

## JAPANESE BRAZILIANS: THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES IN BRAZIL<sup>1</sup>

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This chapter examines Japanese language maintenance and change among contemporary Japanese-Brazilians. Japanese first came to Brazil in the early 1900s, and currently over one and a half million people of Japanese ancestry live in the country. Early Japanese settlers were required by the Brazilian government to immigrate as family units and worked on coffee plantations under conditions little different from that of the former African slaves. Gradually, as they acquired some money, Japanese-Brazilians left these plantations and moved to isolated farm areas, living among themselves. To this day, many have maintained the Japanese language and have fostered a strong awareness of their ethnic heritage.

Today, however, many Japanese-Brazilians have moved to the cities, as rural Japanese farmers send the smartest children off to the universities to get an education. Instead of returning to the farms, these young people have become professionals, entering the middle classes and associating with non-Japanese. These educated Japanese-Brazilians now even feel some shame about their farming-family background. The Japanese-Brazilians who stayed in farming areas, however, have kept their Japanese customs and still highly respect their parents' traditional ways. In this paper, I will argue that these two types of Japanese-Brazilians have developed distinct styles of the Japanese language, each reflecting different social milieus, economic conditions, and cultural values.

### **Introduction**

No visitor is ever able to walk through the São Juanquine district of the Brazilian city of São Paulo without hearing the flowing rhythms of the melodious Portuguese language; the visitor is almost even reminded of the gentle strains of *bossa nova* music.<sup>2</sup> However, if our casual stroller lingers for a moment they might notice that these sounds are not Portuguese at all, but are actually Japanese, though perhaps not the typical major accents such as those found in Kantô (eastern Japan)

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or Kansai (western Japan). For São Juanquine is one of the main 'Japantowns' in South America.<sup>3</sup> This is quite unlike the typical North American city, where few Japantowns exist, and those that do are tourist attractions, as the Little Tokyos of San Francisco or Los Angeles (Adachi 2000a). In São Juanquine, people of Japanese descent live and work, and the area still has a feeling of being the home of immigrants. People awake at dawn and open their shops; the smells of some of the best Japanese and Brazilian dishes emanate from open windows at mealtimes.

Nor are these feelings restricted only to urban areas: When one takes the bus to the countryside, in several hours they will find not only small smatterings of old Japanese settlements, but also whole Japanese communities as well. In fact our traveler might even feel as if they were visiting a Japanese farm village of the early 20th century.<sup>4</sup>

However, the kinds of Japanese spoken in these two areas — city and country — are not the same. The Japanese of urban Japanese-Brazilians is heavily influenced by Portuguese as compared to the Japanese spoken by rural Japanese-Brazilians. Because of this heavy Portuguese influence, the Japanese of urban Japanese-Brazilians is often thought to be dying due to the assimilation, both gradual and rapid, resulting from living among Portuguese speakers (Handa 1980; Nomoto 1969). What I call 'Urban Japanese' is not the result of the process of language death, even though it is significantly different from 'Rural Japanese'. I suggest that these differences are shaped by the different socio-economic values of these two groups.

In this chapter, I will examine the cultural and historical elements that shaped these linguistic differences and the economic and social values that caused them. I will first look at the ethnohistory of early Japanese immigration to Brazil. I will then look at the phonology, morphology, and semantics of the Japanese language used by urban and rural Japanese-Brazilians. I claim that the Japanese language is being used quite actively in both locales, and the reason for this is that the language is so closely tied to Japanese-Brazilian identity, sense of self, and notions of class. Indeed, I would say that language is the key symbol and trope in all these cases.

### **The socio-historical development of the Japanese communities in Brazil**

The peak period of Japanese-Brazilian immigration was in the 1930s when the Japanese government and privately-funded emigrant associations built four villages in the forests of São Paulo and Paraná states.<sup>5</sup> The Japanese government wished to reduce its population and wanted to establish Japanese colonies overseas to show its political and economic power to the Western nations (Nihon Immin Hachijū-nen-shi 1991). Just a few generations earlier, Japan had finally opened the country after some two hundred and sixty years of self-imposed isolation. Japan felt it had to protect itself from the Western nations expanding their colonies in Asia, particularly India, China, and Indonesia.

