



**MONASH** University

**Cultures and Politics of Script Reform in Japan, 1945-1995**

Basil Khalifa Costas Derek Cahusac de Caux

BA Japanese

MA International Cultural Studies

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the cultural and political factors underpinning Japanese script reform between the years 1945 and 1995. It contrasts changes in language policy formulation within the National Language Council to concurrent changes in written language usage and reform among linguists, cultural organisations, educators, and the youth. It also investigates transnational links between Japanese and Chinese language policy makers, consumerism, the education system, and technological advancements in Japanese word processing, and the effects these had on Japanese script reform and language policy. This thesis takes an historical approach to the study of Japanese language ideologies, policies, and practices. It employs the concept of language ownership, which portrays language as an object of value and power that individuals and groups are willing to contest. The thesis finds that script reform occurring outside of officialdom is as significant as official script reform and concludes that future Japanese language policy formulation should include input from a variety of stakeholders with a vested interest in contemporary Japanese script usage.

## Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:

A large black rectangular box redacts the signature and the name of the author.

Print Name: Basil Khalifa Costas Derek Cahusac de Caux

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019

## Publications during enrolment

“Reviewing Reform: Studies of Script Reform in Contemporary Japan.” *Language Problems & Language Planning* 43, no. 1 (2019): 57-75.

*Wellbeing in Doctoral Education: Insights and Guidance from the Student Experience*. Springer Nature (accepted for publication [20 September 2018]). (edited with Pretorius, Lynette, Allie Ford and Luke Macaulay).

“A History of Doctoral Studies.” Chapter in *Wellbeing in Doctoral Education: Insights and Guidance from the Student Experience*.

“Confidence building and anxiety management.” Chapter in *Wellbeing in Doctoral Education: Insights and Guidance from the Student Experience*.

“Macro Translation Economics: Globalisation and Lingua Francas in Borderless Enclaves.” *mTm Journal*, special issue (accepted for publication [13 August 2018]).

“Experiential learning in Doctoral Training Programmes: Fostering Personal Epistemology through Collaboration.” *Studies in Continuing Education* 41, no. 1 (2018): 111-128. (with Cho Kwong Charile Lam, Cuong Hoang, Ricky Lau, Yang Chen, Qiao Qian Ten, and Lynette Pretorius.) Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2018.1482863>

“In Praise of the Difficult.” In *Bordertown no. 2: Mujer: Songs of the Spanish Diaspora*, edited by Christian Griffiths and Jessica Griffiths, np. Melbourne: Transcollaborate, 2018. (translated with Alvaro Sanchez.)

“Reflection for Learning in Doctoral Training: Writing Groups, Academic Writing Proficiency and Reflective Practice.” *Reflective Practice* 18, no. 4 (2017): 463-473. (with Cho Kwong Charile Lam, Cuong Hoang, Ricky Lau, and Lynette Pretorius.) Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2017.1307725>

“My Experience Migrating to Australia.” In *Bordertown: Translations of Migrant Experience*, edited by Christian Griffiths and Jessica Griffiths, np. Melbourne: Transcollaborate, 2017. (translated with anon.)

Review of *Languages and Identities in a Transitional Japan: from Internationalization to Globalization*, edited by Nakane, Ikuko, Emi Otsuji and William S. Amour. *Japanese Studies* 36, no. 1 (2016): 136-137. Doi: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10371397.2016.1172946>

“Orthography and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics” (in Japanese). In *Proceedings of the 18th Annual Japan Association for Language Policy Conference*, edited by Japan Association for Language Policy Committee, 74-76. Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Policy, 2016.

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## Editorial Note

In this thesis I draw on a range of Japanese language primary and secondary sources, including reports, policy documents, newspaper articles, opinion columns, independently published magazines, monographs, and journal articles. Unless otherwise stated, I have translated all direct quotes from Japanese language sources into English. In certain cases, the original Japanese text accompanies a translation in order to increase comprehension. Similarly, standard Japanese orthographic conventions are used for Japanese names, with family names listed before given (first) names. These conventions are dismissed in the case of authors of Japanese origin who list their given name(s) before their family name (e.g. Miyako Inoue) and globally recognisable names such as Akira Kurosawa.

I have italicised Japanese terms not commonly found in the English language. For instance, the Japanese terms for Chinese characters and word processors are given as *kanji* (Chinese characters) and *wāpuro* (word processor), respectively. Diacritics are used, where necessary, to reflect the pronunciation of Japanese terms. For instance, elongated vowels such as those found in the words for word processor (*wāpuro*) and set list (*hyō*) are represented by a macron above the elongated vowel. Similarly, the Hepburn scheme of romanisation has been adopted in this thesis to express Japanese terms in Romanised form. Publications and organisations that use other forms of Romanisation (e.g. the “Rômazi Sya” in Nippon no Rômazi Sya) have been incorporated without change into this thesis.

The following abbreviations are used in the thesis.

ACA – Agency for Cultural Affairs. This abbreviation is used exclusively in the footnotes of the thesis.

CI&E – Civil Information and Education Section of General Headquarters (Occupation era organisation responsible for overseeing the dissemination of democratic ideals through information and media creation and management)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yuka Moriguchi Tsuchiya lists the CI&E’s objectives as: “disseminating democratic ideals and principles through all media of public information, making clear to the Japanese public the facts of defeat and war guilt; making the Japanese public understand all SCAP policies and plans; maintaining liaison with the Japanese Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education, mass media, religious, political, and other organizations; surveying public opinion; and eliminating militarism and ultra-nationalism from the Japanese educational system”. See Yuka Moriguchi Tsuchiya, “Military Occupation as Pedagogy:

CoJ – Constitution of Japan

GHQ – General Headquarters

JIS – Japanese Industrial Standards

NLC – National Language Council (*Kokugo shingikai*). This abbreviation is used in the text and in footnotes to represent the reports of the NLC (*Kokugo shingikai hōkokusho*).

NLC Report – National Language Council Report (*Kokugo shingikai hōkokusho*) containing the policies and minutes of NLC meetings and deliberations after the restructuring of the NLC in 1949. In the footnotes, NLC reports are abbreviated as *NLC*, followed by a number representing the session of NLC. For instance, *NLC 2*, represents the second session of the NLC, which lasted between April 1952 to April 1954.

SCAP – Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers

A glossary of Japanese terms relevant to this thesis is presented below.

*Hiragana* – one of the two phonetic syllabaries used to denote native Japanese words, verb endings, and particles in conventional mixed-script Japanese. For instance, にほん [nihon] “Japan”.

*Katakana* – one of the two phonetic syllabaries used to denote loanwords and emphasis in conventional mixed-script Japanese. Prior to the Second World War, this script was the preferred syllabary of officialdom, and was used in official communications and publications. For instance, ワープロ [wāpuro] “word processor”.

*Kana* – term used to describe both the *hiragana* and *katakana* syllabary.

*Kanji* – Chinese characters containing one or more readings. Commonly used in conventional mixed-script Japanese to denote many simple nouns, compound nouns, proper nouns, and verb stems.

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The U.S. Re-education and Reorientation Policy for Occupied Japan, 1945-1952,” (PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota, 2004), 137.

*Rōmaji* – A Romanised form of the Japanese syllabary, commonly used to denote abbreviations and some company names (e.g. SONY). Several schemes of Romanisation exist, with *Kunrei* scheme (approximating Japanese pronunciation) and Hepburn scheme (approximating a “European” pronunciation of Japanese) being the most common.

*Okurigana* – *Kana* suffixes following *kanji* verb stems, used as a pronunciation guide.

*Furigana* – *Kana*, typically printed directly beside or above *kanji*, used as a pronunciation guide. For instance, the “にほん” above 日本 in “Japan”

*Kokugo* – The national (*koku*) language (*go*) of Japan.

*Kokuji* – The national (*koku*) script (*ji*) used to write *kokugo*.

*Tōyō Kanji Set List* – A *kanji* character set list containing 1,850 characters. Officially adopted on 16 November 1946.

*Tōyō Kanji List of Readings* – A *kanji* character set list containing the *on* and *kun* readings of *kanji* found in the *Tōyō Kanji Set List*. Adopted on 29 September 1947.

*Tōyō Kanji Beppyō* – A list of 881 *kanji* from the *Tōyō Kanji Set List* to be taught during compulsory education. Often referred to as “education *kanji*” (*kyōiku kanji*). Adopted on 29 September 1947.

*Jōyō Kanji Set List* – A *kanji* character set list containing 1,945 characters. Officially adopted on 1 October 1980. Different to the *Jōyō Kanji* that formed part of the of Standard *Kanji Set List* of 1942.

*Contemporary Kana Usage* – Policy document outlining orthographic conventions related to *kana*, emphasising the role of *kana* syllabary in expressing spoken language. Officially adopted on 16 November 1946, revised on 1 July 1986.

*Rules for Using Okurigana* – Policy document outlining the use of *okurigana*. Adopted on 11 July 1959, revised on 18 June 1973 and 1 October 1981.

*Onkun* – A combined word denoting two general classes of *kanji* reading derived from Chinese (*on*) and native Japanese (*kun*) roots. For instance, the character 当 has “tō” as an *on* reading and “ateru” as a *kun* reading.

*Wāpuro/ wāpurō* – Japanese word processor. A device commonly sold alongside a printer that allowed for the input, storage, and processing of mixed-script Japanese.

## Location of Sources

This thesis draws on a range of Japanese and English language primary and secondary sources. National Language Council reports and minutes, newspaper articles, independently published materials belonging to various reformist organisations, policy documents, and translated works are among the most often used primary sources. Primary sources and Japanese language materials were located at a range of libraries and institutions including the National Diet Library of Japan, Waseda University, University of Tokyo, and National Museum of Ethnology. Of these libraries and institutions, the Toki Collection at Waseda University and the Umesao Tadao Catalogue at the National Museum of Ethnology were particularly useful. Primary sources were also drawn from online newspaper databases and repositories, bookstores, and the private libraries of researchers. Secondary sources in the fields of language policy, sociolinguistics, history, education, and sociology were located at the various libraries of Monash University, the National Library of Australia, the Bodleian Japanese Library at the University of Oxford, and numerous online research repositories. This thesis also draws on audiovisual material to a limited extent, particularly in chapter six, to further demonstrate the complexities of Japanese script reform in postwar Japan.

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## Introduction

This thesis focuses on Japanese script reform in the postwar period, stretching from the immediate postwar occupation of Japan during the years 1945-1952 to the word processing revolution of the 1980s and early 1990s. Script reform is defined as official and unofficial changes made to the conventional form of written Japanese, i.e. mixed-script Japanese, with an observable generational effect on written language usage. The thesis consists of case studies spanning government ministries, transnational collaboration between language policy formulators, the education system, the youth, and technological developments occurring within Japanese society. It examines the ways in which different groups within Japanese society perceived and implemented changes to written Japanese during a period of constant change and development in cultural and political norms. It uses investigations into the official position on script reform adopted by the National Language Council (referred to hereafter as the NLC), the body largely responsible for formulating and implementing language policies at a national level from 1934 to 2001, as the backbone of this study. It compares and contrasts the position on script reform within the NLC to practices related to script reform occurring outside of the NLC – predominantly among interest groups in Japan, but also in relation to script reform initiatives pursued by neighbouring East Asian polities – and assesses the role that script reform outside of officialdom played in Japanese society.

While conventional script reform connotes language policy formulation and implementation, often through government-sponsored councils and agencies responsible for overseeing changes to the written language, this thesis frames script reform as an attempt to generate change by groups and individuals both within officialdom and at the grassroots. Much as conventional script reform can lead to change in written language usage among broad segments of society, purposive actions at the grassroots level can also generate changes in written language usage and, thus, should be counted as instances of script reform. Instead of limiting understandings of script reform to language policies that occur through official channels, the definition given here takes script reform as a purposive action that generates observable change in written language usage. Furthermore, script reform is broad (or

universal) in its application, leading to widespread usage of reformed script beyond a single group in society.

The objective of this study is to produce an understanding of some of the cultural and political, as well as external and domestic, factors that led to the reform of the Japanese script over a fifty-year period. The main argument presented in this thesis is that script reform occurs within officialdom and through a variety of forces outside of officialdom during the postwar period and that both are equally deserving of investigation. Forces beyond the control of officialdom cannot exist in complete separation of official bodies such as the NLC because members of the NLC were themselves also “unofficial” language users in the sense of being private citizens involved in a range of activities. The rapid social and political change that permeated the postwar period in Japan, both domestically and internationally, rendered it practically impossible for the NLC to keep abreast of the reform of written Japanese and nonstandard usage of the Japanese writing system by groups and individuals in civil society. Consequently, script reform occurred through a succession of developments in spaces outside of the NLC. Studying the developments in these spaces, and the official position adopted by the NLC in relation to them, provides us with a comprehensive understanding of the factors informing script reform in wider Japanese society.<sup>1</sup>

## Significance

Examining the forces behind changes in the practices and conventions of written Japanese give us an indication of how varying levels of adherence to standards and educational criteria are entangled with notions of power and hierarchy. In Japan, *kokugo*, a term literally meaning “national language” but implicitly connecting language with an exclusive notion of Japanese ethnic identity, entailed the construction of power and hierarchy through language. The “national language” also entailed the existence of a “national script” (*kokujī*), a sanctioned way of writing the national language.<sup>2</sup> Changes to

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<sup>1</sup> Though the NLC made a substantial commitment to the study of policies relating to the written form of the Japanese language throughout its existence (1934-2001), the governmental body was largely unable to implement major reforms after the end of the Allied Occupation of Japan in 1952. Cf. Yasuda Toshiaki, *Kokugo shingikai: Meisō no 60-nen* [60 Years of Straying off Course: The National Language Council] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> The national script was debated throughout most of the twentieth century. For instance, cf. Hoshina Kōichi, *Kokugo kokujī kokubun kairyō shosetsu kōgai* [An Overview of Theories of Improvement of the National Language, National Script, and

written Japanese – national or otherwise – provide us with insights on how political and cultural identity is expressed and perceived by different groups in Japanese society. Simultaneously, it provides with an understanding of how *kokugo* scholars interpreted and sought to shape language policy and language usage among broad segments of society. Groups such as the Romanisation Society of Japan used the writing system in divergent ways to simultaneously demonstrate difference, solidarity, and rebellion at different times and in varying circumstances (wartime, postwar, etcetera). Questions of continuity and discontinuity are also elaborated on in this thesis, to emphasise the interdependence of the Japanese writing system and extra-linguistic practices that defined groups in Japanese society.

Understanding the ways in which groups and individuals affect changes to the written form of Japanese promotes a deeper understanding of the development of national ideologies of ethnic identity, and, in turn, domestic language ideology and policy.<sup>3</sup> The contestation of political and cultural structures of language, such as the educational value and cultural significance ascribed to *kanji*, has been part and parcel of Japan's drive toward modernity since the nineteenth century and continues to dominate scholarly discussion of language in the historical and social sciences.<sup>4</sup> Recent work reflects on the necessity of further investigating the specific interplay between script ideologies and socio-cultural and socio-political factors, where written language is viewed as a practice challenging orthodox conventions through evolving usage and the significance ascribed to script by groups and individuals.<sup>5</sup> Case studies that investigate script reform among various interest groups demonstrate how written language reform can originate outside of official circles: script is rarely ever the exclusive domain of

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National Literature] (Tokyo: Kyōiku Chōsa Kai, 1914); Andō Masatsugu, *Kokugo kokujī sho mondai* [Problems of National Language and National Script] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1937); Matsusaka Tadanori, *Kokugo kokujī ronsō: Fukeko shugi e no hanron* [National Language and Script Debates: Rebutting Reactionism] (Tokyo: Shinkōsha, 1962); Watanabe Shintarō, *Kokugo kokujī no konpon mondai* [Fundamental Issues of National Language and National Script] (Tokyo: Shimpū Shobō, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan: Language Ideology and Japanese Modernity* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan*, 2; Nanette Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics: Language Policy and Japanese Script* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1995); Yasuda Toshiaki, *Kanji haishi no shisō shi* [The Intellectual History of Kanji Abolition] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2016); Yasuda Toshiaki, *Kindai nihon gengo shi saikō V: Kotoba no torakata o megutte* [Rethinking the Linguistic History of Modern Japan, vol. V: Concerning the Construal of Language] (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Mark Sebba, "Orthography as Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power," in *Orthography as Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power*, eds. Alexandra Jaffe, Jannis Androutsopoulos, Mark Sebba, and Sally Johnson (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2012), 11.

language policy formulators but is shaped by various groups within society at various points in time.<sup>6</sup> Approaching the study of script reform through case studies of various segments of society and their relation to social structures such as the education system and the NLC allows researchers to produce a more nuanced description and understanding of the factors underpinning script reform in Japanese society. Similarly, grounding an analysis of diverse realms and processes of script reform in a specific institutional context allows for a consideration of the interplay between official and non-official avenues of reform and the assessment of the successes and failures of script reform as a policy intervention.

## Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis are largely informed by work in the fields of language ideology and language policy. Given the centrality of these two fields in this thesis, I commit the following paragraphs to an overview of the research conducted by scholars of language ideology and language policy. I touch on current trends in academic studies of language ideology and language policy, but also consider the historical originals of the field of language policy research.

The standardisation of languages fits squarely within the realm of language ideology, given its overt concern with regulating linguistic diversity. The promotion of selected language variants – and the regular (re)construction of such variants – over others for the purposes of communication or cultural homogenisation depends heavily on how individuals and groups view the nation-state, their cultural identity, and issues of marginalisation.<sup>7</sup> Language has been used – and is continuing to be used – as a nation-building tool in many parts of the world.<sup>8</sup> The ideological underpinnings of national language standardisation have been addressed in numerous works investigating language policies adopted by

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Unseth, “Sociolinguistic Parallels between Choosing Scripts and Languages,” *Written Language & Literacy* 8, no. 1 (2005): 19-42.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Kim, “The Han’gŭl Crisis and Language Standardization: Clashing Orthographic Identities and the Politics of Cultural Construction,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no. 1 (2017): 5-31; Victoria Clement, *Learning to become Turkmen: Literacy, Language, and Power, 1914-2014* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Sue Wright, *Community and Communication: The Role of Language in Nation State Building in the European Union* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2000).

nation states.<sup>9</sup> Within the Japanese context, an example of an ideology closely associated with national linguistic standardisation is the “need for communicability” and its effect on common language (*futsūgo*) usage versus dialect usage in Japan.<sup>10</sup> Ideological objectives associated with standardisation have rendered dialects in Japan, and elsewhere, as secondary in importance within national political discourse, despite documented coherence between dialects and socio-cultural identity.<sup>11</sup>

At the level of the individual, the development of language ideologies starts during the formative years of one’s life. The education system is a prime example of how language ideologies are inculcated at an early stage in individuals, shaping their outlook on language and society. In the compulsory education system of many countries, including Japan, the standard language is both the medium of instruction and the gauge of linguistic literacy.<sup>12</sup> Numerous studies have documented the role of teachers in influencing the language choices of children in Japan through the use of standard Japanese.<sup>13</sup> Factors impacting the language ideologies that emerge within the education system include ethnic and religious identity,<sup>14</sup> as well as national and class consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Recent research into the formation of language ideology in the classroom has analysed on-going discrimination and

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution: Education, Identity, and Language Policy in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2009); Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan*.

<sup>10</sup> Neriko Musha Doerr, “On the Necessity of ‘Being Understood’: Rethinking the Ideology of Standardization in Japan,” in *Rethinking Language and Culture in Japanese Education: Beyond the Standard*, eds. Shinji Sato and Neriko Musha Doerr (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2014), 63-81.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Heinrich, “New Presentations of Self in Everyday Life: Linguistic Transgressions in England, Germany, and Japan,” in *Identity and Dialect Performance: A Study of Communities and Dialects*, ed. Reem Bassiouney (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 210-225.

<sup>12</sup> Rosina Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (New York: Routledge, 2012), particularly chapter six, “The Educational System: Fixing the Message in Stone”; Victoria Clement, “Emblems of Independence: Script Choice in Post-Soviet Turkmenistan,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2008, no. 192 (2008), 172.

<sup>13</sup> Shinji Sato, “Constructing and Constructed Japanese: The History of Standard Japanese and Practice at a Japanese Preschool,” in *Rethinking Language and Culture in Japanese Education: Beyond the Standard*, eds. Shinji Sato and Neriko Musha Doerr (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2014), 106-127. For a historical account, cf. Annette Skovsted Hansen, “Practicing *Kokugo*: Teachers in Hokkaido and Okinawa Classrooms, 1895-1904,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 40, no. 2 (2014): 329-351. For a contemporary global perspective, cf. eds. Stephanie Ann Houghton and Damian J. Rivers, *Native-Speakerism in Japan: Intergroup Dynamics in Foreign Language Education* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013). For non-Japanese contexts, cf. Adel Asker and Marilyn Martin-Jones, “‘A Classroom is not a Classroom if Students are Talking to me in Berber’: Language Ideologies and Multilingual Resources in Secondary School English Classes in Libya,” *Language and Education* 27, no. 4 (2013): 343-355.

<sup>14</sup> Sonia Ryang, “How to do or not do things with Words: The Case of Koreans in Japan,” *Asian Ethnicity* 6, no. 3 (2005): 223-236; Wendy Klein, “Speaking Punjabi: Heritage Language Socialization and Language Ideologies in Sikh Education Program,” *Heritage Language Journal* 10, no. 1 (2013): 36-50.

<sup>15</sup> Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*.

marginalisation of non-standard language variants as a result of intra-lingual practices and variability.<sup>16</sup> Language ideology, therefore, creates and reinforces (from an early stage) hegemonic notions of language, as monolithic and stringent in written and spoken form.

Language policy is “an officially mandated set of rules for language use and form within a nation-state”.<sup>17</sup> In the case of the Japanese nation-state, the Japanese government directed language policy at the written form of Japanese since its earliest attempts at standardisation of the Japanese language in 1902.<sup>18</sup> As a field, the study of language policy has been a part of the Western academe for at least the past fifty years. Its origins can be traced back to the work of Joshua Fishman and Einar Haugen, who focussed predominantly on language policy at the national level in the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> The study of language policy in Japan, however, arguably predates the establishment of language policy studies as a field in the Western academe. In Japanese academia the study of language policy traces its origins to the wartime and early postwar period, when a handful of scholars worked on *genko seisaku* (language policy) and *genko seikatsu* (language life) within the academe and government ministries (predominantly the Ministry of Education).<sup>20</sup> Much like language policy studies in other parts of the world, the academic writings of Japanese scholars in the field were socio-political and interdisciplinary in nature, dealing with colonialism, modernisation, education, linguistics, and philology. The Japanese scholars who studied language policy were also, at some stage, involved in the formulation of language policy,

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<sup>16</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, *Linguistic Stereotyping and Minority Groups in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2006); Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent*.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Spolsky, “What is Language Policy?”, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*, ed. Bernard Spolsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Significant focus was placed on Japanese script, particularly questions pertaining to the range and form of *kanji* and *kana* to be taught in the Japanese education system. For a brief overview of early language policy formulation in Japan, see Shiraishi Daiji, *Shūsengo ni okeru kokugo kairyō no dōkō* [Trends in National Language Reform in Postwar Japan] (Tokyo: Shakaisha, 1947), 10.

<sup>19</sup> Joshua Fishman, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift as a Field of Inquiry,” *Language* 2, no. 9 (1964): 32-70; Joshua Fishman, “Language Modernization and Planning in Comparison with other Types of National Modernization and Planning,” *Language in Society* 2, no. 1 (1973): 23-43; Einar Haugen, “Dialect, Language, Nation,” *American Anthropologist* 68 (1966): 922-935.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hoshina Kōichi, *Daitōa kyōeiken to kokugo seisaku* [The Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and National Language Policy] (Tokyo: Tōsei-sha, 1942); Andō Masatsugu Chosaku Shū Kankō Kai, ed., *Andō masatsugu chosaku shū dai 6 kan: Gengo seisaku ronkō* [Vol. 6. of the Collected Works of Andō Masatsugu: Language Policy Studies] (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1975); Nishio Minoru, “Gengo seikatsu no mondai” [Problems with Language Life], *Chūgaku Kyōiku* 2, no. 4 (1950): 3-7; Hirai Masao, *Kokugo kokujō mondai no rekishi* [A History of National Language and National Script Problems] (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1948); Shiraishi Daiji, *Shūsengo ni okeru kokugo kairyō no dōkō*. For a comprehensive overview of “language life” studies in Japan, cf. eds. Patrick Heinrich and Cristian Galan, *Language Life in Japan: Transformations and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2010).

either through NLC membership or through direct engagement with policy making bodies such as the Ministry of Education.<sup>21</sup> Their focus, much like the focus of the early works of Fishman and Haugen, was on influencing the national language mandates made predominantly by nation-states and, in some cases, the relationships that hold between national and regional variants of a language.<sup>22</sup> An understanding of how and why scholars were directly engaged in Japanese language policy is, therefore, paramount to understanding policy processes and proposals, as well as the outlook of policy makers responsible for script reform in Japan.

## Language Ownership

Individuals and groups often stake a claim to the written and spoken language they use. Language is viewed as delimiting cultural and political identity, as well as power relations and hierarchy. The delineation of identity, power relations, and hierarchy through language is regularly contested and challenged through further claims to language usage. Pierre Bourdieu's idea of linguistic capital and Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration play a central role in my conceptualisation of language ownership, a key framework in this thesis.<sup>23</sup> Particularly pertinent to language ownership within this study is Bourdieu's notion of the contestation of language through linguistic capital.<sup>24</sup> Contestation, the challenging and disruption of linguistic norms, allows individuals to manipulate language for cultural and political gain. The manipulation of language results in the reconfiguration of power structures within society, affecting not only the individual but also social institutions such as the education system and government. This process of contestation and manipulation is dependent on the "value and power" ascribed to language (linguistic capital),<sup>25</sup> and recurs indefinitely, generating a synergetic relationship between individuals, their language competencies, and the social institutions they inhabit.

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<sup>21</sup> Kindaichi Kyōsuke was a member of the NLC during the 1940s. Hoshina Kōichi and Shiraishi Daiji were Ministry of Education bureaucrats. Andō Masatsugu knew many officials within the Ministry of Education, with whom he worked closely during the wartime and postwar period.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, cf. Kindaichi Kyōsuke, "Hyōjungo shiken" [My Personal Views on the Standard Language], *Gengo Kenkyū* 13 (1949): 1-14; Kindaichi Haruhiko, "Yanigata kunio sensei to kokugo gaku" [Mr. Yanagita Kunio and National Language Studies], *Kokugogaku* 51 (1962): 64-74.

<sup>23</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 43.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges," *Social Science Information* 16, no. 6 (1977), 646.

Giddens' structuration theory focusses on agency and social structures, emphasising that the interrelationship between the two is vital to the study of society and social change. Structuration theory posits that an understanding of how social systems function requires a thorough analysis of the relationship that holds between the agency of individuals and groups and the power and permanence of institutions. For example, in the case of Japan, the NLC is central as an enduring institution involved in Japanese language policy formulation and debates concerning language usage;<sup>26</sup> NLC members, and individuals and groups outside of the NLC, possess the agency necessary to interact with the NLC. The two – agency and social structures – work together to reproduce social systems (structures) that are dependent on constructs such as language. Constructs are in turn affected by conformity and the unconventional actions of individuals and groups against structure.

Through Bourdieu's notion of contestation and Giddens' theory of structuration, my idea of language ownership assumes that individuals perceive language as a construct(s) that can be owned and manipulated by various individuals and social structures for political and cultural gain through the interaction of individuals with social structures. Linguistic anthropologist Alessandro Duranti posits that agency plays a central role in all languages and that "alternative ways of marking agency are available both across languages and within the same language".<sup>27</sup> This view of agency, as central, wide-spanning, and inherent, is adopted in this thesis, to investigate the factors influencing script reform throughout Japanese society. The centrality of agency to the study of script reform lies in its ability to affect change and reproduce structure. As will be shown below, an individual's ability to exercise agency in institutions such as the Ministry of Education and the NLC, as well as in civil society (e.g. through youth culture and word processor usage), makes agency pervasive and far-reaching in its effects. Individuals and groups demonstrating agency through ownership of script usage and practices, through overt (public conformity or rejection of norms) and covert (in-group usage and practices) means, merit

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<sup>26</sup> Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 24-25.

<sup>27</sup> Alessandro Duranti, "Agency in Language," in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. Alessandro Duranti (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 467.

careful consideration in a study that merges the ideas and theories underpinning structuration theory and linguistic capital.

## Studies of Japanese Script Reform

The earliest studies of script reform are found in the writings of established linguists in the prewar period in Japan. The many monographs, articles, and lectures produced by the likes of Hoshina Kōichi 保科孝一 (1873-1955), Kindaichi Kyōsuke 金田一京介 (1882-1971), and Andō Masatsugu 安藤正次 (1878-1952), though oftentimes ideologically motivated (e.g. facilitating smoother governance of the Japanese colonial empire), touch on the role script reform plays in promoting literacy, education, and standard Japanese in Japan and (subsequently) its colonies.<sup>28</sup> Such works, and the scholarship they generated,<sup>29</sup> were anchored in studies of current affairs, comparing Japanese language policies to policies being pursued in Europe and other parts of the world. This scholarship laid the foundations for future Japanese researchers who examined the necessity and direction of language policy formulation within Japanese officialdom in the postwar period.

In the Anglophone literature, research on Japanese script reform began in the postwar period with American Occupation authorities such as Robert K Hall and academics such as John DeFrancis of Johns Hopkins University.<sup>30</sup> Studies focussed on official government direction and assessed approaches adopted by bodies such as the NLC and Japanese Ministry of Education, arguing that Romanisation would bolster the democratisation of Japanese society.<sup>31</sup> They offered insights in Occupation-era language policy, particularly script reform, shortly after the end of World War Two. Much like the work carried out by Japanese scholars in the prewar and wartime period, the focus of these studies was contemporary, dealing with current affairs as they unfolded.<sup>32</sup> Treatment of the subject matter was

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<sup>28</sup> Hoshina, *Kokugo kokujī kokubun kairyō shosetsu kōgai*; Ishiguro Rōhei, *Hyōjungo no mondai* [Problems with the Standard Language] (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1933); Kindaichi Kyōsuke, *Kotodama o megurite* [On the Spirit of Language] (Tokyo: Yae Shobō, 1944); Andō, *Kokugo kokujī sho mondai*; Shinmura Izuru, *Kokugo mondai seigi* [The True Significance of National Language Problems] (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1941).

<sup>29</sup> For a comprehensive overview of prewar studies of Japanese, cf. Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*.

<sup>30</sup> Basil Cahusac de Caux, “Reviewing Reform: Studies of Script Reform in Contemporary Japan,” *Language Problems and Language Planning* 43, no. 1 (2019): 57-75.

<sup>31</sup> For example, see John DeFrancis, “Politics and Phonetics,” *Far Eastern Survey* 16, no. 19 (1947), 218.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

more descriptive than academic, in that interrogation of the origins and need for contemporary script reform seldom occurred. While this is in keeping with the emergence of language policy studied as a field in the Anglosphere, which (as mentioned above) only took place in the 1960s, it also ensured the continuation of the study of Japanese language policy in Western academic circles.

In the late 1970s a new approach to the study of Japanese script reform emerged in the Anglophone literature. This included works by young academics such as Nanette Gottlieb (then Nanette Twine), who linked script reform to political developments in a more academically critical manner than studies produced during the early postwar period.<sup>33</sup> These works did not take script reform and Japanese language policy on face value, but rather problematised the policies, groups, and individuals responsible for changes to written Japanese by analysing historical developments occurring within Japanese society and the causal factors underlying reform. Dedicated Japanese Studies researchers such as Nanette Gottlieb and Janet Hunter provided case studies of events, movements, and individuals (often linguists and bureaucrats) affecting script reform in Japan.<sup>34</sup> Their studies combined rigorous research methodologies with a continuing interest in Japanese script reform. The merits of their scholarship can be found in the nuanced complexities uncovered in relation to the *genbun itchi* movement, postwar democratisation, and constitutional reform.<sup>35</sup> These scholars began by “looking back” at events that occurred in the past, analysing their historical significance and tracing their development either to their origins or the contemporary context. The main contention of many of the works produced by scholars such as Gottlieb was that script reform was informed by a dynamic relationship between intellectuals and the state – a cultural and political relationship of ongoing debate and negotiation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Frank James Daniels, “Japanese Officialdom and the Language,” *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 13, no. 1 (1978): 52-70; Nanette Twine, “The Genbunitchi Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Conclusion,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 33, no. 3 (1978): 333-356; Nanette Twine, “Towards Simplicity: Script Reform Movements in the Meiji Period,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 38, no. 2 (1983): 115-132;

<sup>34</sup> See for instance Janet Hunter, “A Study of the Career of Maejima Hisoka, 1835-1919,” (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1976).

<sup>35</sup> Twine, “The Genbunitchi Movement”; Nanette Twine, “Language and the Constitution,” *Japan Forum* 3, no. 1 (1991): 125-137; Nanette Twine, *Language and the Modern State: The Reform of Written Japanese* (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*.

From the 1980s, scholars turned to the ideological underpinnings of Japanese script reform, concentrating on the effects of modernisation and colonialism from the late 1800s to the present day. The most significant scholarship in this area was published in Japanese by Tanaka Katsuhiko, Mashiko Hidenori, Yasuda Toshiaki, Lee Yeonsuk, and Oguma Eiji.<sup>37</sup> The areas of focus found in the works of these scholars included nationalism, linguistic discrimination, Japanese colonial policy formulation, and the Japanese imperial household.<sup>38</sup> Such scholarship provided a focussed lens on previously neglected or unacknowledged issues. Japan-based scholars have dedicated much of their research careers to the study of ideology and language policy. Yasuda Toshiaki is a prime example, given his numerous studies of script reform in the context of Japanese imperialism and colonialism.<sup>39</sup> His research questions the ideological links drawn between varying nationalisms and language policies, implicitly arguing that internationalism and plurality were eventually suppressed or absorbed into the state with the growing role of the political elite and powerful in deciding policy.<sup>40</sup> Yasuda also conducted a close study of the NLC, dedicating an entire monograph to the postwar policy deliberations and directions of the body.<sup>41</sup>

Mashiko Hidenori identified the class structures underpinning script reform in contemporary Japan, examining the role of the elite in maintaining *kanji* usage within an increasingly diverse and

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<sup>37</sup> Tanaka Katsuhiko, *Kokkago o koete: Kokusaika no naka no nihongo* [Transcending the National Language: Internationalising Japanese] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1989); Mashiko Hidenori, “*Kotoba no seijisei to kindaika*” [Language: Its Political Nature and Modernisation], *Tokyo Daigaku Kyōiku Gakubu Kiyō* 29 (1989): 209–218; Mashiko Hidenori, “*Dōka, ikasochi toshite no kakikotoba*” [Written Language as a Mechanism of Assimilation and Othering], *Proceedings of the Japanese Educational Social Studies Conference* 43 (1991): 85–86; Mashiko Hidenori, “*Gendai nihongo ni okeru sabetsu ka sochi toshite no kakikotoba – kanji hyōki o chūshin ni*” [Writing as a Discriminatory Device in Contemporary Japanese: with a Focus on Kanji Script], *Shakai gengogaku* 2 (2002): 57–73; Yasuda Toshiaki, *Shokuminchi no naka no “Kokugogaku”*: Tokieda motoki to keijō teikoku daigaku o megutte [“National Language Studies” in the Colonies: Tokieda Motoki and Keijō Imperial University] (Tokyo: Sangensha, 1997); Yasuda Toshiaki, *Teikoku nibon no gengo hensei* [The Linguistic Makeup of Imperial Japan] (Yokohama: Seiri Shobō, 1997); Lee Yeonsuk, “*Kokugo*” to *in shisō*: *Kindai nibon no gengo ninsbiki* [The Ideology of “Kokugo”: Language Awareness in Modern Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996); Oguma Eiji, “*Nihon no gengo teikoku shugi: Ainu, ryūkyū kara taiwan e*” [Japan’s Linguistic Imperialism: From Ainu and Ryukyu to Taiwan], in *Gengo teikoku shugi to wa nanika* [What is Linguistic Imperialism?], eds. Miura Nobutaka and Kasuya Keisuke (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2000), 55–65.

<sup>38</sup> Many of the works by authors such as Mashiko Hidenori and Yasuda Toshiaki build on the scholarship of Tanaka Katsuhiko, one of the first Japanese academics to problematise the notion of a Japanese national language (*kokugo*). In the Anglophone literature, work surrounding the “myths” and ideologies associated with the Japanese language have been dealt with in Roy Andrew Miller, *Japan’s Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond* (New York: Weatherhill, 1982).

<sup>39</sup> Yasuda Toshiaki, “*Gengo seisaku*” no *hassei*: *Gengo mondai ninsbiki no keifu* [The Birth of “Language Policy”: A Genealogy of Language Problem Awareness], *Jinbun Gakubō* 83 (2000): 143–183; Yasuda, *Kanji haishi no shisō shi*; Yasuda, *Kindai nibon gengo shi saikō V*.

<sup>40</sup> Yasuda Toshiaki, “*Tagengo shakai*” to *in gensō* [The Fantasy of a “Multilingual Society”] (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2011); Yasuda Toshiaki, “*Tagengo jōkyō wa ika ni toraerarete kita ka – kindai nibon no gengo seisaku shi no shiten kara*” [How has the Condition of Multilingualism been Construed – from the Perspective of a Language Policy History of Modern Japan], in *Tagengo shugi saikō* [Rethinking Multilingualism] ed. Sunano Yukitoshi (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2012), 664–686.

<sup>41</sup> Yasuda, *Kokugo shingikai: Meisō no 60-nen*.

fragmented Japanese society. His work reveals the ongoing socio-political tensions inherent in written language usage in Japan.<sup>42</sup> Patrick Heinrich, who serves alongside Mashiko on the editorial board of a Japanese sociolinguists journal and edited monographs such as *Language Crisis in the Ryukyus* (in which Mashiko's work appears), complements Mashiko's work in his examination of the role of script usage and dialect in shaping identity among various segments of Japanese society.<sup>43</sup> Heinrich made significant contributions to sociolinguist examinations of ideologies underlying Japanese monolingualism by conducting research into language usage by minority groups, Japanese youth, and women in Japan.<sup>44</sup>

The trend of studying the ideological roots of the Japanese language set by Tanaka, Lee, Yasuda, and other scholars in the 1980s and 1990s was soon followed by academics in the Anglosphere, who published numerous monographs and research articles on the historical origins of contemporary written Japanese and the ideological factors shaping Japanese script reform. This included Paul Clark, a historian of modern Japan who produced a comprehensive case study of Ueda Kazutoshi 上田萬年 (1867-1937), a leading Meiji-era Japanese linguist largely responsible for the creation of *kokugo* and standard Japanese.<sup>45</sup> Other scholars are Annette Skovsted Hansen and Florian Coulmas, who used a critical lens to interrogate the language policies and practices found among various groups in prewar and postwar Japanese society.<sup>46</sup> The arguments of these researchers centred on hierarchy (between standard languages and dialects, as well as national and colonial languages) and

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<sup>42</sup> Mashiko Hidenori, "Nihongo kanji to riterashi" [Japanese Kanji and Literacy], *Kotoba to Shakai* 14 (2012): 114-140; Mashiko, "Kotoba no seijisei to kindaika"; Mashiko, "Doka, ikasochi toshite no kakikotoba"; Mashiko, "Gendai nihongo ni okeru sabetsu ka sochi toshite no kakikotoba."

<sup>43</sup> The journal Mashiko and Heinrich, in addition to other sociolinguists, edit, is known as *Kotoba to Shakai* ("Language and Society"). Cf. Sangensha, "Kotoba to shakai' no benshu iin" [Editorial Committee of "Kotoba to Shakai"], <http://www.sangensha.co.jp/allbooks/kotobato.htm>. Also cf. eds. Mark Anderson and Patrick Heinrich, *Language Crisis in the Ryukyus: The Price for being Japanese?* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> Patrick Heinrich, "After Homogeneity: Maintaining Unity in a Linguistically Diversifying Japan," in *Language and Citizenship in Japan*, ed. Nanette Gottlieb (New York: Routledge: 2012), 19-36; Patrick Heinrich, "The Study of Politeness and Women's Language in Japan," in *Globalising Sociolinguistics: Challenging and Expanding Theory*, eds. Dick Smakman and Patrick Heinrich (New York: Routledge, 2015), 178-193; Patrick Heinrich, "Language Choices at Naha Airport," *Japanese Studies* 30, no. 3 (2010): 343-358; Patrick Heinrich, "Dialect Cosplay: Language Usage by the Young Generation," in *Being Young in Super-aging Japan: Formative Events and Cultural Reactions*, eds. Patrick Heinrich and Christian Galan (London: Routledge, 2018), 166-182.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Clark, "The Kokugo Revolution: Ueda Kazutoshi, Language Reform and Language Education in Meiji Japan (1868-1912)," (PhD Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2002); Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*. Also cf. Nanette Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*. For an overview of Ueda Kazutoshi's national Japanese language theories, see chapter one of this thesis.

<sup>46</sup> Hansen, "Practicing *Kokugo*"; Annette Skovsted Hansen, "Re-vitalizing an Indigenous Language: Dictionaries of Ainu Language in Japan, 1625-2013," *Lexicographica* 30, no. 1 (2014): 547-578; Florian Coulmas, "Language Policy and Planning: Political Perspectives," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 14 (1994): 34-52; Florian Coulmas, "The Surge of Japanese," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 80 (1989): 115-132.

the role of Japanese modernity in bolstering cultural and political ideologies through language education and language policy.

From the mid-nineties the focus on the ideological underpinnings and historical undercurrents of script reform expanded to include public institutions, geopolitical comparisons, and cultural essentialism.<sup>47</sup> Such works tended to focus on the postwar and contemporary context, asking how Japanese script reform empowered certain groups over others within Japanese society. Subjects analysed in the literature included the Japanese education system, newcomer migrants in Japan, and the soft power of cultural diplomacy.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Tessa Carroll examined the role that NHK, Japan's national broadcasting organisation and a sizeable cultural institution, played in shaping script reform from the 1970s onwards. Recently, studies of the relationship between gender, youth culture, and script usage in Japanese literature, popular culture, and media have also emerged,<sup>49</sup> indicating an increasing interest in script reform outside of officialdom.

Several gaps in the literature can be identified. One area that requires attention is the effect of international developments in language policy outside of Japan on local language policy and script reform within Japan. This would include a specific study of the impact on Japan of script reform initiatives undertaken by neighbouring East Asian countries during the postwar period, as significant changes to written language usage were made in places such as the People's Republic of China during the early 1950s. In addition, there is a gap in scholarship examining the roles that large cultural institutions played in influencing script reform and language policy in the postwar period. While Tessa Carroll's study of NHK remains a valuable contribution in this area, further research is required to understand the effects cultural institutions other than NHK on Japanese language policy. There is,

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<sup>47</sup> Tessa Carroll, "NHK and Japanese Language Policy," *Language Problems and Language Planning* 19, no. 3 (1995): 271-293; Dilhara Premaratne, "Reforming Chinese Characters in the PRC and Japan: New Directions in the Twenty-first Century," *Current Issues in Language Planning* 13, no. 4 (2012): 305-319; John Maher, "Linguistic Minorities and Education in Japan," *Educational Review* 49, no. 2 (1997): 115-127.

<sup>48</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, *Language and Society in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Kayako Hashimoto, ed., *Japanese Language and Soft Power in Asia* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>49</sup> Claire Maree, "Writing *Onê*: Deviant Orthography and Heteronormativity in Contemporary Japanese Lifestyle Culture," *Media International Australia* 147, no. 1 (2013): 98-110; Wesley Robertson, "He's More *Katakana* than *Kanji*: Indexing Identity and Self-presentation through Script Selection in Japanese Manga (Comics)," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 21, no. 4 (2017): 497-520.

furthermore, a gap in studies of the role of public intellectuals in shaping attitudes toward script reform, with the majority of studies focussing on the ideas of prominent linguists such as Kindaichi Haruhiko. Lastly, a gap exists in the analysis of the opinions of individuals involved in debates concerning Japanese word processing, which had a significant effect on the ways in which Japanese has been written since the 1980s.

This thesis addresses these gaps by contributing new insights into postwar international influences of the language policies of the People's Republic of China and liaisons occurring between its script reform committee and members of the Japanese NLC, as well as other established linguists in Japan (chapter three). It also investigates the impact the Japan Foundation, a cultural institution that emerged in the early 1970s to foster mutual understanding between Japan and other parts of world through cultural exchange, had on Japanese language policy, in addition to the ideas of Umesao Tadao, a public intellectual whose ideas on Japanese script reform have yet to receive ample treatment in the literature (chapter four). Lastly, the ideas of James Marshall Unger and Yamada Hisao, both academics with a lifelong interest in Japanese word processing and script reform, are presented in this thesis (chapter six).

## **Thesis Structure**

In chapter one, I present a brief overview of the prewar and wartime ideologies associated with the Japanese language, particularly national language ideologies and their roles in establishing durable connections between Japaneseness and Japanese language usage. I investigate Ueda Kazutoshi's conceptualisation of the national language (*kokugo*) and its transmission to linguistics during the first half of the twentieth century as a case study of how the Japanese "national language" (and the study thereof) came into existence. Similarly, I analyse the language policies that were implemented in Japan's colonies, especially the Korean peninsula, and contrast such policies to script policies pursued within mainland Japan during the 1930s, to show how differing contexts affect perceptions of the value and power of script reform. Lastly, I focus on language policies developed during the Second World War, at a time when Japan was seeking to expand the borders of its empire and consolidate its vision of a

Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere. Tensions between script reform advocates and conservatives within the Japanese academe coincided with an increasing need to formulate language policies for an intensifying war in China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

In chapter two, I analyse early postwar language policies and established linguists' opinions on the democratisation of language. I begin with a note on the continuities and novel developments in early postwar language policy formulation by drawing on continuities in wartime language policy and the presence of the Allied Powers in Occupied Japan. Subsequently, I investigate the influence of the Allied Powers in shaping language policy in Japan during the early postwar years, concluding that although the CI&E section of GHQ was actively monitoring Japanese language policy, the Allied Powers played a negligible role in language policy formulation. Subsequently, I investigate the role of Japanese linguists in shaping the script conventions contained in the postwar Constitution of Japan, a document that was written with the intention of rooting democratic institutions throughout Japanese society. Finally, I analyse such linguists' opinions on the democratisation of the Japanese writing system, arguing that democratisation was used as a tool for the improvement of the written Japanese language. Competing claims for ownership of the Japanese language within officialdom during this period provide us with a richer account of the political and cultural factors underpinning script reform in postwar Japan. Ensuing tensions over script reform occurred through debates among established linguists and officialdom over language ideology.

In chapter three, I discuss the transnational links that Japanese and Chinese language policy makers formed during the 1950s and early 1960s. As the People's Republic of China formulated progressive script reform policies to boost literacy and promote the spread of a standard language (*Pintonghua*) during the early and mid-fifties, progressive reformists, including NLC members, in Japan began to call for the phoneticisation of the Japanese script. This triggered tensions within the NLC and among established linguists that ruptured the council in two. On the one hand, reformists within the NLC believed that Japan would be left behind if it did not implement more progressive script reform (along the lines pursued by its East Asian neighbour). On the other hand, conservatives within the

council believed that reformists were attempting to relinquish the Japanese language (and Japanese people) of its literary heritage and cultural significance. An analysis of such tensions, which came to a head when several conservative members of the NLC walked out of an NLC general meeting in March 1961, is presented in the second half of the chapter.

In chapter four, I trace the retrenchment of conservatism in language policy formulation within the NLC after the walkout at the NLC. I investigate the anti-prescriptivism that shaped the deliberations of the NLC as its members began to reassess and reconsider language policies formulated during the early postwar period. I contrast this development in the NLC with the outlook on education in Japanese as a foreign language held by the Japan Foundation and the public intellectual Umesao Tadao, which were both actively promoting a “correct” understanding of written Japanese. I contend that the NLC’s decision to limit its role in actively policing script usage led to a slight decrease in its ownership over the Japanese language. Instead, the Japan Foundation and public intellectuals such as Umesao Tadao began to exercise greater influence over written Japanese language usage both at a domestic and international level.

In chapter five, I examine *maru moji*, a variant writing system used by several generations of predominantly teenage girls during the 1970s and 1980s. The variant writing system secured a special place within youth subculture during a time of rising consumerism and the emergence of cute culture among the youth of Japan. I argue that while *maru moji* was actively suppressed by educators, it was a practical writing system that served as an alternative to conventional mixed-script Japanese. The existence of *maru moji*, and its widespread usage, demonstrates vitality of the grassroots in affecting script reform through novel writing practices found in schools, households, and (eventually) popular culture and the public imagination. The NLC overlooked *maru moji*, partly due to concerns with policy revisions and the increasing impact of Japanese word processing technologies on the Japanese writing system.

Chapter six examines the impact of Japanese word processing technologies on script reform and investigates how the spread of Japanese word processing technologies affected the views of

established linguists, journalists, and parents of students in the Japanese education system. It begins with a short history of word processing technologies in Japan and then describes the significance of the discourse of the information society within Japan during the 1980s. Subsequently, it traces attitudes toward Japanese word processing technologies contained in the pages of Japanese broadsheet newspapers. These attitudes are then contrasted with the opinions of individual NLC members and the NLC as a language policy formulator, which are, respectively, quick and slow in their response to the spread of the Japanese word processor. These sections show how the primacy of the NLC as the leading language policy formulator was challenged by organisations such as the Ministry of International Trade and Industry's Japanese Industrial Standards Committee, which had the resources and knowledge to affect writing practices through *kanji* and character sets created specifically for Japanese word processors. The chapter then analyses the outlook of Yamada Hisao, a computer scientist and script reformist, on the role of *kanji* usage within Japanese society and word processing. Lastly, the chapter investigates the views of Romanisation advocates Takeba Ryōichi and James Marshall Unger, demonstrating how the relationship between written Japanese and technological developments can have such a broad impact on the outlook of individuals interested in script reform or Japanese language education that it can render conventional language policy formulation redundant.

## Chapter 1: Prewar and Wartime Trajectories in Japanese Script Reform

This chapter begins with an overview of the development of the national language (*kokugo*) in Japan. It details the *kokugo* theories of the linguist Ueda Kazutoshi, an individual who played a significant role in conceptualising a uniform written and spoken Japanese during the modernisation of Japanese society. It then connects Ueda's *kokugo* theories to established Japanese linguists who played a prominent role in shaping national language studies and Japanese language policy in the first half of the twentieth century. Prominent linguists are referred to as “established linguists” because of their academic training, widely read publications, and influence on national language policy formulation during the period.

The chapter subsequently outlines colonial policies affecting language and script usage on the Korean peninsula and contrasts those policies with script usage and language policy in mainland Japan during the 1930s, where relatively progressive policies were pursued by the Japanese Diet. It then investigates Japanese language policies proposed during the early 1940s, a period of Japanese imperial expansionism and total war. The chapter highlights the active role that established linguists and Japanese script reformists played in shaping proposed language policies during wartime, while also noting how government ministries and agencies perceived such proposals and formulated language policies of their own. This chapter argues that Ueda's conceptualisation of *kokugo* impacted established linguists involved in domestic and colonial language policy formulation during the first half of the twentieth century. It also argues that script reform occupied a pivotal place within Japanese linguistics and government policy-making circles during the Japanese imperialism of the 1930s and military mobilisation of the 1940s, as evidenced by the emergence of the National Language Council in 1934.

### Ueda Kazutoshi's School of Thought

From the late nineteenth century onward, established linguists in Japan believed that the unification of the written and spoken Japanese would aid in the unification of the Japanese people.<sup>1</sup> The focus on

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, see Tanaka Megumi, “*Ôtsuki fumibiko ni totte no hyôki to kokumin*” [Script and Citizens in the Eyes of Ôtsuki Fumihiko], *Nihon shigaku shûroku* 24 (2001): 21-38.

national unification went hand in hand with the normalisation of a national language (*kokugo*) through active linguistic standardisation. Unifying a linguistically (and culturally) diverse Japanese populace, which included Okinawans, Ainu, and ethnic Japanese of various socioeconomic classes, via a standard language inevitably required state-sponsored language policies that supported the creation and maintenance of a conventional writing system. Reaching an agreement on script conventions was an urgent matter, as tension and disagreement over the shape of the Japanese writing system were viewed by the Japanese elite as impeding cultural development.<sup>2</sup>

The development of standard Japanese occurred alongside the gradual entrenchment of standard spoken Japanese (*hyōjungo*) within Japanese society, which can be attributed to the emergence of trained Japanese linguists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Such linguists produced focused theories and policies concerning the role of the national language for the then newly emerging compulsory education system.<sup>4</sup> The effects of language education theories and policies devised during the late 1800s and early 1900s can be witnessed today, for instance in the classroom, where elementary school students throughout Japan continue to take lessons in the “national language” (*kokugo*) to learn to speak and write standard Japanese (*hyōjungo*).<sup>5</sup> The genesis of a modern national language (*kindai kokugo*) in Japan can be traced back to the theories and language ideologies espoused by Japanese linguists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the most influential of which was Ueda Kazutoshi.

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<sup>2</sup> This was particularly the case among influential elite educators and intellectuals such as Ōkuma Shigenobu and Nishi Amane, who regularly discussed and debated the shape of the Japanese writing system. Cf. Ōkuma Shigenobu, *Ōkuma haku enzetsu shū* [A Collection of Count Ōkuma's Speeches] (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1907), 552-556; Douglas Howland, “Nishi Amane's Efforts to Translate Western Knowledge: Sound, Written Character, and Meaning,” *Semiotica* 83, nos. 3-4 (1991): 283-310.

<sup>3</sup> Baoli Chaoulou, “*Meiji kōki ni okeru kokugo kyōiku e no ueda kazutoshi no eikyō*” [The Influence of Ueda Kazutoshi on National Language Education during the Late Meiji Period], *Tōhoku Daigaku Daigakuin Kyoikugaku Kenkyū Nenpō* 53, no. 2 (2005): 31-49.

<sup>4</sup> Hoshina Kōichi, *Kokugo kyōiku oyobi kyōju no shinchō: dai ichi* [New Trends in National Language Education and Instruction: Part 1] (Tokyo: Kodokan, 1914).

<sup>5</sup> Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*; Alan S. Christy, “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa,” in *Race, Ethnicity and Migration in Modern Japan: Imagined and Imaginary Minorities*, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge: 2004), 178; Hansen, “Practicing Kokugo”.

Ueda was a talented Japanese linguist who received a government scholarship to study linguistics in Europe in the 1890s. While in Germany Ueda encountered the theories of Max Müller,<sup>6</sup> an Oxford University linguist of German origin. It is almost certain that Ueda borrowed his theory of a national Japanese language from Müller, as the terminology Ueda uses to describe the national language of Japan resembles the rhetoric found in Müller's lectures on language. Müller spoke of languages as a pure "organic system[s]" into which "not a single drop of foreign blood has entered".<sup>7</sup> This monolithic concept of linguistic purity, the connection between language and race, as well as the use of blood to symbolise the working of language within the social body, are all found in Ueda's conceptualisation of the then newly emerging Japanese nation and national language (*kokugo*).<sup>8</sup> Essential to the functioning of the national language, in Ueda's view, was its ability to create loyal Japanese subjects. It was a unity of the Japanese people through language that Ueda envisioned; the national language itself was representative of the "spiritual blood" of the Japanese people, the racial makeup of the Japanese nation.<sup>9</sup>

In the late 1800s Ueda supported (alongside other prominent linguists) the unification of written and spoken Japanese, in what was known as the *genbun itchi* movement.<sup>10</sup> The *genbun itchi* movement was crucial to the development of *kokugo* and implementation of script reform, as it dismantled class-based assumptions that written Japanese was essentially a demonstration of erudition and allowed the Japanese masses to participate in the production and consumption of literature and other texts. (The continued usage of numerous complex *kanji* during the prewar period, however, ensured that a measure of elitism remained in Japanese society.) While Ueda's participation in the movement provided him with the opportunity to further develop his ideas concerning a national

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<sup>6</sup> In his comprehensive analysis of Ueda Kazutoshi's intellectual formation, Paul Clark mentions the reputation Max Müller had as a leading linguist at the time. However, he does not draw direct links between Müller's idea of language as the "blood and soul" of a nation to Ueda's theory of the "spiritual blood" of the Japanese language.

<sup>7</sup> Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language: Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May & June, 1861, Volume 1* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866), 77-78.

<sup>8</sup> Ueda Kazutoshi, *Kokugo no tame* [For a National Language] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Ueda, *Kokugo no tame*, 12-17. Further details concerning the academics that instructed Ueda can be found in Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*, 90-93.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Heinrich, "Things you have to Leave Behind: The Demise of 'Elegant Writing' and the Rise of *Genbun Itchi* Style in Meiji-period Japan," *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 6, no. 1 (2005): 113-132.

Japanese language, his academic achievements in the field of linguistics led to his being offered a teaching post in linguistics at Tokyo Imperial University upon his return from Europe and a professorial post in the Ministry of Education.<sup>11</sup> One of the core theories Ueda developed in relation to the national language, as demonstrated in his publications on *kokugo* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, drew a link between the Japanese spirit (*Yamato damashii*) and Japanese nation through the Japanese language.<sup>12</sup> Ueda used this theory to argue for the construction of a standard national language, which he perceived as a necessary step toward achieving linguistic unification and a shared sense of ethnic and linguistic culture among the Japanese.

