

Linguistic attitudes and Heritage Language Maintenance in Two Diasporic Communities: Comparative Study of Japanese speakers in Latin America and Anglo-America

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Introduction: Japanese immigration to the Americas

- To North America:
 - 19th century ~; especially to Hawai'i
 - At the beginning of the 20th century: "Yellow Peril" & anti-immigrant laws
 - In recent years: continuing flow from Japan
- To South America:
 - → Bigger immigration flow to Latin America (especially Brazil & Peru)
 - 1934: the Brazilian government restricted Asian immigration
 - → Other regions (including Paraguay)
 - In recent years: "return migration" from Latin America to Japan is more common



Previous studies

- **Hispanosphere:**
 - Fukuda (2021): Family language policy of Japanese-Catalan families; Socially dominant language (Spanish) and minoritized languages (Japanese and Catalan); one parent one language policy to strengthen the trilingual ability of children
 - Matsumoto & Tokumasu (2022): Comparison between pre-war labor migrants and recent self-movers; preservation of Japanese in the community (home & school), especially at work for the older generation as well as contact with friends and family in Japan for the newcomers
- **Anglosphere:**
 - Nishimura (1995): G2 Japanese-Canadians and their efficient bilingual communication
 - Doerr and Kumagai (2014): association between Japanese as a heritage language and those who are not racially perceived as Japanese; especially in the context of Black heritage speakers of Japanese
 - Mulvey (2021): Japanese as a heritage language school in the UK; translanguaging as a way to approach the diversity that exists in the classroom.
- **Translanguaging (García & Li 2014): metalinguistic reflection of the speakers themselves**
 - Linguistic ideologies and imagination of the past, present and future of themselves and their community as a motivational factor in language choices of immigrant parents (Zhu & Li 2018)
 - Racialization of the speakers
 - *Diaspority* and language / Solidarity based on shared memories and hardships/ “shar[ing] the same culture, language and/or religion” (Tsuda 2018: 191)

Current study & methodology

Comparative study of linguistic attitude towards Japanese as a heritage language by Japanese immigrants in two different geographical and linguistic contexts (Paraguay and the Midwestern U.S.)

Paraguay	Participants residence	Midwest U.S.
G1, 2, 3	Generations	G1, 2, 3
Officially bilingual; Many immigrant communities as well as indigenous groups	Linguistic context of the country	No official language; English as de facto official language
Cities & rural colonies	Geographic location	Cities

- Sociolinguistic interviews of twenty participants from each community
 - Metalinguistic reflections of their languaging practices and maintenance of their heritage language
- Recorded and observed spontaneous conversations among speakers
- Qualitative analysis



Results

<p>Highly multilingual (Japanese, Spanish, Paraguayan Guarani, Portuguese, and English) Pride in the multilingual ability; defying the racialized stereotype of ‘non-native speakers’</p>	<p>Linguistic variety</p>	<p>Monolingual (English) or bilingual (English and Japanese)</p>
<p>Japanese language is valued Saturday/after-school language programs Learning from parents and grandparents (implicit or loose language policy inside households) High maintenance level of Japanese, esp. speaking</p>	<p>Motivation of language maintenance</p>	<p>Japanese language is valued Saturday/after-school language programs OPOL policy; but G1 parents find it challenging to teach their children the language; tendency to use English as the dominant language in the household Learning outside of the context of family or heritage program</p>
<p>Organizing with other Latin American people of Japanese descent & linguistic solidarity Racialization of self and by others Friendships with Spanish-speakers as well as Japanese speakers (esp. In tight-knit colonies) Contact with Japan: “Return migration” or studying, retiring in Japan; financial and pedagogical support from the Japanese government; traveling to Japan</p>	<p>Imagination</p>	<p>No international (or inter-state) connection with other diasporic Japanese communities Not much connection between Japanese and future job opportunities; plan to stay in the U.S. Less connection with tight-knit community esp. in cities; Past of immigrating as ‘war brides’ after WWII</p>

Discussions

- Linguistic norms and ideologies of the societies
 - Normalized multilingualism vs. monolingualism
- Language learning context:
 - Both groups have Saturday/after-school heritage language programs
 - Higher maintenance with familial, communal, racial connections to the Japanese language
- Identities and imagination
 - As a part of the larger community of Japanese diaspora
 - Higher *diasporicity* → language as a symbol of solidarity
 - Future plans/desire to use Japanese (Social and economic power of languages)
 - Contact with Japan

Conclusion

- Linguistic attitudes influence the motivation to maintain a heritage language
 - Society
 - Community
 - Family
 - Self-perception and imagined future actions

- Future studies:
 - Japanese as a heritage language in the classroom
 - Pedagogy and instructional materials
 - Teacher and student attitudes

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