

方言敬語の語られ方と近代主義：
方言研究にみる近畿中心主義

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Academic Discourses on Honorifics in Dialects “Kinki Dialect as Most Developed Dialect” Revisited

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This paper argues that some academic discourses on the Tohoku dialect are quite similar to its media representations, and consequently, serve to marginalize the Tohoku dialect and its native speakers. We question the academic analyses which emphasize that the Kinki dialect is more complicated and refined than the Tohoku dialect in terms of the honorific system.

We examine some academic discourses concerning honorifics in dialects which employ a theory by Yanagita Kunio (2013⁸), which proposed that new vocabularies and expressions spread from western areas such as Kinki, once the capital of Japan, to eastern areas such as Tohoku, geographically far away from the capital, i.e. from the capital center to the periphery.

Kobayashi and Sawamura (2014) applied this theory to the way speakers of dialects express their thoughts, claiming that the Kinki dialect is most developed and the Tohoku dialect is least developed, or most primitive with the data and personal experiences. We believe that their analysis needs reconsideration. They claim that the Kinki area is advanced thanks to industrialization, i.e. development of business, which they think requires elaboration of verbal expressions while the Tohoku area is less advanced due to its agricultural nature, which they think requires less verbal communication.

Some academic discourses including Kobayashi and Sawamura(2014) dealing with honorifics in dialects, which have been characterized as linguistic elaboration with politeness, tend to support the idea that the Kinki dialect, the most developed, contains the most refined honorifics while the Tohoku dialect is less developed, less refined or without any honorifics. We claim that even today they evaluate the Kinki dialect too much and the Tohoku dialect too little. Linguistically speaking, every language is perfect and equally complex and refined. This point also applies to dialects. Their analyses ignore the linguistically founded presupposition.

Most analyses of dialects consider the honorifics in the Tohoku dialect is not refined but several analyses demonstrate that honorifics in the Tohoku dialect are

as refined or more refined than those in Standard Japanese.

This paper concludes that the traditional point of view that Kinki is the center and most refined while Tohoku is peripheral and less refined, culturally and linguistically, reflects a Japanese version of orientalism, which Said (1978) persuasively discussed. These academic discourses still marginalize the Tohoku dialect jointly with the media.