The creation of standard Japanese (*hyōjungo*), a modernisation project that spanned the first decades of the twentieth century,<sup>13</sup> was largely shaped by Ueda's research and practice as an academic and official working within the Ministry of Education.<sup>14</sup> The emergence of standard Japanese intertwined with Ueda's conceptualisation of the Japanese national language, as the ethnic links and spiritual bonds found within his conceptualisation of language allowed for the standardisation of the Japanese nation's cultural composition. Standard Japanese was initially codified in 1916 and 1917 with the ordering of Japanese dialects, with the dialect of "educated middle and upper classes of Tokyo" forming the core of the standard Japanese language.<sup>15</sup> An underlying cause for the choice of the Tokyo dialect related to the position of Tokyo as Japan's metropole, the place where Japanese government

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<sup>11</sup> Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*, 84-91; Florian Coulmas, *Guardians of Language: Twenty Voices through History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 170. Nanette Twine (Gottlieb) describes the *genbun itchi* movement as the "battle to replace the difficult literary styles used in the Tokugawa period with a simple style which approximated the spoken language." See Twine, "The Genbunitchi Movement." The *genbun itchi* movement was preceded by the imperial sponsorship of research into script reform in 1899, in the form of the *Kokuji kairyo bu* (National Script Improvement Section), which involved Ueda Kazutoshi and other reformists. Cf. Paul Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*, 111.

<sup>12</sup> This includes not only Ueda's seminal work on the national Japanese language (*Kokugo no tame*), but also the many national language readers (*kokugo dokubon*) he edited during the early 1900s. See Ueda Kazutoshi, *Chūgaku kokugo dokubon* [Middle School National Language Reader] (Tokyo: Dai Nippon Tosho, 1907); Ueda Kazutoshi, ed., *Shihan gakkō kokugo dokubon: Honka yō* [National Language Reader for Teachers College: Regular Courses] (Tokyo: Dai Nippon Tosho, 1908); Ueda Kazutoshi, ed., *Shihan gakkō kokugo dokubon: Yobika yō* [National Language Reader for Teachers College: Preparatory Courses] (Tokyo: Dai Nippon Tosho, 1908); Ueda Kazutoshi, ed., *Shihan gakkō kokugo dokubon: Koshūka yō* [National Language Reader for Teachers College: Lectures and Seminars] (Tokyo: Dai Nippon Tosho, 1908).

<sup>13</sup> Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan*.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Bjarke Frellesvig, *A History of the Japanese Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 381.

ministries resided and official legislation and policy – formulated by an educated elite – was drawn up on a regular basis.<sup>16</sup>

Conceptualisations of the Japanese language, and subsequent techniques of linguistic standardisation and unification, including *kokugo* education in schools and language policy formulation within the Japanese government, allowed for the spread of nationalist ideology and elitist language standards to the edges of the Japanese empire.<sup>17</sup> For instance, compulsory education in the national language (*kokugo*) and the idea of the standard language and its associated script conventions in policy making circles became deeply-entrenched in political and cultural institutions in the then recently annexed territories of Okinawa and Hokkaido.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the idea of a national Japanese language, *kokugo*, became widespread from the year 1900, through the Japanese compulsory education system, when the Ministry of Education specified *kokugo* as a subject to be taught to all students attending schools overseen by the Japanese Ministry of Education.

Concentrated efforts to construct a common national language in Japan emerged during the beginning of the twentieth century as established linguists and the Ministry of Education formulated language policies for the purpose of producing a standard language (or languages) through which to govern.<sup>19</sup> From the outset, language policy formulation in Japan typically assumed a top-down approach, where established linguists worked within the confines of the Ministry of Education and academe to create an official language (*kyōgō*), ultimately at the cost of diminishing the usage of other regional variants (*hōgen*) and languages.<sup>20</sup> A top-down approach to policy formulation was common across most areas of government during the period, as bureaucratic control strengthened through the

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<sup>16</sup> Ueda and many of the linguists involved in the earliest Japanese language policies were also either born in Tokyo or trained there.

<sup>17</sup> Education Department of the Taiwan Governor-General's Civil Administration Bureau, ed., *Kokugo dokubon shobo* [Beginners' National Language Reader] (Taipei: Education Department of the Taiwan Governor-General's Civil Administration Bureau, 1896).

<sup>18</sup> Hansen, "Practicing *Kokugo*".

<sup>19</sup> Yasuda Toshiaki, "'*Kokugo*' 'Nihongo' 'Tōa kyōtsū gō': Teikoku nihon no gengo hensei, shiron" ["National Language", "Japanese", and a "Greater East Asia Lingua Franca": An Attempted Theory of the Linguistic Makeup of Imperial Japan], *Jinbun Gakubō: The Journal of Humanities* 80 (1997), 81.

<sup>20</sup> The active suppression of regional dialects across Japan during the prewar period is well-documented in the literature. For instance, see Nakayama Akihiko, "*Honyaku suru/ sareru genbunitchi – tagengosei to tangengosei no aida*" [Translating and Translated *Genbun itchi*: Between Multilingualism and Monolingualism], *Nihon Bungaku* 47, no. 4 (1998): 16-32.

centralisation of government and concentration of education institutions in the metropole, allowing for the construction of national identity and pride.<sup>21</sup> (The focus on standardisation and the links between established linguists and the Japanese Ministry of Education continued throughout the NLC era.)

Japanese linguists such as Ueda, under the aegis of the Japanese Ministry of Education, regularly studied and discussed the means of implementing language policies related to written and spoken standard Japanese.<sup>22</sup> The promulgation of *kokugo* generally took place in the classroom, through the universal education supported by the state, and was further encouraged through reproduction and consumption of standard Japanese in the media and published word. The written word, and its ties to the standard language,<sup>23</sup> became a pressing issue from the earliest attempts of official language policy formulation, as the Ministry of Education approved *kokugo* primers that promoted national unification through education in a standardised written language.<sup>24</sup> Here Ueda played a pivotal role, as his ideas concerning *kokugo* and his authoring of *kokugo* primers aided the standardisation and unification of the Japanese language through the education system during the early 1900s. For a linguist who had actively participated in the *genbun itchi* movement, the unification of the Japanese language through *kokugo* in schools made perfect sense, as it reflected the movement's attempts to rationalise written Japanese in ways that made spoken Japanese easier to represent in written form.

It was also during the early 1900s that Ueda's theories concerning a unified national language found purchase within the Japanese academe, forming the basis for further investigations into linguistic standardisation and rationalisation within the Japanese empire's expanding borders. His direct influence on established linguists and Japanese language policy formulation is typified by the creation of language

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<sup>21</sup> Kevin Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People* (Boston: Brill, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Kakigi Shigetaka, "1900 nen zengo ni okeru kindai 'kokugo' no seiritsu to kokugo kyoiku no genjō ni tsuite" [The Formation of Modern "Kokugo" and Condition of Kokugo Education around the Year 1900], *Shiga Tanki Daigaku Kenkyū Kijō* 41 (2016): 109-122.

<sup>23</sup> The *Genbun itchi* movement is representative of early efforts to strengthen the links between standard (spoken) and written Japanese. Cf. Lee Yeonsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> According to *kokugo* education scholar Kai Yūichirō, the Ministry of Education first emphasised the teaching of mixed-script Japanese in 1886. Cf. Kai Yūichirō, "Kokugo oyobi kanbun ka no seiritsu haikeri" [The Background to the Establishment of Kokugo and Kanbun Curricula], *Tsukuba Daigaku Kyoikugaku Kijō* 29 (2005): 27-38. The Ministry of Education subsequently introduced *kokugo* as a curriculum subject in 1900.

investigation committees and scholarly research bodies from the early 1900s onward.<sup>25</sup> Ueda suggested the creation of the National Language Survey Committee (*Kokugo chōsa iin kai*), the first official language policy body in modern Japanese history. Headed by Katō Hiroyuki, professor of linguistics at Tokyo Imperial University, and including among its membership Ueda Kazutoshi, the committee was responsible for investigating Japanese script usage and included among its members Hoshina Kōichi, a talented young linguist and Ministry of Education bureaucrat who would play a significant role in future Japanese language policy formulation during the prewar, wartime, and postwar years. In addition to Hoshina, the National Language Survey Committee also included Ōtsuki Fumihiko, a leading Japanese linguist and lexicographer responsible for publishing the first systematic works – based on the findings of the committee – on standard Japanese in 1916 and 1917.<sup>26</sup>

Ueda's prominence as a *kokugo* scholar and Ministry of Education official contributed to a rise in interest in the study of *kokugo* and *hyōjungo* among Japanese linguists, creating a self-sustaining group of academics responsible for researching the national language. The appearance of *kokugo* scholars during the first few decades of the 1900s was akin to what Gramsci categorises as the emergence of “organic intellectuals” that justify the emergence of new structures of power and domination. These intellectuals were useful in the establishment of new hierarchies and structures of power throughout Japanese society by contributing to the dominance of *kokugo* as an official language in Japan. The Ministry of Education ensured that “assimilation and conquest [was] made quicker and more efficacious” by supporting *kokugo* studies and research while “simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals”.<sup>27</sup> Ueda was among the first of a long line of Ministry-supported organic intellectuals that assisted with linguistic standardisation and Japanese language policy formulation. The subsequent creation of the NLC allowed for the continuing support of language policy formulation and script reform through established linguists with ties to the Ministry of Education.

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<sup>25</sup> Ueda established the first linguistics and phonetics society. Ueda's research was also consulted by the NLC during the postwar period, particularly his opinions on overseas language policy in Europe. Cf. ACA, “*Kokugo chōsa enkaku shiryō (Shōwa 24 nen 3 gatsu)*” [Resources on the History of National Language Surveys (March 1949)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/enkaku0.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/enkaku0.html)

<sup>26</sup> Frellesvig, *A History of the Japanese Language*, 381.

<sup>27</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1977), 10.

By the 1920s Ueda's posts at the Imperial University of Tokyo and Ministry of Education had produced a significant number of academics that could play an active role in national language policy formulation and research. This included the Kindaichi family, which would investigate the linguistic makeup of Japan and ideas of "Japaneseness" for decades after Ueda's death in 1937.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, throughout the course of the twentieth century many of the leading Japanese linguists that were taught by – or had at least read the works of – Ueda contributed to language policy formulation at the highest levels, including Shinmura Izuru 新村出 (1876-1967), Tokieda Motoki 時枝誠記 (1900-1967), Hoshina Kōichi, and Iwabuchi Etsutarō 岩淵悦太郎 (1905-1978).<sup>29</sup> Their interest in the links between a national Japanese language and the state was evident in many of their works,<sup>30</sup> which contributed to the bolstering of the foundations for a national language that Ueda had built. These individuals formed a prototypical community of established linguists that would share an ongoing interest in national language policy formulation and national language problems.

While the idea of a shared standard language began to shape many individuals' beliefs and identities from the early 1900s, it was also contested throughout Japan's early modernisation.<sup>31</sup> In particular, suggestions for a unified writing system varied: some were based on adopting *kana* script –

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Kindaichi Kyosuke's reflections on Ueda Kazutoshi in Kindaichi Kyōsuke, *Kindaichi Kyōsuke kiju kinen: Kokugo gaku ronkō – Kindaichi Kyosuke senshū III* [Commemoration of Kindaichi Kyosuke's 77<sup>th</sup> Birthday: Thoughts on National Language Studies – Kindaichi Kyōsuke Selection, Vol. 3] (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1962), 413-425. Other notable Kindaichi linguists include Kindaichi Haruhiko (Kyōsuke's son) and Kindaichi Hideho (Kyōsuke's grandson). The ideas of Kindaichi Haruhiko are examined in chapters five and six of this thesis.

<sup>29</sup> Kindaichi Kyōsuke wrote at length about his studies under Ueda Kazutoshi, describing Ueda's lectures as follows: "every single word [Ueda spoke] was driven like a stake into our hearts". Cf. Kindaichi Kyōsuke, *Kindaichi Kyosuke kiju kinen: Kokugo gaku ronkō – Kindaichi Kyosuke senshū III*, 421. Similarly, Hoshina Kōichi attended Ueda's lectures on national language studies, linguistics, and phonetics, and claimed that Ueda's works drove him to "dedicate" his "life to [...] scientific research into *kokugo*". Cf. Hoshina Kōichi, *Aru kokugo gakusha no kaisō* [The Recollections of a *Kokugo* Scholar] (Tokyo: Asahi shimbun, 1952), 51. Shinmura Izuru became a member of the NLC during its formative years and wrote regularly on national language problems and standardisation during the prewar period. Cf. Shinmura, *Kokugo mondai seigi*; Shinmura Izuru, *Kokugo no kijun* [Standards of the National Language] (Tokyo: Shōbunkan, 1943). Shinmura Izuru also contributed to national language studies through his work in the field of lexicography, in which he excelled; he edited the *Kōjien*, arguably the most popular general Japanese language dictionary published in the postwar period.

<sup>30</sup> Tokieda Motoki, "*Chōsen ni okeru kokugo shisaku to kokugo kyōiku no shōrai*" [National Language Policy and the Future of National Language Education in Korea]. *Nihongo* 2, no. 8 (1942): 54-63; Christian Galan, "Out of this World, in this World, or Both? The Japanese School at a Threshold," in *Language Life in Japan: Transformations and Prospects*, eds. Patrick Heinrich and Christian Galan (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 77-93; Tokieda Motoki, *Kokugogaku shi* [The History of National Language Studies] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1932); Tokieda Motoki, *Kokugo gaku genron* [Principles of National Language Studies] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1941); Patrick Heinrich, "*Gengo Seikatsu: The Study of Language Life in Japan, 1945-1995*," *Historiographia Linguistica* 29, nos. 1/2 (2002), 98; Kindaichi Haruhiko, *Shin nihongo ron: Watakushi no gendai go kyōshitsu* [New Japanese Language Theories: My Contemporary Language Classroom] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1966), 106; Kindaichi Kyōsuke, "*Shin kanazukai hō no gakuteki konkyō*" [The Academic Basis of New *Kana* Usage], *Kokubungaku Kenkyū* 5 (1951), 49.

<sup>31</sup> Hirai, *Kokugo kokuji mondai no rekishi*.

as advocated by Maejima Hisoka as early as the 1860s – as the national script of the Japanese language, while others, such as the *genbun itchi* movement, supported the use of Romanised or mixed-script Japanese writing system.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the early 1900s was also a period in which language usage was regulated by educators and policy makers. For instance, officials in the Prefecture of Okinawa issued an ordinance in 1907 that banned the use of “dialects” (the Ryūkyūan language) in schools, for the purposes of building a shared identity among Japanese and Okinawans.<sup>33</sup> There were, therefore, a range of tensions among established linguists as to how to normalise *kokugo*, which were further complicated with the spread of the national Japanese language and script throughout Japan’s colonies.<sup>34</sup>

## Colonial Language Policies

Supporting a standard language often meant disregarding or actively suppressing alternative language practices within society. The suppression of alternate script variants went hand in hand with the project of linguistic standardisation envisioned by the modernising Japanese state. The overthrow of written language variants occurred in a wide range of contexts, and was not limited to the established borders of the “homeland”, but involved the disempowerment of linguistic minorities in Japanese colonies through the introduction of new script conventions.<sup>35</sup> For instance, Japanese bureaucrats and elite scholars attempted to supplement and replace Taiwanese and Korean language education with Japanese language education in colonial Taiwan and Korea.<sup>36</sup> To this end, the teaching of Japanese as a national language (*kokugo*) in Taiwan began post haste in July 1895,<sup>37</sup> with national language studies in Korea gradually dominating compulsory education in the Korean peninsula after its annexation in 1910.

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<sup>32</sup> Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan*.

<sup>33</sup> Patrick Heinrich, “Language Planning and Language Ideology in the Ryūkyū Islands,” *Language Policy* 3, no. 2 (2004), 158.

<sup>34</sup> Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*, 59-61.

<sup>35</sup> Matsunaga Noriko, “‘Kokugo’ *kyōiku kara tōa no nihongo e no michi: Shokuminchi, senryōchi no nihongo kyōiku*” [The Road from “National Language” Education to “Japanese in Greater East Asia”: Japanese Language Education in Colonies and Occupied Territories], *Nihongo Kyōiku Kenkyū* (March 1997), 73.

<sup>36</sup> Lee Yeonsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, 109.

<sup>37</sup> The rapid pace at which change occurred was surprising; a school to teach Japanese to Taiwanese children was established two months after the creation of the Japanese Governor-general of Taiwan. Cf. Murakami Yoshihide, “Aspect of Japanese Language Policy in Taiwan,” *Tenri University Journal* 36, no. 2 (1985), 22. An account of *kokugo* education in Taiwan can be found in Florian Coulmas, “Language Policy in Modern Japanese Education,” in *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues*, ed. James W. Tollefson (London: Routledge, 2002), 214-215.

Language within Japanese colonial administration between the years 1890 and 1945 followed a similar trajectory to policies formulated by European colonisers.<sup>38</sup> Writing systems were used expressly to isolate, critique, and replicate power relations through ideologies embedded in the education system and political process. Power relations were isolated in the classroom, where *kokugo* became the medium of instruction, and proficiency in Japanese became a determining factor in distinguishing between teachers and students, as well as Japanese and non-Japanese.<sup>39</sup> *Kokugo* functioned as an ideological instrument for the creation of loyal Japanese subjects, both outside and within the Japanese archipelago.

Japanese colonial administrators in Korea began with a benevolent view of Korean society which emphasised the “civilised” status of Korea in relation to “other peoples”.<sup>40</sup> Oguma Eiji, the social historian of wartime and postwar Japan, notes how early into the colonial administration of Korea theories of “common ancestry” and “mixed race” were used by Japanese colonial administrators to justify the continuation of the colonial administration of the Korean peninsula.<sup>41</sup> Such views coexisted with views of assimilation and overt control through language that overlapped, despite their disparate foci, with Korean education and “benevolent” colonialism.

The building of the Japanese empire relied heavily upon diverse mechanisms of assimilation and discrimination throughout annexed territories and colonies, in addition to the challenging of power relations, which bolstered the position of *kokugo* outside of the Japanese nation. To demonstrate the political significance of writing systems, let us consider the fate of language variants in colonial Korea and mainland Japan, particularly during the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>42</sup> The aforementioned theory of

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<sup>38</sup> Komagome Takeshi and J. A. Mangan, “Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan 1895-1922: Precepts and Practices of Control,” *History of Education* 26, no.3 (1997): 307-322; Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 99-103; Bettina Migge and Isabella Léglise, “Language and Colonialism,” in *Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change*, eds. Marlis Hellinger and Anne Pauwels (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 299-332.

<sup>39</sup> For instance, see Izumi Fumika, “*Shokuminchi shibaika oyobi kaibō go no nibongo kyōiku – nibongo kyōkasho to kankoku jin kara no kikitō o tegakari ni*” [Japanese Language Education during the Colonial Occupation and after Liberation: Based on Japanese Language Textbooks and the Narratives of Koreans], *Ryūkyō Kiyō* 29, no. 2 (2008): 203-212.

<sup>40</sup> M. J. Rhee, “Language Planning in Korea under the Japanese Colonial Administration, 1910-1945,” *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 5, no. 2 (1995), 90.

<sup>41</sup> Oguma Eiji, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen: “Nihonjin” no jigazō no keifu* [The Myth of the Homogeneous Nation] (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1995), 152.

<sup>42</sup> The modern era is understood as the period between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“common ancestry” between Japanese and Koreans led to the colonial Government General’s support of the formulation of Korean language policies for written Korean, as well as the Government General’s support of bilingual (Korean and Japanese) education in schooling on the Korean peninsula.<sup>43</sup> These colonial policies were reflected in Japan proper (*naichi*) with the recognition of Korean script on ballots cast for individuals running for the seventeenth House of Representatives elections in the Imperial Diet.<sup>44</sup> However, from 1938 onward the Government General of Korea replaced bilingual educational policies with monolingual Japanese policies that envisioned the complete assimilation (*dōka*) of Koreans through linguistic means.<sup>45</sup> (It is unclear whether this negated the validity of Korean script in the casting of ballots using Korean script by Koreans living in Japan proper.<sup>46</sup>) The intensification of linguistic assimilation envisioned by colonial administrators was closely tied to the mobilisation of imperial subjects during Japan’s invasion of China and countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Monolingual language policies promoted by colonial administrators during this period found support among established linguists and educators such as Tokieda Motoki, professor of linguistics at Keijō University in colonial Seoul. From the late 1930s onward Tokieda tailored his linguistic theories to the ultimate aims of Japanese colonialism and empire at the time: the replication of loyal subjects, both domestically and overseas, through a single shared language.<sup>47</sup> He supported the replacement of Korean with Japanese (*kokugo*) on the Korean Peninsula, through a program of linguistic nativisation.<sup>48</sup> He proposed the formulation of language policies that would aid in the rapid assimilation and

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<sup>43</sup> Oguma notes how in the lead to the annexation of Korea Japanese linguists and historians viewed the “common ancestry” shared between Japanese and Korean through a linguistic lens. Cf. Oguma, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*, 96-100.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Asahi shinbun*, “Chōsenji no tōhyō” [Casting Votes in Korean Script], 1 January, 1927; *Asahi shinbun*, “Chōsenji no tōhyō” [Casting Votes in Korean Script], 28 January, 1930; *Asahi shinbun*, “Chōsenji no tōhyō” [Casting Votes in Korean Script], 12 February, 1930. *Asahi shinbun* newspaper reports trace the “injustice” of forbidding the “tens of thousands” of eligible local Korean voters living in Japan from voting through to the approval of ballots using Korean script according to Japanese pronunciation conventions for the House of Representatives elections.

<sup>45</sup> Lee, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, 171-174; Seong-Cheol Oh and Ki-seok Kim, “Expansion of Elementary Schooling under Colonialism: Top Down or Bottom Up?,” in *Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea 1910-1945*, ed. Hong Yung Lee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 132.

<sup>46</sup> Yasuda Toshiaki discusses the shift from rejection to acceptance of Korean script that occurred with the General Election Law of 1925, which granted voting rights to all men over the age of twenty five residing in Japan. Cf. Yasuda Toshiaki, *Kindai nihon gengo shi saikō V: Kotoba no toraekata o megutte* [Rethinking the Linguistic History of Modern Japan, vol. V: Concerning the Construal of Language] (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2018), 152-62. For a more in-depth discussion of Korean suffrage in prewar Japan, see Matsuda Toshihiko, *Senzenki no zainichi chōsenjin to sanseiken* [Prewar Resident Koreans and Suffrage] (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1995).

<sup>47</sup> Yasuda Toshiaki, *Shokuminchi no naka no “Kokugogaku”*: Tokieda motoki to keijō teikoku daigaku o megutte [“National Language Studies” in the Colonies: Tokieda Motoki and Keijō Imperial University] (Tokyo: Sangensha, 1997).

<sup>48</sup> Christina Yi, “National Language, Imperialization, and the Gendered Aporia of Language,” *Positions* 24, no. 4 (2016), 829.

imperialisation of Koreans through exclusive national language (*kokugo*) education targeting Korean mothers in Korean households.<sup>49</sup> Heinrich notes how the spread of standardised Japanese as a national language among Japanese colonies such as Korea relates to the “ideological linkage between language, spirit, and culture” made by Japanese colonial administrations,<sup>50</sup> which were interested in furthering the unification of Japan and Korea (*naisen ittai*) based on theories of common ancestry and cultural heritage. Tokieda was a prime advocate of the *naisen ittai* during his tenure as a linguistics professor in colonial Seoul. This focus on monolingualism, and its significance in shaping national identity, did not disappear during the Occupation era, as the Japanese writing system continued to represent not only a mode of communication but also a system of cultural homogenisation for many language policy formulators and established linguists.

Links between language and identity were viewed along different lines by various groups of ethnic Koreans on the Korean peninsula, as private organisations such as the Korean Language Research Society attempted to replace colonial Korean language policies with their own vision of a Korean language in relation to an increasingly hegemonic (Japanese) *kokugo*.<sup>51</sup> Korean educators occasionally resisted language policies emanating from colonial administrators or the metropole. In late 1930s colonial Korea, the increasing dominance of standard Japanese in the education system and print media met with opposition from groups within Korean society. Despite strict policing of the education system in Korea during the period, schools such as the Onchon Private School of Northern Hamgyong Province encouraged their students to “read the Korean language” against the wishes of the Japanese colonial administration.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the Hangul script – developed in Korea in the fourteenth century – was increasingly linked to a nascent nationalism that swept across the Korean Peninsula soon after the

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<sup>49</sup> Tokieda, “*Chōsen ni okeru kokugo shisaku to kokugo kyōiku no shōrai*.”

<sup>50</sup> Patrick Heinrich, “Visions of Community: Japanese Language Spread in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea,” *Internationales Asienforum* 44, nos. 3-4 (2013), 240.

<sup>51</sup> M. J. Rhee, “Language Planning in Korea under the Japanese Colonial Administration,” 93. In 1933, the work of the Korean Language Research Association led, with the consent of colonial administrators, to the standardisation of Korean orthography. The standardised orthography contributed to the linguistic nationalism that emerged in postwar Korea.

<sup>52</sup> Ayako Shinomiya Burton, “Japanese Language Planning in Korea, 1905-1945” (Master’s thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1994), 32.

departure of the Japanese colonial administration.<sup>53</sup> The “slippage” between *kokugo* and the Korean language was evident during the colonial administration of the Korean peninsula,<sup>54</sup> and was used by Korean scholars and (later) politicians to formulate new links between Korean script and Korean ethno-nationalism. Language policies within Japan’s colonies, therefore, had a long-lasting impact on linguistic nationalisms and political ideology beyond the physical and cultural borders of imperial Japan.

## Wartime Language Policy

There was a relatively pluralistic understanding of the functioning of language among Japanese linguists during the prewar and wartime period. For instance, during the 1920s and 1930s Esperantists envisioned the adoption of Esperanto as a language of cross-cultural communication between residents of Japan and China,<sup>55</sup> which equated with using Esperanto as an international language in East Asia.<sup>56</sup> Shiraishi notes how calls for the adoption of Esperanto as the national language of Japan were made, but the possibility of such proposals being adopted was inconceivable due to the widespread adherence to *kokugo*.<sup>57</sup> One of the aims of many Esperanto users, both in Japan and overseas, was to rid modern societies of the parochial nationalism inherent in the framing of standard national languages, which were deemed a barrier to universal communication. Yasuda notes how Esperantists such as the dialectologist Saitō Hidekatsu (1908-1940) employed terms such as *genko undō* (“language activism”), as opposed to the commonly used *kokugo undō* (“national language activism”), during the mid-thirties to transcend the confinements of the nation-state and its role in shaping language usage.<sup>58</sup> By the 1930s the Esperanto movement had already attracted a relatively broad following among Japanese intellectuals

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<sup>53</sup> Linguistic nationalism in Korea began with the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in 1919 and subsequently in the postwar period, particularly under the presidency of Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea. Cf. Michael Kim, “The Han’gŭl Crisis and Language Standardization,” 9. For a note on Hangul usage in Korean literature, cf. Kichung Kim, *An Introduction to Classical Korean Literature: From Hyangga to P’ansori* (London: Routledge, 2015), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Pieper, “Korean as Translation Literacy: Language Policy and Korean Colonial Education, 1910-1919,” *Acta Koreana* 18, no. 2 (2015), 413.

<sup>55</sup> Sho Konishi, “The Science of Symbiosis and Linguistic Democracy in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems* no. 13, no. 2 (2015): 299-317.

<sup>56</sup> Toki Zenmaro, an *Asahi shimbun* journalist and later academic and National Language Council chair, is an example of a figure who showed interest in Esperanto and Romanised alphabets during the prewar and wartime periods. Cf. Toki Zenmaro, “*Dare demo kakeru jidai, yomeru jidai ni?*” [An Age where anyone can Write and Read], *Gengo Seikatsu* 22, no. 2 (1970): 88-95.

<sup>57</sup> Shiraishi, *Shūsengo ni okeru kokugo kairyō no dōkō*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Yasuda, “‘Gengo seisaku’ no hassei: Gengo mondai ninshiki no keifu,” 146.

and the general public,<sup>59</sup> though its chances of supplanting *kokugo* were significantly low because of the foundations that Ueda Kazutoshi and other linguists laid for research and education in the standard national language.

Script reformists were able to voice their opinions to the highest authorities in Japan. In Tokyo Japanese script reform was thrust into the public spotlight in July 1931 when Hoshina Kōichi discussed script and other language problems with the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, raising public interest in script reform throughout mainland Japan. The emperor listened to Hoshina speak about issues relating to the Japanese language, including the script reform movement and systems of Romanisation,<sup>60</sup> before asking Hoshina whether he believed the Imperial Rescript (a widely circulated document espousing conservative morals and ethical behaviour) was too difficult to read. Hoshina replied that “it is not only my personal opinion, but the wish of the average citizen, that the Rescript be simplified”.<sup>61</sup> In that moment a significant but short-lived connection was established between script reform and the imperial agenda.

The status of the Imperial Rescript as a sacred text made it difficult to simplify, as it was viewed as a sacred object of veneration to be kept at all Japanese schools and read by individuals in positions of high standing in the community until its abolition in June 1948.<sup>62</sup> Even so, there was much interest in the press in the meeting between Hoshina and Hirohito, which was subsequently celebrated by Japan’s bureaucratic elite in Tokyo.<sup>63</sup> A report in the *Asahi shimbun* notes that Hirohito was so convinced of the complexity of Japanese script problems that he spent over an hour and a half conversing on the topic with Hoshina.<sup>64</sup> This came as a surprise to those that were in Hirohito’s entourage, as only an hour had been set aside for Hoshina’s lecture on language problems. (The news

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<sup>59</sup> Sho Konishi, “Translingual World Order: Language without Culture in Post-Russo-Japanese War Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 1 (2013): 91-114.

<sup>60</sup> During the 1930s Japanese linguists debated what system of Romanisation was most suited to Japanese orthography. The usual candidates were the Hepburn system of Romanisation, created by the American missionary James Hepburn, and Kunrei-shiki Romanisation, developed by Tanaka Aidatekitsu.

<sup>61</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Shōboku wa muzukashiku omoanuka?*” [Don’t you Think the Rescript is Difficult?], 19 June, 1931.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Kazunori Kumagai, “Value-Creating Pedagogy and Japanese Education in the Modern Era,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* 10, no. 1 (2000), 34.

<sup>63</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Shōboku wa muzukashiku omoanuka.*”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

also came as a surprise to Japanese linguists, who proceeded to commemorate the occasion with a celebration.) The National Language Association (*Kokugo kyōkai*) held a banquet (*shukugakai*) in honour of Hoshina's lecture on language problems in the presence of the emperor.<sup>65</sup> The banquet was held at the Japan Club in Tokyo on 4 July 1931,<sup>66</sup> and was attended by approximately eighty people, including such notables as the incumbent Minister of Education Tanaka Ryūzō and (soon to be) first chair of the NLC Minami Hiroshi,<sup>67</sup> demonstrating the ongoing interest in language problems among the Japanese elite.

Organisations promoting radical script reform also shifted their focus to the political agendas of the Japanese empire and elite. For instance, the *Kana Moji Kai* (*Kana* Orthography Association), a large script reform advocacy group that counted *kokugo* scholar Matsusaka Tadanori 松坂忠則 (1902-1986) among its membership in the early 1940s,<sup>68</sup> collaborated with the Japanese Imperial Army in the creation of a writing system and vocabulary that could be employed by the army as it invaded new territories such as the Philippines in its “drive south” (*nanshutsu*) into Southeast Asia and the Pacific.<sup>69</sup> The writing system the *Kana Moji Kai* envisioned made exclusive use of *kana*, given the difficulties and time-consuming nature of learning a multi-script writing system, and involved consultation concerning its implementation with the Southeast Asian division of the Ministry of Greater East Asia during the early 1940s.<sup>70</sup> Such proposals would help spread *kokugo* into new parts of the world, while also increasing the possibility of comprehensive script reform in the future.

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<sup>65</sup> *Asahi shinbun*, “*Kokuji mondai goshinkō no Hoshina shi shukuga kai* [Banquet held for Dr Hoshina's Lecture on Script Problems],” 5 July, 1931.

<sup>66</sup> As of August 2018, the club continues to function as a space for commemorating and hosting a range of political and academic conferences.

<sup>67</sup> Minami Hiroshi was also vice-chair of the National Language Association.

<sup>68</sup> Yasuda, “*Kiso Nihongo no shisō – senjiki no nihongo kanika no jittai to omowaku*” [The Ideas behind Basic Japanese – the Nature and Expectations of Japanese Simplification during Wartime], *Hikaku Bungaku Bunka Ronshū* 12 (1996), 33. Matsusaka Tadanori became a member of the NLC in 1947.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Shimomura Hiroshi, the then chair of the *Kana* Orthography Association, proposed that *kana* be adopted as the common script (*kyōtsū moji*) of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

Similarly, the *Rōmaji no Kai* (Romanisation Association) proposed the adoption of a new simplified “language” termed *Kiso Nihongo* (Basic Japanese),<sup>71</sup> which made use of a limited vocabulary for ease of learning and use among non-Japanese speakers. Basic Japanese became the focus of deliberations between military officials of the Japanese Imperial Army, the Ministry of Education, and the National Language Association, which established a Basic Japanese Survey Group (*chōsa kai*) in 1938.<sup>72</sup> While the main aim of the development and dissemination of Basic Japanese was the facilitation of smooth communication between military personnel and local populations in simplified spoken and written Japanese, sources have noted how literacy rates among military conscripts in the Japanese Army also led to proposals for script reform, e.g. through simplification of nomenclature for military weapons and parts.<sup>73</sup> An acknowledgement of the difficulty of the Japanese writing system within the army during wartime meant that script reform was not only used for the spread of *kokugo* – in the form of linguistic imperialism – but that script reform was also viewed as a means of bolstering the functionality of the Japanese military at a time of rapid mobilisation.

From the perspective of the bureaucratic elite within the Japanese wartime Intelligence Agency (*Jōhō kyoku*), a variant of Basic Japanese, referred to as *Nippongo* (Japanese language), was meant to serve as part of a lingua franca for an expanding Greater East Asia (*Tōa kyōtsūgo*).<sup>74</sup> As an adapted (and simplified) writing system, influenced by the Basic English movement of the 1930s and 1940s,<sup>75</sup> proponents of Basic Japanese variants intended to aid the rapid spread of the Japanese language and culture to non-Japanese speakers in locations falling within the boundaries of the Japanese empire. This include Taiwan, where in 1937 the Governor-General of Taiwan considered incorporating Basic

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<sup>71</sup> A word-for-word translation of the term would be “fundamental Japanese”. However, the lexical and orthographic simplicity of the proposed “language” lends itself to the term “basic”. See Yasuda Toshiaki, “*Kiso Nihongo no shisō – senjiki no nihongo kanika no jittai to omowaku*,” 23-42.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Ibid, 27. In the former British Empire similar proposals were made by Charles Ogen, the University of Cambridge academic who had contacted Winston Churchill about the use of “Basic English” in British colonies. See Ivor Armstrong Richards, “Basic English,” *Modern Language Journal* 29, no. 1 (1945): 60-65.

<sup>73</sup> Yasuda, *Kanji baishō no shisō shi*, 196-7. The list published by the Japanese Imperial Army on 29 February 1940 restricted *kanji* usage to 1,235 characters. Cf. ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi* [A One-hundred Year History of National Language Policy] (Tokyo: Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2005), 935.

<sup>74</sup> Yasuda, “*Kiso nihongo no shisō*,” 24.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. For an example of Basic English in practice, see Charles Kay Ogden, *The ABC of Basic English (in Basic)* (London: Kegan Paul & co., 1932).

Japanese to promote the penetration of *kokugo* throughout Taiwanese society.<sup>76</sup> It is unclear whether *Nippongo* was taught to individuals in other parts of the Japanese empire. However, its existence points to a recognition of the political significance of script in times of war, with a simplified Japanese writing system serving as a means of inculcating perceived Japanese ideologies, cultural customs, and norms.

Efforts to rapidly improve proficiency in Japanese occurred throughout the early 1940s, as streamlined alternatives to *kokugo* were devised to aid the spread of Japanese throughout colonial territories. In 1941 a group of reformists from the National Language Association and *Kana* Orthography Association petitioned then Japanese Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki to guarantee the use of colloquial Japanese throughout the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere.<sup>77</sup> Yasuda describes Japanese officials in the military welcoming changes to the written form of the Japanese language for military “advancement” (*shinshutsu*) in the “Southern” arena (of Southeast Asia and the Pacific),<sup>78</sup> but simultaneously being unable to implement Basic Japanese because of military policies that promoted the spread of “genuine” (*junsei*) Japanese overseas.<sup>79</sup> Ideologies of Japanese spirit and language, and their interconnectedness, had penetrated the highest levels of the Japanese Imperial Army during wartime, preventing the spread of simplified Japanese script and linguistic conventions. The tropes of “correct” and “pure” Japanese language usage would resurface in postwar debates about purity versus simplicity, as well as correctness versus ease of learning (for instance in the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language).<sup>80</sup>

## The Wartime NLC and Established Linguists’ Views on Script Reform

The increasing mobilisation of Japan’s imperial forces overseas during the late 1930s shifted language policies in colonial and occupied territories (such as Manchuria and Korea).<sup>81</sup> This had severe consequences for debates concerning script reform from 1938 onward, as debates in Japanese

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<sup>76</sup> Urabe Masami, “A Study of Kooichi DOI’s ‘Basic Japanese’,” *Fukuoka Kokusai Daigaku Kiyō* 37 (2017), 150.

<sup>77</sup> Yasuda, “*Kiso nihongo no shiso*,” 30.

<sup>78</sup> Efficiency and speedy communication were tantamount to a successful campaign.

<sup>79</sup> The wartime Intelligence Office (*jōhō kyōku*) of Japan devised its own 300-word Basic Japanese glossary, which was written almost entirely in *katakana*.

<sup>80</sup> These distinctions are addressed in chapter four of the thesis.

<sup>81</sup> Matsunaga Noriko, “‘*Kokugo*’ *kyōiku kara* ‘*tōa no nihongo*’ *kyōiku e no michi*?”

ministries began to concentrate on the “New Order of East Asia” and the “spiritual blood” of the Japanese (echoing Ueda’s ideas on the links between the national language and Japanese people).<sup>82</sup> It also had significant implications for script reform in the puppet state of Manchukuo (declared in 1932), where Manchurian *kana* (*mango kana*) was developed as an official writing system of the Manchurian variant of Chinese to improve the infiltration of the Japanese language in the region.<sup>83</sup>

The need for ongoing language policy formulation, to further consolidate *kokugo* and standard *kanji* and *kana* usage in Japan and its colonies, led to the creation of the NLC on 12 December 1934, a few years prior to the commencement of the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>84</sup> Though the NLC only met a handful of times prior to the end of the Second World War,<sup>85</sup> its membership consisted of military personnel, bureaucrats from the Ministry of Education, Cabinet Legislation Bureau (*hōseikyoku*) members and Cabinet secretaries, in addition to established linguists such as the notable scholars Kindaichi Kyōsuke,<sup>86</sup> Shinmura Izuru,<sup>87</sup> Kuraishi Takeshirō 倉石武四郎 (1897-1976), Hoshina Kōichi, and Andō Masatsugu,<sup>88</sup> most of whom either had direct ties to the Ministry of Education or had worked within the Ministry of Education in the past. The presence of military personnel in the NLC membership ensured the close coordination of language policy between the NLC and Imperial Japanese Army,<sup>89</sup> which would become increasingly important with the looming prospect of total war in the early 1940s.

Script reform and a study of the Japanese writing system were top priorities for the wartime NLC, as demonstrated by its regular formulation and reformulation of *kanji* set lists, particularly its

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<sup>82</sup> Matsunaga Noriko, “*Nibongo no ‘nanshutsu’: ‘Daitōa sensō’ kei no Nibongo fukkyū taisaku*” [The “Southern Advance” of Japanese: Japanese Dissemination Policies during the Period of the “Greater East-Asian War”], *Social and Cultural Studies* 1 (1997), 3.

<sup>83</sup> Yasuda Toshiaki, “‘Ōdō rakudo’ to shogengo no chii: ‘Manchukuo’ no gengo seisaku, shiron” [“Arcadia” and the Hierarchy of Languages: An Essay on Language Policy in “Manchukuo”], *Ajia Kenkyū* 42, no. 2 (1996), 47-48.

<sup>84</sup> ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi*, 933.

<sup>85</sup> The NLC held general meetings on 12 December 1934 and 25 May 1943 during this period.

<sup>86</sup> Kindaichi Kyosuke was a student of Ueda Kazutoshi’s.

<sup>87</sup> Shinmura Izuru edited the first edition of the *Kōjien*, one of the most widely used Japanese dictionaries in contemporary Japan. Despite Shinmura’s conservative tendencies and negative attitude toward changes to *kana* usage in the early postwar period, his dictionary made use of Contemporary *Kana* Usage throughout the main body of the text. Cf. Shimizu Tei, “*Kieta ‘tebu’ (kokugo shingikai monogatari: 2)*” [The Disappearance of “Tehu” (National Language Council Sagas: Part 2)], *Asahi shimbun*, 16 February, 2001.

<sup>88</sup> ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi*, 810.

<sup>89</sup> The working relationship between the NLC and Imperial Japanese Army, which included proposals for the reform of nomenclature and *kanji* usage, is detailed in Yasuda, *Kanji haishi no shiso*, 199-202.

support in the compilation of *kanji* usage for military nomenclature in February 1940 and the Standard *Kanji* Set List (comprised of 2,582 characters) of June 1942.<sup>90</sup> By the early 1940s, the publications of NLC members were often informed by, and informing, the widely circulated idea of the Japanese-led Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere, a government-sponsored idea that promoted the development of unity and economic independence in East Asia (China, Manchuria, the Korean Peninsula, Japan, and Taiwan) during wartime. Some of the most prominent linguists and bureaucrats, including Hoshina Kōichi, Kindaichi Kyōsuke, and Andō Masatsugu, reference the *daitōa kyōeiken* (Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere) in their research on language policy during the early 1940s.<sup>91</sup>

Script choice was also regularly contested by established linguists engaged in discussions of language policy within the context of the Co-prosperity Sphere. For instance, Kindaichi Kyōsuke referred to the mixed-Japanese script as the rational choice for the Co-prosperity Sphere, given its logical and aesthetically pleasing qualities.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, advocates of script reform such as Hoshina Kōichi continued to advocate for limitations on *kanji* usage to secure the spread of Japanese overseas.<sup>93</sup> Beyond the established linguists and bureaucrats responsible for language policy, there was little time or interest in script reform during the early 1940s, as public discourse shifted toward conservative ultranationalism, led by the likes of Yamada Yoshio 山田孝雄 (1878-1958) and Shida Nobuyoshi 志田延義 (1906-2003).<sup>94</sup> The Japanese language, ultranationalists argued, should remain untainted and free from meddling by linguists proposing script reform. Yamada Yoshio, a renowned *kokugogaku* scholar, was “extremely cautious of reform” and, as an influential scholar of the Japanese language, often blocked attempts by the Ministry of Education to limit the number of *kanji* in use within official ministries and government bodies.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. Standard *Kanji* Set List entry in ACA, “*Kokugo shisaku enkaku shiryō*” [Resources on the History of National Language Policy], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/enkaku11.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/enkaku11.html)

<sup>91</sup> Hoshina, *Daitōa kyōeiken to kokugo seisaku*; Kindaichi, *Kotodama o megurite*; Andō Masatsugu, “*Nihongo fukkyū no shōrai*” [The Future of the Spread of Japanese], *Nihongo* 3, no. 6 (1943): 4-14.

<sup>92</sup> Kindaichi, *Kotoba no kotodama*.

<sup>93</sup> See, for instance, Hoshina, *Daitōa kyōeiken to kokugo seisaku*, 427-435.

<sup>94</sup> Lee, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, 208-210.

<sup>95</sup> Clark, *The Kokugo Revolution*, 163-165. Yamada, Clark notes, believed that *kanji* were sacred in and of themselves, which made attempts to limit their usage sacrilege.

Yamada Yoshio viewed the Japanese language as belonging to the Yamato race, the ethnic Japanese that occupied mainland Japan. During wartime he considered Japanese to be the *lingua franca* (*tsūyōgo*) of the Japanese people and Japanese empire, a standard language of government and education.<sup>96</sup> This view was common among many other established linguists. However, Yamada also explicitly viewed the national language as an immovable expression of the intellectual development and understanding of the ethnic Japanese,<sup>97</sup> which informed his vehement opposition to government language policies that could potentially alter the national language. Conservative linguists such as Yamada were wary of reform while also opposed to prescriptive language policies due to the ability of such policies to “taint” written language usage among the general Japanese population. The anti-prescriptivism found among conservative linguists of the wartime period was to resurface among NLC members during the 1960s and jeopardise the primacy of the NLC as a language policy formulator.

## Conclusion

A range of interest groups and forces impacted Japanese script reform during the prewar and wartime periods. The groundwork for postwar script reform was undertaken during the prewar period through the conceptualisation of *kokugo*, language standardisation, institutional architecture (policy bodies), and the nexus of academic expertise and policy formulation within officialdom. With the birth of *kokugo* ideologies in the early 1900s, established linguists were able to imagine the Japanese writing system along nationalistic and ethnic lines. Ueda Kazutoshi, an established linguist at Japan’s leading university and Ministry of Education official, used ideas from German linguist Max Müller (1823-1900) to frame *kokugo* as the spirit and blood of the Japanese people. However, this framing of the national language was challenged with the growth of the Japanese empire and its linguistic diversity. The need for *kokugo* as an ideology of unification extended beyond the domestic education system, as colonial

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<sup>96</sup> Yamada Yoshio, “*Kokugo to wa nan zo ya*” [What is a National Language?], in *Kokugo bunka kōza dai 2 kan: Kokugo gairon hen* [National Language Culture Seminar Volume 2: Introduction to the National Language Edition], ed. *Asahi shimbun*, (Tokyo: Asahi shimbun, 1941), 2.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 5-6. Yamada believed that historical and social factors needed to be taken into account when studying language and claimed that linguists viewed language through a narrow lens that concentrated specifically on “spoken language” as opposed to written and spoken forms. Yamada’s holistic view of language suggests an attempt to reincorporate philology into the realm of structural linguistics.

administrators recognised the need to formulate policies that assimilated non-Japanese others into a growing Japanese empire. Such policies affected language usage in Taiwan and the Korean peninsula, as well as Manchuria and the “drive South”, where imagined ethnic ties and “civilisation” were used to legitimate the infiltration of *kokugo* into the everyday lives of individuals living under Japanese colonial rule.

The drive to assimilate non-Japanese others through language policy intensified with the commencement of the Second Sino-Japanese and Second World War. Established linguists, many of whom had been trained by Ueda Kazutoshi, played a central role in tailoring written language policies for the Japanese Imperial Army and other government institutions and ministries. These linguists differed in their opinions on script reform, with some favouring simplification and others arguing for the maintenance of written Japanese in its current form. Similarly, government ministries produced their own policies in coordination with and isolation from established linguists, creating a litany of language policy proposals targeting reform and rationalisation of written Japanese for the purposes of expansion, mobilisation, and improved functionality of military capabilities. Many of these proposals did not eventuate, and those that did, were tempered by a prevailing ultranationalism (found in scholars such as Yamada Yoshio) that prevented the NLC and Japanese Imperial Army from implementing substantial script reform during wartime. Wartime policies, however, served as a reference point for language policy makers in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, a period that was marked by continuity and contrasts in language policy direction.

## Chapter 2: Early Postwar Language Policy and Democratisation

The same people and institutions responsible for language policies during wartime continued formulating language policies immediately after the conclusion of the Second World War. In November 1945 members of the NLC began compiling *kanji* set lists – notably the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List – that would restrict the number of *kanji* used in the Japanese language, as well as normalise simplified *kanji* forms already in common use.<sup>1</sup> This represented a continuation of the NLC’s efforts to establish *kanji* set lists during wartime, as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List compiled during the late months of 1945 and most of 1946 was drawn directly from the *kanji* for daily usage contained in the wartime Standard *Kanji* Set List (*Hyōjun kanji hyō*) of 1942.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note here that set lists produced by the postwar NLC only had a binding effect on government ministries and agencies. None of the policies, with the exception of the set list of characters for personal names of 1951, had any binding power on non-governmental sectors of Japanese society (e.g. the media, higher education, and publishing houses).<sup>3</sup> Despite their non-restrictive nature, many publishing houses and broadsheet newspapers adopted the conventions set forth in early postwar policies, particularly the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage (mentioned below).

Similarly, it is likely that another flagship script policy, Contemporary *Kana* Usage, borrowed heavily from *kana* usage policy, namely the *Shin jion kanazukai* (New Phonetic *Kana* Usage), formulated by the wartime NLC in 1942.<sup>4</sup> The main departure from wartime language policy, however, was in scope: the reconstruction of Japan proper, as opposed to the spread of Japanese as a lingua franca throughout the Greater East-Asian Co-prosperity Sphere, served as the guiding trajectory of Japanese language policy formulation. This required an introspective focus on the links between script and the Japanese nation – the seeds of which had been sown in the prewar era – as well as a re-articulation of

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<sup>1</sup> Yasuda, *Kanji baishi no shisō*, 366-7.

<sup>2</sup> ACA, “*Tōyō kanji hyō*” [*Tōyō Kanji* Set List], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/pdf/12\\_001.pdf](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/pdf/12_001.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> ACA, “*Kore made no kanji seisaku ni tsuite*” [About Past *Kanji* Policies], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkashingikai/sokai/sokai\\_5/39/gijishidai/shiryō\\_6.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkashingikai/sokai/sokai_5/39/gijishidai/shiryō_6.html)

<sup>4</sup> ACA, “*Shin jion kanazukai*” [New Phonetic *Kana* Usage], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/pdf/01\\_089.pdf](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/sisaku/enkaku/pdf/01_089.pdf)

the aims of script reform and language policy more broadly. The imagined ethnic links between the Japanese language and Japaneseness found new life among established linguists of the early postwar period, as the discourse of democratisation began to circulate through academic and government institutions.

The Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-1952) had a varied effect on Japanese policy-making in areas such as defence, foreign affairs, as well as soft policy and cultural institutions.<sup>5</sup> However, language policy was an area in which the Allied occupation was reluctant to actively involve itself,<sup>6</sup> despite interest in Japanese script reform and the establishment of a “Language Simplification Branch” within the Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E).<sup>7</sup> The consensus among SCAP elites was to leave the formulation of language policy and other related tasks to the Japanese Ministry of Education.<sup>8</sup> SCAP elites avoided involvement in language policy formulation – for example through direct orders to the NLC or Ministry of Education to implement script reform – due to their relative disinterest in the issue (as well as the disinterest among the general population of Japan).<sup>9</sup> The language policy-making process typically involved collective drafting of policy documents by NLC members in close coordination with Ministry bureaucrats, followed by ratification and deliberation within the NLC, and then the submission of a final draft of a policy document by the NLC chair to the Minister of Education.

From 1946 onward, a new undercurrent in language policy formulation was the cultural empowerment of the Japanese people through the construction of a *bunka kokka* (cultural nation). The idea of the cultural nation that took hold in elite circles in Japan during the aftermath of the Second

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<sup>5</sup> Takeshi Matsuda, *Soft Power and its Perils: U.S. Cultural Policy in Early Postwar Japan and Permanent Dependency* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> J. Marshall Unger, *Literacy in Occupied Japan*; Kayashima, *Maboroshi no rōmajika*.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 80. The Japanese Ministry of Education, at the instigation of GHQ, also implemented educational experiments involving the teaching of entire curricula, excluding *kokugo*, through Romanised Japanese. Cf. Kayashima Atsushi, *Kokuji rōmajika no kenkyū (kaitei ban): Senryōka nihon no kokunaiteki kokusaiteki yōin no kaimei* [Research on the Romanisation of National Script (Revised Edition): Unveiling Domestic and International Factors in Occupied Japan] (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 2009), 32.

<sup>8</sup> Kayashima, *Kokuji rōmajika no kenkyū: Senryōka nihon no kokunai teki kokusai teki yōin no kaimei* [Research on the Romanisation of the National Script: Unveiling Domestic and International Factors in Occupied Japan] (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 2000), 29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 240. The role of the Allied occupation in shaping script reform is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

World War originated in Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>10</sup> Instead of focussing on the militarism of the recent past, an agenda of inward-facing cultural development was pursued by the various ministries of the Japanese government. Neighbouring nations such as the People's Republic of China, North and South Korea, simultaneously embarked on nation-building projects in the late 1940s (in the case of the People's Republic of China) and mid-fifties (in the cases of North and South Korea), to foster new national identities along similar lines. Language policy formulation served an important role in such projects, reshaping the national identity of citizens through the rhetoric of improvement, progress, and cultural advancement.<sup>11</sup> A representative for the Japanese Minister of Education, the ministry overseeing the NLC, emphasised the significance of rebuilding Japan through language policy in his address to the first postwar meeting of the NLC on 27 November 1945.

It goes without saying that the current reconstruction of a new Japan (*shinsei Nihon*) requires thorough reform of every aspect of the country's inner workings. However, [...] resolving national language problems is a prerequisite to all these reforms, [as] it forms the basis [of reform]<sup>12</sup>

The NLC, therefore, was asked to view language problems, and their resolution, as integral to national reconstruction. The resolution of issues related to Japanese script served as a precursor for the formation of a postwar Japan in need of rebirth (*shinsei*).<sup>13</sup> This was the express goal of the NLC during the Occupation era, particularly in relation to *kanji* and *kanji* usage.<sup>14</sup> Creating a streamlined and easily learnable standard language was one way of meeting the goals of the Japanese Ministry of Education.

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Günter de Bruyne, "On the German Cultural Nation," *New German Critique* no. 52 (1991): 60-66.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of language policy and cultural advancement in North Korea, see Michael Jeffrey Zwick, "Kim Il Sung's Language Policy as a Vehicle of *Juche* and a Performance of Cultural Superiority over South Korea," (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 2016). Fostering connections between culture and the nation-state continue to be a dominant theme in East Asian language policy formulation throughout the postwar period. For instance, cf. eds. Amy B Tsui and James Tollefson, *Language Policy, Culture, and Identity in Asian Contexts* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Education, *Kokugo shingikai no kiroku* [Records of the National Language Council] (Tokyo: Yoshiyama Insatsu, 1952), 32.

<sup>13</sup> Many language policy makers in East Asia made general literacy as a key goal and set about reforming their writing systems to bolster literacy rates among their respective populations.

<sup>14</sup> NLC 1, 8.

## The Role of General Headquarters in Shaping Script Reform in Postwar Japan

An issue often raised by scholars of script reform in Japan is the degree to which Occupying forces impacted written language policy and language usage in postwar Japan.<sup>15</sup> This section addresses this issue by questioning the role the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), particularly the CI&E at SCAP General Headquarters (GHQ) in Tokyo, played in shaping Japanese language policy. Investigating the involvement of GHQ in Japanese language policy is meaningful because of the wide-ranging role GHQ played in influencing other political processes and institutions in Japanese society.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, there was interest in Japanese script reform among SCAP and American educators sent to Japan as part of the United States Education Mission to Japan (in March 1946).<sup>17</sup> I rely on primary sources written during and shortly after the Occupation period, as well as secondary research by Kayashima Atsushi and others, to assess the impact of the Occupation authorities on Japanese script reform in early postwar Japan.

The immediately visible effect of the Occupation of Japan on the Japanese script was the use of Romanized Japanese signage, following the modified Hepburn scheme of Romanisation, in public spaces. The use of Romanised Japanese in public spaces was one of SCAP's first orders, on 3 September 1945.<sup>18</sup> While Japanese remained the predominantly visible language in the linguistic landscape – written language used in public and private signs in public spaces – of cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Sendai, many signs also carried with them Romanised Japanese and, in several cases, English nomenclature. The choice of modified Hepburn Romanisation by SCAP was partly motivated by a false assumption within GHQ that the alternative style of Romanisation adopted by the wartime Japanese government, known as *Nippon-shiki* (Japanese-scheme Romanisation), was associated with Japanese militarism.<sup>19</sup> These changes led some linguists to believe that SCAP was planning more

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan*; Kayashima, *Kokuji rōmaji no kenkyū*.

<sup>16</sup> Toshio Nishi, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> Kayashima, *Kokuji rōmaji no kenkyū*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Sugita Yoneyuki, *Amerika teki kachikan no yuragi: Yūitsu no teikoku wa 9.11 tero go ni dō benyō shitaka* [Tremors in American Values: How the only Empire Changed after 9.11] (Tokyo: Sanwa Shoseki, 2006), 112.

<sup>19</sup> This false assumption is discussed in Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan*, 78. The same work also describes the key differences between the systems of Romanisation.

substantial and long-lasting script reform that would affect language usage among the new generation of Japanese youth.<sup>20</sup>

Such disquiet was enhanced when, under the direction of CI&E's Robert K Hall, the first United States Education Mission to Japan called for Romanisation in 1946.<sup>21</sup> The Mission suggested the Romanisation of the Japanese language to help democratise Japanese society in its report (published on 7 April 1946) to SCAP,<sup>22</sup> which was forwarded to the Ministry of Education to formulate education policies for postwar Japan.<sup>23</sup> Linguists such as Ōno Susumu 大野晋 (1919-2008) would later remember the Occupation as marred by the threat of a foreign power imposing its own linguistic norms on the Japanese people precisely because of these developments. Perceived threats of wholesale Romanisation by SCAP, however, did not eventuate, though the period also saw individuals such as Shiga Naoya 志賀直哉 (1883-1971), the eminent Japanese author of the prewar and wartime period, call for the complete eradication of the Japanese language and the adoption of French as Japan's *kokugo*.<sup>24</sup>

The Japanese Ministry of Education, under the direction of SCAP, made a wide range of reforms to the Japanese education system in the early postwar period. This included the decentralisation of education, the establishment of homeroom teachers, and the erasure of ultra-nationalist material from classroom textbooks.<sup>25</sup> Educational reform touched all aspects of teaching and learning within Japanese schools – the mode of delivery, pedagogical approaches, and school-teacher

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<sup>20</sup>Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan*, 78.

<sup>21</sup> Kayashima, *Kokuji romajika no kenkyū*; Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan*, 38.

<sup>22</sup> Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "(3) Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan", [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/others/detail/1317419.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/others/detail/1317419.htm).

<sup>23</sup> The Japanese Educational Reform Council, which worked alongside delegates of the United States Education Mission in 1946, soon became the powerful Central Council of Education. Cf. Kayashima Atsushi, "The Impact of American Educational Policy on Japanese Educational Administration: Decentralization: A Politico-sociological Analysis and Evaluation of the Elected Boards of Education (1948-1956) in the Social, Economic and Cultural Context of Japan," (Dissertation, Columbia University), 23.

