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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND NATION-STATE BUILDING IN MEIJI JAPAN

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Japan is conventionally considered to be a monocultural, monoethnic, and monolingual society. According to the Population Census taken in 2015, the total population of Japan reached 127.09 million people. Statistics reveals that the percentage of ethnic Japanese people is 98%, while foreign residents account for 2% of the total population (see Population Census 2015 Statistical Maps of Japan). The national and official (*de facto*) language is Japanese.

However, the image of Japan as a monolingual state has always been a subject for discussion. Nowadays, analyzing linguistic situation and language reforms instituted in Japan in the era of modernization, researchers underline that Japan was and has always been multilingual, and the image of a homogenous society, which it presents, is “a modern myth” (Miller, 1982; Maher and Yashiro, 1995) or “fabrication” (Heinrich, 2011, 2012).

Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe those social and political factors that situate language ideology in relation to the nation-state building process in Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912). The paper begins by defining the concepts of *language ideology*. Following this, it clarifies the linguistic situation in the Meiji period. Finally, it analyzes social and political changes that influenced forming language ideology as one of the tools of nation-state building processes in modern Japan.

The nature of language ideology

There is a wide range of literature that covers the nature of language ideology (see e.g. Eagleton, 1991; Heath, 1989; Hill and Hill, 1986; Irvine, 1989; Joseph and Taylor, 1990; Milroy and Milroy, 1995; Silverstein, 1979; Woolard, 1998). However, current research shows struggles in its conceptualization. For example, Silverstein (1979, p. 13) defines language ideology as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use”. Irvine (1989, p. 255), on the other hand, emphasizes the role of social and political processes through which language ideology signifies: “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests”. Another approach is presented by critical linguistics that focuses on the ways in which ideologies are shared through language (Fairclough, 2001). In other words, they consider that ideology is inherent to discourse, and thus attention to political power, social inequality, and social relations in the society should be paid.

Analyzing the approaches to language ideology, Woolard (1998, p. 4) suggests dividing them into the investigation of 1) language ideology as rationalization that affects language structure; 2) the role of language ideology in language (or language varieties) contact; 3) language ideology as scientific ideologies of particular linguists (analysis of public discourses on language).

It should be noticed that a theory of language ideology would be incomplete without considering the nature of ideology itself. Thus, Fishman (1972, p. 43) asserts that language is “an invaluable tool for the spread of nationalist ideologies”. Similarly, Cameron (2006, p. 141) points out that “language is not simply a vehicle for other ideological processes but is itself shaped by ideological processes”.

Therefore, we believe that the key step to reveal ideological beliefs about language is to examine the history of social and cultural factors, which shape linguistic structure, and to analyze the particular ways in which those beliefs are shared through language.

Linguistic situation in early Meiji

The history of modern Japan begins from the political revolution known as the Meiji Restoration. In 1868, a feudal political system of the Tokugawa shogunate was replaced by a new government with the Emperor at its head. Japan’s new government faced the urgent necessity for technical, political, economic, and educational modernization to secure its position of the nation-state in the world.

Japan’s linguistic environment in the middle of the nineteenth century was characterized by coexistence of numerous writing styles based on classical Japanese and Chinese languages and significantly differed from the contemporary spoken language, and a rich variety of social and regional dialects. For this reason, language reforms in Meiji Japan particularly focused on forming a homogenous standard of the national language (Heinrich and Galan, 2011, p.1).

Characteristics of written language. One of the main reasons for the complicated linguistic situation was a difference between written (*bungo*) and spoken (*kōgo*) languages of Japan which had almost no relation to each other in grammar and lexis. *Bungo* was a general name for all written varieties of literal styles based on classical forms, while *kōgo* named a colloquial style of Japanese. Let us consider the nature of *bungo* style.

