CHAPTER 6

Language Planning and Policy towards Ainu and Ryukyuan Languages in Japan

Patrick Heinrich

1 Introduction

Language planning and policy (LPP) in nation-states typically aim to provide communicative solutions for modern society by promoting linguistic unity. However, this approach has often created significant challenges for Indigenous and other linguistic minorities. A stark example of this issue can be seen in Japan, where all autochthonous languages other than Japanese are currently endangered. Therefore, a discussion of LPP towards Japan's endangered languages must start with an examination of how a sociolinguistic environment was created where linguistic diversity cannot be sustained. This will be followed by a discussion of critical reflections and reversals of modernist LPP, and conclude with an outlook on the currently evolving approaches to language revitalization, highlighting the urgency of the situation.

Two language groups are subject to study in this chapter, Ainu and Ryukyuan. The Ainu languages (Ainuic) are commonly divided into Kurile Ainu, Sakhalin Ainu, and Hokkaido Ainu. Kurile Ainu has been extinct since the 1960s, Shakalin Ainu since the 1990s, and Hokkaido Ainu is currently "critically endangered" (Moseley, 2010). Hokkaido Ainu survives as a second language among new speakers of the language. Estimates about the number of Ainu vary between 25,000 to 250,000, as there is no census data that asks for ethnicity, and many Ainu prefer to pass as majority Japanese to avoid discrimination. Following the inclusion of the Ainu territory (*Ainu mosir*) into the Meiji state, the Ainu were quickly outnumbered by Japanese settlers, whose number grew from 150,000 in 1873 to over five million today. On the southwestern end of the Japanese Archipelago, the Ryukyuan languages are found, commonly divided into six distinct Abstand languages. All Ryukyuan languages are mutually unintelligible to Japanese varieties, with a linguistic distance to (Standard) Japanese greater than that between German and English. Three Ryukyuan languages are traditionally spoken in the northern half of the Ryukyuan Archipelago, Amamian, Kungamian, and Okinawan, and three languages in the southern part, Miyakoan, Yaeyama, and Dunan (Yonagunian). Amamian, Kunigamian,

 | HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1163/9789004761131-009

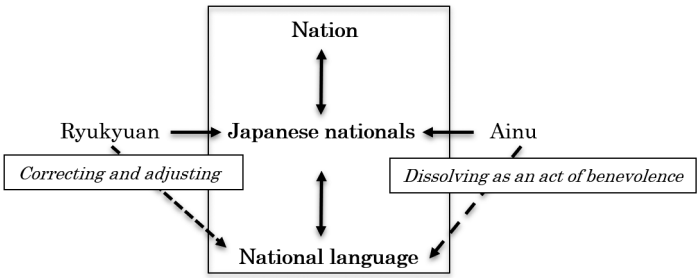

FIGURE 6.1 Pathways to Ainu and Ryukyuan endangerment

Okinawan, and Miyakoan are considered "definitely endangered" today, while Yaeyaman and Dunan (Yonaguni-Ryukyuan) are "severely endangered" (Moseley, 2010).

Ainu and Ryukyuan have been replaced in private domains such as the family and the neighborhood by Japanese. Globalization and the spread of English in Japan in some economic or scholarly domains play no role in their endangerment. Framing Japanese as a national language constitutes the fundamental problem. Along the lines of modernist ideology, being Japanese involves speaking and identifying with Japanese. Language endangerment emerged because the sociolinguistic situation of Japan is more complex than its language ideological imagination and because attempts have been made to mold the existing diverse situation into an imaginary matrix of homogeneity (Figure 6.1).

Ainu and Ryukyuan diverged from the imagined model of Japan as a homogenous language nation, and this divergence had initially called for an adjustment through LPP. Given the prominence of social Darwinism in the Meiji period (1868–1912), and because (ethnic) Japanese saw themselves superior to the Ainu, their assimilation and dissolution were framed as an act of benevolence. Ryukyuans, on the other hand, were declared to represent an ancient strata of the Japanese nation, and they were then corrected and adjusted to modern Japanese society. This necessitated calling their languages dialects (Heinrich, 2012).

Before we start, some brief definitions of the metalanguage employed. *Language endangerment* is a process where a language is used in increasingly fewer domains, interrupting natural language transmission. It is the result of *language shift*, that is, the gradual replacement of an ancestral language (Ainu and Ryukyuan) through a dominating language (Japanese). *Language revitalization* refers to activities that aim to ensure a language is acquired or learned by younger speakers and seek to secure domains where they can use it. The

more recent term *language reclamation* denotes the often emotional processes of adult language learning of an ancestral language one feels should have been acquired during childhood. *Language policy* is a body of laws and regulations that define an objective directed at communication, while *language planning* is an organized attempt to solve communication problems by changing linguistic behavior on a societal level. Language policy and planning constitute a cyclic process that evolves across three major stages. The first stage is formulating a policy objective (e.g., maintaining endangered languages). Secondly, such a policy requires planning how such objectives can be realized (e.g., establishing bilingual education). Thirdly, LPP involves systematically evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented measures. This evaluation may then result in either redesigning new measures to attain the targeted policy goal or revising the policy goal itself (Spolsky, 2004). *Decolonization*, finally, refers to attempts to undo ideological, institutional, and practical inequalities imposed by a more powerful group. Understanding these concepts is crucial as we explore the challenges and strategies related to preserving and revitalizing Japan's endangered languages.

2 Modernist Language Policying and LPP

The early stages of LPP worldwide have often been described as Eurocentric and positivist (e.g., Abdelhay, Makoni and Severo, 2020). These approaches were Eurocentric because the policy objectives aimed to create sociolinguistic situations similar to those in Europe, and positivist because LPP was believed to solve language problems completely and forever. Usually, linguistic unification within a national language was propagated, unity between writing and speaking was endeavoured, and the dissemination of a national language through the education system was planned. We find the application of such models also in Japan from the twentieth century onwards (Carroll, 2001; Gottlieb, 2012). Such early approaches to LPP are termed modernist here because they reflect the prioritization of homogeneity, monotony, and clarity in the modern period over pluralism, variety, and ambivalence (Bauman, 1992). Given such valuarization, it is unsurprising that modernist language policies were implemented to the detriment of autochthonous language communities.

2.1 Modernist LPP in the Ryukyus

Modernist LPP in Japan has been widely studied. For example, Carroll (2001) and Gottlieb (2012) provide comprehensive overviews. Less attention has been

paid to the Ryukyuan languages. This part mainly draws on contributions provided by Heinrich (2004, 2015) and Heinrich and Ishihara (2018).

Japanese was known only to a few Ryukyuan noblemen during the days of the Ryukyuan Kingdom (1429–1879). Following the annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom by the Meiji state in 1872, a policy of "perseverance of old customs" (*kyūkan onzon*) was first imposed, as it was unclear how the Ryukyu Islands ought to become part of the Japanese nation-state. This policy had two exceptions: industrial development and education. After the establishment of Okinawa Prefecture in 1879, the Vice-Minister of Education, Tanaka Fujimaro, was dispatched to Okinawa to develop and implement an educational policy. Tanaka decided that Ryukyuans had to learn Japanese and ordered the establishment of a Conversation Training Centre (*Taiwa renshūjo*) in the ancient capital of Shuri. The center subsequently trained a cohort of school teachers and compiled a bilingual Okinawan-Japanese textbook, *Okinawa Conversation* (*Okinawa taiwa*). The textbook was written by prefectural officials from the mainland (for details, see Yoshimura, 2014). The number of schools in Okinawa Prefecture grew from 14 in 1880 to 55 in 1885, and the number of teachers from 14 to 106 in the same period (Kondō, 2011). The language employed in the classroom changed from local language to favoring local language in the 1910s to favoring standard language in the 1920s, and it shifted to almost exclusive use of Standard Japanese in the second half of the 1930s.

