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Lexical Properties of Onomatopoeias in the Dialects of Kikai Town, Kagoshima Prefecture

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to delineate the properties of onomatopoeia in the dialects of Kikai Town, Kagoshima Prefecture. Specifically, I compile a list of onomatopoeias from dialectological reference materials and give an overview of their lexical properties, after which I delineate their actual current usage based on an interview survey in Gusuku, Kikai Town.

While large-scale databases are presently being used to conduct onomatopoeia research on Standard Japanese from many different angles, there are not even word form lists available for dialectological onomatopoeia research. Through compiling a list of onomatopoeias of the Kikai Town dialects based on dialectological reference materials and referring to them while conducting the actual survey, the search for a dialectological onomatopoeia research methodology forms one aspect of this paper.

2 Onomatopoeia in the Kikai Town dialects as seen from dialectological reference materials

2.1 Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List

First, I will compile a ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’¹ comprising onomatopoeias of the Kikai Town dialects extracted from dialectological reference materials and give a global overview of their forms and meanings, as well as of how many forms there are of different types.

As regards the reference materials, I used the following three works²:

¹ *Translator’s note*: the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’ appended to the original Japanese version of this paper has been omitted from this English translation.

² I also referred to the following materials, but as they use Standard Japanese transcription, I did not make use of them.

- Iwakura, Ichiro (comp.). 1943. *Kikaijima Mukashibanashishū*. Sanseido.
- Tabata, Hidekatsu (ed.). 1974. *Amamishotō no Mukashibanashi (Nihon no Mukashibanashi 7)*. Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

- (1) Iwakura, Ichiro. 1941. *Kikaijima Hōgenshū*. Chuokoron-Sha (reprinted in 1977 by Kokushokankokai).

Dialect material collected by the author, born in Aden, Kikai Town in 1904. Compiles mainly Aden dialect material.

- (2) Nakamoto, Masachie. 1978. ‘Kikaijima Shitooke Hōgen no Goi’. *Ryūkyū no Hōgen 4: Amami Kikaijima Shitooke*. Hosei University Institute for Okinawan Studies.

A lexicological report that forms part of a report of a dialectological survey conducted among elderly speakers in Shitooke, Kikai Town.

- (3) Mori, Toyoryo. 1979. *Kikaijima no Hōgenshū*. Self-published.

Dialect material collected by the author, born in Nakama, Kikai Town in 1905. The research site is not specified.

A total of 149 items were extracted from the above works. Considering how the total number of word forms in the above works exceeds 10,000, the proportion of onomatopoeias in the lexicons of the dialects in question is not particularly large. Among the dialect material collections, the number of onomatopoeias in (3) is more than double that in (1), but as this mirrors a tendency in dialect material collections and dialect dictionaries of other areas, it can be considered a reflection of how the recognition of dialect onomatopoeias as word forms has grown through the years.

Based on this list, I will discuss their forms and meanings in the following sections.

2.2 Word form types

The three main word form^{3,4} types found on the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’ are as follows:

- (1) Reduplicative forms (including forms in which final vowel length does not match between the two parts):

Aduna-aduna, bata-bata, bira-bira, bū-bū, buka-buka, bura-bura, buru-buru, chin-chin, dī-dī, doki-doki, don-don, dumu-dumu, duru-duru, dyi-dyi, dyiru-dyiru, futo-futo, futu-futu, fuya-fuya, gadyi-gadyi, gaji-gaji, gara-gara, gata-gata, gē-ge, gē-gē, gon-gon, gudyu-gudyu, gū-gu, guju-guju, gura-gura, gutsu-gutsu, hara-hara, hatchira-hatchira, hīra-hīra,

³ I omitted notation for unaspirated sounds, nasals, and accent; see the source materials for these.

⁴ *Translator’s note:* in the original Japanese version of this paper, onomatopoeias taken from dialectological reference materials are given in the *katakana* transcriptions used in their respective sources, rather than in phonetic notation; in this translation these *katakana* transcriptions are romanized using the Hepburn system, with the following additions: word-initial/word-final ッ = ʔ; ㇿ (as opposed to ㇾ) = dyi; ㇼイ (specifies non-palatalization of the nasal) = ni; カ° = ŋa.

hīri-hīri, jiru-jiru, jiwa-jiwa, kamyā-kamyā, kē-kē, kī-kī, kō-kō, kuri-kuri, kusu-kusu, macha-macha, mādui-mādui, mā-mā, mancha-mancha, maya-maya, mucha-mucha, muchāri-muchāri, mudo-mudo, muja-muja, munya-munya, musha-musha, nado-nado, nanbu-nanbu, nī-nī, nyū-nyū, pachi-pachi, pī-pī, sara-sara, sā-sa, sas-sa, seka-seka, sō-so, soyo-soyo, sussagi-sussagi, tacho-tacho, tāri-tāri, teya-teya, tsun-tsun, tsuru-tsuru, tsutcha-tsutcha, turu-turu, ucha-ucha, wē-we, yōgari-yōgari, yoi-yoi, yoi-yōi, yōri-yōri, yudē-yudē, yufu-yufu, yura-yura, zā-za, zā-zā, zura-zura, ŷunya-ŷunya.

