
The Perspectives Of Native Kansai Dialect Speakers Towards The Kansai Dialect And Standard Japanese

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***Abstract.** This research analyzes the Kansai dialect, Standard Japanese, and the perspectives of native Kansai dialect speakers towards both languages. The purpose of this study is to find out what native speakers of Kansai dialect feel about their dialect and their views on Standard Japanese. This research uses a qualitative method with a thematic analysis approach. The data for this study were gathered from comments on threads and questions posted on the [jp.quora.com](https://www.jp.quora.com) website. The researcher's conclusion is that native Kansai dialect speakers have a sense of pride in their language and do not hold any particular views towards Standard Japanese.*

***Keywords:** Dialect, Kansai, Kansai dialect, Japanese, Standard Japanese*

INTRODUCTION

Standard language (hyoujungo) is one of the language varieties used by people in a country. Hyoujungo can be said to be the official language, standard language or language that represents the national language of a country that can be used by a community of speakers who have different regional languages to carry out their linguistic communication activities (Sudjianto and Dahidi, 2007: 202).

In addition to the standard language, there are other variations of language known as dialects. A dialect is a language variation used by a relatively small group of speakers who are located in a specific place or area (Chaer and Agustina, 1995: 83). One of the dialects found in Japan is the Kansai Dialect or Kansai-ben (関西弁). The Kansai Dialect is one among the many dialects present in Japan. The Kansai Dialect or Kansai-ben (関西弁) refers to a group of Japanese language dialects in the Kansai region of Japan. However, in common usage, this term most often refers to the dialect used in Osaka, the largest city in the Kansai region.

The Kansai Dialect became known to the Japanese people because comedians and manzai artists used this dialect on television. As time passed, the Kansai Dialect also started being used as the primary language for characters in Japanese anime, video games, and Japanese drama characters. This has led to the widespread recognition of the Kansai Dialect among the Japanese society.

The Kansai Dialect exhibits significant differences compared to Standard Japanese, including accent, tone, intonation, as well as vocabulary and intonation. Examples of differences between the Kansai Dialect and Standard Japanese include:

<i>Hyōjungo</i>	Dialek Kansai	Terjemahan Indonesia
Hontou ni?	Honma ni?	Really?
Suteru	Hokasu	Throw away
dame	akan	No good

In a research titled "Metcha suki ya nen," A sociolinguistic attitude survey concerning the Kansai dialect by Susanne Södergren (2014) stated that the majority of the Japanese population holds a positive view of the Kansai Dialect. This dialect is perceived as friendly, warm, and very straightforward. However, there is a small portion of people who do not like this dialect as they consider it to be too aggressive.

Due to such perceptions, a small portion of individuals from the Kansai region hide their dialect when they are outside of the Kansai area. However, the majority of people from the Kansai region still use it during national occasions.

The aim of this research is to understand the feelings of native speakers of the Kansai Dialect towards the dialect they use (Kansai Dialect) and their perspectives on Standard Japanese.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, the Researcher used the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses) method to determine the appropriate literature review. the researcher used the Publish or Perish software version 8.8.4384.8527 to search for data by entering the keywords Kansai dialect and sociolinguistics. the literature obtained amounted to 100 literature.

At the selection stage, 5 literatures have titles that match the theme but the discussion mostly deviates, the researcher identified 1 article related to Japanese people's opinions of the Kansai dialect based on the title, abstract, and related conclusions. the literature selected by the researcher is in English because English is considered a source that provides more accurate information than Indonesian.

The study used by the researcher is entitled "Metcha suki ya nen", A sociolinguistic attitude survey concerning the Kansai dialect. This research was written by Susanne Sodergren in 2014 as a graduation thesis to obtain a bachelor's degree at the university of Dalarna, Sweden. It discusses the opinions of non-Kansai dialect speakers towards the Kansai dialect.

There are three important points at the heart of this research. The first point is "do you like the Kansai dialect." Of the 71 respondents who were non-native speakers of the Kansai dialect, 53% said they liked the Kansai dialect, 12.7% said they disliked the Kansai dialect, and the remaining 31% said they were neutral.

