

The Politics of the Japanese Language

Kojiro Murakawa

(Received on October 18, 2012)

Abstract

The first decade of the twenty-first century in Japan gives an insight into the politics of language. Neoliberalism, which gives primacy to the flexibility in labor, weakened human ties among individuals. This resulted in the fragmentation of Japanese society, and the state was driven to enhance social cohesion to reinforce the base of sovereignty. In order to create social cohesion and subsume it under the state, the Japanese language was used as a system to develop a sense of unity in the present and as a history to strengthen the sense of unity along the passage of time. However, the strategic use of the Japanese language may lead to a further disintegration of society, because it may reproduce existing social inequality. By taking Japan as an example, therefore, I will consider implications for the politics of language for the next decade in the twenty-first century.

The Politics of the Japanese Language

When we look back at the history of Japan in and after the 1990s, it is characterized by a contradiction in which Japan tried to adapt itself to the context of global interdependence by following global trends on the one hand, but it adhered to specificity by re-organizing the national on the other. This contradiction is a characteristic of modernity, and the adherence to specificity could be understood as an interplay between the nation and the state. Globalization as a consequence of modernity left out social relations from particular localities, and social relations are exposed to global social networks, most of which is formed by invisible others (Giddens, 1990, 1991). Moreover, neoliberalism, which is another product of modernity, weakened human ties within the nation by throwing them into the chaotic situation in which labor conditions changed rapidly before they had ties with others. This resulted in the fragmentation of Japanese society, shaking the foundation of the nation-state's sovereignty. The nation-state is a system of government which resides in the complex that the nation-state forms with other nation-states in order to mutually acknowledge sovereignty over the territory within the borders (Giddens, 1985),

and is often seen as requiring that politics and ethnicity share the borders (Smith, 1995). However, owing to the dynamism of modernity, “state and nation are at each other’s throats, and the hyphen that links them is now less an icon of conjuncture than an index of disjuncture” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 39). The state then needs to raise a sense of belonging in the nation to reinforce the base of its sovereignty.

In order to create social cohesion within the nation and subsume it under the state, the Japanese language was used as a system to arouse a sense of unity in the present and as a history to strengthen the sense of unity along the passage of time (Yasuda, 2006). In other words, the systematic and historical aspects of the Japanese language provided atomized individuals with an anchorage in which they could have ties with others by developing identity as members of Japanese society. However, this nationalist movement may lead to isolation from the international society and paradoxical disintegration of Japanese society. The strategic use of the Japanese language is based on a made-up purity which may work as an obstacle to turning people’s eyes to the diversity of language in the world, and may try to transform social problems inherent in the structure of Japanese society into individuals’ psychological problems (Morris-Suzuki, 2002). Overlooking these ideological aspects of the Japanese language may lead to reproducing social inequality inherent in Japanese society in the 21st century, and by extension, making it difficult for Japan to globalize itself.

In this paper, therefore, I analyze the Japanese-language discourses¹ to examine how the Japanese language is used to foster a sense of unity in the contemporary form of globalization. To this end, I will first look into the dynamism of modernity, and discuss what kinds of influences it has on Japanese society. I will then attend to how the Japanese language has to do with social concerns caused by modernity, and will reveal the way in which the Japanese language is used to arouse a sense of unity in the nation. Finally, analyzing formal properties of Japanese-language discourses, I will consider implications for the politics of language in the 21st century.

The Dynamism of Modernity

One of the paradoxes in the era of globalization, which brings up the image of inter-

1 In this paper, by ‘Japanese-language discourses’, I mean discourses written in Japanese and/or discourses written about Japanese.

connectedness of all the states, is the intensification of nationalism all over the world (Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1991). According to Giddens (1999), “[g]lobalization not only pulls upwards but also pushes downwards, creating new pressures for local autonomy” (p. 31). Globalization’s pressure acted on Japan’s autonomy, and resulted in a series of nationalist movements from the top-down perspectives through the enhancement of a legal structure to protect Japan’s autonomy to the bottom-up perspectives. In 1999, for example, the National Flag and National Anthem Law was passed in the Diet, and in 2000, the then Prime Minister said at a political meeting that Japan was god’s country with the emperor as the central figure. Nationalism was manifested in the academic field and at the grass-roots level as well. Many conservative intellectuals, through their publications, tried to re-examine and partially justify Japan’s imperialism and colonialism during the Second World War. Around the turn of the century, the sales of the Japanese-language-related books picked up quite a bit to the extent that some of them sold more than million copies. Komori (2002) saw the Japanese-language boom as an early sign of bottom-up nationalism, because the Japanese language gave a firm foothold for identity to those who had ascribed Japan’s economic prosperity to the uniqueness of the Japanese but were deprived of the means to identify themselves in the midst of recession. These movements could be seen as an interplay between the ruling classes and masses in Japan over the turn of the century in the sense that the former used nationalism as a means to unify Japan as a nation-state, and the latter used nationalism to construct identity. As I will discuss below, Japanese-language discourses, through which the state tried to arouse a sense of unity in the nation, took the same line as these nationalist movements.