In spite of the Japanese government's intent, however, these new villages did not attract the numbers from Japan that it had hoped for. Instead, a majority of immigrants were already in Brazil and were working on coffee plantations. Brazil was the last country in the New World to abolish slavery (finally in 1888). Coffee planters, then, were seeking cheap labor to replace the lost earnings due to the emancipation of slaves. In order to make up for this shortage of plantation labor, they invited immigrants from overseas.

The history of the Japanese in Brazil, then, begins in 1908 when thousands came to Brazil to avoid the economic hardships that Japan's rapid modernization was causing. This was only twenty years after the abolition of slavery. The majority of planters who hired them were not ready or able to change their attitudes toward farmhands. Having little respect, poor treatment, and heavy physical labor, many Japanese immigrants wished to leave plantation life.<sup>6</sup>

Although the coffee market failed around 1900, the Brazilian economy was still heavily dependent on coffee products; 69% of the national income in 1900 came from coffee. It was not easy for the new immigrants, then, to find new types of work (Nihon Immin Hachijū-nen-shi 1991). Living on the plantations among former slaves as co-workers and neighbors, the Japanese immigrants were afraid their children would acquire unpleasant habits and behaviors. As a result, the primary goal of the early Japanese immigrants was simply to get off the plantation as soon as possible, rather than just making money to return to Japan.

The Japanese government was not unsympathetic. Among the Japanese villages in Brazil, the Japanese government and the various emigrant associations organized the 'Brazil-Takushoku-Kumiai (Brazilian Colonial Association)' or BRATAC for short.<sup>7</sup> BRATAC set up almost everything the immigrants needed in the new social, political, and economic environments. For instance, BRATAC established banks, rice-cleaning mills, coffee-selection mills, hospitals, a pharmacy, and a school for the villagers. At school, children received much the same education they would have gotten back in Japan. There was one area where their curriculum was different, however: In Brazil, a special agricultural doctrine was emphasized, and this was to have important repercussions for the subsequent history of Japanese-Brazilians.

This philosophy was known as the GAT (Gozar A Terra, or 'Love the Soil') movement among BRATAC villagers. This philosophy stressed engaging in farming activities to cultivate a virtuous spirit. Since this was loosely based on Japanese ancient myths, as well as on intellectual and agricultural philosophy then current back in Japan, it did not take long for the GAT movement to coalesce.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the majority of Japanese immigrants lived in farming areas with other Japanese immigrants (and some non-Japanese Brazilians who came to the villages to look for an income). Non-Japanese Brazilians worked in Japanese-owned fields, but their residences were provided apart from those of the Japanese immigrants. In short, very few Japanese-Brazilians went to cities before World War II.

Compared to the experiences of Japanese North-Americans during the Second World War, Japanese-Brazilians did not greatly suffer due to their Japanese ethnic background. And yet, their home country was an enemy nation. Oddly, the war contributed to the creation of another type of Japanese-Brazilian. Recognizing that being a minority group in Brazilian society during the war was a major disadvantage, some Japanese-Brazilians started establishing themselves in mainstream Brazilian society. If it was financially possible, they sent the smartest sons in their families on to higher education — but not the eldest sons, who were to inherit their parents' farmland.<sup>9</sup> These students majored in accounting, law, medicine, engineering, and other professions directly connected to white-collar occupations (Maeyama 1981; 1996).

Associating with middle and upper class non-Japanese Brazilians at universities, those Japanese-Brazilians came to believe that any kind of physical labor, including farming activities, belonged to the lower class. This notion is still prevalent in Brazilian society even today. Following this ideology, educated Japanese-Brazilians started to feel ashamed about their parents and siblings who farmed, even though their educational costs were paid for by agriculture (Maeyama 1981). After graduating from the universities, these Japanese-Brazilians often stayed in the city, where they could find jobs suiting their new education and lifestyle.

Some of these children of farmers married local Japanese-Brazilian women of their farm villages; others, however, married non-Japanese Brazilian women in the city (Nihon Imin Hachijû-nen-shi 1991). Many of these non-Japanese Brazilian women had respect for Japanese culture and tried to learn the Japanese language (at least some vocabulary) or cuisine. The result of this is that in Brazil — unlike North America — Japanese food and ingredients have become blended into the local Brazilian cuisines.<sup>10</sup> Thus, even those who married non-Japanese Brazilians did not necessarily become estranged from their ethnicity. But these psychological conflicts, different backgrounds, and familial guilt certainly affected the complex identities of urban Japanese-Brazilians even to this day.

