

# 母は昔パパだった—音韻変化の話—

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昔々、「ハハ」は「パパ」でした。冗談に聞こえるかもしれませんが、本当の話です。ここで一つ、室町時代のなぞなぞをご紹介します。クイズ好きの後奈良天皇が編集した本『後奈良院御撰何曾』(1516年)に収められているもので、「母には二度逢ひたれど、父には一度も逢はず。何ぞ。唇と解く」というものです。当時の人々には簡単ななぞなぞだったのでしょうか、後世の人にはチンプンカンプン。答を導き出すヒントをみつけられず、いろいろな珍解答があったそうです。長年に渡るこの謎を解いたのは、広辞苑の編集者として有名な新村出先生。カギは発音の仕方でした。つまり、「母」を現代風に/haha/(ハハ)と発音すると唇は合いませんが、両唇音で/ΦaΦa/(ファファ)と発音すれば二度唇が合います。チチは唇を合わせず発音されます。

実は、奈良時代以前の古代日本語では、[h]音は[p]音で発音されていたのが定説です。その[p]音は平安時代に[Φ]音に、江戸時代には[h]音に変わっています。「母」で言えば、パパ→ファファ→ハハと発音が変わったということです。父をパパとも言う現代の私たちは「母がパパだった」なんて聞くと、一瞬混乱してしまうのですが…。これは音韻の話でした。

パパからハハへの変化はなぜ起こったのかを考えてみましょう。[p]は両唇破裂音で、発音時に唇の緊張を伴う音です。その緊張が徐々にゆるむと両唇の隙間から音を出す[Φ]音に、さらにゆるむと、もう唇も使わない[h]音になるのです。こうした変化は唇音退化といわれ、要するに発音は楽な方へ楽な方へと変わってきたということです。coffeeがコーヒー、earphoneがイヤホン、filletがヒレなど、[f]音が[h]音で発音され、表記されるのも、これらの単語がいつ取り入れられたかがわかる資料の一つと考えると、興味深いものがあります。

さて、英語をはじめ多くの外来語を取り込んでいる今の日本語。私たちはファ・フィ・フェ・フォの[f]音その他[v]音なども発音し表記するようになりました。これは、もしかして先祖返りなのでしょうか？

## Once upon a time, a mother was a father. - The story of phonological change -

Sayoko Koike

In the old days, the word, haha (母mother) meant chichi (父father).

You may think it's a joke, however, it's true. I mean it. I would like to show you a riddle in the Gonarain-gosennazo which was published in 1516 of the Muromachi era (1336-1573). It was edited by Emperor Gonara, who was known as a quiz fan.

‘They meet haha twice, but never meet chichi. What are they? ‘

‘The answer is LIPS.’



It would be an easy riddle for people at the time, but it doesn't make any sense for people in later eras. They could not find any clue of the answer, and so created many strange, funny answers. The person who resolved the riddle after years of challenge was Dr. Shinmura Izuru, who is a well-known linguistic scholar as well as an editor of *Kozien*, the most authoritative dictionary of Japanese. The key to finding out the answer for him was the manner of articulation of these words, haha and chichi. In fact, when you articulate haha in present-day Japanese, our upper lip and lower lip never meet or touch each other. If you articulate ΦaΦa (fafa) sound as a bilabial consonant, your lips would meet each other. Chichi is pronounced without touching both lips.

They say that in ancient Japanese spoken before the Nara era, [h] was pronounced [p].

The [p] sound was changed to [Φ] in the Heian era, then to [h] in the Edo era. As a consequence of these changes, 母haha would have been pronounced papa, next fafa, then haha. Since we sometimes call 父chichi, papa, it's a really confusing fact that 'haha used be papa... It's a story about phonetics.

Let's think about how the transition occurred from papa to haha. [p] is a bilabial consonant for which the flow of air is stopped or restricted by the two lips when the sound is pronounced. The sound creates a tension of the lips. When the tension is decreased, [p] sound is changed to [Φ], which is a voiceless bilabial fricative, then to [h], which is pronounced by passing air through the mouth without using the lips. These changes are called labial weakening, when the way to pronounce a sound develops into an easier way in a word. For example, [f] sound is often pronounced and spelled with an [h] sound, such as coffee (ko-hi-), earphone (iyahon) and fillet (hire). I think it's really interesting that we can identify when the word was created by using these clues. Nowadays, Japanese imports many loanwords, including English. As a result, we have come to pronounce [f] or [v] again in loanwords. Does it mean that we are going back to the old days?

Translated by Akiko Tokura (藤倉 晶子)