Article

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan: An Ecological and Theoretical Account

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Abstract

Linguistic diversity has seen two large waves of the loss of linguistic diversity across history. The first wave occurred with the transition from hunter-gatherer to agricultural societies, a process that started 11,000 years ago with the Neolithic revolution when agrarian societies colonized territories of hunter-gatherer communities. The second wave started with the establishment of modern nation states and the creation and diffusion of national languages. It is in the latter setting that the vast majority of language endangerment cases are set today. Endangered languages are predominantly replaced by national languages (and not by global English). The institutions of the 'nation state' and of 'national language' constitute fundamental problems for ethnolinguistic minorities, because their establishment entail the threat of either exclusion or assimilation of these minorities from the nation. In such a situation, minority language and their speakers do usually not fare well. Without altering the modernist language ecologies that exist in modern nation states, language maintenance and revitalization activities are bound to fail in their principal objectives.

In this paper, I examine the rise of language nationalism in Japan in the Meiji period (1868-1912), depict how it led to language endangerment, and show how it continues to shape believes about language in contemporary Japan, also within endangered language revitalization activities and policies themselves. Language revitalization requires language ideological clarification, a recalibration of the relations between majority and minorities, and fundamentally new language policies. In the final part,

34

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

I report on partial changes that can be seen in this direction for the case of the endangered Ainu and Ryukyuan languages in Japan, and analyze to what extent the local language revitalization movements and efforts have so far succeeded in "remaking social reality" (Fishman 1991: 411) together with the majority population of Japan.

Keywords: '*Sanskrit-speaking' villages, Hindu nationalism, linguistic utopia, social imaginary, Indian Census 2011*

Introduction

Across the world, linguistic diversity has seen two waves of loss. This article seeks to demonstrate that (1) language diversity loss is a process that has been underway for several thousand years, and (2) that transformative changes need to take place for language diversity to be maintained. I describe how these two issues unfold and manifest in the Japanese Archipelago. As such, this article provides for a history of the changing language ecology in Japan and for an ecological perspective on language diversity loss and language revitalization. Language ecology is understood here as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen 1972: 325). In other words, it refers to the system of relations between a language, on the one hand, and the place, society, culture and economy of which it is part, on the other hand. Languages are seen as a constitutive part of an ecological system. Language ecology was devised as a framework to account for a wide range of language contact phenomena. Language endangerment is such a phenomenon. In taking a language ecological perspective, I follow the seminal works of Mühlhäusler (1996, 2000), Nettle (1999) and Nichols (1992), who argue that languages become endangered due to the hostility of the language ecology in which these languages are placed.

The first wave of language diversity loss occurred with the transition from hunter-gatherer tribes to agricultural societies. This process started 11,000 years ago with the Neolithic revolution, when agrarian societies colonized territories of hunter-gatherer communities. The second wave started with the establishment of modern nation states and the creation and diffusion of national languages. The latter case is relevant for our contemporary understanding of language endangerment.

Today, predominantly national languages replace endangered languages. These endangered languages are not replaced by, for example, global English (Brenzinger 1997). Globalization thus is not the source of language endangerment. Modernity achieves this role. Within this process, the rise and spread of national languages have been pushing smaller, less prestigious and underdeveloped languages into disuse.

This article is divided into three parts: I first depict the first wave of language replacement that took place in Japanese prehistory (from the first millennium BCE until the seventh century CE). This process sheds light on the fact that language ecologies are shaped by the economic organization of their speech community (hunter-gatherer, agrarian, industrial, post-industrial), and that the geographic distribution

35

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

of languages we find today is a legacy of the first wave of language diversity loss. I then outline the second wave of language diversity loss that accompanied modernity (in Japan, from the second half of the 19th century). This process is still underway. In the third part, I argue that language revitalization requires transformative changes in language ecology.

The objective of this paper is not to give a detailed account of the linguistic history of the Japanese Archipelago (see Frellesvig, Kinsui and Whitman 2021 for this), nor to discuss language endangerment in modern Japan in detail (see Heinrich 2012 for this). The paper gives an ecological account of language diversity in one particular region (the Japanese Archipelago) in order to describe the unfolding of a long-term development, and thus to describe the slow forces that are shaping language diversity loss.

The First Wave of Language Displacement

Japan was a linguistically uncharted territory before the seventh century. There are no written records predating this time, but studies in archaeology and biological anthropology help fill knowledge gaps. The new Yayoi population reached the Japanese Archipelago in the first millennium BCE (Hudson 1999). Research into the introduction of wet rice cultivation in Japan suggests that Yayoi migration started around 950 BCE in Kyūshū in the southwest, and that agriculture then spread into the Japanese main island of Honshū from the sixth century BCE onwards (Shōda 2007). Between 14,000 BCE to the first millennium BCE, the Jōmon culture hunter-gatherer groups populated the Japanese Archipelago with limited contact to populations around the Sea of Okhotsk and the Korean Peninsula. Hunter-gatherers like the Jōmon have distinctive communicative needs and language ecologies. Living in small and mobile bands, each of these small and self-sufficient communities would have a distinct language (Ostler 2005: 9-10). Despite the population number in the Japanese Archipelago in the Jōmon period being significantly lower than in the Yayoi period, the number of Jōmon languages spoken in the Archipelago must have been much higher than those of the Yayoi. Across the world, tens of thousands of hunter-gatherer languages were lost with the advent of agriculture. Likewise, numerous hunter-gatherer languages were possibly lost in the Japanese Archipelago. The linguistic diversity in the Jōmon period was a result of a scarcity of contact, the vast expanse of the archipelago (over 3,000 kilometres from north to south), the different points of entry (from north, south and west), and more than 10,000 years of language diversification (Kidder 1993). When represented graphically, the language ecology of the Jōmon period would have appeared similar to the abstract representation in Figure 1. We see different languages (language 1, 2, x) and different speech communities in contact (symbolized by the arrow), but none of these speech communities has an edge of the other. That is to say, no community is able to dominate and impose values and practices on another community (vertical orientation of the arrow). Whether these languages are genealogically related or not plays no role.
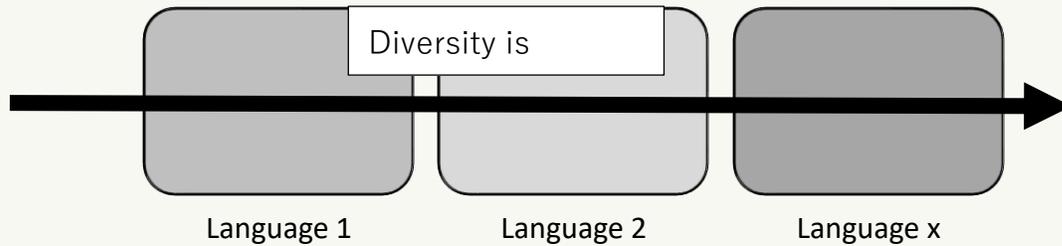
36

