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Market value of languages in Japan

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Abstract

In this paper, an attempt at estimating market value of languages in the case of Japan will be discussed. Languages are actually bought and sold in the world, and the market values of languages can be calculated.

The fact that languages have market values is shown in the "language industry". The publication of books is a good key to measure the market values of languages, especially dictionaries and language texts. Language school is another example of language industry. Usage patterns of multilingual signs are also observed in Tokyo.

The growth of economy (GNP) is often used as a measure of growth of market value of the Japanese language. However, only a slight correlation is found between them. Three additional foreign cultural factors should be taken into consideration; (1) the growth of multilingual activities, (2) the growth of practical language education and (3) the growth of higher education in foreign countries.

Several theoretical problems connected with the basic mechanism of the market value of languages will be discussed. The market value of languages has a peculiar characteristic. The values are decided in a different way from rare goods. We should not forget that language has another important characteristic. Language values can be subdivided into (1) intellectual factor which is determined by the market value and (2) emotional factor. The relative emotional value of a language is inversely correlated with intellectual factors.

There are differential scales among the world languages, and economic principles seem to prevail among them. The Japanese language presents a typical case of shift of market value in the global language market. Still we should not overlook the emotional or pathetic side of language.

1. Introduction

In this paper, an attempt at estimating the market value of languages in Japan will

be discussed.

Sociolinguistic trends were rarely seen before the 1970's in Japan, which was still an age of structural linguistics. At that time it sounded rather ridiculous to discuss the economic or market values of languages, because these matters were considered to be too secular when compared with pure and orthodox theoretical linguistics. Decent scholars were not supposed to talk about money. In addition, the first thing linguistics students were taught was a dogma that all languages in the world are completely equal. Although languages are surely equal as objects of linguistic study, scholars in sociolinguistics have recently begun to pay more attention to language use in the secular world, and they have noticed that there are differences among languages, and that languages are actually bought and sold in the world. The market values of languages can be calculated if some suitable means are found.

In order to show that languages have market values, I will present a personal experience to demonstrate a typical case of the market value of languages.

It is an episode of an Italian research student who was studying the Japanese language for one year in Japan under my supervision. At the end of the year she told me that she wanted to stay in Japan one year more to further improve her Japanese. When asked about her scholarship money, she said that she could live on without a scholarship by teaching Italian in Japan. It was doubtful whether she could find a job as a teacher of Italian. But she made many telephone calls to conversation schools in Tokyo and at last she found a good job. Perhaps her ability in Japanese helped her to secure the job. But if the research student had been a native speaker of an African language or an aboriginal language in Australia instead of Italian, it would have been very difficult to make a living by teaching his or her native language. In this sense, English speaking people nowadays are privileged very much in being able to make a living as language teachers anywhere in the world.

2 . Means to measure the market value : Foreign languages in Japan

First, several means will be discussed which may enable us to measure the market values of languages, using examples from present-day Japan.

2.1. Language industry in Japan: Broadcasting

The fact that languages have market values is shown typically by the word "language industry". The publication of books is a good measure of the market values of languages; especially dictionaries and language texts which are typical examples of the "language industry". For example, NHK (the Japan Broadcasting Corporation) has

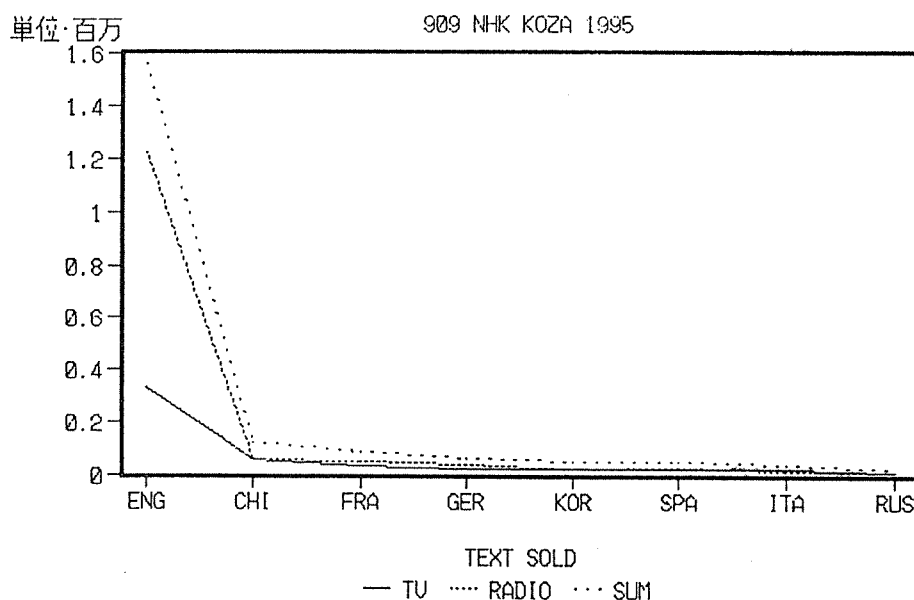


Figure 1 NHK statistics of numbers of textbooks

statistics on the numbers of textbooks sold for language education programs on TV and radio as shown in Figure 1. Of course English textbooks sell best. The languages ranking next are Chinese, French, German and Korean; and Spanish, Italian and Russian follow.

This order shows fairly good correspondence with the languages discussed later in this paper, thus the public media corporation, NHK, seems to be sensitive to the market values of languages. However, historical consideration reveals that language education programs were once influenced by political purposes. NHK language education programs before the Second World War included the Manchurian language when Japan invaded that territory. English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese and Brazilian (Portuguese) were also taught until the beginning of the Second World War. Just after the end of the war, English conversation programs were reinstated and gathered a large audience from people who anticipated the necessity to learn the language of the triumphant country. The other language programs were reinstated in 1952.

