Effect of Hiroshima dialect in World Japanese: A case of complementizer deletion

Yoshiyuki Asahi
NINJAL, Japan

Complementizer in Japanese, to or tte, can be deleted when it appears in two verbs, iu (to say) and omou (to think) in western Japanese dialects as in (1) and (2).

(1) Taro wa gakko ni iku to/tte/966; itta
Taro NOM schoo LOC go COMP said
(2) Ashita ame ga furu to/tte/966; omou
Tomorrow rain NOM fall COM think

This phenomenon can be found in some parts of the West Japan. It is, at the same time in Hiroshima dialects. With a close look at the oral history data available in such countries as US, Canada, Brazil where Japanese emigrated since the end of 19th century, and regional Japanese koine emerged. It is said that Hiroshima is one of the major prefectures that has sent a large number of migrant to those countries.

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether or not any similarities and differences emerge in three Japanese communities: US, Canada, and Brazil. Whereas US and Canada have higher percentage of Hiroshima migrants from Brazil, it is widely said that Hiroshima dialect has become one of the major dialect that makes the local koine.

The data is a collection of a total 80 hours recordings (36 hours in US, 20 hours in Canada, 24 hours in Brazil) which were interview data by local historian between the mid 1970s and 1990s towards the first migrant generations.

The results show that the population size from Hiroshima plays an important role. We have more frequent use of the complementizer deletion in the US and Canada than Brazil. At the same time, I found some differences in the usage of this phenomenon. I will discuss the reasons why this difference emerged.

Keywords: koine, complementizer deletion, World Japanese.