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Figure 1: Language ecology of hunter-gatherer communities

Summary of Hunter-gatherer Language Ecology

Core features:	Symmetric power distribution between communities
	Esoteric languages and communication
Implications for diversity:	Non-competitive language ecologies
	High linguistic diversity reflecting the ecological resources of a given territory
Outlook:	No one of these languages is endangered; languages constitute a stable and healthy ecology

Given the mobility and the small size of hunter-gatherer communities, no single community could get an edge over another one, and this allowed for the maintenance of linguistic diversity. Languages were spoken as first and not as second languages, framing these languages esoteric and specific to the particularities of the natural and cultural environment. The language diversity and the distribution of language, thus, reflected the natural environment. Hunter-gatherer communities saturated the region while drawing sustenance from its natural resource.

The linguistic history of the Japanese Archipelago cannot be characterized as one continuous and linear development (Vovin 2013). As in any part of the world, migration, movements, contact, assimilation and displacement constituted important historical ruptures. There is also no uniform linguistic history, as, for example, the Jōmon culture did not extend to the southern part of the Ryūkyū Islands (Sakishima), and the Jōmon culture was also not replaced by Yayoi culture in Hokkaidō in the north. The Jōmon culture survived in the north as a unique development called Epi-Jōmon (Hudson 2012). Through contact with the Okhotsk culture located in northern Siberia, the distinct Ainu culture then emerged in the first millennium CE and replaced Epi-Jōmon. The Ainu largely maintained a hunter-gatherer economy until the nineteenth century CE.

The situation in the Japanese Archipelago during the Jōmon-Yayoi transition presents a familiar setting. Hunter-gatherer communities were assimilated, disappeared, or were pushed into remote geographic borderlands when in contact with agricultural societies. Two factors motivated this change: Firstly, the different socio-economic organizations of hunter-gatherer and agriculturalist communities

37

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

resulted in power-differentials that favoured the latter. Inequality emerged and so did competitive language ecologies. The language of the agriculturists prevailed influenced by the fact that economic, political, and cultural strength always benefits the strongest player. The larger and more functionally organized a community, the stronger it can become economically, politically, and culturally (Wendel and Heinrich 2012). Secondly, languages themselves serve as instruments for domination, largely influenced by the fact that hunter-gatherer languages are ill-equipped to serve the communicative needs of the new sociocultural environment that is imposed on them (Trudgill 2011; Halliday 2001). When placed into such a situation of language contact, the weaker communities have two general options: to assimilate or to retreat. In the Japanese Archipelago, the Jōmon culture was increasingly pushed towards the north, and it vanished from the main island of Honshū at around the fifteenth century.

Following the faming/language dispersal theory by Bellwood and Renfrew (2002), the arrival and spread of Japonic languages (Japanese, Ryūkyūan and Hachijō) in the archipelago is seen to coincide with the spread of wet rice agriculture (Whitman 2011). To recall, this dispersal theory states that the distribution of many of the world's languages can be explained on the basis of the developments and dispersal of farming (food plants and know-how) across the world. The Japonic languages originated from the Asian continent (Continental Japonic) and were introduced into the Japanese Archipelago by a wave of Yayoi migrants. These migrants also introduced rice cultivation from the ninth century BCE onwards in Kyūshū, from where they then slowly spread into the northeast over a period of several centuries. It would be mistaken to assume that the Yayoi period (900 BCE to 300 CE) was characterized by linguistic uniformity. John Maher (1996: 40) writes that there is "no reason to believe that there was a single Yayoi language", pointing out that migration from the Asian mainland to the archipelago spanned almost one millennium. According to Hanihara (1987), a total of 1,3 million Yayoi migrants arrived at the Japanese Archipelago over the course of 1,000 years, during which, the number of Yayoi settlers in the archipelago rose to about 5.4 million.

Life in such an agrarian society included living in fixed settlements, a division of labour, technological innovation, a surplus in food production, trade, social stratification, and the emergence of literacy practices. Literacy was necessary because agrarian societies encounter new communicative phenomena that involve the formalization, institutionalization and spread of systems such as religion, elaborate and specialized knowledge, and institutionalized law. The oldest extant chronicle of Japan, the Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters) written in from 712 CE, and the oldest official history, the Nihon Shoki (Chronicles from Japan) from 720 CE, describe legends reflecting military invasions from Kyūshū, the center of Yayoi migration, to the central Kinai region on Honshū. In these works, we also find accounts depicting ongoing migration from the Asian continent, in particular the migration of two powerful Clans of Chinese origin, the Aya and the Hata, who settled in Kyūshū (Lewin 1962). Both were subsequently assimilated into Yayoi culture and society.

Once we have a clearer view of language and society in the Japanese Archipelago from the sixth century onwards, we observe that the lack of linguistic diversity is startling. Despite the great north-

38

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

south expansion in the Archipelago, that is, from Hokkaidō in the north to the Ryūkyūs in the south, we find very few autochthonous languages. These languages belong to three larger cultures, Yamato-Japanese, Ryūkyū and Ainu. This low linguistic diversity is the result of the 'shallow history' of the Japonic languages in the Japanese Archipelago (Whitman 2011: 149) and the small number of Ainu. 'Shallow' in this context means that Japonic had been spoken for a relatively brief period that did not allow for its linguistic diversification. Seen the other way around, the low degree of linguistic diversity in the Japanese Archipelago is an indicator of the brief language history of Japonic there, and hence as the core argument to link Japonic to the Yayoi and not to the Jōmon culture. The Yayoi migration did not initially extend to the Ryūkyūs or to Hokkaidō. Japonic-speaking migrants entered the Ryūkyūs Islands from Kyūshū only between the eleventh and twelfth century, and then quickly settled across the entire archipelago, replacing in the southern Ryūkyūs the Austronesian hunter-gatherer. Before that time, Ryūkyūan was spoken in Kyūshū where it was in contact with and influenced by Japanese. In Kyūshū, Ryūkyūan was then gradually replaced by the advent of Old and Middle Japanese (Pellard 2015: 25-31).