Following the Imperial Rescript on Education proclamation in 1890, attention shifted from the necessity to communicate in a shared language (Japanese) to imperial subject education (*kōminka kyōiku*). Teaching Japanese was regarded as a key measure to this end. At this point, Ryukyuan languages became seen as obstacles that stood in the way of modernization. In 1907, the prefectural government banned Ryukyuan languages from schools by an "Ordinance to Regulate Dialects" (*Hōgen torishimari-rei*). When national unity was propagated during war mobilization against China in the 1930s, the first planned attempts were made to spread Japanese into private domains. A "Movement for Enforcement of the Standard Language" (*Hyōjungo reikō undō*) was formed in 1931. In cooperation with the prefectural Department of Education, this movement compiled a policy platform called "Programme for Education in Okinawa Prefecture" (*Okinawa-ken kyōiku kōryō*) in 1939. It placed Japanese language dissemination high on its agenda, and committees responsible for language dissemination were set up in all local communities. Ryukyuan languages were banned at government offices and other public institutions such as post offices or train stations. Customers were refused services if they did not speak Japanese (Kondō, 1997).

Japanese was promoted by organizing debates and lecture circles, by diffusing slogans, and by giving out awards. Such activities were meant to

demonstrate the capacity and superiority of Japanese over Ryukyuan (Iha, 1975). Oppressive measures were implemented, too. One of the most notorious forms of punishment was the so-called "dialect tag" (*hōgen fuda*), used in classrooms from 1907 onwards. The dialect tag had to be worn around the neck by the last pupil to have slipped into the local language, and this pupil was then put in charge of passing the tag on to the next child to use Ryukyuan (Kondō, 2006). Such oppressive language planning prompted a nationwide debate (*hōgen ronsō*) on Japanese language education in Okinawa in 1940 and 1941 (Tanigawa, 1970). Some scholars and journalists expressed support for Ryukyuan languages, while others insisted that it would be best if the languages would vanish as quickly as possible. Despite a long and heated debate that saw over 100 articles published in newspapers across Japan, LPP in the Ryukyus remained unchanged (Heinrich, 2013).

After the devasting Battle of Okinawa (Aprile to June 1945), the Ryukyu Islands were placed under US occupation until 1972. Only the Amami Islands were returned and incorporated into Kagoshima Prefecture in December 1953. US military authorities initially encouraged using Ryukyuan and English to firmly separate the Ryukyus from Japan. Japanese teaching materials were banned, and the development of Ryukyuan textbooks was encouraged. A "Textbook Compilation Staff" (*Kyōkasho henshū buin*) in the Okinawa Advisory Council concluded that a Ryukyuan-medium education was unrealistic (Nakamatsu, 1996). Experts faced the problem that no modern written Ryukyuan variety, writing system, or orthography existed, nor were there resources from which such textbooks could draw. Americans quickly lost interest in language matters. In practice, this meant a return to spreading Japanese across all domains. By the mid-1950s, the majority of the Ryukyuan population sought to end US occupation as it was marred by land confiscation, lack of economic development, and human rights abuses. As an effect, a reunion with the Japanese mainland was sought, and the language planning activities that supported this objective were promoted by the "Movement for Return to the Fatherland" (*Sokoku fukki undō*). Ryukyuans collectively sought to demonstrate their Japaneseness by giving up their ancestral languages and by shifting to Japanese also in the family and neighborhood in the 1950s and 60s. Intergenerational language transmission was interrupted across all Ryukyuan languages, and the languages became endangered (Heinrich, 2015).

2.2 Modernist LPP in Hokkaido

There are a number of articles that discuss modernist LPP directed at Ainu. This section mainly draws on Okazaki (2019), Maher (2001), Martin (2011), and Yotsumoto (2019). Compared to the Ryukyus, Ainu was never high on the

agenda of Japanese LPP. A range of measures for linguistically assimilating the Ainu was developed, nonetheless. Given Ainu minority status also in their homeland, *Ainu mosir*, and due to the forced relocation of Ainu communities (*kotan*) into reservations, these measures led to a much faster decline in Ainu language vitality compared to Ryukyuan.

Japanese domination over the Ainu predates the modern period (Walker, 2001), and this manifested also in linguistic issues. The rise of Russian imperialism in the mid-19th century led to the formulation of an assimilationist policy on the side of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868), which started to encourage Ainu to learn Japanese and acquire Japanese customs (Siddle, 1996). Renaming the land of the Ainu "Hokkaido" in 1869 was more than a change in nomenclature. Hokkaido became an immigration colony where the Ainu had to make space for the new settlers together with their economy, culture, and language. The colonial character is evident by the fact that settlements were coordinated by a "Colonization Office" (*Kaitakushi*, 1869–1882). The majority of the new settlers were so-called *tondenhei*, literally "soldiers stationed in fields" who fulfilled a double role of protecting Japanese interests in Hokkaido (against Russia) and developing it as an agricultural colony. The *tondenhei* established about 40 settlements across Hokkaido (Mason, 2012).

As in the Ryukyus, school education played a major role in Ainu assimilation. "Aborigine Education Centres" (*Dojin kyōikujo*) were established in Hokkaido in 1879 and Shakalin in 1909, and special language textbooks for Ainu pupils were compiled. A watershed moment in Japanese domination over the Ainu was the 1899 "Hokkaido Former Aboriginal Protection Act" (*Hokkaidō kyūdōjin hogo-hō*) through which the Ainu were downgraded as "an inferior race (*rettō no jinshu*), reduced to poverty as a result of the law of survival of the fittest (*yūshō reppai*)" (Siddle, 1995, p. 87). It is also the start of an institutionalized paternalism over the Ainu. The Hokkaido Former Aboriginal Protection Act had two main objectives: turn the hunting and fishing Ainu communities into farmers and assimilate them through education into the Japanese nation. This did not generally change when the restrictions of the 1899 act were gradually lifted between 1919 and 1968. The Former Aboriginal Protection Act regulated Ainu education in Article 7 and Article 9, which stipulated the establishment of schools for the Ainu and waivers for school fees for families who could not afford school fees.

A total of twenty-one "National Schools for Former Aborigines" (*Kokuritsu kyūdojin gakkō*) were built, and school education was conducted in Japanese only. Ainu school attendance remained initially low, leading to the introduction of compulsory education for Ainu in 1898. Segregated school education for Ainu and Japanese was established in 1901 onwards. Ainu education now

emphasized Japanese language learning over all other school subjects (Maher 2001). Ainu children learned Japanese as a foreign language, albeit under the label of "national language" (*kokugo*). Pupils were also encouraged to give up what were perceived to be inferior habits (Koshida, 1993). Teeter and Okazaki (2011, p. 99) report that "Ainu children were isolated into schools where their family could assert no influence […]." Such education policies were carried out with the objective of assimilation, but assimilation meant discrimination for being different, and this, in turn, meant economic, social, cultural, and political disadvantages (Onai, 2018). The first generation of Ainu to be schooled interrupted intergenerational language transmission in the 1910s and 20s (Okazaki, 2019). Ainu became endangered.