(2) Forms ending in *-i*, *-ri*, *-ra*, and the like:

- *-i*: *assai, bittai, chikkai-mekkai, duppui, ēi, gattsui, gattui, gunnai, gurui, mādui-mādui, nyūui, nyūwai, sappai, shikkai, shittaī, suppai, suttai, tsumai, tumui, yurari-yui, yurui, yōi, yoi-yoi, yoi-yōi, zoppui, zuppui*;
- *-ri*: *hīri-hīri, kuri-kuri, muchāri-muchāri, sanjari, sari?, tāri-tāri, tsuzōri, yōgari-yōgari, yōri, yōri-yōri*;
- *-ra*: *ban-barā, bara, birā, bira-bira, bura, bura-bura, gara-gara, gura-gura, hara-hara, hatchira-hatchira, hīra-hīra, parā, yuras-sara, yura-yura, zura-zura.*

(3) Forms ending in *-to* or *-tu* (adverbial suffix)

Assai-to, bun-tu, dī-dī-tu, gurui-to, kut-to, mā-mā-tu, nī-nī-to, pashi-tu, sappai-to, sā-zā-to, shikkai-to, suhat-to, tsun-to, ugat-to, yat-to, yurui-to.

The above shows that the onomatopoeias of the Kikai Town dialects are similar to those of the dialects of mainland Japan with respect to the abundance of reduplicative forms. There are forms related to nouns and verbs, as well, such as *duru-duru* ‘muddy’, the reduplicated form of the noun *duru* ‘mud’, and *ucha-ucha* ‘cheerful’, the reduplicated form of the verb *ucha* ‘to float; to be cheerful’.

They differ from those of the dialects of mainland Japan in that there are more forms ending in *-i* than forms ending in *-ri* or *-ra*. Forms ending in *-i* can be surmised to be the result of elision of the consonant *-r-*. Incidentally, while there are few reduplicative forms ending in *-i*, almost all forms ending in *-ra* are reduplicative.

Furthermore, compared to those of the dialects of mainland Japan, they are not very high in productivity as constituent elements in verb formation. There are forms to which the form corresponding to Standard Japanese *suru* ‘to do’ has been appended, such as *tsuru-tsuru-shi* and *doki-doki-shi*, but words to which verbal suffixes like *-meku* and *-tsuku* have been appended as is seen in other dialects and Standard Japanese, such as *kira-meku* ‘to glitter; to twinkle’, *zawa-meku* ‘to be noisy; to be astir’, *neba-tsuku* ‘to be sticky’, and *muka-tsuku* ‘to feel sick; to feel disgusted’, have not been identified. On the other hand, forms in which an onomatopoeia is combined with a

noun meaning ‘person’ have been observed, such as *bura-mun* ‘person who wanders around without anything to do; person who lives leisurely without anything to do’ and *kusu-chā* ‘person whose throat makes a gurgling sound; person with asthma’.

2.3 Semantic classification

I classify the items on the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’ into seven semantic categories. The number of words is indicated in parentheses (see table 1 for details)⁵.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| (1) Sound | Words expressing animal vocalizations and other noises (onomatopoeia in the narrow sense—36 items). |
| (2) Motion | Words expressing the movements of objects, people, etc. (39 items). |
| (3) Bodily sensations | Words expressing a person’s physical state, the state of a person’s stomach, how awake or sleepy a person is, how something feels to the touch, etc. (18 items). |
| (4) Speed | Words expressing the speed at which something moves (18 items). |
| (5) Mental states | Words expressing how a person feels (10 items). |
| (6) Quantity | Words expressing the quantity of something (21 items). |
| (7) Abstract meanings | Words expressing abstract meanings that do not fit in any of the above categories (e.g. ‘exactly’, ‘much’, ‘steadily’, ‘as if...’, ‘already’, etc.—25 items). |

Items classified under (1) sound and (2) motion are the most numerous, followed by items classified under (7) abstract meanings and (6) quantity, but it is not the case that items of one particular category greatly outnumber those of the others. The list contains no words with multiple meanings, nor are there cases in which one meaning is expressed by multiple forms.

⁵ Rather than an attempt at a classification to be used for dialect onomatopoeia in general, this classification is the result of surveying the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’ and observing that the items on it can be broadly classified into these seven categories. In order to grasp the properties of onomatopoeia in the dialects of Japanese, as well as in the Kikai Town dialects as a subset of the dialects of Japanese, a classification that takes comparison with other areas into account is needed. Furthermore, among these categories, (4) speed, (5) mental states, (6) quantity, and (7) abstract meanings contain many items that should seemingly be classified as adverbs. I categorized them in this paper for the sake of making clear semantic distinctions, but there is room for reconsideration regarding this classification.