We find thus in the Japanese main islands two waves of language diffusion. The first was the spread of Proto-Japonic from Kyūshū towards northeast from 900 BCE onwards, and subsequent to which we then have the spread of Old Japanese across the main islands from the area mid-Western Honshū (Nara and Kyoto), i.e., the region where the Yamato court was based. These two waves were constitutive of two major changes in the language ecology of the main islands (Yamato) of the Japanese Archipelago. Both followed the principle that the language of the stronger community drives the languages of weaker communities which may be now in disuse (Aya, Hata, Tōhoku Ainu) or that the power differential between communities in contact drive the weaker communities into remote areas ('Ryūkyūans' from Kyūshū into the Ryūkūys). The fact that linguistic diversity and its geographic distribution reflects contact between communities of different size, resources and power implies that the distribution of language diversity we find today in Japan (and everywhere else) is both geographically and historically structured. The structuring principles for linguistic diversity are power and domination, and these, in turn, are a reflection of the economic organization of these communities in contact (Nichols 1992).

After the twelfth century, the language ecology of Japan stabilized, evidenced by the presence of Ainu in Hokkaidō, the Kuriles, and in southern Sakhalin, Japanese on the main islands (Honshū, Shikoku and Kyūshū), and Ryūkyūan languages on the Ryūkyū Islands. These three groups of languages are subsequently characterized by high regional variation. In the case of Ainu and Ryūkyūan, we can distinguish between at least three and six significantly different abstand languages , respectively (Hattori 1964; Hokama 1971), while Japanese does not allow for mutual intelligibility between its most southern and northern local varieties (Ītoyo 1998). This linguistic diversity is at present endangered as only Japanese is set to remain by the mid-century if language shift is not reversed. Natural intergenerational language transmission has been interrupted since the 1920s for Ainu, and for Ryūkyūan since the 1950s, and with the childbearing generations no longer speaking these languages

39

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

and in absence of societal language learning programs in place for these languages, the future of these languages can simply be calculated on the basis of life expectancy in Japan (see Anderson 2009).

Two significant lessons emerge from the developments outlined above. Firstly, language shift and obsolescence are triggered by communities in contact with different economic organization (hunter-gatherer, agrarian, industrial, post-industrial), population size and power. One major way to escape assimilation into the dominant group is to move to outlying geographic areas. Agrarian language ecologies are competitive and impede the continued existence of hunter-gatherer languages. In situations of contact, hunter-gatherer societies assimilate, and language diversity remains only in the case of geographic or social seclusion. Secondly, some linguistic diversity could be maintained in the geographic borderlands of the Japanese Archipelago, such as Ryūkyūan (Amami, Kunigami, Okinawa, Miyako, Yaeyama, Yonaguni) in the south and Ainu (Sakhalin, Hokkaidō, Kuriles) in the north.

Neither Ryūkyūan nor Ainu were endangered in the mid-nineteenth century. They only became endangered when the territories in which these languages were spoken became part of the Japanese state and Japanese society started modernizing. Ryūkyūan and Ainu were driven into disuse before the twentieth century because the Japanese Archipelago was not confined by borders as we know them today. As an effect, living in a world without clear-cut borders allowed to perceive people, language and culture as gradually diverging when moving away from the center into the geographic (and social) periphery. The view of the archipelago comprising of concentric circles around the Yamato Court was called kai (華夷). This concept was borrowed from China, where ka is the centre (literally 'China' or 'brilliance') and i is the periphery (literally 'barbarian' or 'savage'). In the Japanese Archipelago, Yamato was the centre or the inner circle of the kai order, and the Ryūkyūs, Hokkaidō, Sakhalin and the Kuriles constituted the periphery or the outer circle, with fluid areas of transition in between such as Tōhoku in northern Honshū and Kyūshū in the south of the main islands. Domination by the centre was taken for granted and so was the gradually evolving difference and variation from the inner to the outer circles. Language diversity could be maintained in this kai order due to the fluid imagination of 'We' and 'Other', but also due to the abstinence of equality between the two (see Akamine 2016; Walker 2006). Neither Ainu nor Ryūkyūan were encouraged to shift to Japanese before modernity. On the contrary, their difference was crucial to support the view of the centre's cultural and political superiority. In Figure 2, we see again different languages (1, 2, x) in this type of ecology. There is contact between the communities speaking them (symbolized by the arrow). The communities speaking these languages differ in economic, cultural and political and power, but this does not necessarily result in language shift and endangerment, because difference in power is taken for granted. What is more, difference is sought to be maintained by powerful actors (vertical orientation of the arrow).
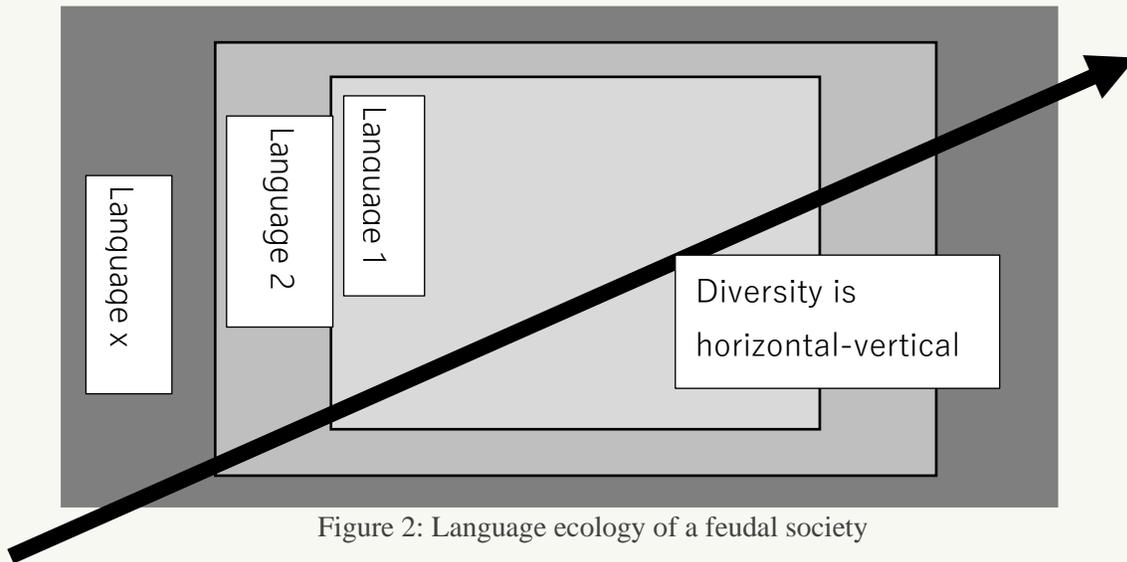
40

