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Monolinguistic Assumptions under Pressure – Perspectives on the languages of Tokyo from the points of view of the economics of language and social psychology

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Japan is a country with a traditionally strong monolingual self-image. In the last decades, however, linguistic heterogeneity has been steadily increasing. This is especially true for Tokyo, where about 40% of all resident foreigners in Japan live. The different languages of the capital will therefore be in the focus of our interest. Research will be conducted on the basis of two methodological approaches developed, respectively, in the economics of language and social psychology. The one will look at the language market in Tokyo, i.e. the different languages spoken there and their respective value in terms of supply and demand as reflected, e.g., in the local language industry. The other will investigate the language attitudes of the receiving end of immigration, the Japanese host community in Tokyo. Questions to be approached are such as how the Japanese think about other languages; how language attitudes are affected by Japan's incipient multilingualism; and how increasing linguistic pluralism is perceived in the Japanese community.

1 Introduction

Linguistic pluralism, like ethnic diversity, has often been regarded as a source of community unrest and social instability (Pattanayak 2001, Calvet 1998, Nelde 1997, 1980). For a long time, Japan's ethnolinguistic homogeneity has been an undisputed component of her self-image, often quoted as a major factor which both makes Japan a classical nation state and secures harmony, social consensus, and stability. In modern times, there has never been any doubt that Japan's proper and only language is Japanese, in contradistinction to many postcolonial countries. In recent decades, however, the monolingual assumptions entertained by the government and the overwhelming majority of the population have come under pressure, as a steady influx of labor migrants have begun to change the face of Japanese society. This is especially apparent in Tokyo which, like all metropolitan cities around the world, is in some measure multilingual. While conforming to a general trend driven by cross-border labor migration and the forces of globalization, Tokyo's growing linguistic diversity offers a unique opportunity for multilingualism research, since, at the present time, a language arrangement long taken for granted is being adjusted to changing communication needs. The mechanisms of these adjustments and their consequences for perceived and actual stability is what we are trying to understand

in this project. Two different paths will be followed to this end, one along the lines of the economics of language, the other language attitude research. The pivot serving as a point of departure for both is the notion of communication needs, as reflected in the local language industry, in economic terms, and in attitudes towards increasing multilingualism on the part of the host community, in sociopsychological terms.

2 Multilingualism as an individual and as a social fact

Bilingualism and multilingualism are situations where speakers of different languages coexist in a society. Both terms are often used interchangeably, where multilingualism is assumed to include bilingualism (e.g., Clyne 1998, Laitin 2001), or bilingualism is taken as the generic term which includes multilingualism (e.g., Haugen 1978: 4, Baker 1993: xiv, Grosjean 2001, Blanc 2001). A useful distinction is that between individual and societal bi-/multilingualism. Since in the former case mainly two languages are involved whereas in a society usually more than two languages coexist we will refer to bilingualism on the individual level and multilingualism on the societal level. Thus, bilingualism is concerned with individuals speaking two or more languages.

Definitions vary broadly with respect to actual use and proficiency, ranging from "native-like control of two languages" (Bloomfield 1933: 56) to the "uneven skills of a recent immigrant" (Spolsky 1998: 48). Baker and Jones (1998) discuss the theoretical implications of narrow and more comprehensive definitions. For the purposes of this paper, we will adopt Mackey's broad definition of bilingualism as "the knowledge and use of two or more languages" (1987: 700, cf. also Clyne 1998: 301, Herdina/Jessner 2002: 52). Accordingly, speakers are considered bilingual if they "use two (or more) languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives" (Grosjean 2001: 11), regardless of their language proficiency. From this point of view, "the majority of the world's population" (Mackey 1967: 11) or even "everyone is bilingual" (Edwards 1994: 55).

The coexistence of two or more languages in society, too, is not "the exception to the rule of monolingualism" (Hakuta 1986: 5), although monolingualism is often assumed to be the standard. Truly monolingual societies are highly exceptional both from geopolitical and historical points of view (Lewis 1977). Even in nations traditionally assumed to be monolingual, such as Germany, France, and Japan, linguistic diversity has steadily increased. This is mostly due to large migrant movements since the end of World War II and the general trend of globalization (e.g. development of supra-national entities like the EU, growing international business corporations, information exchange through the internet) towards the end of the century. On the other hand, there has also been a seemingly countervailing trend towards ethnicity, often referred to as the ethnic revival. Both trends have in common that they promote postnational communities (Philipson 1999) and thus openly challenge the widespread ideology of "one nation — one language".