A possible answer to this contradictory process is the dynamism of modernity. Giddens (1990, 1991) sees globalization as the expansion of modernity on a global scale, and views the re-organization of time and space as a distinctive character of modernity. In pre-modern cultures, according to Giddens, time was always connected with space. Yet modernity separated time from specific places through the uniformity of time measurement by the mechanical clock, and this emptying of time worked as the pre-condition for the emptying of space. Social networks were then lifted out of particular localities, and exposed to infinite space. As Giddens (1991) says, therefore, “Globalization concerns the interaction of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations ‘at distance’ with local contextualities” (p. 21). In the same vein, Harvey (1989) calls this spatial-temporal transformation “time-space compression” (p. 240),

explaining the reason as follows:

I use the word ‘compression’ because a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us (p. 240).

Giddens and Harvey suggest that the foundation of our life is being rapidly changed by the power of the invisible that was aroused by the re-organization of time and space.

Bauman (2000) calls the current stage of modernity ‘liquid modernity’, in which social conditions for people’s actions change before their actions change into habits, as if natural conditions constantly change before a liquid changes into a solid (Bauman, 2005). Among other things, the patterns and frames of interdependence to circumscribe individuals’ social actions are founded anew by liquid modernity’s melting power before anything else (Bauman, 2000). In liquid modernity, therefore, the framework for identity is rapidly changing before individuals build up their identity (Bauman, 2001).

Neoliberalism, which is a theory of political economic practices, shows such characteristics of modernity. I see neoliberalism as the immediate source of the fragmentation of Japanese society, and the prevalence of neoliberalism in the world has to do with what Giddens (1990, 1991) calls modernity’s reflexivity, which refers to the idea that newly acquired knowledge or information on aspects of society (re)structures, or under certain circumstances, transforms the social aspects. This quality of modernity thus causes a break between the past and the present.

Neoliberalism made a break with an economic doctrine that had been practiced in many places of the world. The world after the Second World War was characterized by the economic policy called Keynesianism, in which many states put industrial policy under their control and maintained their influence on standards for social wages through the construction of welfare systems, and Keynesianism achieved a moderate success (Harvey, 2005). As economic growth collapsed and low dividends became the norm in the 1970s, however, an alternative to Keynesianism was sought by the upper classes, because it became clear that the Keynesianism would not give profit to them. By an experiment with neoliberalism in Chile in 1973, it became common knowledge that the alternative to Keynesianism gave more financial advantage to the upper classes under pri-

vatization, and the upper classes then began to introduce neoliberalism into their countries (Harvey, 2005). Modernity's reflexivity accelerated the change of economic policy in the world, and one of the consequences was the uneven distribution of wealth and power on a global scale.

The history of neoliberalism in Japan illustrates Harvey's (2005) views of neoliberalism. In the 1980s, Japan was lagging far behind superpowers such as the UK and US in response to neoliberalism, because at that time, Japan rejoiced in an unprecedented economic development in its history. As Japan lost its competitiveness in the world market early in the 1990s, however, the ruling classes of Japanese society became aware of the need for neoliberalism (Watanabe, 2001). When we survey the history of neoliberalism in Japan from the 1990s to the middle of 2000s, therefore, a list of policies for relaxation of restraints can be drawn up.²

This structural reform had a harmful influence on Japanese society in terms of disparities in income, local administration, and education. The investigation of income distribution for the 2002 fiscal year revealed that people in the upper brackets, who comprised 25 percent of the total population, accounted for 75 percent of the gross national income (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2006). Regional disparities also confronted a grave situation, and disparities between center and periphery or between urban or rural areas widened during the past 25 to 30 years in terms of unemployment rate, the effective opening-to-application ratio, and prefectural income (Tachibanaki, 2006). Disparities in these two areas might threaten equal educational opportunities, because the percentage of students enrolling in prestigious universities depends on parents' annual income. It should be noted, furthermore, that disparities in education may result in a vicious circle in which disparities in income are reproduced by the unequal educational opportunities.