Incidentally, NHK broadcasts international radio programs using 22 languages as of 1996 (NHK 1996). The languages are listed below first by length of time (hours of the programs per day in parentheses) and next by an alphabetical order: Japanese (14hrs.); English (4hrs.); Chinese (1hr.), Indonesian (1hr.), Korean (1hr.), Russian (1hr.); Arabic (1/2hr.), Bengali (1/2hr.), Burmese (1/2hr.), French (1/2hr.), German (1/2hr.), Hindi (1/2hr.), Malay (1/2hr.), Persian (1/2hr.), Portuguese (1/2hr.), Spanish (1/2hr.), Swahili (1/2hr.), Thai

(1/2hr.), Urdu (1/2hr.), Vietnamese (1/2hr.); Italian (1/4hr.), Swedish (1/4hr.). This distribution of the hours of programs does not correspond to the language education programs in Japan or other indices of the market value of languages in Japan. It is in principle a reflection of the mutual relationships among the countries in question, and may also be influenced by the communication environment (needs for outside information) of the recipient countries.

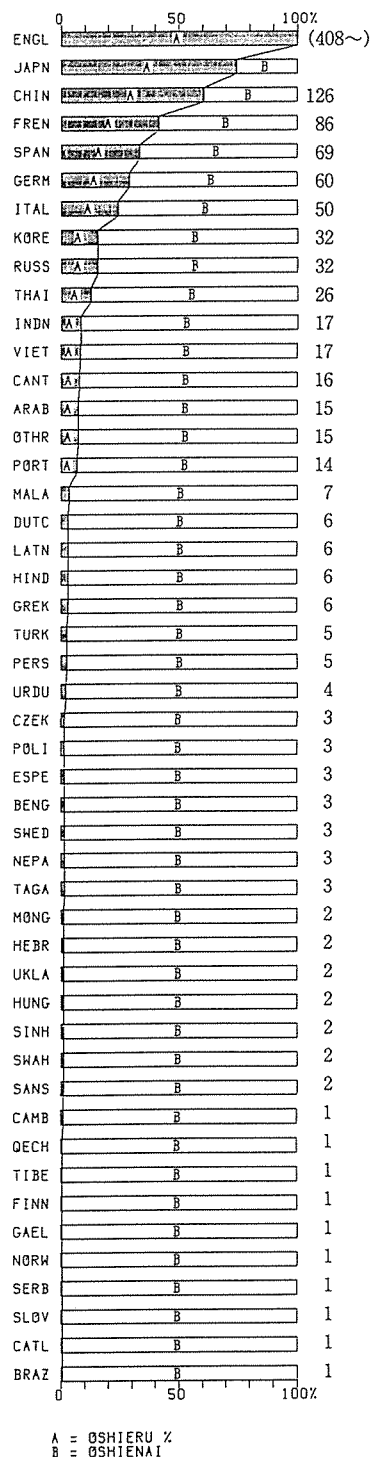
News in Portuguese is broadcast in Japan for workers from South America. This is the first service for foreign residents, though several private FM stations using foreign languages were born after the Great Hanshin Earthquake in January 1995. Until then, FEN (Far East Network) of the United States military service was the only foreign broadcast station situated in Japan.

2.2. Language industry in Japan: Language schools

Other indices for the market value of languages can also be identified. Language schools are another example of language industry.

Based on a list of conversation schools in Tokyo where foreign languages other than English are taught, the numbers of schools for each language were counted. Nearly 40 languages were found to be taught as of this 1993. Figure 2 gives the results of this calculation. The most popular language is of course English, but it has become difficult to count the exact number of conversation

Figure 2 The numbers of conversation schools



schools of English because many chain schools have appeared recently. This phenomenon demonstrates that English conversation schools are becoming more lucrative in Japan. The number of English conversation schools in Tokyo in the telephone directory in 1990 was 408. In Figure 2 information about Japanese language schools is also included. Because Japanese language schools are treated separately both in lists of language schools in telephone directories and official statistics, the numbers are rarely compared in the same statistics. (Of course the applicants and students are quite different; foreign language schools are made for Japanese students while Japanese language schools are made for foreigners in Japan, though some older people complain that Japanese language education is also necessary for current youngsters in Japan.) The graph in Figure 2 shows that Japanese language schools are now becoming popular in Japan.

The second ranking foreign languages are Chinese, French, Spanish, German, and the third ranking languages are Italian, Korean and Russian. Next come Thai, Indonesian and Vietnamese. Generally speaking, the popular languages are European languages, and the next popular languages are Asian languages. All of the languages are official languages of nations or states, the only exception to this is the non-official artificial language, Esperanto.

The total number of nearly 40 languages being taught in Tokyo seems large, when compared with other cities in Japan and the world. However if we consider that there are from 3,000 to 8,000 languages in the world, (though the total number of languages varies according to scholars,) 40 is a very small number. Most of the languages in the world have very small market values.

2.3. Language industry in Japan: Publication

Another good index of the market value of languages in Japan was made by a student. He went to three big bookstores in Tokyo, and at the dictionary corner, wrote down the prices and pages of all the dictionaries exhibited there. The data were put in a computer, and several figures were calculated.