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Figure 2: Language ecology of a feudal society

Summary of Feudal Society Language Ecology

Core features:	Asymmetrical power distribution between communities
	Exoteric-exoteric languages and communication
Implications for diversity:	Competitive, non-stable ecologies
	Language replacement through coercion or geographic displacement into peripheries; language diversity is higher in the geographic periphery
Outlook:	There is contact and multilingualism, but relatively little loss of language diversity; there is no wave of language loss until the start of the modern age

Language diversity remained in feudal Japan, largely influenced by the fact that asymmetrical relations between the centre and the periphery were welcome by the centre as it confirmed its superior position over others. There was little communication between the centre and the periphery. Languages and communication remained esoteric in the outer circle, i.e., it involved only members of these various groups, whereas the dominant language (Old and Middle Japanese) from central Japan spread and became exoteric to speakers of proto-Japonic in the southwest and then northeast of the Japanese mainland. While there were notable power differences between the speech communities in the archipelago, these differences were alleviated by geographic distance. This particular language ecology remained stable for almost 1,000 years. When the limits of what constituted Japan (territory, people, language, culture, etc.) were defined in clear-cut ways after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, an entirely new linguistic ecology emerged. It is in this new, modernist ecology that the linguistic diversity that had remained in the archipelago became endangered. This new ecology was created around two major principles, clear-cut borders which defined the territory of the state and the imagining of the people

41

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

living within this territory (the Japanese nation) as being linguistically, culturally and historically homogenous and unified. We have seen in this section that this was not the case at all, but the premodern ecology had to adapt to the imagination of a homogenous nation with the confines of the Japanese state. Language endangerment was the inevitable result.

The Second Wave of Language Displacement

A minority is an artifact, made minority by a more numerous and powerful group in the process of modernization. The same principle applies to a minority language. The feature of inequality and domination is inherent in the term 'minority' or 'minority language' (Healey, Stepnick and O'Brien 2019). In modern contexts, difference and inequality cannot be separated. In this chapter, modernity is not understood simply as a period of time that followed the enlightenment movement, the invention of the printing press and the ensuing creation of national languages (Anderson 1991) or as an effect on communication subsequent of the rise of industrialization (Deutsch 1969). Rather, I understand modernity here as a set of attitudes that formed during the transformations analysed by Anderson and Deutsch. Central to these attitudes is the desire to organize society in a way that it becomes 'orderly' and 'order' is seen to be paramount with universality, homogeneity, monotony, and clarity (Bauman 1997). With regard to language, modernity led to the emergence of standard languages, the idea of a socially and geographically unmarked language, detached from its speakers, the covering up of linguistic facts not in line with modernist language ideals (e.g. linguistic diversity), the stigmatization and silencing of those not complying with hegemonic standards of imagined speech communities (e.g., minorities), the devaluation of specific languages and cultures (e.g., national language policy) all of which is believed to result in 'progress.' Attitudes based on such principles are called 'modernist' in the following rhetoric.

In modern settings, diversity constitutes a 'problem' to be solved by imposing 'order' in a modernist sense. Here, Jan Blommaert (2010: 28) has a point in stressing that "Bourdieu and his contemporaries Bernstein and Hymes all drew our attention to the same phenomenon; that the world of language is not just one of difference but one of inequality" (italic emphasis mine). This suggests that inequality is not simply an aspect that occasionally arises in settings of linguistic difference, variation or diversity. Inequality is an inherent aspect of linguistic variation in modernist language ecologies. This opposes modernity's promise of progress and equality for all. Modernity does not deliver this promise in practice, and we can recognize this in processes of language endangerment across the modern world. Dominated communities lose their languages, or seen the other way around, language diversity is a barometer of equality. The global community is now witnessing significant loss of language diversity largely influenced by reduced equality between majorities and minorities.

The transition from dynastic realms such as the Shogunate on the Japanese mainland and the Ryūkyū Kingdom in the south of the archipelago to a new unified modern nation state had significant

42

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

linguistic consequences. This transition to modernity was particularly dramatic for the Ainu whose economy was still principally based on hunting and gathering. Modernization affected everybody in Japan, as everybody was from now on to be a modern Japanese national. All the while Japanese nation was imagined as homogenous and uniform by the Meiji Oligarchy who had toured Europe and the US in order to study modern society and institutions, or to obtain education in general (Jansen 2002). This put an abrupt end to the dominant pre-modern conception of the Japanese Archipelago as an area of concentric circles and the resultant center-periphery continuum view gave way to seeing Japan as linguistically, culturally and historically unified (see Figure 2). The idea of concentric circles survived in dialectology though, where, crucially, variation was seen to reside within one language only, Japanese. The nation state came to be seen as a quasi-natural concept where territory, state and nation totally and unequivocally coincided. Here we see modernist thinking at work. Territory (Japan), state (government and institutions governing this territory) and nation (the Japanese people) are totally congruent, and this constitutes 'order' in the modernist mind. That the sociolinguistic situation differed from this idea did not contradict or devaluate this attitude. On the contrary, it called for efforts of ordering, and in our case, this meant the spread of Standard Japanese and the suppression of Japan's minority languages. All of this required the creation of modernist ideology that could straddle the conflict between this imagination and the actual multilingual and multicultural make-up of the Japanese Archipelago.

The modern imagination of linguistically unified nations in a territory characterized by linguistic diversity such as in the case of Japan, requires an emphasis on universality, homogeneity, monotony, and clarity. These attitudes come to shape many aspects of modern language life (Heinrich and Galan 2011). Along these lines of thought, linguistic diversity becomes 'problematic', an inevitable effect of which is a desire to impose 'order' and this means suppress diversity. Multilingualism becomes seen as disorder, and linguistic uniformity and homogeneity are seen as order. Functional diversification of languages has no place in such an imagination, nor in processes of compartmentalization of language, multiple forms of belonging and identification within a nation, or differing linguistic needs and communicative necessities among individuals. While all this is not foreseen in the modernist mind, pre-modern language ecologies did allow for such language attitudes, behaviours, and linguistic needs. This makes modernism an attitude that is hostile to the qualities of pluralism, variety, contingency or ambivalence (Bauman 1997).