The fragmentation of society means the loss of human ties, which leads to entailing anxiety (Bauman, 2000). According to Giddens (1985, 1991), when what he calls 'ontological security' is threatened, people feel anxiety about their identity. Ontological security refers to a sense of security through which people can have a feeling of their lasting existence, and this is brought by everyday routine (Giddens, 1985, 1991). When people

2 Reform of Labor Services Temporary Assignment Law, Privatization of the Japan Highway Public Corporation, financial reconstruction, reform of health care system, and privatization of postal service were all conducted between 1996 and 2006.

are able to define themselves in daily interactions with others, they do not have anxiety in regards to identity. In liquid modernity in which social conditions change constantly before they have ties with others, however, it gets difficult to form a sense of self as a member of the society (Giddens, 1991).

Japan demonstrates this point. According to the *2007 White Paper on National Life* (Cabinet Office, 2007a), neoliberalism and relaxation of restraints had the effect of weakening ties with others. It was thus feared that the breakdown of human ties had a negative influence on society, and the ways to rebuild ties with others were sought (Cabinet Office, 2007a). As a matter of fact, *Kokumin seikatsu ni kansuru seron chosa* (A public-opinion poll about people's lives in Japan) (Cabinet Office, 2007b) announced that those who felt distress and anxiety in daily life accounted for 67.6 percent of 5,941 participants which was the highest number ever registered since 1958.

Frightened individuals then try to lessen their anxiety, searching human ties with others. As Bauman (2000) says metaphorically, therefore, "There is...demand for individual pegs on which frightened individuals could hang collectively, if only for a brief time, their individual fears" (p. 38). The search for identity and human ties can be understood as the emergence of nationalism, since this psychological phenomenon reveals itself when social and political ties are weakened (Hobsbawm, 1990). As Smith (1991) says, furthermore, "It is through a shared, unique culture that we are enabled to know 'who we are' in the contemporary world" (p. 17). Nationalism has to do with the potential to develop an affinity for the symbols that stress a commonality between those who set up a political system (Giddens, 1985). It follows that nationalism by definition keep 'Them' out of sight (Hobsbawm, 1990). Language then plays a crucial role in the nature of nationalism, because by telling history, myth, and tradition, it provides members of a society with the blueprint of what they should be like as members of an ethnic group (Smith, 1991). The Japanese-language boom, which is mentioned above, may be a good example. As Giddens (1985) says, the fact that its existence precedes any generation of the community makes language a firm footing for the members of the ethnic community. Language thus gives those who feel anxiety about identity a footing for the re-construction of identity.

Given the discussion above, it can be observed that the fluid social conditions created by modernity provided Japan with an opportunity to re-structure its base as a nation-state through the Japanese language. In the present, every country is a nation-state

(Giddens, 2001), which refers to the political apparatus that monopolizes administration of the territory within clearly defined boundaries (Giddens, 1985; Held, 1995). The nation-state's governance is approved by law as well as the direct control of violence, and the latter is made possible by internal suppression (Giddens, 1985; Held, 1995). More importantly, the validity of the nation-state, which is vested with such power, depends on how much loyalty the state can command in the nation (Held, 1995). If Japan succeeds in arousing a sense of unity in the nation by molding it into a particular ethnic identity through the strategic use of the Japanese language, this gives Japan a solid foundation, which can meet demands from the political economy of globalization that require every nation-state to work as a collective corporation (Harvey, 2005).

Method

I will analyze Japanese-language discourses to reveal the way in which Japanese-language discourses try to arouse a sense of unity in the nation through particular ways of using words. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) meets this methodological requirement. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), "CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'" (p. 258). In other words, CDA holds that discourses shape and are shaped by society, attending to the impact that formal properties of discourses have on society (Fairclough, 2001, 2003). CDA considers that "discourse may...try to pass off assumptions (often falsifying ones) about any aspect of social life as mere common sense" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). Ideology-laden ways of using language, which underpin falsifying assumptions and represent these as truth, are often invisible. Through linguistic analyses of discourses, therefore, "CDA aims to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258), and tries to reveal the ways in which formal properties of discourses work on society. By using CDA, therefore, I will conduct a linguistic analysis of how Japanese-language discourses try to arouse a sense of unity in the nation. I will particularly attend to the discursive construction of the Japanese language as a system, and of the Japanese language as a history.