Japanese-Brazilians who have stayed on the farms continue to believe in the traditional agricultural ideologies and still live in the Japanese areas. They maintain a social boundary between Japanese-Brazilians and non-Japanese Brazilians. The majority of the non-Japanese Brazilians with whom they associate are their employees, their daylabor farmhands. It is still not so common for them to marry non-Japanese Brazilians. This is especially true of female Japanese-Brazilians. As I found during my fieldwork,<sup>11</sup> rural Japanese-Brazilian women believe non-Japanese Brazilians are not able to provide a stable married life for them, financially or emotionally. Although urban and rural Japanese-Brazilians share the same parents and/or grandparents — some of whom arrived early in the 20th century and settled down in the rugged forests in southern Brazil — these two groups have had different experiences with non-Japanese Brazilians, and have developed different ideas about them.

## Linguistic features of rural and urban Japanese-Brazilians

According to the 1987 survey of the Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, almost 81 percent of rural Japanese-Brazilians claimed that they not only speak, but write and read Japanese. On the other hand, urban Japanese-Brazilians often tell us that they speak Japanese hardly at all. According to Handa (1980) — who immigrated to Brazil with his parents at the age of eleven — because their Japanese language has been criticized as being broken, urban Japanese-Brazilians tend to say (or even believe) that they do not speak Japanese. I analyze spoken and written Japanese of both rural and urban Japanese-Brazilians.

## Rural Japanese-Brazilians

Consider the following sentences spoken by rural Japanese-Brazilians. (Each sentence is marked with S or W to distinguish spoken from written speech). Portuguese loanwords are underlined in the sentences.

- (S-1) 来週 みんな と サンパウロ に 行くんだろ。  
*Raisû min'na to san paulo ni ikun-daro?*  
 next week others with São Paulo to go-aren't you

'(You are) going to São Paulo with the others next week, aren't you?'

— This speaker was born in Brazil in 1954. Her mother is a third-generation, and father a first-generation Japanese-Brazilian (recorded 1993).

- (S-2) やっぱり 自分ら は ブラジル人 だって言う...  
*yappari jibunra wa burajiru-jin datteiu..*  
 after all themselves SCM\* Brazilians that

ブラジル人 の中に 溶け込もうって いう ことじゃない か と。  
*burajiru-jin nonakani tokeko-moutte iu kotojanai ka to.*  
 Brazilians among try to-assimilate it looks like IRM\*\* that

\*SCM = subjective case marker

\*\* IRM = interrogative marker

'After all (they recognize) that they are Brazilians ... (I think that they) tried to assimilate among (non-Japanese) Brazilians.'

— This speaker emigrated to Brazil with his parents in 1927, right after he had been born in Japan (recorded 1995).

- (W-1) りんたろう君 へ  
*Rintarô-kun e*  
 Rintarô-Mr to

ペスカ\* の だいすきな りんたろう  
*Pesuka\* no daisuki-na Rintarô*  
 fishing of love Rintarô

サンタクロース の おじさん は つりざお と いとと  
*santakurôsu no ojisan wa tsurizao to ito to*  
 Santa Claus of a man SCM fishing rod and line and

おき\*\* と おもり を そして はり を プレゼント  
*oki\*\* to omori o soshite hari o purezent*  
 float and weight OCM\*\*\* and hook OCM present

します。

*shimasu.*

do

\*Pesuka < *pesca* = 魚釣り: *sakana-tsuri* = 'fishing'.

\*\*おき *oki* could be 浮き *uki* = 'float'. At this moment I am not sure if it is only this writer who uses *oki* instead of *uki*, or if all Japanese Brazilian use *oki* instead of *uki*. However, most likely it is his personal misunderstanding.

\*\*\*OCM = objective case marker

'Dear Rintarô-kun,

Santa Claus is giving a fishing rod, line, float, weight, and hook to you, Rintarô, who loves fishing.'

— This writer is third generation. He was born in 1960 in a small farm village opened by Japanese-Brazilians early in the 20th century. He was 32 years old when he wrote this letter to his son.