2.4 Word form types and semantic classification

Table 1 combines the word form types and the semantic classification and gives the total number of items in each grouping.

Table 1. Relationships between word form types A–C and semantic categories (1)–(7).

| | | 93 items | 50 items | 16 items |
|----------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | | A: Reduplicative forms | B: <i>-i, -ra, -ri</i> | C: <i>-to, -tu</i> |
| 36 items | (1) Sound | ● 24 | △ 7 | – 1 |
| 39 items | (2) Motion | ● 30 | ◎ 12 | – 0 |
| 18 items | (3) Bodily sensations | ● 15 | ◎ 8 | – 0 |
| 18 items | (4) Speed | ● 11 | △ 5 | △ 3 |
| 11 items | (5) Mental states | △ 8 | △ 3 | – 1 |
| 21 items | (6) Quantity | – 2 | ◎ 8 | △ 3 |
| 25 items | (7) Abstract meanings | – 3 | △ 7 | ◎ 8 |

(Legend: ●—numerous, ◎—somewhat numerous, △—somewhat rare, –—(nearly) absent)

Table 1 shows that word form and meaning are correlated in the onomatopoeias of the Kikai Town dialects. There are many reduplicative forms (A) that express (1) sound, (2) motion, (3) bodily sensations, and (4) speed, but few that express (6) quantity or (7) abstract meanings. Conversely, there are many forms suffixed with *-to* or *-tu* (C) that express (7) abstract meanings, but almost none that express (1) sound, (2) motion, (3) bodily sensations, or (5) mental states. Put differently: concrete meanings tend to be expressed by reduplicative forms, while abstract meanings tend to be expressed by forms suffixed with *-to* or *-tu*.

3 Onomatopoeia in the dialect of Gusuku, Kikai Town

3.1 Approach taken in the interview survey

For the interview survey, I prepared questions aimed at grasping usage distinctions between words, focusing on the parts of the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’ with the largest numbers of items. The number of items was the largest for forms expressing actual sounds and vocalizations, forms expressing manners of movement, and forms used in somewhat abstract senses compared to these. I therefore selected onomatopoeias expressing rain sounds, animal sounds, and

the like, onomatopoeias expressing manners of movement of humans and animals, and onomatopoeias used adverbially to express speed and quantity for the survey.

In lexicological research, and especially in semantic description, it is customary to assume what is called a ‘closed system’ and describe the usage distinctions between the words within that system; in other words, to bound the scope of a lexicon that in principle stretches out unboundedly and elucidate the semantic relationships within it. A number of groups of forms for which usage distinctions regarding similar or adjacent meanings could be expected were selected for this survey from the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’, and the survey was designed to take into account connections with the dialects of the Ryukyus and mainland Japan as well as the ease of conducting it.

The interview survey was conducted by the author at the Gusuku Community Center on September 10, 2010 with two elderly female interviewees born (in 1929 and 1932, respectively) and raised in Gusuku. There were no significant differences between their answers, so I make no distinction between them in this paper. As regards the transcription of the dialect data, that of data from the reference materials is based on that of the respective sources, while a *katakana* transcription as close to the pronunciation as possible forms the basis for the results of the interview survey, with phonetic notation added for the onomatopoeias⁶.

In the following, I discuss the survey results in order.

3.2 Onomatopoeias expressing sounds

Going through the words in the ‘sound’ category of the ‘Kikai Town Dialect Onomatopoeia List’, one finds many words that express individual sounds, which makes it difficult to discover anything resembling some kind of semantic system. Furthermore, in regard to onomatopoeias expressing sounds, loud sounds can be considered marked and soft sounds unmarked; when eliciting onomatopoeias that express rain sounds, an onomatopoeia was used for a loud rain sound, while no onomatopoeias were given for a soft rain sound.

The sound of intense rain is expressed as *zā-zā* [dza:dza:], as in (1). Non-onomatopoeic expressions such as (2) and (3) were given, as well.

- (1) *Zā-zā* [dza:dza:] *ame futtuiyā*. ‘It is raining with an intense sound.’
- (2) *Shinkoku-ame futtuiyā*. ‘It is raining heavily.’
- (3) *Ō-ame futtuiyā*. ‘It is raining hard.’

The following non-onomatopoeic form was given for expressing a soft rain:

⁶ *Translator’s note*: the data from the reference materials and the *katakana* transcriptions by the author are again romanized using the Hepburn system with additions; see footnote 3 in section 2.2 for details.

- (4) *Nama-ami futtuyā*. ‘It is raining softly.’

3.3 Onomatopoeias expressing animal vocalizations and other animal sounds

As regards onomatopoeias that express animal sounds, forms like those in (5)–(13) were elicited for the sounds of pigs, horses, cows, cats, dogs, chickens, skylarks, long-tailed roosters, and bush warblers, respectively.