Japanese-Language Discourses for National Unification

According to Anderson (2006), successful revolutionaries inherit the wiring of the old state such as dossiers, archives, and laws as if it was the electrical system that gives energy to a resident by the name of the state. Yasuda (2006) attends to the fact that the wiring of the state is made up of written language, and sees the Japanese language as an electrical system to control the Japanese society. He suggests that a language built up as an electrical system has the aspect as a system and the aspect as a history. As seen in files, treaties, and memoranda, language as a system has a synchronic function to control society. At the same time, however, a specific language that passes through the system as electricity has diachronic characters which could not be dismissed as a simple system (e.g. culture, ethnicity, and identity). Using the Japanese language discourses in strategic ways, therefore, the ruling classes could foster a sense of synchronic unity through the Japanese language as a system, and a sense of diachronic unity through the Japanese language as a history. To put it differently, just as an X coordinate and a Y coordinate determine the position of a point on coordinates, the synchronic and diachronic aspects of the Japanese language tell the Japanese where they are in fluid social conditions. Through the analysis of formal properties of Japanese-language discourses, I will reveal the ways in which the Japanese language as a system and the Japanese language as a history are discursively constructed.

*The Japanese Language as a System: Love of Home and Love of Country*³

Following Anderson (2006) and Yasuda (2006), I see Japanese-language discourses as an electrical system to develop an imagined community in the present (Yasuda, 2006). I attend particularly to the juxtaposition of love of home and love of country as an example of the Japanese language as a system.

In the 165th extraordinary session of the Diet on 15 December 2006, the new Fundamental Law of Education was passed, and it was promulgated and enforced on 22 December 2006. What gave rise to the discussion in those days was that loving Japan and students' home should be included as an objective in the new law.

3 In this paper, 'love of home' is used as a general term for love towards one's birthplace and family.

To foster an attitude to respect our tradition and culture, love the country and region that nurtured them, together with respect for other countries and a desire to contribute to world peace and the development of the international community.

Students' performance at schools are thus assessed in terms of how much they love or show interest in the history, tradition, culture, and great figures of Japan (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT], n.d.).

The then Prime Minister was particularly enthusiastic for incorporating a description of the nurture of love of home and love of country into the new Fundamental Law of Education.

It is necessary to nurture love of home in the sense of education...in order that the young may have a sense of love of the country in which they were born and raised. A sense of belonging to the country should follow as an extension of it [love of home] (Abe, 2006, p. 91 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

Cultivating love toward students' home and Japan in students had been tried before these nationalist movements. In *Kokoro no Note* (a notebook for moral education) for lower secondary schools, which was distributed to all elementary and lower secondary schools as a supplementary material in April 2002, students are asked to think of beautiful points for their home and what they can do for their home, under the heading "There are familiar sights, sounds, and faces here" that is designed to arouse nostalgia. This is followed by the section on love of country whose heading is "Love our country and wish for its prosperity", and this section includes the following.

Extending love of home a little further leads to a sense of loving Japan. The sense of loving the country in which we live and wishing for its prosperity is quite natural... it is time we properly learn about Japan and gain a new understanding of its excellent tradition and culture... Loving this country leads to loving the world (MEXT, 2002, p. 114 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

As these examples show, love of home and love of country were a primary concern in the Japanese-language discourses as a system.

What is striking is that love of home and love of country are juxtaposed in these discourses as if they were the one and the same. However, Hobsbawm (1990) distinguishes between these two types of love. Nationalism referred to an attachment to one's homeland in the 19th century, and it was in a directly opposite position to the state. Yet ruling classes in the state tried to transform nationalism into an attachment to the state out of recognition that nationalism gave great strength to the state if ruling classes could win it to the state's side. Interestingly, "This...was often possible, by the mere projection of the sentiments of genuine, existential, identification with one's 'little' homeland on to the big one" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 90).

According to Fairclough (2001), consequential relationship between two or more elements, which is taken for granted, is ideologically constructed common sense. In the above discourses, by juxtaposing 'home' and 'country' by the logical connector 'and', 'home and country' implicitly means 'home = country', and 'love of home and love of country' means 'love of home = love of country' (Fairclough, 2001). In other words, through the repetition of key words that are used as synonyms, continuity is established between the words (Woodside-Jiron, 2004). By this discursive strategy, individuals' diverse attachment toward their home is transformed into monolithic love toward the country.

The Japanese Language as a System: A Linguistic Hierarchy and Hybridism

The Japanese-language discourses as a system contribute to achieving national unification by telling people that they are the speakers of a wonderful language which has both uniqueness and universality.

In *The Frontier Within: Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium* (Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century [PMC], 2000), the Japanese language is represented as follows:

Lest there be any misunderstanding, we stress that Japanese is a wonderful language... If we treasure the Japanese language and culture, we should actively assimilate other languages and cultures, enriching Japanese culture through contact with other cultures and showing other countries the attraction of Japanese culture by introducing it in an appropriate fashion in their language (p. 20).

