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Desire and Despair for Losing Heritage Language: Life Experiences of Two Young Second-generation Immigrants

Ayako HIASA
Sophia University Graduate Division of Foreign Studies
M.A. Program in TESOL
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E-mail: ayako.hiasa@gmail.com

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Methodology
4. Jane's life experience
5. Roy's life experience
6. Discussion
7. Conclusion

Minority bilingualism

- ◆ **between family HL and dominant language in host nation**
cf.) elite bilingualism
- ◆ **tends to result in subtractive bilingualism**
(Valdes, 2002)

Non-attendance ratio

City	school-age children	public school	ethnic school	non-attendance	non-attendance ratio
Hamamatsu	1,558	873	358	325	21%
Iwata	270	118	91	61	23%
Kosai	169	116		58	34%
Fuji	274	191	0	83	30%
Toyohashi	1,100	644	250	206	19%
Toyota	819	431	236	75	9%
Ozaki	364	212		152	42%
Kani	258	91	74	93	36%
Minokamo	238	110	74	54	23%
Yokkaichi	461	274	109	78	17%
Suzuka	497	167	50	280	56%
total	6,006	3,227	1,269	1,465	24%

(2001, Gaikokujin shuju toshi-kaigi)

“Semilingual”

“someone with insufficient knowledge of either language”

(Gass&Selinker, 2008)

ア多様なものの見方や考え方を理解し、公正な判断力を養い豊かな心情を育てるのに役立つこと。

イ外国や我が国の生活や文化についての理解を深めるとともに、言語や文化に対する関心を高め、これらを尊重する態度を育てるのに役立つこと。

ウ広い視野から国際理解を深め、国際社会に生きる日本人としての自覚を高めるとともに、国際協調の精神を養うのに役立つこと。

(MEXT, 2011)

International understanding

Research questions

- 1) When and how does HL loss begin?
- 2) To what extent social conditions affect heritage language maintenance?
- 3) Why do immigrants choose to lose their HL?
- 4) How does language loss affect self- and social- identification?
- 5) How do politics of language affect home language policy?

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage Language (1)

“the language associated with one’s cultural background and it may or may not be spoken in the home”

(Cho, Cho, and Tse, 1997, p.167)

Heritage Language (2)

“Heritage language learners comprise a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to nonspeakers who may be generations removed but who may feel culturally connected to a language.”(Deusen-Scholl, 2003, p.216)

Heritage Language (3)

Heritage Language

- ≠ first language
- ≠ dominant language
- ≠ mother tongue

Language shift in three generations (1)

- 1st generation** HL monolingual
- 2nd generation** HL and L2 bilingual
- 3rd generation** L2 monolingual

(Fishman, 1991)

Language shift in three generations (2)

e.g.) A Japanese-American family

- 1st generation** Japanese monolingual
- 2nd generation** Japanese and English bilingual
- 3rd generation** English monolingual

Beginning of HL loss

- ◆ **initiated by young generation**
- ◆ **Schooling**
- ◆ **Children's desire to get accepted by the society**

(Wong Fillmore, 1991)

Language proficiency

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)

- ◆ daily conversational language skills
- ◆ 2 to 3 years to acquire

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

- ◆ language used in academic context
- ◆ 5 to 7 years to acquire

(Cummins, 2000)

Judging language proficiency just by BICS can misevaluate students.

Language shift in three generations (2)

e.g.) A Japanese-American family

- 1st generation** Japanese (CALP & BICS)
- 2nd generation** Japanese (BICS)
& English (CALP & BICS)
- 3rd generation** English (CALP & BICS)

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

Two second-generation immigrants

- ◆ **marginalized generation**
- ◆ **language loss is initiated by children**
- ◆ **key predictor of language loss**

(Wong Fillmore, 1991)

3.2 Profiles of participants

Jane

- ◆ A Japanese-Brazilian female
- ◆ HL: Portuguese
- ◆ L2: Japanese
- ◆ Brazilian (with permanent residency in Japan)

Roy

- ◆ A Chinese-American male
- ◆ HL: Cantonese
- ◆ L2: English
- ◆ American

Participants' name	Jane	Ron
Gender	Female	Male
Age	22	23
Years in the host country	20	23
Home country of parents	Brazil	Hong Kong/China
Heritage language	Portuguese	Cantonese
Second language	Japanese	English
Dominant language	Japanese	English
Current city	Toyota, Aichi	Fairfax, Virginia
Nationality	Brazilian	American

3.3 Data collection

- ◆ **Oral interview**
- ◆ **around 40 minutes for each**
- ◆ **semi-structured**
- ◆ **September, 2011**

Jane

- ◆ **face-to face interview**
- ◆ **at a café near her residence**
- ◆ **in Japanese**

