

## Editorial

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# Introduction: ideologies of contact and space in Japan: a theoretical expansion of language ideological work

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Over the past two decades, linguistic anthropologists, sociolinguists, and scholars from related fields<sup>1</sup> have widened the analysis of language ideology beyond discourse. Greater consideration has been given, for instance, to the importance of commodities, channels, and objects to ideology formation, elements once deemed peripheral or irrelevant to these processes (see, for example, Keane 2003; Kockelman 2006; Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012). This special issue seeks, in broad terms, to supplement the theoretical capacity of language ideology further by analyzing how *contact* and *space* are pragmatically managed. Further, it aims to bring the concept of language ideological work to studies of micro contexts in Japan. Along these lines, we ask the following questions: How do spatial apparatuses and infrastructures construct language ideological processes and metapragmatic meanings in a specific context? What kinds of containers and structures of language ideologies and meta-pragmatics in a language contact situation affect the construction of who we are and how we are formed? Central to our issue's exploration, consequently, is an interest in how semiotic *and* non-semiotic aspects of language ideologies and metapragmatics – e. g., material, (trans-)spatial, infrastructural, and conditional – cosignify meaning and value.

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<sup>1</sup> This introduction mentions linguistic anthropology more often than it does other related fields of language such as sociology of language, sociolinguistics, and ethnography of communication. This is because linguistic anthropology – particularly North American linguistic anthropology – has played a large role in discussing and developing the concept of language ideology. Each of these other fields, too, has explored the issue of language ideology in different ways. The present discussion, however, intends to speak, in an interdisciplinary manner, to all fields that explore the workings of language and power.

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Through investigating aspects of contact and space in the construction of language ideology, we aim to contribute to a multidimensional understanding of language and power in studies of language in Japan. Since the 1980s, numerous studies of language ideology have broadly shown how power relationships and representations are negotiated in diverse sites (see Kroskrity 2000; Schieffelin et al. 1998; Silverstein 1979). The Japanese language provides a particularly rich site to understand how language ideologies and power play out in context-specific ways: Its highly hierarchical and gendered grammatical features bring to light the moment-to-moment social negotiations not often discernable at the palpable level of utterances in less hierarchical languages, such as European languages, for instance. Few studies in Japan, however, have incorporated a concept of language ideology that could serve as a useful tool for understanding interrelated social and linguistic power relations in society. While some sociological and sociolinguistic studies have applied the idea of ideologically constructed language to Japanese contexts, critically laying the foundation for studying power and language in Japan (see Akiba Reynolds 1993; Maher and MacDonald 1995; Yasuda 1997), such approaches have not employed the language ideology concept, which locates language in its specific social context of meaning-making.

In his landmark publication on language ideologies in Japan, *Ideorogī to shite no nihongo* [Japanese language as an ideology] (2001), Mashiko broadly criticized the tendency of Japanese language studies to neglect issues of power, thereby offering one important reason why the language ideology concept has not yet taken hold in Japanese sociological and sociolinguistic studies. Mashiko (2014) listed two exceptions: studies of monolingual language ideologies and Japanese gendered ideologies. Mashiko (1991, 2001, 2014) has analyzed the former in his own work on the tenacious ideologies of *kokugo* (literally, “national language”), in which he examines the mythology of a Japanese standard language and the history of the minority language in Ryūkyū and Okinawa. The fact that Japanese is called *kokugo* (as opposed to *nihongo*, or ‘Japanese language’) at school and in other parts of society, shows the complete naturalization of dominant language ideologies in Japan. Similarly, Heinrich (2012) has dissected the language ideology of *kokugo*, from its inception to expansion. His study used a genealogical approach to examine arguments made by important linguists and intellectuals, who influenced Japanese language ideology as “language brokers,” and showed that the ideology of “monolingual Japan” developed through these debates, which occurred in parallel with the country’s modernization. Furthermore, Heinrich’s analysis of the Ainu and Ryūkyū languages, two major minority languages in Japan, showed that resistance and opposition to the dominant ideologies do exist but are subsumed by Japanese nationalist ideologies as targets of

correction and re-adjustment. Coulmas and Heinrich organized a special issue within this very journal in 2005 on this topic, and the contributions therein further illuminate how the ideology of Japanese monolingualism and linguistic hierarchy has been subjected to adjustment when faced with growing internal linguistic diversity and the increasing need for cross-border communications.