- (5) Pig: *goī-goī* [goi:goi:]
(6) Horse: *hī* [çi:]
(7) Cow: *mō* [mo:]
(8) Cat: *nyā-nyā* [nja:nja:]
(9) Dog: *wan-wan* [wanwan]
(10) Chicken: *kū-kū kū-kū* [ku:ku:ku:ku:] (clucking)
Chicken: *koke-kokkō* [kokekokko:] (crowing to announce the dawn; as in Standard Japanese)
(11) Skylark: *chitchī* [teittei:]
(12) Long-tailed rooster: *hē-hē-koi-koi-koi* [he:he:koikoikoi]
(13) Bush warbler: *honto-ni-kaketa-ka* [hontonikaketaka] (an example of hearing an animal sound as a Japanese phrase)

For flies, an onomatopoeia expressing the sound of their wings was given.

- (14) *Hē-ga bū-bū* [bu:bu:] *sui*. ‘A fly buzzes. = A fly flies while buzzing.’

(15) below is an onomatopoeia for the purring of cats, but it is also used when calling a cat, as in (16).

- (15) By a cat: *guru-guru guru-guru* [guruguru.guruguru] (the purring of cats)

- (16) To a cat: *guru-guru guru-guru* [guruguru.guruguru] (when calling a cat)

Gurū [guru:] is used as a word for ‘cat’⁷. When asked why ‘cat’ is expressed as *gurū* [guru:], the two speakers from Gusuku responded that it originally derives from an onomatopoeia that mimics the purring of cats. It is reportedly used both as a nursery word and as an adult word. We can surmise from this that a contracted form of the onomatopoeia in (15) and (16) became a noun expressing ‘cat’⁸. Speakers (both male) born and raised in Kamikatetsu and Nakasato, in the south of Kikaijima, gave a similar answer.

⁷ In the interview study, *gurū* [guru:] was given without prompting, while *mayā* [maja:] was additionally given after elicitation.

⁸ Iwakura (1941: 101) gives the following: ‘*Gurū*: cat. Synonymous *mayā*.’

As regards its distribution among the dialects of Kikai Town, Masachie Nakamoto (1987: 67) is particularly comprehensive. He states the following regarding the distribution of *gurū* [guru:] in the southwest and its origin (underlined by the author)⁹:

The words for ‘cat’ in the Kikaijima dialects are *mayā* and *gurū*; they are distributed as follows:

maja: Araki, Tekuzuku, Urahara, Kawamine, Keraji, Gamō, Aden, Kadon, Shiramizu, Sōmachi, Shiomichi, Sadeku, Shitooke, Onotsu, Isaneku, Isago, Nagamine, Nakaguma, Nishime, Ōasato, Shimanaka, Sakinai, Nakama, Ikeji.

guru: Araki, Kamikatetsu¹⁰, Sakiyama, Urahara, Sadeku, Takigawa, Gusuku, Yamada, Hasato, Ikeji, Akaren, Wan, Nakasato.

Mayā is distributed around the northern and central parts, while *gurū* is distributed in the southern part, around Wan.

How cats came to be called both *mayā* and *gurū* on Kikaijima is fascinating. *Mayā* is an onomatopoeia deriving from the vocalizations of cats. What kind of word is *gurū*, then? This is an onomatopoeia, as well: it derives from the purring of cats as they comfortably snuggle up to someone. It is fascinating how even though both words are onomatopoeic, they derive from the different sounds of vocalizations and purring.

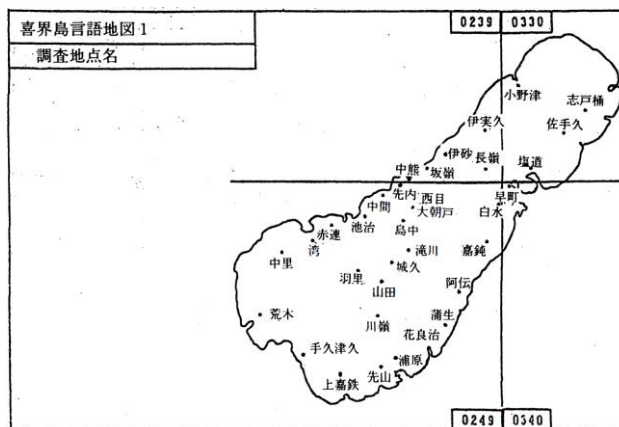


Figure 1. ‘1. Survey site names’ (Nakamoto 1987: 55).