Along these lines of modern thought, only two kinds of solutions are available when dealing with (linguistic) diversity: Assimilation and exclusion. This is why exclusion, poverty and segregation go hand in hand with linguistic diversity in modern settings (Harbert 2009), while inclusion and integration result in the loss of linguistic diversity. The phenomenon at hand is therefore not simply one of ideology and attitude towards language. Those falling between the gap of the imagination of a homogenous and linguistically unified nation and its actual multilingual and multicultural make-up come under pressure to adapt to the imagined model. Doing so manifests most visibly in the loss of

43

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

language diversity. Languages are endangered everywhere where modern orders have been imposed. It is thus unsurprising to find that all languages other than Japanese (or national language) are endangered in Japan today (Moseley 2009). In Figure 3, we see how competitive and therefore unstable language ecologies have become. There are various languages (1, 2, n) in contact (symbolized by the arrow), but these languages are now clearly ranked with regard to prestige and utility (vertical direction of the arrow). Some of the language enjoy institutional support and are developed and adapted (national languages). Languages in top of this hierarchy are safe, others (at risk of) becoming endangered.
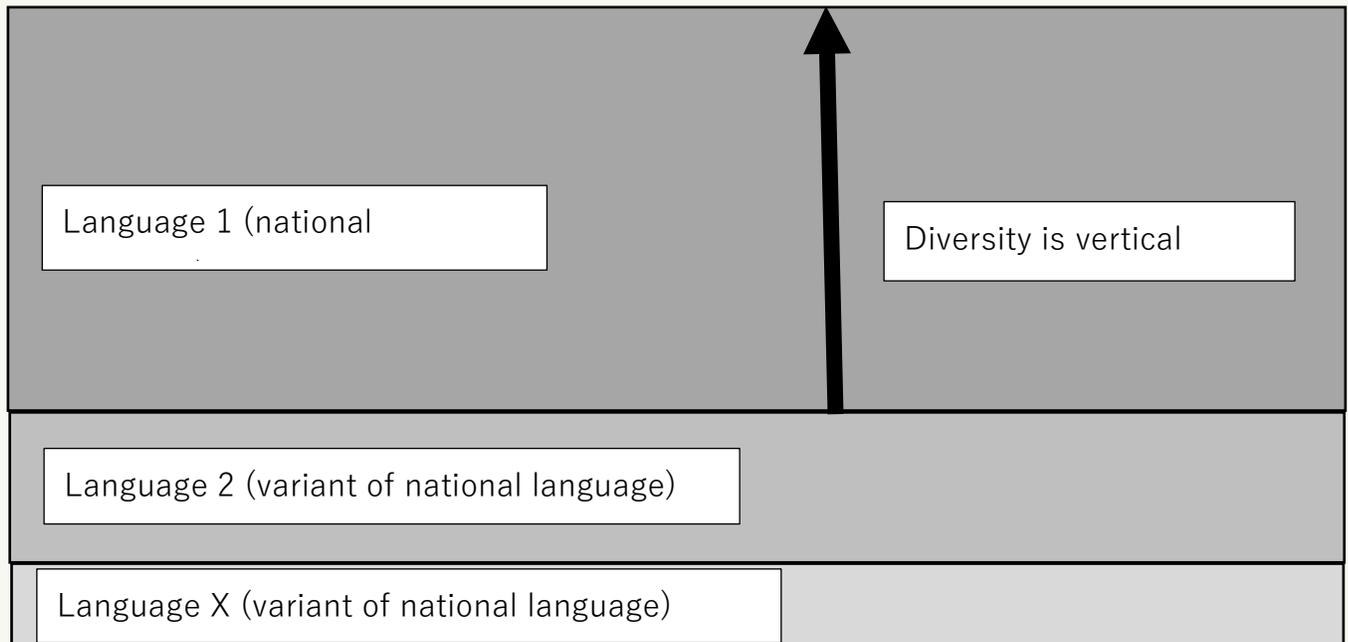
Language 1 (national

Diversity is vertical

Language 2 (variant of national language)

Language X (variant of national language)

Figure 3: Modernist language ecology

Summary of Modernist Language Ecologies

Core features:	Asymmetrical power distribution between communities
	National language regime (ideology, policy, behaviour)
Implications for diversity:	Competitive, non-stable ecologies
	Ideologically mediated language replacement (assimilation or exclusion); language endangerment in the geographic periphery where linguistic diversity remained after the first wave of language loss
Outlook:	There is contact and multilingualism and a shift from smaller and institutionally less supported, developed and prestigious languages, resulting in the current wave of language diversity loss.

44

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

At the onset of modernity (following the proclamation of the US Constitution in 1789, the French Revolution of 1789 in Europe, and the Meiji Restoration of 1868 in Japan), language diversity remained in geographic pockets, borderlands or reservoirs. With the imagination of a homogenous nation, these languages often become either declared as 'variants' of the dominant (national) language so that the idea of linguistic unity can be maintained. Linguistics, in particular, dialectology has for many decades been in the service of this ideology (Heinrich 2012). The variant ('dialect') is seen and experienced as less prestigious. That is to say, linguistic diversity is now perceived as hierarchically (vertically) ordered. The language of the centre is perceived to be 'best', that of the periphery is seen as 'a problem' that worsens the further one moves away from the centre (Tōhoku and Kyūshū is 'bad', but the Ryūkyūs are 'worse'). Whatever cannot be cast as a variant of the language of the centre is either ignored or explained away (in Japan, Ainu as 'vanishing people', horobiyuku minzoku in Japanese).