The second point was "how would you describe the Kansai dialect." This point is about what respondents think of when they hear the word Kansai dialect. Straight forward got the most votes, followed by warm and sloppy.

The third point is "what do you associate the Kansai dialect with." This point is about what occupations respondents think of when they hear the word Kansai dialect. Comedians got the most votes.

RESEARCH METHOD(S)

This study uses a qualitative research method with a Thematic Analysis approach. The data were obtained from the comments on the question thread addressed to native speakers of Kansai dialect on the jp.quora.com website. The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a way to analyze data with the aim to identify patterns or to find themes through the data that has been collected by researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are 4 questions asked on the site. These questions are :

1. 関西弁の人は自分の方言をどう考えているのでしょうか？
2. 関西弁のネイティブスピーカーは、標準語についてどう感じているのでしょうか？
3. 関西弁を使う人は、東京の人や標準語を話す人をどう見ているのでしょうか？
4. 関西弁のネイティブスピーカーは、標準語や日本の中心である東京をどう見ているのでしょうか？

The total number of responses obtained from these 4 questions was 42 answers. The responses were collected and extracted. Each quote was coded and then the codes were collected and linked into a conclusion and answer to the research problem.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Kansai dialect is considered part of the Kansai people's identity. They have a strong attachment to their dialect. This can be understood from a quote by a Kyushu native who visited Kansai in the quote below

“This can be understood not only by observing the prevalence of comedians of Kansai origin who consistently speak in Kansai dialect on television, but also by experiencing the sudden change in linguistic environment upon arriving at Kansai Airport or disembarking at Osaka Station via Shinkansen. It is as if one is instantly enveloped by the Osaka dialect”

The attachment that Kansai people have to their dialect can be seen from Kansai-based comedians who always consistently speak using Kansai dialect on television, and changes in the linguistic environment, as if when someone arrives to one of the cities in the Kansai area (in this quote Osaka city) either through the station or airport, the person will immediately be enveloped by the nuances of the Osaka dialect.

Besides the attachment of native Kansai dialect speakers to their dialect, they also have pride in their dialect. One informant from outside Kansai had a conversation with people from Osaka, and he realized that many Osaka people do not hide their dialect. According to him, one of the factors that can cause this to happen is the influence of Kansai-based comedians who often appear on television, such as the entertainment company Yoshimoto Kogyo.

“many people from Osaka do not hide their dialect. Perhaps it is because the Osaka dialect spoken by entertainers affiliated with Yoshimoto Kogyo has reached the ears of people all over the country, so many can understand it”

The pride that Kansai people have for their dialect makes Kansai people continue to use the Kansai dialect outside the Kansai area despite the risk that the dialect they speak will not be understood by people from other areas. However, there are some people who choose to hide their dialect due to several factors.

“On the other hand, the stereotype that “Kansai dialect equals rude behavior, noisy, and always ready for comedy” has also become widespread, and this is quite troublesome”

The stereotype that the Kansai dialect equals rude behavior, noisy and always ready for comedy has spread throughout the country. This stereotype has made some native Kansai dialect speakers choose to hide their dialect. But they still love the Kansai dialect and are proud of it.

Kansai people dislike anything that they think degrades the Kansai dialect because they have a love and pride for the Kansai dialect. One of the things they dislike is the "fake Kansai dialect" or what they call *ese Kansai*ben 「エセ関西弁」 which is usually used by people outside Kansai.

"If the intonation is not perfect, it is called 'fake Kansai dialect'. If you are from overseas, even if you speak with a fake Kansai dialect, people will say, "Wow, you speak with Kansai dialect!" Osaka people inwardly make fun of those who speak this fake Kansai dialect. While listening, they may feel irritated and think, "What a fool, trying to imitate Osaka.""

They also dislike other Kansai people who love too much and express their love excessively, as one informant felt in the following data

"However, just because one loves their own dialect, it doesn't mean that deliberately flaunting it by speaking in an exaggerated manner is acceptable. In fact, many people who do so are often disliked, even though they love their own dialect very much."