Developed and spread by western European countries in the 19th century, this ideology propagated a national linguistic standard beyond all social and territorial

boundaries (cf., e.g., Safran 1999). Linguistic homogeneity was seen as vital for the national development for economic (communication between all levels involved in industrial production processes), social (facilitation of social mobility), and political reasons (participation in the political process, creation of a general consciousness of national identity, Coulmas 1995). "Language rationalization" — a notion formed in analogy to Max Weber's concept of state rationalization — led to the transformation of formerly multilingual societies into nation-states (Laitin 2001: 652). Due to these processes linguistic homogeneity is perceived as an important precondition for the general functioning of society, at least for those nations traditionally assumed to be linguistically homogeneous.

Research on societal multilingualism has concentrated on two sorts of countries, postcolonial countries with a relatively long tradition of linguistic pluralism, such as, India, Indonesia, and Singapore; and "classical" immigrant countries, such as the United States and Australia, where the encounter of speakers of different languages has always been an element of the national self-image. In countries of both kinds it is easy to find examples of "language conflict" (Nelde 1997), that is, social and/or ethnic tension not necessarily caused by, but focussed on, linguistic division, witness, e.g., the language riots in Tamil Nadu (Schiffman 1996) and the "English Only" debate in the United States (Crawford 1992). A third group of countries are in Western Europe where, as a by-product of labor migration, new linguistic minorities have emerged in recent decades (Extra/Verhoeven 1999, 1993). These countries have long assumed linguistic uniformity, but are forced by socioeconomic changes to adjust their language arrangements to growing multilingualism. With these countries Japan shares a number of features, including the monolingual assumptions under which the state operates.

3 Multilingualism in Japan

Both in domestic and international contexts Japan has long stressed its ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, creating as it were an ideological counterweight to the evident influences it absorbed in earlier periods from neighboring countries, especially China and Korea (Amino 1999: 20) of which the writing system was among the most important. In the agrarian feudal society before Meiji, everyday life was local with marked differences across regions and dialects. There were furthermore pronounced linguistic differences between social classes. Linguistic identification was with region and class, rather than the nation which for most Japanese had little significance. Although we hesitate to use the term multilingualism in this connection, it is clear that linguistic diversity was a feature of pre-modern Japan.

What followed was a period of linguistic homogenization. At the time of the Meiji restoration, the spread of standard Japanese and with it that of national allegiance and a sense of national homogeneity were pivotal parts of the modernization process. Lee (1996) and Yasuda (2000) have analyzed the origin of Japan's language policy and its emphasis on the promotion of the national language (*kokugo*) as an indispensable element of Japanese national identity. Ethnolinguistic homogeneity was considered a source of national power and social stability (Coulmas 1999).

Compulsory education, implemented in the 1870s, was instrumental in promoting the standard language, while regional language forms were actively discouraged, if not discriminated against. Unwritten languages of the Ainu in northern Japan and the Ryukyuans which "might well be called an independent language rather than a branch of Japanese" (Matsumori 1995) in Okinawa were subjected to a policy of rigid assimilation which also applied to regional dialects of Japanese. Later, in conjunction with the expansion of the Japanese empire, the Japanese language was promoted in dependent territories, especially Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria (Kawamura 1994, Chen 2001). Following Japan's defeat in World War II, the extension of the Japanese language was once again reduced to the Japanese archipelago, excepting overseas settlements in Latin America. As a consequence, a sense of homogeneity and isolation prevailed for several decades.

Japan's next experience with linguistic diversity occurred in the wake of the economic boom in the 1970s and 1980s which drew many foreign laborers from Asian and Latin American countries to Japan (Komai 1999). As the growing influx of foreign workers could no longer be ignored, their presence in Japanese society became the subject of public debate. The government clung to the idea of ethnolinguistic homogeneity and adopted the position to admit without restriction only Japanese descendants (*Nikkeijin*), in order not to jeopardize Japan's alleged cultural, linguistic, and racial uniformity (Kajita1994). Legislation to this effect was enacted in 1990. As described by Kajita, the remigration of Japanese-origin Brazilians and other Latin Americans whose forebears had left Japan early in the 20th century was an unexpected occurrence. Between 1980 and 2000, the number of non-Japanese nationals resident in Japan increased almost twofold from 0.78 million to 1.68 million. During the same period the proportion of so-called "new-comer" foreigners exceeded that of the "old-comers" who had arrived in Japan prior to the Pacific War (Immigration Bureau 2001). At 1.2% to 1.5% of Japan's resident population the foreign population is still small compared to Western European countries, however, it is interesting to note that one of 5.7 "new-comers" is married to a Japanese spouse or born to a mixed Japanese/non-Japanese couple.

