

## **Comparing integrated geographical distributions to grasp language changes**

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A new nation-wide linguistic atlas of Japan (New Linguistic Atlas of Japan: NLJ) has been just published; the atlas was made based on the survey called Formation Process of Japanese Dialects (FPJD). We have two previous atlases, Linguistic Atlas of Japan (LAJ) and Grammatical Atlas of Japan (GAJ), so we can compare linguistic maps from these atlases to trace language changes. While we can just compare maps of the same lexical, phonological or grammatical item from published books, there is another way of comparison. The original data of LAJ, GAJ and NLJ are now uploaded to the web and open to the public. Thus we can redraw the maps from our own viewpoint. The author mapped different items which include a specific linguistic feature using the same symbols. One focused example is quasi-nominal particles: ex. Standard Japanese ookii no “a big one”. The particles also follow verbs and make a functional word: ex. Standard Japanese iku no daroo “I think he will probably be going”. A certain variant of quasi-nominal particles was used at three distant places in Niigata Prefecture in NLJ. In order to explain how the distribution was formed, the data of Niigata Prefecture in NLJ and GAJ were examined to find examples of quasi-nominal particles, which were accumulated at each locality. The list of quasi-nominal particles with the ratio of each variant used at each locality was produced and plotted on the maps. It was indicated that each locality has more than one form of quasi-nominal particles and that the combination patterns show regional distributions; then the distribution of the specific variant was explained.