By the end of the nineteenth century, there was a long tradition of coexistence of a few writing systems: *wabun*, *kanbun*, *sōrōbun* and *wakan konkōbun* which goes back to the end of the seventh century when Japan appeared as a new Empire – *Nippon*. At that time, being integrated into a China-centered East Asian world, Japan had its own spoken language but not writing system to go with. Japanese intellectuals used a special hybrid Chinese-Japanese technique: authentic Chinese words represented by characters were translated into spoken Japanese, while Japanese words were written in Chinese characters, which were semantically similar to Japanese. However, since Japanese and Chinese are not related languages and their syntactic systems are absolutely different, it was difficult to reflect grammatical features of Japanese. As a result, an original syllabic script *kana*¹, which was a simplified form of Chinese characters *kanji*, was created in the eighth century.

Once *kana* script was developed, it became possible to write close to spoken Japanese of that time. The combination of intermixed *kanji* read in the Japanese way (using *kun’yomi* readings) and phonetic syllabary representing Japanese syntax formed a writing style *wabun* known as “Classical Japanese writing”. In comparison with other styles, *wabun* being simple in terms of writing and due to containing native Japanese lexicon, various euphemisms and rhetorical devices, characterized as soft, graceful, and elegant style associated with women’s writing (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 42). Therefore, educated women, who were not sufficiently proficient in the Chinese language, learnt to read and write in *wabun* using it in correspondence or literature.

¹ *Kana* is a group name for the Japanese writing system consisting of two syllabic alphabets: *hiragana* (to write Japan-origin words) and *katakana* (to write borrowed words).

Despite the existence of an original writing system, a prestige of Chinese and tradition to write texts imitating classical Chinese (texts were read in *Sino-Japanese way*² using *on'yomi* readings) remained. This writing style called *kanbun* represented civilization and the power of the imperial household (Clark 2009, p. 15). Being valued for its formal erudite tone and conciseness, it had a prestige over all other forms and existed in its classical form until the middle of the twentieth century. Unlike *wabun*, *kanbun* was considered to be men's writing, which was used in official documents, history, and intellectual works (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 41).

The style of writing called *sōrōbun* represented a style based on classical Chinese that developed in the Middle Ages. *Sōrōbun* emerged in the Kamakura period (1191–1333) and was used mainly by men for public and private correspondence. It played a significant role especially in the Tokugawa Period (1603–1868) when it was employed in official and unofficial documents. It did not represent the written form of the spoken language, but being simpler than *kanbun* that required many years of study, it began to be used by both, the samurai and commoners (Twine, 1991, p. 49).

Another writing style, *wakan konkōbun* was a mixture of Chinese writing styles and spoken Japanese of the Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura periods. In contrast to *wabun* and *kanbun*, it combined characters readings, grammar, and lexis of both languages. *Wakan konkōbun* was often used in literature and Buddhist sermons, many classical literature works were also written in it. Including colloquial speech and being close to contemporary vernacular, later it would be chosen by many intellectuals and governors in early Meiji (Clark, 2009, p. 17).

It is important to note that by the Meiji era, each written style had not resembled the spoken language; however, people needed many years of education to be proficient in them. Written language was regarded as a cultural phenomenon which explicitly reflected social stratification and was the language of the elite.

Characteristics of the spoken language. Another factor characterizing the linguistic situation in early Meiji has to do with linguistic regionalism. There was a long history of high regional awareness through the usage of dialects. Hunter (2012, p. 105) highlights, “Up to the Meiji Period it was regarded as a matter of course for people from different areas of Japan to speak different, and often mutually incomprehensible, dialects”. The most prominent dialects were *Kanto*³ and *Kansai*⁴, however, no dialect had a function of standard, nor was codified grammatically. Thus, on the one hand, dialect usage determined the identity of Japanese people living in a particular area, but, on the other hand, caused communication difficulties between people of different provinces.

Language varieties reflected not only regional but also social differences. The variant of the spoken language a person used and his level of literacy clearly reflected social relationships in the society that existed before Meiji Restoration for 250 years. During the Tokugawa period there was strict social stratification which divided Japanese society into classes of samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants. Rigidly stratified social order naturally determined the level of power, wealth, and education.

With regard to education, the Tokugawa government advocated the importance of learning and in contrast to the medieval period, education spread through most segments of the population (Deal, 2007, p. 228). There were schools for each stratum: the fief schools (*hankō*)

² Sino-Japanese was a system of readings according to which each character was read similarly to original Chinese pronunciation.