Figure 3 gives the main results. The vertical axis shows the numbers of dictionaries, or titles for each language. English, of course, is the top. The second ranking Japanese dictionaries are mostly for Japanese students, and only a few are aimed at foreign learners. As the Japanese writing system is notoriously complicated, we must often consult dictionaries just in order to find the appropriate Chinese characters. Here too, main languages in Europe and languages of nearby countries are represented. These 8 languages can be considered to have high market values in Japan. Other languages are summarized as SU, because less than 2 dictionaries were found for

LANGUAGE MARKET OF DICTIONARIES
OOKAWA REPORT 1994.10

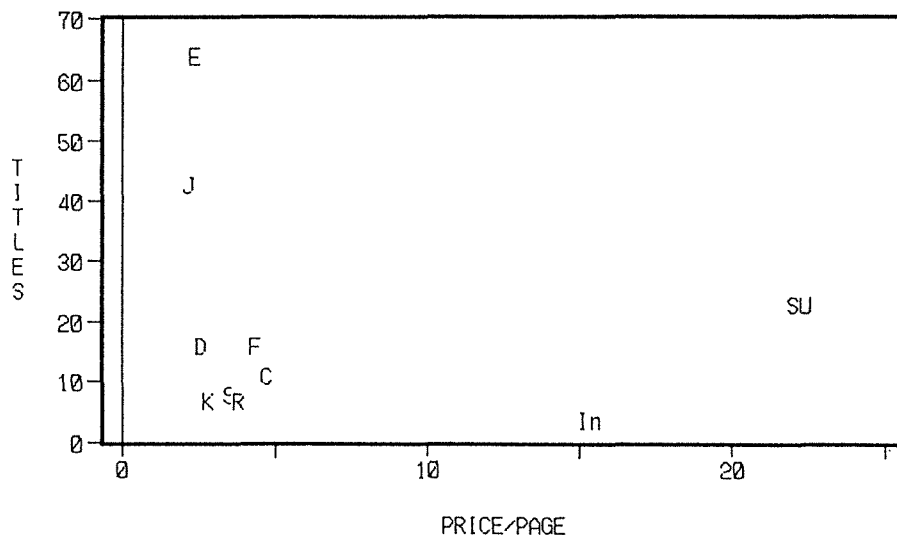


Figure 3 The prices and pages of the dictionaries

each language.

The horizontal axis shows the prices of the dictionaries per page. It goes without saying that the price per page is not simply determined by the number of learners. Publishing company can provide not only cheap, handy dictionaries but also large dictionaries for languages with many learners. But even large dictionaries may be sold with reasonable price for the major languages of the world. In contrast, it is adventurous to publish a large dictionary with many entries (that is, usually with many pages) for a language with few learners, and the price per page must be fixed high. Of course the size of the dictionaries and the size of their written alphabets are different. Thus, we could instead count the price per word, which would be more reliable as an index for the market value. But it is too laborious to calculate, and also it would be impossible without actually buying all the dictionaries.

Figure 3 indicates that the prices are quite different. English and Japanese dictionaries are cheap in relation to the number of pages contained. Next come the other 6 popular European and Asian languages. Students of these 8 languages are privileged because they can learn the languages cheaply. Average prices per page for the other languages are shown by SU. The other languages including Indonesian are economically discriminated against. Their dictionaries are 3 to 5 times more expensive than the 8 popular languages on the average. However, even learners of these languages are privileged when compared with people who want to learn a language without a

dictionary. The price of a dictionary for these languages should be estimated to be infinitely costly.

The other student compared prices for two series of language textbooks for beginners. Since most of the textbooks for minor languages are sold as a series, the difference in prices was not very large, but a similar tendency was obtained.

2.4. Language industry in Japan : Education

There are also statistics for languages taught at universities in Japan. Among the variables are number of courses open for students, students learning the languages, and teachers involved in each language. Figure 4 gives the results for the number of courses or departments for several languages. English is again the most prevalent language. Chinese, French and German are taught mainly for students majoring in literature. All in all, 7 or 8 popular languages, including Japanese, appeared repeatedly. Incidentally, this graph shows that Chinese is taught more at private universities than at national universities, because private universities are more eager to earn money from students just in order to survive in competition. Although German language learners are declining year by year, with the exception of several years after the unification of East and West Germany, the number of departments does not show a decline. (Teachers of German have had fewer and fewer students recently, but they have not lost their jobs.)

Foreign languages are taught in Japan from the 7th year of education, in junior

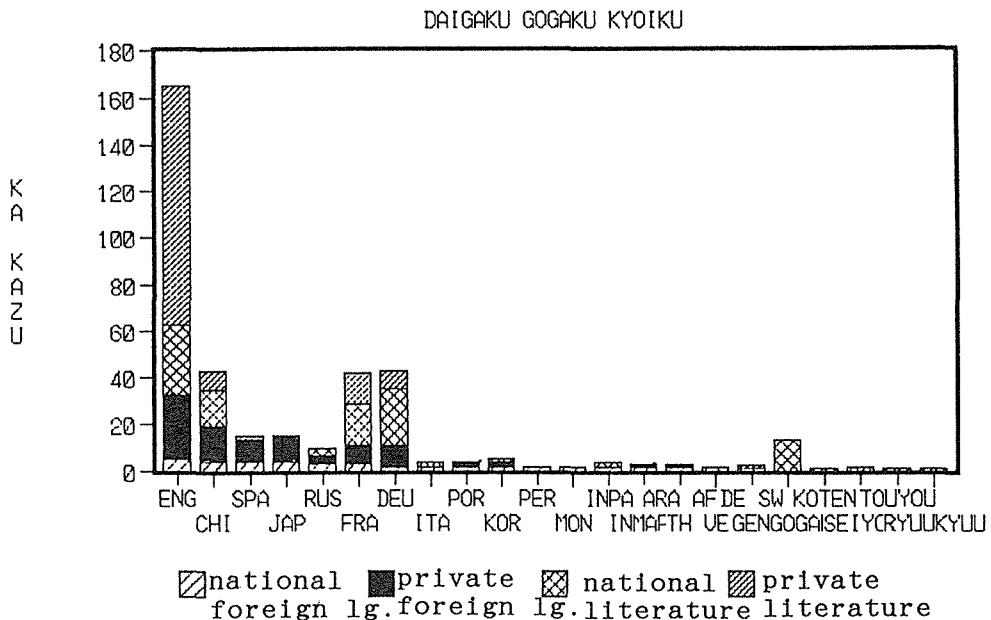


Figure 4 The number of courses for several languages

high school. In some high schools languages other than English are also taught. In the unified national university entrance examination, questions on French and German (and from 1997, Chinese) are prepared. But only a few students take the examination in languages other than English.