(W-2) 日よう になると、あさ から 一日中、  
*nichiyô ni naruto, asa kara ichinichijû,*  
 Sunday on become morning from all day long

マンゲロン\* の セルカ\*\* に のぼって おおきな ぶた を  
*mangeron\* no seruka\*\* ni nobotte, ôkina buta o*  
 fence of railing on claim big pigs OCM

シコッテ\*\*\* で、 おいまわします。  
*shikotte\*\*\* de, oimawashimasu.*  
 a whip with chase around

'When Sunday comes, from morning all day long, I climb over the fence and herd the big pigs with a whip (into the small corral).'

\*mangeron < *mangueorão* = さく: *saku* = 'fence'

\*\*seruka < *cêrca* = 垣: *kaki* = 'railing'

\*\*\*shikotte < *chikote* = 鞭: *muchi* = 'whip'

— Quoted in Nomoto (1969); the writer is a seven-year-old boy.



The structures of all of the above sentences are quite 'Japanese' as opposed to 'Portuguese'. For instance, word order is based on typical Japanese SOV. For example, in (W-1) we find

<i>Santakurôsu no Ojisan</i>	+ <i>tsurizao to ... hari o</i>	+ <i>purezento-shimasu</i>
(Santa Clause)	(fishing rod and...hook)	(give/present)
SUBJECT	OBJECT	VERB

The use of particles such as the subjective case marker, は "wa," objective case marker, を "o," and the interrogative marker, か "ka" is typically standard Japanese. As for phonology, (S-1) has been influenced by the *Kansai* dialect in Japan and (S-2) is based on standard Japanese. It needs to be noted that the parents of the speaker of (S-1) and the majority of founders of his village were from areas where the *Kansai* (western) dialect is spoken.<sup>12</sup>

### Standard Japanese forms

The Japanese spoken by the villagers, then, have some influence from *Kansai* dialect morphology and phonology. Japanese language teachers who are sent to Japanese-Brazilian villages by Japanese institutes, such as the Japan Foundation, however, teach standard 'Tokyo' Japanese. Thus, some people switch their speech to the standard form when they speak to outsiders, especially to people from Japan. This is probably the reason the standard form is used in (S-2), even though that speaker of came from a *Kansai*-speaking area.

The village where the writer of (W-1) lives is one of the BRATAC villages mentioned earlier in the first section. In this village, Japanese-Brazilians still hold power demographically, economically, and politically. Although the villagers sometimes add Portuguese to their Japanese, it is as a supplement. All announcements for villagers, for instance, are still written in Japanese (almost as if events of the village were intended only for Japanese-Brazilians).

There are some differences in the number of Portuguese loanwords found in both spoken and written forms, as seen in (S-1), (S-2), (W-1), and (W-2). Most of these are nativized or 'Japanized,' both phonologically and morphologically. In these examples, there are a few signs of word-borrowing from Portuguese into Japanese. There seem to be at least three kinds. First, Japanese-Brazilians characteristically borrow Portuguese vocabulary for objects for which Japanese does not have words; this was especially true at the time when their ancestors immigrated to Brazil. For instance, the Japanese-Brazilians use the Portuguese word *kamiyon* (< *caminhão*) for truck.

Secondly, although Japanese words might exist, Portuguese words are borrowed because they were not commonly used by the early Japanese immigrants. For instance, because the majority of Japanese immigrants were rice farmers and were not familiar with words for cattle farming, in (W-2) we see the Portuguese words, *mangeron*, *seruka*, and *shikotte* used instead of Japanese, *saku*, *kaki*, and, *muchi* (for 'fence', 'railing', and 'whip', respectively). The above two types of word borrowing, of course, are commonly seen in many languages.





\*\*\*todomundo < *todo mundo* = 'everybody'

\*\*\*\*bon < bom = 'good'

\*\*\*\*\*OCM = objective case marker

'If (you) go to the countryside (you) will hear the typical 'colonial' language of the Japanese. If (you) stay in a place like Liberudade, (you only find that) everybody speaks good Japanese.'