³ *Kanto dialect* is a group of dialects used in the Kanto region that includes Tokyo and prefectures around it.

⁴ *Kansai dialect* is a group of dialects used in the Kansai region that includes Kyoto, Kobe, Osaka and prefectures around them.

for the samurai and the temple schools (*terakoya*) or writing schools (*tenaraijo*) for the commoners. Nevertheless, the level of education, as well as language proficiency, varied immensely according to social status. While the samurai children as the future of ruling elite studied classical Chinese and Japanese and Confucianism in the predominant Sino-centric tradition, the curriculum for commoners centered on basic reading and writing skills required for their occupations. As a result, in the late Tokugawa period, almost all samurai were highly literate, whereas the literacy rate of commoners reached 40% among boys and 15% among girls (Okano, 2011, p. 183–198).

The situation changed drastically after the collapse of the feudal system of Tokugawa shogunate and abolishing the system of social classes when all men and women became the members of the rapidly evolving industrial country. New political authority realized that national unity could be formed only through equal educational opportunities to all people. Moreover, a new generation of educated people would be able to advance Japanese science and technology in order to compete with the technological superiority of the West.

National education could be possible only by establishing a standard language based on modern speech which everyone could read, write and use throughout the country. Therefore, the solution to education problems was both practical and ideological and closely related to the language itself. Education reform presupposed language reform first. On the one hand, general education based on standardized language would allow equating nation breaking down old hierarchical system remained from the Tokugawa period; on the other hand, it would promote the idea of “one nation, one people” (Sanada, 1987, p. 74).

The slogans “Civilization and Enlightenment” (*Bunmei kaika*) and “Rich nation, strong army” (*Fukoku kyōhei*) promoted by Meiji-reformers perfectly characterized national aspiration of that time (Burns, 2003, p. 203). The government believed that establishing and promoting a standard variant of national language had the same value to modern Japan as the development of national economic and military power.

As a result, the Ministry of Education was formed in 1872, and *Japanese Education Order* (“Nihon Kyoikurei”) for establishing a foundation for national education at elementary level was proclaimed in 1879.

The conceptualization of *kokugo*

The beginning of national language ideology in Japan is primarily related to the spread and evolution of the term 国語 *kokugo* during the Meiji period.

After Japan was opened up to the outside world in the 1850s, in order to develop a sense of nation, Meiji politicians and intellectuals began to spread terminology related to the idea of *nation* in terms of Western civilization. As long ago as in the 1860s, the words *kokka* to nominate “a nation, a state” and *kokumin* to denote the concept “citizens, people of the nation” (with a common character 国 *kuni, koku* as a structural element) came into common use. Gluck (1985, p. 23) explains this movement as “the effort to draw all people into the state, to have them thinking national thoughts, to make *kokumin* of them”.

While the concepts of *kokka* and *kokumin* were more or less accepted and spread out in Meiji literature, a problem how to call “a language of Japan” arose. The usage of terms *kokugo* and *nihongo* that both mean “Japanese language” in the contemporary Japanese is clear now, however, there was neither the understanding what is a “national language of Japan” nor official terminology nominating this concept in early Meiji.

Historically, officials, writers, and educators used a wide variety of terms referring to language of Japan: 邦語 *hōgo* (literally “Japanese language”), 本邦語 *honpōgo* (“Japanese

language”), 国語 *kunikotoba* (“a national language”), 国語 *kokugo* (“a national language”), 日本の言語 *nihon no gengo* (“the language of Japan”), 日本文書 *nihon bunsho* (“Japanese writing”), 日本語 *nihongo* (“Japanese language”), 和語 *wago* (“classical Japanese words”) (Clark, 2009, p. 45; Lee, 2010, p. 54–69). It took decades for the Meiji government to construct a concept of national language suitable for modern Japan and finally designate its meaning.

