



Colonial Language Policies and Their Effects

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1. Colonialism and language ecology

Colonialism destabilized fragments of language ecology producing complexities such as pidgin/creole, bilingualism, language shifts, language loss etc. Sociolinguistics (e.g. R. Wardhaugh: 1987, R. Phillipson: 1992) has clarified that these phenomena are produced by language contact between two or more distinctive languages. It should be noted that in many cases the language contact take place in such political situations as imperialism, colonialism, annexation, occupation etc when the language of the ruled meets that of the ruler. And even after these political forms end of themselves, their effects might persist remarkably among the speakers of the dominated and sometimes even of the dominant languages. Sociolinguistics has not opened much discussion of the correlation between the political causes and the linguistic effects so far, while such discussion is essential for clarifying the overall paradigm of the covert phases of language ecology.

This paper intends to examine language phenomena produced by language treatment under Japanese colonial and occupational rule in Asia during the first half of the previous century and also to tentatively examine the correlation between political causes/factors (such as imperialism/colonialism, integration etc.), language treatment/phenomena (such as language diffusion, pidginization/creolization and language shift/loss etc.) and social, cultural and psychological phenomena (such as cultural friction, identity loss etc.).

The data for this examination were collected by the author's field work in the former colonies and occupied areas: Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, China, Korea, the South Seas Islands which now constitute Micronesia. The research was conducted by interviewing local people over 65 who once learned Japanese during the Japanese rule.

2. Colonial education and language policies

Since the late 1890s Japan colonized neighboring countries in Asia and continued imposing the Japanese language, social systems, social practices and values on the colonized natives until Japan was defeated in WW II, 1945.

The Japanese language has ceased to exist as a lingua franca in Asia for more than half a century, but little has been researched up to the present on the historical facts of the imposed Japanese teaching and its effects on the local population. It is significant, therefore, to see what language policies under what educational goals were implemented by the Japanese.

First, let us see the educational regulations, which illustrate the treatment of the local languages and the status of Japanese in each territory.

Taiwan (1895-1945)

In 1895 Taiwan came under Japanese rule after the Sino-Japan War of 1894-95. The Japanese Government-General in Taiwan instituted the Common School Regulations in 1898, stating that the fundamental objectives of common school education be the provision of moral education and practical skills to Taiwanese children, thereby cultivating in them attitudes of Japanese nationalism and also leading them to be well versed in '*Kokugo*' [the national language i.e. Japanese](Article 1).

The Common School Regulations were revised several times thereafter. More drastic revisions such as the abolition of the native language (Chinese) teaching and the integration of the educational system and curriculum with those of homeland Japan were made in 1937 and in 1942 respectively.

Other systems of promoting assimilation were reinforced as well in the late 1930s when Japan started the full scale war in China: the changing of personal names into Japanese ones, the award-winning system of '*Kokugo joyo-katei*' (model families of ordinary Japanese using), pupils' deep bowing to the Japanese Imperial Palace at the morning assembly (facing the north of Taiwan), pupils' reciting of '*Kyoiku Chokugo*' [the Imperial Rescript on Education], courteous visits to *Shinto* shrines and Japanese evening classes for adults etc.

Korea (1910-1945)

Japan annexed Korea in 1910. In the following year the Korea Education Prescript was legislated by the Japanese Government-General in Korea, pursuing the same achievement of the Japanese '*Kyoiku Chokugo*' [the Imperial Rescript on Education].

It oriented moral education and Japanese teaching, as in Taiwanese education, stating that educational practice base its fundamental ideas on the Imperial Rescript on Education and teach Koreans to be pious imperial nationals (Article 2).

In Article 5, it stated that normal education should place its goal on providing children with general knowledge and skills, thereby cultivating in them attitudes of Japanese nationalism and diffusing the national language.

Revision was also made several times. The third revision in 1938 abolished de facto Korean language teaching, leaving it voluntary and stressed the through-going inculcation of Japanization in the curriculum contents. The Primary School Regulations which was revised in the same year, stated that the medium of instruction be '*Kokugo*' (Article 16-8).

Other imperialist assimilation systems were employed as well. In addition to the practices in Taiwan, Korean pupils were required to give the choral reciting of 'The oaths of imperial subjects' at the morning assembly, identifying themselves as loyal subjects of the Japanese Emperor.

