonetic characters), and the common Japanese translation is provided in the lower row.

I split the sentence separately for each morpheme, so that the learner can understand the division of morphemes. In order to contrast Hachijo dialects' texts with those translated into the common language, I tried to translate correctly on a word-by-word basis rather than on the sentence level. Additionally, in refining texts and creating common language translations, as stated above, we collaborated with the speakers.

When the speaker performs a kamishibai, the picture has a big role in it. However, in the case of videos, the role of subtitles is significant. While the speaker can explain dialects and stories as they are performing the plays, in the video it cannot be done. In the video, subtitles supplement the role of performers, and pictures are supplementary to help understand subtitles.

5.6 Possible contributions to inheriting the endangered language

The Hachijo-Jima-Kotoba-Karuta, is useful for acquiring vocabulary as an introduction to learn the dialect, but there is a demerit as that the text is short and it represents speech read from sentences, not natural speech. On the other hand, the narrative of kamishibai is useful for learning the dialect Karuta in that one can hear Hachijo dialects speech of a longer unit and learning by even practising oneself. Thus the learning process can be developed by learning a large sentence with video and practising it using the PPT.

I do not regard dialect Karuta and kamishibai as separate. I am creating it with the assumption that people who study the Hachijo dialects in the Karuta will utilise kamishibai to extend their learning. Furthermore, kamishibai's feature allows you to learn not only by watching images, but also by downloading the PPT file. Learners themselves can play a kamishibai. The learner can perform kamishibai using the PPT file.

The text of a kamishibai is a linguistically guaranteed quality, and by practising it, the learner himself can become a narrator of a folklore of dialect. It is as if the learners themselves are manipulating Hachijo words, but such familiarity is important for expanding the base of language succession activities. The learner can become a storyteller by viewing the video and practising using the PPT file. The vanishing art of telling folk tales is revived with kamishibai. Although it is one limited aspect of the folk tale and language, by passing it down, it is possible to preserve Hachijo dialects with good quality. It is also productive in that it creates new storytellers.

Thus, a new narrator is born who can tell Hachijo's folk tales using Hachijo dialects, thus helping with passing down the language. The story-telling of folk tales, which is

an important part of the culture of Hachijo-jima, is on the verge of extinction, but it can be revived through kamishibai.

In addition, it can be said that kamishibai has a relatively small investment cost. This is important from the research perspective that requires taking economics into account. The cost of a kamishibai production is only the payment to the illustrator and the printing fee. If you save this in the form of a PPT file and distribute it online, you can continue to use it semi-permanently.

5.7 Possible contributions to preserving the endangered language

There are pros and cons when viewing kamishibai as a speech discourse material. The longest story takes only about seven minutes. The amount of text is not large, so the amount of information is somewhat inferior to speech material. On the other hand, it becomes an interesting material in that individual differences and differences in expression methods become visible. Currently, I am engaged in conducting surveys on multiple speakers in each region, and creating multiple texts reflecting differences in expressions by region and speaker using one picture.

Kaneda (2) stated that regional grammatical differences are slight and can be regarded as almost the same. However, if I actually create a text of kamishibai, even though the grammatical structure is the same, there are differences in the manner of its exposure, depending on the region and the speaker. In fact, regional differences in languages are seen in the same area, as the regional difference between the central and south parts of the Osato area within the Okago area. Additionally, there may be differences in expression forms such as degree difference of honorific expressions. By recording the differences in the readings by speakers, we can contribute to the preservation of the diversity of expression amongst different speakers.

When describing languages that are under threat or when reactivating languages, small regional differences and individual differences tend to be ignored. This is because standardisation among new speakers is achieved when a language is restored. In this manner, the regional diversity of the original Hachijo dialects is lost. Creating multiple texts contributes to the preservation of language diversity.

For learners, if there is text reflecting the dialect differences based on the same text, they can undertake a simple comparison for each dialect, and it is beneficially to grasp the differences in the dialect of the whole island by using it. When researchers gather natural discourse, they can control the contents of the story to some extent by setting scenes and themes in advance. However, even if they do it in multiple regions and

create similar texts, they cannot undertake a simple comparison. This is probably not a very important issue for many researchers. Rather, how natural sounds can be picked up is important for them. However, these texts are convenient for learners. By creating a plurality of texts, it is possible not only to learn a single representation but also to grasp variations of expressions and understand the extent to which differences in expressions are permitted.

6. Conclusion

Currently, I translate not only folklore but also literary works into Hachijo. Even long and difficult texts help in comprehension if pictures are involved. A kamishibai has the power to convey the world of language through an image. I would like to utilise the kamishibai so that people who are already unable to speak Hachijo dialects or migrants from outside the island can become interested in Hachijo dialects.

When creating video material, the necessity to record things including gestures when speaking and cultural elements such as traditional songs and dances has been noted. Takubo (7–8) states: “In order to record the true form of the language, it is not enough just to save the language. It is necessary to enrich the metadata, to transcribe, to translate the word and the sentence, and to add the content. In order to really understand, sociological and cultural anthropological commentary will also be necessary.” Additionally, Himmelmann (161–95) asserts the importance of keeping records including language-related social behaviours and gestures. As research progresses, the video of playing the kamishibai may have new value.

Ono and Kobayashi (17–18) talk about the need for developing and creating teaching materials for learning narration by dialects, but they also discuss the necessity of setting a place to utilise such materials. It also touches upon the necessity of communicating the existence of the place to local residents and children. Our future task is to advance such activities.

The kamishibai plays a role in connecting children and people who do not know Hachijo dialects with dialect speakers of higher age.

Additionally, I aim to contribute to the revitalisation of the local community through Hachijo dialects. The attempts are expected to result in the stable inheritance of the Hachijo language.

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Yosuke Miki was born in Tokyo. After completing graduate school at Kokugakuin University and obtaining a PhD in literature, he worked as an associate professor at Chosun University of Korea and a research fellow at the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. He is currently junior associate professor at Mejiro University, Faculty of Human Sciences. He specialises in Japanese Linguistics (Dialectology) and carries out field work in various parts of Japan. His current research themes include grammatical descriptions of Hachijo dialects, which are spoken on remote islands belonging to Tokyo, and the creation of speech discourse material and dictionary.

vmikisan@yahoo.co.jp

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This paper aims to discuss the approach for using an oral discourse database for the preservation and succession activities of an endangered language. The Hachijo dialects were designated as a "language in danger of extinction" by UNESCO in 2009. Only a few people can speak the traditional Hachijo dialects, but the natural conversation recordings collected to preserve the language are insufficient to conserve the former system of the language. Therefore, we created revised texts of the transcripts after consulting about and examining the natural conversation transcripts with native speakers. In the re-recording of the revised texts, in order to eliminate unnaturalness to the extent possible, folk tales were chosen as the subject material, and the style of "storytelling" was adopted. In addition to uploading a video in which the speaker performed a kamishibai online, I created a PowerPoint Presentation (.ppt) Kamishibai, and made it available for downloading and use. Not only can learners watch and learn from the video, but they can also perform a kamishibai in Hachijo dialects by downloading the PPT file. The text in the kamishibai is authentic in the contexts in which it is used and is linguistically accurate. When a new performer talks about it, the language is inherited, albeit partially. A kamishibai can contribute to the preservation and inheritance of Hachijo dialects.

Keywords: endangered dialects, Hachijo dialects, speech discourse material, kamishibai, visualisation