<sup>24</sup> Shiga Naoya proposed replacing Japanese with French as the official language of communication in Japan. For a detailed analysis of Shiga's proposal, see Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan*, 114-121.

<sup>25</sup> Kayashima, "The Impact of American Educational Policy on Japanese Educational Administration." During the first years of the Occupation period, many schools in Japan suffered a textbook shortage. This led to schools recycling many of the books that were used in schools during World War Two. SCAP feared that using such textbooks would enmesh school children to ultra-nationalistic ideologies that were circulated during the wartime period. Therefore, GHQ issued orders that right-wing content be proactively erased from textbooks by teachers and their students (a practice referred to as "inking out", or *suminuri*). This occurred through the first year of the occupation, until the Ministry of Education could replace such textbooks with new content approved by SCAP. Cf. Yoko Thakur, "History Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan, 1945-1952," *History of Education Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (1995): 261-278.

autonomy – including the *Kokugo* (National Language) curriculum, most notably with the introduction of “education *kanji*” (*kyōiku kanji*) in 1947.<sup>26</sup> The reshaping of the *Kokugo* curriculum had a significant effect on writing practices in the classroom and was discussed at length by linguists in the NLC and education experts.

Between 1946 and 1950, representatives of the Japanese Ministry of Education met with officials at GHQ to discuss language policy and script reform, including the teaching of Romanised Japanese. While conversations between the Ministry of Education and GHQ generally focussed on education and the teaching of Japanese in the classroom, several discussions touching on general issues of language policy and written Japanese in broader society also took place. The section responsible for many of the talks concerning language policy was the CI&E, which consisted of numerous American education experts and linguists such as Robert K Hall and Abraham Halpern, working on a range of problems.<sup>27</sup> By late 1947 the CI&E had developed a coherent stance on its potential involvement in Japanese language policy. It decided to avoid interfering in Japanese language policy formulation, arguing that it was a matter for the Japanese Ministry of Education to decide on language policies and policy implementation for the Japanese people. Similarly, by late August of 1947 representatives of the Ministry of Education had begun to gather support of the Cultural Committee of the House of Representatives of the Diet for the establishment of a national script and language research institute.<sup>28</sup> Language policy and script reform, therefore, were further consolidated within the Ministry of Education, the ministry that would continue to oversee national language policy formulation in postwar Japan. However, in the case of the nation’s most important document, the language used was crafted by established linguists working to colloquialise written Japanese.

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<sup>26</sup> ACA, “*Tōyō kanji beppyō*” [Appended *Tōyō Kanji* Set List], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/syusen/tosin03/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/syusen/tosin03/index.html)

<sup>27</sup> Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan*.

<sup>28</sup> National Diet of Japan, *Minutes of the Cultural Committee of the House of Representatives*, no. 3, 26 August 1947, pp. 1-10.

## Debating Script Reform in the Japanese Academe: The Case of the Japanese Constitution and *Kokugogaku* Journal

As one of the most influential and widely interpreted legal documents in Japan, the Constitution of Japan (CoJ) represented the democratic aspirations of postwar Japanese society. Until the end of the Second World War, official documents contained numerous complex Sino-Japanese grammatical constructions and phrasal structures.<sup>29</sup> This was certainly the case with the Imperial Rescript, which (as was discussed in the previous chapter) the emperor Hirohito suspected was too difficult for the average individual to read. The simplified and colloquial style employed in the CoJ marked a substantial shift in the way in which the Japanese government viewed (and used) Japanese script. This shift in the government's perception was a result of the efforts of Japanese linguists, who worked toward producing a CoJ that could be understood by all Japanese citizens. These linguists, and others like them, continued to discuss the democratisation of the Japanese language in the aftermath of the promulgation of the CoJ. Their views are analysed through a sample of articles published in the journal *Kokugogaku* "National Language Studies", which began its life in 1948 as a publication of the Society for Japanese Linguistics (*Kokugo gakkai*) in Tokyo, a year after the promulgation of the CoJ, and carried the voices of some of the most influential Japanese linguists of the period.

The script conventions used in the final draft of the CoJ were quintessentially Japanese, as they were instigated by Japanese linguists such as Yamamoto Yūzō 山本有三 (1887-1974) and Matsusaka Tadanori of the *Kana* Orthography Association.<sup>30</sup> Yamamoto and Matsusaka played a decisive role in shaping the script used in the postwar CoJ,<sup>31</sup> in addition to the consecutive ratification of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage that followed the adoption of the CoJ by the Japanese Diet. Yamamoto's support for the colloquialisation of written Japanese was largely influenced by his long-

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<sup>29</sup> Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*.

<sup>30</sup> Nanette Twine, "Language and the Constitution."

<sup>31</sup> Twine, "Language and the Constitution." Andō Masatsugu played a pivotal role in changing the Japanese government's perception of the orthographic conventions used in the new postwar Constitution of Japan. An account of the manoeuvring required to oversee the switch from archaic Sino-Japanese *kanbun* style to colloquial written Japanese (*kōgotai*) is detailed in Nanette Twine, *Language and the Modern State*.

standing opposition to *furigana* usage, a practice he argued protracted complex *kanji* usage in publications.<sup>32</sup>

Established linguists in Occupied Japan saw democratisation as an on-going project that necessitated the maintenance, reform, and creation of a regulated standard form of the Japanese language. Ideas discussed by established linguists during the period represented an early form of soft nationalism that attempted to link the people or socio-political nation to the Japanese language through democratisation. This is in line with Kevin Doak's view of Japanese nationalism during the Occupation period.<sup>33</sup> He notes how the period saw the promotion of liberal democratic nationalism using the term *kokumin* as a replacement for an ethnically defined nation (*minzoku*). "Democratic nationalism rested," he states, "on the concept of the Japanese people as a sovereign *kokumin*" (or people). We see this idea employed by established linguists, particularly in relation to *kokugo* as a unifier of the Japanese nation and people. While forming part of the rhetoric of reconstruction and cultural advancement, the links that established linguists drew between language and nation promoted discourses of Japanese homogeneity that developed immediately after the end of the Occupation.<sup>34</sup>

The starting point in this analysis is the main body of the CoJ itself, as it demonstrates a fundamental shift in the way that officialdom wrote the laws and obligations it expected citizens to abide by in their day to day lives. Below is a copy of the first part of the preamble of the CoJ (figure 1). The CoJ, when contrasted with the Imperial Rescript, is unique in its use of *kana* and *kanji* usage.

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<sup>32</sup> Kuroki Kazuhito, "The Purpose of 'Furigana-Haishiron': Yamamoto Yūzo's Practice," *Journal of Linguistic Science* 2 (1998): 13-24.

<sup>33</sup> Kevin Doak, "What is a Nation and Who Belongs? National Narratives and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth Century Japan," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (1997): 283-309.

<sup>34</sup> Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (Rosanna: Trans Pacific Press, 2011).

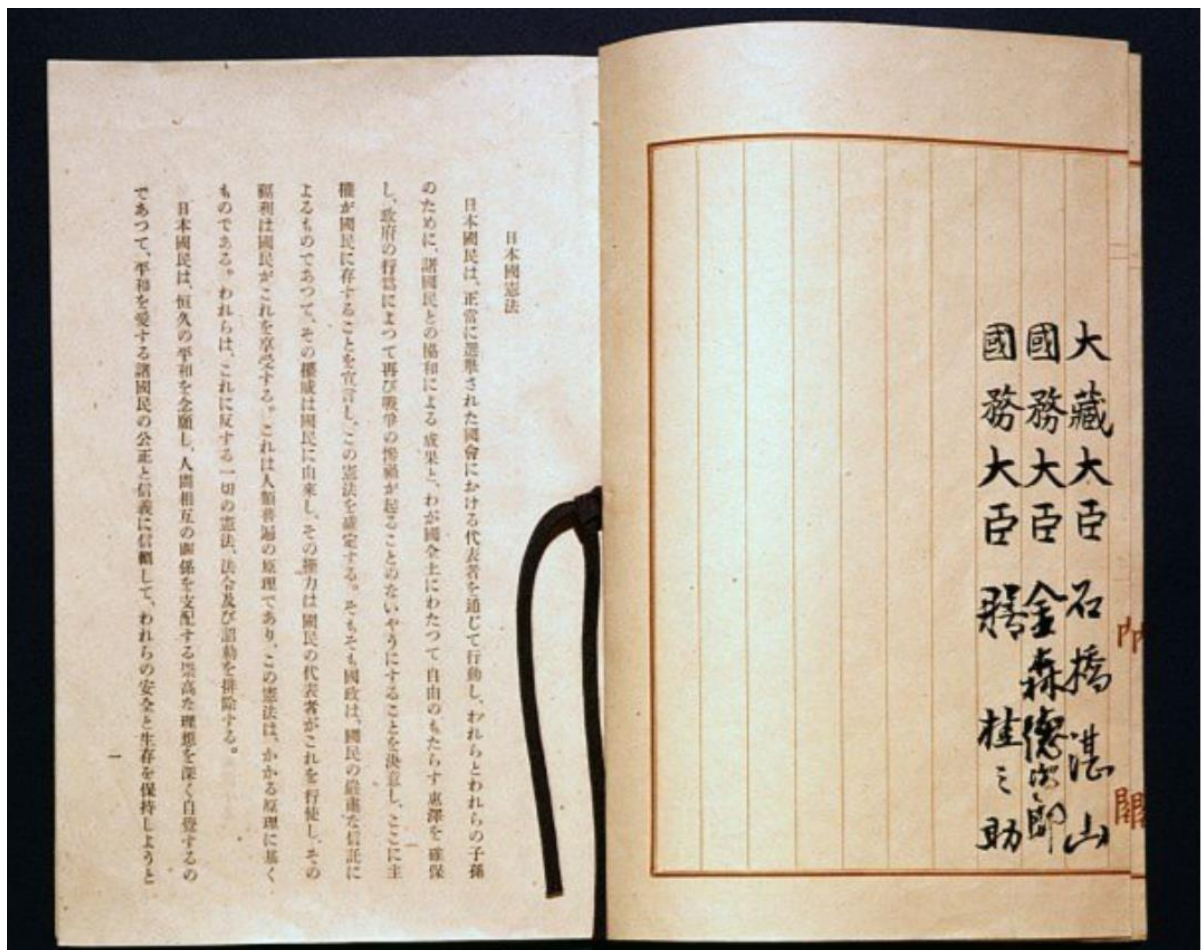


Figure 1. The postwar Constitution of Japan.<sup>35</sup>

What made the postwar CoJ unprecedented was its departure from antiquated written standards and forms that had been maintained by officialdom since the publication of the Imperial Rescript in 1890. The most obvious difference between the Imperial Rescript and CoJ was the use of *hiragana* as opposed to *katakana*. Whereas documents such as the Imperial Rescript made use of *katakana* and *kanji*, the CoJ intentionally switched to a combination of *hiragana* and *kanji* as this was deemed more widely accessible and familiar by the majority of the Japanese population.<sup>36</sup> *Hiragana* was the first script that most learnt at school, and had already been adopted by most publishing houses as the default

<sup>35</sup> Figure taken from *Mainichi shimbun*, “*Nihon koku kenpō: Zenbun*” [The Constitution of Japan: Full Text], 1 May, 2015, <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20150501/mog/00m/010/009000c>

<sup>36</sup> Most large Japanese publishing houses switched to *hiragana* usage between 1900, when *hiragana* usage was established with the revised Elementary School Law of 1900, and the end of the Second World War. See Zeniya Masato, “*Meiji chūki no shōsetsu ni okeru kana jitai oyobi kana moji zūgai: Kappan insatsu ni okeru jitai no tōitsu ni tsuite*” [Kana Type and Kana Character Usage in Middle-Meiji Novels: The Unification of Font in Type Printing], *Waseda Nibongo Kenkyū* 19 (2010): 13-24. The Meiji Constitution of 1889, however, was written in *katakana* and *kanji*, and made use of complex Sino-Japanese constructions.

phonetic script prior to the end of the Second World War.<sup>37</sup> The legal documents and communications produced by government ministries were the last bastion of archaic *katakana* usage. That *katakana* had played a significant role in Japanese diplomatic and military communications for several generations until the conclusion of the World War Two made it more challenging to replace *katakana* with *hiragana* usage in official documents.<sup>38</sup> This meant that the use of *hiragana* in the CoJ marked a significant departure from past script usage within officialdom.

Similarly, a more colloquial tone was adopted in the CoJ, replacing and erasing rigid Sino-Japanese constructions with language that could be spoken aloud and understood.<sup>39</sup> This was done for several reasons and was pushed for by newly emerging movements, led predominantly by linguists, that aimed to democratise the Japanese language. This included the Mitaka Japanese Language Research Institute and the League for the Democratisation of Language (later renamed the Japanese Citizens' Japanese Language Activism League "*Kokumin no Kokugo Undō Renmei*"). The latter was a large group of Japanese language scholars led by the likes of Yamamoto Yūzō (who had founded the Mitaka Japanese Language Research Institute in 1945), Andō Masatsugu, Matsusaka Tadanori, and Nishio Minoru 西尾実 (1889-1979),<sup>40</sup> that formed in early 1946 (prior the publication of the first draft of the CoJ) to lobby for the use of colloquial Japanese that could be understood by most people that read the document.<sup>41</sup> The Japanese Citizens' Japanese Language Activism League had set itself ten basic directives when dealing with the Japanese language, which included avoiding the use of complex *kanji* and promoting the use of *kana* for pronouns, adverbs, and suffixes.<sup>42</sup> While the CoJ was viewed by many as "reeking of

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<sup>37</sup> Daniel Better, "*Meiji jidai no nihongo ni okeru moji hyōki no kakuitsuka ni tsuite*" [Concerning the Standardisation of Japanese Script and Orthography during the Meiji Era] (PhD Thesis, Osaka University, 2018).

<sup>38</sup> Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, "*Nihongo no hyōki wa dō kawatta no?*" [How did Japanese Script Change?], <https://www.jacar.go.jp/glossary/tochikiko-henten/qa/qa23.html>

<sup>39</sup> Twine, "Language and the Constitution".

<sup>40</sup> The League for the Democratisation of Language included established linguists that were actively involved in Japanese language policy formulation in the wartime and early postwar period, including the influential wartime linguists Kindaichi Kyōsuke and Tokieda Motoki.

<sup>41</sup> Twine, "Language and the Constitution," 127. The League gathered members from a range of organisations, including the National Language Association and *Kana* Orthography Association. Cf. Yasuda, *Kanji haishi no shisō shi*, 399-400.

<sup>42</sup> Nakanishi Kiyotada, "*Kokugo hyōki no genjō – rubi no mondai o chūshin ni*" [The Current Condition of National Language Orthography: With a Focus on Ruby], *Takamatsu Tanki Daigaku Kijō* 14 (1984), 42.

Western mannerisms” (*bata kusa*),<sup>43</sup> it was also seen by established linguists as a battlefield for implementing script reform and colloquial language usage in official Japanese documents.

Other noticeable differences in the postwar CoJ were the inclusion of punctuation marks and indentation, which helped improve the readability of the document and decrease the chances of misinterpretation.<sup>44</sup> These changes were partly made in the name of democracy, or the democratisation of the Japanese language. However, punctuation and the use of indentation also helped convey the spirit and interpretation of the legal text. NLC policies were ratified immediately after the promulgation of the CoJ on 3 November 1946. The policies ratified were the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage – both on 16 November 1946 – which limited the number of *kanji* and set rules on the way in which *kana* is to be used, to further facilitate language usage and standardise the language of officialdom in ways that assisted the public’s understanding of the Japanese constitution and other legal texts.<sup>45</sup>

Several established linguists who had been involved in the League for the Democratisation of the Japanese Language, particularly Andō Masatsugu and Nishio Minoru, the latter of which would go on to become the first head of the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) – an institute that was established at the behest of the League – played key roles in the formulation of early postwar language policies.<sup>46</sup> These established linguists succeeded in incorporating a colloquial and relatively more accessible language in the CoJ under the banner of democratisation. (In some cases, they also supported further investigation into *rōmaji* education.<sup>47</sup>) However, how did established linguists view the democratisation of the Japanese script after the ratification of the CoJ?

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<sup>43</sup> Koseki Shoichi, *The Birth of Japan’s Postwar Constitution* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> While the use of punctuation had not been incorporated into official documents at the time the Meiji Constitution was promulgated, it soon came into popular usage among novelists and official communications, in varying forms, from the 1900s onwards. Cf. Nanette Twine, “The Adoption of Punctuation in Japanese Script,” *Visible Language* 58, no. 3 (1984): 229–237.

<sup>45</sup> Fukuda Ryō, “*Tōyō kanji no tanjō: Naikaku kanbō sōmuka shiryō o yomu (dai 9 kai) inayuru ‘kenpō kanji’ ni tsuite*” [The Birth of the *Tōyō Kanji*: Reading Sources from the General Affairs Section of the Cabinet Secretariat (part 9) concerning the so-called “Constitution *Kanji*”], *Nibongogaku* 35, no. 11 (2016): 72–75.

<sup>46</sup> NLC 6.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, Andō Masatsugu was chair of the ad hoc *Rōmaji* Survey Council (*Rōmaji chōsa shingikai*). Cf. ACA, “*Giji rōmaji chōsa shingi kai no haishi ni tsuite*” [Minutes, Concerning the Abolition of the *Rōmaji* Survey Council], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/01/sokai004/02.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/01/sokai004/02.html)

Shiraishi Daiji 白石大二 (1912-1989) provides an answer in his work on language movements in Japan, published shortly after the ratification of the CoJ. In his study Shiraishi Daiji, a Japanese language scholar, NLC member, and Ministry of Education official, concluded that the Japanese language was undemocratic and feudal in structure, syntax, vocabulary, and script.<sup>48</sup> These ideas emerged from the elitism surrounding Japanese script, particularly *kanji* usage, during the prewar period. Problems such as the hierarchical nature of the Japanese language continued to be expressed after the ratification of the new constitution in 1946, by a variety of scholars and for various reasons. Honorific language (*keigo*) was one area that was viewed by established linguists, even within the NLC, as a remnant of feudalism that was in dire need of “settling” (*seisan*).<sup>49</sup>

One way to “settle” language problems during the early postwar period was to democratise (*minshuka*) written and spoken Japanese. Many of Japan’s established linguists expressed their thoughts on the democratisation of Japanese in the first seven volumes of *Kokugogaku* (“National Language Studies”), a linguistics journal dedicated to the study of the Japanese language. The journal carried the opinions of established linguists who supported the democratisation of the Japanese language, had been involved in the NLC when postwar language policies such as Contemporary *Kana* Usage were being formulated, and had published extensively on the Japanese language.

Andō Masatsugu, who served as NLC chair during the early postwar years and played a crucial role in the formulation of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List of 1946, provided the *Kokugogaku* journal with its opening remarks in its inaugural volume. These remarks highlight Andō’s views on the Japanese language. He wrote of a “common language” that is shared among the people of Japan, and saw its study being placed in the hands of experts. In order to understand this shared language, Andō believed that experts needed to study the language life and script life – the way in which individuals used language to interact with one another in the spoken and written forms in daily life.<sup>50</sup> This, he believed,

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<sup>48</sup> Shiraishi, *Shūsengo ni okeru kokugo kairyō no dokō*, 17.

<sup>49</sup> NLC 1. This was an area in which Kindaichi Kyōsuke took interest, given his role in publishing the NLC’s *Kore kara no keigo* policy document in 1952.

<sup>50</sup> Andō Masatsugu, “Watakushi goto – ‘Kokugogaku’ no hakkan o shukushite” [Personal Remarks: Celebrating the Publication of “Kokugogaku”], *Kokugogaku* 1 (1948): 6-9.

would further highlight the characteristics of the common language shared by Japanese people (*kokumin*).

Hoshina Kōichi, one of the oldest NLC members, and an early advocate for language reform who wrote regularly on simplification and language reform, argued for the establishment of a more direct link between democracy and the Japanese language. He argued in the first volume of the *Kokugogaku* journal in 1948 that the creation of a democratic Japan depended on the creation of a “genuine/ pure and elegant Japanese language”. He viewed language as a symbol of character and saw language education as key to the democratisation of the Japanese language. This view was echoed by the Minister of Education, Takase Sōtarō 高瀬荘太郎 (1892-1966), a year later at the NLC general meeting of 10 November 1949.<sup>51</sup> The “most crucial condition” for creating a democratic Japan, Hoshina argued, was the realisation of a regulated Japanese language through educational reform. Regulating the language used in the education system, through simplification and the establishment of well-researched linguistic conventions, would allow students to learn more about the world and concentrate their intellectual energies on subjects other than *kokugo*. The education system was, therefore, seen by some linguists (including Hoshina and Kindaichi Kyōsuke) as the stage on which script reform could have a significantly democratising effect on Japanese society. Hoshina favoured the learning of the fundamentals of pronunciation from the first year of schooling, in addition to placing more weight on the teaching of language usage and nurturing a beautiful and clear Japanese language skills that would allow users to express their thoughts freely and without hindrance through written and spoken Japanese. Simplification, but not radical reform, was what Hoshina believed would benefit the Japanese language most.

Within the discussion of democratisation by established linguists, education was a theme that featured in many articles. Shirashi Daiji was adamant that a new approach to the teaching of the national language be adopted to rid the language of its feudal characteristics.<sup>52</sup> According to Shirashi,

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<sup>51</sup> A translation of Takase’s address to the NLC is reproduced in Appendix B.

<sup>52</sup> Shirashi, *Shūsengo ni okeru kokugo kairyō no dōkō*.

the feudal characteristics of the Japanese language included the elitism associated with *kanji* usage and the classist hierarchy of Japanese language variants (with the Tokyo dialect forming the standard for non-Tokyoites). These characteristics, he argued, should be dismantled through increased proficiency in the standard language at schools throughout Japan. In the second volume of *Kokugogaku* Shiraishi writes that effective expression and language skills need to be taught.<sup>53</sup> Shiraishi was partly referring to writing proficiency within his discussion of language skills. Effective expression and language skills were to be achieved through guidance (*shido*) and extra attention paid to the full development of students' ability to use script, script size, and punctuation correctly.<sup>54</sup>

For Shiraishi, language and thought were “linked functionally, making life a surety” (*tashika na mono*).<sup>55</sup> Proficiency in the standard language, therefore, guaranteed educational attainment and social recognition. While the standard language was construed as a hegemonic force, Shiraishi also assumed that standard Japanese was fundamentally democratic, insofar as it could serve as a tool to convey thoughts and express ideas in an open manner. He admonished scholars to speak as scholars, to criticize and improve the Japanese language even if it went against the will of the people. The people (*kokumin*) included the working class and the elite, with the Japanese language, its script and standards, forming the key ingredients: the strongest link binding and potentially separating people and language from one another.

Endō Yoshimoto 遠藤嘉基 (1905-1992), NLC member and professor of linguistics at Kyoto University, also touched on the theme of language education and proposed a more radical agenda of reform. He echoed Shiraishi's claims relating to the undemocratic nature of the national language but went a step further by suggesting the abolition of *kanji* from the *kokugo* school curriculum.<sup>56</sup> He used his family's experience teaching at schools for the blind as an anecdote to describe how the national language need not use complex characters if students are to learn how to appreciate and come to

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<sup>53</sup> Shiraishi Daiji, “*Gengo gjyutsu no gakuushū o yori yoku shido suru tame ni* [How to Better Instruct the Study of Language Skills], *Kokugogaku* 2 (1946): 109-126.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>56</sup> Endō Yoshimoto, “*Kokugo kyōiku ni tsuite*” [Concerning National Language Education], *Kokugogaku* 1 (1948): 111-120.

understand the Japanese language. *Kanji*, Endō claimed, were a waste of time, and a thorough grasp of the Japanese language could be attained if students (and teachers) were able to focus their studies on grammatical word classes (nouns, adverbs, pronouns, etc) as opposed to complex character structures.<sup>57</sup> This was hard to do if written Japanese was not spaced and dependent on a mixed-script writing system that included *kanji*. (Endō, much like Shiraishi, also viewed Japanese script as elitist because of its emphasis on *kanji* usage and proficiency.<sup>58</sup>) Endō argued that the teaching of Romanised Japanese would help clarify the word classes, such as nouns and adverbs, that exist in the Japanese language. Eventually, he surmised, the abolition of *kanji* would help save up to two thirds of the time spent on learning the Japanese language at schools, as rote learning would become less prominent as a teaching method. This argument had been used for decades by proponents of script reform, including future NLC chair Toki Zenmaro 土岐善麿 (1885-1980).<sup>59</sup>

Ikegami Teizō 池上禎三 (1911-2005), an NLC member and professor at Kyoto University, was similarly interested in the idea of democratization and language reform, and the links they shared. Writing in *Kokugogaku* toward the end of the Occupation in 1951, he exhibited a critical stance toward single-minded reform in the name of democracy.<sup>60</sup> His main opposition to reform was that reform was unnecessary because languages were destined to change. Reforming written Japanese would not solve much because written forms of the language entrench themselves through usage. (The suggestion that the focus of language policy be shifted from script to spoken forms had been discussed by Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875-1962) prior to the end of the Second World War.<sup>61</sup>) Ikegami also distanced himself from the idea of democratization, as he believed such terms were subjective substitutes for other ideologies that were used to spread standard Japanese during the prewar and wartime period, such as “good” and “beautiful” Japanese. That said, Ikegami saw in standard Japanese a language that

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 112-113.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 111. In prewar Japan *kanji* proficiency was often associated with erudition and a comprehensive education – something that typically only the elite could attain.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Toki Zenmaro, “*Toitsu go no jissai mondai: Rōmaji tsuzuri ni tsuite*” [Actual Problems after Unification: On *Rōmaji* Orthography], *Asahi shimbun*, 3 July, 1936.

<sup>60</sup> Ikegami Teizō, “*Gendai nihongo no mondai*” [Problems with Contemporary Japanese], *Kokugogaku* 7 (1951): 2-16

<sup>61</sup> Melek Su Ortobasi, “Japanese Cultural History as Literary Landscape: Scholarship, Authorship and Language in Yanagita Kunio’s Native Ethnology,” (PhD thesis, University of Washington, 2001).

represented a nation of individuals who were aware of the way their language functioned.<sup>62</sup> Ikegami, therefore, hoped that policies aimed at improving the standard language would benefit the people of Japan as individuals began rebuilding Japanese society.

*Kokugogaku*'s contents help us understand how Japanese language scholars and intellectuals viewed the democratisation of the Japanese language in Occupied Japan between the years 1948 and 1951. What must be understood is that the views offered in the journal belonged primarily to established linguists, individuals who could afford to regularly engage in debates relating to the political and cultural qualities of the Japanese language. Moreover, these established linguists tended to be NLC members, meaning their thoughts on the democratisation of language were often voiced at NLC meetings and reflected in language policy formulation.

In many cases established linguists publishing in *Kokugogaku* saw the democratisation of Japanese as an on-going project. It was a project that could be best served through educational reform and the development of freedom of expression. Standardisation, or a common national language, was thought to either exist or be desirable, as part of a wider push for ideals such as clarity in speech and expression. It resembled colonial and wartime language policies utilising Japanese as common language while also signalling a new role for Japanese language within a democratic and cultural nation in the process of rebirth. A common undercurrent seen in the ideas examined above was the notion of a Japanese language for Japan: a *kokugo* (national language) for the *kokumin* (national citizens). The works of the established linguists introduced above present the Japanese language as the national language (*kokugo*), and some clearly conceptualise the representation of a nation/ people through a standard or common language. These opinions may, therefore, mark the beginning of the intellectual formulation of the role that a standard language would play in postwar Japan. We cannot jump to the conclusion that *kokumin* was a concept that could be defined along ethnic lines, as it was distinct from the idea of *minzoku* (the ethnic nation) used by prewar and wartime academics such as Yanagita Kunio.<sup>63</sup> That the

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<sup>62</sup> Ikegami, "Gendai nibongo no mondai," 16.

<sup>63</sup> Ortobasi, "Japanese Cultural History as Literary Landscape," 222-224.

term *minzoku* does not feature in these authors' works is an indication that a more broadly – and politically – defined nation or people was being discussed by established linguists in a top-down process of reform. What kind of a nation was being discussed? How did established linguists envision the Japanese nation?

The fundamental link for many of the linguists publishing in *Kokugogaku* at the time seems to be educating Japanese students in a clear and aesthetically pleasing Japanese language, to inculcate a sense of democracy and cultural homogeneity, where the national language replaces ethnicity as a common embodiment of the people, a representation of the masses that form civil society. (Nowhere in the writings of these established linguists during this period do we find references to the Japanese race or ethnicity, but almost all established linguists mention standard or national language within the context of a “new Japan”, drawing on a shared cultural heritage or language life that was in the midst of recreation.) For this newly envisioned Japan, democratisation was a political project, and the national language and script were its people.

Once the script and style employed in the CoJ were changed to reflect colloquial standard Japanese, government committees soon set about investigating script simplification for all legal documents and government communications. In 1948 the Japanese government established the NINJAL, at the instigation of the Japanese Citizens' Japanese Language Activism League, to assist with comprehensive research into Japanese language usage and problems.<sup>64</sup> The NLC was also involved in similar research from the start, establishing in January 1950 its own section to research the simplification and reform of official written and legally-binding documents.<sup>65</sup> By the early 1950s the Japanese government's support of script simplification and enhanced readability of legal documents had become a priority.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Yasuda, *Kanji haishi no shiso shi*, 403.

<sup>65</sup> ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi*, 944.

<sup>66</sup> However, the script and style employed in some legal documents, such as maritime shipping law, remained unchanged until the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

What was the end goal of the democratisation of language for the scholars who wrote about the necessity of democratisation in *Kokugogaku*? As Endō highlights in *Kokugogaku*, it was to encourage critical thinking and the creation of a new Japanese language (for a new Japan) predominantly by the elite and others in positions of authority within Japanese society.<sup>67</sup> Within this understanding of the Japanese script, Endō argues that even reform measures such as Romanisation should be undertaken primarily with a view to establishing educators' awareness (*ishiki*) of the national language.<sup>68</sup> Democratisation, therefore, was to serve as a tool for the national language and language policy formulation, and not the other way round.

### **A Reorganised National Language Council**

In 1949 the Ministry of Education restructured the NLC as a petitioning body, capable of directly communicating its proposals for script reform to all government ministries.<sup>69</sup> By this time the CI&E's stance on language policy had been made clear to the Ministry of Education and many NLC members.<sup>70</sup> During an inaugural meeting of the NLC in 1948, SCAP sent philosopher and educator Dr Luther Winfield Stalnaker (1892-1954) of the CI&E to convey the opinions of GHQ to NLC members and the Japanese Minister of Education, who was also present at the meeting.<sup>71</sup> The message was that CI&E would involve itself in language policy only in a nominal capacity. The newly restructured NLC set up numerous divisions to address aspects of the Japanese writing system its members deemed problematic. This included the creation of Sections responsible for investigating issues related specifically to *kanji* and Romanisation.<sup>72</sup> Initially, there was confusion among some prominent members of the NLC as to what purpose the NLC would serve and why investigating further script reform was necessary to the continuation of the mandate of the NLC.

The divisions that emerged out of the new NLC focussed on a variety of issues and considered using Romanised Japanese in a manner unseen since the early 1900s. (Of the ten Divisions established

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<sup>67</sup> Endō, “*Kokugo kyōiku ni tsuite*”, 119.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>69</sup> Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*.

<sup>70</sup> Kayashima, *Kokuji rōmajika no kenkyū*.

<sup>71</sup> NLC 1, 52-53.

<sup>72</sup> NLC 1.

within the NLC, four investigated *rōmaji*.) There was continuity in the membership of the NLC between the wartime and early postwar period, as a significant number of wartime NLC members continued to formulate language policy in the early postwar years.<sup>73</sup> Hoshina Kōichi, who actively oversaw the implementation of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, had helped standardise Japanese alongside Ueda Kazutoshi in the first official language policy body in 1901 and was involved in wartime NLC policies shaping *kanji* usage.<sup>74</sup> In addition to writing about Japanese language policy in colonial Taiwan, Andō Masatsugu had produced a study of *kana* usage for the wartime NLC in 1941.<sup>75</sup> These individuals elected Toki Zenmaro, a well-known Romanisation advocate and *Asahi shinbun* journalist during the prewar years, as the first chair of the restructured NLC, leading to a more progressive agenda in the ensuing years. The election of Toki contributed to greater investigation into *rōmaji* education and conventions, as well as the formulation of policies, such as the Annexed *Kanji* List for Personal Names (*jinmei yō kanji beppyō*),<sup>76</sup> which placed further limitations on *kanji* usage.

The inaugural meeting of the newly reformed NLC in November 1949 began with addresses by the Japanese Minister of Education, Takase Sōtarō, and Dr Luther Stalnaker. Takase lauded the NLC for the democratisation of its membership selection process and deliberations and highlighted the support the Ministry of Education would lend to any concrete plans emanating from the NLC. Stalnaker, on the other hand, reflected on the importance of simplifying the Japanese writing system to promote the expression of ideas. Stalnaker recognised the language policies formulated by the NLC as being the most “influential in Japan”, and affirmed the significant role the NLC was to play in future language policy formulation.<sup>77</sup> These speeches demonstrated the leeway and support given to the NLC by the country’s leading educational and administrative institutions (the Japanese Ministry of Education

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<sup>73</sup> This included Hoshina Kōichi, Kindaichi Kyōsuke, Andō Masatsugu, Satō Kiichirō, Shinmura Izuru, Shimomura Hiroshi, Tōjō Misao, Hoshino Yukinori, Kuraishi Takeshirō, and Tamai Kōsuke.

<sup>74</sup> ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku enkaku shiryō 11: Kanji jitai shiryō shū* [National Language Policy Historical Resources 11: Collection of Historical Resources on *Kanji* Forms] (Tokyo: Agency for Cultural Affairs, 1994), 317-324.

<sup>75</sup> ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku enkaku shiryō 2: Kanazukai shiryō shū* [National Language Policy Historical Resources 2: Collection of Historical Resources on *Kana* Usage] (Tokyo: Agency for Cultural Affairs, 1981), 180-187.

<sup>76</sup> NLC 1, 7-10.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 52. Translations of Dr Stalnaker’s and Takase’s addresses to the NLC can be found in Appendix A and B of this thesis.

and GHQ), as well as the limited role SCAP desired to play in directly influencing language policy decisions reached by the NLC.

With the election of Toki Zenmaro to the role of chair of the NLC, Andō Masatsugu (former chair) gave a brief speech outlining the history of the NLC. The speech linked the NLC to National Language Surveying Committee (*Kokugo Chōsa Inkai*) of the early 1900s, and elaborated on the “sizable achievements” of the prewar and wartime NLC while connecting the new policy body to its former incarnations.<sup>78</sup> In addition to stressing the significance of the work carried out by the NLC, Andō, who only a few years earlier had overseen the *Tōyō Kanji* reforms, touched on the “current urgency” that faced the NLC as it set out to improve the “cultural standards of regular citizens” (*ippan kokumin*) by simplifying the language life and “script life” (*moji seikatsu*) of Japan’s inhabitants.<sup>79</sup> This outlook on the role of the NLC in shaping cultural standards was no doubt influenced by the widely circulating idea of Japan as a cultural nation (*bunka kokka*), a modern and universal symbol of peace that represented the arts and open debate that inherited the *taisei yokusan* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association) of the prewar and wartime period.<sup>80</sup> Within this context, script reform represented a top-down process that involved imposing the views of established linguists on the general population through policies that adhered to established linguists’ views of cultural standards and language usage.

There were problems within the newly reformed NLC with regards its future direction. Soon after the restructuring of the NLC, the Japanese linguist Tokieda Motoki began to argue against the speedy way policy decisions, such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage of 1946, had been reached by the NLC. Tokieda urged the NLC to debate language problems without hurriedly formulating policies, as he believed in the necessity of a deeper understanding of both the past undertakings and current changes that were taking place within the NLC (the reform of the body

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 56-57.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> The idea of the cultural nation helped provide societal stability at a time when major upheavals of social and cultural norms were occurring in Japan. For a detailed analysis of the origins and significance of the term *bunka kokka*, see Inoue Atsushi, “*Kindai nihon shakai ni okeru zainichi chōsen jin no jiko ninshiki: ‘Bunka kokka’ to ‘jiko no tekunoroji’*” [Self-Awareness among Resident Koreans in Modern Japanese Society: The “Cultural Nation” and “Technologies of the Self”], *Sōgō Seisaku Ronso* 2 (2001), 167-171.

included) and society. For Tokieda, deliberation (*shingō*) was the heart of the NLC, not “championing reform”,<sup>81</sup> and any rushed attempts to push through further reforms would, he contended, be detrimental to Japanese society.<sup>82</sup> To this, Toki Zenmaro responded that the new NLC was an actively petitioning body that will deal with two problems: improving the Japanese language and developing Japanese language education.<sup>83</sup> This difference in outlook signalled a developing tension between conservative and progressive members of the NLC.

To clarify the NLC’s direction and position on language problems for the general public (and members within the NLC), leading members of the NLC decided to draft a white paper that outlined the duties of the NLC and the problems the Japanese language faced. Toki headed the division responsible for the drafting of the white paper. The division set about clarifying the “characteristics and direction of the NLC”, whilst also “objectively assess[ing] the current situation of the national language and locating where problems existed within the national language”.<sup>84</sup> One aim of the division was to gather a group of NLC members to write a synopsis of what it deemed was problematic with the Japanese language. After its members had conferred and produced several interim reports, on 12 June 1950 the NLC adopted a draft of the division’s Synopsis of National Language Problems (*Kokugo Mondai Yōryō*).<sup>85</sup> The document, often referred to as the National Language Whitepaper because of its broad focus, attempted to address the history of Japanese language policy while also highlighting contemporary language problems that required resolving. One problem singled out in the National Language Whitepaper was the Japanese writing system.<sup>86</sup> The Whitepaper stressed the complexity of written Japanese, describing *kanji* as “difficult” and in need of extra attention by the NLC. The document also implied that the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List attempted to resolve some of these complexities,<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> NLC 1, 63.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>86</sup> ACA, “*Kokugo mondai yōryō (hokoku)*” [Synopsis of National Language Problems (Report)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/01/tosin01/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/01/tosin01/index.html)

<sup>87</sup> The *Synopsis* mentions the language policy recommendations of the US Education Mission to Japan of 1946, which centred on the complete Romanisation of Japanese script, but excludes mention of the specifics of the mission’s policy recommendations, which were broad in scope (and not limited solely to script reform).

but that issues related to *kanji* usage remained. The National Language Whitepaper was reported to the minister of education on the 12 June 1950, and its contents made available to the Japanese public soon after.<sup>88</sup> It mainly focussed on the following topics: national language education, orthography, an historical overview of national language problems, and criteria for deliberating on national language problems.<sup>89</sup> The mainstream media reacted favourably to the National Language Whitepaper, with Tokieda Motoki commenting on the democratic spirit of the document in the *Asahi shimbun*.<sup>90</sup>

The National Language Whitepaper was not without its critics. The conservative national language scholar, Hattori Yoshika 服部嘉香 (1886-1975), attacked the policy document, as well as the NLC, for its liberal reformist outlook.<sup>91</sup> Hattori used traditionalist notions of language and culture to critique the National Language Whitepaper, which attempted to argue for the rationalisation of Japanese script to resolve complexities associated with the Japanese writing system.<sup>92</sup> Hattori's views were elitist, criticising the democratic nature of NLC language policy and language policy debates as flawed and doomed to fail. Hattori argued that the Japanese “masses” (*taishū*) were unaware of traditional *kokugo*, had little education, and were unfit to be the bearers of social customs (*shakaiteki kanshū no ninaitē*).<sup>93</sup> Including the opinions of the masses in language policy formulation, Hattori contended, would lead not to improvements (*kaiizen*) but the degradation (*kaiaku*) of Japanese.<sup>94</sup>

When the National Language Whitepaper was released the NLC contained numerous divisions, each dealing with certain aspects of language policy. The Kanji Division, headed by Tokieda Motoki, set itself the task of considering the demands *kanji* placed on students in the education system. It was particularly concerned with the number of *kanji* to be learnt. Reflecting on the learning abilities of students, the Division deemed a reduction in the number of *kanji* necessary in any future revisions

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<sup>88</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Kokugo hakusho o happyō, kyōiku*” [National Language Whitepaper Announced, Education], 14 June, 1950.

<sup>89</sup> ACA, “*Kokugo mondai yōryō (bōkoku)*.”

<sup>90</sup> Tokieda Motoki, ““*Kokugo hakusho*’ *no nera?*” [The Aims of the National Language Whitepaper], *Asahi shimbun*, 25 June, 1950.

<sup>91</sup> Hattori Yoshika, “*Kokugo kokuji mondai no konpon gi – ‘kokugo hakusho’ no bihyō o chūshin toshite*” [The Fundamental Meaning of National Language and National Script Problems: Focussing on a Criticism of the “National Language White Paper”], *Kokubungaku Kenkyū* 3 (1950): 110-122.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

made to the set list.<sup>95</sup> The *Kanji* Division was unsure of the effects a reduction in *kanji* may have.

However, it was willing to experiment to find out.<sup>96</sup> This stance set the Division apart from previous *kanji* policy directives, which generally shied away from further reductions or major revisions. This was presumably related to the outlook on *kanji* limitation held by the head of the *Kanji* Division, Tokieda Motoki.

The *Kanji* Division was then led by Hara Tomio 原富男 (1898-1983), lecturer at Tokyo University of Education (now Tsukuba University) and intellectual historian, during its second term, at which point it set itself the task of confirming the basic attitude toward upholding (*mamorinuku*) the “spirit” of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List at the time of its establishment.<sup>97</sup> The division began by reconsidering the *kanji* contained in the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List by studying the necessity of removing, retaining, and adding characters to the existing list. To this end, the division worked with the Japan Newspaper Association (*Nihon shimibun kyōkai*) on a document entitled “A Collection of Newspaper Companies’ Opinions regarding the Revision of the *Tōyō Kanji*”,<sup>98</sup> in order to reach a decision regarding the future makeup of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>99</sup>

The NLC also established a Standard Language Division during its second term. Headed by Kindaichi Kyōsuke, the division focussed on “broad fundamental issues” with the spoken and written forms of Japanese.<sup>100</sup> The members of the division came to the decision to treat the contemporary Tokyo variant of Japanese (*Tōkyō-go*) as its primary source in deliberations concerning standard Japanese,<sup>101</sup> thus further cementing the role of the metropole in shaping language usage within Japan. During its term, the division drafted two policy documents. The first, entitled “Toward a Standard Language” (*Hyōjungo no tame ni*), approached problems with the standard language from three angles:

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<sup>95</sup> NLC 1, 2.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>98</sup> This survey gathered the opinions of sixteen newspaper companies from across Japan. Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 3-5.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. Basing the standard language on the language spoken in the Tokyo region was a popular choice, as many language scholars had singled out the dialect of the Tokyo Yamanote area as forming the core of standard Japanese.

pronunciation, vocabulary, and wording,<sup>102</sup> in a reflection of problems that had that preoccupied Kindaichi during the early postwar period.<sup>103</sup> The second part of the division's deliberations focussed on the future of the Japanese language, which culminated in the publication of the *Kore kara no Nihongo* ("Japanese from Hereon") document.<sup>104</sup> The document is characterised by an overtly prescriptive and positivistic statement of the NLC's "stance on how the future Japanese language as a standard language should be", and, in its final form, addressed style, vocabulary, wording, honorific language, spoken Japanese, pronunciation, and the written language.<sup>105</sup> The prescriptive character of *Kore kara no Nihongo* reflected the authority NLC policies carried during the early postwar period, which were derived from their support from both the Ministry of Education and, until the end of the Occupation, SCAP.

Combined with its other activities, the Standard Language Division of the NLC promoted the ideology of unification through linguistic homogeneity that had been regularly discussed by established linguists in the prewar and wartime period. In many cases, the academics involved in ensuring the place of a standard Japanese language during the early 1950s were active prewar or wartime Japanese language scholars. This included Kindaichi Kyōsuke, Tokieda Motoki, and Nishio Minoru, among others. The fact that such a Division was led by a prewar and wartime linguist, Kindaichi Kyōsuke, demonstrates the continuity in NLC perspectives on the standardisation of a written (and spoken) national language. Continuity was characterised by a drive to oversee the use of a standardised *kokugo* throughout Japan, through the ongoing formulation of monolingual language policies and standardised set lists, which can be characterised as a top-down and regulatory approach to policy formulation.

By the end of the Occupation, script reform implemented during the early postwar period was widely accepted by educators and teachers.<sup>106</sup> *Kanji* and *kana* conventions, derived from the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary Kana Usage, penetrated the compulsory education system relatively effortlessly and with little contestation. However, conservative members of the NLC such as Tokieda

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>103</sup> Kindaichi, "*Hyojūngo shiken*".

<sup>104</sup> NLC 1.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Shiraki Susumu, "*Shōwa haisengo no kokugo seisaku kokugo mondai ni kansuru ni san no iken*" [Opinions concerning National Language Policies and Language Problems after the War Defeat], *Kokubungaku Kenkyū* 8 (1972), 131.

Motoki began to voice their concerns over the long-term effects of the recently implemented policies, both on educational outcomes and wider writing practices in society.

During the third term of the newly restructured NLC, a rupture amongst NLC members formed around discussions concerning the early postwar reforms. Funabashi Seiichi, a Japanese novelist, complained about the low number of characters found in the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List. He argued that the number of characters in the list should increase threefold in order to allow writers to express themselves and reach their audiences; the current set list, it was claimed, made it “impossible” to “write easy-to-understand novels for the public.”<sup>107</sup> For Funabashi, a wide range of *kanji* was required in literature to boost comprehension and readability. He disregarded the arguments of reformists who believed that using numerous *kanji* in written work complicated conventional Japanese texts even further – a matter he was vocal about at NLC meetings from the start of the 1950s.<sup>108</sup> Funabashi was of the view that *kanji* usage needed to be promoted among society to strengthen the comprehension of texts and cultural output through literature and language usage.

Other conservative NLC members soon followed suit, arguing for the inclusion of additional *kanji* for educational and other purposes.<sup>109</sup> One member mentioned that the set list violated freedom of expression within literary circles, due to the limitations it potentially placed on an author’s work.<sup>110</sup> This criticism was flawed, as freedom of expression cannot be infringed by restrictions on *kanji* usage. Such complaints, which were often raised during NLC general meetings, were rebutted by members of the NLC who were in close contact with on-site teachers (*genba no sensei*).<sup>111</sup> Such individuals were of the opinion that as little change as possible be made to the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage, due to the adverse effects sudden and drastic changes in national language policy may have on the school curriculum. According to NLC members in favour of maintaining the set list, teachers were

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<sup>107</sup> NLC 3, 57.

<sup>108</sup> NLC 1, 89. For instance, Funabashi confronted Matsusaka Tadanori over Yamamoto Yūzō’s role in shaping early postwar script reform, claiming that Yamamoto’s methods were autocratic and self-righteous.

<sup>109</sup> Iwabuchi Etsutarō, whose ideas are discussed in chapter three, was a prime example of an NLC member who believed in the ongoing educational relevance of *kanji* within compulsory education.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>111</sup> A disconnect between the NLC and individuals and groups on-site is a recurring theme. See chapters four and five for further details of how the NLC failed to actively involve itself in writing practices that were reshaping Japanese script.

content with the current orthographic standards set by the NLC.<sup>112</sup> Any necessary changes made to set list or usage ought to be incremental, they argued, as increasing the number of characters threefold or even tenfold would have to guarantee the development of a method for learning all additional kanji within the education system.<sup>113</sup> Conservative counter-arguments to the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List within the NLC may have been further triggered by the recent end of the Occupation in 1952, which freed individuals from the potential gaze of GHQ.

Also raised as an issue by NLC members were the effects of *kanji* limitation on vocabulary usage. This concern went to the heart of the postwar reforms, and pitted members of the NLC against each other. Some NLC members claimed a full analysis of the effects of *kanji* limitation on vocabulary usage was essential in assessing the effectiveness of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, while others were confident that a limited number of *kanji*, such as the characters found on the set list, was sufficient to write contemporary texts.<sup>114</sup> Other NLC members blamed early postwar policy formulators for the “pressures of [learning] the national language in Japan.”<sup>115</sup> The argument was that countries that overemphasise education in the national language were unable to impart practical knowledge to their students. Ōsumi Tatsuo 大住達雄 (1894-1980), head of Mitsubishi Logistics and NLC member during the period, wanted to remove the pressures of learning the national language on learners of the Japanese writing system, to aid understanding and communication. As an example, he raised the issue of literacy in Turkey. He claimed that literacy rates in Turkey before World War One were approximately fifteen percent. After the end of the war literacy rates increased to fifty percent. He argued that the switch from Arabic to a Romanised writing system was what allowed for that increase in literacy rates to occur among the Turkish population.<sup>116</sup> This argument was partly valid, as script

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 58-59.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 71-72.

reform in Turkey in the late 1920s, along with factors such as political democratisation, helped increase literacy rates in Turkish society.<sup>117</sup>

The newly created *Kana* Usage and *Kanji* Problems Division focussed on revisiting and reassessing changes made to the writing system during the early postwar period. It was particularly interested in rectifying any impracticalities that arose because of policies formulated in the recent past and was divided in its opinion on Contemporary *Kana* Usage. One side within the division preferred to maintain “current conditions” by providing a glossary of sample words and phrases that would clarify any questions regarding Contemporary *Kana* Usage.<sup>118</sup> Such an approach would mean compiling a template or a reference that provided a guide to Contemporary *Kana* Usage in its current rendering and advised users on solutions to the more problematic aspects of Contemporary *Kana* Usage. The approach did not materialise, due to disagreements over policy revision.

A second group within the division recommended a revision (*kaitei*) of Contemporary *Kana* Usage. The “revision argument” was premised on the fact that remnants of historical *kana* usage were found within contemporary *kana* usage, and that the Japanese writing system should be freed, where possible, of anachronistic usage. An NLC general meeting on 2 March 1955 confirmed that a slight majority of members were in favour of maintaining Contemporary *Kana* Usage. However, the NLC as a whole also concluded that partial revisions would eventually need to be made to contemporary *kana* usage.<sup>119</sup> The result was the submission of a proposal on “The Application of Contemporary *Kana* Usage,” which stated that the NLC would adhere to and apply a number of rules stipulated in the Cabinet Announcement on Contemporary *Kana* Usage.<sup>120</sup> The stance effectively ensured that certain redundancies remained in the official *kana* usage supported by the NLC.

Another topic problematized within the division was homophonous kanji such as *jittai* (実態 “actual conditions” versus 実体 “substance”). The creation of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List prompted groups

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<sup>117</sup> Seran Doğançay-Aktuna, “An Evaluation of the Turkish Language Reform after 60 Years,” *Language Problems and Language Planning* 19, no. 3 (1995), 229.

<sup>118</sup> NLC 3, 17.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Cabinet Order no. 1, 1946.

and individuals within society to adapt their writing practices and habits. Novelists and journalists began substituting *kanji* found on the Tōyō Kanji set list for homophonous kanji not found on the list when writing. The NLC set itself the task of gathering as many examples of such words as possible and selecting suitable (*datō*) examples of such writing habits and practices. This required consulting glossaries and dictionaries compiled by the Japan Newspaper Association, Ministry of Education, and a dictionary edited by Kindaichi Kyōsuke.<sup>121</sup> The result was the creation of a 520-word glossary entitled “Substitute Homophonous Characters and Words,” which affirmed numerous changes to kanji usage found within society.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, the NLC provided a comprehensive list of suitable alternatives for homophonous kanji to the general public in July 1956.<sup>123</sup> These gaps in current *kanji* policy provided conservative members of the NLC with additional reason to criticise reformists within the NLC membership.

## Conclusion

While language policy formulation in the wartime period saw proposals for simplification, language ownership in the postwar period remained in the hands of established linguists. Such linguists helped reshape the script choice and style of the CoJ and formulate national language policies in the early postwar period, most notably through the compilation of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage. The NLC’s policy-making was largely dependent on established linguists’ understanding of the language policy implications of democratisation – a process whose meaning did not remain uncontested. The Ministry of Education, the body overseeing the NLC, stressed the central role the resolution of language problems would play in the cultural reconstruction and reinvigoration of postwar Japanese society. Though Occupation authorities were not directly involved in language policy formulation, they also shaped debates concerning the relationship between language policy and democratisation. They encouraged the resolution of language problems through simplification at the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 20-27.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

general meetings of the NLC during the late 1940s and early 1950s and openly viewed the NLC as the highest authority of Japanese language policy formulation in Occupied Japan.

The idea of national reconstruction through cultural advancement relied heavily on language policies involving simplified script and linguistic homogeneity through standardisation. Imagined links between a national Japanese language and Japanese citizens (*kokumin*) directed language policy during this period. Continuity with the prewar ideas of *kokugo* was found in the policies the NLC formulated and opinions published by its established linguists. Thus, the focus of the NLC during the Occupation period and beyond was partly committed to a study of a standard national language and the role it could play in shaping written language usage within society.

During the early postwar period, the NLC also became interested in developments occurring in language policies pursued by Japan's neighbouring countries of China and Korea. During the 1950s numerous NLC members were particularly attracted to the planned implementation of comprehensive script reform by the elite within the recently established People's Republic of China (PRC). The result was the building of transnational ties that saw collaboration and exchange of ideas between Japanese language policy formulators and their counterparts in the PRC. These ties reinvigorated an agenda of script reform among NLC members. The transnational links that formed between members of the NLC and its Chinese counterparts, and the domestic tensions that resulted, form the focus of the next chapter.

### Chapter 3: The Transnational Dynamics of Script Reform

A front-page article in the *Asahi shimbun* in March 1958 tells of a meeting in a hall in the Japanese House of Representatives by a group known as the Language Policy Discussion Group (*Gengo Seisaku o Hanashiau Kai*, hereon Discussion Group). The Discussion Group counted among its members MPs (members of parliament) from the Lower and Upper house, academics, literati, NLC members, and bureaucrats. Concerned with the lack of communication between linguists and politicians interested in language matters, the Discussion Group established itself partly as an attempt to bridge the gap between such individuals in order to work toward the implementation of further script reform. Having convened numerous times, the Discussion Group made public a pledge its members drafted on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1958.

The language policies of the world are continually changing. Japan will soon be home to the only citizens that use *kanji*. Though we must respect the culture bestowed on us through *kanji*, it is essential that the use of a phonetic script such as *kana* or *rōmaji* be adopted in the daily workings of society. Though it may not be a simple task, we are resolved to call out to people from all walks of life and make full efforts [for reform] along nonpartisan lines.<sup>1</sup>

The pledge made by the Discussion Group came over a decade after the initial postwar reforms, and its appearance encompasses several issues broached by reformist groups in postwar Japanese script reform debates. Firstly, the pledge's emphasis on nonpartisan cooperation amongst participants signifies awareness of the political significance of the script reform. Through its diverse membership, the Discussion Group hoped to demonstrate its ability to assemble concerned individuals to influence the shape of the Japanese writing system. Secondly, the pledge aims to pay homage to the past by acknowledging the cultural heritage accrued through *kanji* usage, whilst simultaneously problematising the necessity of continued *kanji* usage within the day-to-day activities of Japanese individuals. Lastly, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Nibonjin dake ni narisō na kanji shiyō*” [Soon *Kanji* Usage may only be found among the Japanese], 19 March, 1958, 1.

pledge navigates between script reform debates in a domestic setting and reforms envisioned in other countries by displaying an acute understanding of world events and the possibility of conventional writing systems being overturned not only in Japan, but also in other parts of the world – hence the focus on “language policies of the world” in the opening of the pledge. This chapter examines the renewed interest in script reform among established linguists and traces the subsequent transnational ties that formed between Japanese and Chinese language policy formulators. It also investigates the tensions that occurred between pro-reformists and conservatives within the NLC, which culminated in a walkout at an NLC general meeting in March 1961. The chapter concludes that renewed interest in script reform among NLC members led to the demise of progressive language policy formulation and the beginning of an inward-looking NLC.

### **The Language Policy Discussion Group**

Scholars and academics interested in reform concluded that few politicians were addressing script reform issues collectively. Some saw the need for a new platform for the sharing of opinions on language policy, which was long overdue since the early postwar reforms implemented over a decade ago. Kuraishi Takeshirō, vice-chair of the NLC and influential member of the Discussion Group, claimed that until the formation of the Discussion Group a large contingent of MPs had not considered the issue of language policy.<sup>2</sup> The Discussion Group was formed with this in mind, by a group of seventy Diet members and interested individuals seeking to bring about further script reform.<sup>3</sup> The Asahi article on the Discussion Group indicates that the group managed to mitigate the estrangement previously felt between academics and politicians: script reform was now being openly discussed and debated in government spaces by members of Japan’s political and academic elite.<sup>4</sup>

The political figureheads of the Discussion Group were Katayama Tetsu 片山哲 (1887-1978), the first socialist prime minister of Japan (1947-1948), Kitamura Tokutarō 北村徳太郎 (1886-1968),

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<sup>2</sup> Arimitsu et al., “‘Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai’ o megutte” [Concerning the “Language Policy Discussion Group”], *Gengo Seikatsu* 86 (1958), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics* (London: Kegan Paul, 1995), 164.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, the Discussion Group regularly held meetings in the Diet Members’ Hall in the House of Representatives. Cf. *Asahi shinbun*, “*Nihonjin dake ni nariso na kanji shiyō!*”.

who had served as Minister of Transport in the Katayama Tetsu cabinet, and Kōra Tomi 高良とみ (1896-1993), erudite politician and women's rights activist. The academic component of the Discussion Group consisted of Kuraishi Takeshirō, Chinese language and literature scholar, Nakashima Kenzō 中島健三 (1903-1979), French literature scholar, and Nishio Minoru, Japanese language scholar and first chair (1949-60) of the NINJAL. These academics had served on the NLC prior to joining the Language Policy Discussion Group and had exhibited a clear interest in Japanese script policy up to a decade before the formation of the Discussion Group in 1958. The vanguard of the Discussion Group, therefore, consisted mainly of elite politicians of various persuasions and seasoned academics who shared a desire to solve a perceived stagnancy in language reform policies. Such politicians and academics believed policy stagnancy stemmed from a lack of progressiveness compared to neighbouring countries such as the People's Republic of China, which were planning comprehensive script reform that would change the shape of their written languages.