Contrary to modernist ideology claims, there was no 'national awakening', neither in Japan nor elsewhere. When working critically and historically, one cannot find cases where a 'uniform and unified nation' sought to place its horizontal bond front and centre, and where such a nation then went on to create a state in the 'territory' it populated. It is also not accurate to assume that all language diversity is one of gradation and, hence, of variation, i.e. 'dialect'. In his sociolinguistic typology of languages, Kloss (1967) distinguished between three categories. Aside from the well-known cases of Ausbau language (language by development in a dialect continuum, e.g., Danish, Swedish, Norwegian) and Abstand language (language by linguistic distance, see footnote 3), he had a third, often overlooked category. This category is called near-dialectilization, and it refers to Abstand languages that are not treated as 'language' but as 'dialect' of the dominant language. Ryukyuan languages as 'dialects of Japanese' are an obvious example of this. The point to be made here is that the idea of 'variation' is used as a strategy to downplay diversity, because diversity is associated in the modernist mind as 'disorder' and thus undesirable. Empirical evidence overwhelmingly supports the notion of high linguistic diversity in our modern world. Ethnologue currently lists 7,177 languages in its database, while the United Nations recognizes 193 states worldwide. And while one can question the basis on which languages are identified and how nations become included in the UN, the ratio of 1:35 of states and languages speaks volumes about the multilingual make-up of states globally. Modernization evolves thus in the exact opposite order of the claims of modernist ideology: in a given territory a state is formed. The state declares all those populating this newly defined territory (by borders) to be nationals. These newly created nationals (here the Japanese) are then linguistically unified in a way that all traces of diversity become weaker and eventually vanish (language endangerment), and this is seen as inevitable side effect of 'progress'. Modernism is the enemy of diversity. Ideology does not adapt to ecology, but ecology to ideology. Empirical evidence clarifies this also. Half of the world's languages are set to be extinct by the end of this century (Krauss 1992). It is obvious that language revitalization requires fundamental changes in this kind of ecological setting, and that these revitalization efforts have to start with new ideologies about language diversity in modern settings

45

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

(Fishman 2001: 17).

We can again consider the case of Japan to illustrate the above point. The confrontation with the outside world and the lingering threat to come under colonial rule by the West led to Japanese modernization efforts from the mid-nineteenth century onward. As a first step, its geographic borders were solidified, and the territory of the state now unequivocally included Hokkaidō, the Kurile Islands, Sakhalin, Ogasawara, and the Ryūkyū Islands (Ogamu 2014). All individuals populating these territories were declared to be Japanese, and whatever differentiated the people living in these peripheries became seen either as 'variation' of national language and culture in order to leave the modernizers' claim of homogeneity intact (e.g., Ryūkyūan as 'Japanese dialects'). The second strategy was to regard linguistic diversity as problem to be resolved, e.g., by declaring Ainu as 'vanishing people'. Language diversity was no longer seen as horizontal, but rather, 'vertical', and hence hierarchical. Language assimilation efforts, framed as efforts of language standardization, increased with distance from the center to the periphery, as the pattern of linguistic diversity in the Japanese Archipelago so obviously contradicted the idea of a linguistically unified nation. Distance from the centre of Tōkyō to the periphery, first to Tōhoku and Kyūshū, and then onwards to the Ryūkyūs in the south and Hokkaidō, the Kuriles and Sakhalin in the north, exposed an increase in linguistic and cultural diversity. This increasing degree of diversity in remote geographic areas called for increasingly severe measure with which to impose linguistic 'order' in these outlying territories (in particular in the Ryūkyūs and Hokkaidō, and to a lesser degree in Tōhoku and Kyūshū). Linguistic diversity suffered from this type of ordering.

The key-idea for linguistically unifying the Japanese Archipelago was the novel concept of kokugo (national language), a claque from the German 'Nationalsprache'. Japan's first linguistic professor, Ueda Kazutoshi (1867-1937) was instrumental in promoting the idea of both a national language and standard language. Standard language is hyōjungo in Japanese, a calque from German 'Standardsprache'. Ueda studied in Europe from 1890 to 1894 in order to acquire the knowledge necessary to solve existing language problems in Japan at the time (diglossia, writing system, lack of standardization, multiplicity of regional and social dialects, etc.). Upon his return to Japan, Ueda was appointed as chair of linguistics at the University of Tokyo where he relentlessly propagated the idea of a national language and a standard language that would represent the national language. Ueda played a central role in the establishment of institutions such as kokugo, a school subject that would henceforth be instrumental for spreading Standard Japanese and the ideologies and attitudes that accompanied the language across Japan (Heinrich 2019). Ueda linked sentiments such as love, respect, home and loyalty to language and the nation. He proclaimed that every Japanese national ought to feel an emotional attachment to kokugo, and that these attitudes should be promoted by the Japanese state. While Ueda's linguistic vision of Japan did not coincide with the societal and linguistic situation at hand, his model was subsequently realized, incrementally. Linguistic diversity began to decline as speakers aligned their behaviours toward this idea.

46

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

The seminal Japanese sociolinguist Sibata Takesi (1977: 29) draws attention to the fact that a negative image of language varieties other than standard language emerged and spread at the exact same time as when the Japanese National Language Research Council (Kokugo Chōsa I'inkai) selected and codified Standard Japanese. It was at this time that variability in language came to be seen as incorrect (tadashikunai), bad (warui) and old-fashioned (furukusai). At this time, language diversity came to been seen hierarchically (vertically) ranked, and that 'good language' was seen to be spoken in the centre (Standard Japanese) and 'poor language' (thick accents) in the peripheries where linguistic diversity and distance from Standard Japanese was highest. According to the hierarchical order of language variation, approximating the periphery correlated positively with an intensification of the diversity problem. Speakers in Tōhoku and Kyūshū became subjected to concentrated efforts of 'correction' (Jugaku 1978), while Ryūkyūan and Ainu were earmarked for extinction and became subjected to language eradication campaigns (Heinrich 2012: 83-106). Languages in the extreme periphery of the state were seen to be too deviant to be maintained ('too much disorder'). Difference called for order, and ordering meant reducing diversity.

We know understand how this modernist language ecology affected Ainu and the Ryūkyūan languages. Language shift from these languages to Standard Japanese reached the family domain from the 1910s to 1920s for Ainu, and from the 1950s to 1970s for Ryūkyūan. Younger generations of Ainu and Ryūkyūan were fully bilingual when language shift reached the family level, but proficiency in (Standard) Japanese did not suffice for being Japanese, as being (linguistically) diverse contradicted the idea of being Japanese. With regards to modernist beliefs and their high reemphasis on universality, homogeneity, monotony and clarity, speakers of Ainu and Ryūkyūan languages were confronted with various measures that aimed to discourage all minority language use (Maher 2001; Kondo 2014). These measures were already at the time being labelled as 'merciless' by some critics of these oppressive modernization attempts (Heinrich 2013), and merciless they were.