The history of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies offers a good example of the social necessity of languages in Japan. Political and economic events were often a decisive factor in opening or closing language courses. Chinese and Mongolian languages were taught at this university before the Second World War, perhaps in order to prepare for the future invasion. The Korean classes were closed after the Japanese domination of the Korean Peninsula, and reopened in 1977 after friendly relations were established between the two countries several decades later. The Persian classes were opened in 1980 just after the oil crisis. The Russian course was enlarged and included Polish and Czech courses in 1991 after perestroika. Philipino (Tagalog) and several Asian languages began being taught in 1992 during the economic development of Asian countries in 1990's.

2.5. Ranking by multilingual signs in Japan

Ranking of languages can also be calculated by observing the actual usage of foreign languages on the street. Japan has been considered to be a typical country showing the "trinity" of language, that is, a rare case of coincidence of geographical sphere of language, ethnic group and country. The other rare case is Iceland, where the Icelandic language, Icelandic people and the country of Iceland are completely coterminous. However, Japan is not actually a linguistically pure country. The aboriginal Ainu language is still alive, though barely, and Korean and Chinese are used by immigrants and their descendants. English is often used in the mass media, especially in disk jockey programs. Some scholars find "institutional bilingualism" or "impersonal bilingualism" in present-day Japan. We can also consider Japan to be in a preliminary stage of diglossia. Also, many foreign languages are used on the street, sometimes for practical purposes for foreigners and sometimes for commercial, decorative or emotional purposes for the Japanese.

Table 1 gives the usage patterns of multilingual signs observed recently in Tokyo. The actual numbers or tokens of usage are ignored here, and only types of combination are listed. To use an analogy with lexical study, the combination pattern of language given in Table 1 is similar to type, and the number of actual usage of languages is similar to the word token of a corpus. The actual numbers of usage become different if the researcher selects different fields of investigation. Because it is difficult to attain

Table 1 Usage patterns of multilingual signs in Japan

Ru	S	Po	F	D	E	J	C	K	Th	Ph	Per	Ar	Bur	Vet	Idn	Ur	Ben
	Du	S		F	D	E	C										
		S	Po	F		E	J	C									
Ru		S		F	D	E	J	C	K								
		S	Po	F	D	E	J	C	K								
Ru	It	S		F	D	E	C	K									
		S	Po			E	J	C	Tw	K	Th	Ph					
		S	Po	F	D	E	J	C	K			Per	Ar			Ur	Ben
		S	Po	F	D	E	J	C	K	Th	Ph	Per	Ar	Bur	Vet	Idn	
		S	Po			E	J		Tw	K	Th	Ph					
		S	Po	F	D	E	J										
			Po				J	C	K								
			Po			E	J	C	K								
			Po			E		C	K								
			Po			E											
				F	D	E	J	C									
				F	D	E	J										
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						E	J			Th							
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comparable conditions, only usage pattern will be treated here. However, if some objective measure is taken, advancement of English and other languages can be observed by comparison with the past (or diachronically). Differences according to geographical or social (occupational) conditions can also be observed at one time (synchronically).

Table 2 Usage patterns of multilingual signs classified

PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE USE IN JAPAN

		COMMERCIAL, IMAGE EUROPEAN	PRACTICAL ASIAN
I	I	Ethnic restaurants	I for Residents, Workers
I	I	Commercialism	I Administration
I MINOR	I	bi- or tri-lingual signs	I multi-lingual signs
I	I	European and other	I Asian minor languages
I	I	minor languages	I
I	I	high quality	I practical use
I MAJOR	I	European major languages	I Asian major languages
I	I	power	I solidarity
I	I	Eng Fre Ger Spa	I Chinese, Korean

Rare use in Japan :

1. non-official languages (inc. Ainu)
2. distant countries (North Eur, East Eur, Middle East, Africa)

Table 1 is based on various sources collected in the past several years in Tokyo: posters, bills, notices, signboards, instruction manuals, explanatory notes, newspapers, etc. Of course, the most frequent combination of usage is Japanese and English. The third language was French or German in the past. But Chinese has often been used recently. However, because the patterns of combination of the languages are not as varied, the appearance of the languages does not vary very much according to the field of investigation. The number of appearances of languages in the columns of Table 1 renders the order of Japanese, English, Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Korean. These seven foreign languages appear repeatedly in many situations. These languages are actually languages with high market values on the street in Japan.

A mass-sale camera shop once played an advertising tape in front of the shop, using eight languages, namely Japanese, English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Arabic. Arabic was exceptional. At that time just after the oil crisis, the Arabic speaking customers must have been considered to be a very good customer. This is an extreme case of the market value of languages.

The other languages are rarely used, and when used, are mostly used for practical purposes for native speakers, for example, in warnings against crime, announcements of the national census and so on. These languages began being used because many

people from Asia and South America began visiting Japan to earn money as temporary workers. These are the languages which are used, but not widely taught in Japan. In these cases, though types and tokens of usage have increased recently, these cannot be direct reflections of the higher market value of these languages. The cases of ethnic restaurants have not been collected yet. By adding their cases, the usage pattern of multilingual signs will be classified as shown in Table 2 . This table shows that Asian and European languages are often treated differently in Japan.