There is growing awareness of the diversified ethnic groups and speech communities who make their presence felt in Japan today (Neustupný 1995). In addition to the 0.25 million *Nikkeijin*, Philippinos, mainland Chinese, Thais, and other Asian nationals have begun to form compact communities. An estimated 18,000 children speakinli Tw efridenmd othetolintie(Minguiturs oEduc(nati, C culteseSropoaisSciin) Tj 336.96 0 TD 0.0433 Tc

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linguistic diversity, even within the Japanese linguistic diasystem. This is not to say that the ideology of homogeneity is dead. The idea that multiculturalism and linguistic pluralism pose a threat not only to the integrity of Japanese culture, but more generally to social harmony and stability is strongly rooted (e.g. Utsumi 2000, Ishihara 2000, Suzuki 1990). In Japan, this is a time of transition. How the incessant multilingualism will develop and affect the host society is an issue of considerable interest. Whether or not it is an aspect of a more general trend from alleged and, in some measure, actual homogeneity to greater diversity is one of the questions to be addresses in field research.

4 The languages of Tokyo

Increasing multilingualism is most salient in big cities. Fieldwork on the topic has, therefore, focussed on metropolitan areas. Quebec (Vaillancourt 1996), New York City (García/Fishman 1997), Brussels (Witte/Baetens Beardsmore 1987), London (Salverda 2002, Baker/Eversley 2000), Jerusalem (Spolsky/Cooper 1991), and Hong Kong (Evans/Green 2001, Pennington 1998) are some major cities for which multilingualism surveys have been carried out of late. We intend to add to this list a stock-taking of the languages of metropolitan Tokyo where about 40% of all resident foreigners in Japan of approximately 100 different nationalities make a living. Tokyo will thus be portrayed as a multilingual area. Some of the questions to be investigated are as follows.

What major language groups are there?

Which languages are spoken in which areas?

Which functions do they serve?

How do new-comers, old-comers, and mainstream Tokyoites experience the increasing linguistic pluralism of everyday life in Tokyo?

Research will be conducted on the basis of two methodological approaches developed, respectively, in the economics of language and social psychology.

4.1 The language market

The economics of language has been defined as

> the study of the relationships between linguistic and economic variables; in addition, it includes the study of language-related issues where economic variables have little or no part, but which can nevertheless be examined with the concepts and methods of neo-classical economics (Grin/Vaillancourt 1997: 43).

The object of this branch of research is thus twofold. On the one hand it applies general concepts of economics like the rationality hypothesis (Grin 1999a: 10) and the labor theory of value (Coulmas 1996: 219), to problems of the sociology of language, such as, language shift (Ladefoged 1992), language maintenance (Goldstein 1997: 5), and language spread (Coulmas 1992: 183-201). Economists, too, have recognized language and communication as an important field of economic theory (e.g., Rubinstein 2000). On the other hand, the economics of language is concerned

with interrelations between language and economy. These include among others the influence of socio-economic variables on an individual's progress in second language learning (Ganguly 1985), the relationship between the economic development of a certain country and the number of languages spoken there (Pool 1972, for a summary cf. Edwards 1994: 213, note 27) or, related to this, the benefits and costs of multilingualism both for individuals and society at large (Grin/Vaillancourt 1997). Examples are Spolsky's (1977) considerations of bilingual education in the U.S., Grin's (1999b) analysis of the economic value of second-language skills in Switzerland, and Inoue's (2000a) hypothetical calculation of the expenses incurred by the introduction of English as a second official language in Japan. Labor migration accounts for the bulk of increasing societal multilingualism (Crystal 1987: 370). In Japan, this is particularly evident. There are good reasons, therefore, to scrutinize the economics of multilingualism in an urban environment such as Tokyo.

A point of departure is the notion of the value of a language. Both on theoretical and political grounds linguists refrain from evaluating languages. However, from a sociolinguistic point of view it is clear that speakers attach different values to different languages. If this was not so we could not explain why language maintenance and language shift differ significantly in different speech communities. Languages are assumed to have intrinsic, cultural, social, and economic values. For their assessment Coulmas (1992: 55-89) proposes a number of variables, including the communicative range of a language (i.e., the number of its speakers as first or foreign language); its functional potential (e.g., for science and technology); the financial investment it has been afforded (e.g., the compilation of dictionaries); and its international supply and demand as manifested in the language industry**.**

The languages of Tokyo will be investigated under the assumption that supply and demand provides an objectifiable measure for their evaluation. Of special interest will be the market of language specific commodities (LSCs). According to Grin (1999c: 39) these can be defined as "consumption goods and services, non-material commodities, or production factors that embody some language-related characteristics". LSCs include foreign language media (printing, broadcasting, internet), private and public language schools (commercial language schools both for Japanese and foreigners, foreign language departments at universities, schools for minority children), and translation agencies, but also shops and restaurants in which languages other than Japanese are understood. A further aspect of LSCs is the overall appearance of a certain language in private and public areas, for example, in municipal administrations, hospitals, on commercial handbills and flyers, NGO materials for catastrophe protection, traffic signs etc.