Among all terms mentioned above, the term *kokugo* was preferred by the majority of intellectuals. The word *kokugo* itself was not new in the Japanese language at that time. Consisting of two Chinese characters 国 *kuni*, *koku* “a country, a nation, a state, a province” and 語 *go* “a word, a term, language”, the term had been originally used as a synonym to *kokubun* “Japanese literature” and in the opposite meaning to *kanbun* “Chinese classics” for hundreds of years (Shioda, 1973, p. 23–26). The shift in its conceptualization occurred in the first years of the Meiji era.

At first, a combination of characters 国 and 語 was noticed as an equivalent for a word “language” in the European context and was used by scholars of Western school of thought in the 1850s. Nevertheless, in the 1860s, the same characters began to be widely used to refer to the indigenous language of Japan at the lexical level as opposite to *kango* “Chinese-origin words” and slightly different from *wago* “Japanese-origin words”. Thus, the meaning of *kokugo* shifted from “Japanese literature” to “Japanese language at the lexical level”.

One of the first advocates of the concept of *kokugo* as a link between language and nation was Meiji politician Maejima Hisoka famous for his “Proposal for the Abolition of Chinese characters” (1866). He used the word *kokugo* throughout his text of “Proposal for Teaching the Japanese language” (1869), contrasting it to other national languages and insisting on studying *kokugo* as a national language of Japan (Lee, 2010, p. 54).

The linguistic chaos and a floating understanding of what national language of Japan ought to be were so serious that even led to the historical proposal of ‘abolition of Japanese’ by Mori Arinori, the first minister of education for the Meiji government. Mori, who was keenly interested in the development of *kokka shugi* “nationalism”, asserted that the Japanese language was not unified enough to support the modern nation and proposed adopting English as a national language. Mori’s proposal was greatly criticized and never supported by Meiji intellectuals, who believed that English would destroy the unity of Japan’s spirit. Nevertheless, his interpretation of *kokugo* as both “national language” and “the language of Japan” mentioned in his book “Education in Japan” (1873), showed a tendency to define *kokugo* exactly in these two meanings by other reformers leading to the beginning of *kokugo ideology* (Lee, 2010, p. 7–14).

Approximately at the same time, the term *kokugo* in the meaning of “national language” was used in “Romaji wo motte nihongo wo tsuzuru setsu” (*Proposal for Writing the Japanese language in Romaji*) (1886) by Kato Hiroyuki in the third edition of “Waei gorin shusei” (*English-Japanese dictionary*) (1886) by Hepburn and “Nihonsho bunten” (*Concise Japanese Grammar Dictionary*) (1887) by Chamberlain.

Later *kokugo* was also used in reference to the subject taught in school. To describe the conceptual chaos around *kokugo*, Sekine Masanao, a Meiji scholar, mentioned in his essay “Kokugo no Hontai Narabini Sono Kachi” (*True Form of Kokugo and Its Value*) (1888), “I know there is a subject called *kokugo* today in elementary and middle schools. However, what is *kokugo*? When it comes to its substance, nobody seems to know at all” (Lee, 2010, p.61).

Although intellectuals and reformers in the early and middle ages of Meiji had not reached a consensus on what national language should be like, the spread of the concept of *kokugo*, however, reflected dramatic changes in the national identity of Japanese people and

understanding its symbolic role in nation-state building. As Lee (2010, p. 2–3) underlines, the birth of Japan’s national language has quite a different background from that of, for example, France, as *kokugo* as a national language did not exist *a priori*. The idea of *kokugo* was an invented concept that had appeared in early Meiji before “a single Japanese language” was formed itself.

Nevertheless, as debates on the idea of *kokugo* evolved in various ways, measures taken to establish a homogenous standard of national language gradually changed from the “period of chaos” (1868–1888) to the “period of experiment” (1889–1900), proceeding later to the “period of implementation” (1901–1912) (see Yamamoto, 1978).

The ideologization of *kokugo*

The late 1880s-1890s were a period of remarkable achievements in the field of nationalism and national language as an instrument for its spread. If previous years of Meiji were a time of Westernization and beginning of liberal movements, then the following years were a time of strengthening of national consciousness and national unification. Government and intellectuals also actively worked on the development of national language idea. *Genbun itchi movement* and the figure of Ueda Kazutoshi played the key role in it.

