

## Minority languages

## Japan as a multilingual society

- The Japanese people tend to think that Japan is a monolingual society.
- It is true that the majority of the people are monolingual speakers of Japanese.
- However, this does not mean that the minority languages can be ignored. (On the contrary, such an impression makes the situation worse for the minority people.)

## Minority languages

- Indigenous minority languages in Japan
- Languages spoken by immigrants
- Pidgins and creoles based on Japanese

## Indigenous languages in Japan

- Ainu (isolate)
- Japonic languages
  - Hachijo, Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, Yaeyama, Yonaguni (There are lots of theories about the detailed classification)

# Ainu

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aQ0f3An6ws>

# Ainu

- Language isolate
- No resemblance to Japanese in grammar or vocabulary
- Critically endangered: 10 speakers (Bradley 2007)

# Ainu

- ***Poropet kotan un arpa.***
- (placename) village to go
- “(s/he) went to the village of Poropet.”

(Shibatani 1991: 35)

## Transitive verb inflection in Classical Ainu

subj	sg.	pl.	subj	sg.	pl.
1st	a-	a-	1st	i-	i-
2nd	e-	eci-	2nd	e-	eci-
3rd			3rd		

*a-e-kore* 'I give you'

(Shibatani 1991: 25-26)

## Languages of immigrant groups in Japan

- Korean
- Chinese
- Portuguese
- Tagalog
- etc.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLt5qSm9U80>

## Languages of immigrant groups in Japan

- The Japanese tend to associate “foreigner” with white people speaking English
- The great majority of foreigners in Japan are from Asia
- Appearance doesn't tell which language they speak

Nationality of foreign residents in Japan (end of 2014)		Tourists visiting Japan (2015 Jan-Oct)	
<b>Chinese</b>	654,777	<b>China</b>	4,283,700
<b>Korean</b>	501,230	<b>Korea</b>	3,226,600
<b>Filipino</b>	217,585	<b>Taiwan</b>	3,114,800
<b>Brazil</b>	175,410	<b>Hong Kong</b>	1,236,100
<b>(US)</b>	51,256	<b>(US)</b>	854,700

(法務省ホームページ [http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri04\\_00050.html](http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri04_00050.html))

(政府観光局ホームページ [http://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/reference/tourism\\_data/pdf/2013\\_15\\_tourists.pdf](http://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/reference/tourism_data/pdf/2013_15_tourists.pdf))

- You find a (non-Japanese-looking) person having trouble in a train station. You want to help him/her. Which language do you use?

## Languages of immigrant groups in Japan

- In which language is there an announcement when a subway train approaches Nagoya station?

- Japanese
- English
- Korean
- Chinese
- Portuguese

## Pidgin and creole languages based on Japanese

- Yokohama Dialect, Ogasawara mixed language, Hawaiian pidgin, Yilan Creole (宜蘭クレオール), Koronia-go (コロニア語) etc.

## Pidgin and creole

- A **pidgin** is a language without native speakers. A pidgin is typically developed in a port, marketplace or an immigrant community where people with no shared language meet and interact.
- When a pidgin gets native speakers, it becomes a **creole**.

## Yokohama Dialect

A: **Anata ohayo.**

B: **Nippon ohayo.**

A: **Konnichi watakushi sakana makoto yasui. Anata kaimasu ka?**

(Today I fish real cheap. You buy?)

B: **Anata yasui. Watakushi kau. Anata takai. Watakushi pekepeke.**

(You cheap, I buy. You expensive, I leave (?).)

From カイザー (2005) Exercises in the Yokohama Dialect と横浜ダイアレクト

## Yilan Creole

- Spoken in a couple of villages in Southern Yilan (宜蘭) Prefecture in Taiwan

**A: Nta lukus moteke.**

You should bring clothes.

**B: Irang, wasi samuysang.**

I don't need one. I'm not cold.

## Lexifier and substrate in Yilan Creole

- **Wasi kino tayhoku ikanai.**

- “I didn't go to Taipei yesterday.”

- **Wasi asta tayhoku ikang.**

- “I will not go to Taipei tomorrow.”

- reflects perfective/imperfective distinction common in Austronesian languages

From 渋谷・簡 (2013) 旅するニホンゴ.

Which language do you use when you know more than one language?

## Diglossia

- A **diglossia** is a co-existence of two language varieties in the same community. Typically, one variety has low prestige (L) and the other has high prestige (H).
- The L variety is used in daily conversation among family and friends.
- The H variety is used in education, broadcasting, and written documents.

## Typical examples of diglossia

- Morocco (H: Classical Arabic, L: Moroccan Arabic)
- German-speaking area of Switzerland (H: Standard German, L: Swiss German)
- Haiti (H: French, L: Haitian Creole)
- Paraguay (H: Spanish, L: Guaraní)

## Is Japan a diglossia?

- If we regard local dialects of Japanese as the L variety, and standard Japanese as the H variety, then many areas of Japan are examples of diglossia.

## Domains

- A **domain** is the social context, function and topic of the talk that often determine language choice of speakers.
- e.g. religious events, novels, newspaper, TV, books, radio, shopping, gossiping etc.
- (Note: if it's just about stylistic difference within the same language, it is usually called **register**.)

## Code switching

- Code switching is a shift from one language to another by the same speaker within the same conversation.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLbQrVvGqw0>

## Code switching

- Dialogue between *nisei* (second-generation Japanese immigrants in US)

**A:** やすと私が今度 drive 代えたのよね。I was in the fast lane. Of course, speed 出さなくちゃいけないから。

**B:** Yeah.

**A:** そしたら、there was a car in the left, right lane.

**B:** うん。

**A:** Two ならんで行ったのよね。Side.

**B:** Uh-huh.

**A:** So, I was in the こっちの left lane. それでこ来たの。

# Questions

- Describe your language choice (or dialect choice) using domains.
- Do you code-switch? When does it happen?