The orchestrated and oppressive efforts to ostracize Japanese minority languages (and Japanese dialects) stopped after 1945. However, language attitudes towards Standard Japanese and away from everything that was not standard did not encounter any fundamental changes until the 1990s (Inoue 2011: 113-114). Standard Japanese remained to be seen as 'correct,' and knowledge of dialects and minority languages continued to be seen as detrimental to learning how to speak 'good' and 'correct' Standard Japanese. Here, standard language and linguistic diversity continued to be seen as a zero-sum game. One had to choose between standard or diversity, and the default choice continued to be for the standard alone. Christian Galan (2011: 83) writes about the post-war period that "it is significant to observe the constancy with which […] dialects have been regarded, at best, as pertaining solely to home and leisure contexts, and at worst, as an improper use of language which must be thwarted." Multilingualism and multiculturalism started to gain a foothold in Japan only from the 1990s onwards, but the Japanese orientation to multilingualism and multiculturalism has been described as being aesthetic or ludic, and not as emancipative or transformative (Heinrich and Yamashita 2018). It was

47

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

not until 2008 that Ainu, who by then had no first-language speaker remaining, was recognized as the language of an ethnic Japanese group (Lewallen 2008). All the while, Ryūkyūan languages continue to be framed as 'dialects of Japanese' even by those who admit that "if unrestrained by political and social factors and relying on linguistic common sense, the varieties of […] Okinawa could be called 'language' just as Ainu" (Kibe et al. 2011). Kibe and her associates are the main proponents of Ryūkyūan as 'Japanese dialects', that is, they are unable to perceive their own modernist bias.

Such types of uncritical scholarship play no role in assisting to transform language ecology. Even if active suppression of linguistic diversity has stopped, we still find the modernist order valuing homogeneity and uniformity and seeing this as constituting 'order' in place. National language ideologies imply and create a strict hierarchization of languages – a hierarchy that is detriment to all languages other than the national language. In Japan, as in any other country, national language as an institution is rarely, if ever, politically challenged. It is known that French was spoken only by about half the French population at the time of French Revolution, but this does not mean that French is now no longer seen as the national language of France. The same applies for Japan, where 'national language' is known to having been taught to ethnolinguistic to Ainu and Ryūkyūans as a second language. The idea of national language remains in place, not because it is a historical or empirical fact, but because it gives cohesion to the nation. The argument is entirely political, and so is linguistic research if it uncritically reproduces these views. This implies that the ideologies that accompany national language or the hierarchies of languages in a given state also remained unchanged. As an effect, language ecology remains hostile to linguistic diversity.

Two notions are to be taken away from this for our discussion. Firstly, the imagining of language as uniform and historically shared among all national may appear 'natural' to most today, but it was largely unknown in Japan where it spread in the early twentieth century (Lee 2009). There is nothing natural about such a sociolinguistic situation. It is an artifact, and this means that it can be changed. Several decades of language modernization in Japan led to the institutionalization of a national language (kokugo), and this required a script reform of both Chinese characters (primarily reduction in their use) and of kana orthography (primarily seeking more transparency between orthography and pronunciation), the creation of a standard variety on the basis of Tōkyō speech, a rapprochement of spoken and written language, the codification of this language and its inclusion as a unified study subject into the national school curriculum (Carroll 2001). In this way, a uniform and unified language was created. However, uniformity and unity were not restricted to the creation and spread of Standard Japanese alone. The institutionalization of national language had a double homogenizing effect. All Japanese nationals became imagined as linguistically homogenous, and this vision started to become realized through the process of pushing other languages out of use. It is in these ideological, social, linguistic and ecological settings that attempts of language revitalization take place today.

48

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Language Revitalization in a National Language Regime

Modern nation states provide for new social and linguistic organizations. The modern state encourages the creation of new institutions for regulating and transforming society consistently and uniformly; national language represents such an institution. While language modernization responded to the needs of organizing language and communication for an industrialized society, linguistic modernization also produced a range of new problems. Maintaining linguistic diversity within the state represents such a new problem created by modernity (Neustupný 2005).

This situation emerged in the case of Japan, where the imagining of a homogenous nation was contradicted by its multilingual and multicultural make-up. Language ideology, not aligning with the societal and linguistic settings of the country, is not seen as problematic in the modernist mind. Rather, the problem rests with all those who are not in tune with modernist ideologies, and there are only two solutions with such a frame of mind: assimilation or exclusion. This situation inevitably manifests in the weakening and loss of language diversity. Current attempts of language maintenance and revitalization do not challenge this mechanism. To start with, it takes a 'language' to have a 'language policy' supportive of language diversity. However, Ainu was only acknowledged to be a language of Japan at a time when all of its first-language speakers had disappeared, and when the threat emanating from Ainu to dominant language ideology was negligible. Official acknowledgement of Ryūkyūan as a language would contradict this ideology, but this process is not yet underway. Efforts of language revitalization are therefore restricted to contesting or resisting national language policy and to taking grassroots initiatives to address issues neglected by national language policy (Heinrich and Ishihara 2018). These efforts are not sufficient to maintain these languages, as are they insufficient to transform the modernist language ecology.

For language revitalization to be successful, language ecology must be transformed in a way that it allows for the coexistence of the dominant (national) language and minority languages spoken in the state. As the term itself suggests, 'transformation' implies fundamental social, political and ecological changes. It is not enough to zoom in on one particular issue ('saving languages') while leaving the underlying conditions that led to language endangerment in place. Transforming a language ecology requires (1) an awareness of the limitations and consequences of the present hostile condition, (2) an appreciation of diversity that does not fare well under the current condition, and (3) the development of practices and institutions that support the process of transformation by demonstrating the practicality and the benefits of such a transformative change. Let us consider these three points in more detail.

(1) Limits and consequences: The conflict between ideologically claimed homogeneity and linguistic diversity results in language problems that national language regimes cannot resolve. All those who contradict the way the nation is imagined come under pressure to adapt to the imagined model. Loss of linguistic diversity is the result. Language diversity is reduced in such a language ecological setting because the modernist idea of equality is thought to be attained by uniformity. However,

49

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

treating diverse groups in the same way creates inequality. This, in a nutshell, is the modernist dilemma.

(2) A newfound appreciation of diversity: Today, hundreds of indigenous or immigrant languages are spoken in nation states globally. Diversity exists within these language communities (Vertovec 2007). Cities are linguistic hubs of such superdiversity. With more than half of the world's population now living in cities, and urbanization not showing any signs of weakening, linguistic superdiversity will continue to grow (Smakman and Heinrich 2018). City residents in particular have difficulties avoiding multilingualism today. Multilingualism is the order of the day. Consequently, appreciation of diversity is on the rise, as more and more people are living multilingual lives that contradict monolingual and national language ideology (Extra and Kutlay 2004).