3 . Ranking of the Japanese language in the world

3.1. Ranking by multilingual signs abroad

The phenomenon of multilingual signs in foreign countries is not presented here with concrete data. However, there is a collection of pictures of multilingual signs in various parts of the world. Signs in Japanese are found in many parts of the world. Recently, the Japanese language can be found frequently in places that Japanese people often visit. In this case the supply and demand of language show proportional relation (though in countries formerly without a free market such as Russia, multilingual signs are insufficient in relation to the number of visitors). Thus, Japanese people get the impression that the Japanese language has become one of the powerful and valuable languages in the world. Some scholars even insist that Japanese is now becoming an international language. However, the data collected so far show that the Japanese language appears only as the seventh or eighth language in European countries (sometimes second or third language in some Asian countries). As will be discussed later, English is now becoming a powerful international language, and the vigor of the Japanese language will dwindle relatively in the future. Language services such as pamphlets for tourists, and taped sightseeing buses show similar patterns in many countries. Usage data of Japanese for commercial purposes abroad was collected in Nikkei (1996).

The opposite side of the market value of languages observed in Japan can also be investigated in foreign countries. For example, data on broadcasts, publications, language schools and so on can be gathered and compared. The data actually collected so far are still fragmentary. However, the results of a preliminary investigation do not contradict to the above conclusions.

3.2. Shift in the market value of Japanese : Language schools

As has been discussed, the Japanese language is now acquiring more market value. Historical changes influencing the shift of market values of a language can be

typically observed in the case of the Japanese language.

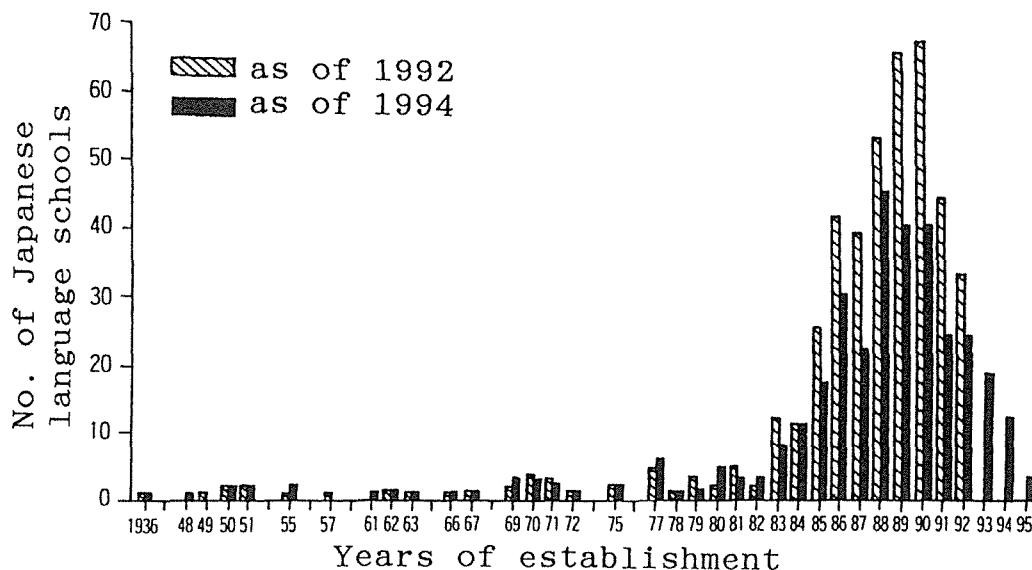


Figure 5 Years of establishment of Japanese language schools in 1992 and 1994

The Japanese people have long lacked self-confidence in their language for a century since modernization. The Japanese language was not studied by many students in the world in the past. Japan was occupied by the USA after the Second World War. At that time American soldiers rarely spoke Japanese. American and Japanese people had limited chance to speak with each other. Almost nobody in the world paid attention to Japan as a poor country defeated in the war. Even in the 1960's, almost nobody thought of the possibility of making a living by teaching the Japanese language to foreigners. However, times have changed. Many people in the world have begun to learn Japanese recently. The Japanese language has clearly become a language on the rise over the last one or two decades. Data on the Japanese language also reflect short-term and short-range changes of the market value.

Figure 5 gives the trends in the market value of the Japanese language. This figure gives the years of establishment of Japanese language schools as of 1992. It indicates that many schools were established in the last half of the 1980's. However, the numbers diminished in the early 1990's. When the same catalog of schools was investigated two years later in 1994 (indicated by dark, black columns), many of the newly established schools had retired from the business. Japanese language schools became popular suddenly in Tokyo. However, this was only a reflection of the so-called "bubble-economy". People came from abroad to Japan to earn money. Their official (nominal)

purpose was learning the Japanese language. However, in actuality, students slept at the Japanese language schools and worked for a long time during the rest of the day to earn more money. The Japanese government began controlling this kind of foreign worker by amending the Immigration Control Law in 1990. Also, after the economic recess of Japan around 1990, the number of Japanese language schools diminished. The fluctuation in number of language schools is a very clear case of the short-term economic value of languages.

Still, we should not overlook the long-term surge of Japanese language schools in the past several decades in Figure 5. Before the 1970's, there were very few language schools where the Japanese language was taught for foreigners, except for those rare schools to train Christian missionaries. However, the time has changed recently and the second most popular language taught in Tokyo is actually Japanese.