Genbun itchi movement. As mentioned above, written language was a barrier to mass literacy and thus “creating” national language. For this reason, the advocates for national language *kokugo* supported the movement for unification of spoken and written languages called *genbun itchi*.

The movement *genbun itchi* goes back to the mid-1870s when several literary figures and journalists started actively debating the need to reconcile spoken and written languages. The term *genbun itchi* itself was coined by Kanda Takahira (1830–1898), a scholar of the Western school of thought, in 1875. In the article “Bunshoron o yomu” (*Rereading theory of Writing*), Kanda emphasized that writing in *kanbun* “Classical Chinese” and *wabun* “classical Japanese”, which were grammatically and lexically different from spoken language, was too remote from a daily language. He asserted the need for *genbun itchi*, that is *gen*, denoting the spoken language, should unify with *bun*, the written language. In Kanda’s view, reforming written Japanese was the only way to adjust to the new era of science (Lee, 2010, p. 41).

It should be mentioned that since the early Meiji period, the so-called “national script problems” (*kokujū mondai*) debates on rationalizing the Japanese script to promote Meiji civilization and enlightenment either by abolishing kanji, limiting their number, or adopting phonetic alphabets took place. Activists were divided into three groups: *Kana no Kai* (Kana Association) that supported *kana* as a national script similarly to the English alphabet, and abolition of *kanji*; *Romaji Kai* (Roman Association) that was arguing in favor of writing Japanese with the Latin alphabet; and a group of intellectuals that presented *kanji seigen ron*, advocating not abolishing but reducing the number of *kanji*. Kanda believed that the reform of the written language had to take place before the script, as once the written language had been reformed, the script problem would be solved easily.

Whatever the case, Kanda’s suggestion contained the seeds for a future compromise between *gen* and *bun*, a compromise that was reached a few decades later. Since the late 1870s there was no official institution that would support written language reform and work on its standard norms yet, the advocates of *genbun itchi* were putting their ideas into practice by creating a new writing style through their publications.

Thus, in 1886, Mozume Takami, a scholar of classics and councilor of *Kana no Kai*, published a book titled “Genbun Itchi”. It was written in the spoken language promoting the

naturalness and spontaneity of spoken Japanese. For example, Mozume experimented with sentence endings that explicitly reflected social relationships in spoken Japanese choosing “masu” in preference to “de aru”, which would become norms later. As Lee (2010, p. 42) notices, Mozume marked “an epoch” in the theory of *genbun itchi* movement, as before him even the supporters of *genbun itchi* were still largely applying an old written style.

The following years witnessed the appearance of a large number of works that defended the need of a model for *gen* that would represent a linguistic model of a single language and could be used by anyone despite geographical or social background. The most significant contributors to the simplification of the written language were novelists and literary critics who were “crystalizing” *genbun itchi* style in their works. The most prominent authors were Futabatei Shimei and Yamada Bimyo.

In 1887, Futabatei published his first modern novel “Ukigumo” (*Drifting Clouds*), and Yamada Bimyo rose to considerable fame with his novel “Musashino”. Both novels were written in *genbun itchi* style. In addition, Yamada was a theorist of the movement expressing his ideas in “Genbun itchi ron gairyaku” (*Outline of Genbun Itchi Theory*) (1888). He defended *genbun itchi* style from social and historical perspectives and promoted its authority. Moreover, Yamada was the first who highlighted that Tokyo dialect should be the model for “common” language and gain the status of standard (Lee, 2010, p. 42–50).

Prior to the Meiji period, there had been two dialects, Tokyo and Kyoto, which were considered as the most authoritative. Tokyo City, which had been formerly known as Edo earlier, was the center of the *bakufu* government during the Tokugawa period and inherited its role after Meiji Restoration. Meanwhile, Kyoto was the capital where the Emperor and the most prominent intellectuals had been living for hundreds of years; therefore, it was regarded as the capital of the elite. However, after the capital and Emperor Palace had been transferred to Tokyo, Tokyo and its dialect gained natural superiority.

