

Promote and Preserve Dialects

~Stopping Population Outflow from Rural Areas~

Ehime Prefectural Imabari West High School

Background

Population outflow has become a major problem in my local community. Population outflow leads to a decline in local culture and weakens community ties. Therefore, we decided to address this social issue by focusing on "dialects."

Hypothesis

Population outflow occurs because people do not find their community attractive enough. Dialects are closely connected to local culture. Therefore, we believe that using dialects in our daily lives can help develop a sense of unity and pride. By increasing opportunities to use dialects and learning more about their unique qualities, more people may become interested in and care about their community. This can lead to the revitalization of the community.

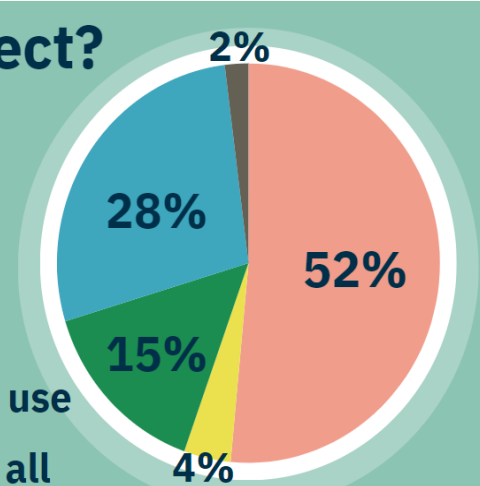
Charm of dialects

- They have unique words, rhythms, and intonation.
- They reflect the way of life, history, and values of people in the community.
- They give people a sense of unity and pride.
- They enable people to express themselves in unique ways, with warmth and familiarity.

Questionnaire

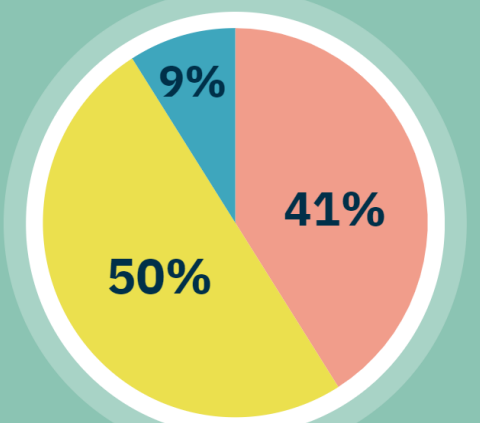
Do you use a dialect?

- Daily use
- Only when talking to the elderly
- Know, but do not use
- Know a little, but do not use
- Neither know nor use at all



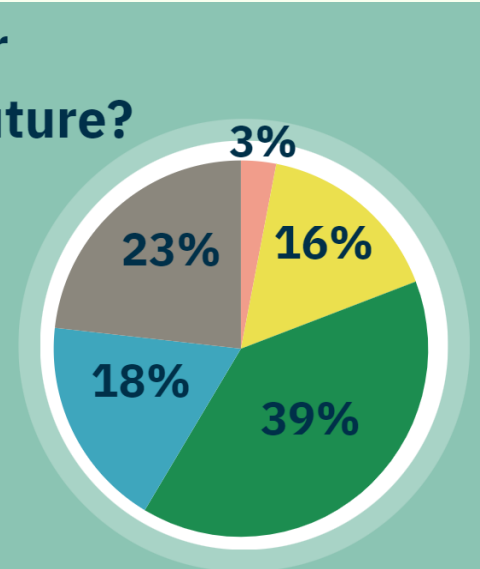
Are dialects attractive to you?

- Yes
- Neutral
- No



Will you live in your hometown in the future?

- Yes
- After graduating from college
- For child care or caregiving
- No
- Undecided



Interview

A dialect expert in our area said:

- The Imabari dialect is my favorite treasure.
- The greatest appeal of dialects is that they are a communication tool that is highly valued by the local people. You can feel a sense of home wherever you are.
- In the past, everyone used dialects in school, and it was commonplace to use dialects in class.
- However, the dialects used by the current generation have changed from those used in the past.
- I want the younger generation to realize the charm of dialects and preserve them for the future.

Example

〈Daily Conversation〉

e.g.1:

Imabari Dialect: **行ってこーわい**(ittekohwai)
Standard Japanese: 行ってきます(ittekimasu)
English: I'm leaving now.

e.g.2:

Imabari Dialect: **かまん**(kaman)
Standard Japanese: 構わない(kamawanai)
English: It's okay.

〈"Momotaro" in Imabari Dialect〉

歩いて行きよったら、イヌに出会いました。

「桃太郎さん、どこ行くん？」

「鬼ヶ島い鬼退治に行くんよ。」

「ほんなら、お腰に付けたきび団子を一つつかあさい。おともするけん。」

While walking, Momotaro met a dog.
"Momotaro, where are you going?"
"I am going to Onigashima to conquer the ogres."
"Please give me one of those kibi-dango (millet dumplings) you have on your waist. Then I will go with you."

Challenges

- Young people today are using dialects less and less, and some dialects are disappearing. This could lead to a loss of the unique culture and identity of the region.
- As local dialects fade away, the sense of unity, pride or identity among people is also weakening. This could cause young people to leave the region for other areas.
- There is not enough effort or educational opportunities to pass dialects on to the next generation.

Our Suggestions

- Teachers use dialects in the classroom to help students learn and appreciate them.
- The broadcasting club makes a weekly announcement in dialect to help people get used to it.
- Volunteers read folktales to children in a dialect.
- Schools and the local government organize courses or workshops on dialects.

References

NHK (2023) 「関西人がどこでも関西弁を話すのはなぜ? チコちゃん」 <https://tmbi-joho.com/2023/02/24/chiko203-ka/> 2024,11,15