According to Arimitsu, another leading figure in the Discussion Group, script reform was the surest way to free the Japanese language from the fetters of *kanji*.<sup>5</sup> How to implement phoneticisation served as the Discussion Group's "departure point". The social benefits of script reform and an awareness of the cultural and political costs of maintaining the contemporary writing system drove most members of the Discussion Group in their dealings with politicians and local administrations. This made the Discussion Group akin to a nonpartisan group with a political and public agenda of reform and phoneticisation of the Japanese writing system.

The Discussion Group viewed itself as a visionary and forward-looking entity. As one member openly stated, it was not to revisit the past when formulating language policy. Benefits were to be found in script reform insofar as they lightened the existing burdens placed on users of the mixed-script Japanese writing system. However, discovering new ways to rationalise the current writing system was not a permanent end in itself. Therefore, a reassessment of the early postwar changes made to the

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<sup>5</sup> Arimitsu et al., "*Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai' o megutte*," 14.

writing system was not considered necessary, as those changes were considered to have already successfully reduced the burden of literacy-acquisition and learning, producing a new generation of Japanese language users that were accepting of script simplification and rationalisation. Rather, Kuraishi argued, “something ha[d] to be done” about the “little momentum” in the push for script reforms witnessed since the implementation of the early postwar reforms.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Discussion Group gathered support from members of parliament and the academic community, in addition to petitioning the Minister of Education and chair of the NLC, to instigate further script reform.<sup>7</sup> The Discussion Group’s approach is reminiscent of the early postwar push for script reform – evident in the actions of the Citizen’s Japanese Language Activism League – that would produce an easy-to-use writing system for all individuals residing in the newly emerging “cultural nation” (*bunka kokka*) of Japan,<sup>8</sup> and can be counted as a progressive functionalist approach to script reform. Much like the political and cultural entanglements of democracy (inclusivity) and nationalism in the pronouncements of the early postwar reformist Citizen’s Japanese Language Activism League, purposeful reform proposals in the late 1950s by the Discussion Group also required the support of a wide political base through calls for an aware and inclusive approach to reform.

The Japanese political landscape in the late 1950s was moving toward moderate conservatism. However, the political hegemony being established by the governing Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) in the mid-to-late fifties was far from a foregone conclusion in 1958. For script reform to go ahead in any meaningful manner, therefore, cooperation was required “along nonpartisan lines”. The membership of the Discussion Group demonstrated the workability of politically balanced proposals for reform by including among its ranks MPs from both houses and of various political leanings and party affiliations.<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding its efforts, the Discussion Group’s particular recommendations for script reform – not to mention its choice of location (the House of Representatives) for meetings – prompted a range of responses from various academic and literary figures opposed to script reform.

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<sup>6</sup> Arimitsu et al., “*Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai’ o megutte*,” 2.

<sup>7</sup> NLC 4, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Hirai, *Kokugo Kokujii mondai no Rekishi*, 387.

<sup>9</sup> Arimitsu et al., “*Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai’ o megutte*,” 2.

The formation of a conservative anti-reform lobbyist group later in 1958 may have partly stemmed from the political campaigning and public actions of the Discussion Group in early 1958.

Rapidly changing politics overseas engendered both fear and hope in members of the Discussion Group. The main aim of the Discussion Group's pledge was not only to note that Japan would not benefit as a country if its people did not possess a writing system that was in keeping with the times. Global changes in language policy and societal needs also necessitated the reassessment of cultural norms with regards the Japanese writing system. *Kanji* had played a crucial role in bringing sophisticated cultures to the Japanese archipelago through religious and literary exposure to mainland China and the Korean peninsula. However, contemporary developments in the People's Republic of China, observable in such government-adopted resolutions as the Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet of February 1958, indicated that even norms relating to *kanji* usage were being seriously scrutinised among the ruling Chinese elite.<sup>10</sup> The Discussion Group believe that Japanese citizens should also reconsider their attitudes towards maintaining an archaic and occasionally unwieldy writing system – lest, as Discussion Group member Matsusaka Tadanori warned, the country's communications are plunged into a state of redundancy.<sup>11</sup>

The Discussion Group had come to an agreement on the issue of script reform and the need for the phoneticisation of the writing system. The timing of the pledge in March 1958 was inadvertently linked to developments in Chinese language policy-making, namely the announcement of the Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. In fact, members of the Discussion Group explicitly stated in an interview that the script reform movement in China had served as a stimulus for the creation of the Discussion Group.<sup>12</sup> If the interest in Chinese language policy found within the Discussion Group was not clear enough in its conversations about Mao Zedong's and other calls for script reform within China, it certainly was in deed: the Discussion Group released a translation of Zhou Enlai's *Current*

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<sup>10</sup> Shouhui Zhao and Jr Richard B. Baldauf, "Individual Agency in Language Planning: Chinese Script Reform as a Case Study," *Language Problems and Language Planning* 36, no. 1 (2012), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Arimitsu et al., "Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai' o megutte," 14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 2.

*Tasks of Reforming the Written Language*, the year the original work was published.<sup>13</sup> In April 1958, Kuraishi also published a reader on Pinyin Chinese according to the new scheme of Chinese Romanisation, with the hope to publish more readers of a similar kind.<sup>14</sup> Chinese language reform initiatives, as earlier Japanese linguists such as Ueda Kazutoshi had opined,<sup>15</sup> played a significant role in shaping the decisions and actions of Japanese reformists. At this stage, Chinese language reform served as a bellwether for at least two influential and active members of the Discussion Group, Kuraishi Takeshirō and Sanetō Keishū 実藤恵秀 (1896-1985), and impacted discussions within the NLC, which Discussion Group member and head of the *Kana* Orthography Association Matsusaka Tadanori suggested should clarify its stance toward the complete abolition (*zenpai*) of *kanji*.<sup>16</sup>

The membership of the Discussion Group shows that script reform was of concern not only to established Japanese linguists such as Nishio Minoru. Nor was it limited to bodies administered by the Ministry of Education, such as the NLC. Instead, it was considered important by elite politicians and academics, who perceived script reform as having an influential role to play in the lives of Japanese citizens and created a space for advocates of reform to discuss language policy at the heart of Japanese political society and public life. The convergence of a Christian socialist politician, women's rights activist, and NLC members in the Discussion Group was a continuation of earlier trends in reformist organisations, such as the convergence of various groups and individuals in the Citizens' Japanese Language Activism League – whose inclusive approach to script reform the Discussion Group assumed. The mingling of academics and politicians served to further blur the lines between government politics and script reform. The Discussion Group allowed its members to bypass the Ministry of Education and negotiate policy-making strategies directly with MPs in both houses, as well as with the Japanese public in a more proactive manner. It also ran columns in newspapers and held public lectures in major cities,<sup>17</sup> such as the one its members organised in the Tokyo *Asahi shimbun*

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<sup>13</sup> Zhou Enlai, trans. Sanetō Keishū, *Moji Kaikaku no Mokuzen no Ninmu* [Current Tasks of Reforming the Written Language], (Tokyo: Gengo Seisaku o Hanashiau Kai, 1958).

<sup>14</sup> Kuraishi Takeshirō, *Pinyin Zhongguo-Yu Chuji* [Pinyin Chinese for Beginners], (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1958), 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Yasuda, *Teikoku ninbon no gengo hensei*.

<sup>16</sup> NLC 5, 86.

<sup>17</sup> Arimitsu et al., “*Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai’ o megutte*,” 9.

auditorium in June 1958,<sup>18</sup> to help raise awareness of language problems among the general Japanese public.

The Discussion Group discovered, through discussions with media staff, that its progressive ideas for script reform, particularly the further reduction and eventual elimination of *kanji* in everyday writing, were representative of those held by the average Japanese citizen,<sup>19</sup> who was aware of the inevitability of reform and saw the potential benefits of ridding the Japanese language of a cumbersome mixed-script writing system.<sup>20</sup> The Discussion Group, therefore, emphasised the improvement and preservation of the Japanese language through script reform by reassuring the public of the outcomes of their proposed script reforms.<sup>21</sup> This took the form of public lectures and seminars that demonstrated the advantages of using a reformed Japanese writing system. Though there had been much conjecture and hypothesising about the social benefits of script reform, the Discussion Group admitted the need for concrete data on the merits of phoneticisation – and hoped (perhaps through its elite membership) the NINJAL could be persuaded to help produce studies on the benefits of phoneticisation.<sup>22</sup>

Links were made by the Discussion Group – as had been done on numerous occasions in the past by other groups and individuals – between script reform and improvement in education.<sup>23</sup> However, the fact that few politicians concerned themselves with script reform in the late 1950s made it difficult for lobbyist groups and prominent reformists to push an agenda of eventual reform of language teaching in schools. The Discussion Group needed to provide a feasible and attractive alternative to the current writing system that would be both politically viable and, simultaneously, free of negative side-effects. The inclusion among its membership of prominent NLC members such as

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<sup>18</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Nibongo o yasashiku suru undō no kai*” [The Activist Organisation that’s ‘Making Japanese Easy’], 19 June, 1958, 7.

<sup>19</sup> In this case, Japanese women.

<sup>20</sup> Arimitsu et al., “*Gengo seisaku o hanashiau kai o megutte*,” 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Attributed to Kuraishi Takeshirō.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Kitamura Tokutarō, a member of the Language Policy Discussion Group, notes in a lengthy newspaper article how “excruciating it is for children with disabilities to learn numerous pronunciations for a single character.” See *Asahi shimbun*, “*Kanji, Tsukawazu ni – dandan hyō’onka suru*” [Gradually Phoneticising without using *Kanji*], 19 June, 1958, 7. This argument resembled the point Endō made about teaching Japanese at a school for the blind in the journal *Kokugogaku* during the Occupation period. Cf. the “Debating Script Reform” section in chapter two of this thesis.

NLC vice-chair Kuraishi Takeshirō, NINJAL advisor Arimitsu Jirō 有光次郎 (1903-1995),<sup>24</sup> and Matsusaka Tadanori lent the Discussion Group the authority it needed in drawing up concrete script reform proposals. The fact that the average Japanese found script reform appealing but worrisome meant that the pleas of the Discussion Group were to fall on deaf ears – even if that came in the form of a publicised pledge by politicians and scholars that attempted, through the media, to reach as wide an audience as possible.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, another barrier to the implementation of reforms proposed by the Discussion Group resided in its composition: politicians of a socialist or leftist leaning, which represented the political figureheads of the Discussion Group, were less likely to sway a conservative ruling party into making admittedly radical changes to so fundamental an aspect of civic livelihood as the Japanese writing system.<sup>26</sup> (This may have constituted a further reason for the Discussion Group members’ targeting of the Japanese public, through media and books on Chinese Romanisation and other prominent matters.)

Conversely, by calling for a nonpartisan approach to script reform the Discussion Group unexpectedly further politicised script reform debates. The emergence and formation that same year of the lobbyist group the Council for Language Matters (*Kokugo Mondai Kyōgikai*), therefore, was not wholly unexpected. It has been noted that, excepting a small group of reform advocates, proposals for Romanisation or the abolition of *kanji* generated fear among conservative academics in the postwar period.<sup>27</sup> Anxiety surrounding sudden and radical reform seems to have carried into the late 1950s. Moreover, by this stage early supporters of moderate reform, such as Tokieda Motoki, who had aligned (perhaps tactically) themselves with “democratic” associations such as the Citizens’ Japanese Language Activism League in the immediate postwar years, now rallied with anti-reform organisations and

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<sup>24</sup> Arimitsu also served as vice-chair of the NLC until November 1958. Kuraishi assumed the role of NLC vice-chair in March 1959. For a list of NLC members and their roles during the period, cf. NLC 4 and NLC 5.

<sup>25</sup> Yasuda, *Kanji baishi no shisō shi*, 432.

<sup>26</sup> John Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4. The difficulty of persuading the ruling political class to reform written Japanese was compounded by fear-mongering concerning Chinese communism at the height of the cold war.

<sup>27</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*, 157; Yasuda, *Kanji baishi no shisō shi*, 405.

lobbyist groups because of the threat the Discussion Group posed.<sup>28</sup> With the emergence of the Council for Language Matters and other groups opposed to reform, such as the Japanese Literary Association, came a concentrated effort to counter script reform initiatives through intellectual criticism and appeals to “Japanese” cultural heritage. The actions of such bodies, in some instances mimicked by reformists themselves, would eventually eclipse further pro-reform initiatives within Japanese officialdom, and cause the NLC to revert to something akin to its former status as a Ministry-controlled investigatory body.

### **Lobbyists Opposed to Further Script Reform**

Having featured on the cover page of the *Asahi shinbun*, the Discussion Group’s pledge attracted attention from various groups and individuals with an interest in script reform. While the formation of lobbies opposed to script reform may not have been in direct reaction to the publication of the pledge, the creation of the Council for Language Matters a mere several months after the pledge’s appearance in the *Asahi shinbun* deserves further investigation.

At its inception, the Council for Language Matters consisted of a collection of academics and professionals headed by Tokieda Motoki, NLC member and established linguist. His theories of language were highly influential among conservatives,<sup>29</sup> partly because they challenged the dominant Saussurean notion of language as an objective and externalised structural entity, and partly because they bolstered the theoretical underpinnings of language (re)education programmes in the Korean peninsula during the Japanese occupation of Korea.<sup>30</sup> From the late 1950s, Tokieda Motoki and his followers used the theory of language process to draw on ideas of cultural relativism and the need for public consent for reform, thereby denying officialdom or any other small groups (such as the Discussion Group) script reform policy prerogatives, regardless of the number of internal justifications accreted by

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<sup>28</sup> Tokieda’s political affiliations in the early postwar years underwent such a drastic, though periodic, change that he even translated the Stalin’s article on language policy, “Marxism and Problems of Linguistics” – an undertaking he would regret in later years. Cf. Tokieda Motoki, “*Sutarin ‘gengo gaku ni okeru marukusu shugi’ ni kanshite*” [On Stalin’s “Marxism and Problems of Linguistics”], *Chuo Koron* 65, no. 10 (1950): 97-104; Tokieda Motoki, *Kokugo mondai to kokugo kyoiku* [National Language Problems and Education] (Tokyo: Chūkyō Shuppan, 1961), 99-118.

<sup>29</sup> Tokieda’s theories and ideas concerning the study of language are covered in chapter one.

<sup>30</sup> Yasuda, *Teikoku nihon no gengo hensei*, 156-157.

their proposals. His outlook on language policy was like the conservative prewar and wartime language scholar Yamada Yoshio, who argued against the use of prescriptivism in language policy formulation.

The Council for Language Matters regularly challenged policy makers and reformists concerning the fundamental characteristics of language policy-making itself. In a book published by the Council for Language Matters, Tokieda argues that the gravest fault in Japanese language policy since the Meiji period resided in its lack of a clear agenda:

Language policy since the Meiji period has taken phonocentrism – bringing the script closer to phonemes – as the rationalisation and simplification of the national language; the large mistake was in [their] disregarding the function of language as a transmitter of human ideas.<sup>31</sup>

Branding modern language policy as one dimensional in its approach, as well as detached from the real needs of contemporary Japanese society through its focus on the streamlining of language as a communicative tool, allowed anti-reformists to delegitimise proposals made by the Discussion Group and others that hoped to further reform the Japanese writing system through phoneticisation. Language, as perceived by members of the Council for Language Matters, needed to be approached as a particularistic incorporation of Japanese needs through the maintenance of a mutually intelligible writing system.<sup>32</sup> Turning the Japanese writing system into a “phonetic” writing system went against those needs, as it risked throwing the language into disorder (a subject that would recur in the discourse of *midare* “disarray” during the 1970s and 1980s).<sup>33</sup> Refusing to acknowledge the subjective nature of language, argued the Council for Language Matters, would result in skewed policy making that would favour efficiency over immediate practicality (read: customs).<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Tokieda had openly

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<sup>31</sup> Tokieda Motoki, *Kokugo mondai no tame ni: Kokugo mondai hakusho* [For the Resolution of Language Problems: A Whitepaper on Language Problems], (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan, 1962), 36.

<sup>32</sup> Tokieda, *Kokugo mondai no tame ni*, 154.

<sup>33</sup> Uno Seiichi, another member of the Council for Language Matters and a close associate of Tokieda’s, would continue to argue that the Japanese language is in disarray, while also criticising the viewpoints of linguists who thought otherwise. For instance, cf. Kindaichi Haruhiko, *Shin nihongo ron*, 35.

<sup>34</sup> The Council for Language Problems continues to exist, and through the course of its years as a conservative lobbyist group has held fast to prewar Japanese writing system conventions in its books and reports, publishing works on such topics as the *kanji* and *kana* usage and honorary language reserved for the emperor.

promoted a passive approach to language policy-formation,<sup>35</sup> which did not sit well with the proactive stance on script reform adopted by NLC chair Toki Zenmaro and other members of the Discussion Group.

Tokieda steered the Council for Language Matters toward a “passive-aggressive” opposition to contemporary policy-making strategies with relative success. Members of the Council for Language Matters, such as Ōno Susumu and Uno Seichi 宇野精一 (1910-2008), would lead illustrious careers as Japanese language scholars and became members of a more conservative NLC, starting in the mid-to-late 1960s. Others directly involved in the decisions made by the Discussion Group, such as Fukuda Tsuneari 福田恆存 (1912-1994) and Funabashi Seichi 舟橋聖一 (1904-1976), lent the cause a sense of importance, due to their statuses in Japanese society as a famed literary critic and renowned novelist. Moreover, Ōno was a Japanese language scholar who was known, perhaps equally alongside the author of *Nibongo* (“The Japanese Language”) Kindaichi Haruhiko 金田一春彦 (1913-2004), for holding essentialist views concerning Japanese culture and society.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the composition of the Council for Language Matters was, in part, influenced not only by an agenda that aimed to maintain the “integrity” of the Japanese language, but also by individuals who felt the need to replicate a *Nihonjinron*-esque language ideology that emphasised Japanese uniqueness (discussed in further detail in the following chapter). In this light, the Council for Language Matters was apt to talk about language as the foundation of “Japanese culture” while lambasting script reform by describing Romanisation and *kana*-isation as “linguistically suicidal behaviour”.<sup>37</sup> Among the Council for Language Matters membership, sudden radical reform of the writing system was considered anathema to Japanese society, and any attempts at reform deserved careful studied consideration.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Toki Zenmaro et al., “*Kokugo shingikai wa dō in koto o shiteiru ka*” [What Kinds of Things is the National Language Council Doing?], *Gengo Seikatsu* 6 (1952), 3-4. Tokieda’s anti-prescriptivism and passive approach to language policy formulation were adopted by the NLC after the walkout of March 1961.

<sup>36</sup> Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, 52-3. These views, often referred to as *Nihonjinron* (theories of Japaneseness), and their effects on established linguists are discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>37</sup> Tokieda, *Kokugo mondai no tame ni*, 42-3.

<sup>38</sup> See Tokieda, ‘*Kokugo seisaku no tame ni kisoteki kenkyū ni tsuite*’ [On Research Fundamentals for National Language Policy], *Kokugogaku*, 37 (1959): 92-96.

The future state of the Japanese writing system envisioned by the lobbyist groups was both diametrically opposed and, in some regards, similar to one another. One group had hoped to work proactively toward the phoneticisation of the Japanese writing system; the other was opposed to the early postwar reforms made to the writing system and fought to preserve the writing system in its current form, lest it turn into something unrecognisable (and therefore, unusable). They were both, therefore, attempting to challenge the status quo. Though both groups counted amongst its membership members of the NLC – and in the case of the Discussion Group a public servant working for the Ministry of Education – their focus was not directed exclusively toward the NLC. One similarity shared by the lobbyist groups resides in their targeting of both politicians and the general public, in order to persuade the average Japanese citizen of the merits of their respective positions on script reform. The Discussion Group was more proactive in its efforts, with its members organising talks and seminars for the general public during the late 1950s and early sixties. However, it was the Council for Language Problems that would eventually enjoy the longest tenure, a group that, throughout its existence, continued to stand for a culturally conservative interpretation of the Japanese writing system that linked the “preservation” of language to the maintenance of customs found within Japanese society.

### **An International “Meeting of Minds”**

Despite (or perhaps due to) opposition, reformists made further inroads in their engagement with global trends in language policy. With the financial and logistical assistance of the recently established China-Japan Association (founded in 1956), a small group of Japanese individuals visited Beijing to meet with the Chinese Script Reform Committee and assess the state of script reform initiatives in that neighbouring country. Heading the group was Toki Zenmaro, serving chair of the NLC. The visit to Beijing took place in March 1960, at the height of the Cold War, only ten years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

The name of the group of Japanese to visit Beijing was the Academic Representatives of the Chinese Script Reform Inspection (hereon the Academic Group).<sup>39</sup> Little has been written about the Academic Group and what it accomplished on its visit to China. However, the actions of and texts produced by the Academic Group – facilitated partially by the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association – mark an important landmark in the Japanese script reform movement, as it illustrates the lengths to which certain individuals were willing to go, at a time of general political instability in the domestic (the US-Japan security treaty crisis) and international spheres (diplomatic estrangement from China and Korea), to gauge the direction of Chinese language policy and script reform.

Akin to the Language Policy Discussion Group and its pledge two years earlier, the interests of the Academic Group revolved around an intimate investigation of overseas approaches to script reform and whether such approaches could be utilised in Japan. Though the People's Republic of China had no diplomatic relations with Japan, an internationalist ideal suffused the visit and other civilian activities that preceded it: a shadow of former times in which Esperanto served as a means of transnational communication between Japanese and Chinese (and individuals from other regions).<sup>40</sup>

The central aim of the Academic Group is self-evident from the name of the group. The group's *raison d'être* was to gain a scientific understanding of the workings of script reform policy in the People's Republic of China (PRC).<sup>41</sup> Nearly all members of the Academic Group were well acquainted with language problems and had served in positions that required them to handle language issues. Apart from one man, the seven men who travelled to Beijing were all members of the NLC.<sup>42</sup> Five of the

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<sup>39</sup> Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association, “*Nichū bunka kōryū*” [Japan-China Cultural Exchange], no. 716 (23.3.2006), 13. The Japanese name of the Academic Group was the *Chūgoku Moji Kaikaku Shisatsu Gakujutsu Dan*. The Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association was established in Tokyo in 1956 to “deepen mutual understanding and foster cultural improvement and amicable relations among the people” of Japan and China “through cultural exchange”. Cf. Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association, “*Nihon chūgoku bunka kōryū kyōkai teikan*” [Articles of Association of the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association], <http://www.nicchubunka1956.jp/%E5%AE%9A%E6%AC%BE/>

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Ulrich Lins, “Esperanto as Language and Idea in China and Japan,” *Language Problems and Language Planning* 32, no. 1 (2008): 47-60. Cultural exchange between China and Japan resumed in 1953 with the repatriation of Japanese from China.

<sup>41</sup> The political revolution that ushered in the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949 saw the creation in Beijing of the Chinese Script Reform Committee in the very same month of that year.

<sup>42</sup> Another account mentions ten people comprising the Chinese Script Reform Investigation Academic Group; Odagiri Fumihito, “*Toki Zenmaro to Chūgoku (1)*” [Toki Zenmaro and China (Part 1)], *Nihon Daigaku Kokusai Kankei Gakubu Kenkyū Nenpō* 34 (February, 2013), 1-8. Despite the factual discrepancy, the names not found in the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association's magazine do not change the fact that the majority of the members involved in the trip to China had served on the NLC.

members had been involved in the NLC since at least the late 1940s, with the majority having had held positions of responsibility (division chief or vice-chair of the council) within the NLC before their visit to the PRC. Toki Zenmaro was also a prominent member of the Discussion Group and a translator of Chinese poetry and was therefore well acquainted with script reform initiatives in China. Four of the seven Academic Group members were knowledgeable in Chinese literature or history. The outlier of this group was Takasugi Ichirō 高杉一郎 (1908-2008) – also known as Ogawa Gorō 小川五郎 – an influential author and Esperantist, who worked in the Kanto region as a university professor and translator of Russian literature. However, it may have been his interest in Esperanto that aligned him to the internationalist outlook of the other members in the group. The table below provides a list of names and description of the individuals involved in the Academic Group’s visit to Beijing.<sup>43</sup> As the table below shows, the members of the Academic Group were largely academics with a level of involvement with the NLC.

Table 1. Individuals involved in the Academic Group of 1960

Name	Occupational experience	Interests	Involvement in Script Reform
Toki Zenmaro	Lecturer at Waseda University, poet and translator of poetry, reporter for <i>Asahi shimbun</i>	Chinese poetry; Romanisation	Chair of the NLC (1949-61)
Arimitsu Jirō	Ministry of Education, Chief of Shūei Publishing	Education and language reform; involved in postwar education reforms	NLC member since 1947, Discussion Group member

<sup>43</sup> Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association, “*Nichū bunka kōryū*,” 13.

Kuraishi Takeshirō	Professor at the Imperial University of Kyoto and University of Tokyo	Chinese language and literature	Vice-chair of the NLC (member since 1943), Discussion Group member
Sanetō Keishū	Professor at Waseda University	Chinese literature	NLC member between 1956-1959
Miyazawa Toshiyoshi 宮澤俊儀 (1899-1976)	Professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo, former member of the House of Peers	Constitutional law	NLC member since 1949
Hara Tomio	Professor at Daitō Bunka University	Chinese intellectual history	NLC member since 1947
Takasugi Ichirō	Professor at Shizuoka and Wakō University, novelist, translator	Russian literature, Esperanto	

In many respects, activities undertaken by Chinese linguists and reformists in the 1950s and 1960s marked the heyday of radical script reform in the PRC. It would have been counter-intuitive for advocates of Japanese script reform such as Toki to ignore the work of Chinese reformists dealing with writing systems whose written and literary heritage possess close ties to written Japanese through *kanji* usage. Furthermore, the links between script reform, efficiency, and social wellbeing feature prominently in both the Chinese and Japanese rationales for reform, providing common ground in linguistic and theoretical terms. The period saw the publication of a book on Chinese script reform, the *Hanzi Gaige Gailun* “An Outline of Chinese Character Reform”,<sup>44</sup> by Zhou Youguang (1906-2017), the

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<sup>44</sup> cf. Zhou Youguang, trans. Kitta Hirokuni, *Kanji Kaikaku Gairon* [An Outline of Chinese Character Reform], (Tokyo: Nippon no Rōmaji Sha, 1985).

father of Pinyin and staunch advocate of democracy. (The *Hanzi Gaige Gailun* was a work that in the 1970s would once again spur Japanese reformists into dialogue with their Chinese counterparts, albeit under different circumstances.)

The visit to Beijing allowed individuals such as Toki Zenmaro, head of the Academic Group and NLC, to gain a deeper appreciation of the similarities and differences between the Chinese and Japanese stance on script reform, as well as to exchange information relating to the merits and demerits of Romanisation, script reform, and the activities of the NLC with their Chinese counterparts.<sup>45</sup> It also resulted in three Academic Group participants to write a total of seven reports on their impressions of Chinese script reform initiatives,<sup>46</sup> which were published in various works, and most probably made known to the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association, as well as other interested individuals outside of the Association, upon the Academic Group's return from Beijing.<sup>47</sup> The visit was also reported in the Chinese media.

Though not a government initiative, the purpose of the Academic Group's visit is implicitly linked to the current and future activities and direction of the NLC and, more generally, the debate on language problems (*kokugo mondai*) and script reform in Japan. This is evidenced both by the composition of the visiting group (the majority had direct ties to the NLC) and, as Odagiri Fumihiro argues, the testimonies found in their reports and elsewhere.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the overwhelming majority of individuals that met the Academic Group upon their arrival in Beijing were either members of the Chinese Script Reform Committee or linguists, or both.<sup>49</sup> The gathering of a contingent of NLC members and individuals knowledgeable in Chinese script reform provided for an informed exchange of views on script reform for both sides. In socio-cultural and socio-political terms, the visit was a sharp break from the Cold War politics that tended to isolate progressive policy makers in "Eastern" and "Western" blocs. The meeting also demonstrates how members of the NLC used the international

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<sup>45</sup> Odagiri, "Toki Zenmaro to Chūgoku (1)," 2.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Reports on the Academic Group's visit to China were composed by Kuraishi Takeshirō, Sanetō Keishū, and Hara Tomio. Unfortunately, these reports could not be located.

<sup>47</sup> A treatment of the reports has yet to appear in the Anglophone scholarship on Japanese script reform.

<sup>48</sup> Odagiri, "Toki Zenmaro to Chūgoku (1)," 2.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 4.

aspects of script reform, widely discussed since 1958 by the likes of the Discussion Group, to good effect, to gain information on overseas policy-making practices and to envision paths to further script reform within Japanese society.

Toki's visit to Beijing – his first of three trips to China – came over a decade prior to the normalisation of relations between the Japanese and Chinese governments. The visit therefore sparked interest in the Japanese media and may have also elicited feelings of opposition (or even revulsion) within politically conservative members of the NLC. Lastly, the visit led Toki to pen a well-known poem about *kanji*, and a press conference with Toki was also reported in the Japanese media, upon the group's return from China on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1960.<sup>50</sup> The poem reads:

If *kanji* are not abolished,

China itself will see its own demise,

So explained I,

As I stood before Lu Xun<sup>51</sup>

### **The Walkout at the National Language Council**

By the early sixties, tensions between script reform proponents and anti-reformists had been building for several years. They were evident in journals published by the Discussion Group and the Council for Language Matters,<sup>52</sup> and new reforms concerning the use of *okurigana* announced in 1959 (ironically of lesser significance than early postwar reforms) further fuelled anti-reformist sentiments among conservative linguists and novelists such as Tokieda and Funabashi Seiichi.<sup>53</sup> On 22 March 1961 a walkout occurred at the general meeting of the NLC,<sup>54</sup> less than a year after Toki's return from China. A total of five NLC members, including University of Tokyo linguist Uno Seiichi, walked out of the forty-second general meeting of the NLC, shortly before issuing a joint statement outlining their

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Takasaki claims that Toki wrote this poem in Shanghai, as he stood in front of the statue of the Chinese literary figure Lu Xun, who wrote many of his works in vernacular and classical Chinese. Cf. Takasaki Atsuko, “*Chugoku ryokō uta no seka?*” [The World of Chinese Travel Poetry], *Yamaguchi Kokubun* 30 (2007), 49.

<sup>52</sup> Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*, 164.

<sup>53</sup> Gottlieb, “Language and Politics,” 1184.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1187.

resignation and reasons for leaving the council.<sup>55</sup> An agenda of phoneticisation of the Japanese script and the number of reformists within the NLC were cited as the two reasons underlying the decision to resign from their positions in the NLC.<sup>56</sup>

While it is difficult to determine whether there was an overt agenda of phoneticisation within the NLC during the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were numerous reformists within the council willing to retaliate. These individuals did not feel intimidated by the actions of Uno's anti-reformist group of NLC members that initiated the walkout. Instead reformists issued their own joint statement on the same day of the walkout, criticising the actions of Uno Seiichi and others among his circle of conservative scholars and authors.<sup>57</sup> Matsusaka Tadanori, who by now was head of the *Kana* Orthography Association he served during the Second World War, rightfully argued that all members of the NLC were aware of the policies that were being pursued, and that decisions concerning *kanji* and *kana* script policy had been made with the consensus of council members involved in deliberations.<sup>58</sup> Matsusaka feared that a halt to NLC deliberations would result in a deadlock, with further script reform and rationalisation – which Matsusaka had viewed as a necessity since the wartime script policies he proposed – becoming an impossibility.<sup>59</sup>

The walkout not only potentially inhibited the prospects of further interaction or exchange among Japanese reformists and their Chinese counterparts; it drove certain members of the NLC to stop their involvement in language policy and script reform. The debacle, which hinged on NLC members' interpretation of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage, led to the resignation of NLC chair Toki Zenmaro, and the reinstatement of Uno Seiichi and several other NLC members who had walked out of the general meeting. The result was a resounding victory for conservative anti-reformist members of the NLC. The effect of the walkout was profound; in an interview for the journal *Gengo Seikatsu*, Toki Zenmaro recalled vowing “never [to] say another word” about script reform in the

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<sup>55</sup> The five NLC members that walked out of the general meeting were Uno Seiichi, literary scholar Shioda Ryōhei, author Funabashi Seiichi, author Naruse Masakatsu, and literary scholar Yamagishi Tokuhei.

<sup>56</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Go shi ga dakkei seimei – kokugo shingikai?*” [Five Individuals Announce their Resignation from the National Language Council], 23 March 1961.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Matsusaka, *Kokugo kokuji ronsō*.

aftermath of the walkout.<sup>60</sup> Anti-reformists, some of whom were members of the Council for Language Matters, then presented an alternative to the learning goals of students studying the national language within the compulsory education system: instead of acquiring 881 *kanji* specified in the *Tōyō Kanji Beppyō* (Appended *Tōyō Kanji* Set List), 3000 *kanji* should be learnt.<sup>61</sup> Their proposal, perhaps due to the significant reallocation of curriculum hours it entailed, never materialised.<sup>62</sup>

The silencing of reformists within the NLC in the wake of the walkout was covered in the Japanese media, with both the *Mainichi* and *Asahi shimbun* publishing numerous articles on the incident soon after it occurred.<sup>63</sup> The political “stir up” depicted in the newspapers would have a substantial effect on cooperative efforts between reformists in Japan and China: nearly a decade would pass before individuals – this time a business owner and the head of a Romanisation organisation – attempted to re-establish any kind of rapport with neighbouring script reformists in China. In Japanese officialdom, the walkout saw the departure of the NLC’s longest serving chair (Toki Zenmaro), which stymied motions for further reform within the NLC and brought about a period of conservative introspection (*hansei*) and reconsideration (*saikentō*), which led to the reassessment of the early postwar script reforms formulated by the NLC. This in turn cast a shadow over future proceedings in the NLC. Similarly, the Discussion Group lost momentum after 1961, as its final concrete initiatives – a public seminar and the submission of a petition to the NLC – came to an end in 1960.<sup>64</sup> This meant that prolonged tensions over the direction of script reform outside of the NLC contributed to a change in the dynamics of the NLC. While script reform could be shaped by external factors, such as the lobbying of interest groups and policies drawn up in foreign countries, a perceived threat of substantial reform among conservative

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<sup>60</sup> Toki, “*Dare demo kakeru jidai, yomeru jidai ni*,” 93. Notice the order in which the two proficiencies (“writing” before “reading”) appear in the title of this publication. This is telling of the significance Toki attached to script reform.

<sup>61</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Kaikaku meguru fuman bakuhatsu: Kyōkasbo gyōsei ni mo obiku*” [An Explosion of Dissatisfaction with “Reform”: Textbooks and Administration also Pulled in], 24 March 1961.

<sup>62</sup> The rupture caused by the walkout was felt on both the reformist and anti-reformist side. Conservative NLC members Uno Seiichi and Tokieda Motoki publicly refused to join the NLC when invited to become members for the sixth term. Cf. *Asahi shimbun*, “*San shi fusanka o hyōmei*” [Three Individuals Announce Decision not to Join NLC], 28 September, 1961.

<sup>63</sup> Various articles relating to the NLC walkout were published between 23 and 29 March, with five pieces on the incident featuring in the *Asahi shimbun* and six in the *Mainichi* newspaper.

<sup>64</sup> The Discussion Group petitioned the Minister of Education in 1963 in an attempt to influence the selection of NLC members for the seventh term of the NLC. As will be shown in the following chapter, the Discussion Group’s petition fell upon deaf ears, as the NLC pursued a conservative policy direction centred on anti-prescriptivism and cultural nationalism after the walkout of March 1961. Cf. Fukuda Tsuneari, “*Dai 6 ki kokugo shingikai*” [The 6<sup>th</sup> Term of the NLC], *Asahi shimbun*, 9 August, 1963.

NLC members caused several NLC members to move to counteract any further proposals to phoneticise written Japanese.

### **The NLC Revisits the Chinese Language Reform Committee**

Despite opposition to further reform from conservative factions of the NLC in the early sixties, an official visit to the PRC was organised by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs in the early seventies. The aim of the trip was to foster ties between the NLC and its Chinese counterpart, the Chinese Language Reform Committee, and learn about the latter's programme of script reform. This culminated in a short trip to Beijing and Shanghai, led by NLC member Hayashi Ōki 林大 (1913-2004), in early 1975. Hayashi claims that only a "surface level" understanding of script reform initiatives in the PRC was achieved when compared to the achievements of the unofficial visit of the Academic Group of 1960.<sup>65</sup> However, given that the second visit was official and carried out toward the end of the Cultural Revolution, much can be said about the outcomes of the meetings that took place between the NLC and PRC officials in 1975. Hayashi learnt from the head of the Chinese Language Reform Committee, Laishi Ye (1911-1994), that the basic stance of script reform derived from Mao's pronouncements on language policy.<sup>66</sup> Though this is of no surprise, given the proximity of the committee to the centres of political power, what is interesting is that phoneticisation supposedly continued to be the final goal that the Chinese Language Reform Committee strived to achieve through the implementation of script reform, even in 1975 (decades after it had been announced).<sup>67</sup>

Hayashi compared the circumstances and environment he observed in the language policy formulation of the PRC to those that prevailed during the establishment of the first Japanese national language committee in the early 1900s.<sup>68</sup> He saw similarities in the spread of a standard language (Putonghua) as forming one of the main tasks of the Chinese Language Reform Committee and perhaps also the education system as a means for such dissemination. However, Hayashi also saw room

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<sup>65</sup> ACA, "*Shidai chūgoku ni okeru moji kaikaku nado ni tsuite (hōkoku) (sono 1)*" [(Report) Concerning Script Reform and other Matters in China (Part 1)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/12/sokai095/02.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/12/sokai095/02.html)

<sup>66</sup> Yan Li, *China's Soviet Dream: Propaganda, Culture, and Popular Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 73.

<sup>67</sup> ACA, "*Shidai chūgoku ni okeru moji kaikaku nado ni tsuite (hōkoku) (sono 1)*".

<sup>68</sup> ACA, "*Shidai chūgoku ni okeru moji kaikaku nado ni tsuite (hōkoku) (sono 2)*" [(Report) Concerning Script Reform and other Matters in China (Part 2)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/12/sokai095/03.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/12/sokai095/03.html)

for Japan to learn from the PRC's dedication to policies affecting pronunciation and elocution. Matsumura – another NLC member who visited China alongside Hayashi – claimed that language policy took centre stage in policy formulation,<sup>69</sup> whereas Japanese policy makers paid relatively little attention to language policy (as had been claimed by members of the Discussion Group at the time of its creation in 1958).

In response to reports of the second visit to the PRC, conservative members of the NLC claimed that little could be learnt from the language policies of the Chinese Language Reform Committee. During the ninety-fifth general meeting of the NLC, Uno Seiichi, a Japanese linguist and scholar of Confucian Studies, raised his hands and quipped that information on *kanji* problems in the PRC were of no direct value to the NLC.<sup>70</sup> He painted the simplification of Chinese characters in the PRC as something that would not help the country easily transition to the use of a phonetic script, particularly if the simplified scheme of Chinese characters was widely accepted by the Chinese population.<sup>71</sup>

Though Uno portrayed the visit in a negative light, other members of the NLC were eager to share what knowledge they had of language policy in the PRC. During an NLC general meeting, the NLC chair Fukushima recalled a conversation he had with a member of Chinese Language Reform Committee during his visit to Beijing. Fukushima asked a “journalistic” question about the exact timing of Romanisation of written Chinese.<sup>72</sup> The answer he received was that the numerous dialects used within the PRC's borders had to be standardised before Romanisation was implemented.<sup>73</sup> Fukushima and other NLC members who visited Beijing in 1975 were keen to study developments in Chinese language policy since Toki's visit with the Academic Group in 1960; they returned with numerous Chinese language works that were unavailable in Japan at the time,<sup>74</sup> to ensure that knowledge of Chinese language policy was better understood by NLC members. This indicates that at least a surface-

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

level interest in Chinese script reform was sustained among NLC members, including the chair of the NLC, during a period of increasing introspection.

## Conclusion

A perceived stagnation in language policy formulation and sense of urgency to phoneticise the Japanese writing system among script reformists in Japan led to a renewed drive for script reform in the late 1950s. The move to reform the Japanese writing system involved open cooperation between progressive politicians and academics that called for the eradication of *kanji* from the Japanese writing system. This, in turn, contributed to the emergence of anti-reformist lobbies such as the Council for Language Matters. While the agenda of the reformist Discussion Group may not have received widespread public support, prominent members of the Discussion Group continued to pursue script reform via other avenues, including exchanging ideas with script reformists in the People's Republic of China.

The actions of the Discussion Group contributed to increasing tensions over script reform within the NLC. After several years, conservative members of the NLC, fearing reformists as a threat to Japanese culture and social norms, instigated a walkout in March 1961. The walkout resulted in the resignation of the NLC chair, Toki Zenmaro, who had participated in the Academic Group that visited China and worked to promote progressive language policies that limited *kanji* usage. This change ushered in a period of conservative language policy formulation within the NLC. A new policy outlook dampened the internationalism that led to the creation of the Academic Group, further contributing to an inward-looking and anti-prescriptivist stance toward script reform and language policy within the NLC from the 1960s onward.

## Chapter 4: Retrenchment and the Reassessment of Script Reform in a Globalising World

This chapter argues that developments within the NLC and Japan Foundation made progressive script reform untenable within government-sponsored organisations. It also argues that with the internationalisation of the Japanese language, specifically the international spread of the teaching of Japanese, members of both the NLC and Japan Foundation actively circulated ideas concerning cultural uniqueness and “correct” Japanese language usage. However, the Japan Foundation was more proactive in disseminating such conventions at a global level. This meant matters pertaining to Japanese language policy, at least outside of Japan, no longer remained within the exclusive purview of the NLC. As an organisation with a vested interest in written Japanese, the Japan Foundation widely promoted conventional mixed-script Japanese through policy documents, international education conferences, and teaching materials of its own, enabling ideas of cultural uniqueness and “correctness” associated with the Japanese language to spread beyond policy-making and academic circles and, in turn, beyond the borders of the “cultural nation” of Japan. In doing so, it bolstered the conservative policy direction of the NLC while creating new spaces for discussion of language policy and education.

Subsequent to the walkout at the NLC in March 1961,<sup>1</sup> a significant change occurred in the official position of the NLC toward script policies formulated during the early postwar period. Members of the NLC began to reassess script reform policies such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage and call for their revision. This led to a period of language policy re-evaluation within the NLC, marked by a fundamental shift in the way NLC members viewed national language policy formulation. This chapter examines NLC deliberations from October 1961 to May 1968, to draw attention to the change in focus within official language policy formulation.

The chapter then examines broad socioeconomic developments that allowed Japanese organisations to actively contribute to the global spread of Japanese. Subsequent to the rapid growth of

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<sup>1</sup> See “The Walkout at the National Language Council” section in chapter three of this thesis.

the Japanese economy in the 1960s, government and private industry created new cultural organisations to promote Japanese culture overseas and meet growing demand for Japanese as a foreign language education. One such organisation was the Japan Foundation, a semi-governmental organisation established to “deepen understanding of our country [Japan], promote mutual understanding among nations, and contribute to the world in culture and other fields”.<sup>2</sup> Its creation marked the emergence of a new group with a vested interest in the development of written Japanese. Since its inception in 1972, the Japan Foundation took an ongoing interest in spreading Japanese overseas to foreign institutions and classrooms. The latter half of the chapter examines the ideas of Umesao Tadao 梅棹忠夫 (1920-2010), an anthropologist and language reformist closely associated with the founding and activities of the Japan Foundation.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the chapter investigates the position the Japan Foundation, its first President, and members of its Japanese language section, adopted in relation to written Japanese.

## Reconsidering Early Postwar Policies and Values

Chapter two touched on the range of reforms that occurred during the early postwar Occupation of Japan by the Allied Powers. The reforms that took place during the period were comprehensive and often informed by agendas of democratisation that were nationalistic in character. After the end of the Occupation era, the legacy of several fundamental democratic reforms was partially undone. For instance, educational policy underwent gradual centralisation after the end of the Occupation era.<sup>4</sup> The centralisation of education – by the Ministry of Education – was relevant to NLC language policy foci because of the use of the NLC-formulated “education *kanji*” (*kyōiku kanji*) set list in the *kokugo* curriculum throughout Japan.<sup>5</sup> The “education *kanji*”, initially outlined in the Appended *Tōyō Kanji* Set List of 1947, established the number of *kanji* in which students were expected to have writing and reading proficiency.<sup>6</sup> From 1958 the “education *kanji*” drew its *kanji* from the Grade Breakdown *Kanji*

<sup>2</sup> The House of Representatives, Japan, “*Dokuritsu hōjin kokusai kōryū kikin hōan*” [Incorporated Administrative Agency Japan Foundation Bill], [http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb\\_gian.nsf/html/gian/honbun/houan/g15505017.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_gian.nsf/html/gian/honbun/houan/g15505017.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Sakura Osamu, “Umesao Tadao and 3/11,” *Japan Foreign Policy Forum*, <https://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/archives/culture/pt20110930121050.html>

<sup>4</sup> Kayashima, “The Impact of American Educational Policy on Japanese Educational Administration: Decentralization”.

<sup>5</sup> ACA, “*Tōyō kanji beppyō*” [Appended *Tōyō Kanji* Set List], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/syusen/tosin03/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/syusen/tosin03/index.html)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Allotment Set List (*Gakunen betsu kanji baitō hyō*), which initially contained the same 881 *kanji* listed on the Appended *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>7</sup> (The number of education *kanji* was later increased to 996 and 1006 characters in 1977 and 1989, respectively.)

In contrast to the liberal decentralisation of education promoted by SCAP during the Occupation era, the post-Occupation period involved attempts by the Ministry of Education to re-establish control over nearly all aspects of education, particularly within the compulsory education system.<sup>8</sup> Coinciding with the conservative turn in education in Japan, which intensified during the late 1950s, conservative lobbies formed in 1958 and 1959 to combat the reformist agendas of the Romanisation advocate Toki Zenmaro, who had chaired the NLC since 1949.<sup>9</sup> This, as was highlighted in chapter three, led to the walkout of conservative NLC members during an NLC general meeting in March 1961, which culminated in the resignation of Toki Zenmaro as NLC chair. A year after the walkout, the autonomy of the NLC diminished as appointments of members came increasingly under the control and discretion of the Ministry of Education – another instance of centralisation – through a revision of the rules that govern the selection of NLC members.<sup>10</sup>

Researchers associate the centralisation of education within Japanese society in the 1950s with a resurgence of conservatism.<sup>11</sup> The compulsory education system that emerged during the postwar period prevented the integration of ethnic others in Japanese society, creating a foundation for the linking of Japanese ethnicity with language in the classroom.<sup>12</sup> This helped bolster the image of a monoethnic and monolingual nation. The conservative policies adopted by the NLC, though anchored to monoethnicity and monolingualism, differed to the goal of centralisation pursued by bureaucrats and

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Kobayashi Kazuhito, “*Kanji’ kyoiku no hensen: Shiyō jittai, kokugo shisaku to no kanren ni oite*” [Changes in “*kanji*” Education: The Relation between Actual Usage and National Language Policy], *Zenkoku Daigaku Kokugo Kyoiku Gakkai Happyo Yōshi Shū* 99 (2000), 242.

<sup>8</sup> For a revealing article on the relationship between compulsory education and language in Japan, see Jo Gwan-ja, “Beyond the Criticism of Assimilation: Rethinking the Politics of Ethno-national Education in Postwar Japan,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 16, no. 2 (2015): 174-191.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on these lobbies, see “Lobbyists and other Groups” in chapter two of this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> NLC 8, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin C. Duke, “Educational Administration and Supervision in Japan,” *International Review of Education* 22, no. 4 (1976): 479-490; Christian Galan, “The Evolution of the Concept of Postwar Education,” in *Japan’s Postwar*, ed. Michael Lucken, Anne Bayard-Sakai, and Emmanuel Lozerand (trans. J. A. A. Stockwin) (London: Routledge, 2011), 34-62.

<sup>12</sup> Jo Gwan-ja, “Beyond the Criticism of Assimilation.”

politicians within the Ministry of Education.<sup>13</sup> Although the NLC was overseen by the Ministry of Education, the NLC followed a dissonant course of conservatism after the walkout of March 1961. The policies of the NLC were characterised by anti-prescriptivism, as opposed to centralisation – the main driving force underpinning the actions of the Ministry of Education. Though often associated with progressive policy formulation, anti-prescriptivism in the case of the NLC represented efforts to minimise the impact of language policies such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List on the shape and usage of the Japanese writing system (as explained in detail below). Despite being a central institution under ministerial control, the NLC retained relative independence in its policy formulation and direction during this period. The following sections analyse the reasons underlying the shift toward anti-prescriptivism within the NLC.

### **The Conservative Turn in Language Policy Formulation**

From the mid-sixties links between national language policy and education were made more salient in NLC policy. For instance, a subcommittee charged with “general problems” related to the national language was set up in the NLC during the ninth term of the NLC. The “general problems” subcommittee spent most of its time investigating the relationship (*kankei*) between the national language and education. The conclusions they reached had a conservative tone reminiscent of prewar and wartime language policy and education, which emphasised the value of the historical origins of Japanese alongside its “cultural composition”. For instance, the subcommittee had the following to say about the links between the national language and education in an interim report:

National language education enjoys the distinguished linguistic culture of the past, improves present reading, writing, and speaking proficiencies, and serves as a key to the future<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hiromitsu Muta, “Deregulation and Decentralization of Education in Japan,” *Journal of Educational Administration* 38, no. 5 (2000), 456. The relationship between the Ministry of Education and NLC during this period is discussed in further detail in the “October 1961 to October 1963” section (below).

<sup>14</sup> ACA, “*Ippan mondai shō iinkai shingi keika hōkokusho*” [General Problems Subcommittee Interim Report], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/09/tosin03/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/09/tosin03/index.html)

国語教育は過去のすぐれた言語文化を享受し、現在の読み書き話す能力を高め、未来を開くためのものである

The subcommittee proceeded in the same report to make recommendations for increases in time allocated to *kokugo* lessons in compulsory education, more training in national language education at teacher training institutions, and measures to ensure that knowledge and cultivation in the national language was promoted among teachers responsible for teaching subjects other than Japanese. Additionally, the subcommittee sought an increase in advanced research at institutions focussing on national language education.<sup>15</sup> While it is unclear whether such recommendations led to an increase in the number of hours spent studying *kokugo* at the elementary school level,<sup>16</sup> in 1968 the Ministry of Education began to encourage its students, through curriculum guidelines, to “love and protect” (*aigo*) the national language through the study of *kokugo*.<sup>17</sup>

The “general problems” subcommittee did not, however, mention the Romanisation of the Japanese script or the potential for further reform or simplification of the Japanese script, despite the preoccupation of the NLC with these questions in the early postwar period. Given the shift in policy agendas – from progressive reform to reassessment – it was clear that the NLC preferred not to preoccupy itself with major script reform. Instead, it concentrated on a narrower agenda that was closely tied to the agendas of the Ministry of Education: instilling love and protection of cultural heritage and linguistic culture through the national language and education.<sup>18</sup>

The NLC made clear its stance on the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, its flagship language policy of the early postwar period, soon after the walkout. Its members began to reinterpret the set list as a non-binding guide to usage, as opposed to a definitive list to be strictly followed. The head of the NLC’s

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> In 1969 an increase of thirty-five hours of *kokugo* education was seen in the second-year curriculum for junior high school students. Otherwise, the number of hours spent on *kokugo* remained virtually unchanged in the elementary and junior high school curriculum.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, “*Shōgakko shidō yōryō kokugo ka mokuyō no henshin*” [Changes in the *Kokugo* Curriculum of the Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines], [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/011/siryo/attach/1400123.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/011/siryo/attach/1400123.htm)

<sup>18</sup> Oguma Eiji has shown how links between ethnic nationalism and language became more pronounced on both the left and right in the 1950s. Cf. Oguma Eiji, “*Minshu*” to “*Aikoku*”: *Sengo nihon no nasbonarizumu to kōkyōsei* [“Democracy” and “Patriotism”: Nationalism and Public Character in Postwar Japan] (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2002), 373-380.

*Kanji* division, Iwabuchi Etsutarō, typified the reinterpretation of the set list when he stated his disagreement with the “usage precautions” (*shiyōjō no chūi*) of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, arguing that they were harmful to individuals writing Japanese. Iwabuchi Etsutarō was an established linguist who served as head of the NINJAL during his lengthy membership of the NLC. He became a member of the NLC in 1966 and passed away whilst serving as a member of the NLC in 1978. Iwabuchi had by then spent decades writing about the Japanese language, notably alongside other conservative linguists and NLC members such as Yamada Yoshio and Tokieda Motoki during the Second World War and later as an editor of academic monographs concerning the Japanese language during the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> His opinions on the Japanese script, therefore, carried significant weight, at a time when the NLC was beginning to reconsider its role as a body responsible for the formulation of national language policy.

A year before joining the NLC in 1966, Iwabuchi published the findings of his statistical analysis of *kanji* usage based on a survey of *kanji* usage in Japanese magazines from a range of genres.<sup>20</sup> His findings indicated the existence of a mismatch between *kanji* usage in the surveyed magazines and *kanji* found on the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, which Iwabuchi argued contained low-frequency characters and excluded several high-frequency ones. This mismatch between grassroots practices and official expectations surrounding script usage led Iwabuchi to call for the revision of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List devised by the NLC in 1946. Iwabuchi continued to write about language policy during his membership of the NLC; he was particularly interested in script policy and orthography within Japanese society.<sup>21</sup> In his writings on language policy Iwabuchi was concerned specifically with the effects of language policy on *kanji* usage and readings.

Iwabuchi believed that prescriptive language policy could undermine *kanji* usage and readings through the erasure of the “tradition and history” embedded in “language and script”.<sup>22</sup> Disrupting tradition and history through overt means was, in Iwabuchi’s view, indicative of a “hasty” attitude

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Iwabuchi Etsutarō, “*Gojūon zu to iroha uta*” [The Japanese Syllabary and Iroha Songs], in *Kokugo bunka kōza dai 2 kan: Kokugo gairon hen* [National Language Culture Seminar Volume 2: Introduction to the National Language Edition], ed. *Asahi shimbun* (Tokyo: Asahi shimbun, 1941), 223-39. Iwabuchi’s publications during the 1960s are referenced below.

<sup>20</sup> Iwabuchi Etsutarō, *Gendai no kotoba* [Contemporary Language] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1965), 213-220.

<sup>21</sup> Iwabuchi Etsutarō, *Kokugo no kokoro* [The Spirit of the National Language] (Tokyo: Mainichi shimbunsha, 1973).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

toward language policy that was regularly found among contemporary individuals who “rationalise using surface level knowledge” (*hyōmen teki na chishiki de gōrika*) of Japanese script.<sup>23</sup> For Iwabuchi, one way to rectify script “rationalisation” was through increased “tolerance” (*kyōyō*) of *kanji* usage and a reassessment of the “norms” of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>24</sup> This meant reconsidering the kind and number of *kanji* included on the set list and assessing the necessity of placing limits on *kanji* usage.

Another member of the NLC, Uno Seiichi (one of the five NLC members to walkout of the NLC general meeting in 1961), reiterated Iwabuchi’s assessment of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List. Uno, however, assumed a stronger and harsher tone in his criticism of early postwar policy-making, drawing on the opinions of conservative Japanese linguist Ōno Susumu.<sup>25</sup> Uno followed in the footsteps of Ōno in his critical assessment of the set list: “I’ve never heard a clear explanation of why that number of *kanji* became the standard [for the set list]”.<sup>26</sup> Writing at roughly the same time as Iwabuchi, Uno was adamant that there were alternatives to script reform that would work equally well in the education system and beyond. For instance, he cited the approach of Ishii Isao 石井勲 (1919-2004),<sup>27</sup> a well-known educator during the 1960s, who had developed pedagogical practices that focussed extensively on *kanji* education during early childhood. Ishii was a firm supporter of *kanji* education during the early stages of a child’s education, arguing that exposure to *kanji* in daily use should be prioritised over abstract learning (e.g. studying *kanji* by radical) and phonetic syllabary. Uno was a firm supporter of Ishii’s stance toward early childhood education, often echoing the opinions of Ishii, while criticising the “half-baked” (*hanpa*) selection of *kanji* found in the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 167-170.

<sup>25</sup> Ōno had regularly railed against script reform since the implementation of early postwar script reforms.

<sup>26</sup> Uno Seiichi, “*Kanji no mondai* [Kanji Problems]”, in Iwabuchi Etsutarō, *Nibongo o kangaeru* [Thinking of the Japanese Language, Part 2] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbun, 1969), 78. Uno was a fiercely opposed to the postwar reforms formulated by the NLC, and hoped to see the return of prewar and wartime language policy.

<sup>27</sup> Ishii Isao argued that children should encounter a diverse range of *kanji* used in the real world prior to abstraction and the teaching of *kana*. He moved from a position as a high school teacher into elementary school, and subsequently preschool, education to promote early childhood *kanji* learning. Ishii became the main proponent of what is now known as the “Ishii method” of *kanji* education. Cf. Ishii Method National Language Education Research Association (*Ishii kokugo kyōiku kenkyū kai*), “homepage,” <http://www.isiisiki.co.jp/>.

<sup>28</sup> Uno, “*Kanji no mondai* [Kanji Problems]”, 78.