Micronesia (1914-1945)

In 1914 when Japan joined WW I, the Japanese Navy occupied the South Seas Islands, or Micronesia, which had been under German rule. In 1915 the Japanese navy initiated teaching of the Japanese language and songs to the island children. The Primary School Regulations of the South Seas Islands in 1914, stressed the teaching of '*Kokugo*' and moral education as its goals: The primary school should have as its goal, providing island children with moral education, teaching of the national language, general knowledge and skills essential to their daily life, ... (and) indoctrinating them with filial piety and obedience to authority (Article 1).

The Directions for Primary School Teachers in 1916 more clearly described the educational goals for islanders:

Now that the South Seas Islands are under the rule of the Japanese Empire, it is certainly the mission of the Japanese Empire that the Empire should nurture the islanders and assimilate them. Education is the essential means of assimilation. Assimilation, whether it will be successful or not, solely depends on education, and education, whether it will be successful or not, similarly depends on teachers. Teachers should feel obliged to take island children as His Majesty's children and nurture them with benevolence.

The distinctive features of the mandated South Seas Islands education was that the educational system was limited to 3 years at common schools and 2 more years at a vocational training school for only a limited number of promising pupils.

Manchoukuo (1932-1945)

In 1932, Japan established a puppet state called 'Manchoukuo' in the northeast of China. It aimed for a multinational state of five major different peoples: Manchurians, Chinese, Mongolians, Koreans and Japanese. They were to cooperate in order to build an ideal state '*Odo Rakudo*' [a Realm of Peace and Prosperity].

'*Gakusei Yoko*' [The School System Outline] legislated in 1937, stated that:

The Japanese language should be given priority in respective school systems over any other state language, considering the spirit of Japan-Manchoukuo: one virtue and one mind. The state languages should be Japanese, Manchu (Chinese) and Mongolian, with Japanese as a more important common language than the others.



The Educational Department of Manchoukuo proclaimed to teaching staff the 'Thorough Diffusion of Japanese in the School Education' in 1937, as follows:

- (1) Japanese language teachers should not treat Japanese teaching just like language instruction, but should let pupils realize Japanese spirit and Japanese customs and manners, and therefore endeavor through Japanese to enlighten them with the true meaning of one virtue and one mind in the light of Japan-Manchoukuo relationships,
- (2) Japanese teachers should endeavor to let Chinese teaching staff and students realize the significance of the thorough diffusion of Japanese,
- (3) Chinese teachers should learn Japanese,
- (4) Chinese teaching staff and students should carry on the use of Japanese at home, as well as at school etc.

Occupied areas in China (1937-45)

In other parts of China such as Beijing, Tianjin, Jinan, Nanjing, Shanghai, where pro-Japanese puppet regimes such as the Societies for Maintenance of the Public Peace or the *Hsinminhui* Societies (a kind of Concordia Association) were established after Japanese invasion, Japanese teaching was introduced as part of cultural propaganda in China. The educational goals were instituted to counter anti-Japanese, pro-communist ideology and unify the diverse national groups in Asia and exalt a Japanese idea of moral justice in East Asia.

In the late 1930s a number of Japanese language schools were founded in the above-mentioned cities to produce civil servants (clerks, diplomats, policemen and school teachers) with Japanese competence who would cooperate with the Japanese administration for the establishment of '*Daitoa*' [the Greater East Asia]. Japanese teaching at primary, secondary and tertiary schools was also initiated in the same period, giving 2-3, or 5-6 class hours per week depending on regional and school situations. The class hours devoted to teaching Japanese exceeded those of the local language

Southeast Asia (1942-1945)

During the Pacific War (8 December 1941-15 August 1945) Japanese forces carried out military administration in the occupied areas such as the Philippines, Malaya/Sumatra/Singapore, Indonesia and Burma. In these areas, more abrupt measures were taken. Once an area came under Japanese rule, Japanese military administration promulgated its educational principles that referred to language status and application.

The major lines related with language/culture matters were:

To diffuse Japanese, gradually limit the use of European languages and eventually abolish them,

The official language should be Japanese or a major local language, but for the time being European languages be allowed to be used,

The medium of instruction should be Japanese,

To stamp out European/American thoughts, and establish an Oriental-minded culture,

To demonstrate to the Southern peoples the Japanese imperial spirit of '*Hakko ichiu*' [the eight corners of the world under one roof] and unify other Asian cultures into Japanese culture,

After the educational principles were declared, the military administration founded Japanese language schools to produce Japanese-speaking interpreters, civil servants, engineers, businessmen and school teachers who would cooperate with Japanese military administrations. The retrained teachers taught simple Japanese to their children at their original schools. The problems that could be identified as characteristic, however, were that;