Language shift had been completed when the aggressive assimilation policy directed at the Ainu was relaxed in the post-war period. Today, four to five generations of Ainu have grown up as Japanese monolinguals, with few exceptions. Ainu has been maintained solely due to grassroots activities. Most famous of these many efforts is Kayano Shigeru's establishment of the first Ainu language school in Nibutani (Biratori Town, Hokkaido) in 1983.

2.3 Summary

Japanese language spread among Ainu and Ryukyuan communities evolved with a different rationale but with the same policy goal of linguistically unifying all Japanese nationals within a shared national language. Initially, this meant deleting all traces that testified to linguistic diversity. This kind of LPP bears clear signs of colonialism. Language choices were never discussed, the language of the dominant group was imposed, education in one's native language was denied, and teaching materials and initially also teachers came from outside these language communities. Consider how the developments in Hokkaido and the Ryukyus coincide with large parts of the definition of colonization.

> *Colonization* involves direct territorial appropriation of another geopolitical entity, combined with forthright exploitation of its resources and labor and systematic interference in the capacity of the appropriated culture (itself not necessarily a homogenous entity) to organize its dispensations of power. Internal colonization occurs when the dominant part of a country treats a group or region as it might a foreign colony. (McClintock, 1992: p. 88, italics in the original)

The Ainu were socioculturally displaced and became outsiders in their territory. Scholars of Japanese colonialism have long pointed out the similarities

between policies that aimed at Japanese nation-building and those directed towards the Japanese colonies. A single date, namely that of the proclamation of the Meiji Constitution on 11 February 1889, separated what became seen as part of the national territory and what became colonies (Iriye, 1970).

Japanese language spread in Hokkaido and the Ryukyus led to the emergence of a bilingual generation, but bilingualism was never a policy objective. Given decade-long suppression and lack of support for Ainu and Ryukyuan, language shift spread from public domains such as schools, work, or media to private domains such as the family and the neighborhood. The slow but steady decrease in the number of traditional speakers of Ainu and Ryukyuan in the postwar era started to foster critical reviews of modernist policies. However, such critical reviews did not imply that these policies were replaced by an LPP supportive of language diversity. *Laissez-faire*, or "Leave your language alone" became the order of the day.

3 Critical Scholarship and a Revision of Modernist LPP

A critical turn in scholarship on Ainu and Ryukyuan developed slowly after 1945, gaining more traction in the 1970s and 80s, and becoming mainstream in the 1990s (Hara and Heinrich, 2015; DeChiccis, 1995). Note in this context that criticism of modernist policies and their effects among the Ainu and Ryukyuans predate such scholarly concerns for many decades (see, e.g., Iboshi, 1995 [posthumously]; Iha, 1916). Before language endangerment became a mainstream topic in sociolinguistics, it was silently accepted that there was no alternative for speakers to shift from smaller languages to official or national languages. Along the lines of modernist thought, language endangerment was seen as a teleological process, and language shift was accepted, with some sense of regret, also by the pioneers of modern Ryukyuan and Ainu linguistics (e.g., Chamberlain, 1999 [1895]; Kindaichi, 1925).

Once the objective of achieving linguistic homogeneity was seen to be largely fulfilled, awareness about the backsplash of this endeavor grew. Modern and later modern societies differ in that the latter grow critical of epistemological certainties, teleological developments, and uncritical belief in progress. This leads to a chronic examination and revision of modernist beliefs, including linguistic beliefs (Heinrich, 2025). It is no coincidence that the study of language endangerment has grown into a major topic of linguistics with the transition of modern to late modern societies. The foundational publications on language rights, minority education, linguistic imperialism, language endangerment, and language revitalization emerged in the 1980s and 90s. The

same applies to critical studies of LPP (e.g., Tollefson, 1991). The newly emerging critical approaches shifted focus from descriptions of "what is" to analyzing "what could be" in this period. In this way, being critical implies an expansion of perceptions and possibilities, which leads to a new imperative to commit and act.

In Japan, the critical turn in language policy and planning was accelerated by two simultaneously evolving developments: the reception and translation of Western works of sociolinguistics, which provided for a template how to deal with sociolinguistic topics critically, and the involvement of and collaboration with scholars from neighboring disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology or impairment studies (Masiko, 2014). Additionally, remarks by Prime Minister Nakasone in 1986, referring to Japan as a "homogenous nation" (*tan'itsu minzoku*), galvanized the Ainu community to oppose such comments and advocate for their rights (Ohara, 2025). In the context of LPP for Ainu and Ryukyuan languages, being critical meant considering societal bilingualism as a possibility for the national language and the ancestral languages to coexist. A critical, late modern mindset saw also value for everyday life in something that was not (ethnic) Japanese, could conceptualize the Japanese nation as multilingual and diverse, imagine language regimentation detached from orders of power, and endeavor to seek (real) equality between communities that differ and want to keep such difference intact. Late-modern attitudes allowed one to act upon such values and frame the ensuing action as a political position (just as the insistence on homogeneity in a state of diversity is a political position).

From the 1990s onwards critical considerations took precedence over the modernist attitudes and practices discussed in Section 2. While the scholarly contributions in the critical study of Ainu or Ryukyuan languages do (usually) not fall directly into the field of LPP, Otomo (2019, p. 306) notes that "the trajectories of these Indigenous languages cannot be explained without referring to language policies." Hence, despite Ainu and Ryukyuan LPP never becoming a prominent field of research in its own right, the oppressive effects of modernist LPP became noticed across a range of disciplines in Ainu and Ryukyuan studies.

3.1 Critical Reflections on Modernist LPP on Ryukyuan Languages

Efforts to maintain a distinct Ryukyuan heritage started slowly during the occupation period (1945–1972). They were initially focused on intangible culture and slowly started including language (Hara and Heinrich, 2015). A watershed moment for a critical reflection on language was the inauguration of the "Society for Okinawan Language Spread" (*Uchinaaguchi fukyū kyōgikai*) in

2000. The society organized in 2005 for the first time a "Community Language Day" (*Shimakutoba no hi*). This annual day was set for September 18 as the date can be read *ku-tu-ba*, 9-10-8). In 2006, Okinawa Prefecture endorsed Community Language Day and has lent its support to the annual celebration. The term *shimakutuba* is a non-controversial designation to highlight the existing linguistic diversity in the Ryukyus without directly confronting modernist beliefs about linguistic homogeneity in Japan. *Shimakutuba* leaves the question open to which language "community language" belongs. *Shimakutuba* is the Okinawan equivalent of the Japanese term *hōgen* ("dialect"). Whether it is part of the national language or of Ryukyuan is unclear. In the Amami Islands, separated from the rest of the Ryukyuan cultural sphere by being placed in Kagoshima Prefecture, a "dialect day" (*hōgen no hi*) has been commemorated since 2007 on 18 February.