3.3. Shift in the market value of Japanese: Language learners

Figure 6 is also an index of the market value of Japanese. It shows the number of students learning Japanese. In this figure, several indices are listed, all compared by calculating the numerical values around 1974 as one. The numbers of foreign students learning Japanese while living in Japan showed an increase and decrease; the numbers of foreign students learning in Japan diminished when the bubble economy burst around 1990. However, the number of foreign students learning Japanese abroad has

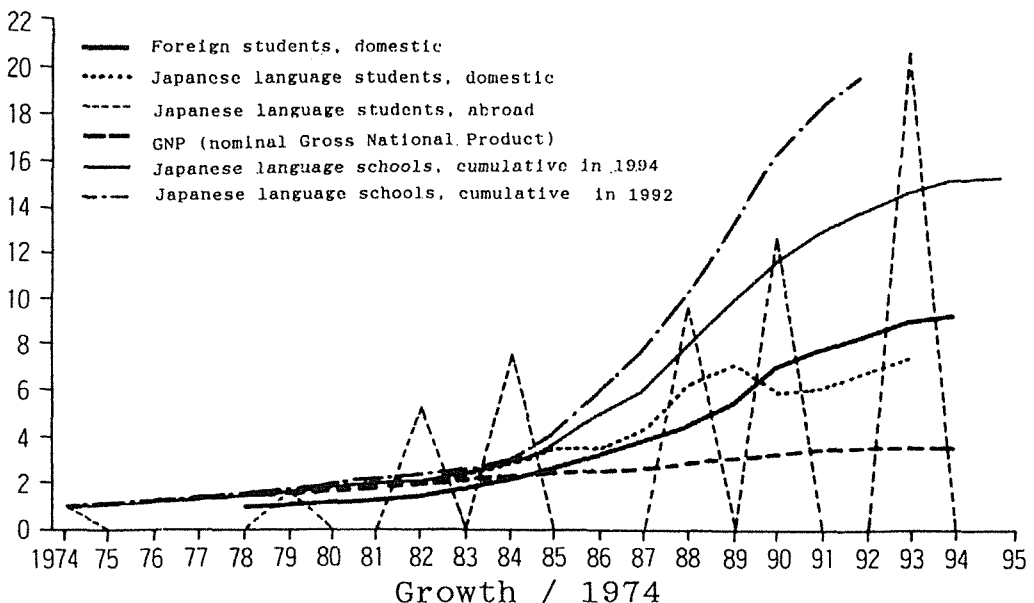


Figure 6 Growth of language industry (ratio 1=1974)
GNP vs. number of Japanese language schools and students

shown a steady increase according to surveys made every two years, becoming about 20 times bigger than 20 years ago. In foreign countries, the economic recess in Japan has not influenced Japanese language teaching. Actually, according to one calculation, nearly two million people in the world are said to be learning Japanese (about 2/100 of the total Japanese population). The diffusion index proposed by Breton (1988) is 0.02, which is far smaller than English and the major European languages, is however greater than many other languages in the world.

Some linguists argue that the growth of the Japanese language can be explained by the growth rate of the Japanese economy. The short-term shift of learners of Japanese seems to prove this tendency. The growth of the GNP of Japan is given in Figure 6 . The curve is flat as shown at the bottom of Figure 6. The growth of foreign learners cannot be explained by domestic economic growth in Japan alone. We must think of other factors.

3.4. Mechanisms of ranking of the Japanese language

Trends of other languages should be taken into consideration in analyzing the market value of Japanese.

As a field worker of Japanese dialects, I remember an episode of an old husband and his wife living in a mountainous area in Japan. The old man said he was glad because their lives became more comfortable with the benefit of electric tools such as a TV, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, refrigerator, and so on. But from the eyes of the younger villagers, the old husband and wife were the slowest to adopt electrical tools.

This episode tells us that we should not forget that several languages other than Japanese are growing in the market values of languages. Educators of the Japanese language sometimes seem too optimistic about the growth of the market of Japanese in the long term. The market values of English and other languages are becoming far greater than Japanese.

Three additional foreign cultural factors will be discussed; (1) the growth of multilingual activities, (2) the growth of practical language education and (3) the growth of higher education in foreign countries.

First, the growth of multilingual activities in the world should be taken into consideration. As can be noticed, in many places in the world, tourists and businesspeople visit foreign countries more frequently. Many people are beginning to pick up foreign languages just in order to make basic communication, or in order to sell well. This enlargement of basic language education, or popularization of language learning, gives stimulus to a higher level of language education. In this sense, many

languages in the world are getting new learners reciprocally. However, this tendency does not work for all languages equally. The so-called leading languages, or powerful languages, are acquiring more and more learners. Thus the Japanese language is not the sole language which is growing in market value.

Second, the growth of practical language education in many foreign countries should be pointed out. In this sense a shift of language education in Oceania, especially Australia, has contributed greatly to the growth of Japanese language learners.

There have been two typical types of foreign language learning:

(a) One is learning language as a symbol of social status. In the past, the classical languages, Greek and Latin, which are of almost no use in the real world, were taught at universities for aristocratic classes.

(b) The other is aimed at practical demand of foreign languages. As the command of foreign languages increases, languages for actual utilization are being taught in many countries. That is, modern languages are being taught for middle class students. At present, modern language education is more popular at universities, and the Japanese language is learned mostly for practical purposes. In the past, the Japanese language was learned out of curiosity, and typical learners were rich European youths of aristocratic ancestry who had no pressing concerns in everyday life. These aristocratic youths were mostly interested in things Japanese in the olden days. Humanistic disciplines such as literature, fine arts, performing arts, etc. were popular topics of study. Nowadays, many students from Europe, Asia and Oceania are interested in modern Japanese society or Japanese industry. The economy and social structure in Japanese companies are among the popular topics. Many students from Asia are eager to learn Japanese in order to learn modern technology. These students are not interested in Japan's remote past (which is rather irritating for those Japanese people who think that the true Japanese spirit can only be found in the genuine Japanese culture of the past).