There were early attempts to emphasize the role of Tokyo dialect as a common language. For example, in 1885, in their article “Tokyo no tsūyo” (*Common Use of Tokyo language*), the Liberal Party mentioned that the local elementary education should be conducted in Tokyo language (see Yamamoto, 1978). However, due to supporters of *genbun itchi* style who were choosing Tokyo dialect for their novels and articles, Tokyo dialect became a language of modern literature and the expression of modern concepts, gradually gaining its authority among other dialects. In addition, as provinces developed closer communication with the capital in the 1890s, Tokyo dialect became ordinary among non-Tokyo people. In this way, Tokyo dialect went through the natural process of *standardization*, defined by Ferguson (1968, p. 31) as “the process of one variety of a language becoming widely accepted throughout the speech community as a superdialect norm”.

Despite popularity of *genbun itchi* movement in the 1880s, there was a period of decline in the 1890s when, on the one hand, supports of *genbun itchi* style had an active discussion on its stylistic nuances⁵ among themselves, and, on the other hand, the supporters of the classical written language severely criticized *genbun itchi* movement itself. Arguments varied considerably depending on the ideological background of the advocate. The critics of *genbun itchi* saw the ideals of Japanese spirit and tradition in classical writing and characterized *genbun itchi* as ordinary, odd, and artless. While the advocates of *genbun itchi* interpreted classical writing as

⁵ There were two directions in *genbun itchi* movement: *zokubunronsha* – advocates of the vernacular style who attempted to make written language closer to spoken, and *futsibunronsha* – supporters of the standard language, who tried to reconcile the written and spoken languages.

outdated and inappropriate for modern life emphasizing that *genbun itchi* style was a means of advancing society and mass education (Heinrich, 2012, p. 48–58).

The *genbun itchi* movement made a decisive comeback in the first decade of the twentieth century when famous linguists (such as described below Ueda Kazutoshi) and leading literary figures reiterated the need for a simple language in society. As a result, by 1903 all schoolbooks were written in *genbun itchi*.

The role of Ueda Kazutoshi. Ueda Kazutoshi, the professor of Tokyo Imperial University, is widely regarded as establisher of *kokugogaku* “Japanese linguistics” and provider of the revolutionary basis for *kokugo* ideology. In his main works “Kokugo No Tame” (*For National Language*) (1895), “Kokugo to Kokka” (*The National language and the State*) (1895), “Kokugo No Tame Dai Ni” (*For National Language 2*) (1903), Ueda revealed his key concepts of ideology of national monolingualism and spiritual connection between the nation and the national language.

Ueda’s understanding of nation was determined by social and political changes that took place in Japan at that time. Japan won the Sino-Japanese war in 1895 that gave it a colonial power in Taiwan and southern Manchuria. Marking the significance of the Japanese empire in the whole world, this victory was also a turning point in the Japanese language history (Heinrich, 2012, p. 62).

Ueda stated that a *national language* itself could not be discussed without considering a *nation* first. Inspired by nationalism in Europe and especially Germany where he studied linguistics, he adopted the theory of German *volk* “nation” and defined it as a four-element construct: land, race, unity, and law. As for “race”, he meant history, customs, political principles, religion, language and education. In his view, Japan as a nation-state had it all. Moreover, Japan’s victory against China and control over other Asian territories proved its superiority in relation to other Asian nations such as China and Korea which, he believed, lacked national spirit (Lee, 2010, p. 88–89).

He asserted that Japan’s success could be possible only due to sharing a common Japanese spirit and the language of Japanese people as ancestors of ancient Yamato race. Speaking of language, Ueda considered that language reflected the essence of the social life of an ethnic group. Furthermore, he stated that *kokugo* is the spiritual blood that ties Japanese people as a nation, and Japan’s fundamental national character (*kokutai*) is sustained by the spiritual blood (Yasuda, 1997, p. 82). Compared with spiritual blood, language was considered as a defining characteristic of the Japanese nation. In this way, *kokugo* was incorporated into the concept of *kokumin* “nation” as a way to differentiate the Japanese nation from all others. Identification of a language with people would become the fundamental basis of language ideology in modern Japan, which Woolard (1998, p. 16) characterizes not as natural, but a historical and ideological construct.