- Japanese learning above all accounted for the greater part of the curriculum,
- few Japanese language teachers were well-trained,
- it was too late for Japanese trained teachers to arrive from Japan, so some Japanese soldiers at the front who had teaching experience back in Japan, were engaged,
- Japanese supervisors who could help in-service local teachers improve their teaching skill were too few in number to meet the needs,
- the Japanese textbooks were not compiled in time for the reopening of the schools, so the textbooks were locally made,
- the schools hours arranged were too short (usually 2-3 hours daily) compared with 5-6 in other areas like Taiwan and Korea,
- the education was defective in that it provided only simple language skills, Japanese songs and exercises, but not native language, science, or locally-based social studies/history were provided,
- education including Japanese teaching was made use of as a propaganda machine to justify Japan's expansive imperialism,
- the contents of education were strongly influenced by Japanese political ideology, promoting '*Daitoa kyoeiken*', establishing the new order in Asia with Japan as the leader.

3. Fieldwork data

The author conducted fieldwork in Malaysia, Singapore, China, Korea, Micronesia, Myanmar (Burma), and interviewed more than 100 former students who learned Japanese under Japanese rule. The interview was conducted basically in Japanese to obtain their language competence data. Surprisingly the former students maintained Japanese to a communicable degree in spite of their short period of learning. The findings from the fieldwork are that:

- Native language use (in Taiwan, Korea, Manchoukuo) was strictly forbidden in the school, and once witnessed speaking the native language, punishment was given



[**Taiwan:** In the 2nd term of the First Grade we came to speak in broken Japanese. There were occasions that we were whipped if we spoke Taiwanese in the 3rd or 4th Grade.

[**Korea:** If anyone used Korean at school, he/she was punished; he/she was forced to wear a 'penalty plate' on the neck until he/she caught someone else using Korean.]

- Natives followed the Japanese manners and practices

[**Micronesia:** Every morning we assembled on the playground. And facing north to Japan, we made a courteous bow to the Japanese Emperor 'Ten'no'. At school we never spoke our language Marshallese, we spoke only the Japanese language. If we spoke Marshallese at school, the teacher beat us. At the morning assembly we sang 'Kimigayo' and raised 'Hinomaru' the Japanese national flag, and then cited the school rules. We were indoctrinated that we were Emperor's subjects.]

- Partly maintaining Japanese in the specific situations such as secret

talk between husband and wife

[**Micronesia:** My wife and I use Japanese only when we have something that we don't want to be understood by our children, when we talk in secret, when we argue and yell at each other before our children]

- Grammatical interference from English usage 'some (a certain)' into

Japanese 'aru', when that usage usually doesn't occur among native speakers of Japanese,

[**Micronesia:** 'Aru' onna no ko ga, ano-tottemo omoshiroi yome de ne. ('Some' girl, well, she was a very funny bride.))] (some = a certain, singular)

- Borrowings in both Japanese and Chinese emerged in the northeast of China

[**Manchoukuo:** We had Japanese borrowings in Chinese and Chinese borrowings in Japanese. That created 'Kyowa-go' [a pidgin language]. Japanese grammar was also taken into Chinese and we were confused

· Linguistic, cultural, psychological effects of Japanese on natives after the liberation of 1945; language shift/loss, identity loss

[**Korea:** I continued using Japanese for two or three years after the liberation of

1945, since I was completely accustomed to speaking Japanese and couldn't speak Korean well]

- English use was forbidden and native languages were admitted in former British colonies.

[**Singapore:** English was prohibited, but we could use our local languages,

Malay, Tamil or Chinese]



CONGRÉS MUNDIAL SOBRE POLÍTICAS LINGÜÍSTIQUES
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· Vernacularization of Japanese creole

[**Micronesia**: *bento* [lunch], *meshi* [(boiled) rice], *sushi* [sushi], *hashi* [chopsticks], *sukiyaki* [sukiyaki], *daikon* [radish], *denki* [electric light], *tenjo* [ceiling], *yuka* [floor], *zori* [sandals], *chirishi* [tissue], *shinbun* [newspaper], *yakan* [kettle], *undokai* [sports day/meet], *yakyu* [baseball], *marason* [marathon], *sumo* [sumo wrestling], *tunahiki* [tug of war] etc.

4. Correlation of politics and language

>From the above discussion it is clear that colonialism as one of the political factors produced a diverse range of effects on language management/treatment, language phenomena and social, cultural, psychological phenomena.