Only three Portuguese words are used in the above sentences, *colônia* 'colony',<sup>14</sup> *bon* 'good, well', and *todo mundo* 'everybody'. However, this sentence is much harder to understand for Japanese speakers who are not familiar with Portuguese than sentences articulated by rural Japanese-Brazilians. This is typical of such speech, even if the sentences of rural Japanese-Brazilians contain more Portuguese loanwords.

There are at least two reasons for the communicative barrier found for other Japanese speakers in the speech used by urban Japanese-Brazilians. First, one difficulty comes from the grammatical roles of loanwords. Traditionally foreign words are borrowed into Japanese as nouns, regardless of their grammatical status in the original language. These nouns usually add the *-suru* ('to do') auxiliary-verb suffix to make verbs, or a *-na*-type suffix to make adjectives. For instance, consider these two examples:

チャイニーズレストランが オープンする。

*Chainīzu-resutoran ga ôpin-suru.*

Chinese restaurant SCM opening-do

< A Chinese restaurant is going to open.>

ヘルシーな 食べ物

*herushi-na tabemono*

heath-na food

<healthy food>

It is, however, seen that English loanwords in Japan can sometimes use real adjectival markers (such as *-i*), especially among young Japanese in Japan. For instance,

(S-4) それって ナウい じゃん。

*Sorette nau-i jan.*

That's now Sentence-Final particle

'That's now (= That's cool.).'

Since a native Japanese adjective ends with '-i', '-i' gets attached to the English word *now* to create a new adjective. This way of making a new adjective violates traditional Japanese grammar, which borrows foreign vocabulary only as nouns, or adds '-na' to create borrowed adjectives. Though this new adjective, *nau-i* has been used by young people for a couple of decades, it has not attracted many us-

ers. According to Stanlaw 2000, the meanings of such loanwords do not need to be fully understood linguistically. Instead, like a visual art work, such loanwords can convey new sentiments or feelings, and might even carry different linguistic meanings or sentiments each time they are used. Their use, however, creates a social boundary between message senders and receivers, who are not able to appreciate the 'art' of the new usages of such words. In other words, these loanwords used for adjectives and adverbs are not used as expected.

Portuguese adjectives and adverbs used in the Japanese of urban Japanese-Brazilians, however, are not used to create new sentiments, but to convey fixed linguistic meanings. Sometimes those meanings carry the most critical information of the sentence. Consider the following examples, which are commonly used by urban Japanese-Brazilians.

(S-5) バスタンチ\* 下さい。

Basutanchi\* kudasai.  
a lot please give

\* bastanchi > bastante = enough, plenty

<Please give me a lot.>

(S-6) マイス\*\* 下さい。

Maisu\*\* kudasai.  
more please give

\*\* maisu > mais = more

<Please give me more.>

(S-7) クルチーバ の 町 と ロンドリーナの 町は  
*Kuruchiba no machi to Rondorina no machi wa*  
Curityba of town and Rondorina of town SCM

ボニータス\*\*\* ねえ。

bonitasu\*\*\* *nee*  
pretty sentence-final particle

\*\*\*bonitasu < *bonitas* = 'pretty'

'Curityba and Rondorina are pretty towns.'  
(the example sentences above are from Mase 1986)

The important information of the above sentences is in the loan adjectives and adverbs, *bastanchi*, *maisu*, and *bonitasu* 'many', 'more', and 'pretty', respectively. Urban Japanese-Brazilians use these words in Japanese structures based on their knowledge of Portuguese grammar. In (S-7), the speaker said *bonitasu* (which derives from *bonitas*, a plural and feminine form of *bonito* 'pretty'). This adjective modifies two nouns, *Kuruchiba no machi* and *Rondorina no machi*. Japanese *machi* 'city' is *cidade* in Portuguese, a feminine noun; thus, the adjective *bonito*, which modifies *cidade*, becomes the plural feminine form *bonitasu* (< *bonitas*). The first generation of Japanese-Brazilians use only *bonito* for any modified noun (Mase 1986). In order to understand the Japanese language of urban

Japanese-Brazilians, one needs to have a good command of Portuguese as well as a knowledge of Japanese.