The inclusion of the Ryukyuan languages in the third edition of the *World Atlas of World's Languages in Danger* in 2009 has led to an unprecedented wave of scholarly activities on Ryukyuan languages. In 2010, the "Ryukyuan Heritage Language Society" (*Ryūkyū keishō gengo kenkyū-kai*) was formed. It has organized annual symposia on Ryukyuan language revitalization, and its members have published several books and countless articles on Ryukyuan languages ever since (e.g., Heinrich, Miyara and Shimoji, 2015; Shimoji, 2022). In 2014, the Ryukyuan Heritage Language Society organized, together with the Foundation for Endangered Languages, an international conference in Okinawa, where a petition was drafted that demanded the establishment of Ryukyuan-Japanese bilingual education in Okinawa Prefecture and in Amami. The reception of the petition was acknowledged by Okinawa Prefecture and Kagoshima Prefecture but then ignored (Heinrich and Ishihara 2018). Since 2015, the Cultural Agency of the Japanese Government has organized an annual "Endangered Language and Dialect Sumit" (*Kikiteki na jōkyō ni aru gengo hōgen samitto*) where linguistic experts meet, discuss, and interact with endangered language communities (Cultural Agency, 2024). Here, too, *la questione della lingua*, the clarification of the language question, is side-stepped. This is problematic, as non-commitment in such fundamental issues in language revitalization does not mean being neutral but simply siding with the strongest player in the field, i.e., the majority informed by modernist ideologies, institutions, and practices (May, 2001).

Non-commitment on the language question notwithstanding, several LPP initiatives were taken within the conceptual frame of *shimakutuba*. In 2012, a policy goal for the Ryukyuan languages was formulated by Okinawa Prefecture for the first time. Since Amami is located in Kagoshima Prefecture, it is left out of these policies. In its *Vision for Okinawa in the 21st Century*, we find the following statement on language:

> *Shimakutuba* is the basis of Okinawan culture and has historical value as a cultural heritage. We endeavor to build a research system supportive of language preservation, dissemination, and transmission within the prefectural university and school system. We seek to create a learning environment by enhancing educational programs in school education and by providing opportunities for lifelong learning. We aim to preserve, disseminate, and transmit the languages in danger of disappearing by creating opportunities for young people to encounter *shimakutuba* and to foster their emotional attachment to it. (Okinawa Prefecture, 2012, p. 30)

If we unpack this statement in terms of LPP, we can state that the policy objective is to preserve, disseminate, and transmit *shimakutuba* and that the rationale for doing so is that *shimakutuba* is seen to constitute the basis of Okinawan culture. To attain this goal, the planning activities consist of building a research system, creating learning environments, and nurturing attachment to *shimakutuba* among the young generation. The planning remains abstract. Furthermore, no provisions are made on how and when to examine the actual outcome of these measures. The plan lacks consideration of where and with what socio-economic benefits *shimakutuba* ought to be used. In other words, it lacks considerations of domains of language use and socioeconomic rewards for reclaiming it—two central pillars in language revitalization theory (Fishman, 1991). A range of activities followed the *Vision for Okinawa in the 21st Century*. In 2015, the Okinawa Prefectural Department for Culture, Tourism and Sports published *shimakutuba* textbooks for elementary and middle school students for Kunigamian, Okinawan, Miyakoan, Yaeyaman, and Dunan, and in 2017, a prefectural "Shimakutuba Dissemination Centre" (*Shimakutuba fukyū sentā*) was established (Heinrich and Ishihara, 2018).

In 2022, the prefecture presented a *New Vision for Okinawa in the 21st Century*, in which we find an expansion of its considerations of *shimakutuba*:

> Efforts are made in all regions to preserve and transmit *shimakutuba* in danger of disappearing through the creation of archives, etc. Under the Shimakutuba Dissemination Centre's coordination and cooperation with relevant institutions and organizations, [...], we also endeavor to implement training courses and on-site lectures in all regions. Promotion for the spread of *shimakutuba* will include support for learning activities in the school system using *shimakutuba* teaching materials, as well as support for organizations and private companies that promote *shimakutuba*. We also aim to create opportunities for prefectural citizens to listen and speak *shimakutuba*. (Okinawa Prefecture, 2022a, p. 46)

We find two new objectives in this document. First, it is made explicit that these objectives apply to all regions in the prefecture, that is, Kunigami, Okinawa, Miyako, Yaeyama, and Yonaguni. Second, support for *shimakutuba* now exceeds schools and universities by including "organizations" (*dantai*) and "private companies" (*minkan kigyō*). The planning now also includes establishing a language archive, teacher training courses, and on-site lectures. The idea of domains is vaguely referred to as opportunities to listen and to speak, but how this should be done is not spelled out. There are no considerations of the benefits of increasing the use of *shimakutuba*, and also provisions for an organized evaluation of whether these measures are effective in maintaining and revitalizing Ryukyuan languages remain absent. Last but not least, saving a language through documentation reveals a static and structural view of language. It lacks consideration of interaction and the advantages that one's ancestral language provides to communities.

Also in 2022, a new "Shimakutuba Orthography Review Committee" (*Shimakutuba seishohō kentō i'inkai*) presented official orthographies for the five Ryukyuan languages spoken in Okinawa Prefecture (Okinawa Prefecture, 2022b) and in 2023, a "Shimakutuba Dissemination and Promotion Office" (*Shimakutuba fukyū suishin-shitsu*) was established within the prefectural Cultural Promotion Division. This office collaborates with the above-mentioned "Shimakutuba Dissemination Centre" (*Shimakutuba fukyū sentā*).

We can see in this new critical wave that the situation of language endangerment is now acknowledged, perceived as a problem, and confronted. Yet the causes of endangerment are never addressed. In the study of language endangerment, it is common knowledge that only dominated communities undergo language shift (Dorian, 1981) and that revitalization requires undoing domination by the outside. Undoing domination from the outside is never mentioned. Addressing it remains a taboo. Last but not least, the measures implemented are insufficient to maintain and revitalize Ryukyuan. Language revitalization was defined in the introduction as "activities that aim to ensure a language is acquired or learned by younger speakers and seek to secure domains where they can use it," and we find no concrete measures of how this ought to be achieved.

3.2 Critical Reflections on Modernist LPP on Ainu

Starting in the second half of the 20th century, attempts to reverse language shifts and preserve the Ainu language and culture slowly emerged, gaining significant momentum in the 1980s. These endeavors included publishing Ainu newspapers such as the *Anutari Ainu* and *Ainu Times*, the inauguration

of government-sponsored classes of Ainu and a broadcasted Ainu language course on Sapporo Radio from 1987 onwards. Ainu speech contests have been held at least once a year since 1989, and in 1994, Ainu activists elected Diet member Kayano Shigeru delivered his inauguration address to the National Diet first in Ainu and then in Japanese. Also in 1994, the popular Ainu textbook *Akor Itak* was published, and the number of Ainu rediscovering and reclaiming Ainu grew to several hundred (Martin, 2011).

There was a new wave of scholarship on Ainu language that supported these developments. It became commonplace to critically pay attention to language ideologies, power inequality, and the reproduction of domination (e.g., Kayano, 1990; Maher and Yashiro, 1995). DeChicchis (1995) provided an important discussion of speaker-types of Ainu, surmounting thereby the restrictive notions of native-speakerism for endangered languages. Maher (2001) gave a detailed analysis of Ainu within Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), later taken up and expanded by Yotsumoto (2020). Papers explicitly focusing on Ainu LPP remained sporadic, though. Martin (2011) and Yotsumoto (2019) constitute rare expectations of this trend.