Japanese gendered language ideologies are another well-developed research domain addressing power. Gendered differences in the diverse aspects of the Japanese language, such as self-references, address forms, sentence-final forms, and vocabulary, have attracted broad scholarly attention, both within and outside of Japan (see Ide and McGloin 1990; Shibamoto 1985). Many scholars, however, have found that Japanese women's speech diverges widely depending on a speaker's age, region, class, and sexuality. Female speakers of Japanese, notably, do not always employ the most feminine forms of speech prescribed by dominant gendered language ideologies.<sup>2</sup> Contributions from *Japanese language, gender and ideology: Cultural models and real people* (2004), edited by Okamoto and Smith, described these phenomena in detail. Sunaoshi (2004), for instance, found that women farmers in Ibaraki prefecture frequently used *ore*, a first-person pronoun supposedly not available to women, during their farm development meetings. In Abe's study (2004), young female employees at a lesbian bar used *jibun*, a first-person pronoun that is normally associated with men in sports or in militaristic groups. Using a genealogical approach, Inoue (2006) and Nakamura (2014) (also contributors to this issue) showed that Japanese women's language was created as a strong modernizing force, similar to the aforementioned ideology of monolingual Japan. Despite its deliberate political and ideological constructedness, Japanese women's language is still imagined to be indisputable and natural. Inoue argued that to denaturalize images of Japanese women's language as atemporal and omnipresent, it is necessary to analyze Japanese gendered language not as the language that women speak naturally, but as an ideology that women are supposed to follow (Inoue 2006). This is precisely the aim of Miyazaki's and Nakamura's papers in this issue: to bring this approach to analyze gender in contemporary Japan.

As is evident in the above review, monolingual and gendered language ideologies have been relatively well-studied in the Japanese context. Beyond these themes, however, Mashiko has argued that studies of Japanese language have yet to develop a sufficiently broad basis for investigating language ideologies, and he has called for greater attention to be given to issues of language and power. Furthermore, Nawa offered another explanation for why the concept of language ideology has not been

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2 Some scholars have also investigated Japanese male speech and masculinities in light of language ideologies and revealed the complex gendered linguistic constructions in Japan (see SturtzSreetharan 2009; Suzuki 2020)

widely taken up in Japanese studies of language. In his important review of Japanese anthropology, Nawa showed (2020) that linguistic anthropological theories, a driving force in the development of the concept of language ideology, have not until recently been incorporated in anthropological frameworks used in Japan. While some traditional theories, such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, were introduced to Japan several decades ago, more recent North American linguistic anthropology, particularly after the development of the ethnography of communication, has not been widely discussed in Japanese anthropology. The underdevelopment of Japanese linguistic anthropology is demonstrated by the fact that Japan-based linguistic anthropologists who wish to publish papers in their field must either publish in English in overseas linguistic anthropology journals, as no such journals exist in Japan, or publish in Japanese in journals in adjacent fields – such as English education, linguistics, and sociolinguistics. In sum, few connections between linguistic anthropological theories and the theories of language and power in Japan have been explored, a situation we hope to see change, in part, through our contributions in this issue.<sup>3</sup>