The Use of Manzai Comedic Art and Osaka People's View of this Comedic Art

Kansai people/native speakers of Kansai dialect, especially Osaka people, think that something pleasant is very important to Osaka people.

"In Osaka, it's normal and important to be funny"

But when Osaka locals talk to each other in the city, they often use polite language, and they don't fully display what we know as "Osaka-style humor." Where a "tsukkomi" and a "boke" meet.

"Many people have set aside the traditional comedic roles of "boke" (funny person) and "tsukkomi" (straight person), as part of their past experiences."

Manzai comedy is stand-up comedy involving dumb (boke) and smart (tsukkomi) characters whose banter revolves around contemporary events, leisure, work, social issues, and gossip about modern, urban, and industrial life. (Whelan 2014:16, Stocker 2002:3). In this comedy art, a boke is tasked with delivering funny lines, while being forgetful and unfocused. Usually they will misunderstand even the simplest of topics and make silly mistakes. The tsukkomi is the second comedian who will reprimand - and often berate - the boke's forgetfulness. Their direct responses to their partner make the whole show unique and hilarious.

The art of humor is not completely lost in Osaka, sometimes they use this "Osaka-style humor" as tsukami or a way to attract attention from the other person.

"Well, it's not entirely true that comedy is completely ruled out. In conversations, comedic elements are still used as a form of "tsukami" (a way to attract people's attention)"

When this comedy was still booming in Osaka, there are some informant who was proud of being an Osaka resident and speaking the Kansai dialect because manzai comedy was one of the things that brought the Kansai dialect to be known by all Japanese people. But over time, this informant felt bored because the comedy seemed repetitive and eventually his pride slowly disappeared.

"During the manzai comedy boom, I used to feel proud to be an Osaka resident who spoke the Kansai dialect. However, that has become a relic of the past. At first, it may have been perceived as something unique, but as time passed, it became a feeling of fatigue and boredom, like repetition for the umpteenth time."

Kansai dialects differ by region

The Kansai dialect, known as "Kansai-ben", is a form of expression intended for people outside the Kansai region. The Kansai dialect itself differs depending on the region.

"Kansai dialect, known as "Kansai-ben", is a form of expression intended for people outside the Kansai region, Osaka dialect, Kobe dialect, Kyoto dialect, Harima dialect, and others may look similar but differ from each other. The Ashiya dialect also falls into this mix. Even within the Kobe dialect, there are differences between the east and west, and areas along the Hankyu Railway line (Yamate) and neighborhoods along the Hanshin Railway line (Shitamachi) also have unique variations."

All regions in the Kansai region, e.g. Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Harima, Ashiya, have slight differences in dialect, and there are even dialectal differences in some parts of the same region, e.g. the northern part and the southern part of Osaka, and the eastern part and the western part. These differences include intonation and vocabulary.

Kobe dialect natives' opinions on Kobe

Kobe is the seventh largest city in the Kansai region with a population of about 1.5 million. Kobe City is the capital of Hyogo Prefecture. It is located in the south of the island of Honshu, north of Osaka Bay and about 30 km west of Osaka city (Haryono 2020).

Kobe people believe that their dialect (Kobe dialect) is more suitable to describe their "sophisticated" city than standard Japanese, and they are proud of it.

"However, people in Kobe are very proud of their city, considering it the second most sophisticated city in Japan after Kyoto. We believe that speaking the Kobe dialect (although it may not be specifically called that) is more suitable for our sophisticated selves than speaking Standard Japanese."

Kyoto native's opinion on Kyoto dialect

Kyoto was the capital and center of Japan before the Meiji restoration in 1868. Kyoto people believe that Kyoto is the eternal capital of Japan. They believe that Kyoto is still the capital of Japan, and has not been moved to Tokyo. They believe that the emperor will return to Kyoto someday, and this is taught in history lessons to children in Kyoto.

"People in Kyoto in the early Meiji period believed that the Emperor would eventually return to Kyoto. This is something that is taught in Japanese history classes."

