

THE POLYSEMY OF 'FUTSŪGO (COMMON LANGUAGE)' AND THE MODERN JAPANESE NATION: THE UNIVERSALIZATION OF A 'STANDARD LANGUAGE' TO CORRECT DIALECTS?

Saki AMANO

Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan
saki10093141@gmail.com

Abstract

In this paper, the term *futsūgo* (common language) was viewed over two periods. The first period (1880s-1894) was concerned with education but aimed to establish everyday, commonplace language and script that was familiar to the populace. However, by the 1890s, the policy of Europeanization was being reconsidered, and national consciousness was on the rise. The second period (1894-early 1900s), with the start of the Sino-Japanese War, saw an increase in the national consciousness in strengthening both literary and military arts, with a desire for the establishment of an artificially unified language with artificial rules that would unify the populace and the nation. The natural shift from the populace's everyday commonplace language to a unified national language became possible through the linguistic logic, or mediation of terminology, seen in the single (but ambiguous) word *futsūgo*.

Keywords: common words; common language; standard language; national language; spoken and written language

Povzetek

V tem prispevku je izraz *futsūgo* (skupni jezik) obravnavan v dveh obdobjih. Prvo obdobje (pribl. 1880-1894) se je ukvarjalo z izobraževanjem, vendar je bilo namenjeno vzpostavitvi vsakdanjega, običajnega jezika in pisave, ki so bili ljudem poznani. Toda v devetdesetih letih 19. stoletja je bila politika evropeizacije ponovno preučena in nacionalna zavest je bila v vzponu. V drugem obdobju (1894 - začetek 19. stoletja) se je z pričetkom kitajsko-japonske vojne povečala nacionalna zavest pri krepitvi tako literarne kot vojaške umetnosti in posledično želja po vzpostavitvi umetno poenotenega jezika s pravili, ki naj bi poenotili prebivalstvo in narod. Naravni prehod iz vsakdanjega, običajnega jezika prebivalstva v poenoten nacionalni jezik je postal mogoč z jezikovno logiko ali posredovanjem terminologije, ki je vidna v eni (vendar dvoumni) besedi *futsūgo*.

Ključne besede: skupne besede; skupni jezik; standardni jezik; narodni jezik; govornjeni in pisni jezik



1 Introduction

During the Meiji era, especially after the consecutive enactment of the Elementary School Order Revision, the establishment of the ‘National Language Course’ (*kokugoka*), and the establishment of the Ministry of Education National Language Research Committee in 1900, there were calls for the establishment of a national language for national unification, and it was decided that dialects should be corrected to a ‘standard language’ (*hyōjungo*) based on the dialect of Tōkyō as the capital city. National language education adopted the same policy.¹

Previous studies (Ogasawara & Funaki, 2001; Murakami, 2005) about this series of events have discussed the issue of ‘general education’ through an ideal, unified *futsūgo* (usually referring to ‘common language’) related to national language establishment and education; indeed, *futsūgo* was characterized by being a ‘created norm’ of the modern state. On the other hand, however, as is often the case with Meiji era terminology, a single term is often polysemous, used in multiple fields and several ages, causing conceptual confusion in our research in later periods (Amano, 2019). This is also the case for the term *futsūgo*, which is the subject of this study. In actual research, each field independently uses the term as if it was self-evident, with little discussion about the uses of the term in other fields, much less the mutual relationship among them.²

Just because the single term *futsūgo* is used it does not mean that it is necessary to limit conceptual discussion to a single meaning. Rather, it is because the term appears to be the same at first glance that its conceptual conflicts in multiple contexts need to be examined carefully, making it possible to clarify the linguistic logic of the ‘created norms’ that makes them appear identical. I believe that it was a strategy to follow the process of having an everyday, commonplace ‘common language’ for widespread education change to focus on a simplified and unified national education system – in other words, a strategy to unify a ‘national language’ (*kokugo*) through the mediation of the term ‘common language’ (*futsūgo*).

In this paper, I will examine the term *futsūgo* from when it is thought to have first appeared in the 1880s, to the use of *futsūgo* to correct ‘dialects’, and finally to prominent calls for the establishment of a national language at the turn of the century. The Sino-Japanese war, which broke out in 1894, was accompanied by a pronounced rise in the national consciousness. This period marked a major turning point in the use

¹ This series of movements was an attempt to clarify the unity of the nation by artificially polishing the ‘Japanese language’, which included several registers (described below), as a form of state-led nationalism. The use of the word ‘nation/al’ as used in this paper allows for the shifting significance of the concept of ‘nation’ towards a more state-led nationalism.

