

## **The genesis of Brazilian Portuguese as a migrant koine in Japan: Language and dialect contact, and the feature pool**

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This paper presents the first ever variationist study of language and dialect contact and its subsequent new dialect formation among a Brazilian community in Japan. During the 1980s, the rapidly expanding Japanese economy was faced with a serious shortage of manual labour. Consequently, the immigration control law was radically revised to allow *Nikkei* (Japanese descendants) Latin Americans to come to work in Japan. This has resulted in the emergence of Brazilian communities across Japan.

For the last three decades, this population has received academic attention in Japan, being studied from sociolinguistic perspectives. However, there are as yet no studies that focus explicitly on a newly emerging variety of Brazilian Portuguese as a result of language and dialect contact within this immigrant context in Japan from a perspective of koine formation.

To address this gap, we conducted a variationist research project on Brazilian Portuguese dialect contact in Joso City, Ibaraki Prefecture. Recordings of spontaneous speech as well as reading aloud of a word list were collected from 60 speakers (both first and second generation speakers). The word list was designed to examine a series of phonological variables in a range of linguistic environments. However, as this is a report of work-in progress, we focus only on the variable (r), using only part of the word list data from first and second generation participants.

In this paper, we use Trudgill's (1986) and Britain's (2018) approach to koineisation – a cluster of linguistic processes (levelling and interdialectalisation) operating on linguistic systems in dialect contact situations – as well as Mufwene's (2001) feature pool and Founder Principle as a lens to examine koine formation in a Brazilian migrant setting in Japan. Our preliminary results provide some evidence of levelling and interdialectalisation, which supports the validity and applicability of both the Dialect Contact Theory proposed by Trudgill and Britain and the Founder Principle by Mufwene.

This paper concludes by highlighting the importance of taking into consideration where people in the donor community come from, in what numbers, and what dialects they bring with them, as well as other languages in competition in a new settlement.