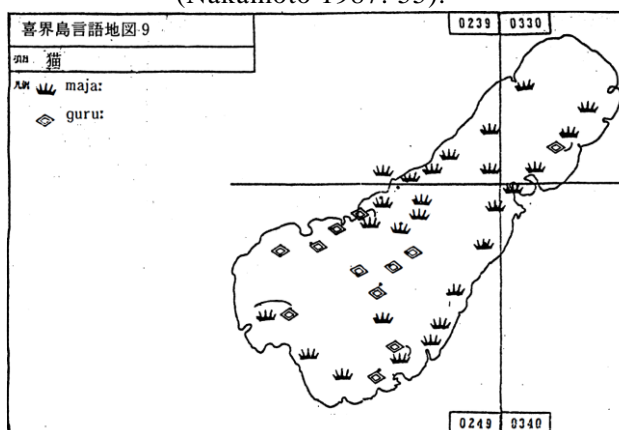


Figure 2. ‘9. “Cat”’ (Nakamoto 1987: 63).

⁹ It could not be confirmed in this survey whether the noun [maja:], expressing ‘cat’, derives from an onomatopoeia for the vocalizations of cats, as Nakamoto (1979, 1981) claims. This is a matter for further research.

¹⁰ Regarding Kamikatetsu, Nakamoto’s (1987) map shows the symbol for *mayā*, while the text gives *gurū*.

Cats are called *mayā* in the dialects of Okinawa, and a peculiar gesture is used when calling one. The hand is extended with the palm upwards, and a finger is erected and repeatedly extended and retracted. The hand is moved exactly like when a Westerner beckons someone. Simultaneously with the hand movement, the cat is called by uttering *kuru-kuru-kuru*. When the cat is then stroked on its throat, it feels at ease and purrs *kuru-kuru*. This *kuru*-call can be surmised to have developed into a word for ‘cat’ on Kikaijima.

Gurū [guru:] is also used on Amami Ōshima. Nakamoto (1981: 144), who uses maps to show its distribution among the dialects of all of the Ryukyus, states: ‘*Gurū* is used on Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima, also as a nursery word. *Gurū* is an onomatopoeia deriving from the purring of cats. It originally developed as a nursery word, but it is also used by adults when calling a cat.’

Other examples of contracted forms of reduplicative onomatopoeias with final vowel lengthening being used as nouns are observed in the Kikai Town dialects, as well. I have gathered likely corresponding pairs of reduplicative forms and nouns taken from Iwakura (1941) in table 2. It can be seen that these nouns express something like ‘a person who is in the state signified by the reduplicative form’.

Table 2. Nouns formed through contraction of reduplicative forms.

| Onomatopoeia | Noun |
|--|---|
| <i>Aduna-aduna</i> —used to describe slowness and sluggishness (Iwakura 1941: 15). | <i>Adunā</i> —term of abuse for a slow-witted person; <i>adusui</i> is used, as well (Iwakura 1941: 15). |
| <i>Gunnai-gunnai</i> —used to describe the walking of a person with a limp (Iwakura 1941: 101). | <i>Gunnā</i> —used for a person with a limp (Iwakura 1941: 101). |
| <i>Dyiru-dyiru</i> —used to describe the goggling of eyes and staring (Iwakura 1941: 187). | <i>Mī-dyirū</i> —used for a person with goggling eyes (Iwakura 1941: 187). |
| <i>Buka-buka</i> —adverb used to describe softness to the touch, e.g. of bedding or earth (Iwakura 1941: 272). | <i>Pukā</i> ¹¹ —Aden dialect nursery word used for a person who is poor at sumo wrestling (Iwakura 1941: 272). |
| <i>Yōgari-yōgari</i> —used for wobbling and staggering, both of people and of objects (Iwakura 1941: 326). | <i>Yōgarī</i> —used for a person who is thin and fragile (Iwakura 1941: 326). |

¹¹ Although *pukā* is given as an Aden dialect nursery word, it seems that this is a misprint for *bukā*.

Likewise, the word *gurū* [guru:] for ‘cat’ can be considered to have come about as a noun meaning ‘an animal that purrs *guru-guru guru-guru* [guruguru.guruguru]’, formed by contraction to the shortest possible form of an onomatopoeic reduplicative form and final vowel lengthening. *Guru* is usually repeated between two and four times when it is used as an onomatopoeia for the purring of cats, but it is not repeated when it is used as a noun for ‘cat’; instead, it undergoes final vowel lengthening to become *gurū* [guru:]. In Standard Japanese, too, onomatopoeias for the vocalizations of animals are sometimes used to refer to the animals themselves, such as *wan-wan* and *chun-chun* for ‘dog’ and ‘sparrow’, respectively; these reduplicative forms are only used as nursery words, however, and they are also not contracted to form nouns such as *wan* or *chun*.

When confirming whether there were similar correspondences for other animals, it turned out that *tū-tū tū-tū* [tu:tu:tu:tu:] is used when calling a chicken¹², while the noun *tū-tū* [tu:tu:] is sometimes used as a nursery word for ‘chicken’¹³.