His expression “*kokugo* is the guardian of the emperor, and the benevolent mother of the people” (Lee, 2010, p. 108) showed that the national language *kokugo* is a prerogative of the Japanese people, placing them in a higher position in respect to other Asian nations. The superiority of the Japanese nation was taken for granted, and three unities of the Japanese nation, Japanese culture and Japanese language became integral components of national ideology of modern Japan (see Sakai, 1997).

It should be noted that around that time Japan incorporated Okinawa and Hokkaido in its state. By 1879, Japan had annexed Ezo (renamed Hokkaido) and the Ryukyu Kingdom (renamed Okinawa prefecture). In 1899, the Japanese government passed “Hokkaido Aborigine Protection Act” and “Okinawa Prefecture Land Reorganization Law” according to which the

ethnic group of Ainu (indigenous people who had historically lived in Hokkaido) and the Okinawans (originally Ryukyu people) were forced to abide by Japanese daily customs. What lay in the heart of this law was an aggressive assimilation which imposed the Japanese culture, language, and education system.

Ueda never questioned the appropriateness of cultural and linguistic assimilation of the Okinawans and the Ainu. He saw Japan only as a monolingual and monoethnic state ignoring all of Japan's cultural and linguistic diversity (Maher and Yashiro, 1995). In "Kokugo to Kokka" (1895), he denied the existence of other languages and ethnic groups in Japan, stating that a nation always used the language handed down by its forefathers (Heinrich, 2012, p.65). This assumption of monolingualism, as Heinrich points out (2010, p. 34), was very typical for modernity – 'value homogeneity, monotony and clarity and disregard pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence'. In relation to this, Gottlieb (2012, p. 7) comments, "the ideology of monolingualism [...] was explicitly employed to suppress difference and to subordinate minorities by assimilating them linguistically into the category of Japanese citizens". Thus, since the late nineteenth century all Japanese people together with the assimilated Okinawans and Ainu have been expected to speak Japanese as their only one language.

Ueda's ideological interpretation of the spiritual connection between *kokugo* and *kokka* "nation-state" revolutionized Japanese society and awakened language patriotism. Simultaneously, he had quite a radical position towards the status of Chinese and Western languages. Ueda was concerned that the spread of Western languages might have the same effect as Chinese had had throughout the history of the Japanese language, and thus might be a threat to Japanese linguistic authenticity. Emphasizing the role of modern *kokugo* in unity and independence of the nation, he encouraged language reformers towards simplification of the written Japanese as a foundation of national education. For this reason, he supported *genbun itchi* movement and promoted increasing of *yamatokotoba* (original Japanese words) and reducing the number of Chinese characters in writing (Clark, 2009, p. 138). He also insisted on the importance of establishing the norms of standard Japanese intended to unite Japan's nation. In his publication "Hyōjungo nitsukite" (*About the Standard language*), Ueda used a term *hyōjungo* as an equivalent to *standard language* in English or *gemeinsprache* in German to denote "a model language in a country". As Lee points out, Ueda did not believe Japan had such a language; however, he suggested that 'current Tokyo language', spoken in the capital of the great empire, could serve as the standard (Lee, 2010, p. 99).

Ueda was aware that the spread of *kokugo* consciousness required reform to meet the ideological needs of the nation and that it could be possible only due to the institutionalization of the national language. His premise was instrumental in changing the course of a language reform at the beginning of the twentieth century by creating a wide range of ideological attitudes towards language. In 1900, The Imperial Board of Education in "Kokuji kokugo kokubun no kanryō ni kansuru seigansho" (*Petition regarding Improvements in National Script and Language*) stated that Japan as "a triumphal Empire of the competitive world" had to reform this "chaotic, confusing, disordered and inconsistent script and language" for the good of nation's power (Lee, 2010, p. 35). Language reform was considered as a necessary foundation for the success of educational, political, and social reforms (Carroll, 2001, p. 53).