Uno also felt that reforms associated with the national language and script were generally geared towards foreigners, and not the Japanese. He was highly critical of Occupation era policies and the involvement of foreigners in political decision-making within Japan,<sup>29</sup> despite the limited intervention of GHQ in language policy formulation during the Occupation era.<sup>30</sup> A fear of foreign influence on written Japanese led Uno to reject the idea of adapting Japanese script to devices such as the “Western” typewriter,<sup>31</sup> suggesting instead that devices capable of typing written Japanese be invented in Japan. Tailoring the Japanese language to non-Japanese typewriters was, he argued, placing the cart before the horse (*bonmatsu tento*). Uno uses the analogy of changing the size of one’s feet to fit “Western” shoes to criticise the reworking of Japanese script to enable Japanese language users to type Japanese on foreign typewriters.<sup>32</sup> The automation of Japanese script, which had been raised by anthropologist and NLC member Umesao Tadao, was a topic of contention during the sixth term of the NLC.<sup>33</sup> While Uno’s analogy presents an interesting question concerning the relationship between written Japanese and technology,<sup>34</sup> Uno (and other NLC members at the time) often resorted to essentialist descriptions of the relationship between Japanese people and Japanese language usage, often equating Japaneseness (or “Japanese culture”) with Japanese script.<sup>35</sup>

Uno, much like other linguists in the NLC at the time (including Umesao Tadao and Kindaichi Haruhiko), engaged in *Nihonjinron* (theories of Japanese uniqueness) discourse when discussing script reform and language problems.<sup>36</sup> He placed his faith in the supposed uniqueness and superiority of Japanese culture and language. In Uno’s writing we find mention of the intellectual superiority of the Japanese and their ability to do things differently from the rest of the world. For instance, to bolster his arguments for the invention of typewriters suited to conventional Japanese script, Uno argues that a

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter two of this thesis for an examination of GHQ’s involvement in Occupation-era Japanese language policy.

<sup>31</sup> See chapter six of this thesis for a discussion of the compatibility of conventional Japanese script with word processing technologies.

<sup>32</sup> Iwabuchi Etsutarō, “*Kanji no mondaï*”, 91.

<sup>33</sup> NLC 6, 92-99.

<sup>34</sup> This question is addressed at length in the sixth chapter of this thesis.

<sup>35</sup> Umesao, whose ideas are discussed later in the chapter, is a prime example.

<sup>36</sup> See Yasuda Toshiaki and other scholars for an in-depth discussion of the “theory of Japanese uniqueness” held by Japanese linguists during the 1960s and 1970s.

solution to the inefficiencies of Japanese typewriting can be overcome “with minds as outstanding as the Japanese” (*Nibonjin hodo no yūshū na zunō*).<sup>37</sup> The problem of the relative “technological incompatibility” of mixed-script Japanese need not be resolved through further reform of the Japanese writing system; a solution to the problem could be obtained through the collected efforts of smart Japanese individuals, working together to create unique devices that could efficiently process conventional mixed-script Japanese writing. This outlook was inherently flawed, as the development of the Japanese word processor proved that even technological advancement in computing could not resolve the “typewriting” issue without inputting written Japanese one script – often in *kana* or *romaji* – at a time.<sup>38</sup> Others within the NLC also framed language problems, including script reform, in this light, arguing for the fostering of national pride in the Japanese writing system. The following section traces the official stance of the NLC toward language policy during the years 1961 to 1963 and 1966 and 1968,<sup>39</sup> to demonstrate the cultural nationalism and linguistic conservatism that replaced the progressive yet nationalistic script policies of the early postwar period and 1950s.

### **Consolidating Mixed-Script Japanese within Officialdom**

The sixth term was the first NLC term following the walkout of March 1961. After the events of the walkout the NLC set about re-evaluating and discussing problems associated with past policies.<sup>40</sup> Retrospective discussions concerning the degree of involvement in policy making were also held, resulting in a report outlining the NLC’s attitude toward language improvement (*kokugo kaizen*).<sup>41</sup> During this term the NLC also strived to draft an overview of language policy and issue a preamble on language problems that presumably require rectifying.<sup>42</sup> The preamble was concerned with the ways in which the Japanese language was connected to the “Japanese nation”. The major report on language improvement produced by the NLC during the sixth term, titled On Improving the National Language

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<sup>37</sup> Iwabuchi Etsutarō, “*Kanji no mondai*”, 91.

<sup>38</sup> See chapter six for further discussion of input methods on Japanese word processors.

<sup>39</sup> The years 1964 and 1965 are omitted here because a sufficient range of minutes taken during these years could not be obtained.

<sup>40</sup> NLC 6, *maegaki* (foreword).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 9-20.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 9-20.

(*Kokugo no kaiizen ni tsuite*), found that presumably uncomplicated social and historical connections between the nation and the Japanese language needed to be taken into consideration when formulating strategies to resolve language-related issues. The NLC viewed conventional mixed-script Japanese as a social and historical entity that expressed the “spirit” (*seishin*) of the Japanese people (*kokumin*), akin to how Ueda had viewed *kokugo* as an expression of the “Japanese spirit” in the past.<sup>43</sup> The NLC asserted its ownership over written Japanese by elaborating its opinions on the connections between mixed-script Japanese and Japanese culture and customs, and the need to protect those perceived links.

Through its report on language improvement, the NLC quickly established its opposition to implementing further script reform. The NLC indicated its opposition to further script reform by stressing the inconceivability of abolishing *kanji*, reasoning that “*kanji* is closely connected to the national language, and is [therefore] impossible to abruptly separate from the national language”.<sup>44</sup> The false dichotomy the NLC drew between reform and *kanji* usage helped its members consolidate conventional mixed-script *kanji kana majimbun* (mixed *kanji* and *kana* script) as the only legitimate writing system for the Japanese language. The NLC considered no other alternatives during this period. *Kanji* simplification had, as we had seen in chapter two, been perceived by numerous individuals as promoting cultural development and aiding with the rebuilding of Japan as a cultural nation. The NLC of the 1960s, however, believed that any attempts to simplify or limit *kanji* posed a threat to Japanese culture, particularly its literary heritage and perceived ethnic composition. This was fully supported by the Minister of Education, who reasoned that the NLC should stop “consecutively producing concrete language policies as the NLC did in the past” so that time could be allocated to “listening to the opinions of the public”.<sup>45</sup>

The link the NLC drew between *kanji* and the national language cemented the overall opinion of its members concerning the Japanese writing system – as mixed-script and dependent on *kanji* and *kana* script usage. By 1966 a consensus was reached within the NLC concerning the fundamental

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 7.

makeup of the Japanese writing system. The NLC, along with the incumbent Minister of Education, agreed that the national language comprised of mixed-script Japanese, *kanji kana majiribun*.<sup>46</sup> It was relatively easy for the NLC and Ministry of Education to reach a consensus on this issue, due to the continuing presence of the Ministry's National Language Section (*Kokugo ka*) both at the majority of NLC general meetings and behind the scenes (as “technical support”).<sup>47</sup>

Direct input from Ministry of Education officials came in a variety of forms, ranging from the regular attendance of heads of the National Language Section (*Kokugo ka*) of the Ministry of Education to the presence of the Minister of Education himself. This ensured the coordination of policy formulation within the NLC with the language-related activities of the Ministry of Education and research conducted by NINJAL (whose head was a member of the NLC). The Minister of Education was of critical importance, as he often acted as a mediator (*sewayaku*) between NLC policy and Japanese legislature responsible for enforcing language policy through cabinet orders.<sup>48</sup> This was certainly the case with early postwar policies, which were supported by the then incumbent Minister of Education and chair of the NLC. Agreement on the shape of the Japanese writing system between the NLC and Minister of Education expedited the decision-making process and resolutions (in this case that Japanese was a mixed-script writing system) passed by the NLC.

The most salient changes within the NLC during this period were the absence of a *rōmaji* subcommittees or divisions and the addition of public intellectuals to NLC membership. Unlike the NLC during Toki Zenmaro's leadership – where four out of ten division were charged with deliberating on Romanisation – the NLC after the walkout did not actively investigate Romanisation, perhaps given the outcry “phoneticisation” had caused among conservative NLC members during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The absence of divisions dealing with Romanisation was, however, out of keeping with the

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<sup>46</sup> NLC 8, 66.

<sup>47</sup> The National Language Section of the Ministry of Education, established in 1940, often aided in the preparing of materials and resources for NLC meetings. It also assisted the NINJAL with administrative duties and conducted surveys of Japanese language usage in Ministry of Education publications. Cf. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, “*Kokugo shisaku*” [National Language Policy], [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/others/detail/1317867.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/others/detail/1317867.htm)

<sup>48</sup> NLC 6, 83-84.

original National Language Council Ordinance, which stipulated that “items related to *rōmaji*” be deliberated.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, from 1950 onward the revised National Language Council Ordinance stated that a *Rōmaji* Survey Subcommittee be established and maintained within the NLC to investigate and deliberate on *rōmaji* usage and education.<sup>50</sup> A year after the walkout, the ordinance was revised by the incumbent Minister of Education, Araki Masuo, and the *Rōmaji* Survey Subcommittee was removed (*kezuri*) from the NLC.<sup>51</sup>

Additionally, Japanese language scholar Kindaichi Haruhiko and anthropologist Umesao Tadao became NLC members, theoretically ensuring a variety of views on language policy were debated within the NLC. Their roles in the NLC, however, were largely ceremonial, as they rarely initiated significant proposals or calls for reform from within the NLC.<sup>52</sup> (Outside of the NLC, Umesao contributed to the creation of the Japan Foundation, whose role is discussed below, while Kindaichi Haruhiko played a significant role in shaping the discourse of Japanese word processor usage during the 1980s.<sup>53</sup>) Their invitation to join the NLC was largely based on their reputation as widely respected public intellectuals during the early 1960s,<sup>54</sup> which helped leverage and legitimate the NLC’s language policies.

Though Romanisation was no longer part of the NLC agenda, the overall outlook of the council continued to centre on a modernistic drive to “improve” (*kaizen*) language through the formulation of general and educational set lists and standardisation. Issues related to gendered language remained neglected in favour of a generally applicable approach to policy-making. For instance, *Kore*

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>50</sup> ACA, “*Kokugo shingikai rei*” [National Language Council Ordinance, [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/singikai/horitu/singikairei/19500417.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/singikai/horitu/singikairei/19500417.html)]

<sup>51</sup> National Archives of Japan, “*Kokugo shingikai rei no ichibu o kaisei suru seirei*” [Cabinet Order to Revise a Part of the National Language Council Ordinance], <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/meta/F0000000000000112669>

<sup>52</sup> There was, however, open criticism of the NLC by former NLC members who had left the council during the walkout of 1961. For instance, Matsusaka Tadanori, the wartime advocate of *kana*-isation and member of the progressive Discussion Group, published a critique of the NLC in January 1962, soon after the walkout. The main target of criticism in Matsusaka’s book was the NLC’s decision to abandon the study of phoneticisation and further script reform, which he blamed on “anti-reformists” and “reactionaries” such as Shioda Ryōhei. See Matsusaka, *Kokugo kokujū ronsō*. Further discussion can be found in the “Walkout at the National Language Council” section in chapter three of this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> See chapter six of this thesis for an analysis of Kindaichi Haruhiko’s views on script reform during the spread of the Japanese word processor in the 1980s.

<sup>54</sup> Kindaichi Haruhiko had gained widespread recognition and success through his publication of *Nihongo* (“The Japanese Language”) in 1957. Similarly, Umesao Tadao was a widely recognised for his publications during the 1960s and involvement in the Osaka “Banpaku” World’s Fair in 1970.

*kara no keigo* (“Honorary Language from Hereon”), a policy document the NLC issued in 1952, was one of the few policy documents that touched on the use of gendered language, namely pronouns and particles such as “*atashi*” and “*o*”.<sup>55</sup> With the exception of Romanised Japanese, the issues discussed during the sixth term were similar to problems visited in the fifth term of the NLC: *kanji*, *kana*, and the use of mixed-script Japanese, with an overall focus on script problems related to proper nouns and *kanji* education.<sup>56</sup> However, the refusal of the NLC to clearly outline limitations on *kanji* usage – as the NLC of the past had during the late 1940s – meant a decrease in language ownership among the NLC as a language policy formulating body. Though tacit agreement concerning the shape of the Japanese writing system allowed the NLC to legitimate mixed-script Japanese as a standard means of writing Japanese, its decisions lost substance and credence among Japanese society because of the inertia that came with the NLC’s anti-prescriptivism.<sup>57</sup>

Unlike earlier NLC deliberations, the sixth term of the NLC witnessed a significant increase in nationalistic conservatism in the direction of policy formulation. Links were made between Japanese culture and the national language, history and tradition, and cultural essentialism was foregrounded in descriptions of problems associated with the Japanese writing system. For instance, NLC member Matsushita Masatoshi 松下正寿 (1901-1986) stressed the ethnic characteristic of the Japanese language, as not only a tool of communication among Japanese, but as a central part of the thought processes of the Japanese.<sup>58</sup> According to Matsushita, the Japanese had their own “Japanese” (*Nihon teki*) way of thinking, which would change according to the language policies the NLC formulated. The NLC, he argued, had to find a middle ground when formulating policy, as any radically progressive or overly conservative policies would have a negative impact on the Japanese people and their uniqueness.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> ACA, “*Kore kara no keigo*” [Honorary Language from Hereon], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/01/tosin06/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/01/tosin06/index.html)

<sup>56</sup> Cf. NLC 6, 18-19; NLC 6, 81.

<sup>57</sup> The reactionary NLC member Fukuda Tsuneari described the NLC of the sixth term as “idle and incompetent”. Cf. Fukuda, “*Dai 6 ki kokugo shingikai*.”

<sup>58</sup> NLC 6, 82.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

The NLC regularly contemplated the educational consequences of implementing further script reform, choosing to adopt a more cautious and conservative approach to policy formulation. This was something the mainstream media recognised from an early point, indicating that the general public was aware of the new position on script reform the NLC adopted.<sup>60</sup> The interrelationship between NLC divisions in language policy formulation bolstered the anti-prescriptivism and assumed language ownership that developed within the council.

### ***Essentialising Kanji and Uprooting Reformism***

Headed by Murakami Shunsuke 村上俊亮 (1901-1977), professor of education at Aoyama Gakuin University and former head of the National Education Research Institute, Division One of the NLC aimed to rectify the “appearance of Japanese vocabulary and writing” and establish criteria for national language improvement along conservative lines. It took an essentialist view on *kanji*, which it deemed a tool that conveyed thought itself.<sup>61</sup> This led to the division determining that a consensus be reached within itself with regards the nature of the Japanese writing system before deliberating on matters such as language improvement. The division agreed that changing the Japanese script through law or the efforts of “a group of individuals” (*ichibu no hito*) was significantly difficult, given the number and diversity of people using Japanese on a regular basis.<sup>62</sup> It therefore took a passive approach to “language improvement” (*Kokugo kaiizen*), deeming any further reforms a hindrance to the Japanese script.<sup>63</sup> The division then proceeded to adopt a proposal-style approach to language policy, whereby the results of discussions and deliberations would avoid “forcing” policy on the general public. The justification for such a practice was founded on the assumption that the “language and script will improve naturally” and the notion of the “deplorability of attempting to organise [script] through man-made intervention”.<sup>64</sup> The need for “natural” improvement of the Japanese writing system was also based on the division’s assessment that no concrete criteria concerning Japanese script conventions had been

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<sup>60</sup> *Asahi shinbun*, “*Kokugo shingikai no hokoku, yōshi*” [Report of the NLC, A Summary], 12 October, 1963.

<sup>61</sup> NLC 6, 25.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

established,<sup>65</sup> a matter the Minister of Education and NLC attempted to address by enshrining mixed-script Japanese as part of standard Japanese.

The division released an interim report of their meetings, which contained critiques of the NLC's past approach to language policy. It argued that the NLC had been "led around in circles" by Romanisation and *kana*-isation advocates, whose outlook on script conventions and language improvement had complicated matters and confused language users.<sup>66</sup> The most effective way to resolve the indiscretions of reformists such as Toki Zenmaro, the report contended, was through the establishment of *kanji kana majiribun* as the basis for written Japanese.<sup>67</sup> This recommendation was not heeded in the early postwar period because the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and other related language policies such as the "education *kanji*" were widely accepted and had built within them assumptions of further reform and simplification of the national language, especially the reduction of *kanji*.<sup>68</sup> The division viewed that period of policy formulation as counter-productive and harmful.

The consensus Division One reached concerned first and foremost the scripts used in the Japanese writing system. Here the division was clear that it would come to an agreement on the mixed-script (*kanji kana majiribun*) character of the Japanese writing system prior to any deliberations and decision-making.<sup>69</sup> A wholly negative attitude was adopted toward approaches seen in the NLC during previous terms, and (as noted above) the division blamed Romanisation and *kana*-isation advocates within the NLC for the strife and tension that occurred during the first five terms of the NLC. It was quick to point out differences in opinions present in earlier NLC terms and set out to consolidate differences in outlook by reconsidering the "fundamental character" (*kihonteki na arikata*) of the national language from a broad perspective.<sup>70</sup> Differences in opinion, the division argued, resided in stances toward simplifying the Japanese language and passing down and creating culturally meaningful

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> NLC 1, 5.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 29.

products,<sup>71</sup> such as literary heritage and *kanji* proficiency. Thus, the division sought to break from the relatively progressive and disruptive policy initiatives of the past while maintaining a hold on what it deemed culturally significant and relevant within its framing of the national language (a mixed-script writing system rooted in cultural norms and literary traditions). It was more interested in protecting what it deemed to be the cultural heritage of the past through conservative and passive language policy deliberations than honouring the original aims of early postwar policies.

### ***Re-evaluating Early Postwar Script Policies***

Similar arguments were made by other working groups within the NLC. For instance, the main task of Division Two was to evaluate the results of past petitions, reports, and deliberations of the NLC and decide whether past language policies or resolutions required revising or amending.<sup>72</sup> It noted the need for a reinvestigation of the NLC's overall approach to language problems, which it did by scrutinising "postwar national language policy" presentations, reports, and minutes.<sup>73</sup> The division concluded – contrary to former allegations circulated during the walkout – that the NLC had not intended to overhaul the Japanese writing system through Romanisation or *kana*-isation.<sup>74</sup> Instead, the division continued, the NLC strove to eliminate any deficiencies with the lack of standardisation of the written form of the language, whilst also managing the current confusion (*konran*) surrounding the conventional mixed-script writing system.<sup>75</sup> This was a much fairer appraisal of the actions of the early postwar NLC. For Division Two, deficiencies associated with the written Japanese included *kanji* usage found in past language policies such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, which the division viewed as lacking in both scope and purview due to the absence of *kanji* used in proper nouns in common usage at the time.<sup>76</sup> Though former NLC chair Toki Zenmaro had taken a liberal stance on the NLC's approach to the Japanese writing system, arguing that such minor issues would resolve themselves over time,

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 38.

Division Two recast past actions in a new light to fit current approaches by presenting the NLC as a council that was solely concerned with the conventional mixed-script *kanji kana majiribun*.

Past policies were inspected by Division Two in the following order: *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, Contemporary *Kana* Usage, and Rules for *Okurigana*. The division asked whether these policies were appropriate, how future language policies should be implemented, and where problems with policies resided.<sup>77</sup> It studied these three policies by analysing the goals and aims set out in the preamble of each official policy document and invited independent observers from newspaper and media outlets and educators to present their opinions on the relevant postwar language policies. The result of these deliberations materialised in a report entitled “National Language Policies to Date.”<sup>78</sup> The report focussed on the policies outlined at the start of this paragraph, and found fault with such things as the “handling of *kanji*” in personal names and *kanji* readings that were missing from the list of *kanji* readings accompanying the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>79</sup> While the overall outlook on postwar policies was not as critical as that of Division One, the division also reached the conclusion that postwar language policies were in need of reassessment and rectification. It questioned the role of officialdom in directing script reform during a period of great social change but contradicted itself by supporting an anti-prescriptivism that necessitated the dismantling of past policies. Like other divisions within the NLC, Division Two reframed language problems and policy direction in a way that suited the council’s general outlook: the support of the natural evolution of written Japanese in ways that maintained the cultural significance it ascribed to continued *kanji* usage.

### ***Reframing Language Problems***

Akin to Divisions One and Two, the third division of the NLC focussed on the overarching actions and attitudes of the council toward language problems.<sup>80</sup> The central aim of the division was to investigate and deliberate on methods of language policy implementation. The division dissected

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 37-41.

<sup>79</sup> Restrictions on the use of *kanji* in personal names had sparked widespread debate in the 1950s, when the Japanese government decided to place a limit on the range of *kanji* used in personal names.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 43.

language problems into those falling under two broad categories: issues with the spoken and written language. Under the first category the division discussed issues apparent in the use of honorifics (*keigo*) and the characteristics of standardised Japanese pronunciation.<sup>81</sup> Under the second category the division dealt with the paraphrasing and rewriting of *kango* (Japanese compound words of Chinese origin) and ways in which the Japanese writing system could be used to write Japanese place and personal names.<sup>82</sup> The purpose of paraphrasing and finding ways to rewrite *kango* was to simplify written Japanese in a way that former NLC terms had.<sup>83</sup> This represented a continuation in the policy direction of the NLC, which in previous terms had strived to reduce the number of complicated compound words and vocabulary.<sup>84</sup>

The opinion of Division Three on *kanji* usage in proper nouns (personal and place names), however, was far more ambiguous. It merely claimed that the council needed to reassess its basic attitude (*konpon hōshin*) toward proper nouns in a manner similar to that outlined in the report “National Language Problems to Date,” which produced a short list of *kanji* related to place names that did not feature in the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>85</sup> It was thus unclear how the council hoped to remedy such a problem, other than through revising or replacing the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, an idea that gained increasing support during the eighth term of the NLC due to the outpour of anti-prescriptive sentiment within the NLC. The NLC therefore neglected concrete language policy formulation as it reassessed the value of its actions as a council with a vested interest in the shape of the Japanese writing system.

## Dismantling the Early Postwar Set Lists

The NLC began its eighth term with the production of a document overviewing the pros and cons of early postwar language policies and ended with its divisions and subcommittee publishing a series of progress reports (*keika hōkokū*) detailing its respective deliberations.<sup>86</sup> The eighth term of the NLC was

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>82</sup> *Kango* refers mainly to compound words in use in the Japanese language that are made up of two or more kanji and pronounced using an *on*-reading.

<sup>83</sup> NLC 6, 45.

<sup>84</sup> NLC 2, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 48. The kanji included on the list were: 阪, 奈, 岡, 阜, 枳, 茨, 埼, 崎, 梨, 媛, 鹿, 熊, 潟, and 縄.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, foreword.

insignificant in terms of immediate policy formulation and retrospective in outlook. Much like the sixth term (described above), the NLC realised it could not formulate any concrete policies and was content to focus on past policies. Inertia within the council generated questions of its relevance as a language policy formulator, as the council failed to draft any topic-focussed reports and did not produce any script policy recommendations for the Minister of Education. Instead, the one subcommittee formed during the eighth term was responsible for assessing the early postwar *Tōyō Kanji* Set List – a significant challenge given the scope of the original policy document and its penetration of broad segments of society.<sup>87</sup> The creation of the subcommittee related to the prevailing criticisms toward early postwar language policies. As will be shown below, the majority of NLC members of the eighth term also viewed script reform implemented during the early postwar period as either rushed or influenced by Occupation-era politics.<sup>88</sup> In addition, a *kana* and *kanji* division were created to tackle language problems connected to *kana* and *kanji* usage in the Japanese writing system.<sup>89</sup> (Notably, a *rōmaji* division was absent.) The NLC subcommittee and divisions were responsible for producing their own respective progress reports for the review of all NLC members at NLC general meetings.

Within the NLC there was a newfound sense that individuals were lobbying for changes to the early postwar set list or promoting individualistic agendas that suited their outlooks. It was noted during a general meeting that a reduction or increase in kanji signalled a “win or loss” for various members of the NLC, depending on whether they were proponents of *kanji* or *kana* usage in the written language.<sup>90</sup> This focus on the minutiae of *kanji* policy partially blinded NLC members (on both sides) from the necessity of formulating policies that were relevant to broad segments of society. A win for a particular side in the “kanji-count contest” bolstered that side’s authority over other items on the script reform agenda. Ōno Susumu, for example, rehashed the argument that the term “limit” (*seigen*) be replaced

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<sup>87</sup> The education system, publishing houses, and mainstream newspapers all drew on the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List for their own needs.

<sup>88</sup> Occupation era politics, including democratisation and the role of the GHQ in shaping language policy, are discussed in chapter one of this thesis.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 115. *Asahi shinbun*, “‘Chūkanha’ fuyasu, kokugo shingikai iin kimaru” [An Increase in “Neutral Members”, National Language Council Members Selected], 6 November, 1968.

with the term “criteria” (*kejūn*) in the wording set out in the preamble of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>91</sup>

Changing the preamble in such a way would unshackle the real and assumed restrictions placed on *kanji* usage within government bodies and organisations throughout Japan. Such an argument, thus, represented the unfettering of cultural norms and political alliances – between the government and the general public and across governmental institutions. Despite its short-sightedness, the argument presaged an increase in script reform through written language usage among groups outside of officialdom.<sup>92</sup>

For the NLC chair, Maeda Yoshinori 前田義徳 (1906-1983),<sup>93</sup> two goals could be accomplished through a significant increase in the number of *kanji* and a maintenance of the limitation on *kanji* usage: the livelihood and “cultural standards” (*bunka suijun*) of the Japanese people.<sup>94</sup> This, much like the outlook of Funabashi during the third term of the NLC, was based on an elitist understanding of script, as a vessel of literary heritage and erudition, and a continuation of the modernist ideal of Japan as a cultural nation. However, perceived differences in points of view within the NLC produced tensions that hindered the council from fully pursuing its remit as an investigative and deliberative body responsible for the formulation of national language policy.

In the first few months of 1966 the National Language Council Ordinance was revised with the inauguration of the Agency for Cultural Affairs.<sup>95</sup> Though the amendment to the ordinance did not have a tremendous impact on the purview of the NLC, notable changes occurred in council membership during the period. This included the appointment of one of the first female council members, Hirabayashi Taiko 平林たい子 (1905-1972), to the NLC (in the seventh term), a continued increase in conservatism concerning the fundamental “shape” of the Japanese writing system, and a

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<sup>91</sup> NLC 8, 116.

<sup>92</sup> Script reform at the grassroots (among youth), private electronics firms, and word processor users forms the subject matter of the following two chapters.

<sup>93</sup> Maeda was the chairman of the NHK and a professional journalist who spoke on the importance of education and communication through television.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. ACA, “*Kokugo shingikai rei*” [National Language Council Ordinance], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/singikai/horitu/singikairei/19680615.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/singikai/horitu/singikairei/19680615.html).

passive attitude toward policy formulation.<sup>96</sup> A conventional mixed-script writing system that made use of kana and kanji was increasingly recognised as the “right way” to write Japanese, and suggested alternatives were often dismissed as culturally ignorant or inferior to what NLC members deemed the national script (*kokujiri* or *kokugo hyōki*). The idea that the Japanese mixed-script writing system was superior to all other alternative writing systems (discussed below) was taken up by Kiuchi Nobutane 木内信胤 (1899-1993), NLC member and head of the Global Economy Survey Council.<sup>97</sup>

### ***Concrete Measures for the Improvement of National Language Policy***

Concerning Concrete Measures for the Improvement of National Language Policy (*Kokugo shisaku no kaiizen no gutaishaku ni tsuite*) was arguably one of the most influential policy documents produced by the NLC during the 1960s. It formed the basis for the formulation of the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List of 1981,<sup>98</sup> in addition to the other script policies formulated during the 1980s, such as the Revised Contemporary *Kana* Usage.<sup>99</sup> Through this policy, the NLC articulated an anti-prescriptivist position on *kanji* usage that would shape its script policy over the proceeding decades.

This policy document contested the number of characters on the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and featured a lengthy section on proper nouns and the terminology used in the preamble of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>100</sup> One of the terms that featured heavily in the document was the word “restriction” (*seigen*), due to its influence on official document creation and production within the ministries and government institutions of the time. The policy’s critique of early postwar measures adopted by the NLC appropriately reflected the negative attitude toward further script reform within the NLC. It signalled a return to cultural development through *kanji* usage, and unabashedly promoted the teaching of

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<sup>96</sup> The first female NLC member was Muraoka Hanako, a translator and women’s activist, who was assigned to the NLC as an interim (*rinji*) and subsequently a full member in 1946 and 1947. She was progressive in her views on *kana* usage, arguing that *kana* should be reformed in a way that better represents their pronunciation in standard spoken Japanese. See Appendix D of this thesis for more on Muraoka Hanako.

<sup>97</sup> This idea was not new and had found purchase in the wartime writings of Kindaichi Kyōsuke. See the “The Wartime NLC and Established Linguists’ Views on Script Reform” section of chapter one.

<sup>98</sup> ACA, “*Jōyō Kanji Hyō ni tsuite*” [Concerning the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/14/tosin01/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/14/tosin01/index.html)

<sup>99</sup> ACA, “*Gendai kana zukai no kaitei ni tsuite*” [Concerning the Revision of Contemporary *Kana* Usage], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/16/tosin01/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/16/tosin01/index.html)

<sup>100</sup> NLC 8, 247-281.

complex *kanji* within the Japanese education system. The reasoning underpinning the promotion of complex *kanji* was that complex societies require complex characters. This was in keeping with the position of novelists such as NLC member Funabashi, who supported the use of *kanji* beyond the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Lifting Perceived Restrictions on Kanji Usage***

Hirabayashi Taiko was assigned a position in the NLC's *Kanji* Division. Hirabayashi was a novelist who had won acclaim for her many novels on contemporary social issues in Japan and was sceptical of the effects of early postwar language policies. She concerned herself predominantly with the “containment” of script reform before the established policy of “*kanji* restriction penetrated society”.<sup>102</sup> Hirabayashi, much like other novelists of her time, was emphatically opposed to the restriction of *kanji* used or included in NLC set lists and viewed past policies as a “mistake” that required rectification.<sup>103</sup> During the NLC's sixty-fifth general meeting, she argued that the NLC “should not restrict the number of *kanji*” used in the Japanese writing system.<sup>104</sup> This view was shared by numerous other writers, including literary figures such as Shioda Ryōhei 塩田良平 (1899-1971). Hirabayashi believed that restricting *kanji* usage would only lead to further complications. She viewed a deliberation on the fundamental aspects of the Japanese writing system and Japanese language problems, which she claimed (in the postwar period) boiled down to the issue of *kanji*,<sup>105</sup> as the most appropriate starting point for formulating script policies and set lists. Ōno Susumu, a prominent voice in the NLC, shared Hirabayashi's suggested approach to script policy formulation in the NLC and believed restrictions should be lifted without delay.<sup>106</sup> Conservative linguists and literary figures took the lead in shaping language policy formulation within the NLC.

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<sup>101</sup> The Japanese Literary Association, of which Funabashi was a long-time member, also lent its weight to the position that unfettered *kanji* usage be promoted throughout society.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 75-76.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 114-115.

The Kanji Division of which Hirabayashi was a part discussed the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List with an eye to pinpointing problems with the set list and its associated documents. The way in which the Japanese script was used continued to be the focal point of the NLC's deliberations. The division put forward a lengthy list of considerations that urged the reassessment of the set list in a critical manner. One of these considerations included the liberal use of script, as a freedom granted to every individual.<sup>107</sup> This idea was put forward by Morito Tatsuo 森戸辰男 (1888-1984), a former politician and intellectual of democratic leanings. (Morito served as Minister of Education between 1947 and 1948, a year after the formulation of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and Contemporary *Kana* Usage, and was responsible for overseeing the introduction of the postwar “education *kanji*”.<sup>108</sup>) Morito believed that a smaller number of *kanji* would benefit the users of the Japanese language, and accordingly labelled the early postwar set list a “common sense” policy measure requiring little (if any) adjustment.<sup>109</sup> The Japanese linguist Ōno Susumu disagreed with this idea, suggesting instead that *kanji* used for proper nouns – many of which did not feature on the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List – be considered when reassessing the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>110</sup> Other NLC members who helped formulate early postwar *kanji* policy reiterated Ōno's sentiments, renouncing the significance of the democratic reforms of the Occupation era. This indicated a collective legitimization of a top-down approach to dismantling early postwar language policies.

Stances appropriate to a re-examination of the set list were outlined as: expressing texts in written form and comprehending past literature.<sup>111</sup> The latter stance was soon ignored by the division, which took a positive approach to evaluating the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List from the first perspective, i.e. the writing and expressing texts in written form. Calls to re-examine the set list were also put forward by Kiuchi Nobutane, who echoed the opinions of Hirabayashi and Ōno concerning the lifting of *kanji* restrictions, as they could be construed as the government playing too central a role in directing the life

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>108</sup> ACA, “*Tōyō kanji beppyō*”.

[http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/syusen/tosin03/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/syusen/tosin03/index.html)

<sup>109</sup> NLC 8, 114.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 41.

of the Japanese people. At the sixty-fourth general meeting of the NLC, Kiuchi produced a list of seven items that conveyed his thoughts on early postwar language policy to the chair of the NLC. They were as follows:

- 1) Simplifying the national script through Directives and Notifications<sup>112</sup> was a mistake
- 2) While it is reasonable to establish *kanji* restrictions as a basis in educational settings, it is narrow minded to expand such a principle to other fields
- 3) How were postwar language policies formulated? What perspectives and ideas shaped policy formulation during that period? I believe the philosophies that informed postwar language policies were mistaken. I believe it is necessary to reassess these policies
- 4) The following perspectives and ideas played a role in shaping postwar language policies: i. *kanji* is difficult, ii. *kanji* is inconvenient, iii. decreasing the number of *kanji* will reduce the burden placed on students, and benefit the study of other subjects, iv. it is irrational to have numerous readings for a single *kanji*, v. ideographic scripts are irrational, whereas phonetic scripts are rational. I believe perspectives and ideas are significantly flawed.
- 5) Individuals responsible for promoting postwar language policies did not have a clear understanding of the historical basis that led to the use of mixed-script Japanese orthography. I also think that these individuals believed that nothing would be better than seeing the Romanisation of the Japanese language.
- 6) Recently even American linguists are beginning to recognise the superior efficiency of Japanese mixed *kanji-kana* script. Does this idea not merit investigation?
- 7) There is a lack of research into *kanji* education. Exploring this area [of research] would unlock new possibilities.<sup>113</sup>

Kiuchi recited the items on this list on at least two separate occasions during NLC general meetings.<sup>114</sup> No NLC members openly opposed the sentiments found in Kiuchi's list, signalling a wide acceptance of the criticisms and suggestions Kiuchi had offered. One member of the NLC, Hosokawa Takachika,<sup>115</sup> agreed with the basic ideas found within Kiuchi's list and highlighted that the members of the NLC all shared his outlook on the Japanese writing system.<sup>116</sup> Kiuchi's third point, in particular,

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<sup>112</sup> Directives (*kunrei*) and Notifications (*kokuji*) are official instructions and announcements to government agencies by Ministers and other members of the Prime Minister's Cabinet.

<sup>113</sup> NLC 8, 145. Parts of Kiuchi's list have been abbreviated.

<sup>114</sup> NLC reports indicate that Kiuchi read this list at the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth general meeting of the NLC. Cf. NLC 8, 153-154.

<sup>115</sup> Hosokawa was a former Socialist Party of Japan politician turned political critic.

<sup>116</sup> NLC 8, 159.

questioned the degree to which top-down policies should be allowed to shape grassroots practices. The outlook: a mixed-script writing system, based on *kanji* and *kana*, formed the “premise of deliberation” on script issues within the NLC.<sup>117</sup> Further interference through supposed limits on script usage were unwelcome.

During this period a momentous shift also occurred within the outlook of established linguists who had participated in the democratic postwar reforms. While few of the postwar members of the NLC continued to be involved in national language policy formulation,<sup>118</sup> Nishio Minoru played an active role in the NLC during this period. Nishio, who had directly participated in the formulation of the very first “education *kanji*” between 1946 and 1947,<sup>119</sup> aired his thoughts on script policy in December of 1967, at the sixty-seventh general meeting of the NLC. He claimed that *kanji* simplification and restriction, though well-meaning, were essentially flawed. Reflecting on the postwar policies he played a pivotal role in promoting, Nishio describes the policies as forming part of a “period of national experimentation” (*kokumin teki jikken ki*). He continues:

Formulating a rationalised script for the future is laudable but impossible. Setting a future objective and forcing citizens to write in a certain way or restrict readings is practically impossible. [...] Though an ideal script may come [into existence] after we are gone, under current circumstances it is impossible [to create such a script]<sup>120</sup>

Thus, we see a shift not only in new NLC members but also in the opinions of a key reformist that had been a part of the NLC since the early postwar period (two decades prior). Nishio Minoru, who had championed the democratisation of the Japanese writing system during the early postwar period and actively participated in the Discussion Group during the late 1950s, was recanting his belief in further reform or Romanisation. It was, in his words, an “impossibility” that cost Japanese citizens

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ōno Susumu, Hayashi Ōki, and Nishio Minoru were the only early postwar NLC members serving on the NLC in 1967. Ikegami Teizō, the Kyoto University professor who was critical of democratisation during the early postwar period, became an NLC member in 1962. Ikegami’s ideas on script reform are discussed in chapter one.

<sup>119</sup> Ministry of Education, *Kokugo shingikai no kiroku* [Records of the National Language Council] (Tokyo: Yoshiyama Insatsu, 1952), 103.

<sup>120</sup> NLC 8, 190-191.

their linguistic liberty. Language ownership within the NLC was, therefore, partly relinquished through Nishio's claim that the early postwar policies were overly coercive.

Established linguists within the NLC frequently assumed a conservative and cautious attitude toward further script reform and prescriptive language policy formulation precisely because of their pessimism concerning the efficacy of language policy formulation. In their view, man-made interventions in language usage were not the solution to Japanese language problems. The early postwar reforms were raised as an example of how experimental policies could potentially harm language users through prescriptive policies that potentially restricted language usage. To rectify this issue, NLC members such as Ōno Susumu proposed the NLC gather opinions on postwar language policy from groups and individuals across broad segments of Japanese society. This led to the NLC conducting surveys of broad segments of society, as well as individual members of the NLC expressing their support for Nishio and Kiuchi's statements.<sup>121</sup>

Lastly, there emerged at NLC general meetings a discussion concerning the “*kanji* cultural sphere” (*kanji bunka ken*) and considerations of *kanji* usage both in the Japanese writing system and in places such as the People's Republic of China and the Koreas.<sup>122</sup> Differences were noted between the script simplification that occurred in the *kanji* used in the Japanese and mainland Chinese writing systems, which were respectively referred to as *kanyō jitai* (simplified form) and *kantai ji* (simplified script). Ōno Susumu contended that *kanji* used in the Japanese language was purely a Japanese issue and any attempts to consolidate the use of *kanji* in the two writing systems would only “confuse” future NLC deliberations and policy decisions.<sup>123</sup> Other council members concurred, stating that attempts to consolidate *kanji* usage in the *kanji* cultural sphere as “meaningless,”<sup>124</sup> due in part to differences in the way in which mainland Chinese and Japanese language committees and councils approached script simplification. The view that Japanese language policy was a “national” affair that would not benefit

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<sup>121</sup> For instance, Funaba Fumio, NLC member and chair of the Japanese Literary Association, submitted a petition to the Minister of Education on behalf of his association in support of Kiuchi's assertions.

<sup>122</sup> NLC 8, 124-125.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

from the input of neighbouring nations was another factor that contributed to the inward-looking direction of policy formulation at the NLC. This was a veiled criticism of former NLC members Toki Zenmaro and Kuraishi Takeshirō (among others), who visited China in 1960 to exchange ideas related to script reform and language policy in Japan and the People's Republic of China.

### ***Surveying Script Reform***

The vice-chair of the NLC proposed the NLC conduct a large survey to gather opinions on “how to improve” the national writing system. The survey, to be conducted in November 1967, was to gather viewpoints on the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and associated policies such as the *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings, Contemporary *Kana* Usage, and Rules for *Okurigana* from a range of one-thousand institutions and organisations and two-thousand individuals.<sup>125</sup> This signified a decision within the NLC to engage with the various forces that shape written Japanese, as opposed to viewing such forces as malleable. Though this received widespread support by other members of the NLC,<sup>126</sup> it is unclear if the NLC conducted the proposed survey, as a discussion of how to implement it was postponed till the ninth term of the NLC.<sup>127</sup> No mention is made of the survey after the ninth term of the NLC, meaning that it was either never conducted or its findings were not published.

The *Kanji* Division, however, succeeded in eliciting responses concerning the *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings from the Japan Newspaper Association and the Japanese Literary Association during the eighth term of the NLC. The Japanese Literary Association expressed an overwhelmingly hostile attitude toward the *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings in its current form, arguing for an increase in the number of *kanji* on the list to approximately three thousand characters.<sup>128</sup> This criticism of the *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings equated to a criticism of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List because the two lists were interdependent. As for the Japan Newspaper Association, it believed “restrictions” should initially be “relaxed” (*enma*) to allow for more comprehensive *kanji* usage.<sup>129</sup> Both organisations signalled a

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<sup>125</sup> NLC 8, 163.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 160-161.

<sup>127</sup> ACA, “*Unei iinkai*” [Steering Committee], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/09/bukai01/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/09/bukai01/index.html)

<sup>128</sup> NLC 8, 349.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 346.

preference for fewer restrictions on *kanji* usage, despite acknowledgement by the NLC that *kanji* set lists were non-binding.<sup>130</sup> These responses further encouraged the NLC to pursue its agenda of anti-prescriptivism.

The NLC's concern with the supposed restrictive nature of postwar language policy led to the adoption of script policies designed to act as guidelines (as opposed to prescriptions). The reassessment of early postwar policies in the 1960s and 1970s led to the revision of the *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings (*onkun hyō*) in 1973, followed by the formulation of a new comprehensive *kanji* set list, the Jōyō Kanji Set List of 1981. The revised *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings was the first postwar policy document by the NLC to emphasise the non-binding nature of the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, proposing instead that the list act as a guide (*meyasu*) to usage. This contradicted the previous purview of postwar policy formulation, as policies formulated during the early postwar years were intended to restrict *kanji* usage among the general population.<sup>131</sup> The first section of the foreword to the revised *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings of 1973 reads:

This list presents a guide to the *on* and *kun* usage for the written expression of the contemporary National language through *kanji* raised featured on the “Tōyō Kanji Set List”, for laws, official documents, newspapers, magazines, broadcasts, and other areas found in general social life<sup>132</sup>

The NLC's shift away from “restrictive” policy formulation to a “guideline” approach to written language usage marked a change that was to be maintained in future language policies formulated by the NLC. *Kanji* set lists introduced after 1973 expressly offered a “guide” to *kanji* usage, as opposed to apparently binding measures to be adopted by government ministries and organisations. This shift in policy direction also signalled a break from the early postwar spirit of policy making, which assumed further reductions in *kanji* usage and simplification through progressive policy formulation.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 467.

<sup>131</sup> The operative word here is “intended”. While early postwar policies were not binding on the general population (a point made at the start of chapter two), the NLC's *Kanji* Division of 1949 reported that the Minister of Education and Language Section of the Ministry of Education viewed *kanji* policy as restricting *kanji* usage within wider society. Cf. NLC 1, 3-4.

<sup>132</sup> Satō Kiyōji, ed., *Tōyō kanji hyō hyōki jiten zōteiban* [*Tōyō Kanji* Set List Script Dictionary, New and Revised Edition] (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1978), 526.

<sup>133</sup> NLC 1, 3-4.

This shift was met with mixed reaction within the mainstream media, with some praising the relaxation of restrictions and opportunity for various interest groups to have a say in future language policy direction, and others arguing that only a concerted reduction in *kanji* would benefit society.<sup>134</sup> The underlying motive for the change in wording in policy documents was an inward-looking nationalistic conservatism that was critical of the early postwar script reforms, with a secondary justification often being the promotion of freedom of expression through lifting restrictions on *kanji* usage.<sup>135</sup> The main focus of the NLC of this period was the maintenance of the social and historical characteristics of the Japanese script according to its members' view of the Japanese writing system: a mixed-script writing system that made use of *kanji*, which in turn conjured images of a unique and superior Japanese culture or “Japanese spirit” worthy of defending. With the NLC, language policy had taken an ethno-nationalistic turn that would reverberate through segments of society with a vested interest in script reform, language policy, and the promotion of the Japanese language overseas.

### Umesao Tadao and the Japan Foundation

The growth of the Japanese economy in the 1960s and early 1970s contributed to an increasing interest in the Japanese language among non-native speakers of Japanese. By the early 1970s individuals advocating reform of the Japanese script sought to impact the shape of the written Japanese language outside the confines of the NLC. This was partly due to the conservative turn taken by the NLC in the 1960s (outlined in the previous chapter) but was also related to newly emerging opportunities to promote Japan overseas that were enabled by a rapidly growing domestic economy. The Japan Foundation, a semi-governmental organisation established through government legislation in 1972, grasped the opportunity to “take Japan to the world”, much as many other private and public organisations, such as the national television broadcaster NHK, would during and after Japan's economic growth in the postwar period.<sup>136</sup> This included the circulation of publications and courses

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<sup>134</sup> Itō Naoki, “*Kanji hyō no 'jiryūka' bōshin*” [Directions in “Liberalising” *Kanji* Set Lists], *Asahi shimbun*, 9 November, 1974; Ōta Toshio, “*Tōyō kanji wa heraseru*” [We can Decrease the Number of *Tōyō Kanji*], *Asahi shimbun*, 18 December, 1974.

<sup>135</sup> This would lead to several problems with the development of Japanese word processing technologies in the late 1970s. A detailed study of the effects of Japanese word processing on *kanji* usage can be found in chapter five of this thesis.

<sup>136</sup> For research on the role of the NHK in shaping Japanese language policy, cf. Carroll, “NHK and Japanese Language Policy.”

concerning “Japanese” business management techniques, customs, and manners. Private industry has been involved in the promotion of Japanese language studies overseas, with the Toyota Motor Corporation and Nissan being two prime examples of firms investing in centres for the study of Japanese as a foreign language.<sup>137</sup> Originating with the ideas of public intellectuals such as Umesao Tadao (whose ideas are discussed below), the Japan Foundation became a key disseminator of overseas Japanese foreign language learning resources from the mid-seventies.<sup>138</sup> Governmental and private support meant the Japan Foundation had a pivotal role to play in shaping the perceptions of Japanese language learners and teachers both overseas and, to a degree, domestically.<sup>139</sup> Institutions such as the French Académie française were similarly interested in establishing and maintaining cultural links on a global scale (for instance, with former colonies),<sup>140</sup> as language education increasingly began to function as a platform for cultural diplomacy.

Umesao Tadao, a trained anthropologist and NLC member, played a critical role in promoting international exchange and developing the notion of the information age (see chapter six) in Japanese intellectual discourse. His belief in the need for Japan to internationalise contributed to the creation of the Japan Foundation.<sup>141</sup> Umesao was vocal on issues relating to the Japanese writing system and its use in contemporary Japanese society. His ideas about Japanese script reform are worth considering because of his reputation as the first head of the National Museum of Ethnology (founded in 1974) and his contributions to various academic discourses and debates within the NLC and Japan Foundation. His arguments provide some key insights into how script reform was viewed by non-linguists of a scholarly background.

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<sup>137</sup> A summary of contributions made by the Toyota Motor Corporation is provided by Toyota, “Social Contribution Initiatives,” [https://www.toyota-global.com/company/history\\_of\\_toyota/75years/data/company\\_information/social\\_contribution/social\\_contribution/human\\_resources\\_development.html](https://www.toyota-global.com/company/history_of_toyota/75years/data/company_information/social_contribution/social_contribution/human_resources_development.html)

<sup>138</sup> Sakuma Katsuhiko, “*Terebi nihongo kōza shokuyū 1’ ni tsuite* [Let’s Learn Japanese: Basic 1],” *Departmental Bulletin of the Open University of Japan* 29 (1990): 57-62; Utpal Vyas, “The Japan Foundation in China: An Agent of Japan’s Soft Power?,” *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* 5 (2018). <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2008/Vyas.html>

<sup>139</sup> Hashimoto, *Japanese Language and Soft Power in Asia*.

<sup>140</sup> Nancy Kwang Johnson, “Senegalese ‘into Frenchmen’? The French Technology of Nationalism in Senegal,” in *Language, Ethnic Identity and the State*, eds. William Safran and Jean A. Laponce (London: Routledge, 2014), 141-164.

<sup>141</sup> Umehara Hiroshi, “Umesao tadao ron: ‘Kokka dezainā’, ‘purannā’ teki chishiki jin keisei [Umesao Tadao Theory: The Formation of an Intellectual ‘Nation Designer’ and ‘Planner’],” *Applied Social Sciences Research (Oyō Shakai Gaku Kenkyū)* 53 (2011), 164.

One of Umesao's main criticisms of the Japanese writing system was that it was overly complex. He saw the use of *kanji* in particular as a hindrance to the “operation of everyday civilisation” in Japan and beyond.<sup>142</sup> By this Umesao meant that individuals using the Japanese writing system should adopt *rōmaji*, what he terms a “global script”, when writing in fields such as the sciences, technology, and economics,<sup>143</sup> to avoid the obscurantism he believed was associated with *kanji* usage. He argued that *Kanji* should be reserved for those who appreciate Chinese characters, but implied that such characters should not be used in writing of general texts due to their complexity.

Umesao also claimed that reforming the writing system would benefit not only the Japanese but foreigners interested in learning the Japanese language.<sup>144</sup> Through script reform, Umesao envisioned Japanese becoming an international language of communication that could be used between non-native speakers of Japanese across the world (much as English and Spanish are used today as *lingua francas*).<sup>145</sup> To help contribute to the spread of Japanese as an international language, in 1985 Umesao joined a Japan Foundation survey committee tasked with promoting the spread of Japanese overseas.<sup>146</sup> Based on the recommendations of Umesao and others involved on the committee, the Japan Foundation established the Japanese-Language Institute (*Nibongo kokusai sentā*) in Saitama City in 1989.<sup>147</sup> That same year saw the release of the Great Japanese Dictionary, a Japanese language dictionary edited by Umesao, Kindaichi Haruhiko, the established linguist and (by then) prominent public intellectual, and two other academics.<sup>148</sup> The foreword to the dictionary explicitly references the internationalisation of the Japanese language with the backdrop of a growing interest in Japanese as a foreign language,<sup>149</sup> aims that Umesao had hoped to achieve during the course of his lifetime.

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<sup>142</sup> Umesao Tadao, *Nibongo no shōrai: Rōmaji hyōki de kokusaika o* [The Future of the Japanese Language: Internationalising with a Romanised Writing System] (Tokyo: NHK Books, 2004), 183.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Umesao, *Nibongo no shōrai: Rōmaji hyōki de kokusaika o*.

<sup>145</sup> Umesao Tadao, *Jissen/ sekai gengo kikō*, 215.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 216.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. The Japanese-Language Institute is responsible for training Japanese as a foreign language teachers and developing language learning resources for teachers and learners of Japanese as a foreign language. Many the Japanese-Language Institute's resources promote proficiency in conventional mixed-script Japanese. The Institute continues to function today. Cf. Japan Foundation, “The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute,” <https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/urawa/>

<sup>148</sup> Eds. Umesao Tadao, Kindaichi Haruhiko, Sakakura Atsuyoshi, and Hinohara Shigeaki, *Nibongo dai jiten* [The Great Japanese Dictionary] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1989).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 4.

From his very early career as a researcher in the final years of years of the Second World War to his death in the early 2000s, Umesao regularly practised and presented his ideas on the Japanese writing system. He wrote his field notes in Romanised Japanese, helped publish a science journal (SAIENSU) written entirely in *romaji* during the early postwar period, and created the first *kana-kana* typewriter in the early 1970s.<sup>150</sup> Umehara Hiroshi describes Umesao as a pioneer of *Nibonjinron*,<sup>151</sup> which established the idea of Japanese exceptionalism (initially among intellectuals) in the postwar period. *Nibonjinron* acted as a sound chamber for many established linguists and intellectuals who viewed Japanese society as influenced by a unique amalgamation of cultural and political conditions only found within the borders of Japan.<sup>152</sup> It found favour among conservatives, liberals, progressives, and reformists in a range of different fields in the 1970s,<sup>153</sup> as it drew on a discourse of uniqueness and similarity that could be applied to a wide range of disciplines. Despite the tautology inherent in *Nibonjinron* theories of Japanese uniqueness (are not all societies unique in their own way?), Umesao was able to use such theories to present a different view of the Japanese writing system. (The use of *Nibonjinron* to convey opposing and contradictory views on uniqueness made it meaningless as a set of theories.)

Umesao emphasised the need to recognise Japanese as “one of many thousands of languages”,<sup>154</sup> a language whose writing system was in dire need of reform to “adapt to contemporary civilisation”.<sup>155</sup> He saw a clear connection between Japanese civilisation and the Japanese language, with an improvement in one serving as a prerequisite for the advancement of the other. The titles of his major publications feature terms such as civilisation and *Nibongo* (Japanese language), as opposed to culture or national language (*kokugo*). This distinction is important to note, as many Japanese authors refer to Japanese used by native Japanese speakers as *kokugo* (the national language), as opposed to *Nibongo* (the Japanese language), a more neutral term that was often reserved for discussions of

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<sup>150</sup> Konagaya Yuki, “Umesao Tadao’s Cards of Romanised Japanese: Fieldwork in Inner Mongolia, 1944-1945,” *Senri Ethnological Reports* 122 (2014): 1-397.

<sup>151</sup> Umehara Hiroshi, “Umesao Tadao ron,” 155-160.

<sup>152</sup> Oguma Eiji, “*Nibonjin no kyōkai: Okinawa, ainu, taiwan, chōsen shokuminchi shibai kara fukkō undo made* [The Boundaries of the Japanese] (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1998).

<sup>153</sup> Befe, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*.

<sup>154</sup> Umesao Tadao, *Jissen/ sekai gengo kikō* [Actual Fighting and a Travelogue of the World’s Languages] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1992), 205.

<sup>155</sup> Umesao, *Nibongo no shōrai: Rōmaji hyōki de kokusaika o*, ii.

Japanese as a foreign language. Umesao's views were internationalist and grand, yet also mired in the cultural essentialism that had spread throughout the Japanese academe in the 1960s and 1970s.

As an anthropologist, Umesao had a broad all-encompassing view of the world of human experience. His works categorised the world into civilisations, of which Japan was one.<sup>156</sup> His theory of civilisation dichotomised the world into the East and West, and this dichotomy enabled comparisons of cultural and social differences in the world.<sup>157</sup> Within Umesao's portrayal of East and West, he constructed centres and peripheries, with Chinese thought (*chūka shisō*) forming the focal point for what he termed frontier ethnic groups (*henkyō minzoku*).<sup>158</sup> Japan was a frontier ethnic group with a culture that derived its origins – but strove to distinguish itself – from Chinese thought. Perhaps continual efforts to distinguish Japanese culture and civilisation justified Umesao's proposed shift away from a *kanji*-based writing system. Umesao was aware of the cultural heritage the NLC ascribed to written Japanese but saw modernisation as a force that would render such heritage meaningless if groups within Japanese society failed to reform the Japanese writing system.

Umesao's general view of civilisation was modernist, in that his work drew categorical distinctions between “developed” and “primitive” communities based on prevailing local conditions.<sup>159</sup> He developed an image of Japanese-ness that challenged the links between a national language (*kokugo*) and Japanese ethnicity that established linguists of the period drew. Umesao's self-professed love of the Japanese language did not prevent him from proposing script reform.<sup>160</sup> His love of the Japanese language was perhaps one of the driving forces underpinning his calls for script reform. Umesao viewed written language and writing systems as a window into civilisation, and believed that Japanese script reform could help “unlock” the door for foreigners attempting to learn more about Japanese culture and civilisation.<sup>161</sup> For instance, he discusses the usefulness of Romanised road signs in his

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<sup>156</sup> Umesao Tadao, ed., *Nihon bunmei: 77 no kagi* [Japanese Civilisation: 77 Keys] (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1988).

<sup>157</sup> Umesao Tadao, *Bunmei no seitai shikan* [An Ecological Historical View of Civilisation] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1974).

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 34–36.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 113–33.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>161</sup> Umesao discussed the idea of “closing the door” to foreigners interested in Japanese culture through the use of *kanji*. Cf. Umesao, *Nihongo no shōrai: Rōmaji hyōki de kokusaika o.*

travels through India and Pakistan in the 1950s, hinting that Romanisation of the Japanese linguistic landscape would similarly benefit both the Japanese and visitors to Japan during a period of rapid economic growth.<sup>162</sup> Aid-through-Romanisation is something that Umesao claims is missing in Japan, and could be implemented to benefit broader Japanese society through its promotion of in-depth cultural appreciation.<sup>163</sup>

Umesao also viewed *kanji* and *kana* as keys to comprehending Japanese civilisation. He therefore maintained a somewhat contradictory stance on the efficacy of script reform. On the one hand, Umesao viewed script reform as aiding understanding and cultural appreciation. He viewed the Romanisation of the Japanese writing system as a tool that can effectively help foreigners study Japanese and learn about Japanese civilisation. On the other hand, Umesao believed that a concrete understanding of Japanese civilisation could only be achieved through an appreciation of the historical and contemporary roles that *kanji* and *kana*, as well as the Japanese language, play in the lives of the Japanese people.<sup>164</sup>

For foreigners to achieve a concrete understanding of Japanese civilisation, Umesao believed the Japanese language had to be internationalised through Romanisation.<sup>165</sup> However, his version of internationalisation also demanded “assimilating and absorbing” (*doka kyūshū*) non-native speakers of Japanese into the Japanese language in a way that saw non-native speakers become more proficient in the Japanese language.<sup>166</sup> Whether this involved foreigners developing a rudimentary knowledge of *kanji* and *kana* is unclear. His thoughts on the widespread teaching of mixed-script Japanese to foreign learners are unclear. One of Umesao’s underlying motives for reform was, however, the acculturation of foreigners residing in Japan. This meant that foreigners would form an interest group that shaped written Japanese, but whose ideas on script reform do not inform the discussion led by Umesao.

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<sup>162</sup> Umesao, *Bunmei no seitai shikan*, 28-29.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 29-30.

<sup>164</sup> Umesao, *Nihon bunmei: 77 no kagi*, 54-62.

<sup>165</sup> Umesao, *Nihongo no shōrai: Rōmaji hyōki de kokusaika o*, 34.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 27.