As can be seen in "Japanese is a wonderful language", the Japanese language is repre-

sented in an evaluative way. According to Fairclough (2003), “Direct evaluative statements can be seen as presupposed” (p. 179). What is presupposed in this representation is a linguistic hierarchy. The report presupposes that there are wonderful languages on the one hand and less wonderful languages on the other, since “a wonderful language” is “a discourse-relative evaluative expression” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 179). By conceptually categorizing languages, the superiority of the Japanese language is implied in this report.

In the last sentence, this report recommends that the Japanese language be treasured by assimilating other languages into it. In other words, it argues the need for the Japanese language as a hybrid language. I regard this argument as a form of interdiscursivity. According to Fairclough (1992), “different discourses combine under particular social conditions to produce a new, complex discourse” (p. 4). It is a discourse of *Nihonjinron* (theories of Japaneseness) that combines with the above argument. According to Iwabuchi (2001), since the 1990s, the ability to assimilate different cultures into Japanese culture has been seen as a distinctive Japanese identity in a discourse of *Nihonjinron*. Iwabuchi calls this strategic use of hybridity ‘hybridism’, and concludes that the main interest of those who advocated hybridism as a civilization was to present Japanese-style civilization to the world as universal. The last sentence suggests that a discourse of *Nihonjinron* combine with a discourse of the Japanese language under the social condition in which national unification is needed for global competitiveness.

Just as the discourse of hybridism to establish Japan’s national identity can be attributed to a request of modern projects to create Japan as a distinctive nation-state in international exchange and cultural heterogeneity at the international level (Iwabuchi, 2001), the issue of introducing the Japanese language as a hybrid language to the world could be understood as a political project in which on the one hand, the universality of the Japanese language is ensured by stressing the existence of other languages’ elements in it, but on the other, uniqueness of the Japanese language is guaranteed by seeing the ability of appropriating other languages’ elements for it as peculiar to Japan. As a consequence, Japanese people could use the uniqueness and universality of the Japanese language to strengthen their identity as the speakers of this wonderful language.

The Japanese Language as a History: A Historical Flow of the Japanese Language

As long as electricity that passes through the electrical system is a particular language, it has a history which cannot be dismissed as a simple system (Yasuda,

2006). Japanese-language discourses use the long history of the Japanese language to locate Japanese people in the flux of time.

In *Korekara no jidai ni motomerareru kokugoryoku ni tsuite* (Concerning the Japanese Language Abilities Required for the Future Age),⁴ there are passages which represent the Japanese language in terms of the flux of time. For example, the following traces the history of the Japanese language, and explains that it owes much to the forefathers' knowledge.

The Japanese language is formed through its long history, and it is the basis of our country's culture. Or it is culture in itself. Our forefather's emotions such as sorrow, pain, and joy are accumulated in each word of the Japanese language. It is essential for understanding and taking over the traditional culture that our forefathers created and for developing a new culture (Council for Cultural Affairs, 2004, p. 3 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

The following emphasizes the need for taking over the legacy embedded in the Japanese language as a prescription for problems in the present. In addition, the following discusses what the Japanese language education should be like in the present.

Furthermore, it is a critical issue that the decay of morals that has been seen in Japanese society in recent years can be attributed to the lack of abilities to understand the sensitivity and emotion that we have as human beings... These abilities are not naturally acquired but learned mainly through Japanese language education. The main purpose of Japanese language education is to steadily cultivate the emotional abilities, and by doing so, to enhance cultivation and foster a broad perspective (Council for Cultural Affairs, 2004, p. 5 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

As the title "Concerning the Japanese Language Abilities Required for the Future Age" shows, furthermore, this report discusses what the Japanese language should be like in

4 This document was drawn up by the Council for Cultural Affairs in 2004 to develop Japanese people's emotional aspects and communicative abilities by improving their Japanese-language abilities.

the future. This report implies a long uninterrupted history of the Japanese language.

According to Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, and Liebhart (1999), “the discursive construction of national identity revolves around the three temporal axes of the past, the present, and the future” (p. 26). In a similar vein, Smith (1986) says that individuals’ feeling of meaninglessness could be overcome by linking them to “persisting communities whose generations form indissoluble links in a chain of memories and identities” (p. 176). In order to integrate atomized individuals in the present, one of the best ways might be to link them to a historical chain of the Japanese language. Individuals could then have a sense of unity through the shared language, its history, and its memories.

The Goodness of the Japanese Language

There is no room for doubt that language is closely bound up with nationalism. A particular language is especially important as a medium for linking with the good old days, authenticity, and the distinction between Us and Them, each of which is considered a constituent of national cohesion (Hobsbawm, 1990). The Japanese language is no exception in this respect. However, why a particular language contributes to creating national unification is not fully explicated. Anderson’s (1998) idea of ‘the Goodness of nations’ gives an insight into this question.