New legislation on Ainu followed the grassroots activities and their scholarly support. Yotsumoto (2020, p. 1712) writes that these developments pressured the Japanese Government to the point where it could "no longer ignore minority languages based on the essentialist idea of homogeneity and monolingualism as Japanese society [was] transforming toward a multicultural society." Policies towards the Ainu started to undergo significant changes. In 1997 the Ainu Cultural Promotion Act replaced the oppressive 1889 Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act. As part of this new legislation, a Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture was established. The foundation has an office in Sapporo (Hokkaido) and Tokyo, offering language classes, teacher training, and developing learning materials. The Ainu Cultural Promotion Act aims to foster knowledge and understanding of Ainu history and traditions, and it declares it an obligation of the government to impose measures to curb discrimination against the Ainu. The new legislation also funded efforts to preserve traditional Ainu culture, mentioning the Ainu language only in passing, though. The Ainu Cultural Promotion Act lacks a statement on the status of Ainu and concrete policy goals for developing, spreading, and using the language. It reproduces a folklorist view on Ainu and the museumification of the language. In a critical review, Teeter and Okazaki (2011, p. 105) conclude that it seems that "Ainu language education was purposefully left out" and the same appears to be the case for the lack of an account of "why the Ainu language was being lost." This constitutes a policy problem. Without identifying the basic institutions, ideologies, and practices that have weakened the Ainu language

and culture, a reversal of language endangerment is unlikely. As an effect of such negligence, planning measures for Ainu language revitalization need to take place outside this policy framework, a difficult undertaking given the lack of infrastructures for language revitalization and the dispersion of potential Ainu language learners across the vast region of Hokkaido (Gayman, 2011). It is evident that a planned and purposeful revision process for this new LPP was missing, and there is no verification of whether policy goals are actually met.

Such problems notwithstanding, we can subsequently find a range of measures that can potentially support Ainu language maintenance and revitalization. In chronological order, we can identify several developments. The most important was a resolution to recognize the Ainu as Indigenous people of Japan by both chambers of Japan's legislative system on 6 June 2008 (for details, see lewallen, 2008). This recognition led, amongst other things, to the establishment of a "Council for Ainu Policy Promotion" (*Ainu seisaku no arikata ni kansuru yūshikisha kodankai*) in 2009. The Council is constituted of 14 expert members and government officials. For the first time, Ainu representatives are included in Ainu policy-making. Five of the 14 members are Ainu, a long overdue reversal of the paternalistic treatment of the Ainu in modern history. In 2007, a "Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies" (*Aynu teetawanoankur kanpinuye cise*) was established at Hokkaido University. This center conducts interdisciplinary research on Ainu that is disseminated in a series of publications and presentations.

In 2019, a New Ainu Policy replaced the 1997 Ainu Cultural Promotion Act. This new policy has two main pillars (Council for Ainu Policy Promotion, 2024). The first aim is to close the disparity gap in life conditions, including education, employment, income, and health, between Ainu and the majority of Japanese society. The second pillar is concerned with the promotion and dissemination of Ainu culture. This second section features six subpoints, one of which is promoting the Ainu language, and another is establishing a Symbolic Space for Harmony, including a National Ainu Museum. Promoting Ainu language education comprises three components: training Ainu language teachers and reclamation leaders, establishing advanced Ainu language courses, and Ainu language courses for parents and children. The Ainu language promotion comprises two components: an Ainu radio course accompanied by textbook materials and the organization of a speech contest (see Yotsumoto, 2020). Perhaps the most prominent outcome of this new policy was the establishment of a National Ainu Museum (*An-ukokor aynu ikoromakenru*), inaugurated in 2020 in Shiraoi Town in Hokkaido. The National Ainu Museum features a bilingual Ainu-Japanese linguistic landscape (Santalahti, 2024), and the museum is also active in creating information in Ainu, thereby

expanding and modernizing the Ainu lexicon. Attempts are made to include as many local varieties of Ainu as possible (Fukazawa, 2019). The museum has played an important role in helping to adapt the Ainu language to the communicative requirements of contemporary society. While Martin (2011, p. 76) observed 15 years ago that "there has not been a systematic approach to the development and introduction of new lexical items into modern Ainu," Ijas (2023, p. 146) has more recently observed that "some good progress has been made in the modernization of the Ainu lexicon."

3.3 Summary

It is not difficult to notice that the critical approach maintained a paternalistic undertone in which (usually non-Indigenous) scholars seemed to know what was best for endangered language communities. Biological concepts such as "language death" insinuated that those languages were on an unreversible march into oblivion, still reflecting the modernist preference for teleologies. The ubiquitous rhetoric of "saving languages" suggested that linguists have the expertise to stop this, but the actual outcome of language revitalization (new users in secure domains) remains modest, if not altogether absent. Saving languages mostly meant describing, documenting, and archiving them, and the labels endangered, minority, or vanishing were hardly encouraging for those who seek to maintain their ancestral language (Sawai, 1998). Awareness of the limits of such discourses, and the plain fact that Ainu and Ryukyuan were revitalized so little and so slowly, has recently resulted in a new epistemological shift, which will be discussed in the next section.

LPP itself remains incomplete because it lacks a process of organized LPP evaluation and revision. The currently implemented measures (the planning in LPP) do little to bring back Ainu and Ryukyuan language use (the policy objective in LPP). There exists an incongruency between policy and planning, and it is not clear whether it is based on the lack of LPP expertise for language revitalization or whether the planning preceded the policy. It seems as if the policy goal was added in an ad-hoc fashion only afterward. This would also explain the lack of an organized LPP revision process.

4 Ways Forward: Decolonization and an Indigenous Turn

It is a moot point to decide when exactly critical approaches to the study of endangered languages became themselves subject to reflection, but an iconoclastic article by Hill (2002) could well serve to mark this turn (see

also Duchêne, 2008). Hill pointed out that the critical discourse on language endangerment we discussed in Section 3 prominently applied three types of rhetorics and that these rhetorics served mainly the interests of linguists and not necessarily the endangered language communities. The first rhetorical strategy is universal ownership, frequently manifesting in statements that all languages constitute a cultural heritage for all. The second strategy is hyperbolic valorization, i.e., dramatizing the value of language, a strategy reproduced in statements such as that the future of humankind is at stake due to the current language crisis. The third is the theme of enumeration, applying metrics to language endangerment and making statements such as more than half of the world's languages are in danger or counting the last speakers of a given language. In hindsight, we understand that such rhetoric served the important goal of rallying support behind the study of endangered languages. However, it was less useful for endangered language communities themselves. Tove Skutabb-Kangas (1999, p. 46) had a point in writing, "just as seed banks cannot preserve a [...] biological ecology, ex situ linguistic documentation can not preserve a language's linguistic ecology."

Rather than applying biological metaphors (e.g., language death) and adding rhetorical drama to language endangerment, we can observe today the emergence of a new postcolonial and Indigenous paradigm that is more hopeful and applied to community needs. If the critical turn led to a shift from language as a problem to language as a right and language as a resource (Ruiz, 1984), then we can now observe a shift to language and well-being (see Heinrich, 2023a). We can find a recentering of agency within endangered communities in what we may call an Indigenous turn in language endangerment studies. Endangered language communities (re)emerge as centers of knowledge, action, and innovation. They resist attempts to be framed as research objectives within biological teleology, where outside experts conduct fieldwork along the lines of modern linguistics that disregards everything that is not part of this Western tradition (Leonard, 2012, 2023). The race to save endangered languages by language description is giving way to Indigenous individuals reclaiming their ancestral language and building social networks where they can use them. Such individuals find support in the upcoming research paradigm of language decolonization (e.g., Charity Hudly, Mallison and Bucholtz, 2024; Errington, 2008; Pennycook and Makoni, 2006).