Since urban Japanese-Brazilian speakers of Japanese are bilingual in both Japanese and Portuguese, one may claim that the new usage of Portuguese loanwords in Japanese discourse could be just code-mixing instead of a new way of using loanwords. However, in (S-5) it is clear that this is not the case. For instance, the Portuguese word is a loanword, and this is not code-mixing. The meaning of *bastanchi* to Japanese-Brazilians in their Japanese discourse is only 'a lot', which is different from the Portuguese meaning of *bastante*, which is either 'enough' or 'plenty'. That is, when they speak in Japanese, urban Japanese-Brazilians use *bastanchi* as 'a lot', and when they speak in Portuguese they use *bastante* in the Portuguese meaning. There is no confusion among Japanese-Brazilian speakers and listeners of Portuguese. The meaning of *bastanchi* has become more restricted than in the original language, Portuguese. It is well known that semantic restriction is one of the most distinctive traits of word borrowing (McMahon 1994).

The intonation of the Japanese sentences spoken by urban Japanese-Brazilians has also changed from that of the Japanese spoken in Japan. Consider the following spectrograms. The first spectrogram (Figure 1) is the sound-wave pattern of example (S-3) spoken by a second generation urban Japanese-Brazilian. The second spectrogram (Figure 2) was spoken by a native Japanese speaker who acquired Japanese in Japan. The sentence text was the same in both cases (given in S-3).

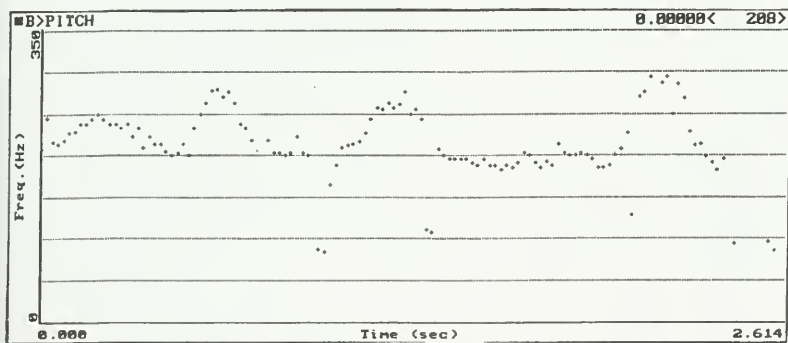
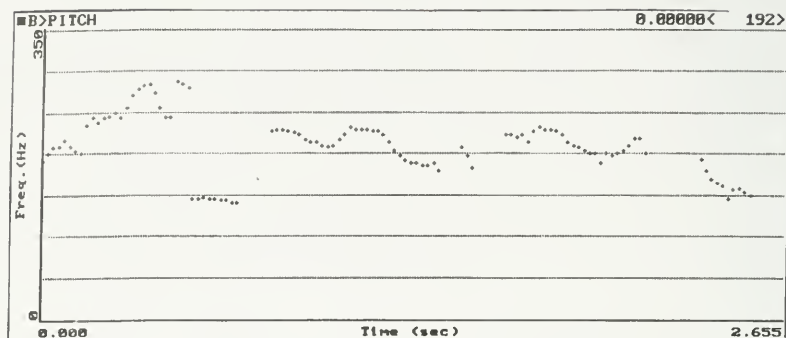


Figure 1: Sound-wave pattern produced by an urban Japanese-Brazilian



**Figure 2:** Sound-wave pattern produced by a native Japanese speaker

Portuguese words tend to have accents on the penultimate syllable. In the first spectrogram, the wave of the urban Japanese-Brazilian matches a Portuguese accent pattern, even though she is speaking Japanese words. For instance, the first wave comes from the accent on the penultimate vowel /i/ of the final word *ii* in the first phrase, *inaka ni ittara ii*. In contrast, the spectrogram of the Japanese speaker from Japan is almost flat. This is the typical Japanese accent pattern in Japan (Shibatani 1990:158-84).

Because the intonation of their Japanese has taken on a Portuguese pattern, and because some of their usages of Portuguese loanwords are unique, the Japanese of urban Japanese-Brazilians is often hard for Japanese from Japan to understand. This is why it is criticized by some Japanese linguists (such as Mase 1986, Nagao 1975, or Nomoto 1969) who feel their acquisition of Japanese is incomplete. This incomplete-acquisition theory is, however, very questionable. First, all the linguistic structures of the Japanese spoken by urban Japanese-Brazilians are based on that of standard Japanese. For instance, the word order and use of case markers in (S-3) is standard:

*Nihongo o shaberuru kara*  
 Japanese OCM speak because  
 '... because (they) speak Japanese.'