² One of the few considerations of the relationship among various examples is seen in Sato (1991).

of the term *futsūgo* to express the desire for the establishment of an artificially unified language with artificial rules that would unify the populace and the nation.

2 An overview of national language reforms in the Meiji era: The issue of *futsū*

2.1 The beginning of the national language reforms

First, the Japanese language during the Meiji era, whether the spoken or written language, had various registers (sometimes called 'phases', *isō*) depending on the environment of their use.

For example, the spoken language differed by region, such as the Tōkyō dialect and the Okinawa dialect. Depending on social class, people used the formal, refined language or the rough language of the downtown craftspeople. In a literary context, a frog was a *kawazu*, and in everyday speech it was *kaeru*. For the written language, there were many styles, such as a style like translated literary Chinese and an epistolary style. As for scripts, there were multiple methods of writing, such as Chinese logographs (*kanji*), Japanese phonographs (*kana*), and mixtures of the two.

Within these various registers, the questions of which linguistic system to use in which situation, or which script system, or which writing style – all of these questions are broadly referred to as the 'national language reforms' (in Japanese, *kokugo kokuji mondai*, literally 'national language and script problem' is used). The aspects of this issue can be summarized as follows.

1. Aspect on speech (e.g., region, class)
2. Aspect on writing (e.g., literary Chinese translation style, epistolary style)
3. Aspect on script (e.g., *kanji*, *kana*, Latin alphabet)

Next, we consider the perspective of Masao Hirai's research on the national language reforms (Hirai, 1949) which represents the major trend. In the 1870s of the early Meiji era, Japan came into contact with western civilization, nominally dismantled its feudal class system, and began to pursue a democratic way of life. When the national language reforms are considered in this light, their goal was the democratization of education, or the standardization of an educational curriculum that used everyday, commonplace language aimed at the widespread populace. Before the Meiji Restoration (1868), education was administered by the domains (*han*), and its opportunity was mostly limited to studying Chinese learning (*kangaku*) as the educational prerogative of the ruling warrior class.

Hisoka Maejima, a Meiji government official who is also known for founding the postal system, made a petition (Maejima, 1899) to the shogun Yoshinobu Tokugawa as early as in December 1866 to abandon Chinese characters, and also argued his vision

for the future of education. His petition (1899) called for ‘general education’ (*futsū kyōiku*), explaining that:

The national essence is the education of the people. That education should not depend on class but should be spread throughout the people. In order to spread education, it is necessary to use a script and writing style that are as simple as possible (Maejima, 1899, p. 6).³

In other words, regardless of social class, education should be aimed at the general populace, and script and writing should be simplified as much as possible. Here, the meaning of the word *futsū* may mean ‘widespread’ or ‘universal’.

2.2 The development of the national language reforms

What exactly is everyday, commonplace language? Though we might say ‘everyday, commonplace’, there are many levels of language with different standpoints and trends.

The dawn of the national language reforms was the 1870s, when a debate over the script (third aspect) was being held. Maejima drafted his petition to abandon Chinese characters, and instead adopt the simpler phonographic *kana* script.

The second aspect, the actual practice of writing, was also the subject of discussion. Before the Meiji Restoration, the mainstream of education was Chinese-derived words written in the *kanji* logographic script from China, and when words originating from Japanese were used, they tended to be archaic words from the Heian period (794-1185). In other words, it was not just a question of whether the script should be modernized, but whether the written language should be reformed to correspond to the modern spoken language.

In this context, Maejima (1899) wrote:

When establishing national writing and literature, one should not reconstruct the classical language with words such as *haberu* (archaic polite ‘to be’) and *kerukana* (archaic exclamation), but should use today’s common language, such as *tsukamatsuru* (humble ‘to do’) and *gozaru* (polite ‘to be’), and these should be fixed as the standard (Maejima, 1899, p. 15).

The important words in this quotation are seen contrasting the ‘classical language’ (*kobun*) and the ‘today’s common language’ (*konnichi futsū no gengo*). ‘Classical language’ refers to the Heian period language that was extant in written form, and ‘today’s common language’ existed in verbal form, as the spoken language. In other words, Maejima aimed to create a written style of writing words as they were used in

³ This and subsequent sources were translated by the author and Loren Waller (Yale University).

everyday speech rather than the traditional, elegant style that had become fixed in written documents.⁴ This writing style that corresponded to the spoken language was known as the *genbun itchi* (unified speech and writing) style.

In the wake of these debates of written style, the first aspect mentioned above came to be debated concurrently by the 1880s, the period of development examined in this paper. Since the spoken language is organic in nature, it produces a variety of different linguistic usages and registers. However, for the spoken language to be established as a standard, it was necessary that certain standards of the spoken language itself first be established.