(17) To a chicken: *tū-tū tū-tū* [tu:tu:tu:tu:] (when calling a chicken)

(18) To children, as a nursery word: *tū-tū* [tu:tu:] (a noun for ‘chicken’)

It appears, however, that *tū-tū* [tu:tu:] does not derive from an onomatopoeia. The onomatopoeia for the vocalizations of chickens is *kū-kū kū-kū* [ku:ku:ku:ku:], which is not used for calling them. In addition, the noun *tui* [tui] was given as an adult word for ‘chicken’, while a noun for ‘chicken’ deriving from the onomatopoeia (such as *kū*) could not be identified.

As regards other animals, it was said that dogs are called by their names, while cows, horses, and pigs are not called at all, so no words were given for calling animals other than cats and chickens. (19), (20), and (21) were given as commands for cows, however¹⁴. This can be surmised to be because calling livestock is in itself giving a command. As for horses, it was said that reins are used to give them commands, so no specific words were given.

(19) To a cow: *tudi* [tudi] (command: ‘go left’)

(20) To a cow: *ʔu* [ʔu] (command: ‘go right’)

(21) To a cow: *fui* [ɸui] (command: ‘go forward’)

¹² Iwakura (1941: 152) gives the following, as well: ‘*Tūtū*: a word used when calling a chicken.’

¹³ Iwakura (1941: 208) gives the following: ‘*Nyūnyū* (nursery word): chicken. Synonymous with *tūtū*.’; this was not confirmed in this survey, however.

¹⁴ Iwakura (1941) gives the following: ‘*Chudi*: left—a word used for giving commands to horses and cows.’ (p. 147), ‘*U*: right—a word used to command a horse or cow into a certain direction’ (p. 40), and ‘*Fui*: a word used to command a horse to go forward’ (p. 232). This more or less coincides with (19)–(21).

I have summarized the above data regarding onomatopoeias for animal vocalizations, words for calling animals, and the like in table 3.

Table 3. Gusuku dialect onomatopoeias for animal vocalizations and the like, as well as words for calling animals and nouns deriving from them.

| Animal \ Word | Onomatopoeias for vocalizations and the like | Words for calling | Nouns deriving from onomatopoeias | |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| | | | Nursery word | Adult word |
| Pig | [goi:goi:] | — | — | — |
| Horse | [çi:] | — | — | — |
| Cow | [mo:] | — | — | — |
| Dog | [wanwan] | — (called by name) | — | — |
| Cat | [nja:nja:] (vocalization) | — | — | — |
| | [guruguru.guruguru] (purring) | [guruguru.guruguru] | [guru:] | [guru:] |
| Chicken | [ku:ku:.ku:ku:] | — | — | — |
| | — | [tu:tu:.tu:tu:] | [tu:tu:] | — |
| Skylark | [teittei:] | — | — | — |
| Long-tailed rooster | [he:he:koikoikoi] | — | — | — |
| Bush warbler | [hontonikaketaka] | — | — | — |
| Fly | [bu:bu:] (wing sound) | — | — | — |

(‘—’ indicates that no relevant word forms were given.)

From the above, it can be concluded that onomatopoeias for animal vocalizations and the like are not necessarily also used as nouns for animals in the Kikai Town dialects, and that rather, the word for ‘cat’ in particular developed as follows. There is an onomatopoeia that mimics the purring of cats, which came to be used when calling one as a pet. Simultaneously, a common noun used as a nursery word developed from the onomatopoeia by contraction and final vowel lengthening, which eventually also took root as an adult word. It is fascinating how *guru-guru guru-guru* [guruguru.guruguru] is also used as a word for calling cats with the recognition that it derives from an onomatopoeia that mimics an actual sound, as well as how adults use a word that developed

from this onomatopoeia by contraction and final vowel lengthening as a common noun for ‘cat’, and moreover, how this word is shared and distributed over a certain geographical area.

Although it is a word that is widely used by adults, the word *gurū* [guru:] of the Gusuku dialect does have a kind of humorous connotation. When asked about the noun for ‘cat’, the two speakers from Gusuku, Kikai Town cheerfully uttered *gurū* [guru:] with twinkles in their eyes, explaining that while [maja:]¹⁵ is the proper form on Kikaijima, [guru:] is the form used in Gusuku, and that [guru:] is an onomatopoeic alternative for [maja:] with a playful, humorous connotation. It can be surmised that it has this connotation because it is recognized as having derived from an onomatopoeia, even when it is used as an adult word.

3.4 Manners of movement

As regards onomatopoeias that express manners of movement, Nakamoto gives the following in the section ‘Words mimicking [actions of] humans and animals’ of his ‘Vocabulary of the Dialect of Shitooke, Kikaijima’ (Nakamoto 1978: 14), showing that there are usage distinctions between onomatopoeias depending on the subject:

Words that express actions like wandering around:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Human: | manja manja tʃʉŋa manja manja sui ‘Someone is wandering around.’ |
| Cow; horse: | matʃa matʃa |
| Cat; dog: | maja maja maja:ŋa maja maja sui ‘A cat is wandering around.’ ʃiŋŋa: ŋa maja maja sui ‘A dog is wandering around.’ |
| Fish: | mantʃa mantʃa |
| Bug: | ʃunja ʃunja |
| Snake: | ʃunja ʃunja |
| Fly: | bu: bu: |

Using the above as a reference, I conducted the survey focusing on onomatopoeias that express the wandering or moving around of humans, cows and horses, dogs and cats, fish, bugs, and flies. The response given was that in Gusuku, *maya-maya* [majamaja] is used for humans, cats, dogs, and fish.