Japanese studies of language ideologies have been rapidly developing, however, as the Japanese linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic scene has been transformed in the past decade, especially in the past several years, to address issues of power. For example, Nawa (2020) organized a special issue on linguistic anthropology and indexicality in the *Japanese Journal of Cultural Anthropology* and emphasized the effectiveness of linguistic anthropology and its concepts, in particular, the North American semiotic anthropology tradition, for providing Japanese-based anthropologists with useful tools with which to examine semiotic activities in specific social contexts. Koyama (2008, 2009, 2011) played a crucial role in introducing the North American semiotic anthropology tradition to Japan, including Silverstein's theory of language ideology (1985, 1976, 1979), by analyzing the tradition from a transdisciplinary perspective and by applying these theories to Japanese contexts. Koyama's work and teaching developed a community of scholars who focus on language ideologies, including scholars such as Yoshida (2011), who revealed seemingly neutral, but actually discriminatory, Spanish-Japanese translation practices in Japanese courts. Similarly, Fudano (2012) discussed the severe inequality of power in Japanese courts, where defendants were not allowed to use their dialects while

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<sup>3</sup> Some important studies of language ideologies in other parts of the world have been done by Japanese-based linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists, including Tsuboi (2016) and the contributors of the special issue of the *Journal of Japanese Cultural Anthropology* that Nawa edited (2020), such as Asai, Kajimaru, Kaneko and Takada. This introduction to the *International Journal of Sociology of Language*, on the other hand, focuses on language ideologies and power in Japan, and the existence of these important studies does not change the fact that Japanese linguistic anthropological academia remains underdeveloped.

prosecutors and judges use defendants' dialects to manipulate and exert power over defendants. An edited volume on "discordance" that Takekuro (2018) put together also illuminated the effectiveness of the theories of linguistic anthropology. Takekuro's volume questioned the smooth, cooperative, and harmonized communication that traditional studies tend to assume and, by using theories on social indexicality, uncovered asymmetrical, antagonistic, and ideological communications that are deeply related to the here and now of identity and power. Moreover, Ide et al. (2019) published a long-awaited comprehensive linguistic anthropology textbook whose clear explanation of linguistic anthropological concepts and methods promotes the development of the field in Japan and the understanding of the issues of language and power.

Along with such new developments in Japanese linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, some more-recent studies have investigated language ideologies in a multi-modal context, thereby offering a new way of understanding the role of non-semiotic aspects in language ideological processes, which is similar to the focus of this volume. These studies treat language as part of a complex construction of ideology rather than as the sole determinant. Ide's and Hata's (2020) volume, for example, unmasks the ideology of *kizuna* 'bonding,' which came under the spotlight after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and which many people thought served as a means of covering up slow relief efforts. The intricate processes of bonding are uncovered in each chapter of the volume through linguistic, corporeal, interactional, and socio-cultural contexts that question the conventional way of investigating language and its speakers as the central focus of analysis. Kataoka's (see 2009, 2018) interdisciplinary exploration of spatial narratives, spatial frames of reference, and perspective-taking shows how multi-modal aspects – e. g., body, gesture, space, and culture – co-construct communications in complex ways. In addition, the valuable perspective of linguistic anthropology of education has been promoted by Enomoto (see 2012, 2019), who thoroughly depicts how multilayered power dynamics occur simultaneously in metacommunications in English classrooms in Japan.

By extending these critical approaches in Japanese linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and related fields, this issue examines how the ideologies of contact and space are pragmatically negotiated in diverse contexts in Japan. Our issue aims to understand the meeting space of multiple pragmatic functions. These are spaces where different languages meet, where different femininities and masculinities are enacted, where the virtual and the real intersect, and where the controlling and the controlled encounter one another. Meeting spaces have long been

studied in “contact situation” studies in the fields of linguistics and sociolinguistics (such as Hickey 2010).<sup>4</sup> Those studies have traced the nature of contact and language changes in multilingual environments. Garret (2006), however, in a review of language and contact scholarship, emphasized that it is crucial for contact situation studies to investigate not only how language is changed grammatically in contact with other languages, but also how language is negotiated through everyday interactions and interpretations of individual agents and how these negotiations are influenced by ideology and power. Garret also pointed out that the working of power in recent contact settings is more and more subtle and complicated, such as “mock Spanish” in the United States, which may sound innocent and funny but in fact denigrates and marginalizes Spanish-speaking minorities (Hill 1998, 2008). What is important, then, is “what speakers do with codes, rather than the codes themselves” (Garret 2006: 66), and additionally people’s perceptions about language, that is, language ideologies and metapragmatic meanings.