Yet another instance of foreign language use is what Haarmann (1989: 4) has termed "impersonal multilingualism", that is, the phatic use of foreign languages addressed at a Japanese audience. In combination these aspects will allow us to assemble a picture of the economics of multilingualism in Tokyo. Such a picture will be a measure of actual communication needs across linguistic boundaries, but it will say nothing about the evaluation of these needs and the incidence of multilingualism in Tokyo. This issue will be addressed separately by means of an in-depth survey of language attitudes.

4.2 Language attitudes in the host community

The increasing presence of non-Japanese nationals in Japan described above has become the object of scientific study in various disciplines. Sociologists, cultural anthropologists, linguists, and educationalists have conduced research on community networks (e.g. Komai 1996, Tajima 1998, Hirota 1997, Shiramizu 1996), culture (e.g. Kawamura 2002, Suh 2001, Maeyama 2001, Nakano 1993), religion (e.g. Hasumi 1993, Chikushi 2001), language (e.g. Douglass 2000, Nishikawa 2000, Shoji1999, Keio SFC1999, Miura1997), and education (e.g. Satô 2001, Kobe 2001, Nuibe 1999, Takahashi 1996, Hirota 1996) of migrant communities. At the same time, Japanese as a Foreign Language has expanded rapidly, both as a field of research and as an industry (e.g. Coulmas 1988, Inoue 2000b, Honna 2000, Neustupný 2000, Sasaki 1994). However, so far, relatively little research has been done about the host community. The present project is designed to help fill this gap, for a sound understanding of the complex processes involved in migration and in the transformation of a society which has for a long time operated under largely monolingual assumptions, is incomplete without a careful investigation of the receiving end of immigration, especially where social stability is at issue. Language attitude research offers an interesting perspective in this connection.

It is a well-known fact that people entertain attitudes toward languages based mostly on implicit value judgements about their own speech and that of others. As many empirical studies (e.g., Madera 1996, Bradac 1990, Saville-Troike 1989) have shown, language attitudes are a front for attitudes towards their speakers (Edwards 1985), a clear reflection of the fact that language is one of the most tangible social distinguishers. Within the Japanese identity discourse (*Nihonron*) the question of how the Japanese think about their own language has attracted a great deal of attention (e.g., Suzuki 1990, Kindaichi 2001, Befu 2001). Very little is known, however, about how the Japanese think about other languages and virtually nothing about how language attitudes are affected by Japan's incipient multilingualism or how increasing linguistic pluralism is perceived in the Japanese community.

Some of the questions to be investigated by means of the instruments developed in language attitude research are as follows.

To what extent are the Japanese aware of the presence in Japanese society of languages other than Japanese?

Are there any indications that Japan's self-image as a monolingual country is changing?

Are non-Japanese residents expected to speak Japanese, if so, at what level of proficiency?

How do such expectations differ across different groups of non-Japanese nationals?

What is the image (value) of different languages in Japanese society?

Following Ryan and Giles (1982), Sanada et al. (1992: 114) interpret the term *language attitude* as evaluations based on three essential factors, affective response, belief, and behavior toward language. Language attitudes have been considered "in

the context of societal structures and institutions" (Fishman 1971). Stereotypes are a common component of language attitudes (Coupland/Jaworski 2002: 484). The importance of shared language attitudes to the members of a speech community has been emphasized by Labov (1978).

Some of the instruments for ascertaining language attitudes by means of interviews and questionnaires developed by Ryan, Giles, and Hewstone (1988: 1069) will be applied in investigating attitudes toward the occurrence of foreign languages in writing and speech in Tokyo. Interviews will be conducted with persons representing both the Japanese majority and minority communities. Regular opinion polls about the Japanese language carried out by the National Language Research Institute (*Kokugo ni kansuru chôsa*) will be used as a frame of reference for comparison.

Our expectation is that our interviews and questionnaires will yield information about what majority-group members think about increasing linguistic pluralism and how their ideas differ from (or concur with) what minority-group members think about the need to assimilate and the desirability to maintain their ethnic languages. Whether and to what extent assimilation policies of former Japanese governments (Hatsuse 1996: 210) affect language attitudes on both sides will also be investigated. The results are expected to shed light on the integration of non-Japanese nationals into Japanese society with implications for the majority's sense of social stability (*anteisei*), a notion which in opinion polls about public well-being consistently ranks highly among the concerns of Japanese mainstream society.

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