The idea of assimilation and acculturation proposed by Umesao fits neatly within his view of Japanese civilisation as a distinct entity informed by Chinese thought. Umesao viewed the *kanji* that had crossed to Japan and were used to write Japanese as a “thousand-year spell” that needed to be lifted.<sup>167</sup> While this spell had contributed to the creation of a distinct Japanese civilisation, it also prevented that civilisation from spreading through easily accessible script. Ridding the Japanese writing system of *kanji* would free Japan of the parochialism accompanying the widespread use of a Chinese script (*kanji*) in the Japanese archipelago from the seventh century onward.<sup>168</sup>

The number of individuals studying Japanese as a foreign language grew substantially during the 1970s (and beyond), as more schools and universities began offering Japanese as a subject. Between the years 1974 and 1984 the number of Japanese language learners and institutions teaching Japanese as a foreign language outside of Japan increased from 77,827 to 584,934 and 898 to 2,620, respectively.<sup>169</sup> The Japan Foundation played a substantial role in disseminating information concerning Japanese culture and customs to students of Japanese as a foreign language to encourage the spread of Japanese language learning overseas. One way the Japan Foundation promoted Japanese language learning overseas was by funding and establishing Japanese language learning facilities in East Asia and other parts of the world,<sup>170</sup> as well as establishing its own centres in Sydney, Jakarta, and Bangkok.<sup>171</sup> The Japan Foundation also furnished overseas educational institutes with Japanese language teaching materials, teachers, and teacher training.<sup>172</sup> Through such initiatives, the Japan Foundation could “deepen understanding” of the Japanese society it envisioned.

In an attempt to address some of the demands that emerged with the growing interest in Japanese language learning overseas, in 1978 the Japan Foundation hosted the International

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>168</sup> Frellesvig, *A History of the Japanese Language*, 12.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Japan Foundation, *Kaigai nihongo kyoiku kikan ichiran* [A List of Overseas Japanese Language Education Institutions] (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1975); Japan Foundation, ed., *Kaigai nihongo kyoiku kikan ichiran* [A List of Overseas Japanese Language Education Institutions] (Tokyo: Bonjinsha, 1987).

<sup>170</sup> Vyas, “The Japan Foundation in China: An Agent of Japan’s Soft Power?”

<sup>171</sup> Yamada Masaharu, “*Kaigai no nihongo kyoiku e no kyoryoku: Kokusai koryu kikin no jigyo*” [Assisting Japanese Language Education Overseas: The Activities of the Japan Foundation], *Ninbon Onkyogaku Kaishi* 46, no. 4 (1990), 352.

<sup>172</sup> *Asahi shinbun*, “*Kaigai de no nihongo kyoiku no jujitsu o*” [Enhancing Japanese Language Education Overseas], 28 May 1977.

Symposium of Japanese Language Education in Tokyo and Osaka.<sup>173</sup> The symposium, the first of its kind, gathered domestic and foreign Japanese language scholars and educators to debate teaching methods, materials, and approaches to research in teaching Japanese as a foreign language. One focus of the symposium was new and innovative teaching methods in Japanese as a foreign language education. The symposium was an indication of the Japan Foundation's commitment to actively supporting Japanese language learning overseas and its growing role as a promoter of the Japanese writing system.

Several individuals affiliated with the Japan Foundation attended and spoke at the symposium. For instance, Sawada Tōru, the standing director (*jōmu riji*) of the Japan Foundation, spoke about the need to recognise that not all Japanese were able to teach Japanese as a foreign language. He proposed that native speakers proficient in standard Japanese should teach Japanese overseas.<sup>174</sup> The reason underpinning his conviction was that Japanese teachers needed to understand Japanese “correctly” to teach overseas,<sup>175</sup> as he viewed an inability to speak standard Japanese as an impediment to communication. According to this viewpoint, which was an implied criticism of linguistic diversity within Japan, standard spoken Japanese was not only a domestic issue, but a language variant that should be spread globally through Japanese as a foreign language learning.

Members of the NLC and the head of NINJAL also attended the symposium. This included Hayashi Ōki (then head of the NINJAL), Suzuki Takao 鈴木孝夫 (b. 1926), and Teramura Hideo 寺村秀夫 (1928-1990). In one of the closing keynotes of the symposium, Suzuki Takao outlined his thoughts on the spread of Japanese language learning overseas. For Suzuki, the demand for Japanese language learning overseas was an indication of the “recognition of the value of the language”, a sign of Japanese becoming a “prestige language” among foreign language learners.<sup>176</sup> He attributed the rising interest in Japanese language learning to Japan's economic success and the special characteristics

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<sup>173</sup> Japan Foundation, ed., *Nihongo kyoiku kokusai kaigi* [International Symposium for Japanese Language Education] (place of publication unknown: Japan Foundation, 1978).

<sup>174</sup> Japan Foundation, *Nihongo kyoiku kokusai kaigi*, 101.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 107.

(*tokushusei*) of Japanese culture.<sup>177</sup> Japan, Suzuki believed, “belonged to a mysterious third world” that was neither part of the West or the East.<sup>178</sup> The Japanese language and, by extension, its writing system, was one factor that contributed to its special characteristics and mysteriousness.

For Suzuki, an NLC member, the Japanese language was no longer in need of reform or improvement. It was, as he describes in his keynote, a “fantastic” language that the Japanese people should be “confident in” teaching to foreign learners of Japanese.<sup>179</sup> Suzuki believed that the value of the Japanese language, a language used only by the Japanese people, needed to be appreciated once more. The ethnocentrism and cultural essentialism that was at work in Suzuki’s conceptualisation of Japanese is reminiscent of the ideas propounded by Ueda Kazutoshi and his students. According to Suzuki’s line of reasoning, the Japanese language was culturally unique, a product of the Japanese race,<sup>180</sup> and worthy of spreading overseas for the purposes of economic growth and cultural understanding. As has already been mentioned, the deepening of cultural understanding was certainly a priority that the Japan Foundation also had a vested interest in since its establishment in 1972, hence the invitation of Suzuki Takao as a keynote speaker at its symposium.

Sawada Tōru, a proponent of “correct” Japanese language education working at the Japan Foundation (described above), was hopeful that the Japanese language would become a global medium of communication. As a representative of the Japan Foundation, Sawada was convinced that turning Japanese into an international language of communication was a “task for all Japanese” to engage with over the coming years.<sup>181</sup> He argued that the efforts of Japanese language teachers – teaching “correct” mixed-script Japanese – was vital to ensuring the Japanese language was counted alongside English and French as an international language of communication.<sup>182</sup> By turning Japanese into an international language of communication, Sawada envisioned the exportation of the “singular” culture of the

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 108. Suzuki also implicitly touches on soft power in his keynote speech, referring specifically to Japan’s ability to spread its influence through cultural means due to its lack of military strength and influence. Incidentally, Suzuki also viewed this kind of “soft power” as unique to Japan and unique in the history of the world.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 110-1.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

Japanese population through Japanese language education overseas.<sup>183</sup> In his view, therefore, the spread of correct Japanese was a national mission that required the participation of all Japanese, especially speakers of standard Japanese, as they were the true bearers of the national language. I assume that Sawada includes the conventional mixed-script writing system in his definition of correct Japanese, as he is silent on the issue of script reform or teaching exclusively through Romanised or other forms of written Japanese. The tension between correct and unorthodox use of script conventions was already surfacing at schools, where young female students made use of *maru moji* (“rounded script”).<sup>184</sup>

The perceived success of the International Symposium of Japanese Language Education led to the publication of a summary of the panels and keynotes held. The Japan Foundation sent a publication containing a selection of the discussions held during the symposium to the Consulate-General of Japan in Melbourne, Australia. It can be safe to assume that the Japan Foundation sent copies to embassies and consulates in Australia, the United States of America, and other parts of the world. As a semi-governmental organisation with ties to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan Foundation was able to use Japanese diplomatic channels to spread its members’ vision of Japanese as a foreign language education and, by extension, its vision of written Japanese to a broad audience of teachers and students of the Japanese language overseas.<sup>185</sup> It is unlikely that the effectiveness of this approach went unnoticed, as the Japan Foundation developed its own teaching materials and resources to reach teachers and students of Japanese as a foreign language in China and other parts of Asia.<sup>186</sup> This is because cultural diplomacy formed (and continued to form) a core part of the Japan Foundation’s activities, which involved promoting a “good international image”.<sup>187</sup> During the symposium, head of NINJAL and NLC member Hayashi stated that future symposia would also involve input from

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>184</sup> *Maru moji* is examined in the following chapter.

<sup>185</sup> The official history of the Japan Foundation can be found on the Japan Foundation webpage. See Japan Foundation, “About the Japan Foundation”, [https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/about/outline/about\\_01.html](https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/about/outline/about_01.html)

<sup>186</sup> Vyas, “The Japan Foundation in China: An Agent of Japan’s Soft Power?”

<sup>187</sup> Peng Er Lam, “Japan’s Quest for ‘Soft Power’: Attraction and Limitation,” *East Asia* 24, no. 4 (2007), 354.

Japanese language teachers in Asian countries,<sup>188</sup> indicating the desire for a greater outreach for Japanese language educators overseas.

The Japan Foundation reinforced conventional mixed-script Japanese writing through its overseas Japanese language teaching programmes and materials. In 1975 the Japan Foundation published a Japanese language education handbook for teachers, entitled Script (*hyōkei*), that aimed to provide guidelines to the use of written Japanese in teaching contexts.<sup>189</sup> The book's foreword, written by then president of the Japan Foundation Kon Hidemi 今日出美 (1903-1984), described the Japanese language as follows to its target audience (teachers of Japanese as a foreign language):

The teaching of characters is indispensable to the teaching of language. Character education accounts for a large proportion of Japanese language education, especially since the Japanese language is [written in] *kanji kana* mixed-script<sup>190</sup>

In this respect, the president of the Japan Foundation and the NLC shared similar views on the Japanese script. Essentially, a mixed-script writing system, consisting of *kanji* and *kana*, characterised written Japanese. The book itself, authored by an overseas lecturer and researcher of Japanese (Arahari Kazuko), reinforced this view, by focussing predominantly on the teaching of *kanji* to foreign learners of the Japanese language. It also referred to the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and other postwar policies, such as Contemporary *Kana* Usage.<sup>191</sup> From the time of its inception the Japan Foundation “correct” Japanese consisted of mixed-script Japanese, which was predicated on the teaching of *kanji*. This is evident from the remarks made by Kon, but also clearly articulated by others working within the Japan Foundation. Sawada Tōru, alongside other Japan Foundation staff working on Japanese language education, seldom discussed the idea of script reform proposed by members of the early postwar NLC. Instead, they concentrated on presenting foreign learners of the Japanese language with a cohesive writing system comprised of mixed-script Japan that made use of *kanji* and *kana*.

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<sup>188</sup> Japan Foundation, *Nibongo kyoiku kokusai kaigi*, 74.

<sup>189</sup> Arahari Kazuko, *Kyōshi yō nibongo kyoiku handobukku 2: Hyōkei* [2<sup>nd</sup> Handbook for Japanese Language Education Teachers: Script] (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1975).

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-34.

By the time of the symposium ideas about written Japanese had been clearly elaborated by the fledgling Japan Foundation. People in positions of authority in the Japan Foundation considered mixed-script Japanese the standard form of the Japanese writing system. From the late 1970s the Japan Foundation gifted Japanese language teaching resources to numerous overseas universities teaching Japanese as a foreign language.<sup>192</sup> Growing numbers of Japanese language learners led to the Japan Foundation publishing its own bilingual Japanese-English dictionary, which contained entries in mixed-script Japanese.<sup>193</sup>

The relevance of studying Japanese as a foreign language was debated by organisations other than the Japan Foundation. For instance, outside of Japan the Australia-Japan Foundation, established by the Australian government in 1976, held a seminar to discuss the employment prospects of Australian graduates of Japanese language studies in August 1979. The seminar, which was published as a report in 1981, reflected on the commercial viability of studying Japanese, as well as the importance of Japanese language proficiency at the point of graduation.<sup>194</sup> Similarly, Japanese businesses and their management practices and production techniques became the focus of domestic and international publishing houses, generating an image of the Japanese economy as efficient and high-tech.<sup>195</sup> This fuelled demand for Japanese language learning overseas. Coupled with the growing number of foreign institutions teaching Japanese from the 1970s, organisations and businesses contributed to the overall optimism surrounding the merits of Japanese as a foreign language education – both within Japan and overseas. The increase in popularity of teaching and studying Japanese as a foreign language detracted from the arguments of reformists such as Umesao, as the Japanese language gained increasing attention despite its complex writing system. The status of the Japanese language and its value as linguistic capital rose not only through the efforts of the Japan Foundation, but also as a result of a performing Japanese

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<sup>192</sup> *Mainichi shinbun*, “*Nibongo no kyōzai – gaikoku no daigaku de daikōhyō*” [Japanese Language Teaching Resources – Enthusiastic Reception among Foreign Universities], 14 September, 1978.

<sup>193</sup> Japan Foundation, *Basic Japanese-English Dictionary* (Tokyo: Bonjinsha, 1986).

<sup>194</sup> Australia-Japan Foundation, *Employment Prospects for Australian Graduates of Japanese Language* (Sydney: Australia-Japan Foundation, 1981).

<sup>195</sup> Ezra Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

economy. Prevailing economic conditions therefore served as one force that shaped the development of written Japanese.<sup>196</sup>

## Conclusions

This chapter demonstrated how language policy evolved as individuals became more confident in Japan's place in the world and the importance of its language both domestically and internationally. This confidence in Japan was witnessed in the widespread references to Japanese uniqueness and “correct” Japanese within the NLC and Japan Foundation. There was a strong sense of cultural tradition and “love of language” among both organisations, which was partly illustrated through attempts by the NLC and Japan Foundation to raise mixed-script Japanese as the bedrock of Japanese script usage. By asserting their definition of the Japanese writing system through cultural nationalism, the NLC, Ministry of Education, and Japan Foundation, which drew on NLC policies, were able to assume ownership of the written form of the national language.

The NLC became less proactive and more conservative in its language policy direction and formulation. Its members preoccupied themselves with the re-evaluation of early postwar policies implemented during the Occupation era, while also attempting to clearly designate mixed-script *kanji kana majinbun* Japanese as the standard Japanese writing system. Through reassessment and criticism of early postwar language policy, the NLC positioned itself as an anti-prescriptive council that aimed to foster imagined immovable ties between the Japanese language and the Japanese people. The idea of “script reform” itself was reformed in order to maintain the way written Japanese is used, even if that meant reversing progressive policies formulated during the early postwar period.

The majority of NLC members, including the progressive postwar reformist Nishio Minoru, were keen to revise policies such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List, and the NLC began critically evaluating the policies from at least the early 1960s until the establishment of the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List in 1981. Nishio, who had led the early postwar reforms, was now siding with anti-prescriptivists by labelling the early

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<sup>196</sup> This was also to prove the case through the rise of consumerism among the Japanese youth (detailed in the following chapter).

reforms “experiments”. This demonstrates the changes in people’s views that occurred within the NLC, indicating that simple ideological labels cannot be attached to any NLC member. By the early 1970s the NLC had succeeded in diluting the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List through the introduction of the revised *Tōyō Kanji* List of Readings in 1973, a chart of *kanji* readings that emphasised that *kanji* readings introduced by the NLC were merely guidelines (*meyasu*). This signalled a shift in the NLC’s stance on language policy and reform, from one of restrictive prescription to suggested usage and guidelines. As the NLC became more conservative in its language policy direction, youth culture began to reshape the way in which the Japanese writing system was used at the grassroots.

## Chapter 5: Girls' Language Usage as Grassroots Script Reform

Grassroots script reform intersected with developments in postwar language policy and national language education and tested the ability of a conservative NLC to maintain control over conventional script usage. Documenting the use of divergent written language usage among Japanese youth demonstrates the limitations of NLC language policy formulation and direction while highlighting the vitality of script reform at the grassroots. This chapter examines *maru moji* “rounded script”, a variant writing system that emerged in the mid-seventies and was used predominantly by girls, as a case study of grassroots script reform. Catherine Driscoll’s definition of “girls” is used in this chapter to signify young females in their tween, teen, and early adult stages of life.<sup>1</sup> The chapter investigates the attitudes of such girls and educators toward *maru moji* usage, and draws predominantly on the work of Yamane Kazuma 山根一眞 (b. 1947), whose research on *maru moji* was conducted at the height of *maru moji* usage in Japan.

The chapter examines the factors that shaped *maru moji* usage and perceptions towards the variant writing system in Japanese junior high schools, senior high schools, junior colleges, and universities between the late 1970s and early 1990s. The chapter then demonstrates how script reform occurred outside of the NLC, in areas beyond the control of national language policy formulation, affecting several generations of girls and, from the 1980s, young teachers. Unlike conventional script reform, which was dependent on coordinated language policy, *maru moji* entailed the reform of written Japanese through purposive actions occurring via unofficial channels such as peer groups and popular culture. Finally, future iterations of girls’ script usage in Japanese society, which were dependent on the consumption of new technologies such as cellular phones, are briefly presented as a continuation of the variant writing system discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes that girls’ written language usage is innovative and practical – a prime example of change generated by script reform at the grassroots level – and subverts conventional written forms of the Japanese language in numerous ways,

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

through adaptation of stroke order, *kanji* usage, and the drawing of novel aesthetic associations between language usage and youth culture. Grassroots actions that led to changes in girls' written language usage challenged official script reform, which was characterised by its rigidity and neglect of writing practices among the grassroots, through the use of unorthodox channels to spread novel forms and conventions of Japanese script, initially among girls and subsequently among broader segments of Japanese society. This chapter demonstrates how forces such as the education system and consumerism shaped written Japanese in ways that allowed girls to act in ways that allowed them to own their writing practices within and outside the classroom across several generations.

### **The Linguistic Features of *Maru Moji***










An outline of the linguistic features of *maru moji* is required to understand the difference between conventionally written Japanese of the 1970s and, to a lesser extent, 1980s and the coexisting variant writing system.<sup>2</sup> *Maru moji* can be characterised in three ways: firstly, by its overall appearance as a rounded and “globular” script; secondly, by its distinct rearrangement and detraction of strokes used to form a graph; thirdly, by the presence of nonconventional graphs such as hearts in the linguistic representation of words.

Japanese written using *maru moji* exhibits a relatively rotund form when compared to conventional written Japanese. Users regularly adjust the length and curvature of strokes to form a rounded graph (table 1). When writing certain graphs users occasionally omit and abbreviate strokes, as can be seen in the examples of *maru moji* variants of “ki” and “to” in the table below.

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<sup>2</sup> A description of mainstream views on language among established linguists during the 1970s can be found in chapter four. Similarly, see chapter six for an analysis of written language practices during the 1980s.

Table 2. Conventional Written Japanese (CJ) and *Maru Moji* (MM)<sup>3</sup>

	CJ	MM
Roundness		
Rearrangement of Strokes	か “ka”	 “ka”
	わ “wa”	 “wa”
Detraction and abbreviation of Strokes	 “ki” (four strokes)	 “ki” (three strokes)
	 “to” (two strokes)	 “to” (one stroke)
Incorporation of graphs	Rare	Common, e.g.  “hidari” (left)

<sup>3</sup> The example of roundness of CJ and MM and the detraction and abbreviation of strokes are taken from Satō Atsuko, “Yureugoku mojikan – gendai shakai ni miru mangaji no hanran” [Wavering Perspectives on Writing – the Inundation of Manga Script in Contemporary Society], *Yamanashi Daigaku Kokugo Kokubun to Kokugo Kyoiku* 4 (March 1990), 46. The two examples representing the rearrangement of strokes are taken from Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū* [Research on Variant Girls’ Script] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1989), 72. The example representing the incorporation of graphs is documented in *Asahi shinbun* “Hidari o mite mo migi o mite mo ‘maruji darake’ ni nattari shite” [No matter which way I turn all I see is *Maru Moji*], 23 June, 1987.

## ***Research on Maru Moji***

Research has shown that the use of *maru moji* dates back to 1974 at the latest and began to spread rapidly through Japan from 1978.<sup>4</sup> The study of the *maru moji* phenomenon began in the mid-eighties,<sup>5</sup> and recent literature, though scant and incomprehensive, has affirmed its links to the innovative quality of girls' Japanese language usage.<sup>6</sup> To date only one in-depth study of *maru moji* – as of yet unavailable in the English language – has been conducted.<sup>7</sup> *Maru moji* is, however, mentioned and discussed at some length in the work of Kinsella as part of a study of the cute (*kawaii*) culture that emerged in Japan in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> Other academic works criticise the variant writing system, comparing it to an illness or “syndrome”.<sup>9</sup> Disdain for the variant writing system is not uncommon,<sup>10</sup> and (as shown below) was witnessed in educators faced with a growing number of *maru moji* users amongst their student cohorts.<sup>11</sup>

In 1989 Yamane Kazuma, a journalist and non-fiction author, published the only monograph on the variant writing system. His work is used as a central primary source in this chapter, due to its broad engagement and detailed analysis of girls' language usage in the 1970s and 1980s. Yamane viewed *maru moji* as a catalyst for linguistic change and diversity and was critical of the overly negative attitude exhibited toward the variant writing system during the mid-eighties. His analysis evaluates *maru moji* positively as a variant writing system that is both practical and effective, yet also playful and able to motivate students to write.<sup>12</sup> Yamane was not connected to the NLC or any sociolinguists of the time, making his work unique in both its focus and findings.

Included in Yamane's work on *maru moji* are the results of a questionnaire he conducted in 1985. Over a period of two years spent engaging in fieldwork and surveys, Yamane contacted 194 junior-high schools and senior high schools across Japan, to grasp the scale of *maru moji* usage among

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<sup>4</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 96-97.

<sup>5</sup> The most prominent being Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*.

<sup>6</sup> Laura Miller, “Subversive Script”

<sup>7</sup> Sharon Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan,” in *Women, Media, and Consumption in Japan*, eds. Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 220-254.

<sup>8</sup> Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan”.

<sup>9</sup> Ishikawa Kyūō, *Nihongo to wa dō in gengo ka* [What Kind of a Language is Japanese?] (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 2016), 394.

<sup>10</sup> An online blogger remembers expressing a “deep loathing” for the girl he sat next to in class, due to her use of *maru moji* to take notes. See the blog: [http://oreryu.eco.to/80's/13\\_marumoji.htm](http://oreryu.eco.to/80's/13_marumoji.htm)

<sup>11</sup> See the preceding “Educators’ Attitudes toward *Maru Moji*” section for more on educators’ views of the variant writing system.

<sup>12</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 123.

the school-going population in Japan. He received a response from a total of 66 schools. Based on his survey data, Yamane estimates that 55.3% of junior high school students and 47.5% of senior high school students used *maru moji*. Applying this estimate to the student population at the time, Yamane estimates that approximately five million people used *maru moji* across Japan in 1985. The majority of users were girls, though a separate survey of *maru moji* usage in the 1980s also indicates *maru moji* usage was not limited to girls: a significant, though much smaller, portion of boys also used *maru moji* at school from junior high school onwards.<sup>13</sup> The widespread use of *maru moji* in Japanese schools meant that many users of *maru moji* viewed the variant writing system as a characteristic of their writing habits. It was learnt through emulating the many users, students and siblings, who had adopted the variant writing system over the years.

This new way of writing Japanese gradually made its way out of schools and into the mainstream as it gained popularity and recognition among broader segments of society. Soon after the spread of *maru moji* as a symbol of girlhood took place, young female pop idols began using *maru moji* in the 1980s and the large typesetting company Shaken created the first *maru moji* styled fonts during the mid-eighties. The former regularly featured in magazines and on television, as idolised pop singers such as Matsuda Seiko presented their audiences with short, cute, and stylised messages about everyday topics.<sup>14</sup> *Maru moji* usage by young celebrities, typically on the airwaves during the 1980s, validated *maru moji* usage among young girls, who were heavy consumers of popular culture during the period.<sup>15</sup> Shaken's creation of *maru moji* styled fonts was a product of *maru moji* handwriting competitions during the 1980s,<sup>16</sup> which elicited thousands of submissions from individuals across Japan.<sup>17</sup> The winners of two of the largest competitions of the period were senior high school girls.<sup>18</sup> The fact that both winners

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<sup>13</sup> Satō, “Yureugoku mojikan”.

<sup>14</sup> Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan,” 235.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *Asabi shimbun*, “Maruji bunka mo shiminken?” [Has Rounded Script Culture been Widely Accepted?], July 23, 1986. These competitions were organised by companies that had hoped to create replicable fonts that reflected this new variant writing system. One competition, for example, was organised by Shaken, a Tokyo-based typesetting company. Shaken offered the winner of the competition a money prize of 100,000 yen. That a manga artist was involved as one of the panels that judged the competition is indicative of the cultural “reach” the variant writing system had as a commodity by the mid-eighties. The winning samples of this particular competition were displayed at a gallery in the Ginza shopping district in Tokyo.

<sup>17</sup> *Asabi shimbun*, “Maruji bunka mo shiminken?”; *Asabi shimbun*, “Maruji joō wa shodō shodan” [Rounded Script Queen is an Amateur Calligrapher], 20 August, 1987.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

of the competition were girls demonstrated the strength of the link between female youth and *maru moji* usage in the 1980s. Additionally, comic books (*manga*), one of the most widely consumed items among the youth, began incorporating *maru moji* at an early stage,<sup>19</sup> to increase readership among the Japanese youth.

The position *maru moji* occupied within girl (and arguably youth) culture led one of the leading newspapers to ask whether the variant writing system had become culturally accepted across Japan.<sup>20</sup> The term used to describe *maru moji* was *shiminken* (citizenship right), a term denoting widespread acceptance and recognition throughout society among the general population. This signalled a shift toward pluralistic writing practices, with the NLC no longer the sole arbiter of changes to the Japanese writing system. The use of *maru moji*, thus, complicated the question of who decides how and where Japanese script is used, with new interest groups emerging as equally capable of shaping written Japanese within society.

The NLC conducted no research into the variant writing system during the heyday of *maru moji* usage, which spanned the years 1974-1994. The main reason for the lack of interest in *maru moji* usage during its spread and widespread usage may be associated with the NLC's formulation of the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List in 1981, Contemporary *Kana* Usage in the mid-eighties, and its relative disinterest in issues of gendered language usage.<sup>21</sup> The disinterest in gendered language stemmed from the widespread assumption in the academe that a "realm of dominant gender norms" existed,<sup>22</sup> which was only just beginning to be challenged by periphery academics in Japan in the 1990s (as widespread *maru moji* usage started to wane).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, time spent formulating the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List during the 1970s partially

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<sup>19</sup> Examples include Hasegawa Machiko's hit comic *Sazae San*. See Ishikawa Kyūyō, *Nibongo to wa do in gengo ka: gengoron* [What Kind of Language is Japanese? Linguistic Arguments] (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 2016), 394.

<sup>20</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, "Maruji bunka mo shiminken?"

<sup>21</sup> Gender and language policy is discussed in Appendix D.

<sup>22</sup> Shigeko Okamoto, "Variability and Multiplicity in the Meanings of Stereotypical Gendered Speech in Japanese," *East Asian Pragmatics* 1, no. 1 (2016), 25.

<sup>23</sup> Risako Ide and Tomomi Terada, "The Historical Origins of Japanese Women's Speech: From the Secluded Worlds of 'Court Ladies' and 'Play Ladies'," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 129, no. 1 (1998): 139-56; Miyako Inoue, "Gender, Language, and Modernity. Toward and Effective History of Japanese Women's Language," *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 2 (2002): 392-422; Janet Shibamoto Smith, "Gendered Structures in Japanese," in *Gender Across Languages: The Linguistic Representation of Women and Men. Volume 3*, eds. Marlis Hellinger and Hadumod Bußman (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003), 201-225; eds. Shigeko Okamoto and Janet Shibamoto Smith, *Japanese Language, Gender, and Ideology: Cultural Models and Real People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

blinded NLC members to concurrent linguistic phenomena not directly related to official *kanji* usage.<sup>24</sup> This demonstrated the inability of the NLC to impact aspects of Japanese script usage beyond the guidelines it provided for the education system and government offices and ministries. Another reason for the lack of interest in *maru moji* within the NLC was technological developments and their effect on language usage within Japanese society. This was certainly the case toward the end of the 1980s, as the invention and spread of Japanese language word processing technologies garnered significantly more attention within the NLC membership, mainstream media, and among public intellectuals in Japan,<sup>25</sup> due to their potentially revolutionary effects on written language usage.

## Girls' Attitudes toward *Maru Moji*

### *Girls' Language Usage at School*

Girls using *maru moji* exhibited a range of opinions concerning the variant writing system. Several schoolgirls talking about their experiences using *maru moji* claimed that they began using the writing system without giving much thought to the fact that they were employing a variant form of the written Japanese language. One senior high school girl from Tokyo claimed: “before realising it, I was writing [in *maru moji*]”.<sup>26</sup> A second-year Nihon Joshi University student made a similar remark: “I’ve never practised [writing in *maru moji*]. My writing naturally became rounded”.<sup>27</sup> What seemed conventional to girls was in fact novel and unrecognised among other groups with a vested interest in Japanese script reform.

The influence of peers and an aesthetic attraction to *maru moji* played a key role in informing girls’ adoption of *maru moji*. Some schoolgirls reported practising writing *maru moji* prior to making use of it in their daily lives.<sup>28</sup> A female university student recalls how “there was a girl when I was in junior high school who had *kawaii* handwriting, so I copied her”.<sup>29</sup> The motivation to use *maru moji* generally

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<sup>24</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Shin ‘kanji hyō’ o sakusei e*” [Toward the Creation of a New “*Kanji* Set List”], 1 February, 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Chapter six details mainstream media portrayals of the effects of the spread of Japanese word processor and the NLC’s eventual response to such effects. Also cf. Gottlieb, *Word-processing Technology in Japan*, 121-128.

<sup>26</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 117.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 117.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 117-118.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 117.

stemmed from language usage among peers and family members. Young females saw their friends and sisters using the writing system and began using it themselves, indicating a spread of *maru moji* usage at the grassroots level. The cuteness of *maru moji* was regularly cited by young female students as another reason why they were attracted to the writing system. Students referred to the rounded script using diminutives such as *marukko* (round) – a common indicator of cuteness and fragility – and signalled a desire to attain *kawaii* handwriting through *maru moji* usage.<sup>30</sup> This signals that an aesthetic association between *maru moji* and *kawaii* culture existed in the minds of some girls.

The spread of *maru moji* coincided with a marked increase in female educational advancement beyond senior high school in the mid-seventies, at which time educational meritocracy was highly influential within Japanese society.<sup>31</sup> Meritocratic education led to competition amongst student cohorts seeking to attain places at prestigious colleges and universities.<sup>32</sup> One pressure commonly felt at Japanese senior high schools during the period of increasing enrolment rates and competition for places at prestigious colleges and universities was the need to perform well on entrance examinations. The entrance examination system was often viewed as the key to a successful education and was a requirement for students who wished to qualify for a place at tertiary education institutions. By the eighties entrance examinations had become a “national obsession”,<sup>33</sup> demanding strict content-oriented learning in the classroom, exam-appropriate knowledge,<sup>34</sup> and the attendance of cram schools outside of school hours.<sup>35</sup> The pressure to produce results on entrance examinations was not only felt at senior high schools. Junior high schools were responsible for preparing their students for senior high school

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<sup>30</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shojo moji no kenkyū*, 120. Speakers of Italian and Arabic make use of diminutives in a similar manner when using spoken language.

<sup>31</sup> Takehiko Kariya, “From Credential Society to ‘Learning Capital’ Society,” in *Social Class in Contemporary Japan: Structures, Sorting and Strategies* eds. Hiroshi Ishida and David H. Slater (London: Routledge, 2010), 89.

<sup>32</sup> Takeuchi Yō, *Kyōsō to shakaigaku: gakureki to shōshin* [The Sociology of Competition: Academic Background and Advancement] (Kyoto: Sekai Shisō Sha, 1981); Thomas Rohlen, *Japan’s High Schools* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 135; Okazaki Tomonori, *Kyōiku shakaigaku II: Shudan, soshiki, taisei, to kyōiku* [The Sociology of Education II: Groups, Organisations, Systems, and Education] (Tokyo: Hōsō Daigaku Kyōiku Shinkōkai, 1990), 173–87; Mamoru Tsukada, *Nihon no meritokurashi: kōzō to shinsei* [Japan’s Meritocracy: Structure and Mentality] (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1995).

<sup>33</sup> For a detailed account see Rohlen, *Japan’s High Schools*, 77–110. Also see Edward Beauchamp, ed., *Education and Schooling in Japan since 1945* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 234–235.

<sup>34</sup> Merry White, *The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 141.

<sup>35</sup> Walter Dawson, “Private Tutoring and Mass Schooling in East Asia: Reflections of Inequality in Japan, South Korea, and Cambodia,” *Asia Pacific Educational Review* 11, no. 1 (2010), 16–17.

entrance examinations, a hurdle of arguably greater importance in an academically competitive society.<sup>36</sup> The mode of instruction at junior high schools resembled that of senior high schools, focussing on content and knowledge retention and reproduction, as opposed to fostering creativity and individual expression. Within this environment, *maru moji* was one way for girls to effectively record content and demonstrate individual creativity through the adaptation and subversion of conventional written Japanese.

For the first time since the establishment of universities in Japan in the late nineteenth century, in the 1970s thirty percent of girls advanced to tertiary education (specifically, to junior colleges and universities).<sup>37</sup> This trend did not abate, as the number of females entering tertiary education went on to exceed male academic tertiary education enrolment for the first time in 1989 whilst also doubling during the preceding decade.<sup>38</sup> The 1970s was also marked by a continued increase in female senior high school attendance rates. In 1970 the percentage of girls entering senior high school outstripped males for the first time (82.7% versus 81.6%). Notably, from 1973 onward over ninety percent of females in Japan entered senior high schools, a trend that has not reversed since.<sup>39</sup> The rising population of females undertaking studies at the non-compulsory education level – that is, at the senior high school and tertiary level – in the seventies supported the birth of a new youth culture that distinguished itself through written language usage in classrooms and consumption of cute products outside of school.

### ***Bridging the Gap: Practical and Sensible Language Usage***

An aspect of *maru moji* that was crucial to its uptake and spread was its departure from the prioritisation of *kanji* usage. Girls using *maru moji* were less likely to use *kanji* in their writing.<sup>40</sup> This usually meant an overall reduction in the number of strokes used to produce sentences, which equated with a drop in the

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<sup>36</sup> Senior high school entrance examinations commonly determined a student's competitiveness and academic progression beyond senior high school. See "Entering High School", in Rohen, *Japan's High Schools*, 121-125.

<sup>37</sup> Statistics Bureau of Japan, "Enrolment Rate and Advancement Rate (1948-2005)," [www.stat.go.jp/data/chouki/zuhyou/25-12.xls](http://www.stat.go.jp/data/chouki/zuhyou/25-12.xls). During the 1970s and 1980s there existed a highly gendered distinction between enrolment at Junior Colleges (*tanki daigaku*) and Universities (*daigaku*), with girls typically comprising the majority in Junior Colleges.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Satō, "Yureugoku mojikan," 39.

time spent producing text. Another notable characteristic of *maru moji* usage was the preference given to the use of *hiragana* (Japanese syllabary) over other scripts,<sup>41</sup> even when conventional practice dictated that the use of other scripts (such as *kanji* or *katakana*) was preferable. As we have seen in table 1, *maru moji* modified the conventional form of written Japanese in a variety of ways. The choice and frequency of scripts was one way in which girls altered written Japanese. Girls using *maru moji* intentionally wrote words that were typically written in *katakana* or Romanised Japanese in *hiragana*,<sup>42</sup> while also writing parts of abbreviated words such as *saten* (derived from *keissaten*, Japanese for “café”, which was typically written in *kanji*) in *katakana*.

This combination of practices and preferences allowed girls to speedily jot the ideas discussed and presented in lectures and classes.<sup>43</sup> Girls benefited from *maru moji* usage, as they wrote fewer complex *kanji* and more *kana*, which in turn saved them time due to decreased stroke count and less need to remember *kanji*. Some girls would render their notes into conventional Japanese once they returned to their homes. However, this was not always the case, particularly with written exchange of (typically succinct) notes among peers. Interviews with female senior high school and university students show that the low linguistic burden that was characteristic of *maru moji* helped solidify its ongoing use.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to this, *maru moji* was easy to read, due to its tendency to bring the written form of Japanese nearer to the spoken language.<sup>45</sup> Girls attempted to represent the spoken form of Japanese in their writing by producing text that was generally shorter and more expressive.<sup>46</sup> This was useful in the classroom, as students often struggled to sufficiently record the information being presented. The content-oriented learning that had been incorporated into many classrooms may have motivated the use of *maru moji* as a means of swift note-taking. It also represented a general trend among the youth of the 1980s, whom researchers have shown to be more flexible, emotive, and economical in their choice

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<sup>41</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shojo moji no kenkyū*, 219-221.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Examples include “*baibi*” (“bye bye”).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 122-123.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 114-121.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 121.

of script.<sup>47</sup> Within the context of changing habits among the youth, girls, who often exchanged messages with their classmates,<sup>48</sup> were prone to produce text that more closely represented the way they spoke and related to the world around them. These changing habits also manifested themselves in changing patterns of consumption among girls.

### ***Tying Consumption to Language Production and Identity***

The factors discussed above – namely, ease of adoption, links with peer and family usage, and practicality as a writing system – cemented the role of *maru moji* among girls. However, the continuing use of *maru moji* was not only dependent on these factors. The cuteness of *maru moji* bolstered its image among girls at a time when the consumption of cute products and production of cute culture was beginning to flourish among Japanese youth.<sup>49</sup> Companies that produced and sold items linked to the burgeoning cute culture of the 1970s and 1980s stood to benefit from the spread of *maru moji*, as a variety of stationery goods began to gain in popularity among girls as *maru moji* usage spread across schools throughout Japan.<sup>50</sup>

Girls began to use so called “fancy notes” (*fanshi nōto*) – also referred to as “dedicated notebooks” – to write their letters and notes to one another during class, share secrets, and record private thoughts.<sup>51</sup> These fancy notes were typically colourful and childish, featuring images of cute fictional characters, and were used as diaries and designed for the passing of notes during class.<sup>52</sup> Their increasing popularity is exemplified by the revenues of Sanrio, a firm that led the industry of cute goods and stationery in Japan from the 1970s.<sup>53</sup> The “fancy goods” business was worth over ten trillion yen (90 billion dollars) in 1990,<sup>54</sup> and was tailored predominantly toward adolescents.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Inoue Michio, “*Nibongo no hyōon mojika ni tsuite: tegaki kara wāpuro e*” [On the Increasing Usage of Phonograms (*Kana*) in Japanese Writing: From Handwriting to Word Processing], *Journal of Kobe Yamate University* 4 (2002), 16-17.

<sup>48</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 124-125.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew Burdelski and Koji Mitsuhashi, “‘She Thinks You’re *Kawaii*’: Socializing Affect, Gender, and Relationships in a Japanese Preschool,” *Language in Society* 39, no. 1 (2010), 67; Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan”, 220-54.

<sup>50</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Ryūko suru manga moji*” [Manga Script Gaining in Popularity], 22 May, 1985.

<sup>51</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 124-125.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan”, 225-226.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>55</sup> White, “The Marketing of Adolescence in Japan: Buying and Dreaming”.

The incorporation of cute symbolism and iconography in dedicated notebooks and other goods widely consumed by girls allowed girls to further link their language usage and writing practices to an identity that embodied and idealised cuteness. A female junior high school teacher and once user of the *maru moji* reflects thus: “I wanted to be romantic and cute, and for me that writing was the utmost expression of those [sentiments]”.<sup>56</sup> Contemporary echoes of this reflection are found in the responses of girls asked to comment on samples of *maru moji* during the 1980s, many of which used the word *kawaii* (cute) to describe the variant writing system.<sup>57</sup> The production of *maru moji* epitomised the cultural value of cuteness among girls. Increases in the consumption of goods that promoted or emphasised the cuteness of *maru moji* can be partially explained by the spread of consumerism among the Japanese youth during the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>58</sup> which in turn shaped the way in which girls viewed their current and ideal selves through visible Japanese script and gendered writing practices.<sup>59</sup> *Maru moji* usage was at once part of cute culture and the rising tide of consumerism through which a generation of girls could resist the dictates of teachers who believed they “knew better” when it came to questions concerning written Japanese language usage.<sup>60</sup>

### **Educators’ Attitudes toward *Maru Moji***

*Maru moji* signalled a break from conventional writing practices that were taught through the education system. This led to a sense of moral panic among educators that observed students adopting unconventional Japanese script usage in their writing. In 1990 Satō Atsuko, a Japanese elementary school teacher (whose work is cited extensively below), warned that an inundation (*hanran*) of *maru moji* in schools had led to the disruption of communication among groups and individuals within society. In

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<sup>56</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shojo moji no kenkyū*, 133.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>58</sup> Researcher of Japanese youth culture refer to new forms of solidarity and identity formation through the consumption of physical goods during the period. Cf. Millie Creighton, “Edutaining’ Children: Consumer and Gender Socialization in Japanese Marketing,” *Ethnology* 33, no. 1 (1994), 50; Merry White, “The Marketing of Adolescence in Japan: Buying and Dreaming,” in *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, eds. Lise Skov and Brian Moeran (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 257.

<sup>59</sup> In modern Japan, the links between gendered language usage and identity in a consumer context date to the early twentieth century, when corporations began using “feminine” aesthetics and language in commercial advertisements. Cf. Miyako Inoue, *Vicarious Language: Gender and Linguistic Modernity in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 141-143.

<sup>60</sup> Kinsella notes how cute culture has its origins in the youth protest movement of the 1960s, with its encouragement of anti-establishment behaviour. Cf. Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan,” 250-251.

order to demonstrate the detrimental effects of *maru moji* on students around Japan, she conducted a series of surveys of junior high school and university students.<sup>61</sup> One survey highlighted the wide range of forms the variant writing system took. The author argued that forms were diverse enough for *maru moji* to possess its own “schools” of writing,<sup>62</sup> thus challenging established conventional script usage found in schools and supported by the NLC.

The views Satō held toward *maru moji* were rooted in *Nihonjinron* discourse (discussed in the previous chapter) that was prevalent in academia and the mainstream media at the time. She ascribed to people of Japanese origin a singular appreciation of the aesthetic of written Japanese and claimed a tendency for written language to determine personality in the eyes of others.<sup>63</sup> The idea that language determined the individual was a typical trope found in *Nihonjinron* discourse, due to the association language scholars made between the Japanese language and Japanese people.<sup>64</sup> The ability of written language usage to influence personality laid the basis, Satō reasoned, for the current view of writing held by all Japanese,<sup>65</sup> opening her analysis with a banal yet popular misconception of the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the people of Japan. *Maru moji* usage challenged such links, as it was viewed by Satō as divergent usage of the Japanese writing system; *maru moji* was morally reprehensible because it allowed its users to defy supposed cultural norms and expectations of homogeneity.

Aside from an appeal to Japanese sensibilities, a host of issues were raised by Satō.<sup>66</sup> She contended that *Maru moji* encouraged a lack of grammaticality and *kanji* usage; it was colourful and flowery; its users preferred permanent markers to pencils; spacing between characters and sentences was minimal, inhibiting legibility; the use of unconventional stroke order made characters appeared as if they represented other characters.<sup>67</sup> In relation to the use of *maru moji*, she writes: “[it] casts a problem

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<sup>61</sup> Satō, “*Yurengoku mojikan*,” 38.

<sup>62</sup> Satō, “*Yurengoku mojikan*,” 41.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>64</sup> John Maher and Kyoko Yashiro, “Multilingual Japan: An Introduction,” *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development* 16, nos. 1-2 (1995), 2.

<sup>65</sup> Satō, “*Yurengoku mojikan*.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>67</sup> Two examples given in Satō are “ら” and “5”, and “な” and “よ”.

at this unique Japanese view of writing”.<sup>68</sup> Satō reasoned that teachers should provide their students with guidance (*shido*) and, ultimately, rectify their writing practices, lest *maru moji* usage affect their ability to write Japanese “properly” (which would be a detriment to a student’s ability to appreciate the links between written Japanese and “Japaneseness”). The paternalistic practice of guidance (*shido*) suggested by Satō has also been linked to the perceived benefit of hierarchical student-teacher relationships, encouraged in the Japanese education system, and similarly justified with reference to Japanese uniqueness.<sup>69</sup>

In addition, teachers at the junior high school and senior high school level tended to perceive *maru moji* as an indicator of behavioural problems. For example, a senior high school Japanese language teacher in Nagano attending a local teachers conference in the mid-eighties found himself sympathising with the following advice from a fellow teacher at another regional senior high school: “If a student begins using [*maru moji*], make sure to keep an eye on them. They are sure to have some sort of problem”.<sup>70</sup> The association of behavioural problems with writing practices prompted some educators to monitor students that used *maru moji*. Such educators connected “correct” usage of written Japanese with morality and social cohesion.

As the popularity of *maru moji* gained between 1979 and the mid-eighties, and the number of *maru moji* users reached the millions,<sup>71</sup> senior high schools and junior high schools in Japan began to issue warnings about the use of *maru moji* to their pupils. By the mid-eighties one teacher conjectured that approximately a third of all junior high schools deducted marks from students who used *maru moji*.<sup>72</sup> While there were indications that Ministry of Education officials began to monitor developments in *maru moji* usage, teachers were the main upholders of such measures, and typically administered punishment through the deduction of marks from tests containing *maru moji*.<sup>73</sup> They reasoned that *maru*

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> For more on paternalistic teaching practices, see Shoko Yoneyama, *The Japanese High School: Silence and Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1999), 66-67.

<sup>70</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 138.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 125-128.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Asahi shimbun*, “Ryūkō suru manga moji.”

*moji* was not suitable for everyday use in the classroom and on examinations, and should be restricted to private diaries and notes.<sup>74</sup> Teachers at some schools urged each other to take a harsh stance toward students who used the variant writing system, whilst at the prefectural level teachers from different schools gave each other advice on how to deal with *maru moji* in the classroom.<sup>75</sup>

The punishment employed by educators demonstrated that *maru moji* was unacceptable in junior high schools, senior high schools, junior colleges, and universities, and did not form part of what teachers' understood to be "correct" written Japanese.<sup>76</sup> Since punishment was typically perceived by teachers as a form of guidance, some teachers felt free to impose their own expectations and beliefs on students without taking into consideration the overall value students attached to *maru moji*. A stringent and rigid education system encouraged intolerance and served to bolster conformity among student cohorts through teacher-student guidance. Thus, punishment and penalisation at various levels and in a range of scenarios (in classrooms, on entrance examinations, in essay submissions) typically targeted nonconformity and variance, and in the process avoided passing judgement on practicality and usefulness, one of the driving factors underlying the use of the variant writing system. Straying from "correct" usage of written Japanese at school came with real (as opposed to abstract) consequences that were aimed at mitigating the use of *maru moji* in school and beyond.

Criticism of *maru moji* was not uncommon among educators. For instance, responding to the need for the correction of illegible handwriting, in 1979, teaching staff and assistants at a Heian Junior College for Girls in Kyoto sat down to review and mark entrance examinations (for their college) submitted by two and a half thousand applicants. Some of the submissions were written in *maru moji*. Examiners judged these entrance exams to be difficult to read, and therefore difficult to mark. This led to a professor of Japanese at the junior college persuading the examination board to insert an instruction in future examinations warning that sentences written using *maru moji* would be void and invalid for marking purposes.<sup>77</sup> *Maru moji* was, in the eyes of the Japanese professor, an illegitimate

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<sup>74</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 106.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 111-3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

writing system that was underserving of recognition and toleration because it defied the importance entrance examinations played as a key rite of passage and means of ordering society.

Educators left no room for doubt as to the reasons underlying the penalisation of *maru moji* usage on tests and exams at various levels (junior high school, senior high school, and tertiary). As one junior high school teacher in Chiba Prefecture put it: “this writing is ill-suited for entrance exams”.<sup>78</sup> It was in order to meet students’ (and parents’) aims of achieving satisfactory results on entrance examinations that *maru moji* was circumscribed on in-class tests and examinations. However, ideologies concerning correct and standard script usage also played a role in shaping educators’ attitudes toward *maru moji*. Social expectations of scholastic achievement and educational attainment, coupled with conventional script usage, pressured students to reproduce and recall content that was expected to appear on entrance examinations in a clear and conventional manner – using writing “suited” for entrance examinations. Totalling the greatest number of users of the variant writing system, girls suffered more than their male counterparts because of *maru moji* usage at school.<sup>79</sup>

The punishments imposed on students in classrooms and on examinations across Japan had an immediate effect on the writing produced by students. From 1985 onward, teachers noted a drop in *maru moji* usage on tests after the implementation of measures that penalised students for their use of the variant writing system.<sup>80</sup> However, in many cases the success of such measures was noticeably limited, failing to completely uproot the practice. One teacher reports: “students only stopped writing like this on tests, but not a single student fixed [their handwriting in general]”.<sup>81</sup> The overall futility of punishing students in order to “fix” their writing habits is documented in a number of other accounts by educators,<sup>82</sup> and signals a rigid conceptualisation of conventional written Japanese on the part of educators. The failure to affect any change in girls’ language usage indicates that *maru moji*, as a variant

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> That the Japanese language is gendered is indisputable. Studies focussing on other aspects of gendered language usage have found that language usage among female students has been viewed as subversive since at least the Meiji era. Cf. Nakamura Momoko, “*Gengo ideoriji toshite no ‘onna kotoba’: meiji ki ‘jogakusei kotoba’ no seiritsu* [‘Women’s Language’ as Language Ideology: the Establishment of ‘Schoolgirl Language’ during the Meiji Period]”, in Japanese Language and Gender Association, ed., *Ninbongo to Jyendā* [The Japanese Language and Gender] (Tokyo: Hitsuji Shobō, 2006), 121-38.

<sup>80</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 110-111.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 112-113.

to standard written Japanese, had become embedded as a symbol of girl identity. It also demonstrates that *maru moji* served as a useful tool of communication and knowledge retention for many girls. Thus, *maru moji* was something that few girls were willing to relinquish. As one junior high school teacher said of one of her students: “she wouldn’t try to fix the way she wrote, and complained that ‘you’re from a different generation’”.<sup>83</sup> With the progression of time young female educators also began to use rounded writing on their classroom blackboards, further evidencing the extent to which the variant writing system shaped the writing practices of the youth.<sup>84</sup> The spread of *maru moji* usage from girls to young female teachers sparked controversy and revealed the underlying generational tension over “proper” script usage (as shown in the figure below). It also signalled the generational continuity and transcendence of *maru moji*, which had been in popular use among girls for nearly two decades and was now bridging the divide between girls and adults.

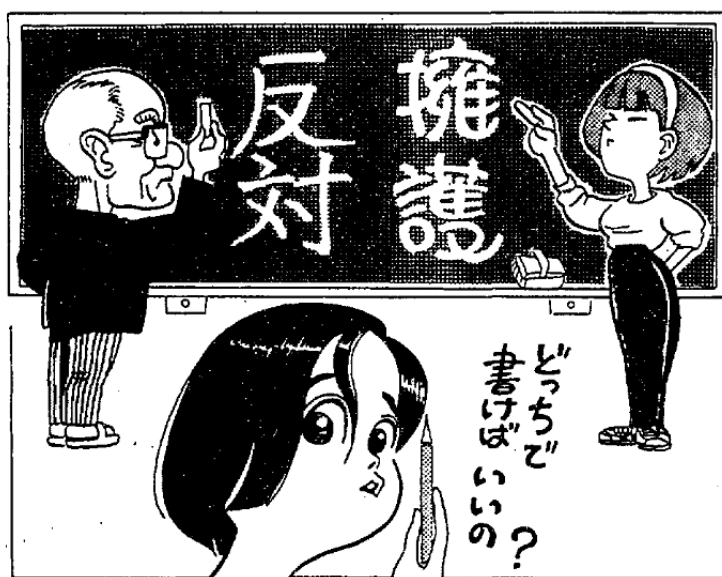


Figure 3. A rebellious young female teacher writing in *maru moji* the *kanji* for “protect [*maru moji* usage]” next to an angry elderly male teacher writing “opposed [to *maru moji*]” on a blackboard. A young female student is shown holding a pencil and asking the reader, “which script should I use?”<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>85</sup> Illustration for the *Asahi shimbun*. *Asahi shimbun*, “Hankyō samazama, sensei ga kaku maru moji” [Varying Reactions to Teachers Writing *Maru moji*], 20 June, 1990.

An autocratic education system guaranteed teachers ultimate (and perhaps the only) authority in whether to allow *maru moji* into the classroom. Certainly, it was for teachers to decide whether to allow unorthodox writing practices on tests and submissions in the classroom. Though research suggests that punishment was somewhat effective in quelling *maru moji* usage on examinations, it did not prevent girls from using *maru moji* among themselves in the classroom.<sup>86</sup> Banning usage within the classroom probably led to greater uptake, as *maru moji* allowed girls to demonstrate defiance through use of the cute variant writing system.

### Future Iterations of Girls' Language

The innovativeness of girls' written language usage was by no means restricted to the *maru moji* phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s. It found new purchase in the *gyaru* "Girl" subculture of the late 1990s and early 2000s that informed much of youth fashion culture during that period.<sup>87</sup> The writing system employed within the *gyaru* subculture was heavily mediated by the proliferation of cellular phone technology, particularly short message services. Word processing software built into Japanese cellular phones was used by *gyaru* to create what Laura Miller terms "girl-graphs".<sup>88</sup> Initially, girl-graphs were highly idiosyncratic and time-consuming to produce, as they mimicked conventional graphs and characters using special symbols and disjointed characters. However, conversion tools were soon created for users of girl-graphs,<sup>89</sup> leading to their spread within Japanese youth subculture. Girl-graphs and other instances of script experimentation (e.g. using emoji for words that would typically be written in conventional Japanese script) demonstrate the vitality of language usage among youth at the grassroots. With the spread of social networking among the youth of Japan, script reform at the grassroots is continuing to produce novel writing practices and script usage among generations of

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<sup>86</sup> Yamane, *Hentai shōjo moji no kenkyū*, 110-111.

<sup>87</sup> See Arai Yūsuke, *Gyaru to gyaru-o no bunka jinrui gaku* [A Cultural Anthropology of *Gyaru* and *Gyaru* Men] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2009) for a cultural anthropological study of Girl youth culture written by a member of the *gyaru* subculture. For youth fashion during the 2000s, see Yuniya Kawamura, *Fashioning Youth Subcultures* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>88</sup> Laura Miller, "Subversive Script and Novel Graphs in Japanese Girls' Culture," *Language & Communication* 31, no. 1 (2011): 16-26.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, see Anonymous, "*Gyaru moji ikkatsu benkan sochi*" [Girl Graph Batch Conversion Device], [http://www.gal-moji.com/moji/gyaru\\_moji.asp](http://www.gal-moji.com/moji/gyaru_moji.asp)

Japanese youth.<sup>90</sup> Various forces beyond the control of officialdom are shaping written Japanese in novel ways.

## Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated how grassroots script reform reshaped written Japanese beyond the realm of official language policy. *Maru moji*, used by girls at junior high schools, senior high schools, and in tertiary education institutions, subverted conventional writing practices and provided a grassroots basis for script reform in the 1970s and 1980s, as it spread to various segments of society (celebrity personalities, popular visual culture, the mass media, and young teachers) from the Japanese youth. Girls' identification with and consumption of cute culture emerged alongside *maru moji*, a novel aesthetic that reinforced the popularity of *maru moji* usage. The perception of *maru moji* as cute and functional motivated several generations of girls to adopt *maru moji* at various levels of the education system.

I have shown how *maru moji*, as a variant writing system, is practical as well as symbolic – an epitome of cute culture that proved useful and economical, within the education system and beyond. Users of *maru moji* tended to save time writing and recording notes using *maru moji*, due to the fewer strokes required to write *kana* and the less frequent use of *kanji*. A tendency to replace scripts with *hiragana* improved the speed at which handwritten text could be produced. Simultaneously, *maru moji* made the written form of Japanese more accessible to girls through its closer representation of spoken Japanese. Girls appreciated and utilised the benefits offered by this variant writing system and saw a close connection between their identities and the cultural ideals of cuteness and fragility that *maru moji* embodied.

Educators usually assumed an overly negative attitude toward the variant writing system, at least in the eyes of girls that made use of *maru moji*. They penalised and punished girls for using *maru moji* by deducting marks from the tests and examinations of students who completed assessments using the

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<sup>90</sup> Dentsu, “*Wakamono ga yoku tsukau SNS no torendo wa moji kara bijyuaru e*” [Trends in SNS used by the Youth will Result in a Shift from Script to Visual Communication], <https://dentsu-ho.com/articles/3542>

variant writing system. In some cases, colleges issued formal written instructions on assessments warning against the use of the variant writing system. In other cases, *maru moji* was perceived as an indicator of behavioural problems or a generational breakdown in communication. This points to the existence of a generational gap in language usage and attitudes toward language reform and written language, between students and their teachers. The youth were able to experiment with written Japanese in ways that many teachers could not understand, at a time when educators tended to be less supportive of unorthodox written language usage due to the pressures of a meritocratic education system.

Thus, *maru moji* functioned as a viable alternative to conventionally written Japanese from the mid-seventies until at least the late 1980s. The way in which its widespread usage altered written Japanese was neither informed by top-down policy decisions nor considered by official language policy makers. It was fundamentally a grassroots case of girls adapting a script to suit their own needs and desires. For the reasons given above, girls were overall unwilling to relinquish control over the script and resisted punishment by educators for using what they deemed to be a viable alternative to standard written Japanese – a script that belonged to them. This led to future iterations of script reform among the Japanese youth. The shift in language ownership through grassroots script reform, among the youth and other groups in society, was to become increasingly reliant on the spread of Japanese word processing technologies (which forms the focus of the following chapter).