In Japan, too, the issue of language and power is increasingly recognized in *sesshoku bamen* ‘contact situation’ studies. These studies are often conducted in the context of Japanese language education, where non-native and native speakers meet. Many of these conventional studies focus on non-native speakers (NNS) rather than on native speakers (NS). These studies typically investigate how NNS perceive their unsuccessful communicative moments and how they overcome those problems. Notably, these studies have not paid attention to the power relationships between NS and NNS. Yoon and Haruguchi (2018), through analyzing all the contact situation studies published from 2011 to 2016 in Japan, criticized many for focusing only on NNS and holding them exclusively accountable for miscommunications and responsible for improving their communication skills in contact zones. Such traditional studies have neglected the possibilities of NS and NNS standing on equal footing, a point similar to one made by Uekusa and Lee in this volume. Recently, however, some scholars, such as Sato (2019), have argued that the field of language education needs to change direction, away from its focus on language teaching

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4 A number of studies in anthropology, sociology, and geography, other than in contact situation studies, have sought to understand the meeting place of language, not only semiotically, but also non-semiotically, spatially, and materially. Bourdieu’s famous study of a Berber house (1970), for instance, examines symbolic and semiotic meanings of the space and the evident correlations between the house being spatially divided in two parts and the people in it being socially divided by gender. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, who edited an influential reader for the anthropology of space and place (2003), state that in the 1990s, anthropologists began treating the spatial dimensions of culture not merely as a background, but as an indispensable factor that constructs culture. Basso (1996), also claiming that anthropology traditionally neglected place as a central focus of investigation, illuminates how Western Apache people weave their history, memory, and identity through their constant reference to community landscapes.

efficacy and toward the analysis of language ideologies and power. Moreover, sociological, sociolinguistic, and linguistic studies of contact situations, based on language management theory, have investigated the power and agency of language learners and speakers, as well as those of various parties in contact situations (Kimura 2019), analyzing how all participants strategize, improve their communicative skills, and negotiate asymmetric power relationships.<sup>5</sup>

Research on contact situations has taken a new turn in our increasingly globalizing world, where contact situations are now at the center of daily lives. The meanings of transnational space and the subjectivities of border crossing have become a crucial topic of investigation (see Hiramoto and Sung-Yul Park 2014). Language materiality and commodification are a central topic in this novel turn for contact studies. Shankar and Cavanaugh (2012) have described an increasing interest in how language and objects cosignify meanings, values, and identities, and they have traced two important streams of studies: (a) examinations of the value of language itself, which have become more utilized in the neoliberal, global world with contemporary forms of circulation, and (b) studies that ask “how material conditions shape ideologies and uses of language” (2012: 356), which lead to analyses of the political economy of language. Like coffee mugs with Yiddish vernacular sayings in Shandler’s study (2006), or greeting cards and billboards with “mock Spanish” in Hill’s study (2008), objects circulate widely and create forceful environments of cultural consumption and fetishism, often reinforcing harmful racial representations. Such complex meaning-making of objects is what Furukawa’s paper in this volume carefully dissects.