In particular, the aim was to unify the language at the local and class level. This will be discussed in more detail in the following sections since it relates to the discussion of 'common language' as a term. Here, I will simply state the overall trend that the language of the middle class of Tōkyō, as the capital, would become the standard.

The concrete ways in which the everyday, commonplace language was used to democratize education, becoming the mainstream course of the national language reforms, can be summarized as follows.

1. Speech (Tōkyō, middle class)
2. Writing (*genbun itchi*, unified speech and writing)
3. Script (mixed *kanji* and *kana*)

3 The concept of *futsūgo* (1880s-1894): everyday, commonplace language

As shown in the previous section, the national language reforms and the word *futsū* as used to democratize education evoked discussions at different levels, resulting in many standpoints and trends. The term *futsūgo* which is the focus of this paper underwent a similar phenomenon in that it too became polysemous, being used in several different fields and over several different periods.

However, since this is used as an academic term, it should be defined as a clear concept, so this phenomenon of polysemy requires careful attention. In this section, I will first look at the main examples of references to *futsūgo* up through the first period from the 1880s to 1894. I will argue that there was no normative consciousness of national unification when the term *futsūgo* was used in this first period.

⁴ However, classical language is not limited to elegant words, and modern spoken language is not limited to colloquial words. For example, classical literature includes both *waka* and *haikai*. The former was elegant court poetry and the latter more lighthearted, colloquial, popular poetry. The medium of the source and the determination of elegant or colloquial is not fixed.

3.1 *Futsūgo* in dictionary compilation projects

3.1.1 *Futsūgo* as the Japanese language as a whole

Just as in the West, dictionary compilation projects were a way of honoring the nation's culture also in Japan. Japanese dictionaries⁵ are books that collect words from just the Japanese language; in other words, they are fixed cultural heritages that put Japan's linguistic culture into a visible form.

In the previous studies listed at the beginning of this paper, *futsūgo* is seen as a translation of 'common language'. However, the earliest instance of the word *futsūgo* is thought to be taken from the lecture by a Japanese linguist Kazutoshi Ueda entitled 'On Compiling the Great Japanese Dictionary' (*Nihon daijisho hensan ni tsukite*, Ueda 1889), but an examination of the original materials for the lecture reveals that the original phrase was 'common words'. Still, Ueda's use of *futsūgo* greatly transcended the scope expressed by the original, stemming from the differences in the relationship between the spoken and written language in Japanese and English. Indeed, even the essential word *futsū* took on a new meaning.

This specific example deserves special attention in that it is the first known instance. To explain the varieties of *go* (words), Ueda (1895b) gives the following explanation (Figure 1): "the varieties of words as defined by Murray, the president of London Philological Society" (Ueda, 1895b, p. 306). Ueda does not provide details of his source but based on other English quotations used and on the dates of publication, it is clear that this is from the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter OED), published with James A. H. Murray (1884) as Editor in Chief. The following Figure 2 is adapted from the first fascicle's 'General Explanation', in the first section 'The Vocabulary' (Murray, 1884, p. vii).

⁵ Before 1900, Japanese dictionaries were called 'Japanese' dictionaries; *kokugo* ('national language') was not used for dictionaries as it is today. For example, in 1915, *Dainihon kokugo jiten* (Ueda & Matsui, 1915) appeared. This shift to using *kokugo* for dictionaries was probably due to the national establishment of *Kokugo* as an academic subject.

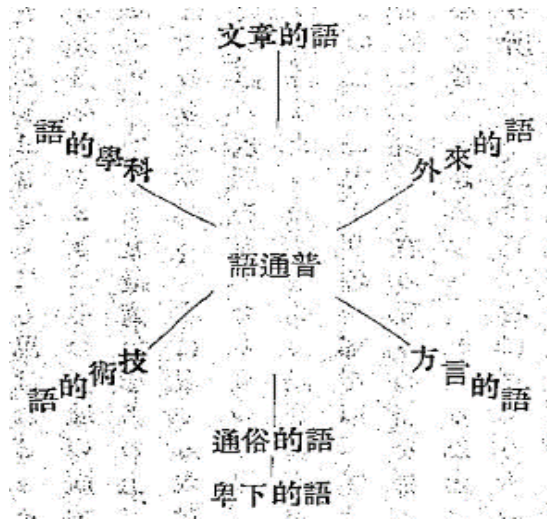


Figure 1: Varieties of words (Ueda, 1889)