(22) *Anchō maya-maya* [majamaja] *sutcha-ya*. ‘That person is wandering around.’

¹⁵ It appears that *mayā* [maja:] ‘cat’ is unrelated to the onomatopoeia *maya-maya* [majamaja] ‘to wander around; to loiter’. When asked, the speakers said they were not aware of any connection.

(23) *Unu injā maya-maya* [majamaja] *shite atchui-yā*. ‘Our dog is wandering around.’

(24) *Unu gurū maya-maya* [majamaja] *shite atchui-yā*. ‘Our cat is wandering around.’

(25) *An io maya-maya* [majamaja] *sui*. ‘That fish is moving around.’

Turu-turu [turuturu] was also given for humans, as in (26). Rather than for wandering around, however, it is used for stumbling and physical imbalance like that of a drunk person.

(26) *Anchō turu-turu* [turuturu] *sutchaya*. ‘That person is stumbling around.’

As stated by Iwakura (1941: 178)—‘*Turu-turu*: the state of being about to fall asleep or wake up.’—and Toyoryo Mori (1979: 196)—‘*Tsuru-tsuru shi*: to be dozing; to sleep lightly; to not be fast asleep.’—sentences like (26) can be used to express how someone is dozing off.

It is used in a similar sense in other dialects, as well. Masahiro Ono (2007: 276) gives the following (underlined by the author):

Tsuru-tsuru: [dialectal] sleeping lightly and briefly. Kinki, Chugoku, and Kyushu regions. Also *tsuru?*. *Itsu-no ma-ni-yara tsuru-tsuru-to nete simōta* ‘Before I knew it, I had dozed off.’ (Kyoto Prefecture); *Tsuru-tsurut-to shitara ichiban-ressha-ga tōtta* ‘As I was dozing, the first train passed by.’ (Shimane Prefecture); *Tsurut-to shita* ‘I took a nap.’ (Hiroshima Prefecture).

The reference to Kyushu is based on entries in Oita Prefecture dialect material collections¹⁶; namely, ‘To sleep only briefly. A nap.’ (Gekkan City Jōhō Ōita & Brass 1992: 103) and ‘To take a nap. = *torot-to suru*.’ (Kamae Town Board of Education 2000: 78). It can be conjectured from this that *turu-turu* [turuturu] in (26) is distributed along a continuum southwards from the Chugoku and Kyushu regions as an onomatopoeia that expresses the unconscious swaying movement resulting from physical imbalance when taking a nap. As this cannot be confirmed from just the descriptions found in dictionaries and dialect material collections, more detailed information regarding its usages in other areas, such as Oita Prefecture and Shimane Prefecture, would seem necessary.

As regards bugs, *ɽujo-ujo* [ɽudʒoudʒo] and *waja-waja* [wadʒawadʒa] were given as onomatopoeias expressing ‘wriggling in a swarm’. Similar forms are used in nearly the same sense in the dialects of mainland Japan, so it appears that these, too, are distributed along a continuum.

(27) *Mushi-ga ɽujo-ujo* [ɽudʒoudʒo] *sundō*. ‘Bugs wriggle around.’ (cf. mainland Japanese *uja-uja*)

(28) *Hē-ga waja-waja* [wadʒawadʒa] *sui*. ‘Flies wriggle around.’ (cf. mainland Japanese *uja-uja*)

¹⁶ The dialectal entries in the dictionary edited by Masahiro Ono (2007) were written by Harumi Mitsui and myself. The reference to the Kyushu region in the entry for *tsuru?* was based on these Oita Prefecture dialect material collections.

3.5 Onomatopoeias used adverbially

It would seem that the meanings of onomatopoeias are most abstract when they are used as adverbs. When expressing sounds, voices, and the like, onomatopoeias can be seen as capturing something concrete in a word form; when adverbial, on the other hand, they can be considered to capture speed, quantity, and the like as abstractions.

I therefore conducted this survey focusing on the words on the aforementioned list meaning ‘hastily’, ‘many’, and ‘exactly’ that appear to derive from onomatopoeias.