Our project is to expand on these crucial studies and to explore how the ideologies of contact and space are pragmatically managed in actual, micro, virtual, and trans-spatial contexts. The papers in this special issue focus on uncommon sites and objects for linguistic studies in Japan: a ramen restaurant and pop idol hand-shaking events; a natural disaster affecting linguistic minorities; a gag expression, *nanchatte*; English words and phrases worn on T-shirts; a world-travel television program; and Japanese girls’ masculine pronouns. Our papers draw from diverse theoretical and conceptual backgrounds such as the ideology of the phatic, disaster linguicism, phenomenology, media studies, translation studies, and gendered indexical fields. In our volume, we approach “contact” in a different way from traditional contact situation studies. We pursue the power issues of meeting spaces, not only from the perspectives of agents, but also from those of non-human actants. We not only illuminate the ideational and discursive aspects of language ideologies but also the

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5 The website for the Society of Language Management in Japan (<https://lmtjapan.wordpress.com/>) includes an extensive review, not only of contact situation studies based on language management theory, but also of those from different perspectives.

material, infrastructural, and structural aspects. In this way, we examine not only what is inside discourses, but what surrounds, contains, moves, and structures language ideologies and metapragmatic functions. Through providing holistic and multidimensional pictures of language ideologies, our special issue elucidates the dynamic processes of “ideologizing and ideological work” (Gal and Irvine 2019: 14) in contact and space, and in doing so, expands the theoretical capacity of language ideologies, a crucial task for studies of language and power.

Eighteen years have passed since the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* featured the aforementioned special issue on the Japanese context, which also marks the timeline for the country’s facing language issues in a rapidly globalizing world. The situation surrounding Japanese language ideologies has continued to be transformed since then. Specifically, nationalism has risen in response to Japan’s diversification and growing foreign population. The Great East Japan Earthquake devastated much of the country in 2011 and pushed minorities further to the periphery. Globalization and mediatization have intensified the propagation of semiotic images affecting Japanese linguistic hierarchies. Youth cultures and social media have become spaces for new experimentation with alternative language ideologies. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis, social-distancing policies, and lockdowns have shifted not only the power dynamics in global circulations, but also the meaning of intimacy, contact, and communication (Nozawa 2015), which in turn has ushered in a more-covert manner of controlling the population. Consequently, Japanese linguistic hegemonies have become more complex and difficult to track.

Within the shifting grounds of contemporary Japan, our issue begins with Nozawa’s paper, which examines the ideology of the phatic in two locations: a famous ramen restaurant chain that tries to control channels of contact through material means, such as signs and partitions, and the space of fan idol events that are spatially strategized and highly institutionalized. Nozawa’s examination of the material and non-human calibration of contact shows how channels of communication have become a central metapragmatic concern of political and economic intervention. Further, Nozawa shows that the ideology of the phatic is more and more fetishized and fantasized in contemporary society. Uekusa and Lee, leading scholars of “disaster linguicism” – the study of language barriers in times of disaster – likewise examine the communication channels of contact. Disaster linguicism is a matter of life and death for “Indigenous/Tribal, Minority and Minoritized languages and peoples” (ITMs). However, these scholars’ research shows how the top-down translation channels provided by the Japanese government, such as easy Japanese and automated translation, often confuse, disadvantage, and alienate ITMs. Uekusa and Lee’s interviews with ITMs after the Great East Japan Earthquake show that in urgent contact situations, these one-way communication channels produced tragic



misalignment between the Japanese government and people who hold monolingual ideologies, on the one hand, and ITMs who desperately need to talk about the disaster and their experiences, on the other hand.

Inoue's paper shows us how a seemingly frivolous gag expression, *nanchatte*, opens a broad theoretical horizon to explore dynamic movements in space-time. *Nanchatte* comes at the end of a phrase and can be translated into English as "just kidding," but it is unparalleled as an expression in the sense that it retroactively unsettles what the speaker just said and reframes the utterance from a *narrating* event to a *narrated* event, generating and locating "the otherness in the self." Analyzing this peculiar expression through the lens of phenomenology, Inoue illuminates how *nanchatte* neutralizes and virtualizes the original utterance and bifurcates the speaker into stance-taking and non-stance taking egos and the space into actual and virtual worlds. Through this process, *nanchatte* frees the utterance and its subject from the conventional world, where communication is always serious, intentional, and present, and produces "a space-time in which the actual and the virtual coexist and in which worlds of 'otherwise' are possible." This indeterminate, up-in-the-air space is where we can explore the infinite worlds of "as ifs," and where we can seek political potentials to go beyond everyday ideological constraints.