This trend also emerges in Ainu and Ryukyuan research and language activism. We can observe a shift from language revitalization, centered on language itself (such as the lexicon and orthographies), to language reclamation, centered on speakers' emotional struggle to reappropriate their ancestral language (Heinrich and Valsecchi, 2023). Ainu activists started doing so

a long time ago. The Indigenous Ainu language schools, the massive work of Kayano Shigeru, and those who succeeded him testify to the long emergence of this Indigenous turn in Hokkaido. In its contemporary manifestation, we find collaboration and exchange with other Indigenous communities, such as the Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Tangiku, 2019), but we can also observe individual action, such as in the parent-child Ainu study sessions described by (Tsagelnik, 2022). The result is not simply the emergence of a new epistemology and template for acting in support of Ainu (both the language and the new or aspiring speakers). New speakers of Ainu employ the language today on many occasions, ranging from rituals and ceremonies, in the transmission of traditional handcrafts, in research and study circles, though singing and dancing, during speech events, and on the radio or social media. At the (old) Ainu Museum in Shiraoi, Ainu reclamation classes started in 2010. Ainu students study their ancestral language and culture with the support of scholarships from the so-called *Urespa* project. Ainu scholar Honda Yuko from Sapporo University established this project. These classes have now been relocated to the new National Ainu Museum. Students enrolled in the *Urespa* program study Ainu for eight hours a week. This allows for fluency in the language, a deeper understanding of ancestral culture and lifeways, and reaching out to and influencing others (Ohara, 2025). The *Urespa* project is future-oriented. Reclamation implies putting Ainu in the service of new identity formation processes, projecting a future that is more rewarding than the modern past (Ohara and Okada, 2022), and this also includes applying Ainu to commercial enterprises such as tourism (Santalahti, 2025).

Also, in the Ryukyus, we can find a long history of grassroots language learning and cultivation (for an overview, see Hara and Heinrich, 2015; for a recent update, Ishihara, 2024). Research into language reclamation is spearheaded by Indigenous scholar Hammine Madoka (2019). Hammine (2022, p. 117) sees such activities deeply embedded in decolonization efforts, writing that from "decolonization perspectives, revitalizing Indigenous languages seeks to address historical domination and to reclaim identities, which necessitates community mobilization, healing, and transformation." Just as in the case of the Ainu, scholars, and activists of Ryukyuan are connected to Indigenous networks and draw on initiatives developed in Hawai'i or among Native Americans (see, e.g., Topping, 2023; Yūji, 2023; Zlasli, 2021). This new generation of scholars and activists becomes fluent in at least one Ryukyuan language. They use Ryukyuan among themselves in expanding and intensifying social networks (Heinrich, 2023b), reintroducing the ancestral language also in their families (Arakaki, 2023). Language revitalization takes place in concrete communities, such as Yomitan Village in Okinawa, where research feeds seamlessly

into language reclamation and revitalization planning (Heinrich, Nespoli and Machida, 2023; Ohara and Machida, 2023; Machida, 2022). Many, if not all, of these new scholar-activists have partly been trained outside Japan; they are fluent in foreign languages and are part of international academic networks. They are informed and practice late-modern attitudes that value pluralism, variety, and ambivalence and support the maintenance of language variation (see Matsuda and Van der Lubbe, 2020; Van der Lubbe, 2023). Language reclamation resonates with a more meaningful and dignified life. One can find all this in the activities organized by Okinawa Hands-On NPO, where Okinawan is transmitted to children through various activities involving theatre, radio broadcasts, farming, and cooking (Okinawa Hands-On NPO, 2024).

While there is no shortage of examples showing changing attitudes towards and practices of Ainu and Ryukyuan, the activities outlined above currently lack organized support of governmental LPP.

5 Conclusion

LPP reveals changing attitudes towards languages and identities. Modernism prioritized homogeneity, monotony, and clarity over attitudes that support diversity. The effect was language endangerment. Once modernity had been achieved, such modernist objectives were seen more critically. Awareness grew that linguistic modernity could also have evolved differently. Such reflections on the consequences of modernity led to a new stage where Ainu and Ryukyuan were no longer actively oppressed. Yet, we can notice a reluctance to fully embrace Japan's multilingual heritage in policy-making. Wholeheartedly supporting linguistic diversity would require differentiated treatment of diverse Japanese nationals, but we do not see this in status planning (Ainu and Ryukyuan as official languages) or in language-in-education planning (bilingual school education). Japan's current critical approach to LPP remains insufficient for language maintenance and revitalization. There remains a gap between the policy objective and the planned measures to achieve this objective. These shortcomings have prompted a new grassroots approach, where efforts of decolonization result in a recentering of agency among Ainu and Ryukyuan scholars, activists, and (new) speakers. The difference between the Indigenous and the critical approach is not simply one of epistemology and action. We can also note a difference in generation, international connectivity, and cosmopolitan attitudes. Time will prove if this new generation will become more influential in shaping governmental and prefectural LPP.

For the time being, those reclaiming, adapting, and teaching Ainu and Ryukyuan are mostly on their own. They could be supported, though, by promoting bilingualism, granting societal rewards to new bilinguals in the form of employment opportunities, and the creation of domains where these languages can serve as unmarked default language choices, by establishing bilingual landscapes and soundscapes, by providing governmental services, or simply safe spaces for language reclamation activities. We find little planning in this direction. It seems as if the sheer possibility of having more than one language of Japan continues to be seen as a source of social instability. Beyond all the talk of maintaining and revitalizing Japan's endangered language, the view of Japan as a monolingual nation continues to inform epistemologies on language and identity, including LPP on Ainu and Ryukyuan. Without challenging and changing such dominant ideological beliefs, Ainu and Ryukyuan will remain in an environment hostile to linguistic diversity. There are two principal ways how this can be changed. One is to create equality between the majority and minorities and to redistribute power between them. This requires collaboration by the majority, but there are no signs that this is underway. The second option is for minorities to place distance to the nation and to reimagine Ainu and Ryukyuan communities as sociocultural, linguistic, and political centers in their own rights. Decolonization and a new level of grassroots activities we are witnessing today are testimony to these efforts.

Acknowledgments

This chapter has profited from discussions of Ainu and Ryukyuan LPP over many years with Saana Santalahti, Jeff Gayman, and Mashide Ishihara. Madokoa Hammine makes sure that I stay tuned and updated on paradigm changes in the field, and I thank her greatly for this. I am also indebted to Masahiko Minami for his patience, comments, and editorial assistance. Remaining errors and shortcomings are mine.

References

Abdelhay, Ashraf, Sinfree Makoni and Cristine Severo (eds.). (2020). *Language planning and policy: Ideologies, ethnicities, and semiotic spaces of power*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Arakaki, Tomoko. (2023). Promoting the use of Okinawan by new speakers: An analysis of honorific choices in the family domain. *Languages* 8, online journal, https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010012 (accessed 13 May 2024).

Bauman, Zygmunt. (1992). *Intimations of postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

Carroll, Tessa. (2001). *Language planning and language change in Japan*. Richmond: Curzon.

Chamberlain, Basil Hall. (1999 [1895]). *Essay in aid of a grammar and dictionary of the Luchuan language*. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō.

Charity Hudley, Anne H., Christine Mallison and Mary Bucholtz (eds.). (2024). *Decolonizing linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Council for Ainu Policy Promotion. (2024). Overview of Ainu policy in Japan, government website, https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/policy.html (accessed 9 May 2024).

Cultural Agency. (2024). *Kikiteki na jōkyō ni aru gengo hōgen samitto* [Summit on endangered languages and dialects], government website, https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/kokugo_nihongo/kokugo_shisaku/kikigengo/summit/index.html (accessed 9 May 2024).