## Chapter 6: The Spread of Japanese Word Processing Technologies

This chapter demonstrates how Japanese word processing technologies affected Japanese script reform and writing practices, as well as the primacy of the NLC as a language policy formulator. Akin to *maru moji* usage among girls (see previous chapter), technology is viewed as a force that shaped written Japanese outside of the NLC. The chapter investigates the significance of Japanese word processing and personal computing for script reform within the context of the prolific spread of information technology in the public and private spheres of Japanese society during the 1980s and 1990s. It documents perspectives on Japanese word processing and script maintained by established linguists within the NLC, in addition to examining the views of computer scientists, Romanisation advocates, and parents of school-going children. In this chapter word processing is defined as the “electronic production, storage, and manipulation of text”.<sup>1</sup> Word processing technologies are defined more broadly as techniques or devices that facilitate production, storage and manipulation of text in electronic and analogue form.

Japanese newspapers carried the voices of many worried about the way in which computers may affect language usage. For example, a mother of a junior-high school student submitted a short article decrying the disconnection between mind (*kokoro*) and hand (penmanship) that occurs when word processors are used to create documents in schools and at home.<sup>2</sup> In the same article the mother also complains about incorrect *kanji* used by teachers who use word processors to type classroom notifications. The author of the article argues that problems can be resolved if children and teachers reconsider the importance of learning how to write by hand. The mother views learning how to write by hand, through calligraphy lessons, as a learning experience that encompasses not only the learning of *kanji* but also cultural etiquette.<sup>3</sup> Fears, as well as excitement, concerning the spread of the Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, n. “word processing”.

<sup>2</sup> Yamaguchi Eiko, “*Wāpuro jidai: Ki ni naru ‘kokoro’*” [The Age of the Word Processor: Worrying about One’s Mind] *Asahi shimbun*, 12 December, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

word processor regularly appeared in mainstream Japanese media, as Japanese word processing technologies spread throughout Japanese society.

## **A Short History of Word Processing Technologies in Japan**

Word processing technologies have a relatively long history in modern Japan, starting with the development and application of shorthand in the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The development of shorthand was followed by the invention of typewriters designed for the reproduction of mixed-script Japanese in the early twentieth century, though these were bulkier and heavier than Western counterparts due to the large amount of movable type (approximately 2,450 pieces) and components required to assemble them.<sup>5</sup> The weight of Japanese typewriters made them inefficient for everyday document creation and text production in Japan, except for among individuals who had been specially trained to use such typewriters at large firms and government ministries.<sup>6</sup> Until the advent of electronic Japanese word processors, mechanical typewriting, particularly in the publication industry, only occurred after handwritten documents had been proofread and edited, with corrections typically added by hand.

During the 1960s and 1970s Japanese public universities played a large role in researching language input methods and computation, beginning with the University of Tokyo Information Science Research Facility in 1960.<sup>7</sup> Such facilities conducted research into input methods and coding for keyboards and a variety of computer applications that aimed to facilitate and streamline the production of conventional mixed-script Japanese on computers. Subsequently, the commercialisation of applications enabling the input of conventional mixed-script Japanese on computers was led by Japanese electronics firm Toshiba in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> The spread of Japanese word processing technologies through machines such as the Toshiba JW-10 impacted the established custom of producing

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<sup>4</sup> Seth Jacobowitz, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan: A Media History of Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Nishoka Tsuneo, “*Genjō tenbō: Wabun taipuraitā*” [The *Wabun* Typewriter: An Overview of its Present State], *Jōbō Kanri* 18, no. 6 (1975), 450.

<sup>6</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, “Technology and Language Policy: Word Processing in Japan,” *Asian Studies Review* 18, no. 3 (1995), 58.

<sup>7</sup> University of Tokyo Information Science and Engineering Research School, “About Department of Information Sciences” <http://www.is.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp/about/history.html>

<sup>8</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, *Word Processing Technology in Japan: Kanji and the Keyboard* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 44.

documents for communication and data storage by hand, in both the public and private sectors of the economy,<sup>9</sup> and led to novel forms of experimentation with the Japanese script.<sup>10</sup> The first wave of personal computing in Japan stimulated further research and investment into mixed-script Japanese input methods, character coding and retrieval, and electronic dictionary compilation, as well as memory. The expansion of word processing and personal computing markets accelerated in Japan through the 1980s and into the 1990s, by which time over fifty percent of Japanese households possessed a word processor or personal computer.<sup>11</sup>

The creation and subsequent spread of personal computing in the 1970s and 1980s destabilised writing practices in many parts of the world.<sup>12</sup> As the personal computer found its way into the offices, classrooms, and households, it became a “new and independent technology of literacy” allowing individuals to rework text and remould writing systems in novel ways.<sup>13</sup> In Japan the advent of Japanese word processors in the 1970s, and the word processing technologies that would eventually find their way into personal computers, had a similarly significant effect on the production of written documents and written Japanese.<sup>14</sup> This challenged the conventionality of written Japanese, unleashing new opportunities to experiment with the Japanese writing system.

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<sup>9</sup> Mori Kenichi, one of the leading developers of Japanese word processing technologies for Toshiba, claims that “manual handling of business documents consumed nearly half the time of all workers” prior to the dissemination of Japanese word processing technologies. Cf. Mori Kenichi and Kawada Tsutomu, “From Kana to Kanji: Word Processing in Japan,” *IEEE Spectrum* 27, no. 8 (1990), 46.

<sup>10</sup> An article in the *Mainichi shimbun* in 1991 noted how users of Japanese word processors were “disassembling” (*bunkai*) *kanji* used in written communication. Cf. *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Nibongo wa doko e*] *shin kokugoshin no kadai*/ 4 *denshi moji kanji bunkai, e mo tsuke*” [[Where to from here for the Japanese Language?] Issues for the New National Language Council/ 4 Electronic Script, Disassembled *Kanji*, and Pictures], 26 October, 1991, 26.

<sup>11</sup> The penetration of word processing technology grew even further with the spread of internet-enabled cellular telephony (which also made use of Japanese word processing technologies) in the late 1990s. Cf. Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, “*Heisei 13 nen ‘tsūshin riyō dokō chōsa’ kekka*” [Results of 2001 “Survey of Trends in Communications Usage”], 21 May, 2002, [http://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/statistics/data/020521\\_1.pdf](http://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/statistics/data/020521_1.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Jay David Bolter, “Beyond Word Processing: The Computer as a New Writing Space,” *Language and Communication* 9, nos. 2-3 (1989): 129-142; Ross Knox Bassett, “Aligning India in the Cold War Era: Indian Technical Elites, the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur, and Computing in India and the United States,” *Technology and Culture* 50, no. 4 (2009): 783-810.

<sup>13</sup> Gary W Dickson and Mal Nechis, “Key Information Systems Issues for the 1980’s,” *MIS Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1984): 135-159; Gail E Hawisher, Sibylle Gruber and Margaret F Sweany, *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education, 1979-1994: A History* (Norwood: Ablex Pub, 1996); William H. Dutton, Rogers Everett, and Suk-ho Jun, “Diffusion and Social Impacts of Personal Computers,” *Communication Research* 14, no. 2, (1987): 219-250; Jay David Bolter, “Beyond Word Processing,” 129.

<sup>14</sup> Gerard O’Regan, *Introduction to the History of Computing: A Computing History Primer* (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 127-141.

From the early 1980s a shift from typewriters to word processors and personal computers took place in large Japanese firms as word processing devices became more affordable and readily available.<sup>15</sup> This shift, in office and personal computing, equated to an increasing reliance on processing power and functionality for the everyday storage and reproduction of written Japanese and communication. New word processing technologies also made further script reform possible, through the creation of novel character sets and experimentation with written Japanese (discussed in the sections below). The following table contains an overview of the various word processing technologies utilised in modern and contemporary Japan since the emergence of Japanese shorthand.

Table 3. Word processing technologies in modern Japan

Word Processing Technology	Date of Invention	Uses and Issues
Shorthand writing ( <i>sokkita</i> )	Late nineteenth century	Dictation and the simultaneous recording of speeches and addresses in abbreviated form. Issue: required specialist training
<i>Wabun</i> Japanese typewriter	1915 (Sugimoto Kyōta <sup>16</sup> )	Typing documents in mixed-script. Issue: time consumption and portability
<i>Katakana</i> typewriter	1923 <sup>17</sup>	Billing machines. Issue: shift to hiragana-kanji dominant script in postwar period

<sup>15</sup> *Asahi shinbun*, “*Wabun taipu kentei, wāpuro to shinkyū kōtai*” [In with Word Processor and Out with *Wabun* Typewriter Certifications], 21 May 1989

<sup>16</sup> Gottlieb, *Word Processing Technology in Japan*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

Shorthand Typewriter	Early postwar period	Used by stenographers in courts. <sup>18</sup> Issue: required specialist training to type and read
Teletype	Early postwar period	Used by government agencies, publishing houses. Issue: required specialist training
<i>Hiragana</i> typewriter	1962	Typing documents. Issue: did not type conventional mixed-script Japanese text
<i>Kana-kana</i> typewriter	1973 (Umesao Tadao)	Vertical typing of documents in <i>hiragana</i> , <i>katana</i> , and the alphabet. Issue: production halted by Brother due to Oil Crisis of 1973
Japanese word processor	1978	Electronically processes information and language in mixed-script Japanese. Issue: encouraged overuse of <i>kanji</i> and use of complex characters

We can see from table three that a wide range of word processing technologies were borrowed and created to deal with document production in modern Japan. For example, a variety of typewriters

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<sup>18</sup> Japan Stenography Association, “*Saiban in seido to soken roku*” [The Lay Judge System and Shorthand Records], <http://www.sokki.or.jp/column/jury/>

(the *wabun*, *katakana*, and *hiragana*) were in use in Japan throughout the early to mid-twentieth century. In many cases, *kana* and Romanised Japanese typewriters accelerated and simplified document production, though the documents they produced were widely unsuited to mass distribution due to the absence of *kanji* in outputted text.<sup>19</sup> The spread of the *wabun* Japanese typewriter, on the other hand, was hampered by the sheer number of movable type required for its operation. Though the typing speed of *wabun* Japanese typewriters increased during the decades following its invention, the amount of type it utilised made it especially heavy. For example, a *wabun* Japanese typewriter such as the Nikkei OMC-335M (released in 1976) weighed approximately thirty kilograms, whereas the Adler Tippa 1 typewriter (a Latin script typewriter manufactured circa 1967) weighed approximately five kilograms. Furthermore, differences in typewriter dimension affected portability, with the *wabun* typewriter being invariably larger and wider than standard QWERTY-keyboard typewriters, further hindering the spread of *wabun* typewriters in Japan.<sup>20</sup>

The advent of the Toshiba JW-10 word processor in 1978 vastly improved the efficiency of textual input in mixed-script Japanese. It also facilitated script reform through technological change, due to the character set it used (described below). The electronically processed input method for Japanese on the JW-10 made it possible to produce and store documents containing mixed-script (conventional) Japanese on computers. The input method used in the Toshiba JW-10 was referred to as *kana kanji* conversion (仮名漢字変換), due to its capability to convert *kana* input to *kanji*. The JW-10 word processor contained 6,802 characters, drawn from the Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) C6226 character set,<sup>21</sup> a collection of encoded scripts and symbols published in 1978 by the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee, a “national standardisation body” that develops standards “covering a wide range of products and technologies from robots to pictograms”.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Gottlieb, *Word Processing Technology*, 26-32.

<sup>20</sup> Only after input methods on electronic Japanese word processors were developed did mixed-script Japanese textual production become feasible on electronic devices.

<sup>21</sup> Amano Shinya and Mori Kenichi, “*Kanji nibongo shori gijutsu no batten: Nibongo wado prosessa no tanjō to sono rekishi*” [The Development of *Kanji* and Japanese Language Processing Technologies: The Birth and History of the Japanese Word Processor], *IPSJ Magazine* 43, 11(2002), 1219.

<sup>22</sup> Japanese Industrial Standards Committee, “Our Roles,” [http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jisc/index\\_e.html](http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jisc/index_e.html)

The Japanese Industrial Standards Committee took an early interest in Japanese word processing technologies and character input methods, including the codification of *kanji* for word processing technologies, allowing it to influence *kanji* usage and script conventions. The development of character sets allowed the JIS Committee to assume control over *kanji* usage, which impacted the role of the NLC as a language policy formulator, and function as a de facto script reform body. The JIS C6226 character set developed by the JIS Committee contained a significant number of *kanji* (over three times the number contained in the NLC's *Tōyō Kanji* Set List), in addition to numerals, Latin script, *hiragana*, *katakana*, Cyrillic, and box drawing parts.<sup>23</sup> This, and future character sets the JIS Committee developed, allowed it to indirectly control what *kanji* word processor users used when typing documents.

The creation of the C6226 character set took four years, and was overseen by two survey and research committees: the *Kanji* Code Standardisation Survey and Research Committee, which lasted from 1974 to 1976, and the Japanese Industrial Standards Survey Committee, which formed in 1976 and lasted until 1978.<sup>24</sup> Both committees were headed by Moriguchi Shigeichi 森口繁一 (1916-2002), an University of Tokyo academic who taught aeronautical engineering.<sup>25</sup> Of a total of sixty-one individuals involved in these research and survey committees, only one was an established linguist: Hayashi Ōki (an NLC member whose views on written Japanese and Chinese script reform are detailed in chapter three).<sup>26</sup> The remainder of the individuals responsible for compiling the JIS C6226 character set were academics and researchers in information processing, machine translation, electrical engineering, and mathematics, such as Sakai Toshiyuki 坂井利之 (1924-2017), Motooka Tōru 本岡達

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<sup>23</sup> Jack Huang and Timothy Huang, *An Introduction to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Computing* (Singapore: World Scientific, 1989), 188. The JIS C6226 contained 6,353 *kanji*, split into two “levels” (Level 1 and Level 2 *Kanji* Characters) determined by the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee.

<sup>24</sup> Yasuoka Kōichi, “JIS *kanji* an to JIS C 6226-1978 no idō” [Discrepancies in the JIS *Kanji* Proposal and JIS C 6226-1978], *Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Research Seminar of the Computer Applications in Oriental Studies*, University of Kyoto, 24 March 2006, 3; Tokutaro Takahashi, “A Proposal for a Standardized Common Use Character Set in East Asian Countries,” *Journal of East Asian Libraries* 63 (1980), 50; Shōjirō Maruyama, “Japanese Bibliographic Information – its Control and Standardisation,” *The Electronic Library* 5, no. 1 (1987), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Information Processing Society of Japan, “*Nihon no konpyūatā pionia – Moriguchi Shigeichi*” [Japan’s Computer Pioneers – Moriguchi Shigeichi], <http://museum.ipsj.or.jp/pioneer/morigu.html>

<sup>26</sup> Yasuoka, “JIS *kanji* an to JIS C 6226-1978 no idō,” 3.

(1929-1985), and Okamoto Eiichi 岡本栄一 (1929-2001).<sup>27</sup> While the character set they compiled included *kanji* found in the core *kanji* set lists compiled by the NLC (such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List), it also contained several thousand *kanji* not found in NLC *kanji* set lists.<sup>28</sup> Though JW-10 word processor users, for instance, typically input text in *kana*, many Japanese word processors were equipped with *rōmaji-to-kanji* conversion capabilities, a feature that became popular among word processor users approximately a decade later and had policy implications for the NLC.<sup>29</sup> A variety of methods for typing Japanese existed, the most common of which are listed below.

Table 4. A typology of typing methods, adapted from Yamada Hisao<sup>30</sup>

Characterisation	Category
Full Display ( <i>wabun</i> typewriters and <i>kanji</i> teletype)	One-to-one (sight typing)
	Multishift
Coded Input	Stenographic
<i>Kana kanji</i> Conversion (word processors)	Word group segmentation
	<i>Kanji</i> designation
	Homophone display-select

Table four shows the range of input methods available by the early 1980s. While a significant range of input methods were available to users of Japanese word processing technologies, the problem for word processor developers hinged on electronic dictionary creation (lexicography), syntax, hardware compatibility, overall size, and cost had to be overcome before word processing technologies could succeed.<sup>31</sup> The JW-10 resolved these issues in an innovative and cost-effective manner, by compiling, reediting, and integrating dictionaries in an electronic format. Much of the linguistic information stored

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. For a profile of Motooka Tōru, cf. Information Processing Society of Japan, “*Nihon no konpyūata pionia – Motooka Tōru*” [Japan’s Computer Pioneers – Motooka Tōru], <http://museum.ipsj.or.jp/pioneer/motoo.html>

<sup>28</sup> Yasuoka, “JIS *kanji an to JIS C 6226-1978 no ido*,” 20; Christopher Seeley, “The Japanese Script and Computers: The JIS Character Codes and their Periphery,” *Japan Forum* 6, no. 1 (1994), 90-91.

<sup>29</sup> Miwako Doi and Haito Lei, “STARS: Word Processing for the Japanese Language,” *Proceedings of the IEEE* 102, no. 2 (2014): 222-228. For a comprehensive list of the specifications of the JW-10, cf. Information Processing Society of Japan, “Toshiba JW-10,” <http://museum.ipsj.or.jp/en/computer/word/0049.html>

<sup>30</sup> Yamada Hisao, “Certain Problems associated with the Design of Input Keyboards for Japanese Writing,” in *Cognitive Aspects of Skilled Typing*, ed. William E. Cooper (New York: Springer, 1983), 316.

<sup>31</sup> Amano Shinya and Mori Kenichi, “*Kanji nihongo shori gijutsu no batten*.”

in its dictionaries utilised morphological analysis and statistical linguistics,<sup>32</sup> which at the time was relatively novel in the construction of word processing technologies. The novel specifications of the JW-10 became a model for many of the word processing technologies developed by Japanese electronics manufacturers in the 1980s, which aided with greater experimentation with the Japanese writing system.<sup>33</sup>

The various input and typing methods developed by computer scientists in Japan allowed individuals to electronically produce mixed-script documents in written forms that were widely suited to general print and publication. While early input methods such as the *kanji* teletype (see table 3) required specialist knowledge and training,<sup>34</sup> the conversion of input text in Romanised Japanese or *kana* to mixed-script text was a sensational success among businesses and in households in the 1980s because of its relative ease-of-use and increasing affordability. As the market for word processing technologies expanded,<sup>35</sup> numerous developmental breakthroughs established the Japanese word processor as a viable alternative to typewriting and handwriting. One key factor aiding the spread of word processing technologies was the promotion of word processors by government agencies and private businesses in the early 1980s.<sup>36</sup>

Table 5. Early Word Processing Devices. Table partially adapted from the “Japanese Word Processors” segment of the Information Processing Society of Japan website<sup>37</sup>

Word Processor Model	Date of Release	Features and Pricing
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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 1218.

<sup>33</sup> The Japanese word processors of the 1980s and first half of the 1990s were dedicated electronic devices, functionally similar to an electronic typewriter fitted with a digital screen. Most marketed word processors facilitated type-to-print functionality, used line editing, and were sold with a printer.

<sup>34</sup> Tajima Kazuo, trans. Toyama Ryoko, Alan Tucker and Barbara O'Neill, "Kanji Information Processing Systems: The Design and Manipulation of a Kanji Character Set," *Journal of East Asian Libraries* 64 (1981): 18.

<sup>35</sup> By 1990, over a quarter of Japanese households possessed a Japanese word processor. Cf. Doi and Lei, “STARS: Word Processing for the Japanese Language,” 227.

<sup>36</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Beyond Computopia: Information, Automation, and Democracy in Japan* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1988).

<sup>37</sup> Information Processing Society of Japan, “Historical Computers in Japan: Japanese Word Processors,” accessed 2 Feb 2017, <http://museum.ipsj.or.jp/en/computer/word/index.html>

Toshiba JW-10	September 1978	Kana-kanji input method, <i>kana</i> keyboard, printer, price: ¥6,300,000
Sharp WD-3000	September 1979	Tablet word processor (stylus operated), price: ¥2,950,000
Sharp WD-1000	January 1981	Portable tablet word processor, price: ¥1,198,000
NEC PW-10	March 1984	Desktop style word processor utilising M system keyboard, price: ¥252,000
Fujitsu OASYS 30LX	March 1989	Portable laptop word processor with LCD display, price: unknown
Toshiba Rupo JWR1	September 1993	Portable laptop word processor with interactive and illustrative user interface, price: ¥148,000
Hitachi with me BF-220	February 1995	Laptop word processor with colour LCD display and colour ink jet printer compatible, price: ¥45,360

A remarkable number of individuals began using word processors during the 1980s. Statistical data gathered during the 1980s and 1990s indicate a significant rise in word processor device sales in the 1980s, with a total of ten million word processors sold by 1989.<sup>38</sup> (This equated to one word

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<sup>38</sup> Information Processing Society of Japan, “Brief History [of Japanese Word Processors],” accessed 1 November 2017, <http://museum.ipsj.or.jp/en/computer/word/history.html>

processor per ten people in Japan.<sup>39)</sup> The cost of Japanese word processors decreased significantly, partly due to decreases in semiconductor prices during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>40)</sup> Simultaneously, technological diversification, increased functionality, and miniaturisation occurred, with many companies and government bodies, as well as households making use of word processors (*wāpuro*), office computers (*ofukon*), and personal computers (*pasokon*) to write.<sup>41)</sup> The widespread use of word processors throughout Japanese society reshaped the relationship between Japanese individuals and the Japanese writing system, as the engrained custom of handwriting was made partially redundant by emerging word processing technologies.

With the spread of Japanese word processing devices, ways of speaking about word processing technology also changed. For instance, the phrase “the age of the word processor” regularly featured in mainstream media and publications during this period.<sup>42)</sup> Similarly, many within Japanese society began referring to themselves (and others) as “word processor people” (*wāpuro ningen*) that regularly depended on word processors for their daily writing.<sup>43)</sup> (These terms feature in the analyses below.) However, discussion of the ramifications of word processing technologies for language policy and usage were not discussed within the NLC until the early 1990s,<sup>44)</sup> long after the uptake of word processors disturbed the conventions of the contemporary Japanese writing system.

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<sup>39)</sup> The number of word processor users increased into the mid-nineties. For instance, the 1998 Information Communications Whitepaper by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications found that fifty percent of households were using word processors in 1997. Cf. Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, “*Sūchi de miru katei no jōhōka*” [The Informatising of Households viewed through Numbers],

<http://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsushintokei/whitepaper/ja/h10/html/98wp1-1-2.html>

<sup>40)</sup> Ōmichi Yasunori, “*Kokusaika, gijutsu kaikaku o rido suru denki denshi sangyō*” [The Electrical/ Electronics Industry will continue to Take the Lead in Globalization and Technological Innovation], *Sangyō gakkai kenkyū nenpō* 10 (1995), 51.

<sup>41)</sup> Yamamoto Naozo, “The Revolution of Office by Information Technology,” *Keiei Kenkyū* 16, no. 1 (2002), 21. Of the three Japanese terms above, *pasokon* (personal computer) and *wāpuro* (word processor) continued to be used today.

<sup>42)</sup> Nakada Kōji, *Wāpuro jidai o yomu: Kaku insatsu no sekai* [Reading the Age of the Word Processor: The World of the Expanding Print] (Tokyo: Insatsu Gakkai, 1984); Noto Seishi, *Wāpuro jidai no bunshō sakubō* [Composition Methods in the Age of the Word Processor] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1987); Gendai Gengo Kenkyū Kai, *Wāpuro jidai no onaji yomi de imi no chigau kotoba no jiten* [A Dictionary of Homophonous Words with Different Meanings for the Age of the Word Processor] (Tokyo: Asutoro, 1994).

<sup>43)</sup> Yamaguchi, “*Wāpuro jidai: Ki ni naru ‘kokoro’*”.

<sup>44)</sup> The NLC’s discussions concerning word processing technologies are touched on in the following sections.

## The Information Society and its Effects on Script Reform

Advancements made in computing in the 1980s and early 1990s need to be discussed with reference to the information society (*jōhō shakai*), which denoted a shift away from industry to knowledge-intensive forms of economic activity and output in Japan.<sup>45</sup> This is because the information society was to have such wide-reaching effect on government and private sector activities that it was inevitably incorporated, in the early 1990s, in the language policy agendas of the NLC.<sup>46</sup> The information society signified a greater reliance on the storage and dissemination of written information for economic gain. Such dependence necessitated the use of Japanese word processing technologies in various segments of the Japanese economy. Other important, though less significant, developments included the emergence of “internationalisation” as a discourse promoted by the Japanese government, namely the Nakasone Cabinet, in the early 1980s.<sup>47</sup> Established linguists soon began to take up the role of mediators of the information society and internationalisation to the masses. They regularly discussed the impact that the information society and internationalisation of the Japanese language may have on the general population in Japan.<sup>48</sup> The examples they give include the effects of word processing technologies on language proficiency (discussed below).

The terms information age and information society began to feature regularly in the *Asahi shinbun* from 1983-1984, with the latter (“information society”) becoming something of a buzz word in 1984.<sup>49</sup> The place of the concept in the public imagination in Japan during the 1980s can be ascertained through a simple comparison of the occurrence of the term “information society” in the *Asahi shinbun* and *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*. Between the years 1988 and 1993, *The Daily Telegraph*

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<sup>45</sup> The term information society is closely linked to the anthropologist Umesao Tadao’s notion of the “information age” (mentioned in chapter four of this thesis).

<sup>46</sup> For instance, the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the NLC included “internationalisation and the language awareness (*gengo ishiki*) of the Japanese” on the agenda of its first meeting on 12 April 1994. See ACA, “*Dai 2 iinkai*” [Second Subcommittee], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/20/bukai03/01.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/20/bukai03/01.html)

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Eds. Glenn D. Hook and Michael A. Weiner, *The Internationalization of Japan* (London: Routledge, 1992); eds. Hiroshi Mannari and Harumi Bifu, *The Challenge of Japan’s Internationalization: Organization and Culture* (Nishinomiya: Kwansei Gakuin University, 1983).

<sup>48</sup> Kabashima Tadao, *Nihongo no 21-seiki: nihongo wa dō kawaru ka* [The Japanese Language in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: How will Japanese Change?] (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1983).

<sup>49</sup> Though both “information age” and “information society” first appear in 1969 in the *Asahi shinbun*, they begin to regularly feature in newspaper articles in the early 1980s.

and *The Sunday Telegraph* newspapers carried one-hundred and nineteen pieces featuring the term “information society”, whereas the *Asahi shimbun* published some five-hundred and ninety-two pieces mentioning the same subject over the same period.

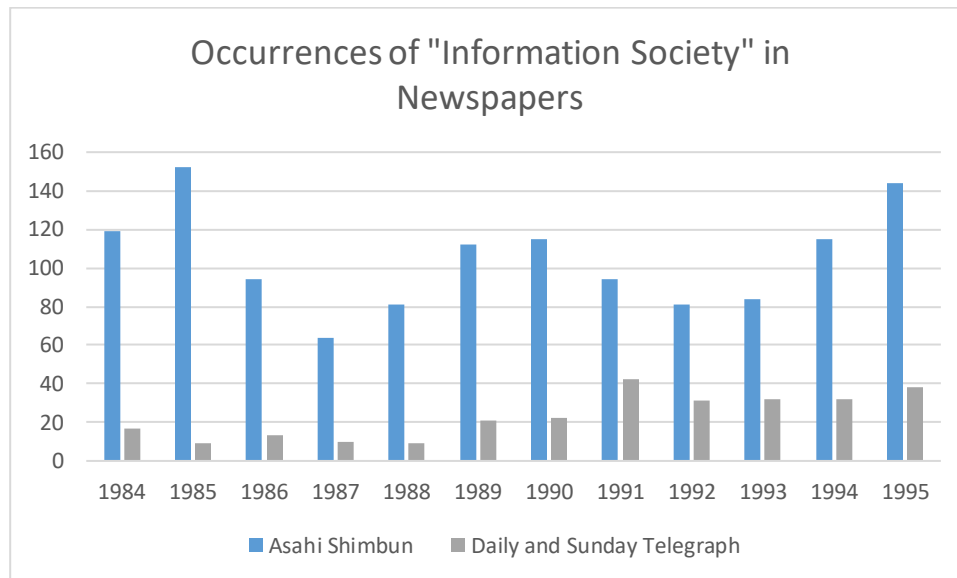


Figure 2. Tracing the instances of the usage of the term “information society” in the *Asahi shimbun* and *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*.

Whilst access to increasing amounts of information was viewed as a benefit in the majority of articles, by the mid-eighties information overload was recognized as a problem facing Japanese society.<sup>50</sup> The early 1980s was a period in which the Japanese media spoke of the arrival of the rapid information society (*kōdo jōhō shakai*),<sup>51</sup> and language policy makers in the NLC belatedly perceived challenges to the Japanese writing system with the spread of word processing technologies and personal computing. The term rapid information society is an adequate indicator of the social climate in Japan and other developed nations during the late 1980s, which were increasingly characterised by their reliance on and utilisation of information technology. Though current scholars call into question the

<sup>50</sup> See the “Trends in Information Distribution [*Jōhō ryūtsū no dōkō*],” Chapter 2, Section 1 in the 1984 Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications White Paper; *Asahi shimbun*, *Jōhō sentaku no jidai ni: tsūshin bakusho ga shiteki, denwa ya fakushimire riyō kyūzō* [The age of information selection: Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications White Paper Indicates Sharp Increase in Telephone and Facsimile Usage], 30 November 1984; *Asahi shimbun*, *Jōhō tarenagashi jōtai, “shōbi” wa 6% dake: tsūshin bakusho shiteki* [State of Information Overflow, “Consumption” at 6% Indicates Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications White Paper], 29 November 1985.

<sup>51</sup> The Japanese term for rapid information society is *kōdo jōhō shakai*.

existence of an information society,<sup>52</sup> the emergence of readily available information technology devices and the subsequent spread of such devices throughout workplaces, schools, and homes evidence a shift in the economic output and educational methodologies of many developed societies.<sup>53</sup>

Ideas held about the “informatising” (*jōhōka*) of Japanese society can provide us with a glimpse of what expectations were in place with regards the Japanese writing system in the 1980s. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, who researched the social implications of Japanese computing during the period, lists the following ideas concerning informatisation:

1. In the information society, the application of computer technology to production, office work, commerce, and banking will lead to the rapid automation of many areas of work;
2. The development of computer-based automation is inseparable from the development of communications networks. Just as human thought would have little function without the human capacity to communicate thought through speech, so the automation of certain mental functions requires the creation of means by which computer[s] can communicate, both with computer and with human user;
3. New communications technolog[ies] will open up new ways of performing work and enjoying leisure;
4. Information-producing industries such as the software industry and mass media will become more important...<sup>54</sup>

These optimistic ideas, which were also discussed in North America and the United Kingdom,<sup>55</sup> were reflected, for example, in media reports of the “paperless movement” and the establishment of

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<sup>52</sup> See Frank Webster, *Theories of the Information Society, fourth edition* (London: Routledge, 2014). One can contend that societies have since time immemorial been heavily reliant on a steady flow of information for political, economic, and social viability.

<sup>53</sup> William J. Martin, *The Information Society* (London: Aslib, 1988), 37.

<sup>54</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *Beyond Computopia*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Robin Mansell, “Information and Communications Technology for Development: Assessing the Potential and the Risks,” *Telecommunications Policy* 23, no. 1 (1997): 35-50.

computer networks within firms.<sup>56</sup> Increasing reliance on word processing technology and input methods decreased the need for individuals to handwrite Japanese at the office, which equated to an increase in efficiency due to the storability and communicability of digitised information and time saved producing and editing text. Equally importantly, the input methods in use did relatively little to reinforce memorisation and recall of *kanji* stroke order and shorthand. With the penetration of the word processor into schools and middle-class households, teachers, children and parents depended increasingly on the word processor for the writing of documents. This gave rise to moral panic over the decline in handwriting skills and *kanji* recall (as illustrated at the start of the chapter).<sup>57</sup>

At the heart of the information society was the digitisation of language, driven by the development of increasingly complex word processing technologies and a rising demand for word processing skills.<sup>58</sup> This was wedded to the subsequent internationalisation of the Japanese language (and culture),<sup>59</sup> which followed from the Nakasone Cabinet's envisioned spread of Japanese industries and practices outside of Japan proper.<sup>60</sup> The rate at which new word processors and software were being developed during this period in Japan helped internationalise the Japanese language, giving access to teaching and learning tools that could be used for the acquisition of written Japanese overseas. Word processors also facilitated Japanese language learning by stimulating interest in *kanji* in novel ways: the creation of portable electronic Japanese dictionaries.<sup>61</sup>

The perceived arrival of the information age and emergence of the information society was not solely a Japanese phenomenon. As visions of the effects of computerisation began to circulate, usage of

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<sup>56</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Tōkyō denryoku, shōryoku no jikken ofisu sechi” [Tokyo Electric Power Company Establishes an Experimental Labour-saving Office], 26 February, 1987; *Asahi shimbun*, “Dejitaru tsūshin yatto bassoku, ISDN sabisu jitsuyōka” [Digital Communications due to Start with Materialisation of ISDN Services], 19 March 1988.

<sup>57</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “(be between) ‘kanji wa kanjin’ to jikken” [(be between) Realisation that “*kanji* is Essential”], 7 February, 2009.

<sup>58</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Wabun taipu kentei, wapuro to shinkyū kota”.

<sup>59</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “Gaijin ni nihongo o oshieru hitotachi no hatsu no kentei shiken ni 4700 nin ga chosen” [4700 People Attempt the First Qualification Examination for People Teaching Japanese to Foreigners], 1 February, 1988; *Mainichi shimbun*, “Hirogaru nihongo gakushū netsu” [Spreading Fever for Japanese Language Learning], 30 July, 1992.

<sup>60</sup> This entailed an increased focus on the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language and the reshaping of Japanese vocabulary and expressions used on the international stage. A succinct explanation of these ideals can be found in *Gendai no kokugo o meguru sho mondai ni tsuite (shingi keika hokoku)* [Regarding Problems Faced by the Contemporary National Language (Council Mid-term Report)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/19/tosin01/11.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/19/tosin01/11.html)

<sup>61</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Seikō denshi kōgyō ga deta no ooi denshi jisho” [Seiko Electronics Creates Electronic Dictionary with Plenty of Data], 9 November, 1990.

the terms in the English language increased dramatically from 1980 onward, peaking between 1986-1988 and once again in the early 2000s.<sup>62</sup> One English-language journal launched during the period, *The Information Society*, spoke of the technological revolution the silicon chip would bring whilst also warning of the dangers of increasing flows of information across internationally recognised borders.<sup>63</sup> In Japan the early 1980s saw heated competition by companies seeking to dominate retail sales in the market for Japanese word processors, with large firms such as the Nippon Electric Company and Fujitsu announcing the release of their word processors only a day apart from each another.<sup>64</sup> Competition was matched by a need to protect the linguistic heritage and culture of Japanese,<sup>65</sup> which scholars and policy makers, as well as everyday individuals working outside these fields, began to debate in relation to the effects of widespread word processing technologies on writing habits and practices. These debates, which the NLC eventually viewed as necessary due to perceived negative effects of word processing, are covered in the following section.

## Does Technology Affect Language Usage? Tracing Attitudes in Japanese Broadsheet Newspapers

One of the key concerns of language enthusiasts and researchers during the rapid spread of Japanese word processing technologies was the erosion or dilution of written language conventions among future generation of Japanese language users.<sup>66</sup> A search through mainstream Japanese newspapers

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<sup>62</sup> Google N-gram Viewer, “information age” and “information society” from the English corpus between years 1800-2008 with smoothing of zero, viewed 27.01.2017.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Paul Sieghart, “The International Implications of the Development of Microelectronics,” *The Information Society* 1, no. 1 (1981): 1-16; J. G. Maisonrouge, “Regulation of International Information Flows,” *The Information Society* 1, no. 1 (1981): 17-30. Concerns that technology and the information society may affect cultural values were not unique to groups within Japan. The British scholar Paul Sieghart referred to the “cultural pollution” (a pernicious term) that arises through the free flow of information. Cf. Sieghart, “The International Implications of the Development of Microelectronics,” 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Hanbaiten ubai ai ni: Bunsbo sakusei ki, ni sha aitsugi happyo” [Competing for Retailers: Two companies consecutively announce release of word processor], 8 May, 1980.

<sup>65</sup> This is evident in the 1992 Mid-term Report mentioned above, which states that it there is “no need to simply the national language for foreigners. Doing so is undesirable, as it makes it difficult [for foreigners] to become acquainted with Japanese culture”.

<sup>66</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Wāpuro no fukkyū de aratana konran, nibongo no midare (tēma tōron)” [New Confusion with the Spread of the Word Processor, Japanese Language in Disarray (Themed Debate)], 30 November, 1992; Jōo Hakutarō, “Kotoba no midare to benka (nibonjin no tame no nibongo semina – kotoba o dō tsukaikonasu ka)” [Disarray and Change in Language (A Japanese Language Seminar for Japanese People – How to Master Language)], *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to Kyōzai no Kenkyū* 32, no. 14 (1987): 120-123; *Asahi shimbun*, “Katakana zōgo ga ōsuginai ka, nibongo no midare (tēma tōron)” [Aren’t there too many Katakana Neologisms? Japanese Language in Disarray (Themed Debate)], 9 November, 1992; Izumi Masahiko, “Kokugo no midare wa kuni no midare – gaikokugo kabure no nibonjin to bokokugo sonchō no kankoku” [A National Language in Disarray means a Country in Disarray – Japanese with an Affectation for Foreign Languages and Koreans that Value their Mother Tongues], *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin* 1570 (1983): 149-151.

shows that the term *midare* (“disarray”) was employed alongside the language usage promoted by word processing technologies.<sup>67</sup> This included incorrect *kanji* usage, *kanji* overuse, and problems with *okurigana*. Within the opinions expressed in such articles it was claimed that many groups in society were to blame for linguistic disarray, though a significant portion of the blame was often allotted to the youth and a newly forming popular culture. Educators frequently blamed the spread of *maru moji* and the word processor for what they deemed “improper” handwriting,<sup>68</sup> while university students and young women were blamed for plunging the Japanese language into a state of disarray.<sup>69</sup> The spread of the word processor was, therefore, similar in some respects to *maru moji*: it was viewed by the older generation as a vehicle of the youth, and as one that disrupted conventional and “correct” Japanese language usage. Similarly, it was a new mode of automation that was being absorbed into workplace practices in business offices.

During the 1980s and early 1990s the discourse of *midare* continued unabated in the media.<sup>70</sup> It soon made its way into academic discussions about contemporary Japanese language usage as a consequence of media coverage. However, unlike alarmist opinions concerning *midare* found in broadsheet newspapers, established linguists began to argue that *midare* was a “common quality” of the Japanese language, including *kanji* usage and script. An early example of this is found in 1981, when Kindaichi Haruhiko published an entire book on the question of whether the contemporary Japanese language was suffering from *midare*. His conclusion was that Japanese was constantly changing, in its present and historical forms, and therefore there was no serious concern over the state of the language or language usage.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Kokusai shinpojiumu ‘kanji bunka no rekishi to shorai’” [International Symposium “The History and Future of Kanji Culture”], 27 May, 1986; *Asahi shimbun*, “Sumi o suri, hude de kaku toraddo de torendi” [The Conventionality and Trendiness of Grinding Ink and Writing with a Brush], 10 July, 1990.

<sup>68</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Sumi o suri, hude de kaku toraddo de torendi.”

<sup>69</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “Kokusai shinpojiumu ‘kanji bunka no rekishi to shorai’.”

<sup>70</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Nihongo wa doko e*] Shin kokugoshin no kadai/ 3 genbun itchi ‘midare’ na no ka ‘katsuryoku’ ka” [[Where to from here for the Japanese Language?] Issues for the New National Language Council/ 3 Genbun itchi “Disarray” or “Vitality”?], 25 October, 1991, 30.

<sup>71</sup> Kindaichi Haruhiko, *Kawaru nihongo: Gendaigo wa midaretekita ka* [Changing Japanese: Is Contemporary Japanese in Disarray?] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981), 8-10. Also see comments on youth language and disarray made by NLC member Machi Tawara in *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Nihongo wa doko e*] shin kokugoshin no kadai/ 3” [[Where to now for the Japanese Language?] problems for the new National Language Council/ 3], 25 October, 1991.

The media also concentrated on the role of the NLC as language policy formulator during the spread of Japanese word processing technologies. A short “aside” (*yoroku*) on the front page of the *Mainichi Shimbun* in early 1986 comments on the perceived effects the word processor has had on the ability of the NLC to regulate written Japanese.<sup>72</sup> The article opens with a discussion between the writer of the article and a “word processor user” who claims that their word processor can be used to type any *kanji*, no matter how difficult. The article then proceeds to contemplate the potential impact of character sets determined by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry’s Japanese Industrial Standards Committee on written language proficiency and usage. The article concludes with the following criticism:

The National Language Council and Agency for Cultural Affairs ignore [*kanji* usage], while the Ministry of International Trade and Industry effectively controls the written national language – it is the age of the JIS [Japanese Industrial Standards]. It truly is difficult [to see the] vanguard of the word processor that allows you to write [*kanji*] without knowing how to read.<sup>73</sup>

Two points stand out in the quote above. Firstly, the author of the article questions the ability – and relevance – of the NLC to control Japanese script usage as a language policy formulating body. The contention the article makes is that the spread of word processing technologies is wresting language policy formulation away from the NLC and placing it in the hands of bodies involved in the production and development of character sets for word processing technologies. The shift in “linguistic relevance” toward the JIS, in the “age of the JIS”, was clearly highlighted in an article on the largest *kanji* testing body in Japan, the Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation, which had decided to base its highest award (level 1) on a JIS character set,<sup>74</sup> as opposed to a *kanji* set list produced by the NLC. NLC deliberations and policies seemed increasingly irrelevant among debates concerning the effects of the

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<sup>72</sup> The *Mainichi shimbun* regularly covered the actions and opinions of the NLC in relation to word processing and language disarray between 1990 and 1995.

<sup>73</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “*Yoroku* [An Aside]”, 3 March, 1986, 1.

<sup>74</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “*Kanji kentei, monbushō no osumitsuki ni – wāpuro no fukyū de jukensha zō – 10 gatsu ni dai ichi shaken* [Ministry of Education Authorises Kanji Aptitude Test – Exam-takers increase with Spread of Word Processor – First Test to be held in October], 15 July, 1992, 3.

spread of the Japanese word processor on written Japanese language usage, as JIS character sets formed the basis upon which word processing technologies and *kanji* testing authorities worked.

The spread of word processing technologies was accompanied by regular commentary on experimentation with written Japanese. For instance, an article in the *Mainichi Shimbun*, a popular broadsheet Japanese newspaper, talks about a science-fiction writer who enjoyed using the word processing technology on her computer to parse *kanji* and “joke around” with written Japanese. An illustration accompanying the article shows the angel-like spirit of Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862-1922), a famous author and surgeon whose name could not be typed on a computer because the *kanji* 鷗 that features in his name is not included on the JIS character list installed on her computer, hovering over the science-fiction writer, who is busy typing away at her computer (which displays two large emoticons alongside Mori Ōgai’s name in *kanji*, 森鷗外 – see figure 4, below).<sup>75</sup> Mori is depicted riding the cloud of the “Japanese language” (*Nibongo*), symbolising the transitory nature of modern Japanese. Written Japanese, the article suggested, had undergone a drastic change since the days of Mori Ōgai, who wrote his most famous works at the beginning of the twentieth century. Japanese word processing technologies were redefining the way in which writers wrote.

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<sup>75</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Nibongo wa doko e*] *shin kokugoshin no kadai*.”

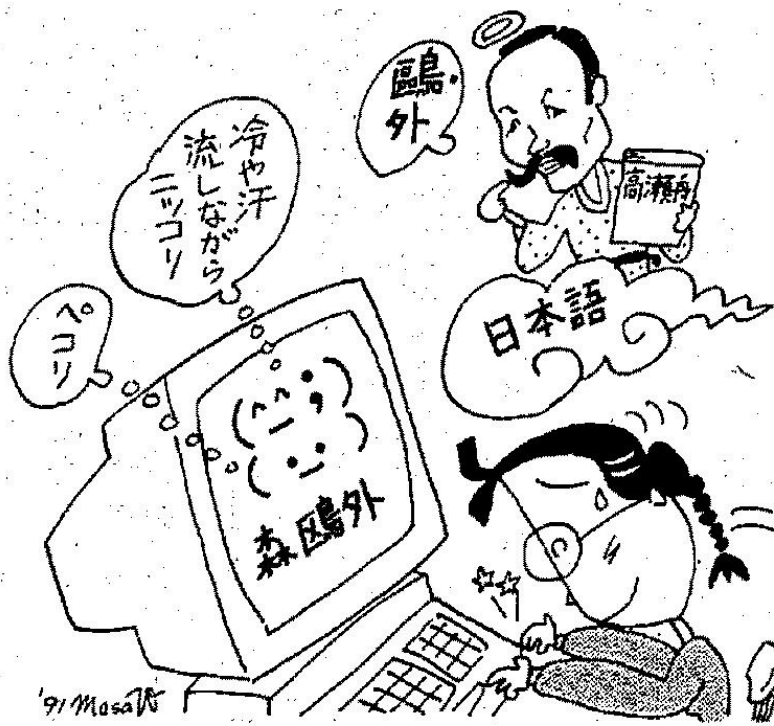


Figure 4. The Ghost of Mori Ōgai floating on a “Japanese” cloud while looking down on an Author and Computer User, illustration by Watanabe Masayoshi for the *Mainichi Shimbun*.<sup>76</sup>

There were also articles praising the new dictionaries and assisted-learning methods that were made possible by the invention of Japanese word processing. This was a boon, for example, to writers who had trouble looking up the meaning of words while typing.<sup>77</sup> Computer users happily reported the progress that was being made, while newspapers themselves made increasing efforts to capture such readers by creating dedicated columns such as “The Personal Computer Block” (*pasokon gaiku*). Such developments also aided Japanese as a foreign language learning in developed countries, where access to such technologies was widely available (if not yet in the home, then at least at schools and universities). Thus, the *Mainichi Shimbun* reported on the “trendiness” of studying Japanese using CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction) in the United States of America and Australia. The article concluded with a hopeful remark: maybe more foreigners will master the Japanese language, as a result of CAI.<sup>78</sup> In this article we see a clear reference to the internationalisation of Japanese through computerisation,

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Asobi gokokoro de*] *pasokon itsu demo doko demo jikuji*” [[In a Playful Mood] Personal Computers, Always Abashed wherever I am], 24 September, 1992, 7.

<sup>78</sup> *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Jiryū go jiten*] *CAI*” [[Dictionary of Trending Terms] CAI], 11 December, 1992, 14.

an area that (as detailed in chapter four) fell within the scope of the Japan Foundation and its involvement in supporting and promoting the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language overseas.<sup>79</sup>

A survey of broadsheet newspapers in the 1980s and early 1990s indicates that various factors affected people's perceptions of the impact of word processing on the Japanese language. For instance, schooling was one issue that held significant weight for a mother whose child was being taught by teachers she believed were too reliant on word processors. She argued that word processor usage should be mitigated if it inhibits children's ability to access quality education.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, if personal computers allow individuals to quickly retrieve the definition of words while drafting a document, then perhaps word processing technologies were aiding more than inhibiting textual production and an understanding of written Japanese. People and businesses whose livelihood depended on processing information in a speedy manner tended to favour the inclusion of word processing technologies in the home and the workplace.

Word processing technologies allowed for linguistic experimentation and (from the 1990s) greater interconnectivity via the internet. Many used word processors despite the discourse surrounding the effects of word processing on written language. This indicates the existence of a gap between people's perception of linguistic disarray and their daily writing practices, as supplemented and strengthened by seemingly "problematic" technological aids. These conflicting views co-existed and remained unresolved among many word processor users, including established linguists within the NLC, whose views on Japanese word processing technologies I discuss below.

### **“Selling out” or “Buying in”? The National Language Council’s Stance on Word Processing Technologies in the 1980s and early 1990s**

During the early 1990s tensions arose within the NLC over the impact of JIS character sets on Japanese script usage. The spread of Japanese word processors, which made use of character sets created by the

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<sup>79</sup> For a broad discussion of the internationalisation of Japanese language education outside of Japan, cf. Anthony Liddicoat, “Internationalising Japan: *Nihonjinron* and the Intercultural in Japanese Language-in-Education Policy,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 2, no. 1 (2007): 32-46.

<sup>80</sup> Yamaguchi, “*Wapuro jidai: Ki ni naru 'kokoro'*”.

JIS Committee, during the 1980s compelled the NLC to consider the impact of Japanese word processing technologies on the Japanese writing system. However, the NLC failed to deliberate on the effects of word processing on Japanese script in a timely manner. As a body responsible for formulating national language policy, the NLC remained quiet on word processing technologies throughout the 1980s. Early inertia may have been related to the relaxed guidelines on *kanji* usage reinforced by the NLC through the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List of 1981, which bred complacency toward increasing *kanji* usage among NLC members. This is likely because the timing of the introduction of the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List coincided with the initial spread of Japanese word processing technologies.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, the NLC had a history of waiting for public debate concerning new policies to abate before deciding whether policy revisions were necessary. The delayed responses of the NLC often went “hand in hand” with surveys of attitudes toward formulated language policies (e.g. with the Japanese Literary Association and Japan Newspaper Association), which tended to be conducted years after the initial introduction of a set list or policy concerning script usage.

Members of the NLC could have focussed on word processing technologies during the mid-eighties, after the initial spread of Japanese word processors. However, they preoccupied themselves with Contemporary *Kana* Usage,<sup>82</sup> which was revised soon after the release of the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List, in 1986.<sup>83</sup> While discussions within the NLC during the 1980s failed to consider the effects of Japanese word processing technologies on the Japanese writing system, the actions of NLC members outside of council meetings during this period reveal their attitudes toward debates concerning word processing technologies.

Initially, language policy makers were lulled by the invention and proliferation of the Japanese word processor and the information technology devices capable of electronically producing mixed-script written Japanese documents. During the 1980s some NLC members openly supported the newly emerging word processing technologies, aiding in their spread through Japanese offices and

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<sup>81</sup> The *Jōyō Kanji* Set List was released in 1981.

<sup>82</sup> NLC 16, 35–42.

<sup>83</sup> ACA, “‘Gendai kanazukai’ no kaitei nit suite (tōshin)” [Revision of “Contemporary *Kana* Usage” (Proposal)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/16/tosin01/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/16/tosin01/index.html)

households. Kindaichi Haruhiko, a leading member of the NLC at the time, is a notable example of such an NLC member. He appeared in a television advertisement in the early 1980s promoting a Japanese word processor that he proclaimed would usher in “a bright future for Japanese businesses”.<sup>84</sup> The invention of the Japanese word processor, he stated in one of a series of advertisements in which he appeared, had “beautifully upended the reputation of the Japanese language as being difficult to type on machines”. The product Haruhiko helped advertise was one of the first commercially successful word processors, the Sharp WD-1000. Haruhiko was by the 1980s a widely recognised public intellectual,<sup>85</sup> who regularly appeared on television shows from the late 1970s, making appearances on NHK television programmes throughout the 1980s and on the popular talk show “*Waratte ii tomo*” in 1988.<sup>86</sup> His reputation as an established linguist lent the claims made in the advertisement significant weight.

Kindaichi once again featured in a Sharp word processor television advertisement supporting the Japanese word processor in the late 1980s.<sup>87</sup> The message this advertisement sent to the public was that word processing technologies are endorsed by linguists and leading Japanese language specialists such as Kindaichi Haruhiko. Indeed, companies involved in marketing word processing technologies to the general population strived to link Japanese word processors to established linguists and cultural icons who could lend a voice of authority to their technological innovations. The aim of such companies, which included Sharp, Toshiba, NEC, Ricoh, and Sony, was to portray Japanese word processing as sophisticated yet familiar and, thus, easy to learn. Famous individuals used in advertisements for word processors included not only public intellectuals but writers, musicians, actors, and film directors such as Akira Kurosawa.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> soikll5, “79-96 *bunka jin CM shū vol. 2*” [Vol. 2 of the 1979-1996 Cultural Figure Commercial Collection], YouTube, 4:59-5:29, 13 November 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IINTzVxWcwM&>

<sup>85</sup> By the late 1980s Kindaichi Haruhiko was a well-recognised name among the Japanese public. Cf. Manabe Kazufumi and Harumi Befu, “Japanese Cultural Identity,” *Japanstudien* 4, no. 1 (1993), 93.

<sup>86</sup> Kindaichi Haruhiko starred in numerous television programmes aired on NHK and other television stations. Cf. NHK Online, “NHK Chronicle,” search term “*Kindaichi Haruhiko*” (in Japanese), <https://www.nhk.or.jp/archives/chronicle/>.

<sup>87</sup> soikll5, “82-88 *kaden CM shū vol. 16 wāpuro*” [Vol. 16 of the 1982-1988 Electronics Commercial Collection, Word Processors], YouTube, 9:42-9:57, 13 November 2013, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbAwv\\_DRvDg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbAwv_DRvDg)

<sup>88</sup> soikll5, “79-96 *bunka jin CM shū vol. 2*,” YouTube, 8:43-9:11.

The opinions of NLC members were also found in academic journals specialising in Japanese language studies. In 1984 the journal *Nibongogaku* ran a special issue on the word processor, which included academic articles and personal reflections related to newly emerging word processing technologies.<sup>89</sup> Morioka Kenji 森岡健二 (1917-2008), an NLC member during the late 1970s and Japanese language scholar who had studied JIS character sets,<sup>90</sup> reflected on his first experience using a word processor.<sup>91</sup> In his account, Morioka makes some interesting observations concerning his early usage of word processing technology. Firstly, he notes how he quickly began to make regular use of his word processor for a variety of tasks: preparation of class materials, drafting of manuscripts, and personal correspondences.<sup>92</sup> Given his advanced age at the time (Morioka was sixty-five years old), Morioka demonstrates the relative ease with which the operation of Japanese word processors could be learnt by individuals in the later stages of their lives. The account also mirrored the portrayal of word processing as easy to learn (found in television advertisements), further strengthening the links between NLC members and word processor usage in the 1980s.

Morioka wrote in favour of word processors when weighing up the “pros and cons” of word processors, describing the word processor as an efficient device that speeds up the writing and document creation process, but also as something that has affected his self-confidence in his ability to write *kanji* by hand.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, he admits that while the appearance of text produced using a word processor is formal, typed (versus handwritten) letters allow for the inclusion of more thoughtful (*kokoro no komotta*) content – given the numerous editing functions and speed of document production.<sup>94</sup> This undermined the dominant notion that only handwritten Japanese could be

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<sup>89</sup> *Nibongogaku* 3, no. 7 (1984).

<sup>90</sup> Morioka Kenji, “JIS *kanji* hyō ni tsuite kangaeru” [Thinking about the JIS Character List], in *Kokugo shisaku hyakunen no ayumi* [The Course of 100 Years of Language Policy], ed. ACA (Tokyo: Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2003); Morioka Kenji, *Nibongo to kanji* [Japanese and Kanji] (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 2004).

<sup>91</sup> Morioka Kenji, “*Watashi no wāpuro taiken* [My Word Processor Experience],” *Kokugogaku* 3, no. 7 (1984): 72-75. The journal *Kokugogaku* is also examined in my discussion of early postwar linguists’ opinions on democratisation (contained in the second chapter of this thesis).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 74. Morioka also notes that using a word processor increased the number and variety of *kanji* he used in documents.

<sup>94</sup> Morioka Kenji, “*Watashi no wāpuro taiken*,” 74.

thoughtful, aesthetically pleasing, and sincere (warm).<sup>95</sup> By the end of his account, Morioka admits that he views the word processor as a necessity (*bitsujubhin*) and claims to have quickly become a “word processor person” (*wāpuro ningen*),<sup>96</sup> further challenging the supremacy of handwritten Japanese script. Thus, the established linguist Morioka was fully supportive of the use of Japanese word processors over handwritten Japanese for work and other daily purposes.

The conventionality of script produced by many word processors in the 1980s seems to have found strong support among several NLC members. As discussed previously, a conservative shift in attitudes towards postwar language policies during the preceding decades, particularly those pertaining to the lifting of *kanji* restrictions, was bolstered among leading council members soon after the widespread use of word processing technologies in Japanese society. After appearing in advertisements for word processors, Kindaichi Haruhiko concurred that with the spread of word processors restrictions no longer needed to be placed on the number of *kanji* used in the Japanese language.<sup>97</sup> His contention was that it was perfectly reasonable to allow individuals to use as many *kanji* as they wished when typing Japanese; this was in keeping with new spirit of language policy as a “guideline” (as opposed to prescription or restriction) to written language usage.

Members of the NLC interpreted the information age as further justification of their decision to rid language policies of any stipulations that limited the number of *kanji* used in official documents and media. This change in attitude toward written Japanese was outlined in the announcement of the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List of 1981. The announcement stated that the character set list provided “guidelines” (*meyasu*) to *kanji* usage,<sup>98</sup> breaking free from the “limitations” the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List placed on *kanji* usage in the early postwar period.<sup>99</sup> The need for placing limitations on *kanji* was redundant if word

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<sup>95</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, “*Tegaki no saiensu kabe shinbun ga 400 go*” [Handwritten Science Newspaper Marks its 400<sup>th</sup> Issue], 14 May, 1995.

<sup>96</sup> Morioka, “*Watashi no wāpuro taiken*,” 73.

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Yuri Sachiko, “*Don don fueru wāpuro kanji [Drastically Increasing Word Processing Kanji]*,” *Asahi shimbun*, 12 April, 1990.

<sup>98</sup> ACA, “*Jōyō kanji hyō kunrei, kokuji seitei bun* [Letter Announcing the Enactment of the *Jōyō* Character Set List Directives]”, [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/14/tosin02/02.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/14/tosin02/02.html), accessed 24 November 2017.

<sup>99</sup> It is unclear how “limiting” the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List was intended to be. Gottlieb rightfully contends that the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List was never meant to legally restrict *kanji* usage beyond the government sphere. Cf. Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics*, 135. However, NLC reports based on the testimonies of the Minister of Education and head of the Ministry of Education’s National

processing technologies allowed language users to type over five thousand kanji with relative ease and little memorisation. This position, however, was qualified by the Ministry of Education, which continued to teach students approximately 1000 *kanji*.<sup>100</sup> Both the debates conducted by members of the NLC and the reports they produced concerning word processing technologies provide testament to the role the information society and the Japanese word processor was to play in policy making decisions.