Firstly, Iwakura (1941) and Mori (1978) give the following words for ‘hastily’:

- *Bata-bata*: quickly—hastily.
E.g. *Bata-bata aruke* ‘Walk quickly.’ (imperative) Iwakura (1941: 269)
- *Bata-bata*: acting in a busy manner.
Bata-bata atsukyō. ‘Walk quickly.’ (imperative)
Bata-bata seryō. ‘Do it quickly.’ (imperative) Mori (1979: 253)
- *Batamichui*: to make great haste—close to ‘to be flustered’. Also *bataku yui*.
E.g. *Amari batamichi kega suru-na-yo* ‘Don’t hurt yourself hurrying too much.’
Iwakura (1941: 269)

When confirming this by showing the speakers these examples, they responded that these forms are used as follows¹⁷:

- (29) *Bata-bata* [batabata] *shiri-yō*. ‘Do it quickly.’ (imperative)
 (30) *Bata-bata* [batabata] *shiranba*. ‘You must do it quickly.’
 (31) *Bata-bata* [batabata] *shin-na-yō*. ‘Don’t do it hastily.’
 (32) *Anmari batamichi* [batamit̤i] *kega sun-na-yo*. ‘Don’t hurt yourself hurrying too much.’

Although this *bata-bata* [batabata] is also an onomatopoeia that expresses the making of busy noises, it is used here as an onomatopoeia expressing how something is done hastily.

Next, *gaba* [gaba] is used for ‘many’. Similar expressions are *tsumari* and *dunbai*. *Tsumari* is used with a meaning similar to ‘to pack (with/into); to stuff (with/into)’, while *dunbai* is used with a meaning similar to ‘full’.

- (33) *Gaba* [gaba] *kami-yō*. ‘Eat a lot.’ (imperative—to a child)
 (34) *Tsumari* *kami-yō*. ‘Eat a lot.’ (imperative—to a child)

¹⁷ It has been reported that *guru-guru* is used in the Amami region, as well (*Amami no Hōgen Sanpo II*, p. 143; *Amami Hōgen Bunrui Jiten*, p. 205), but it was not observed in this survey.

(35) *Dunbai kami-yō*. ‘Eat a lot.’ (imperative—to a child; in the sense of ‘Eat a bowlful’ or ‘Eat a very large portion’)

When referring to speed, *don-don* [dondon] is used.

(36) *Don-don* [dondon] *kami-yō*. ‘Eat quickly.’ (imperative—to a child)

Lastly, the expression *gatchiri* [gatt̚ɕiri] corresponds to ‘exactly; just right’.

(37) *Gatchiri* [gatt̚ɕiri] *ichi-jikan kāta*. ‘It took exactly one hour.’

According to Iwakura (1941), *gattui* is used in Aden, also as a postpositive adverb at the end of a sentence, as in *Sā shirō-ka gattui* ‘What shall I do; really...’ In the Gusuku dialect, however, no such usage was identified for *gatchiri*. It can be surmised that there are regional differences within Kikai Town with respect to these grammatical functions. Incidentally, this *gatchiri* would seem to be cognate with southern Kyushu forms such as *gattsui*, *gatchui*, and *gattsuri*.

4 Summary and directions for further research

In the above, I analyzed a Kikai Town dialect onomatopoeia list based on dialectological reference materials with regard to word form types and semantic classification, and I reported on findings from an interview survey on the dialect of Gusuku, Kikai Town regarding uses of onomatopoeia to express sounds and vocalizations, motion, and adverbial meanings. It can be summarized as follows.

In the analysis of the onomatopoeia list based on reference materials, I established among other things that reduplicative forms are abundant, that the onomatopoeias are not very high in productivity as constituent elements in verb formation, that polysemy is not observed, and that words expressing sound and motion are somewhat numerous. In addition, I pointed out that word form and meaning are to a certain degree correlated, as concrete things such as sound, motion, and bodily sensations are often expressed using reduplicative forms, while abstract adverbial meanings are often expressed using forms suffixed with *-to* or *-tu*. In the interview survey I focused on onomatopoeias that express sounds and vocalizations and manners of motion, as well as onomatopoeias that are used adverbially. I pointed out that in regard to onomatopoeias expressing sounds, loud sounds can be considered marked and soft sounds unmarked, and that with respect to onomatopoeias that express sounds such as vocalizations, there are nouns that derive from reduplicative forms by contraction and final vowel lengthening. Furthermore, I discussed onomatopoeias expressing manners of motion and adverbs deriving from onomatopoeias, and I pointed out the possibility of a number of the above onomatopoeias being distributed along a continuum with the dialects of mainland Japan.

The following two matters remain as topics for further research. Having compiled an onomatopoeia list, it has become possible to examine the onomatopoeias of the Kikai Town dialects comprehensively, so I was able to give a global overview of their lexical properties in this paper. Furthermore, this could be utilized in the preparation and analysis stages of the interview survey. Lists of this kind for many more dialects, a database that can be used for comparing dialects and identifying distributions, and the like are required for further research. In addition, there were many items in the interview survey for which I was unable to conduct sufficient elicitation to be able to sketch a partial system. I would like to leave these matters, including survey methodology, for further research.

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