Professor Sibata’s *haha* and Other Sociolinguistic Insights

J.K. Chambers, University of Toronto

Takesi Sibata (1918-2007), the pioneer of sociolinguistic dialectology, anticipated several developments that we now apply internationally in the discipline of sociolinguistics. I will briefly outline Professor Sibata’s role from a Western perspective and include some reminiscences of our infrequent meetings, but I am mainly interested in promoting wider appreciation of his achievements in the study of language variation. To do that, I review some of his analyses and show how Professor Sibata developed concepts that persist in contemporary sociolinguistics. I show that, for instance, almost fifteen years before the inception of Western sociolinguistics, Professor Sibata was already engaged in studying sound change in apparent time, identifying linguistic innovators and pursuing empirical evidence for the critical period in dialect acquisition, as well as other hallmarks of our discipline.