DeChicchis, Joseph. (1995). The current state of the Ainu language. In John C. Maher and Kayoko Yashiro (eds.), *Multilingual Japan*, pp. 103–124. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Dorian, Nancy C. (1981). *Language death: The life cycle of a Scottish Gaelic dialect*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Duchêne, Alexandre. (2008). *Ideologies across nations: The construction of linguistic minorities at the United Nations*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Errington, Joseph. (2008). *Linguistics in a colonial world: A story of language, meaning, and power*. Malden: Blackwell.

Fishman, Joshua A. (1991). *Reversing language shift*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Fukazawa, Mika. (2019). Ainu language and Ainu speakers. In Patrick Heinrich and Yumiko Ohara (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of Japanese sociolinguistics*, pp. 3–24. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gayman, Jeffry. (2011). Ainu right to education and Ainu practice of "education": Current situation and imminent issues in light of Indigenous education rights and theory. *Intercultural Education* 22(1), 15–27.

Gottlieb, Nanette. (2012). *Language policy in Japan: The challenge of change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hammine, Madoka. (2019). Our way of multilingualism: Translanguaging to break the chain of colonialism. In Corinne Seals and Vincent Leni Olsen-Reeder (eds.), *Embracing multilingualism across educational contexts*, pp. 100–125. Wellington: Viktoria University Press.

Hammine, Madoka. (2022). Hear our voice: New speakers of Ryukyuan language—negotiation, construction, and change of identities. In Martin Mielick, Ryuko Kubota and Luke Lawrence (eds.), *Discourses of Identity: Language learning, teaching, and reclamation perspectives in Japan*, pp. 117–137. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hara, Kiyoshi and Patrick Heinrich. (2015). Linguistic and cultural revitalization. In Patrick Heinrich, Shinsho Miyara and Michinori Shimoji (eds.), *Handbook of the Ryukyuan languages*, pp. 649–665. Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Heinrich, Patrick. (2004). Language planning and language ideology in the Ryukyu Islands. *Language policy* 3, 153–179.

Heinrich, Patrick. (2012). *The making of monolingual Japan: Language ideology and Japanese modernity*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Heinrich, Patrick. (2013). Hōgen ronsō: The great Ryukyuan languages debate of 1940. *Contemporary Japan* 25(2), 167–187.

Heinrich, Patrick. (2015). Language shift. In Patrick Heinrich, Shinsho Miyara and Michinori Shimoji (eds.), *Handbook of the Ryukyuan languages*, pp. 613–630. Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Heinrich, Patrick. (2023a). Cultural expertise and language. In Livia Holden (ed.), *Cultural expertise, law, and rights: A comprehensive guide*, pp. 98–108. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heinrich, Patrick. (2023b). Ryukyuan perspectives for language reclamation. *Languages* 8, online journal, https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010035 (accessed 14 May 2024).

Heinrich, Patrick. (2025). Language policy in Japan: Modernity, modernity maintenance, and late modernity. In Jeroen Darquennes, Joe Salmons and Wim Vandenbussche (eds.), *Language contact: An international handbook* (Volume 2) (pp. page–page), Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Heinrich, Patrick, Shinsho Miyara, Michinori Shimoji (eds.). (2015). *Handbook of the Ryukyuan languages*. Boston: de Gryuter Mouton.

Heinrich, Patrick and Masahide Ishihara. (2018). Ryukyuan languages in Japan. In Corinne A. Seals and Sheena Shah (eds.), *Heritage language policies around the world*, pp. 165–184. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heinrich, Patrick and Giulia Valsecchi. (2022). Ryukyuan language reclamation: Individual struggle and social change. In Martin Mielick, Ryuko Kubota and Luke Lawrence (eds.), *Discourses of Identity: Language learning, teaching, and reclamation perspectives in Japan*, pp. 139–157. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Heinrich, Patrick, Lorenzo Nespoli and Seira Machida. (2024). Language and well-being in Yomitan-Village (Okinawa, Japan). *Linguapax International* 11, 123–142.

Hill, Jane H. (2002). "Expert rhetorics" in advocacy for endangered languages: Who is listening, and what do they hear? *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2), 119–133.

AQ 1

Iboshi, Hokuto. (1995). *Kotan: Iboshi Hokuto ikō* [Kotan: Iboshi Hokuto posthumous manuscripts]. Tokyo: Sōfūkan.

Iha, Fuyū. (1916). *Ryūkyūgo binran* [Ryukyuan language guide]. Tokyo: Tōgyō Kenkyūkai Shuppan.

Iha, Fuyū. (1975). Ryukyu to yamatoguchi [Ryukyu and Japanese]. In Shirō Hattori, Seizen Nakasone and Shuzen Hokama (eds.), *Ifa Fūyu Zenshū* [Collected works of Ifa Fuyū] (volume 8), pp. 457–459. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Ijas, Silja. (2023). Language revitalization through lexical modernization and neologism-coining. *Aynu teetawanoankur kampinuye* [Ainu Indigenous Research] 3, 117–160.

Iriye, Akira. (1970). Imperialism in East Asia. In James B. Crowley (ed.), *Modern East Asia: Essay in interpretation*, pp. 122–150. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

AQ 2

Ishihara, Masahide. (2024). Nihon no gengo mainoriti to shite no Ryūkyū shogo [Ryukyuan languages as a Japanese minority language]. *Kotoba to shakai* [Language and society] 26, page–page.

Kayano, Shigeru. (1990). *Ainu no ishibumi* [Ainu Monument]. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun-sha.

Kindaichi, Kyōsuke. (1925). *Ainu no kenkyū* [Ainu Studies]. Tokyo: Nagai Shobō.

Kondō, Kenichirō. (1997). Kokka sōdōin taiseika no Okinawa ni okeru hyōjungo reikō undō [The movement to enforce the standard language in Okinawa in its correlation with the national mobilization campaign]. *Nantō Shigaku* [Southern Islands Historical Studies] 49, 28–47.

Kondō, Ken'ichirō. (2006). *Kindai Okinawa ni okeru kyōiku to kokumin tōgō* [Education and national integration in modern Okinawa]. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press.

Kondō, Ken'ichirō. (2011). Kindai kyōiku no dōnyū [Introduction of modern school education]. Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai (ed.), *Okinawa-ken-shi* [History of Okinawa Prefecture] (volume 5), pp. 189–209. Naha: Okinawa-ken Kyōiku I'inkai.

Koshida, Kiyokazu. (1993). From a "perishing people" to self-determination. *Ampo: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 24(3), 2–6.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2012). Producing language reclamation by decolonising "language". In Wesley Y. Leonard and Haley De Korne (eds.), *Language documentation and description* (volume 14), pp. 15–36. London: EL Publishing.

Leonard, Wesley Y. (2023). Refusing "endangered languages" narratives. *Dædalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 152(3), 69–83.

lewallen, ann-elise. (2008). Indigenous at last! Ainu grassroots organizing and the Indigenous Peoples Summit in Ainu Mosir. *The Asia-Pacific Journal* (48-6-08), online journal, https://apjjf.org/ann-elise-lewallen/2971/article (accessed 9 May 2024).

Machida, Seira. (2022). Tsumugareru "umui" [Spinning "thoughts"]. *Kotoba to shakai* [Language and society] 24, 255–261.

Maher, John C. (2001). Ainu itak—our language, your language: Ainu in Japan. In Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *Can threatened languages be saved?*, pp. 323–349. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Maher, John C. and Kyoko Yashiro (eds.). (1995). *Multilingual Japan*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Martin, Kylie. (2011). Aynu itak: On the road to Ainu language revitalization. *Media and Communication Studies* 60, 57–93.