This sentence has an object and objective case marker, and the verb is conjugated as in normal Japanese. In (S-5) and (S-6), adverb + copula forms are again not a surprise, as in

*Basutanichi + Kudasai*  
 (Adv) (Copula).

A second, more general point is: If urban Japanese-Brazilians lack sufficient knowledge of Japanese linguistic structure, how can we explain the abundance of

books and newspapers written by them in Japanese? The following sentences are random examples from a São Paulo newspaper:

(W-3) 春の陽を浴びてカンポで  
*haru no hi o abite kanpo\* de*  
 spring of sunshine OCM basket field in

「日本のたいこ」をけいこするバレエ団。  
 “*Nihon no Taiko*” *o kēkosuru barê dan.*  
 「Japanese Drum」 OCM practice bale troupe

\*kanpo < *campo* = ‘field’

‘The ballet troupe, which is practicing “Japanese Taiko Drums”, is basking in the spring sun in the (farm) field.’

Since the target audience is not the Japanese in Japan, the writer uses a Portuguese loanword, *kanpo*, which is not used among Japanese unless they have a knowledge of Portuguese. But otherwise the sentence is transparent.

Furthermore, there are many cookbooks written in Japanese by Japanese-Brazilians. Are Japanese from Japan or first-generation immigrants reading these cookbooks written by second and third generation Japanese-Brazilians to learn about traditional Japanese dishes? Probably not. Those books are for Japanese-Brazilian descendants, especially for urban Japanese-Brazilians. Unlike rural Japanese-Brazilians who grew up with traditional Japanese dishes, it is always difficult to maintain a traditional cuisine in an urban setting. Thus, those urban Japanese-Brazilians who want to cook Japanese dishes need to have these cookbooks. Furthermore, even academic publications from the Centro de Nipo-Brasileiros (the Center for Japanese-Brazilians) are written in Japanese by Japanese-Brazilians. These publications are usually read in São Paulo, but not in Japan; they are intended, then, for a South-American audience.

There are newspapers published in Japanese in North America as well. However, these newspapers, when they *are* written in Japanese — and this is not always the case — are usually written by Japanese from Japan. Even if some Japanese-North Americans write articles in Japanese, no publisher would print them without having them edited by a Japanese from Japan.<sup>15</sup> Since the target readers are Japanese and the first-generation immigrants, papers have to be written in the standard Japanese of Japan.

In contrast, readers of Japanese newspapers and books published in São Paulo are for Japanese-Brazilians, so it seems that it would be better to write things in their own style of Japanese; but again, most of the time these papers are written in standard Japanese newspaper registers. Finally, there are many Japanese comic books from Japan that are read by Japanese-Brazilians. There even is a Japanese comic-book library in the city of São Paulo. Many Japanese-Brazilians seem to have no trouble at all handling these materials. If the Japanese language of urban Japanese-Brazilians is an incomplete version of standard Japanese, then why

do they still speak, read, and write in any form of Japanese at all? Despite the fact that their city lifestyle provides only Portuguese linguistic situations, they still use Japanese among themselves, even when speakers are fluent in Portuguese. According to Brown & Levinson 1978 and Heller 1982, speakers can implicitly claim in-group membership through the common ground of language usage. The social, ethnic, and class identity of urban Japanese-Brazilians is very complex. Because urban Japanese-Brazilians do not want to be looked down upon as people from the working classes, they do not speak like rural Japanese-Brazilians. And yet, urban Japanese-Brazilians do not have strong negative feelings regarding their ethnic background, unlike Japanese-North Americans who suffered internment during World War II.