As a result, in 1889 Ueda set a proposal for the creation of a state-funded institution responsible for the research on national language. The Ministry of Education approved it and in 1902, the National Language Research Council (*Kokugo Chōsa Inkai*) as an advisory body to the Ministry of Education was established. Together with other eleven members, Ueda was appointed to sit the council. The aims of National Language Research Council responsible for

the early stages of language planning in Japan covered the use of an alphabetic script *kana*, the implementation of *genbun itchi* style, investigation of phonology system and regional dialects in order to set a standard language (Ito, 1991, p. 5).

Ueda as a director to the Ministry of Education's Bureau of Higher Education also influenced educational reforms, particularly implementing *kokugo* as a school subject in the elementary school curriculum. The first state textbook for Japanese language education, "Jinjō shōgaku dokuhon", published in 1903, reflected Ueda's vision of strong ties of the nation and national language (Heinrich, 2012, p. 67).

Ueda's concept of *kokugo* successfully developed in the academic discipline of *kokugogaku* (literally "national language study") which theorized his ideological ideas in terms of modern linguistics and nationalism of Japan. The last one by the end of the Meiji period later developed into the ultranationalism of the 1930s–early 1940s. As Carroll cites Connor, "Japan to the Japanese, just as Germany to the Germans, was far more personal and profound than a territorial-political structure named a state; it was an embodiment of the nation-idea and therefore extension itself" (Carroll, 2001, p. 35).

The measures taken to establish a homogenous standard language and spread it as national in Meiji, perfectly reflected three factors usually forming language policy, which Spolsky (2004, p. 5) describes as the *practice* (the way a linguistic variety is selected), *ideology* (beliefs about language), and *planning* or *management* (deliberate efforts to manipulate language practices).

Conclusion

The ideology of Japan's national language played a significant role in nation-building in Meiji era. The complexity of writing styles of classic Japanese, a variety of regional and social variants of spoken Japanese along with unequal education system, representing both social and linguistic plurality of Japan in the post-Restoration years, were a barrier to constructing a common standard language comprehensible throughout the country and uniform national language. However, the processes of language standardization and codification that took place during the Meiji period served not only social and scientific interests of the state but also were a strong political tool, incorporating dimensions of power and national ideology. Looking to Europe and trying to imply its models of social and political systems along with the ideas of nationalism, where a national language became a symbol of a nation's spiritual unity, Japanese government officials realized that language was an instrument for its spread. As a result, by the end of Meiji period, a system of beliefs about Japanese as a homogenous national language along with convictions that national identity was marked by language use had been shaped. The language criteria became the criteria of citizenship perfectly meeting the ideological needs of modern Japan's nation-state.

The second dimension of language ideology was external linguistic assimilation. Due to modernist language ideology that neglected ethnic and cultural variety and made Japanese superior to other Asian languages, the belief that only one language is spoken in Japan and Japanese people are identified with their language was born and still dominates today. The national language, denoted by the term *kokugo*, became a powerful marker of Japanese citizenship, playing the mediating role in the organization of nation-state power and the formation of a unified nation with strong national consciousness. For this reason, *kokugo* ideology could be considered as a successful project, since today Japanese people could not imagine how it might ever be different.

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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND NATION-STATE BUILDING IN MEIJI JAPAN

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Background: During the Meiji period (1868–1912) a national language (*kokugo*) as a symbol of Japanese nation became a marker of Japanese national beliefs and enhanced a sense of national identity of people. The ideas of what national language ought to be summed up in the modern ideology of national language.

Purpose: The purpose of the research is to investigate those historical factors that shaped language ideology in relation to the nation-state building process in Japan during Meiji period.

Results: The analysis shows that the ideology developed in two directions. The first one served the goal of constructing national identity and linguistic consciousness of Japanese people by establishing a homogenous standard of the national language. The second one aimed at external linguistic assimilation of regions colonized by Japan during the late nineteenth – early twentieth centuries and had characteristics of language imperialism.

Key words: language ideology, national language, language reform, nation-state building.

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