The historical background of Japanese colonialism for this discussion may be briefly summarized as follows: Japan colonized its neighboring countries/areas beginning from the late 1890s, by winning at the Japan-Sino War (1894-95), the Japan-Russia War (1904-05), the WWI (1914-18), and invading China (1931) and the Southeast Asia (1941). Japanese Governments there managed and treated the languages of the colonized/occupied areas with **language legislation**, giving Japanese the top status (as an official/state language) that formed **language stratification**, and stamped out the local languages (Taiwanese, Korean, island languages in Micronesia), which lead to **linguicism**. If they spoke their own languages, they suffered **language punishment**. They were **deprived** of their own language use at school. That sort of inhumane system may be termed **language oppression**. The languages of the ruled came to be less used, which led to **language decline**.

The above harsh system of language treatment produced diverse linguistic phenomena. **Diglossia** (Japanese-High, native languages-Low) and **pidgin** Japanese emerged as is exemplified in the cases of the northeast of China and Micronesia, and partly developed to **creole**. Japanese **borrowings** are **vernacularized**, and *Tunahiki* (tug of war) and *Sumo* are popular games at *Undokai* (sports meet) in Micronesia.

From the author's fieldwork, some of the local people who had experienced Japanese colonial teaching were able to **code-switch**, since they are still **bilinguals**.

Social/cultural/psychological phenomena are also linked with colonialism. The pre-war and wartime Japan promoted imperialistic world-view (**nationalism**) and infused it into its colonized/occupied population. The native people there were indoctrinated with Japanese *Ten'no* (*Emperor*)-centered world-view. **Loyalty to Japan and its *Ten'no*** was enforced upon them (some of the old Micronesian islanders still adore the former Japanese Emperor). The native people suffered **racial discrimination** and **prejudice**; they were labeled as second/third class subjects even though they acquired good Japanese competence, and some of those people felt ashamed of identifying themselves; they **lost their ethnic identity**.

The correlation of these factors and effects above may be illustrated as follows (see the appendix):

The Japanese colonialism/occupation as a political factor (in the Sector I of the Correlation paradigm) managed the languages of the ruler and the ruled by legislating the status of them (in Sector II) with Japanese a high status and the ruled languages a low status. Thus the language

stratification was induced, resulting in such treatments as oppression, deprivation, punishment, linguicism and language decline/genocide in the Sector II. These treatments may be categorized as 'negative' phases, while legislation may be categorized as 'neutral' or 'positive' depending on political factors.

>From the above treatments a large variety of language phenomena such as pidginization/creolization, borrowing, vernacularization, diglossia in the 'negative' phase, and code switch, bilingualism, interference etc. in the 'neutral' developed as is in the Sector III.

Colonialism, on the other hand, affected the society, culture and psychology of the ruled, and produced a variety of social, cultural and psychological phenomena such as discrimination/prejudice, assimilation, identity loss etc. in the 'negative' phase as is in the Sector IV.

5. Conclusion

It is clear from the historical instance of Japanese colonial language policies and their effects that colonialism, which is one of the political factors affect language ecology; that is, the language of the ruler dominated over the ruled as a de fact official language, while the language of the ruled was oppressed, deprived of, or treated as marginal. The colonial language policies deformed the inter-group relations, social structure, education, traditional cultures and values, and the national identity of the ruled as well. As a result, many of the linguistic, social, cultural and psychological phenomena which sociolinguistics today deals with were produced. In addition, many of the old local population who experienced the colonial rule still suffer from their mother tongue loss/illiteracy, identity loss or hurt in their minds in the process of assimilation although some have attained bilingualism/biculturalism for career build.

The author tried to tentatively theorize the correlation between political factors and language treatment, language phenomena and social/ cultural/ psychological phenomena. It still needs further elaborate and historical research, verification and analysis from the instances of European and American colonies as well for a more complete picture of theory on the correlation (see the appendix).