However, since they still do face something of a boundary established by upper class Brazilians, elite Japanese-Brazilians might have a tendency to unite. It has been very commonly believed that there is no skin-color-based racial discrimination in Brazil (e.g., Harris 1964; Saito 1976), however, recently various scholars, such as Guimarães 1996, Skidmore 1992, and Twine 1998, claim that there is indeed real racial discrimination in Brazilian society. The racial discrimination towards Japanese-Brazilians is not exceptional (Lesser 1999). Regardless of their economic success, Japanese-Brazilians are not able to join the new upper classes as full fledged members, as are other ethnic immigrants (like Italians and Germans).<sup>16</sup> The socio-economic complexities of the urban Japanese-Brazilian situation finds that they face a social boundary with non-Japanese Brazilians as well as with rural Japanese-Brazilians. Yet their group membership is symbolized by, and defined in, their use of the Japanese language. They speak the Japanese language, which other Brazilians do not understand; but at the same time their Japanese also requires a good command of Portuguese, which their first Japanese farming ancestors might not have controlled.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined two kinds of Japanese spoken in Brazil. I have looked historically and linguistically at the very complex socio-ethnic identities of two Japanese-Brazilian groups. After World War II, Japanese-Brazilians split into two groups — the rural farming group and the urban white-collar group. These two communities created different cultural values, and experienced different social conflicts with non-Japanese Brazilians. As a result, the two populations face — and have established — different kinds of social boundaries. They have developed different registers of the Japanese language. Their two versions of Japanese are not the result of incomplete language acquisition, but are symbols of their various social identities — as Brazilians, as Japanese, and as members of specific subcultures.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version was presented in the organized session, 'The Diffusion of the Japanese Language' at the 1999 Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago. I am grateful to Professor Braj Kachru for his thoughtful comments on an earlier draft, and to Prof. Susumu Miyao and Ms. Neuza Matsuo for helping me during my collection of fieldwork data. I would also like to thank Dr. Robert MacLaury for his friendship and helpful criticism, my family, and Max and Jim Stanlaw for their continued support and advice.

<sup>2</sup> *Bossa nova*, or 'new way' or 'new fashion', is one of Brazil's celebrated musical exports. Probably the most famous song in this popular style of samba-jazz is the well-known 'Girl From Ipanema' by Antonio Carlos Jobim.

<sup>3</sup> According to a 1987 survey by the Center for the Study of Japanese Brazilians (Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros), there are almost three hundred thousand Brazilians of Japanese descent living in the urban areas of São Paulo State (Mae-yama 1996:158). The area of São Juanquine itself may have up to forty thousand, though these figures are a little speculative as lately many Japanese-Brazilians have been returning to Japan as *dekasegi* 'temporary foreign' workers due to the long economic depression in Brazil and high wages in Japan.

<sup>4</sup> Today some 1.3 million Japanese-Brazilians make their home in Brazil, and a majority of them not only understand, but also speak, Japanese, especially in the rural areas (Adachi 1997, 1999b).

<sup>5</sup> This chapter will focus on Japanese-Brazilians in southern Brazil. The situation in northern Brazil was somewhat different, with a different history of Japanese immigration, which I will address at a later time.

<sup>6</sup> For historical details, see Adachi 1999b or *Nihon Hachijû-nen-shi* 1991.

<sup>7</sup> The acronym BRATAC comes from the initials of the Japanese name, *Brazil-Takushoku-Kumiai*.

<sup>8</sup> See Adachi 1997 or 2000b for details on this philosophy, called *Nôhon-Shugi*.

<sup>9</sup> It is important to remember that people did not consider it important for women to receive a higher education in many nations in those days.

<sup>10</sup> To be sure, Japanese food can be found in Canada and the United States. In North America, however, Japanese food is not rooted, but is becoming popular as an exotic cuisine. Although I will not go into details, this difference is very interesting when we look at the social status of immigrants in these different societies.

<sup>11</sup> Conducted at various times in 1989, 1992, 1993, and 1995.

<sup>12</sup> The Kansai dialect is spoken in the western side of Japan, including such areas as Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara; it has many regional variants (cf. Miller 1967; Shibatani 1990).

<sup>13</sup>When the new Westerners arrived in Japan after some two hundred and sixty years of self-imposed isolation, many linguistic changes took place. See Adachi 1988 for details.

<sup>14</sup>The Japanese language spoken in Brazil is sometimes called *coronia-go* 'colonial language' and Japanese villages in Brazil are sometimes called *coronia* = *colônia* 'colony' by Japanese-Brazilians. However, the meaning of *coronia* is just 'Japanese-Brazilian' (Satio 1974:205).

<sup>15</sup>As a former staff member of such a paper, I can attest to this.

<sup>16</sup>I argue this in more detail in Adachi 1999a.

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