Third, the growth of students of higher (or university) education is observed all over the world. This trend makes the market values of modern "major" languages grow more and more costly. The Japanese language has become only one of these major languages. The growth of Japanese language learners in China, which has the largest population in the world, contributes very much to the growing rate of Japanese language learners. Anyway, this change in reasons for taking up Japanese clearly shows that market values exist for languages.

All in all, the value of the Japanese language has become high not just because of the economic growth of Japan. The crucial factor is found not in the Japanese economy

but in the social growth of other countries.

In many countries in western Asia, learning the Japanese language is still a lucrative business. Students of Japanese are said to be richer than their lecturers or professors, because students can earn money very easily as tour guides or interpreters. Several professors of the Japanese language in foreign countries complain that their students do not want to continue Japanese studies, just because the concept of becoming a poor post-graduate student sounds stupid compared to the idea of becoming a rich tour guide.

Pessimistic view is prevalent on this matter. Every year as new students become tour guides, the number of guides increases steadily by accumulation. However, the number of Japanese tourists does not increase by accumulation. In addition, every year the rate of the Japanese population with newer language education increases. Usefulness or necessity of the English language is felt among Japanese students, and educational techniques for teaching spoken English have improved, so young Japanese people are becoming better users of English. Thus, a lower percentage of Japanese tourists rely on tour guides who speak Japanese. If a tour guide can speak English, he or she can serve many tourists from all over the world. He or she does not have to rely on Japanese tourists only. A guide who can speak Japanese is lucrative at present. However, as more and more universities are beginning to open courses in the Japanese language, the supply increases but the demand for the Japanese language may decrease.

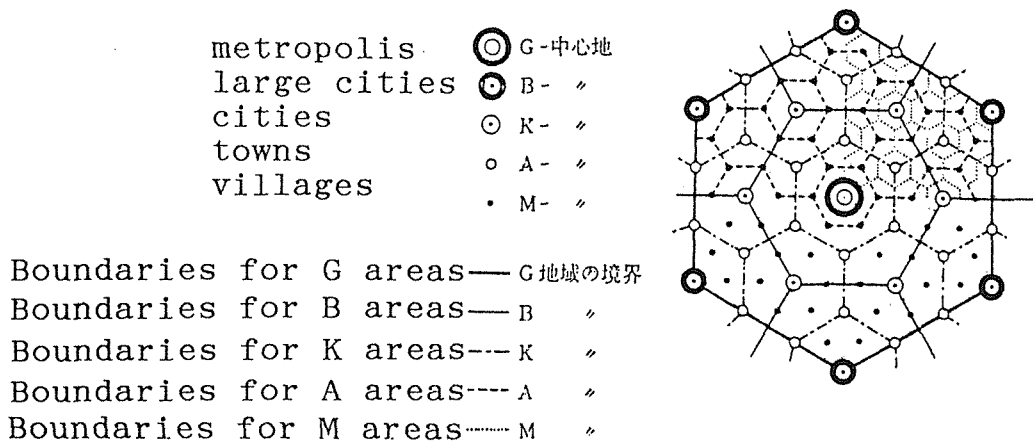


Figure 7 W. Christaller's center system

3.5. A simile of population movement

In pre-modern society where people rarely walked outside their territory, monolingual speakers were prevalent. In post-modern society, where people often transcend (trespass) national borders, the chances of using a foreign language have increased. We cannot always rely on interpreters. As modernized higher education becomes popular in the world, learners of foreign languages increase. This tendency differentiates market values among world languages.

We can borrow a theoretical model of population geography to explain the change of the market values of languages. Christaller's geographical model of the hierarchy of villages and cities is effective in linguistics too. According to the model of Christaller in Figure 7, there is a hierarchy of population sizes of cities and settlements. For a certain number of villages, there exists one central town. For a certain number of towns, there exists a city. For a certain number of cities, there exists a large city. For a certain number of large cities, there exists a metropolis.

This hierarchy can be utilized also in historical terms. First in the olden days, there were many villagers or farmers. Next, there appeared towns. Cities were born later. After the industrial revolution, population movement towards big cities was observed. Total populations moved to geographically central cities, reflecting urbanization.

The same trends of population concentration can be observed in language too on a worldwide scale, slowly and steadily in the past, and swiftly and extensively at present. As the communication network among people grows, people tend to acquire a language which is used wider than their own in the world. The cost of learning a foreign language is quite high, because one must spend time and labor to learn a foreign language. As a result, language learners want to acquire a better language, that is, a more effective, more lucrative language. Population concentration of languages occur in this manner. This tendency causes the market values of the major languages of the world to increase. Japanese, previously studied mainly in Asia and Oceania, was in a medium rank, but is growing at present. One cannot be sure whether this growth rate will continue forever. It is like a large city, which has collected population from surrounding smaller cities, and is beginning to provide population towards a metropolis. The English language is in the situation of a metropolis of languages. It will collect many learners in the future.

3.6. Shift in the civilization and destiny of the Japanese language

The short-term and long-term tendencies of the Japanese language also indicate

that the market values of language change historically. It is unbelievable that the prosperity of the Japanese economy or industry will last forever. World history shows the growth and decline of great empires in many places of the world. In a long time span, century by century, centers of civilization moved. From the point of view of historical geography, centers of world civilization moved westward. First originating from Mesopotamia and Egypt, the Center moved to Greece, Rome, Islamic world, and west to Western Europe after Renaissance. After the First World War, the center moved west to the USA. Someone recently said that East Asia, including Japan and the so-called "rising dragon" nations, is becoming a new industrial center. This tendency predicts that the center of prosperity will further move West. Prosperity of Japan will be only ephemeral from the standpoint of world history.