(3) Practicing transformative change: Critically studying language diversity requires us to move beyond accounts of 'what exists' and to ask hard questions such as 'what could be', in order to expand horizons (Thomas 1993). It is important to acknowledge that language modernization could have evolved differently. Spreading a common, standardized language across a nation does not require pushing other languages and varieties out of use. Standard and diversity can coexist. Language revitalization efforts can expand its epistemological stance to imagine 'what could be', and this must include a transformation of the modernist language ecology. Our discussion shows that there are two principle ways to do this: (1) either contact between speech communities need to be based on and be characterized by something else than power inequality and domination, or (2) contact between dominant and dominated speech communities must be alleviated. In Japan, we see no sign of any of these developments, and this is an obstacle for all those who seek to maintain language diversity there (Heinrich 2011). Being aware of the range and scope of the problem, and of the fact that it can be resolved, is an important first step to take.

Conclusion

We saw in this article that language ecologies have been competitive ever since the Neolithic revolution. In Japan, the transition from stable to competitive ecologies took place with the transition from Jōmon to Yayoi in the first millennium BCE. Competition then shaped the distribution of diversity with languages of smaller and weaker groups being pushed into the peripheries. They would remain there, and remain vital, due to a centre-periphery continuum that left diversity in borderlands intact. Modernity put an end to this order, and the central language ecology was extended across the territory of the newly established nation state.

The substitution of frontiers through borders and the imagination of the nation as homogenous put linguistic diversity in the periphery of the state at risk. Language endangerment is currently underway in geographic and social margins. The modernist ecology remains competitive, non-stable and hostile

50

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

to diversity. It is more hostile to diversity than the feudal orders were. This means that attempts of language revitalization are not only tasked with language issues (documentation, development of orthographies, written style, teaching, language adaptation, etc.) but also with the creation of language ecologies where dominant and smaller languages can coexist. The past ecologies offer no model how to do this. The only stable ecology was that of hunter-gatherer ecologies, but these were only stable because there were no differences in community size and power. Feudal ecologies offer no solution either, as diversity was in the service of domination and inequality then (the Other as 'barbarian'). Creating stable ecologies that allow for international lingua franca, national language and minority languages to coexist cannot simply return to the past. There are, however, two things that can be learned from the past. Firstly, diversity can also not be framed vertically and not result in hierarchies. Secondly, individuals or smaller communities do not have to develop the same repertoires as the majority (its okay to be different). A language ecology that transcends the problems of modernist ecologies could take the shape as represented in Figure 4.
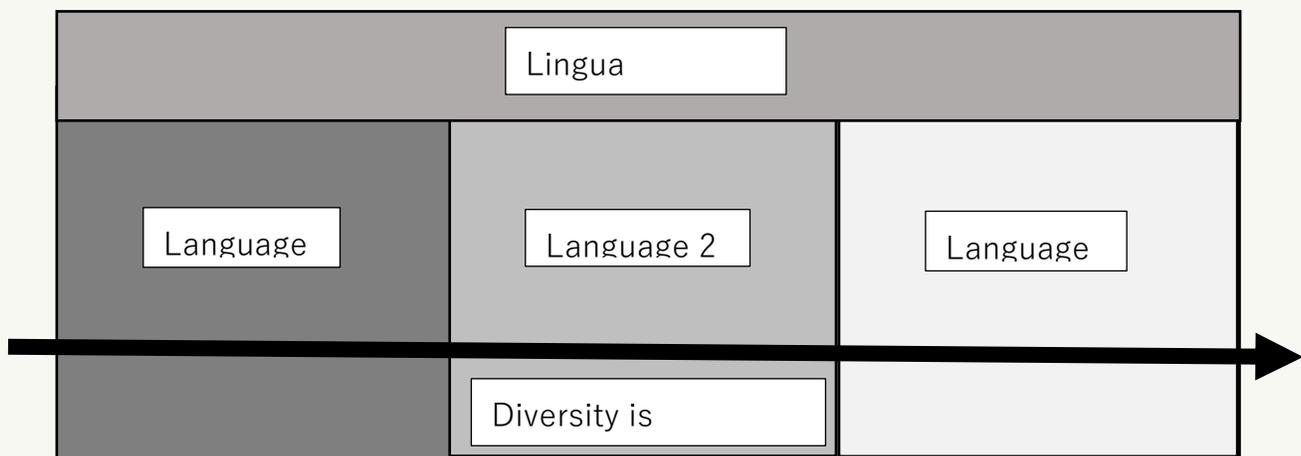

Figure 4: Language ecology for a postmodern society

Summary of Postmodern Language Ecologies:

Core features:	Relation between communities based on solidarity (not power)
	Functionally and individually layered language behaviour
Implications for diversity:	Stable, non-competitive ecologies
	Language replacement and language diversification according to communicative needs
Outlook:	There is contact and multilingualism, and there is also a difference in economic, cultural and political power between communities in contact, but contact this no longer based on power differentials and diversity is valued by all (also by the

51

Waves of Language Diversity Loss in Japan:
An Ecological and Theoretical Account
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

dominant group). Language diversity is safe and the ecology
is stable.

A (postmodern) language ecology that transcends the current limits of modernist ecologies must combine diversity, solidarity and cultural freedom so that being diverse can be a gratifying choice (and not some sort of 'duty' to maintain a heritage). This is only possible if there is a shared sense of solidary and support by the entire society (majority and minority) for such choices. Communication between all members of a nation remain important, but rather than framing a commonly shared language as 'national language' and tying membership to the nation to native-speakerness, such a language should be recognized as what it always has been, the 'lingua franca' of the state.

What then does this imply for Japan, the case we discussed here to illustrate the ecological changes over a long period of time? National language (kokugo) needs to be reframed as an important common language (kyōtsūgo) spoken across the archipelago. English and Chinese are important international lingua franca for Japan (and also Japanese is spoken around the world as a foreign language by more than 5 million speakers). All other languages of Japan should be given language status and opportunities (not duties) should be created to learn and use these languages, irrespective of whether somebody is Ainu or Ryūkyūan. By applying a language ecological perspective, we also understand that these languages have been disconnected from much of contemporary life (economy, higher domains, popular culture, etc.) and that these links between language and the rest of the ecologies need to develop new connections and new roots. This topic would be subject to an entirely different discussion for which there is no space in the present article. Suffice to say that after 150 years of giving privilege exclusively to the language of the centre, Standard Japanese, privilege and social awards need to also include minority languages. Solidarity and cultural freedom are attitudes that would support such a shift of priorities.

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52

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