In a journal interview whose main topic is a territorial issue of Japan, the former Prime Minister Abe talked about what constitutes Japan as a state.

When we think of ‘Japan’ as a state, we find that it includes those who live in Japan, those who lived in Japan, and those who will be born in Japan (Yamamoto, 2007, p. 89 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

In Abe’s view, the past, present, and future Japanese people constitute Japan as a state.

Abe talked about the unborn and the dead in this interview, but he did not describe their features. As Anderson (1998) says, therefore, “They have no special lineament at all” (p. 362). The fact that the unborn are not born yet leads them to being conceptualized as a totally innocent nation, and by disregarding the behavior and social background of the dead during their lifetime, whether they were right or wrong, the dead are purified. In other words, both the unborn and the dead have purity bereft of every social

characteristic. Anderson (1998) calls this purity “monochrome purity” (p. 362), and says that monochrome purity guarantees the Goodness of nations. The purified unborn and dead combine in the present as if they reflected each other in a mirror. Through this combination, which Anderson (1998) calls “combined ghostliness” (p. 364), continuity of monochrome purity is ensured, and it affords a basis for the Goodness of nations. The nation that retains a perfect purity as its basis cannot be wrong.

The unborn and the dead bring a sense of shame on the living in that the living do not achieve the same purity. The way in which the living contribute to the Goodness of nations has to do with sexual representation. According to Anderson (1998), athletic young male bodies are viewed as a representation of national soundness in many countries, and mother is the only woman for whom young males do not feel sexual desire and in whom they put their trust unconditionally. This relationship might explain the relationship between the nation and the state most clearly, because “It is She [Mother Country] who serves as the magnet around which a disorderly myriad of young...males form themselves into a beautifully ordered field of force” (Anderson, 1998, p. 367). The fraternity of the living framed by political incest taboo then works as the last source of the Goodness of nations. In the above interview about a territorial issue, Abe might manifest his nationalism as the Prime Minister of Japan through this idea of the Goodness of nations.

The reason for the use of the Japanese language for national unification could be explained by using the notion of the Goodness of nations. As noted above, the past of the Japanese language is represented as follows.

The Japanese language is formed through its long history, and it is the basis of our culture’s culture... Our forefather’s emotions...are accumulated in each word of the Japanese language (Council for Cultural Affairs, 2004, p. 3 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

This representation overlooks the fact that the Japanese language as the national language is a result of political manipulation to lessen disparities between spoken and written languages between dialects (Yasuda, 2006). It should be noted, furthermore, that the Japanese language was established by suppressing non-standard varieties for the purpose of integrating the nation (Gottlieb, 2005). In disregard of this political manipulation, the Japanese language is represented as an innocent language as if it had not

experienced any chronological change.

The idea of the Goodness of nations applies to the representation of the future of the Japanese language. *Korekara no jidai ni motomerareru kokugoryoku ni tsuite* (Concerning the Japanese Language Abilities Required for the Future Age) discusses two areas as the Japanese language abilities required for the future age. One is the area that is needed to manage information centering around language, and the other area has to do with knowledge of the Japanese language, cultivation, a sense of value, and sensitivity. The Japanese language as a basis for identity is then represented in the following way in terms of the second area.

This area forms a basis for ‘ability to think, ability to feel, ability to imagine, and ability to express’. Furthermore, this area can be divided into the part of ‘knowledge of the Japanese language’, which is directly linked with ‘ability to think, ability to feel, ability to imagine, and ability to express’, and the part of ‘cultivation, a sense of value, and sensitivity’.

The latter [cultivation, a sense of value, and sensitivity] is considered as a component of the Japanese language proficiency, but more precisely speaking, the latter itself is mainly shaped by the Japanese language proficiency, and plays a role as a basis for ‘ability to think, ability to feel, ability to imagine, and ability to express’. Moreover, the latter is the basis of all kinds of activities, and in this sense, it is the area that has a serious bearing on the fundamentals as a human being or a Japanese (Council for Cultural Affairs, 2004, p. 8 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

What characterizes this representation is that this report focuses only on psychological aspects of the Japanese language. According to Morris-Suzuki (2002), one of the characteristics in discourses of Japan’s nationalism is that they transform sociopolitical matters of Japanese society into psychological matters. In other words, the problems that derive from social structure are attributed to psychology. It is a good example that this report claims in a different part that the decay of morals, which has main source in social structure, could be treated by the education of feelings through the Japanese language. As Anderson (1998) says with respect to the unborn, therefore, the Japanese language is stripped of all substantive sociological significance.