Kyoto's long history is one of pride for Kansai people, and Kyoto people themselves. Because of this, Kyoto natives from generation to generation do not like it when their way of speaking is labeled ".....-ben", such as Osaka-ben, Kobe-ben, etc. They call their dialect "Kyōkotoba" rather than "Kyōto-ben". They consider Kyoto dialect to be of a higher level than other dialects in Kansai.

"Kyoto has been the capital of Japan for over 1200 years. Therefore, we don't call it a regional dialect like " ____-ben," and we don't like being called that either."

Opinions of Shiga, Nara, and Wakayama natives on their dialects

Shiga, Nara, and Wakayama are prefectures located in the Kansai region. People from Shiga, Nara, Wakayama, people in Kyoto prefecture who are outside Kyoto City, as well as people from Hyogo prefecture who are outside Kobe City, may not have much pride in their dialect, compared to other areas such as Osaka, and people from Kyoto & Kobe City.

“People from areas such as Shiga, Nara, Wakayama, or those in Kyoto Prefecture but outside Kyoto City, as well as those in Hyogo Prefecture but outside Kobe City, may be less proud of their own dialect than others.”

Native Kansai dialect's opinion on Hyoujungo

The base of today's standard Japanese is taken from the Tokyo dialect because Tokyo is the center of government of the Japan.

“I wrote that the standard language was created based on words used in Tokyo (and the Kanto region), so it only means that the words are similar to the standard language. So, if Kyoto is still the center and capital (or administrative capital) of Japan today, then the Kansai dialect would be a language more similar to the standard language.”

Kansai people, especially Kobe people consider Hyoujungo (Standard Japanese) to be the standard way of speaking, they use Standard Japanese when they are confronted with official situations that require them to use standard language, while Kansai dialect (Kobe dialect) is used when they want to express themselves and speak freely and openly. Some Kansai people consider that Dialects, such as Kansai dialect, Edo dialect are culture, while standard language is a tool.

“In conclusion, in situations where more standardized language is expected, people tend to use standardized language, but when they want to speak freely and openly, they will use Kobe dialect. Standardized language is just a standardized way of speaking. Standard Language is a tool. The Edo dialect, just like the Kansai dialect is culture”

The rest have a neutral opinion, they think that the standard language is just the Tokyo dialect or the language used by speakers on television or radio, they don't feel anything special about this. Here are 3 data from 3 different informants about their opinions on standard Japanese/Tokyo dialect

東京弁だなあと思うだけ。テレビやラジオでアナウンサーが話す標準語に関しては、とくに何も感じません。ごく普通に聞こえる。まだ使

い慣れないのか、イントネーションが変なときは、ん？って思う時はある。

"I just thought, "Oh, that's Tokyo dialect." As for the standard language spoken by broadcasters on television and radio, I didn't feel anything special. It sounds pretty normal to me. There are times when I think, "Huh?" if the intonation sounds strange, but maybe I'm just not used to it yet."

どうも思っていないでしたよ(^-^) 今は標準語で話していますがやはり何も思いません。

"Oh, I didn't really think about it that way (^-^) Right now, I'm speaking in a standard language, but to be honest, I don't feel anything special about it."

テレビ、ラジオ、から流れる言葉は基本的標準語、関東アクセントで聞き慣れているので、何とも思っていないのではないのでしょうか。

"I'm sure I probably don't have any special thoughts because I'm used to hearing words spoken in a basic standard language with a Kanto accent on television and radio."

All three people have the same view on the Tokyo dialect, and they have no particular view on it. According to them, the Standard Japanese they hear on radio and television is quite normal, as they are used to it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted above, the majority of native speakers of the Kansai dialect have pride in their dialect. Some of the reasons for Kansai pride include the history of Kansai itself, the original culture that is still preserved, and also the role of Kansai-based comedians who spread the Kansai dialect throughout the country.

The Kansai dialect is an expression used by people from outside Kansai for the dialect used in Kansai, but the Kansai dialect itself is actually different based on the region, each region has differences in intonation and vowels. Each native speaker of the Kansai dialect has pride in their own dialect and region.

Kobe people think that standard Japanese is considered a standardized way of speaking and is only used for official purposes, while the Kansai dialect is used when they want to express themselves freely and openly. They don't feel anything special about Standard Japanese.

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