Furukawa's article investigates Japanese society's contact with English, a language with great symbolic and economic value, and, in particular, the media circulation of images of popular English T-shirts in Japan. Furukawa's moment-to-moment examination illustrates the detailed processes by which TV variety shows mock, embarrass, and denigrate people who unknowingly wear T-shirts with awkward and meaningless English. Those shows mobilize linguistic and material resources, such as a picture-in-picture effect called *waipu* 'wipe' or *kōna waipu* 'corner wipe' on the screen, through which celebrity hosts and panelists comment from linguistically and symbolically powerful positions. These cinematic techniques, as well as the materiality of T-shirts, show how an object can be used to create a sharp hierarchy between those who have linguistic abilities and symbolic power and those who do not. The process of this material hierarchy building can be located not only within Japan but also in the transnational circulation of symbolic values flowing into local dynamics (Sergeant 2009).

Nakamura's paper likewise deals with a distance and a gap in the meeting place of different languages, in this case, a Japanese television travel documentary series, where worldwide languages are translated into Japanese women's language, an act of translation and projection of Japanese gendered voices onto non-Japanese bodies. In doing so, the series regiments femininities in different regions, actively adopting the indexical expansion of the ideology of "Japanese women's language," in effect reproducing and reinforcing those femininities. Finally, Miyazaki's paper concerns the spatial and relational construction of Japanese gendered language

ideologies in an actual gendered contact situation in a junior high school. Based on a longitudinal ethnographic study, Miyazaki's paper explores how girls employed masculine and non-traditional first-person pronouns and broke the presumed linkage between female gender, body, and language through their everyday meta-pragmatic practices. The girls' persistence in aligning masculine and non-traditional registers and persona (see Agha 2005, 2007), however, did not point to any evidence of their desire to take on a male identity, but rather, to their creation of positive indexicalities about masculine pronouns and to their engagement in the social capital of maleness that accompanies male speech. Girls' ideological work thereby created new indexical fields (Eckert 2008) where girls established their own space in which they contextually constructed a gap between gender identity and language.

All papers in this volume thus highlight the fact that "language ideologies are barely about language at all" (Seargeant this volume). Instead, we have shown how language ideologies are linguistic, social, cultural, economic, and political fusions. Contact and space are key among the many aspects that construct context because they decenter language and its speaker as a privilege point of analysis and show how power works multi-dimensionally in these encounters. By shedding light on how contact and space are pragmatically managed in non-human communicative channels and actants, in ambiguous virtual and actual spaces, in transnational movements, in linguistic objects, and in gendered bodies and fields, our issue shows that language is vital, but not always dominant, in language ideological work.

Finally, Seargeant's commentary concludes this special issue by explaining its significance from both linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic points of view. His interpretations put each of the contributing papers into a broader context and shed light on the very meaning of exploring language ideologies in a Japanese context. Seargeant contends that not only do we need to understand how language ideologies are constructed in various contexts, but we also need to understand how these same ideologies constrain us as researchers. Seargeant writes that an important language ideology that shapes this special issue, and sociolinguistics and related fields more generally, is the fact that international journals use "English as [their] working language" (this volume). This language choice is not merely about convenience; it is about power.

Following up on Seargeant's point, I would like to clarify another crucial objective of this special issue. As Seargeant explains, theories of linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, sociology of language, and related fields are often created in Anglophone and western contexts and are habitually applied to non-western contexts, but rarely the other way around. The contributions to this special issue therefore try to do more than just showcase the usefulness of language ideological concepts. The collected papers challenge what the fields of linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, sociology of language, and related fields have considered as

language ideologies. Through this theoretical expansion of the existing notion of ideology, we hope that these insightful, creative, and fun papers contribute to the reversal of unidirectional theory production in language studies and to the development of Japanese and other studies of language and power.

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