Roy

- ◆ **through skype with web cameras**
- ◆ **in his room**
- ◆ **in English**

3.4 Data analysis

- ◆ **transcribed**
- ◆ **analyzed based on the five research questions**

CHAPTER 4 JANE'S FINDING

4.1 Family background

- ◆ father: third-generation Japanese-Brazilian
- ◆ mother: Brazilian
- ◆ Parents' Japanese ability: elementary level
- ◆ younger sister: born in Brazil

- ◆ The family came to Japan in 1990.
- ◆ Toyota city, Aichi
- ◆ Working visa
- ◆ Parents wish to go back to Brazil after retirement, but no concrete plan

◆ Well integrated into Japanese life style

「もっとブラジルに行ったり来たりする家だったら、もっとブラジル感があるとか。私は日本にしか住んだことがないから。うちは特殊なのかも。」

“Other Brazilian families who often travel to Brazil have more Brazilianness. I have only lived in Japan, maybe my family is kind of different.”

4.2 Social Infrastructure and HL maintenance

- ◆ grew up in a small town in Toyota city
- ◆ Brazilian Christian church
- ◆ 「国際学級」 *kokusaigakkyu*
elementary: Portuguese
jr high: Japanese

「本当に日本人と同化してたから、自分がブラジル人だから日本語しゃべれるって言う準備をしなきゃいけないっていうのを意識したことがなくて。先生がそうやって言うから、なんかそういうものが必要なんだなって思わされた初めて。」

“I had assimilated so much into the Japanese way of life, so I didn't think of preparing to demonstrate my Japanese language ability as a Brazilian. But teachers said so, so I thought I need to do so, for the first time.”

4.3 Attitudes toward HL and L2

◆ Language use at home

Father-Mother: Portuguese

Parents-Children: Portuguese

Child-Child: Japanese

Portuguese (HL)

- ◆ uses Portuguese with parents with Brazilian community members, only when they are nonspeakers of Japanese
- ◆ has literacy in Portuguese (perceptual)
- ◆ describes own Portuguese ability as limited and childish

Japanese (L2)

- ◆ Learned Japanese from mother
- ◆ learned hiragana & katakana at home
- ◆ became more fluent in Japanese than in Portuguese when entered elementary school

Parents' attitude toward HL

- ◆ not satisfied with Jane's Portuguese ability
- ◆ want her to study more intensively and acquire business-level Portuguese proficiency
- ◆ Being fluent in Portuguese will be a great advantage in the future

- ◆ regard Jane's Japanese ability in a positive way

「でもお父さんとお母さんは私たちが日本語をしゃべれることを自慢に思っているから、・・・中略・・・Hの子たちは日本語もポルトガル語も中途半端な子ばかりだったから。」

“But my dad and mom are proud that we speak Japanese so fluently. There were many Brazilian children in H town who were fluent neither in Japanese nor in Portuguese.”

4.4 Self language planning and living as a minority

“Do you want to pass down your HL to your future children?”

- ◆ answered negatively
- ◆ wants the next generation to be fully proficient in Japanese

「難しい話、政治の話とかをしてみたい。…中略…言葉自体が幼いから、お父さんお母さんの前では、すごく幼いキャラでいる気がする。何があってもママたちのいい子みたいな会話しかなかった。…中略…もう文化が違うから、分かりあえないところはある。」

“I want to talk about difficult topics like politics with my future kids. Because my Portuguese vocabulary is childish, from that I act like a little kid when I am with my dad and mom. Whatever happens, I could only have limited conversations. Because the cultures are different, there are some parts we cannot fully understand about each other.”

“Do you think it is your advantage to have a different linguistic and cultural background?”

- ◆ **Brazil: “poor” “underdeveloped”**
- ◆ **discrimination against non-white foreigners**

「疎外感。下級市民に思われているような気がする。なんか、完全な市民権は得てないなっていうか。…中略…逆差別って言うか、『ブラジル人なのに頭いい』とか」

“Alienated. I kind of feel I am considered as a “second-class citizen”. I don’t feel I have gained full membership in the society. It’s like a reverse discrimination. Like, sometimes people say, “You are smart even though you are Brazilian.”