4 . Basic mechanism of the market value

So far concrete examples of the market values of languages have been presented and discussed. Next, several theoretical problems connected with basic mechanism of the market value of languages will be discussed. The market value of languages has a peculiar characteristic. The values are decided in a different way from rare goods like the largest diamond, rare old coins or masterpieces of the old masters, which are often sold at the famous collection markets in London. Language is often said to have similar characteristics with coins, which are exchanged between people who accept the same currency system. An example of old coins will thus be used in order to differentiate language from rare goods.

If an owner of a rare coin sells it to another person, the former owner loses it, and the number of owner is still one. However, the principle of the language market is different. If a language teacher sells his foreign language ability to a student, the teacher does not lose anything by teaching. Simply, the number of owners or speakers become two. If one teacher teaches many students at one time, the number of owners of the language increases. Learners can literally "share" the language with the teachers. This has a "snowball effect" on speakers of a language, which is impossible in the case of rare coins. Take another example of old coins. If a large number of old coins is found in a hole in an excavation site, the price of the old coins become cheaper. As for language, if the number of owners or users (learners) of a language increases, the owners or users have more conveniences in being able to utilize the language more often, and the language becomes more valuable. As it is rather difficult and time-consuming for a human being to learn a foreign language, a person tends to select the most effective language to learn. This tendency makes a popular language more and

more popular. It also has a kind of snowball effect. Nowadays English is gathering more and more snow.

The simile of seeds of a crop may seem better qualified than rare coins, in that distributing seeds to other farmers does not necessarily mean loss of seeds of the original holder. However, the effect of distributing seeds is different from teaching language to students. If more of crop is produced than is in demand as a result of distribution of the seeds, the market value of the crop declines temporarily. Similarly, in the case of raising interpreters, tourist guides or bilingual workers of foreign capital enterprises, a supply of more speakers than is in demand lowers the average wage of workers with foreign language ability. However, a language is not learned for economic reasons only. When the language in question is considered also as a symbol of cultivation or as a means to ensure international communication, supply of more speakers enlarges the potential value of the language in question. Although a crop can be consumed and disappear, a language is not consumed and will not disappear. Thus, language also differs from the seeds of a crop.

Today Great Britain is said to have lost its political and economic power, though it once dominated all over the world having many colonies. However, English people can still make a living by selling what they were given by their parents. Language is jokingly said to be the last resource (and industry) of England.

5 . Emotional value of languages

So far, the discussions have been around economic factors in languages which are connected with money. But we should not forget that language has another important characteristic connected to psychological factors. Hereafter the pathetic or emotional values of languages will be considered. Language value can be subdivided into (1) intellectual and (2) emotional factors. The market values of languages thus far discussed have been only one-sided, i. e., only a reflection of intellectual factors. The emotional factors of language should not be ignored. Emotional factors can also be subdivided into absolute and relative emotional factors. An absolute emotional factor is something similar to patriotic or parochial ideas. All human beings seem to have a special love for their own native language. For this reason, the right of using one's native language should be observed.

In the meantime, the relative emotional value of language inversely correlates with intellectual factors, that is, it works in the opposite direction of the intellectual market value of languages. If a foreigner speaks a major, highly valued language in broken style, with mistakes, he or she will not be praised. But if a foreigner speaks a language

which is considered low in market value, his language ability will be praised even if he or she speaks it with mistakes. Speaking a language which is spoken in small areas by a small number of speakers raises the solidarity, sympathetic feeling, or group consciousness of native speakers. A foreigner and a native speaker can have intimate feelings by speaking a language with a low market value. This relationship can be typically observed in Asian countries. This relationship can also be observed in the historical changes of the Japanese language. When there were only a few foreigners who spoke Japanese in prewar and postwar Japan, the Japanese people almost always praised the language ability of foreigners, even though their Japanese was horrible and halting. However, as the numbers of foreign speakers speaking the Japanese language increased recently, Japanese people have become accustomed to foreigners' Japanese, and do not praise the language ability of foreigners as much nowadays. This is a reflection of the change of the market value of Japanese. When the market value of Japanese was low, the relative emotional value was high. Now that the market value of Japanese became high, the relative emotional value has decreased.

6 . Conclusion

In conclusion, there are differential scales among the world languages, and economic principles seem to prevail among them. The Japanese language presents a typical case of shift in market value in the global language market. Still we should not overlook the emotional or pathetic side of language which is important for communication between human beings. Other problems concerning market value of languages will be discussed elsewhere.

This is the first and last portion of a revised version of a paper read at Helsinki University and Stockholm University in November 1996. A similar idea was presented in Japanese in Inoue (1993, 1995, 1997).

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日本における言語の市場価値

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概要

この論文では、言語の市場価値を計量する手段を、日本語を例にして論じる。言語は現実世界で売買されており、言語の市場価値を計算することができる。

言語が市場価値を持つ適例は、「言語産業」に見られる。辞書・入門書・教科書などの出版物や、会話学校が手がかりになる。また多言語表示も、手がかりになる。戦後の日本語の市場価値上昇の説明に、日本の経済力（国民総生産）発展が指摘されるが、いい相関をみせない。外国の側の条件が、むしろ重要である。多言語活動の隆盛、実用外国語教育の成長、高等教育の普及である。

言語の市場価値の基本的メカニズムに関する理論的問題をも論じる。言語の市場価値は特異な性質があって、希少商品とは別の形で決定される。ただ、言語はもう一つ重要な性質を持つ。市場価値の反映たる知的価値以外に、情的価値を持つ。かつ相対的情的価値は知的価値と反比例する。

世界の諸言語には格差があり、そこに経済原則が貫徹するように見える。しかし一方で、言語の感情的・情的側面を見逃してはならない。