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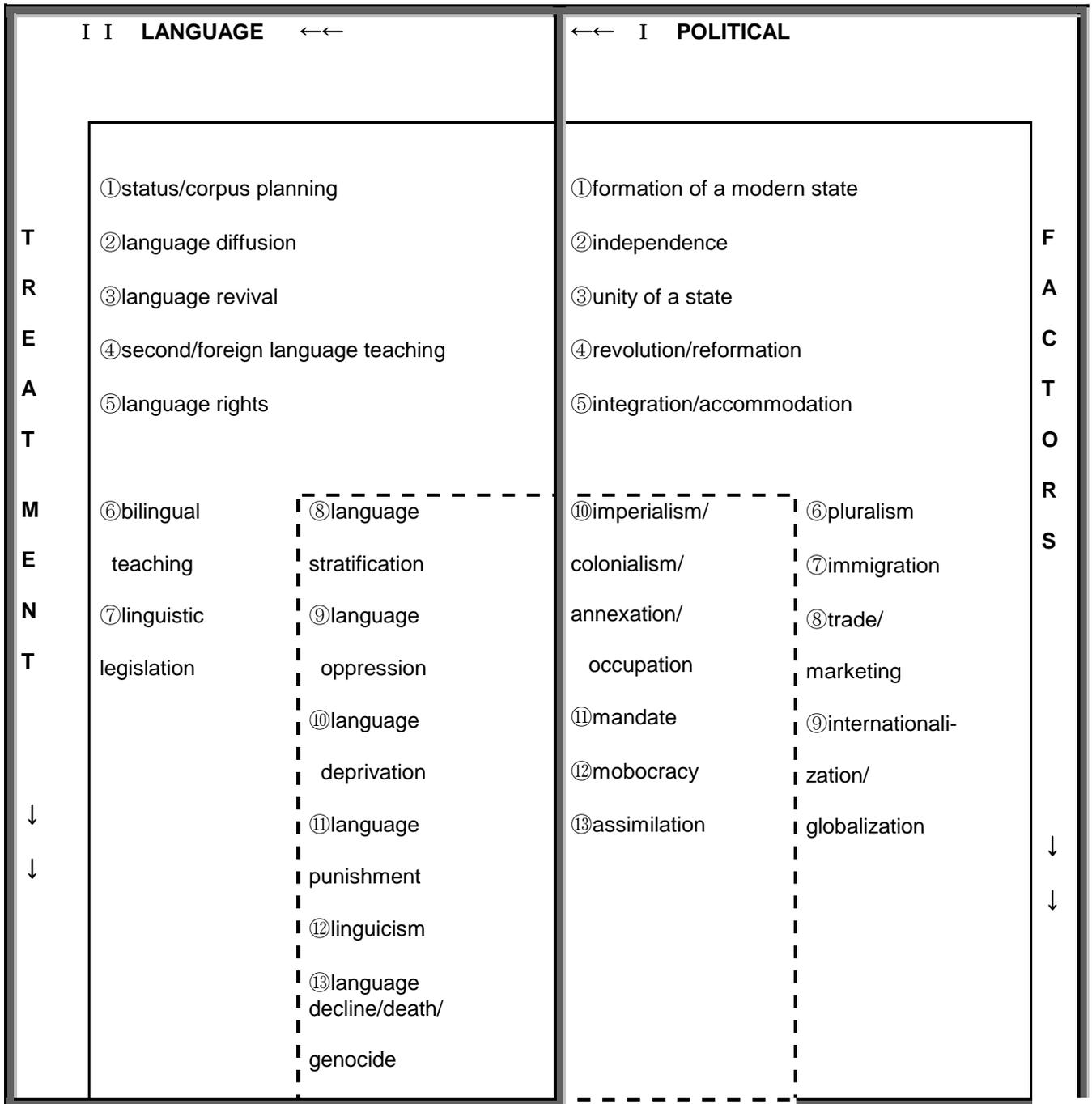
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Appendix:

Correlation Between Political factors & Language Treatment, Language phenomena and Social/Cultural/Psychological Phenomena





CONGRÉS MUNDIAL SOBRE POLÍTQUES LINGÜÍSTIQUES
CONGRÈS MONDIAL SUR LES POLITIQUES LINGUISTIQUES
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↓				↓
↓		⑦pidginization/ creolization	⑧racial discrimination	↓
III		⑧linguistic cannibalism	prejudice	IV
		⑨borrowing	⑨cultural	
L		⑩vernaculari- zation	invasion	P
A		⑪diglossia	⑩cultural	H
N		⑫language shift	assimilation	E
G	①code mix/ switch	⑬integration	⑪illiteracy	N
U			⑫identity loss	O
A	②bilingualism		⑬anomie	M
G			friction	E
E	③hyper- correction		④multiculturalism	N
	④language interference		⑤multicultural education	A
	⑤renaming proper names	of	⑥loyalty to the state	
	⑥language maintenance		⑦bicognition	
	PHENOMENA		SOCIAL/CULTURAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL	

Generally Negative Phases