

The Impact of the Modern Language Reform on Contemporary Japanese Society, and its Relation to the Language, Society and Political Identity

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This paper is an extension to previous researches that have addressed the problem of "Language Reform" in Japan from the official standpoint, and some modern linguistic theories that came to Japan through the West, the "Linguistic Standardization" movement, or the "Writing Systems Reform" movement in the modern era, from the perspective of the reformers.

This paper answers the following question: Why Japan did not succeed in creating a pure language like the major European languages, or like its neighbor, Korea? The contemporary Japanese language is the result of the corrective movements that have sought to treat the phenomenon of "Diglossia" within the linguistic levels in the Japanese language. The Japanese language did not get rid of the Chinese characters, which are rich with Chinese ideology, and did not depend entirely on phonetic characters, like Korea did, but it came as a unique model of building the modern language, for it was neither a pure European model, nor an Oriental model that depends on the old language as a means of expressing contemporary culture, the thing that affected it with some diseases like "Bilingualism", resulting in dualism in everything.

The heart of the "Japanese linguistic revolution" lies in the modernization of the old linguistic traditions, not westernizing them, through maintaining approximately 2000 Chinese character, and using the alphabetic system alongside with them, in addition to the grammar of the spoken language since the Meiji era.

To answer the preceding question, Why Japan did not succeed in creating a pure language like the major European languages, or like its neighbor, Korea?,

we'll explain it through the following factors:

- The relation of the imperial system and the government departments with the contemporary language.
- The translation movement and its relation to the Chinese characters.
- The impact of teaching the standard language on the citizens' everyday language.
- The standard language in textbooks, and its social background.
- The language as an ideology and its relation to the political identity.