CHAPTER 5 ROY’S FINDING

5.1 Family background

◆ **Father:**

- ◆ **from HongKong**
- ◆ **Cantonese and English**
- ◆ **immigrated to the US with his entire family when in middle school**
- ◆ **US citizen**

◆ **Mother:**

- ◆ **Guangdong, China**
- ◆ **Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese, and English**
- ◆ **immigrated to the US via HK in the late 1970s**
- ◆ **US citizen**

◆ **Older Brother: Born in the US**

5.2 Social infrastructure and HL maintenance

- ◆ Virginia, the United States
- ◆ no Chinese ethnic community around the area
- ◆ has never learned HL in school
- ◆ no experience of attending ESL

- ◆ studied Japanese for four years at high school

- ◆ took Mandarin Chinese course in college

“explore own origin”

5.3 Actual language use and attitude toward HL

◆ Language use at home

Father-Mother:

- ◆ mainly Cantonese
- ◆ code-switch between Cantonese and English

Parents-Children:

- ◆ English
- ◆ Mother sometimes uses Cantonese but children reply in English

Child-Child: English

“Chinese cultural concepts, talking about food culture or like holidays. Whenever like certain historical events, like you know, contain Chinese-like, we switch to Cantonese. Because it’s a little bit **difficult to describe American things in Cantonese.**”

Cantonese (HL)

- ◆ speaks Cantonese with relatives on mother’s side
- ◆ no literacy in Cantonese
- ◆ rarely has actual interactions with Cantonese speakers

- ◆ perceptual ability in casual conversations

- ◆ difficulty in speaking the language

“I really don’t do much with Canto. If a guy does more with a language than just speak at home, it goes a lot further. I would imagine.”

Parents' attitude toward HL

- ◆ Not concerned with language loss
- ◆ put more importance on adapting American way of life

"They don't care but what they want right now is for me to find a good job, have a successful life."

5.4 Self language planning an living as a minority

- ◆ Cantonese: local dialect of Chinese
- ◆ not practical or beneficial

"I would hate to see it die."

"Do you want to pass down your HL to your future children?"

"As much as I know. More, preferably. If I could, I really would. For own pride, yes, they need the language. But I don't know enough to. I'm not qualified. I don't know the language all that well myself. My Cantonese is very broke and corrupted. If they do, it's probably not from me."

- ◆ acknowledges the importance of HL as cultural heritage

- ◆ skeptical about passing down HL
 - ◆ proficiency
 - ◆ social supports

- ◆ Solid national identity as a US citizen

"I am American, and English is my language."

- ◆ shows a positive attitude toward being culturally different from the mainstream

"Because it is definitely a good thing to be a bilingual. And it is a better thing to be a multilingual. Of course, it is beneficial economically... the more you know languages, the more you can understand others"

- ◆ Being culturally diverse is associated with practical benefits
- ◆ Having difference does not scare him
- ◆ To have linguistic and cultural diversity should be appreciated

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

Jane

HL: BICS

-> necessary for family communication

regarded HL as a tool, not as heritage

Roy

HL: very limited

acquiring HL -> optional

adherence to HL

*6.1 Language shift in **Jane's** family*

1st generation Portuguese (CALP & BICS)

2nd generation Portuguese (BICS)
Japanese (CALP & BICS)

3rd generation Japanese (BICS & CALP)

*Language shift in **Roy's** family*

1st generation Cantonese (CALP & BICS)
English (CALP & BICS)

2nd generation Cantonese
(BICS, perceptual)
English (CALP & BICS)

3rd generation English (BICS & CALP)

◆ Importance of CALP in HL for family communication to overcome cultural differences

「難しい話、政治の話とか話してみたい。…中略…言葉自体が幼いから、お父さんお母さんの前では、すごく幼いキャラでいる気がする。何があってもママたちのいい子みたいな会話しなかった。…中略…もう文化が違うから、分かちあえないところはある。」

"I want to talk about difficult topics like politics with my future kids. Because my Portuguese vocabulary is childish, from that I act like a little kid when I am with my dad and mom. Whatever happens, I could only have limited conversations. **Because the cultures are different, there are some parts we cannot fully understand about each other.**"

6.2 Home language policy

taught L2 at home

school-home mismatch

no HL education

6.3 Social infrastructure

Jane

- ◆ religious community
- ◆ Kokusai gakkyuu 「国際学級」

Roy

language education at school
(as a regular American student)

- ◆ Japanese: 4 years at high school
- ◆ Mandarin Chinese: 4 years at college

6.4 Politics of languages

Japanese

Portuguese

English

Cantonese

6.5 Desire for losing, desire for revitalizing

Jane

- ◆ HL = barrier for acculturation

Roy

- ◆ HL = cultural pride

6.6 The second-generation

traditional view of acculturation
-> the second-generation

Jane's case

Roy's case

the first-generation

- ◆ fully bilingual
- ◆ gained legitimate status

Limitations

- ◆ participants
- ◆ halo effect
- ◆ dichotomical analysis

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

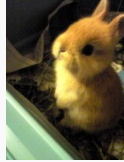
◆ Acquisition or Loss of Language

-> both individual and *social*

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Thank you for your input!



Ayako HIASA

M.A. Program in TESOL, Sophia University
ayako.hiasa@gmail.com