Masiko, Hidenori. (2014). Nihon no shakai gengogaku wa nani o shite kit no ka, doko e ikō to shiteiru [What has Japan's sociolinguistics done so far and where is it going henceforth?]. *Shakai gengogaku* [Sociolinguistics] 14, 1–23.

Mason, Michele. (2012). *Dominant narratives of colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan: Envisioning the periphery and the modern nation-state*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Matsuda, Misato and Gijs van der Lubbe. (2020) Uchinaaguchi nu fukusuu nu shimakutuba-naraashi [Teaching various shimakutuba of Okinawan]. *Kotoba to shakai* [Language and society] 22, 202–216.

May, Stephen. (2001) *Language and minority rights: Ethnicity, nationalism and the politics of language*. Harlow: Longman.

McClintock, Anne. (1992). The angel of progress: Pitfalls of the term 'post-colonialism'. *Social Text* 31/32, 84–98.

Moseley, Christopher (ed.). (2010). *Atlas of the world's language in danger*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Nakamatsu, Takeo. (1996). *Ryūkyū gogaku* [Ryūkyū language studies]. Naha: Okinawa Gengo Bunka Kenkyūjo.

Ohara, Yumiko. (2025). Questioning, challenging, and reformulating dominant language ideologies in Japan: The cases of Ainu and Uchinaaguchi. In Patrick Heinrich, Florian Grosser and Saana Santalahti (eds.), *Ideologies of communication in Japan*, pp. xx–xx. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

AQ 3

Ohara, Yumiko and Seira Machida. (2023). Uchinaaguchi learning through Indigenous critical pedagogy: Why do some people in Yomitan not know Yomitan Mountain? *Languages* 8, online journal, https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010017 (accessed 9 May 2024).

Ohara, Yumiko and Yuki Okada. (2022). Creation and expansion of a safe place to be Ainu: The Urespa project. In Martin Mielick, Ryuko Kubota and Luke Lawrence (eds.), *Discourses of Identity: Language learning, teaching and reclamation perspectives in Japan*, pp. 81–96. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Okazaki, Takayuki. (2019). Ainu language shift. In Patrick Heinrich and Yumiko Ohara(eds.), *Routledge handbook of Japanese sociolinguistics*, pp. 354–369. Abingdon: Routledge.

Okinawa Hands-On NPO. (2024). Okinawa Hands-on NPO, NPO webpage, https://www.h-on.org/ (accessed 14 May 2024).

Okinawa Prefecture. (2012). *Okinawa 21-seiki bijon: Kihon keikaku* [Vision for Okinawa in the 21st century: A basic plan]. Naha: Okinawa Prefecture, prefectual webpage,

https://www.pref.okinawa.jp/_res/projects/default_project/_page_/001/011/778/hukyusuisinkeikaku.pdf (accessed 9 May 2024).

Okinawa Prefecture. (2022a). *Shin-Okinawa 21-seiki bijon: Kihon keikaku* [New vision for Okinawa in the 21st century: A basic plan]. Naha: Okinawa Prefecture, prefectual webpage, https://www.pref.okinawa.jp/_res/projects/default_project/_page_/001/011/778/nikikeikaku.pdf (accessed 9 May 2024).

Okinawa Prefecture. (2022b). Okinawa-ken ni okeru shimakutuba no hyōki ni tsuite [On the shimakutuba orthography in Okinawa Prefecture], prefectural webpage, https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/_res/projects/default_project/_page_/001/009/625/02_shimakutubahyouki.pdf (accessed 9 May 2024).

Onai, Tōru (ed.). (2018). *Gendai Ainu no seikatsu to chi'iki jūmin* [Modern Ainu life compared to local residents]. Tokyo: Tōshindō.

Otomo, Ruriko. (2019). Language policy and planning. In Patrick Heinrich and Yumiko Ohara (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of Japanese sociolinguistics*, pp. 299–314. Abingdon: Routledge.

Pennycook, Alastair and Sinfree Makoni (eds.). (2006). *Disinventing and reconstituting languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Ruiz, Richard. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal* 20, 13–34.

AQ 4 Santalahti, Saana. (2024). Ainu language use and display in the National Ainu Museum. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 288, page–page.

AQ 5 Santalahti, Saana. (2025). "Sowing seeds of knowledge for future generations": Possibilities to empower Ainu language and people through tourism. In Patrick Heinrich, Florian Grosser and Saana Santalahti (eds.), *Ideologies of communication in Japan*, pp. xx–xx. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Sawai, Harumi. (1998). The present situation of the Ainu language. In Kazuto Matsumura (ed.), *Studies in endangered languages*, pp. 177–189. Tokyo: Hitsuji Shobō.

Shimoji, Michinori (ed.). (2022). *An Introduction to the Japonic Languages*. Leiden: Brill.

Siddle, Richard. (1995). The Ainu: Contruction of an image. In John C. Maher and Gaynor Macdonald (eds.), *Diversity in Japanese culture and language*, pp. 73–94. London: Routledge.

Siddle, Richard. (1996). *Race, resistance and the Ainu of Japan*. London: Routledge.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. (1999). Linguistic diversity and language rights. In Darrell Posey (ed.), *Cultural and spiritual values of biodiversity*, pp. 44–54. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme.

Spolsky, Bernard. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tangiku, Itsuji. (2019). Aynu itak amososo kuni asir rir [New developments in Ainu revitalization]. *Kotoba to shakai* [Language and society] 20, 164–183.

Tanigawa, Ken'ichi (ed.). (1970). *Waga Okinawa* [Our Okinawa]. Tokyo: Mokujisha.

Teeter, Jennifer L. and Takayuki Okazaki. (2011). Ainu as a heritage language of Japan: History, current state and future of Ainu language policy and education. *Heritage Language Journal* 8(2), 96–114.

Topping, Matthew W. (2023). "Words that open your heart": Overcoming social barriers to heritage language reclamation in Ishigaki City. *Languages* 8, online journal, https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010005 (accessed 9 May 2024).

Tsagelnik, Tatsiana. (2022). In search of Indigenous Identity through re-creation of Ainu self-sustaining community. In Martin Mielick, Ryuko Kubota and Luke Lawrence (eds.), *Discourses of Identity: Language learning, teaching and reclamation perspectives in Japan*, pp. 97–115. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Van der Lubbe, Gijs. (2023). Introducing a polynomic approach in Ryukyuan language learning. *Languages* 8, online journal, https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010011 (accessed 9 May 2024).

Walker, Brett L. (2001). *The conquest of Ainu lands: Ecology and culture in Japanese expansion, 1590–1800*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yoshimura, Sayaka. (2014). Japanese language education in the Meiji period. In Mark Anderson and Patrick Heinrich (eds.), *Language crisis in the Ryukyus*, pp. 31–53. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Yotsumoto, Yukio. (2019). Revitalization of the Ainu language: Japanese government efforts. In Stanley D. Brunn and Roland Kehrein (eds.), *Handbook of the changing world language map*, pp. 1711–1727. Cham: Springer.

Yūji, Kōtarō. (2023). Datsu-shokuminchi-ka undō no naka no gengo fukkō [Language revitalization within a decolonization movement]. *Kotoba to shakai* [Language and society] 25, 228–233.

Zlazli, Miho. (2021). While we are asleep: Master/mentor-apprentice language learning initiative in the Ryukyus. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics* 20, 142–168.