It has been already noted that fraternity framed by political incest taboo guarantees the Goodness of nations (Anderson, 1998). The following representation of the current Japanese language appears to imply that Japanese people have the relationship of 'brothers and sisters' by learning the Japanese language as the 'mother tongue'.

as internationalization progresses, the ability to think logically..., the need for the establishment of identity as a Japanese, and the importance of learning foreign languages...are passionately argued. A command of the Japanese language as the mother tongue seriously affects all of these (Council for Cultural Affairs, 2004 [translated by the author from the Japanese original]).

By abstracting social characteristics from the past and future of the Japanese language, the Japanese language is given monochrome purity, which guarantees the Goodness of the Japanese language. It may further guarantee the Goodness of identity as the speakers of the Japanese language. The Japanese language as the 'mother tongue' then works as the magnet around which a disorderly myriad of Japanese people form a solid society. The Goodness of the Japanese language may thus fit the state's purpose to strengthen ties with others and enhance national unification.

Paradoxical Disintegration of Japanese Society

The ruling classes in Japan have taken active steps towards globalization on the one hand, but on the other, they have been driven by necessity to create social cohesion. Kang and Morris (2002) compared the present state of Japanese society to stepping on the accelerator and the brake simultaneously, and say that such a situation inevitably gives rise to distortion. I fear that the distortion manifests itself in the form of paradoxical disintegration of Japanese society.

The biggest cause of the paradoxical disintegration of Japanese society lies in the replacement of social matters by psychological matters. Although Japanese-language discourses stress love toward Japan, as long as loving is an art which is acquired (Fromm, 1956), seeing love as a totally psychological matter carries a problem with it. According to Fromm (1956), the process of mastering an art is made up of being well informed of theory and doing considerable practice. Marrying theory with practice leads to master-

ing an art.

Given that everyone does not have an equal access to knowledge (Giddens, 1990), however, different individuals have different degrees of mastery of the art of loving. In Japan, as noted above, there is a correlation between disparities in income and education. Those who have more economic and cultural capital have easier access to mastery of knowledge and the arts than those who have less capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Regional disparity may also affect the degree of mastery of the art of loving in that the center can offer more opportunities for access to knowledge than the periphery. Replacing these social matters with psychological matters may trigger further fragmentation of Japanese society.

Japanese-language discourses may segregate minorities from Japanese society. According to Bourdieu (1991), the legitimate competence of a language can be seen as linguistic capital, which produces “a profit of distinction on the occasion of each social exchange” (p. 55). In Japan, needless to say, the legitimate competence of the Japanese language functions as linguistic capital. For many of minorities, however, the Japanese language is not the first language. They lack linguistic capital, and this leads to the denial of equal opportunities in education, employment, and social security. Even if they have bilingual ability, Japanese-language discourses, which exclusively focus on ‘Japaneseness’, eliminate the possibility of ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1994).

As Sellek (1997) suggests, while minorities only form a small portion of the total population of Japan, they have a big influence on whether or not Japan can globalize itself. Just as external and internal ethnic diversity are interrelated, so Japan needs to see its linguistic diversity as a global language system by going beyond exclusive nationalist movements.

Conclusion

As Bourdieu (1999) says, anxiety has been used as a way to control society in many countries. Anxiety itself may be no more than a small ripple on the surface of the mind. As seen in Japanese society, however, the psychological ripple tends to search an object of assimilation for ontological security. When the psychological ripple joins and is swallowed up by the state-led movement for re-structuring Japanese society, existing social inequity may be reproduced. As demonstrated above, language can play a critical

role in the reproduction of social inequity. Therefore, what is required for the study of the politics of language for the next decade in the twenty-first century is to unravel the mechanism by which language contributes to reproducing social inequity.

We can get an insight into a way to achieve the objective from two intellectuals. Tolstoy (1900) saw nationalism and racism as two sides of the same coin, and denied the existence of sound nationalism. He thus claimed that the only justifiable love is love for the human race.

As Tolstoy suggests, the denial of nationalism itself is one of the ways to achieve social equality. Yet given that nationalism could be seen as a psychological tie with a particular space which individuals construct through their social practices (Morris-Suzuki, 2007), it is not easy to totally deny nationalism. Citing a passage from Hugo of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*, Said (1994) gives a suggestion as to this point.

“The man who finds its homeland sweet it still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.” The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance (p. 259).

I interpret this statement as getting a critical perspective toward our own homeland. We should cast a critical eye on, deconstruct, and relativize our cultural, ethnic, and political home. The critical eye makes it possible for us to conduct a close inspection of the native country from every angle. We can then get an overall picture of the state, keeping a certain distance from it. This may lead to unraveling the mechanism in which language is involved in the reproduction of social inequality and enforcing better language policies.