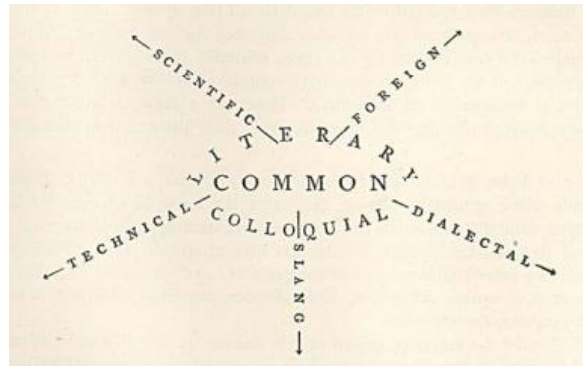


Figure 2: Varieties of words, OED, 1st ed. (1884)

Each figure shows the language in question in the center with its derived registers branching outward. The following two quotations are from the text of the OED describing the relationship between these types of vocabulary. I have changed the key terms to underlined>.

So the English vocabulary contains a nucleus or central mass of many thousand words whose 'Anglicity' is unquestioned; some of them only literary, some of them only colloquial, the great majority at once literary and colloquial—they are the Common Words of the language.

The center is occupied by the 'common' words, in which literary and colloquial usage meet. 'Scientific' and 'foreign' words enter the common language mainly through literature; 'slang' words ascend through colloquial use; the 'technical' terms of crafts and processes, and the 'dialect' words, blend with the common language both in speech and literature. (Murray, 1884, p. vii)

The first quotation defines the term ‘common words’ and the second is a detailed description of the relationship between ‘common words’ and each register. According to this, the English lexical system has a central part where written and spoken usage coincides, represented on the diagram as a circle with *common* in the middle surrounded by the words *literary* and *colloquial*. Vocabulary in actual use stems from one of the qualities and usages of these two central terms and develops into registers. The arrows stemming from the center represent this relationship. However, ‘common words’ particularly refers to the central part that is both written and oral, that is the very core words of the English language.

Here, it is important to recognize that literary and colloquial usage in the contemporary Japanese language that Ueda described did not correspond. As mentioned above, written Japanese used Chinese-derived words or Japanese words from the Heian period, making the systems of written and spoken Japanese completely different.

We next consider how Ueda’s diagram corresponds to the OED diagram. Ueda’s diagram (Figure 1) has 普通語 *futsūgo* (common) in the center, with six surrounding branches. Reading from the left, the top has 科学的語 *kagakutekigo* (scientific words), 文章的語 *bunshōtekigo* (literary), 外来的語 *gairaittekigo* (foreign words), and the bottom has 技術的語 *gijutsutekigo* (technical words), 通俗的語 *tsūzokutekigo* (colloquial) with 卑下の語 *higetekigo* (slang words) below it, and 方言的語 *hōgentekigo* (dialectal words). Ueda’s diagram differs from the OED diagram (Figure 2) of five branches in that he made ‘literary words’ a new branch and combined ‘colloquial words’ with the ‘slang words’ branch.

This difference is a clear indication of the lack of unity between written and spoken words at that time, which was one of the issues in the national language reforms. As was discussed above, the gap between written (literary) language and spoken (colloquial) language was great during the early Meiji era. Therefore, it was necessary to separate these two as independent registers; indeed, we can understand that there were few words in the central area where the two areas overlapped.

What, then, is the meaning of Ueda’s translation *futsūgo*? I think of it not as a central area (a core group of words), but as a starting point on the diagram. In other words, it is not the overlapping area of several registers within a language, but that language itself. That is, Ueda understood ‘common words’ to be the whole of the Japanese language itself, with each branch representing words in its various registers. This can be surmised from the fact that the central elements are not described or shown in particular, and that the branches are not shown as arrows. Furthermore, considering that the purpose of Ueda’s dictionary compilation project was to honor his nation’s culture, as with the OED in the West, it is not hard to imagine that there was a sense of Japanese as a national language as opposed to other national languages.

Therefore, we can conclude that the *futsū* in Ueda's *futsūgo* did not mean 'everyday, commonplace words', but the 'general language' comprising its various registers. Still, even considering Ueda's background, he studied linguistics from B. H. Chamberlain, and also had experience studying abroad, so was versant in the field of western linguistics, and was a forerunner in organizing the theoretical foundations of modern Japanese linguistics. He, therefore, looked broadly at Japanese from a national perspective. Ueda's broad vision of a dictionary as seen in his lecture notes spanned periods and vocabulary and aimed at establishing a linguistic-cultural heritage for all of Japan.