Ten years after the release of the first relatively affordable word processors the NLC started to take serious notice of the potentially disruptive effects of information technology on written Japanese proficiency. The NLC began debating the consequences of increasing dependence on technology for the production of written Japanese in the early 1990s.<sup>101</sup> Its first real attempt to systematically address the effects of word processing technologies came with the publication of the “National Language Policy for a New Age” policy document in November 1995.<sup>102</sup> The document enters into a discussion of the potential influence of word processing devices on language proficiency,<sup>103</sup> touching on areas such as script choice (e.g. *kanji* versus *kana*), self-expression, and cognitive faculty.

For the NLC the word processor, which is singled out for lengthy treatment in a section of the aforementioned document entitled “The Development of Information Devices and National Language Proficiency,” was an object that symbolised the “new age” of information processing.<sup>104</sup> In the

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Language Section at the time the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List was compiled state that the set list was a “restrictive set list” (*seigen hyō*) compiled for use throughout wider society. Cf. NLC 1, 4.

<sup>100</sup> Kobayashi, “*Kanji kyoiku no bensen: Shiyō jittai, kokugo shisaku to no kanren ni oite*,” 241.

<sup>101</sup> The first mention of the “informatising” and “word processors, computers, and facsimiles” in a NLC document dates to 1992. See the section on “Changes in Social Conditions and the National Language” in ACA, “*Gendai no kokugo o meguru sho mondai ni tsuite*” (*shingi keika hōkoku*) [Regarding Problems Faced by the Contemporary National Language (Council Mid-term Report)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/19/tosin01/07.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kakuki/19/tosin01/07.html) However, this document offers only a superficial treatment of the effects of word processing on written Japanese.

<sup>102</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, “*Atarashi jidai ni ojita kokugo shisaku ni tsuite (shingi keika hōkoku)*” [National Language Policy for a New Age (Progress Report)], [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/nc/t19951101001/t19951101001.html](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/nc/t19951101001/t19951101001.html). The NLC’s decision, in turn, to investigate the effects of word processing on language proficiency can partly be attributed to a meeting to discuss national language policy in Sendai City in 1993, whose minutes were provided to the NLC at the 2<sup>nd</sup> general meeting of its 20<sup>th</sup> session on 16 May 1994. Cf. ACA, “*Dai 2 iinkai*”; *Mainichi shinbun*, “[*Zenkoku nyūsu*] *kyōiku, wāpuro ga torimaku mondai o kentō, bunkachō ga kondankai*” [[National News] Education, Agency for Cultural Affairs holds Round Table Discussions [to discuss] Problems surrounding Word Processors], 31 October, 1993.

<sup>103</sup> The NLC deems language proficiency to be comprised of handwriting and typing proficiency (*shoki nōryoku*), written expression (*bunshō hyōgen ryoku*), and cognitive faculty (*shikō ryoku*).

<sup>104</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, “*Atarashi jidai ni ojita kokugo shisaku ni tsuite*.”

document the NLC stated the need to conduct research on adult and child users of word processors separately, arguing that word processor usage affects adults and children in different ways. On one hand, children using word processors were deemed to be more vulnerable to the effects of word processing. On the other hand, adults are more capable of expressing themselves, having attained a suitable level of language proficiency. These opinions resembled the discourse of *midare* in the media, which often associated improper language usage with the youth. The policy document takes a particularly cautious stance toward word processor usage, citing children as standing to suffer the most from “overuse”. The NLC concludes that research on word processors and language proficiency is “extremely limited” (*kiwamete sukunai*) and suggests the need to “actively survey and research” the impact of word processing technologies on language proficiency.<sup>105</sup>

The “National Language Policy for a New Age” policy document, however, also betrays a lack of preparedness to address the impact of word processing technologies through language policy formulation. The NLC admits to having “no knowledge” about many of the potential effects of word processing on language proficiency, whilst also acknowledging the “complexity of operations” in newly developing technologies.<sup>106</sup> The document fails to concretely elaborate on how and whether it will approach “actively surveying and researching” the relationship between Japanese word processor usage and language proficiency. Instead it concentrates on how the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee deals with *kanji* set lists – an area that had been dominated by the NLC – and stresses the need to recognise the difference between the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List of 1981 and the JIS character sets.<sup>107</sup> This can be viewed as a veiled criticism of the role of the JIS Committee in shaping the production of written Japanese during the spread of word processing technologies in Japan in the 1980s and early 1990s.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> See the first two chapters of the thesis for a detailed description of the critical role the NLC played in formulating *kanji* set lists such as the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List of 1946. In the policy document mentioned above the NLC briefly touches on what it believes to be the different aims that inform the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List and the JIS character sets: the former provides lax guidelines for character usage, whereas the latter is tailored to information exchange. The NLC claimed that the JIS character sets impact individual script choice and creates confusion in terms of character types and fonts.

Despite their unease with JIS character sets, future language policy makers would continue to cite the word processor as an instance of triumph against all odds for the mixed-script writing system. It was a vindication of earlier policy makers' hopes that conventional written Japanese would someday be "typed" using the latest word processing technologies. In a conference paper given in 2012, *kanji* specialist, NLC member, and Kyoto University emeritus professor Atsuji Tetsuji associates a perceived decline in *kanji* abolitionist rhetoric, which he attributed to Romanisation advocates, with the technological advancements that led to the invention and spread of the Japanese word processor.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the invention and spread of word processors that allowed for the electronic production and storage of conventional mixed-script Japanese were seen not only as breakthroughs in computing, but as props for "*kanji* culture" in the age of the computer.<sup>109</sup> However, those involved in the research that contributed to the invention of the Japanese word processor held differing views on the primacy of "*kanji* culture" in Japanese society.

## **Yamada Hisao: A Computer Scientist's Opinions on Script Reform and Word Processing Technologies**

Despite the success of Japanese word processing technologies, there were computer scientists who were sceptical of the benefits of the spread of Japanese word processing technologies. A well-known computer scientist and academic was among the leading voices of dissent opposed to the spread of Japanese word processing technologies in Japan. Yamada Hisao 山田尚勇 (1930-2008, pictured in figure 5) was a professor at the University of Tokyo and a computer scientist responsible for encoding characters that would later be used in Japanese keyboards in modern word processors.<sup>110</sup> In addition to a successful career as a computer scientist, he wrote about the Japanese language for a wide range of audiences, including Romanisation advocates, and served on the administrative board of Nippon no

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<sup>108</sup> Atsuji Tetsuji, "*Kanji to dō tsukiau ka*" [How do we get along with *Kanji*?] (poster presentation, Hitotsubashi University, the Fourth NINJAL Forum, 11 September, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> Yuri Sachiko, "*Kanji no hyōsei, dentatsu nōryoku de gyakko (denshi jidai no nihongo 3)*" [Casting a Spotlight on *Kanji* through its Ideographic Nature and Transmittability], *Asahi shimbun*, 11 April, 1990.

<sup>110</sup> Yamada Hisao, "*Nihon bun nyūryoku hō: Ronsetsu: Taipuraitā no rekishi to nihon bun nyūryoku*" [Japanese Sentence Input Methods: An Article: The History of Typewriting and Japanese Sentence Input Methods], *Information Processing Society of Japan* 23, no. 6 (1982): 559-564.

Rômazi Sya (The Romanisation Society of Japan) in 1993.<sup>111</sup> After graduating from the electronic engineering department at the University of Tokyo in 1953, he spent sixteen years in the United States, where he earned a PhD in computer and information science at the University of Pennsylvania, worked at an IBM research institute, and taught as assistant professor of electronic engineering at his American alma mater.<sup>112</sup> Despite (or perhaps because of) his contribution to the creation of the modern Japanese word processor, Yamada was an advocate of script reform, particularly Romanisation and the re-evaluation of the use of *kanji* in written Japanese. His views provide us with an insight into the mind of a Japanese computer scientist, concerned both with Japanese word processing technologies and script reform between the 1970s and early 2000s.

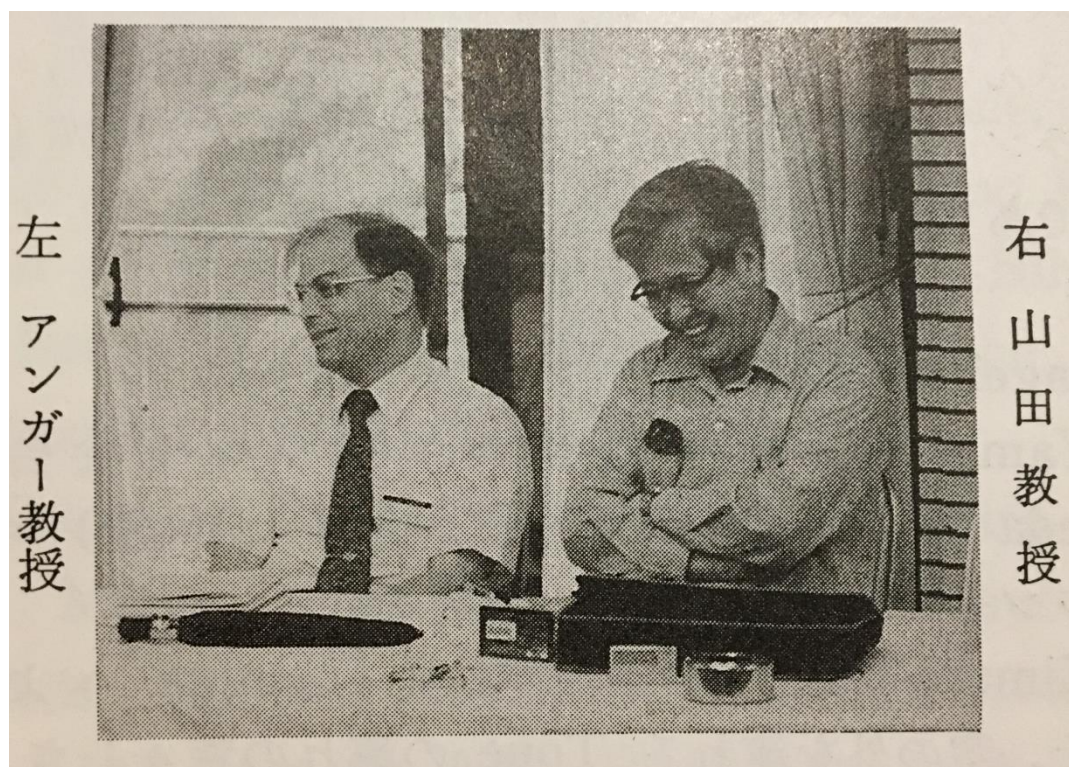


Figure 5. Photograph of Yamada Hisao (right) and James Marshall Unger (left) at the 42<sup>nd</sup> National Conference for Japanese Romanisation Education Research.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Nippon no Rômazi Sya, “*Dokusya meibo*” [Readers List], *Rômazî no Nippon* 478 (1993): 1-12. Yamada also supported The Romanisation Society of Japan financially. Cf. Nippon no Rômazi Sya, “*Otikarazoe eno ore?*” [Thanking those who Helped], *Rômazî no Nippon* 458 (1991), 8.

<sup>112</sup> Miyoshi Kazunori, “*Meiyo kaiin – Yamada Hisao bakase o shinobu*” [Remembering Doctor Yamada Hisao – Our Emeritus Member], *IJPS Magazine* 49, no. 7 (2008): 885-6; University of Pennsylvania, “Deaths,” *Almanac* 55, no. 2 (2008), <https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/volumes/v55/n02/obit.html>. Yamada Hisao’s main contribution to Japanese word processing technologies was the T-code Chinese character non-associative input method, a common variant of the direct input methods developed for the input of *kanji*.

<sup>113</sup> Image taken from Nippon no Rômazi Sya “*Taikai hôkoku*” [Conference Report], *Rômazî no Nippon* 460 (1991), 1.

Yamada's interest in script reform and *kanji* saw him publish regularly on the subject of written Japanese and its relation to a wide variety of topics, including the standardisation of Romanised Japanese, the information society, Second World War, higher education, and academic practices in Japan.<sup>114</sup> The majority of his discussions reached diverse audiences: academics, computer scientists, specialists in the information technology sector, and script reform advocates that belonged to Romanisation organisations such as Nippon no Rômazî Sya. His opinions on word processing technologies and written language were published in the leading Japanese language journals, including *Nihongogaku* (Japanese Language Studies), which allowed his ideas to reach many scholars involved in the study of written language and policy formulation.<sup>115</sup> Yamada's position as professor at the University of Tokyo, one of Japan's leading academic institutions, from 1972-91 also undoubtedly lent his voice some authority.

It is likely that Yamada Hisao's long absence from Japan in the 1950s and 1960s and research into character input methods for Japanese word processors led him to consider the option of Romanisation – an option he continued to ponder even after the successful spread of the Japanese word processor. Though his interest in the development of code for word processor input methods started in the 1970s, he continued to speak about the “big lead” that Europe and North America had over Japan in computing. Yamada contended that, despite the advancements in word-processor document creation made in Japan in the 1980s, an imbalance in computing productivity was growing between Japan and the “West” during the 1990s.<sup>116</sup> This was of importance to Yamada partly because of the time in which he lived, when developed economies were moving from industrial- to service-based modes of production. Office automation and productivity, he believed, would be a deciding

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<sup>114</sup> Yamada Hisao, “On Logographic Writing Systems,” *Research bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems* 4 (1991): 261-318; Yamada Hisao, “How to Cope with a Plethora of Chinese Characters and Words,” *Research bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems* 6 (1994), 249-290; Tatsuoka Hiroshi and Yamada Hisao, “On the Theory and Practice of the Romanized Writing System for Japanese,” *Research Bulletin of the National Centre for Science Information System* 8, (1996), 27-74; Yamada Hisao, “Globalization of Information Society in Japanese Language,” *Research bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems* 9 (1997), 33-71; Yamada Hisao, “What Determined the Fighting Power of the Armed Forces,” *Research bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems* 10 (1998), 81-109.

<sup>115</sup> Yamada Hisao, “*Wapuro to nihongo no genjô to shôrai?*” [Word Processors and the Present Condition and Future of Japanese], *Nihongogaku* 3, no.7 (1984): 4-17.

<sup>116</sup> Yamada Hisao, “*Moji ron no kagaku teki kentô (8)*” [A Scientific Consideration of Script Theory (Part 8)], *Rômazî no Nippon* 490 (1994), 5.

factor in the newly emerging service industries that would dominate developed economies in the twenty-first century.<sup>117</sup>

Two case studies that Yamada employed when discussing the effect of *kanji* on the Japanese language are the use of terminology in Japanese patents and televised political debates. On the first, he stated that a substantial amount of terminology used in patents is inaccessible, as the terminology used cannot be found in regular or technical dictionaries. This problem stems from the use of “perplexing rows of *kanji* that are difficult to read”.<sup>118</sup> On the second point, Yamada alluded to an early 1998 broadcasting of the television programme “Sunday Project” (TV Asahi), in which a young politician repeatedly mispronounces a word due to an incorrect reading of a *kanji*.<sup>119</sup> This led Yamada to conclude that using *kanji* on a regular basis engenders diminished objective and rational thinking.<sup>120</sup>

Yamada stressed the need for cultural understanding and literacy in an internationalising age. These can be achieved through critical engagement with the conventional Japanese writing system, which Yamada believed impeded foreign language learning among researchers because of its reliance on *kanji*.<sup>121</sup> One of Yamada’s main concerns was with the use of abbreviations without providing a clear definition at first use. The example he used was the term *setsuden* (節電) “power conservation”. The abbreviation, in common use today (particularly since the energy consumption efforts following the tsunami and Fukushima crisis of 11 March 2011), fails to clearly convey the semantic content of the term because it is missing crucial *kanji* that would complete and help accurately convey the meaning of the term *setsuden*.<sup>122</sup> Yamada believed that such phenomena, due to an alleged careless use of *kanji*, act as a serious hindrance to the development of concepts in the Japanese language. Yamada argued that the careless use of abbreviated terms is one reason why native Japanese speakers produce “atypical” utterances in foreign languages such as English.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Yamada Hisao, “What Determined the Fighting Power of the Armed Forces,” 99.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Yamada Hisao, “What Determined the Fighting Power of the Armed Forces,” 100.

<sup>121</sup> Yamada Hisao, “*Moji ron no kagaku teki kentō* (6)” [A Scientific Consideration of Script Theory (Part 6)], *Rômazî no Nippon* 486 (1993), 4.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 5.

The information society and internationalisation are two ideas that heavily inform Yamada's writings on script reform. One of his central arguments – to which he often returned – was that language efficiency and ease of use were essential characteristics of an expanding information society. These sought after characteristics – efficiency and ease of use – needed to be built into the Japanese writing system in order, he contended, to ensure its widespread and on-going use.<sup>124</sup> The mixed-script Japanese he encountered would be branded as inefficient and difficult to use.

Yamada's views of the Japanese writing system seldom tied the idea of the ethnic Japanese or Japanese citizen to the language; he was more universal in his views of Japanese script, presenting the Japanese writing system as something detached from ideologies of ethnicity and political status. Simultaneously arguing that the use of *kanji* provides essentially no benefits,<sup>125</sup> Yamada also highlighted internationalisation and the rapid progression of the “global information society” as two factors that pose pressing problems for the Japanese language.<sup>126</sup> In order to solve such an issue and improve the economic competitiveness of Japan (through decreases in office automation costs) in an international market, Yamada argued that the country should pay greater attention to solving the problem of its mixed-script writing system. If only to make this clearer, Yamada pointed to the “plethora of Chinese characters and words originally adopted some 1500 years ago” as the “major problem” of the Japanese language.<sup>127</sup> These ideas were shared with the leading specialists in the information sciences in Japan through the research bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems and echoed the thoughts of Umesao Tadao concerning the *kanji* “curse”.

Another point that Yamada touched on was the impact of conventional mixed-script Japanese on the dissemination of academic findings. In February 1994, Yamada wrote at length about Japanese publications and their role in a globalising world. He argued that academic journals publishing in Japanese were seldom read by international audiences because, in many cases, the reference lists and

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<sup>124</sup> Yamada Hisao, “*Wāpuro to nihongo no genjō to shōrai*,” 13.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Yamada Hisao, “Globalization of Information Society in Japanese Language,” *Research bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems* 9 (1997), 33-71; Yamada Hisao, “What Determined the Fighting Power of the Armed Forces.”

<sup>127</sup> Yamada Hisao, “How to Cope with a Plethora of Chinese Characters and Words,” *Research Bulletin of the National Center for Science Information Systems* 6 (1994), 249.

bibliographies appearing in the articles of such journals contained many mixed-script Japanese language works, which Yamada deemed inaccessible for a non-Japanese speaking readership due to the complexity of conventional mixed-script Japanese.<sup>128</sup> Problems of reference-ability, Yamada argued, dissuaded foreign academics from engaging with the content and findings of academic journals published in Japanese. In the same article he notes how international research collaboration and information sharing initiatives among international institutions did not recognise information catalogued in *kanji kana* mixed-script Japanese, forcing Japanese research institutions and universities to allocate funding to the translation of documents in mixed-script Japanese (into English and other languages).<sup>129</sup> This essentially meant an extra burden was placed on academics in Japan who wanted to actively participate in global information sharing initiatives. A “mixed-script penalty” was applied to researchers making use of conventional written Japanese in their academic writing. Romanisation of the Japanese writing system, Yamada would argue, could lift the penalty of documenting research in mixed-script Japanese.

This examination of Yamada Hisao’s ideas about word processing technologies and the Japanese writing system allows us to conclude that the discourses of the information society and internationalisation influenced debates about language problems and script reform within the computer science community in Japan. The fact that a Japanese computer scientist heavily involved in the development of Japanese word processing technologies argued against cultural norms and conventions associated with mixed-script writing signals a clear break from contemporary language policy makers and the norms they attempted to impose. Similar views were held by others outside of the linguistic establishment, including sociolinguists such as Mashiko Hidenori ましこひでのり (b. 1960) and Tanaka Katsuhiko 田中克彦 (b. 1934), who opposed the nationalism and marginalisation that accompanied the use of conventional mixed-script Japanese.<sup>130</sup> This indicates that alternatives to

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<sup>128</sup> Yamada Hisao, “*Moji ron no kagaku teki kentō (7)*” [A Scientific Consideration of Script Theory (Part 7)], *Rōmaji no Nippon* 488 (1994), 4. The complete paper can be found in Yamada Hisao, “*Moji ron no kagaku teki kentō*” [A Scientific Consideration of Script Theory], *Gakujutsu Jōhō Sentā Kiyō*, 4 (25 December, 1991): 261-318.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>130</sup> See Mashiko, “*Dōka, ikasochi toshite no kakikotoba*”; Mashiko, “*Gendai nihongo ni okeru sabetsu ka sochi toshite no kakikotoba*”; Tanaka Katsuhiko, *Kokkago o koete*.

conventional mixed-script Japanese were being considered as word processing technologies were redefining the Japanese writing system.

### **Romanisation and its Arguments Sunk: How the Romanisation Society of Japan dealt with the Advent of the Japanese Word Processor**

Individuals pushing for the Romanisation of written Japanese had long argued that technological innovators would encounter insurmountable challenges in producing word processors that could effectively handle mixed-script writing systems such as Japanese.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, for decades the complexity of *kanji* precluded the spread of Japanese word processing technologies throughout Japan. These insurmountable challenges were, however, overcome in the late 1970s with the development of the Japanese word processor, robbing Romanisation advocates of one of their central arguments against the use of a mixed-script writing system: conventional written Japanese is incompatible with modern technology.<sup>132</sup> How did proponents of script reform view the developments that were occurring in the field of computing during the 1980s and early 1990s? I answer this question through an analysis of the perspectives of two Romanisation advocates on word processing technologies and script reform between the mid-eighties and early 1990s. The first Romanisation advocate is Takeba Ryōichi 竹端瞭一 (b. 1946), board member of Nippon no Rōmaji Sya and former professor at Kawamura Gakuen Women's University. The second advocate is James Marshall Unger (b. 1947),<sup>133</sup> a linguist and academic who has written at length on Japanese language problems since the mid-eighties, particularly as they pertain to the script reform debates of modern and contemporary Japan.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Umesao Tadao was one of the leading advocates of this position on the compatibility of mixed-script Japanese.

<sup>132</sup> For a history of Romanisation advocacy, see Nanette Gottlieb, "The Rōmaji Movement in Japan".

<sup>133</sup> Unger claims that his interest in script reform was triggered in 1985 by the computer scientist Yamada Hisao, whose views on script reform are discussed at length later in the chapter. Cf. "*Kōen 'senryōki nihon no rōmaji kyōiku – J. Marshall Unger, Hawaii daigaku kyōju'*" [Lecture on "Rōmaji Education in Occupation Japan" – J. Marshall Unger, Professor at University of Hawaii], *Rōmaji no Nippon*, 461 (1991), 1.

<sup>134</sup> The work of James Marshall Unger is referenced in chapter two of this thesis. Cf. James Marshall Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan: Reading Between the Lines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). James Marshall Unger was also a member of the Nippon no Rōmaji Sya. See pages 12 and 9 of Nippon no Rōmaji Sya, "*Dokusya meibo*," for entries on James Marshall Unger and Takeba Ryōichi, respectively.

In February 1988 Takeba Ryōichi wrote about the detrimental effect of the many thousands of *kanji* found on Japanese word processors.<sup>135</sup> His main concern was the influence that writing systems have on word formation and script adaptation. Takeba believed that written languages do not only act as “tools for documenting words,” but impact the creation of new words and scripts,<sup>136</sup> and a marked increase in the ability to produce *kanji* adds significantly to the complexity of the Japanese writing system. Romanisation proponents – much as the NLC’s “National Language Policy for a New Age” would later conjecture – viewed such increased *kanji* usage as harmful to young students learning how to read and write and counterproductive for long-term literacy among Japanese individuals. A few months later Romanisation advocate and scholar James Marshall Unger echoed these views by publishing an article titled “The Computer and the Literacy of the Japanese”. Unger, a long-time researcher in writing systems and computational linguistics in Japan and the United States, listed several problems with the word processor.<sup>137</sup> One problem Unger raises was (and is) often alluded to by scholars of the Japanese language: “character amnesia,” forgetting how to write *kanji*.<sup>138</sup> This echoed the concern of the woman who wrote to a Japanese newspaper about the effects of Japanese word processors usage at schools, indicating the extent to which beliefs about word processor usage had spread among academics and non-academics alike.

To solve the problem of character amnesia, Takeba created a list of five hundred *kanji* to replace the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List that had been released by the NLC in 1981. This proposal for a simple set of *kanji* was akin to the early postwar efforts to devise character lists that aimed to dramatically decrease the language learning burden on students and everyday users of the Japanese writing system.<sup>139</sup> Dubbed “Basic *Kanji*” (*kibon kanji*), Takeda’s *kanji* set list was based on frequency analysis taken from past

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<sup>135</sup> Takeba Ryōichi, “*kanji mo roomazī mo*,” *Rōmazī no Nippon* 419 (1988): 4.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> James Marshall Unger, “*Nipponjin no yomikaki nooryoku to konpyūta (3)*” [Computers and the Reading and Writing Proficiency of the Japanese People], *Rōmazī no Nippon*, 425 (1988), 3.

<sup>138</sup> Atsugi Tetsuji discusses this phenomenon in Atsugi Tetsuji, “*Kanji dangi (2) wāpuro to kanji no ‘dowasure’*” [A Lecture on *kanji* (2) Word Processors and “Forgetting” *kanji*], *Gakushikai kaibō* (July, 2013): 88-90. The problem of character amnesia, sometimes referred to as *wāpuro sei kanji kenbōshō* (word processor-type *kanji* amnesia), was also alluded to by media journalists, who perceived it as an ailment. Cf. *Mainichi shimbun*, “[*Sonna banana*] *wāpuro sei kanji kenbōshō*” [[*Sonna banana*] Word Processor-type *Kanji* Amnesia], 28 October, 1992, 5. Other instances of script problems associated with word processors among journalists can be found in Fujimoto Setsu, “[*Kōetsubu gozen san ji*] *wāpuro no nakidokoro*” [[The Proofreading Desk at 3am] The Weakness of Word Processors], *Mainichi shimbun*, Tokyo Evening Edition, 17 May, 1993, 5.

<sup>139</sup> For a full account of character set lists devised in the early postwar period, cf. Yasuda, *Kanji haishi no shisō shi*.

research on language usage in newspapers, compulsory education, and policy. Characters included in the Basic *Kanji* were arranged phonetically according to the *kana* syllabary and were supposed to be used for general terms and vocabulary. *Kanji* that did not feature on Takeba's Basic *Kanji* could be used only for the writing of proper nouns, such as place names and personal names.<sup>140</sup>

The development of Basic *Kanji* was not solely aimed at producing a character set list to replace the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List. Takeba attempted to modify the Japanese writing system by incorporating the use of spacing in conjunction with Basic *Kanji* in his writings.<sup>141</sup> In order to achieve this, Takeba utilised contemporary word processing technologies to shrink the font size of *hiragana* to two thirds the size of a typed *kanji* character to save space on the page. This constituted an innovative use of Japanese word processing technology to support script reform.<sup>142</sup> An example, utilising Takeba's Basic *Kanji* and spacing, is shown below.

この文章は、漢字かなまじり文と基本漢字でかかれている。<sup>143</sup>

“This sentence is written in kanji-kana mixed-script and Basic Kanji.”

Basic *Kanji* was an attempt to bridge the gap between the use of spacing in the conventional Japanese writing system and other popular writing systems such as English. Such spacing, Takeba believed, would aid with textual reproduction and analysis, while a decreased range of *kanji* would help minimise the need to memorise large numbers or sets of *kanji*. For these reasons, Romanisation advocates such as Takeba did not perceive word processing technologies solely as a threat to script reform. This description of Basic *Kanji* demonstrates how during the 1980s and 1990s word processing technologies were envisioned as playing a central role in script reform, as opposed to disheartening *kanji* abolition (as Atsui argued), by Romanisation advocates. Though it is unclear whether Takeba's aim of formulating Basic *Kanji* was the total eradication of *kanji* or a move away from a mixed-script

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<sup>140</sup> Takeba Ryōichi, “*Nibongo kibun kanji ‘mirai’ 500 ji no kangae: nichijō nyūmon yō toshite* [Principles of the Basic *Kanji* ‘Future’ 500 Characters: For Daily Use and as a Primer],” *Kawamura Gakuen Joshi Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō* 2 (1991), 1.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Takeba does not stipulate a character size for punctuation marks in his writing on Basic *Kanji*.

writing system, the proposals he put forward indicate flexibility toward continued use of mixed-script written Japanese and an embrace of Japanese word processing technologies. Romanisation advocates skilfully adapted to technological changes occurring in broader society by utilising such technologies in their proposals for script reform and strived to make incremental changes to written Japanese by embracing such technologies.

Other Romanisation advocates favoured drastic changes to word processing technologies that, they argued, would resolve some of the more pressing problems facing the Japanese writing system. James Marshall Unger was one such advocate. Unger argued that the “wasteful, imprecise, and difficult nature” of the Japanese writing system was the main reason underlying the inefficiencies that stemmed from technological innovations such as the Japanese word processor. He claimed that a switch or move from the Japanese mixed script writing system to a Romanised writing system, which he saw as a wider orthographic achievement among the writing systems of the world,<sup>144</sup> would resolve many of the issues that occurred during character input.<sup>145</sup> Unger viewed existing *kanji* variation as an impediment to the construction of digitised character sets. China and Japan both utilised variants of the same Chinese characters, which could be viewed as a hindrance to developers of word processing technologies. Unger also lists other reasons related to difficulties posed by implementing technologies that would allow for the input of Chinese characters: resolution, readings (of a single *kanji*), structural incongruence (at a phonological and semantic level), orthographic variation, inventory size, and the ordering of words. Unger’s interest also extended to Romanisation in China (through Pinyin), which he viewed as aiding in the protection of minority languages and facilitating language rights through the internet.<sup>146</sup> His interest in Chinese language problems came partly from his mentor and colleague, John DeFrancis, who wrote regularly about script reform and language problems in China.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Arguably in civilizational terms, as Unger’s theorises that the alphabet is one of the most practical (and therefore advanced) writing systems.

<sup>145</sup> James Marshall Unger, “Japanese Orthography in the Computer Age,” *Visible Language* 18, no. 3 (1994), 239.

<sup>146</sup> James Marshall Unger, “Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages 1949-2002 (review),” *Language* 81, no. 3 (2005), 764.

<sup>147</sup> John DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972).

The main target of Unger’s criticism of mixed-script Japanese was *kanji*. The table below, adapted from Unger, paints a clear picture of the animosity Unger harboured toward *kanji* usage. When applied to word processing technologies, particularly the *kana-kanji* input method described above, these characteristics necessitate what Unger calls a “two stage input process” of word processing.<sup>148</sup> Essentially, this equates to a process where the phonetic representation of *kanji* is typed (stage one) and then converted (stage two) to the relevant *kanji* – the *kana-to-kanji* or *romaji-to-kanji* conversion method. Unger viewed conversion processes as time-consuming and costly.

Table 6. Unger’s *Kanji* Taxonomy<sup>149</sup>

Because...	<b>WASTEFUL</b>	<b>IMPRECISE</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
<b>Sets of <i>kanji</i> are</b>	LARGE	OPEN	ILL-ORDERED
<b>Readings of <i>kanji</i> are</b>	REDUNDANT	AMBIGUOUS	ARTIFICIAL
<b><i>kanji</i> shapes are</b>	COMPLEX	ABSTRACT	HOMOGENOUS

Eradicating *kanji* from the Japanese language would, Unger surmised, aid in the development of efficient Japanese word processing technologies that could compete with similar technologies in use in the United States and Europe.<sup>150</sup> It was not a question of cultural relevance but more a question of technological efficiency that drove the arguments that Unger presented (see table 6).<sup>151</sup> Reformists like Unger believed that computing needed to develop along the lines of linguistic rationality and concreteness. Any attempts to incorporate redundancies such as the two-stage conversion process should be avoided in order to achieve streamlined technological prowess, or else faster input methods such as the M system method should be utilised to produce mixed-script Japanese on word processing

<sup>148</sup> Unger, “Japanese Orthography in the Computer Age,” 245.

<sup>149</sup> Unger, “Japanese Orthography in the Computer Age,” 241.

<sup>150</sup> James Marshall Unger, *The Fifth Generation Fallacy: Why Japan is Betting its Future on Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>151</sup> Similar arguments were presented by Japanese computer scientists promoting the spread of word processing and computing capability in Japan. This was particularly the case among individuals who hoped to see Japanese computing gain a stronger foothold in global computing research and development.

devices. Unger's arguments, however, contained a cultural bias that portrayed "streamlined" and phonocentric writing systems used in Western word processing technologies as the ideal.

### Ongoing Effects of Technology on Script Reform

Japanese word processing technologies have had an increasingly significant effect on written Japanese language usage since the initial spread of Japanese word processing technologies in the 1980s.

Subsequent to the early development and spread of Japanese word processors, handheld devices and the interconnectivity provided by the internet began to disrupt writing practices and, by extension, written Japanese. Notable effects included Romanised methods of character input and increased *kanji* usage on digital devices (versus handwritten textual production),<sup>152</sup> which have led to the entrenchment of writing practices involving the typing of Japanese in *rōmaji* on QWERTY keyboards. However, *kana* input methods have also once again become common on smart devices, as toggle and flick input methods on smartphones find widespread support among smartphone users typing in Japanese.<sup>153</sup>

The Japanese script is further complicated by keyboards that include a shift input that allow users to switch from *kana* to *rōmaji* to a mixture of Arab numerals, punctuation marks, and special symbols, in addition to emoticons, while typing. There is a particularly pronounced difference in keyboard usage between smartphone and computer users, with the former preferring flick or toggle (shift) input and the latter preferring the QWERTY *rōmaji* input method.<sup>154</sup> Whether Romanised and toggle/ flick input methods will remain on separate trajectories is yet to be seen. It is clear, however, that future developments in word processing technologies will play an ongoing role in shaping textual input methods and, by extension, perceived relations between Japanese script and identity.

The spread of online social networking services since the middle of the 2000s is also impacting the Japanese script. There is a greater level of experimentation with written forms of the Japanese language as a result of increased online interaction. The practice of employing special symbols and

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<sup>152</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, "Technology and the Writing System in Japan," in *Language Life in Japan: Transformations and Prospects*, eds. Patrick Heinrich and Christian Galan (New York: Routledge, 2010), 140-153.

<sup>153</sup> For a description of toggle and flick input methods, see Nagasawa Naoko, "How Japanese Students Type on Smartphone and PC," *Konpyūta & Ejukeshon* 43 (2017): 67-72.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 71.

graphs to represent conventional Japanese scripts – observed in *maru moji* usage – gathered significant media attention as it spread through Japanese society. Additionally, *kanji* have begun to assume novel usage patterns. Characters such as 笑 (“laugh”) are used irrespective of syntactic structure to represent the equivalent of the Globish LOL (“laugh out loud”) and are scattered throughout sentences much as the term LOL (or “lol”) is in current online written English language usage. In turn, Japanese-speaking youth developed a shorthand for 笑, “w”, which phonetically represented the initial consonant of the *kun* reading of the character 笑 (*warau*, “laugh”). The presence of experimentation and play in text produced by the youth – both on- and offline – is not guaranteed, though the penetration of online written language into the offline script is clearly documented in the scholarship.<sup>155</sup> These patterns of written language usage currently occur to some extent in handwritten text – for instance in the use of *ri* and *ba* among Japanese youth for *ryōkai* (“understood”) and *arubaito* (“part-time job”) – and are a demonstration of how scripts reformed by interest groups move across media and into the everyday writing practices of the youth,<sup>156</sup> who have been shown to spend more time consuming script in electronic and in mixed (electronic and print) format than in print alone.<sup>157</sup>

## The Disappearance of the NLC

In 2001 the NLC was abolished by the Ministry of Education and replaced in 2002 by the National Language Subcommittee (*Kokugo bunkakai*) – a subcommittee subsumed under the Cultural Council (*bunka shingikai*) and overseen by the Ministry of Education’s Agency for Cultural Affairs. Many of the roles formerly assumed by the NLC were taken up by the National Language Subcommittee, including the formulation and revision of *kanji* set lists. Processes of language policy formulation also remained largely unchanged, with the subcommittee consulting key stakeholders, such as mainstream newspapers

<sup>155</sup> For instance, cf. David Barton and Carmen Lee, *Language Online: Investigation Digital Texts and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2013), 178-181.

<sup>156</sup> The words *ri*, typically written in *hiragana*, and *ba*, written in *katakana*, originated on Japanese social media around the year 2017 before becoming used across Japan. Cf. Yonekawa Akihiko, “Heisei no wakamono kotoba” [Heisei Youth Language], *Nihongogaku* 9 (2018), 32.

<sup>157</sup> Hashimoto Ryōmei, “*Moji no shōbi jikan no suiri to moji shōbi ni kansuru taiporōji: ‘Nihonjin no jōbō kōdō chōsa’ kara*” [Shifts in Script Consumption Time and a Typology of Script Consumption: From the “Japanese Information Behaviour Survey”], *Shakai Gengo Kagaku* 20, no. 1 (2017): 5-15.

and media, and deliberating on language policy.<sup>158</sup> The focus of the National Language Subcommittee, much like that of the NLC, predominantly centres on *kanji* and the improvement (*kaizen*) and spread of *kokugo*.<sup>159</sup> However, a decrease in membership size – from approximately forty-five to thirty members – and a subsumption within the Cultural Council meant the dwindling of the influence of state-sponsored national language policy formulation.

In 2005 the NLC was commemorated for its 67-year existence with the publication of a lengthy monograph on language policy by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. The monograph, titled *A One Hundred Year History of National Language Policy*, contained a section on “language policy for a new age”.<sup>160</sup> This signalled that the age of the NLC was being replaced by a new era of policy formulation, potentially led by the Agency for Cultural Affairs’ National Language Subcommittee. During the production of the monograph tensions arose between the Agency for Cultural Affairs and Yamaguchi Nakami 山口仲美 (b. 1943), a former NLC member and member of the commemorative book’s editorial board, who had been commissioned to write the “language policy for a new age” section of the book.<sup>161</sup>

Yamaguchi, emeritus professor of the Japanese language at Saitama University, was removed from the editorial board after painting a critical picture of NLC members and their opinions,<sup>162</sup> in addition to incorporating public commentary and media coverage of the NLC’s policies, in her draft of her book section. The decision to remove her from the editorial board – made by Iwabuchi Tadasu 岩淵匡 (b. 1937), Iwabuchi Etsutarō’s son – led to her publishing verbatim her drafted section of the

<sup>158</sup> Koitabayashi Yasuo, “‘Jōyō kanji hyō’ minaoshi no ugokai” [Moves to Revise the “Jōyō Kanji Set List”], *Hosō Kenkyū to Chōsa* (September 2008), 64–65.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. ACA, “*Bunka shingikai ni tsuite*” [About the Cultural Council], <http://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkashingikai/about/index.html>; ACA, “*Kokugo shingikai oyobi bunka shingikai (kokugo bunkakai) no omo na tōshin nado*” [The Main Proposals of the National Language Council and Cultural Council (National Language Subcommittee)], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkashingikai/kokugo/kokugo/kokugo\\_68/pdf/r1404730\\_11.pdf](http://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkashingikai/kokugo/kokugo/kokugo_68/pdf/r1404730_11.pdf).

<sup>160</sup> ACA, ed., *Kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi*, 663–725.

<sup>161</sup> Yamaguchi Nakami, “*Kokugo shingikai no shuen: kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi no hitokoma toshite*” [The Death of the National Language Council: A Snapshot of A One Hundred Year History of National Language Policy], *Saitama Daigaku Kiyō* 41, no. 1 (2005): 21–49.

<sup>162</sup> In her publication, Yamaguchi rightfully states that the names of individual NLC members and their opinions are readily available in NLC reports and minutes published by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

book in an academic journal associated with her home institution (Saitama University). In her publication Yamaguchi noted how the ability of the NLC to influence language usage in broader society had diminished due to its short-sightedness and conservatism.<sup>163</sup> Yamaguchi also criticised the NLC for its inability to formulate policies that provided “new direction” in a new age of word processors and rapid technological development.<sup>164</sup> This was also the contention of an *Asahi shimbun* journalist, who argued that the NLC had lost its ability to prescribe language usage and, as a consequence, was unable to rehabilitate the Japanese language.<sup>165</sup>

Despite accusations that the NLC no longer formulated effective language policies, *kanji* set lists continued to represent an attempt by officialdom to regulate Japanese script usage and influence writing practices, despite the dominant rhetoric portraying set lists as mere guidelines (as opposed to prescriptions) for written language usage and widespread experimentation with the Japanese writing system among the youth and other users of Japanese word processing technologies.<sup>166</sup> The authority granted to the NLC and National Language Subcommittee, in addition to media coverage of its policies, effectively ensured a level of adherence to the set lists published by such bodies, though, as Yamaguchi rightfully stated, such set lists carried less weight than they did in the past.<sup>167</sup>

## Conclusion

During the 1980s the NLC lost its position as prime language policy formulator due to its inability to keep abreast of technological changes affecting the Japanese writing system. The development of JIS character sets for Japanese word processors challenged the *kanji* set lists of the NLC, which were no longer as widely adhered to by the general public. Japanese word processing technologies, particularly the Japanese word processor, flourished in the 1980s, reaching broad segments of Japanese society:

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<sup>163</sup> Yamaguchi, “*Kokugo shingikai no shuen: kokugo shisaku hyakunen shi no hitokoma toshite*,” 48–49.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>165</sup> Kiyomizu Tei, “*Rōnsō kiemukaeta kokugo no kiki?*” [A National Language Crisis born of the Disappearance of Debate], *Asahi shimbun*, 16 April 2001.

<sup>166</sup> The National Language Subcommittee, for instance, revised the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List in 2010. Cf. ACA, “*Jōyō kanji hyō*” [*Jōyō Kanji* Set List], [http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kijun/naikaku/kanji/](http://www.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/sisaku/joho/joho/kijun/naikaku/kanji/)

<sup>167</sup> For an analysis of current script policy in Japan, see Dilhara Premaratne, “Globalisation, Language Planning and Language Rights: The Recent Script Policy Measures adopted by Japan and the People’s Republic of China,” *Current Issues in Language Planning* 16, no. 4 (2015): 425–440.

workplaces, schools, and households. Their success, in large part, can be found in their ease of use and efficiency, though support for word processing technologies among established linguists, manufacturers, and the mainstream media also aided their spread. While the progress in computing made during the 1980s dated back to the early postwar investment in computer science research,<sup>168</sup> the pace of innovation in the area of character input methods increased exponentially from the late 1970s onward, when information technologies and communications industries were sponsored by government agencies, politicians, and large corporations to develop new input methods and Japanese word processing technologies.

The word processing technologies that were invented during the period, particularly Toshiba's JW-10 word processor, resulted in the computerisation of vast segments of society through their ability to electronically reproduce and store mixed-script Japanese. It is likely that such developments encouraged experimentation with the Japanese writing system while also bolstering computer and digital literacy among the general population. However, the spread of Japanese word processing technologies also raised questions concerning the efficiency of the conventional mixed-script writing system and the need for its reform, including among the very computer scientists that contributed to the development of Japanese word processing. Additionally, the perceived benefits and setbacks of the coming information society were discussed in the media and education councils, by concerned parents, educators, language specialists, and a host of other bodies and individuals, partly to clarify the complex relationship between Japanese script and society. The conclusions they drew concerning word processors were contradictory. This was reflected in the gap between perceived effects and actual usage of Japanese word processors within various segments of society.

Compared to past generations of Japanese language users, the combination of information abundance and readily available information technology devices (such as the word processor and personal computer) generated a wide range of debates concerning the Japanese writing system.

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<sup>168</sup> See Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth to the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 196-199.

Romanisation advocates did not reject the basic premise of their argument (the inefficiency of a mixed-script writing system), and accordingly argued for gradual and drastic measures of reform by proposing new norms (e.g. based on Basic *Kanji*) using word processing technologies. Established linguists (NLC members) lent their voices, and energies, to the technological innovations that occurred in the field of computing, while the NLC itself lagged behind in policy formulation, until the mid-nineties (with its release of the “National Language Policy for a New Age” policy document).

Throughout the 1980s key members of the NLC saw computerisation and the word processor as tools that would promote literacy and increased contact with the Japanese writing system. This approach reinforced script conventions and enabled the automation of written Japanese to spread both within Japan and beyond its borders. The NLC did not, however, anticipate the concurrent drop in *kanji* reading and writing proficiency that supposedly accompanied computerisation. Similarly, they did not anticipate external concern with the effects of word processing on childhood education. Instead, the NLC chose to deliberate on the *Jōyō Kanji* Set List during the early 1980s and Contemporary *Kana* Usage in the mid-eighties. However, by the time the NLC began to openly discuss the effects of computerisation on Japanese society in the early 1990s the computerisation of society had itself become irreversible. The information society and information communication technologies that spread through Japanese households, workplaces, and schools brought with them problems that could not be resolved using conventional policy formulation targeting computerisation or word processing. This was mainly due to the momentum of technological change that occurred with the spread of Japanese word processors, and the lack of expertise among many members of the NLC to direct written language usage. The expertise of current policy makers during the 1980s was supplemented by the technology-focussed Japanese Industrial Standards Committee, a body that was able to supply word processor manufacturers and wider society with meaningful and practical *kanji* and character set lists.

In terms of language ownership, a noticeable shift occurred from the NLC to the JIS. With the spread of word processing technologies, the JIS gained a remarkable amount of influence on textual production of the Japanese language. From the late 1970s until the late 1990s, it was the JIS Committee

that secured ownership of key parts of the Japanese language and script (e.g. *kanji*). In the age of the word processor, the JIS Committee decided how written Japanese was to be displayed on word processors and computers; the JIS compiled character sets according to levels of linguistic complexity; the JIS Committee's analysis and research impacted what could and could not be written on most Japanese word processing devices. The NLC, on the other hand, tardy in its overall response to technological change, had to relinquish its power as a maker of effective script policy, a tremendous departure from its long preoccupation with written Japanese. Its existence as a postwar force for the reform and revitalisation of written Japanese was undermined in ways that could seldom have been foreseen prior to spread of the Japanese word processor. This led to the decline of the NLC and its eventual disappearance from Japanese language policy formulation, replaced by a smaller and less influential National Language Subcommittee in the early 2000s.

## Conclusion

This thesis demonstrated how Japanese script reform occurs through cultural and political developments within officialdom, interest groups outside of officialdom, and at the intersection between them. One broad conclusion drawn here is that script reform outside of officialdom is as significant as the Japanese language policies formulated by the NLC, in terms of shaping written language usage among the general public. By showing how various aspects of written Japanese were contested as “correct”, “appropriate”, “cute”, in a state of “disarray”, and “inappropriate”, the concept of language ownership confirms that written language does, after all, belong to an array of individuals and organisations, including established linguists and computer scientists, schools and ministries, cultural organisations and public intellectuals, parents, students, and teachers. This suggests the need for Japanese language policy makers to involve a wider range of groups and individuals as stakeholders in future language policy decisions and deliberations. The NLC’s attempts to direct written language usage and reform without the input of such stakeholders were unrealistic. Differences in Japanese script usage reflected a politically vibrant and culturally diverse Japanese society that could not be changed simply through top-down policies of script reform.

Several continuities can be found in language policies formulated by the NLC. Continuities included the membership and *kanji* policies of the NLC across the wartime and postwar period and its continued focus on standardised *kokugo* and *kokugo* education. The ongoing focus on standardised *kokugo* and *kokugo* education illustrates the extent to which the ideas of modern linguists such as Ueda Kazutoshi held sway over the many established linguists responsible for formulating language policies within the NLC. This outlook not only informed the formulation of set lists and rules for script usage but also reinforced connections between written Japanese and national identity through an increasingly culturally essentialist framing of *kokugo* and *kokujji* as a language and script that formed the core of Japanese ethnic identity.

Disagreement also regularly occurred within groups whose task it was to oversee the shape of written Japanese. Established linguists contended with one another over how and whether to reform Japanese script, with members even contesting the meaning of “reform”. While many established linguists supported the spread of Japanese as a lingua franca through East and Southeast Asia prior to the end of the Second World War, their overall vision for the Japanese writing system differed greatly based on their affiliation and training as scholars. This continued in the postwar period, with ideas such as democratisation (and its role within national language policy and education) being heatedly contested in the Occupation era. The contestation of language policy and script reform intensified during the 1950s and 1960s, as the range of ideas held by established linguists within the NLC during this period was such that groups of NLC members banded together to lobby politicians and, in some cases, visit language policy formulators in other countries (that were pursuing their own national agendas of script reform). Tensions came to a head when a walkout of conservative linguists led to the resignation of a progressive NLC chair, resulting in a period of introspective conservatism and anti-prescriptivism that eventually cost the NLC its reputation as the most influential language policy formulator in Japan.

As an organisation, the NLC was not only a language policy formulator, but a forum for the academic discussion of language problems. For instance, tensions within the NLC were often reflective of differences within Japanese linguistics. Differences were based on established linguists’ view of phonocentrism and nationalism, *kanji* culture and Romanisation, prescriptivism and anti-prescriptivism, and the ways these impacted the study of language. Such language problems indicate the existence of a broad spectrum of issues on which NLC members regularly positioned themselves. Tokieda Motoki is a prime example of an established linguist who repositioned himself on the spectrum with regards *kanji* culture and nationalism, shifting from linguistic imperialism during wartime to democratisation in the early postwar period, only then to become an anti-prescriptivist who was wholeheartedly against government intervention in language policy formulation because of the phonocentrism he claimed was driving national language policy. Nishio Minoru was another case of an established linguist who had supported early postwar policies only to later criticise them as being experimental and overly idealistic. Such changes in the stances of NLC members demonstrate the variability and development of opinions

and ideologies over time, making it impossible to portray individual NLC members (or the NLC as a whole) as intractable and unwavering.

The Japanese state was not the only actor attempting to influence the development of written language usage on a nationwide scale. Transformations in written language usage were impacted by language policies pursued by modern and postmodern states across the world. In the case of France, the Académie française continues to attempt to shape the French language through deliberation and the reinforcement of “correct” French usage (at the cost of gender diversity).<sup>1</sup> The British Council exerts its influence on English as a lingua franca on a much broader global scale, in places such as Africa, South America, the Middle East, East Asia, and Central Asia.<sup>2</sup> In the Central Asian state of Turkmenistan, script reform was (and is) entwined with notions of literacy and modernisation that bolstered a sense of “Turkmen” identity.<sup>3</sup> This thesis helps us rethink language policy and its potential and failures in empowering various groups and individuals with a vested interest in script reform and written language usage as a medium of self-expression and social cohesion.

The case studies contained in this thesis, which covered the postwar democratisation of language, transnationalism, cultural organisations, youth culture, and technology, provide not only an understanding of Japanese script reform, but also descriptions of key aspects of the relationship between subcultures and the mainstream, the effects of technological innovation on the development of written language usage, and the institutional history of Japan. Institutions such as the NLC were initially wedded to government bureaucracy, as wartime mobilisation and postwar reconstruction required coordinated efforts to resolve broad societal issues such as linguistic standardisation. Such connections, however, were short-lived and contributed to internal conflicts that impacted the overall effectiveness of policies. As cultural diplomacy and subcultures became increasingly important and visible within mainstream Japanese society and at a global level, the relevance of institutions geared

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<sup>1</sup> *France24*, “Académie française Rejects push to make French Language less Masculine,” 27 October, 2017, <https://www.france24.com/en/20171027-academie-francaise-gender-inclusive-spellings-mortal-danger-french>.

<sup>2</sup> See the “British Council Worldwide” section of the British Council’s online homepage. British Council, “Welcome to the British Council,” <https://www.britishcouncil.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Victoria Clement, *Learning to Become Turkmen: Literacy, Language, and Power, 1914-2014* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2018).

toward national matters gradually diminished. A perpetual flux in cultural and political factors will generate different views of Japanese script and script reform as the present unfolds. Through committees such as the National Language Subcommittee, in classrooms, and on smart devices, individuals and groups will continue to contest their ownership of the Japanese script, a script that represents a complex society, its subcultures, institutions, and practices, and imagined places within them.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

Opening address by Luther W. Stalnaker of the CI&E to the First Session of the NLC on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1949<sup>1</sup>

As a member of GHQ's Civil Information and Education Section, I am honoured to attend this meeting. I extend my greetings to all council members that have been newly selected from their respective fields [for NLC membership]. Given that I am not a language specialist, I feel handicapped attending a meeting to debate improvements and simplification of the national language. However, whilst being a philosopher, I am also interested in language problems, which leads me to believe there is meaning in my participation in this meeting. One thing we must not forget about when considering language problems is the importance of contemporary, as opposed to archaic, language problems and the simplification of the contemporary language as a vehicle to express thought.

There are criticisms that, despite various deliberations, little has been resolved by those gathered here from various segments of society to discuss language problems. These criticisms come not only from the Japanese side but can also be heard within General Headquarters. However, I am of a different opinion. One of my tasks is to negate those criticisms. I recognise the efforts all of you have made toward improving and simplifying various aspects of the national language. However, I would like you to strive even harder than you have to date in improving and simplifying the language. Since it is difficult to complete a range of tasks at once, it would be wise to tackle one problem at a time. In due course I would like you to consider what tasks to prioritise before reaching conclusions and reporting on each [issue]. As the decisions of the council are the most influential in Japan, I would like you to reach a conclusion on each issue. At the same time, I would like you to thoroughly notify the public of what you are doing. This must be done in a precise and suitable manner.

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<sup>1</sup> NLC 1, 52-53. The individual giving the address is Luther Winfield Stalnaker, clergyman and philosopher who wrote on humanism.

## Appendix B

Minister of Education Takase Sōtarō's Opening Address to the First Session of the NLC on 10<sup>th</sup>  
November 1949<sup>2</sup>

I would like to share a few remarks on the occasion of the convening of the general meeting of the National Language Council.

I am joyed to see, through the reorganisation of the National Language Council, the council's organisation and running become democratic, enabling it to function more effectively.

It goes without saying that the resolution of national language and national script problems is vital to the democratisation of our nation, particularly the fundamental issue of building a cultural nation (*bunka kokka*). It is also clear that the work [of the NLC] is accompanied by no ordinary difficulty.

I have nothing but respect for the considerable driving force and tireless efforts of the National Language Council of the past as it addressed the critical and difficult task [of resolving national language and script problems].

With the reorganisation, I urge those of you chosen based on recommendations from various sources to be amply aware of the importance of these [language] problems, and to exercise exceptional effort in your deliberations and proposals.

The authoritative plans of the National Language Council will be adopted as government policy. If [these policies are] gradually spread to other areas [of society], I believe your plans will not only largely contribute to the refinement and development of the national language, but they will lessen the educational burden, improve the efficiency of social life, and by extension further advance the cultural standards of our country.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone of you for attending today, amidst your busy schedules.

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<sup>2</sup> NLC 1, 51-52.

## Appendix C

Cabinet Order No. 85<sup>3</sup>

National Language Council Ordinance

The Cabinet, based on the provisions in clause 24, article 2 of the Act for Establishment of the Ministry of Education [...], enacts this cabinet order.

Clause 1: The National Language Council (hereon referred to as the ‘Council’) investigates and deliberates on the items listed [below], as well as any items deemed necessary in relation to these items, and petitions the Minister of Education and related Ministers regarding such items.

1. Items on the improvement of the National Language
2. Items on the promotion of National Language education
3. Items on *rōmaji*

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<sup>3</sup> NLC 2, 164.

## Appendix D

### A Note on Gender in Early Postwar Language Policy Formulation

A notable absence from the discussion of language policy and problems during the early postwar period is gender. Despite assurances of gender equality in the postwar Japanese Constitution and female representation in the political sphere, neither the NLC nor the journal articles analysed in chapter two touch on women's or men's language rights. Gender is absent from discussions of democracy and language. This may be attributed to the lack of female representation in language policy formulation, council membership, and among the established linguists that contributed to *Kokugogaku*. (This was reflected in GHQ, with only one female on the constitutional committee it set up.<sup>4</sup>) Female voices were largely absent within language policy discussions, much as they were in other important areas of political life, which correlated with issues of gender equality in other spheres of Japanese society during the early postwar period.<sup>5</sup> The only exception to this was Muraoka Hanako 村岡花子 (1893-1968), the Japanese translator and wartime women's activist, who served initially as a temporary Ministry of Education appointed NLC member and then a fully-fledged member of the NLC in the early postwar years. Her views on script reform were progressive, much like the majority of the individuals in the NLC at the time, and she was the only female involved in deliberations that established the *Tōyō Kanji* Set List.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, female voices continued to be grossly underrepresented in government-sponsored deliberations of a national bearing, even in areas unrelated to language.<sup>7</sup> It was predominantly the view of male linguists that shaped the script and style employed in the CoJ and the direction of debates concerning the democratisation of the Japanese language contained in the pages of

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<sup>4</sup> Beate Sirota Gordon, *The Only Woman in the Room: A Memoir* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> The reinforcement and construction of new gender roles based on the domestic (private) and workplace (public) spheres can be listed as one example of an area where gender equality remained a challenge after the implementation of the postwar CoJ. Cf. Shirahase Sawako, "Women and Class Structure in Contemporary Japan," *British Journal of Sociology* 52, no. 3 (2001), 406.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Education, *Kokugo shingikai no kiroku*, 74.

<sup>7</sup> The underrepresentation of female voices continued to be a problem even toward the end of the NLC's existence. Cf. Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, "*Kuni no shingikai nado no josei iin no wariai wa 17.4%*" [The Proportion of Female Committee Members in Government Councils, etc, is 17.4%], <http://www.gender.go.jp/research/kenkyu/ratio/970930.html>

the journal *Kokugogaku*. Academic journals focussing on Japanese language problems were also gender-skewed until the late 1980s.