References

- Abe, S. (2006). *Utsukushii kuni he* [For a beautiful country]. Tokyo: bungeishunju.
Anderson, B. (1998). *The spectre of comparisons*. London: Verso.

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed.). London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *The individualized society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Liquid life*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language & symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999). *Acts of resistance: Against the tyranny of the market*. New York: New Press.
- Cabinet Office. (2007a). *Heisei 19nen ban kokumin seikatsu hakusho: Tsunagari ga kizuku yutaka na kokumin seikatsu* [The 2007 White Paper on National Life: Rich national life established by ties]. Tokyo: Shadan Hojin Jiji Gaho Sha.
- Cabinet Office. (2007b). *Kokumin seikatsu ni kansuru seron chosa* [A public-opinion poll about people's lives in Japan]. Retrieved April 21, 2007, from <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h14/h14-life/index.html>
- Council for Cultural Affairs. (2004). *Korekara no jidai ni motomerareru kokugoryoku* [Concerning the Japanese language abilities required for the Future Age]. Retrieved October 11, 2006, from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/bunka/toushin/04020301.htm
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourses: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 258–284). London: Sage.
- Fromm, E. (1956). *The Art of loving*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.
- Giddens, A. (1985). *The nation-state and violence*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1999). *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives*. New York: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (2001). *Sociology* (4th ed.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Gottlieb, N. (2005). *Language and society in Japan*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity. An inquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Cambridge, UK: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Held, D. (1995). *Democracy and the global order: From the modern state to cosmopolitan governance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1990). *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Iwabuchi, K. (2001). *Toransu nashonaru Japan: Ajia wo tsunagu poppyula karucha* [Popular culture linking Asia]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Kang, S., & Morris, H. (2002). *Nashonarizumu no kokufuku* [Transcending nationalism]. Tokyo: Shueisha.

- Komori, Y. (2002). Japanese-language booms and nationalism. *Japan Book News* 40, 1–2.
- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. (2006). *Nisenninen do no shotoku saibunpai chosa* [Investigation of income distribution for the 2002 fiscal year]. Retrieved April 21, 2007, from <http://www.dobts.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/kouhyo/data-kou6/data14/h14hou.pdf>
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2002). *Kokoro no note* [Note for mind]. Retrieved October 11, 2006, from <http://cebc.jp/data/education/gov/jp/konote/cyu/>
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.). *Kyoiku kihonho shiryoshitsu he yokoso!* [Welcome to the files of the Fundamental Law of Education!]. Retrieved February 11, 2012, from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/kihon/data/07080117.htm
- Morris-Suzuki, T. (2002). *Hihanteki sozoryoku no tame ni: Gurobaruka jidai no Nihon* [For critical imagination: Japan in the era of globalization]. Tokyo: Heibonsha.
- Morris-Suzuki, T. (2007). *Aikoku shin wo kangaeru* [Considering nationalism]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century. (2000). *Nihon no frontier wa nihon no naka ni aru* [The frontier within: individual empowerment and better governance in the new millennium]. Retrieved September 17, 2005, from <http://www.katei.go.jp/jp/21century/report/htmls/index.html>
- Said, E. W. (1994). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Sellek, Y. (1997). Nikkeijin: The phenomenon of return migration. In M. Weiner (Ed.), *Japan's minorities: The illusion of homogeneity* (pp. 178–210). London: Routledge.
- Smith, A. D. (1986). *The ethnic origins of nations*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.
- Smith, A. D. (1995). *Nations and nationalism in a global era*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Tachibanaki, T. (2006). *Kakusa shakai*. [Disparity society]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Tolstoy, L. (1900). *Patriotism and government*. London: Free Age Press.
- Watanabe, O. (2001). *Nihon no taikokuka to neo-nationalism no keisei* [The imperialization of Japan and the formation of neo-nationalism]. Tokyo: Sakurai Shoten.
- Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., & Liebhart, K. (1999). *The discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Woodside-Jiron, H. (2004). Language, power, and participation: Using critical discourse analysis to make sense of public policy. In R. Rogers (Ed.), *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (pp. 173–205). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Yamamoto, K. (2007). Ryodo mondai no kaiketsu ni wa 'mizukara no te de kokudo wo mamoru' kigai ga fukaketsu da [The pluck 'we protect our territory by ourselves' is essential for the solution of territorial issues], *SAPIO*, 19, 87–90.
- Yasuda, T. (2006). *Togogenri to shite no kokugo* [National language as a governing principle]. Tokyo: Sangensha.