3.1.2 *Futsūgo* as 'everyday words'

Next, we will look at the Japanese dictionary *Genkai* ('Sea of Words') by the Japanese linguist Fumihiko Ōtsuki (1889). Like Ueda, he was aiming at a large dictionary that would eventually contain words from many periods as a part of a dictionary compilation project. However, 'The purpose of this compilation' in the preface to *Genkai* describes the contemporary position of dictionary compilation regarding a particular group of words in a language as its 'common words', and aims to create a 'common dictionary' primarily comprising those words. Although Ōtsuki was using the same term *futsūgo* in the same context of dictionary compilation as Ueda, he was using it to refer to a more limited group of words.

Ōtsuki divides a language into its 'common words' (*futsūgo*) and its 'proper nouns and specialized words' (*koyū meishō mata wa senmōgo*), and as is apparent through this contrasting conceptual categorization, the term *futsūgo* here refers to general nouns and everyday words in particular within the Japanese lexicon. For example, Ōtsuki includes unfamiliar western loanwords in the dictionary as 'everyday words' (*nichijōgo*), which is synonymous with *futsūgo*. A specific example is seen in the word *mishin*, which is a Japanese word deriving from the English sewing machine, though included in the dictionary with the *kanji* logographs 縫機 (literally, 'sewing machine'). Indeed, this is an appliance necessary to everyday life, and such words can also be called everyday-use words.

Reconsidering Ōtsuki's relationship to Ueda, Ueda referred to one language being made up of *futsūgo*, but Ōtsuki divided one language into its everyday lexicon and its specialized lexicon, calling the former general-use words *futsūgo*. In other words, *futsū* referred to everyday as opposed to a specialized register, and *go* referred to words. Even within the same context of dictionary compilation, the policy of lexical classification and the level of 'common' differed. We can say that Ōtsuki's stance had become closer to the 'everyday' that was desired during the national language reforms.

Ōtsuki had still made no clear distinction between spoken and written language, but Bimyō Yamada (1892), in *Nihon Daijiten* ('Great Japanese Dictionary') clarified this point, distinguishing 'everyday-use words, and both spoken and written words'.

Yamada was also a novelist and practiced the *genbun itchi* style of writing using everyday speech in his works. In this way, we can say that he was more sensitive to the relationship between the spoken and written language.

3.2 *Futsūgo* according to a Nativist Studies Scholar: *Futsūgo* as ‘modern language’

Next, we shall consider the use of *futsūgo* by the Meiji Period Nativist studies (*Kokugaku*) scholar Naozumi Ochiai (1889). Ochiai’s use of the term compares to Ōtsuki’s, but he emphasized the historical period in which a word was used. Based on the understanding that familiar modern words (e.g., *ossharu*) derive from phonetic changes in classical words (e.g., *ohoseraru*), he deepened the understanding of words by observing the process of how they traced back to classical words that were no longer familiar. He referred to modern words as *futsūgo* in this context.

Regarding this goal, Ochiai (1889) argued that “If one writes using *futsūgo*, then it will be understood even to the most unlearned. Likewise, even the most unlearned will be able to write freely.” (Ochiai, 1889, p. 26). This is a dual structure of ‘today’s common language’ and ‘classical language’ that was the key to the establishment of the *genbun itchi* style for the democratization of education, as seen in Section 2.2 above.

While the ‘classical language’ was the language of the Heian period extant in surviving written texts, ‘today’s common language’ was available only from modern oral sources, or in other words, everyday spoken language. Therefore, according to Ochiai, *futsūgo* referred to the modern colloquial language as opposed to the classical language.

Furthermore, if we reconsider the relationship between Ochiai and Ōtsuki, both are similar in that they were interested in everyday words. On the other hand, they focused on different aspects: Ōtsuki pursued the everydayness of *futsūgo*, while Ochiai focused on not only the everydayness of *futsūgo*, but also how it related to the issue of writing, as well as how everyday words were related to classical words.

I believe the fact that Ochiai himself was a Nativist studies scholar is one of the reasons for this minor difference. Nativist studies, to put it simply, was an academic discipline that attempted to rigorously examine and understand ancient literary texts in order to understand the ancient language and its manifest spirituality. In other words, it was an academic discipline that always looked to the past. Ochiai seems to have taken advantage of the contemporary focus on *futsūgo* to enhance the academic significance of his field of study.

3.3 Trends in Japanese linguistics around 1890

As mentioned above, the national language reform debate in the 1880s focused on establishing a unity of spoken and written language – *genbun itchi* – for the democratization of education, and there were calls for the unification of the spoken language to serve as the standard for written style. Around 1890, the consciousness for unification at the regional and class level was systematized through Japanese linguistics. This was conceptualized through 'dialects', linguistic systems that differed from region to region, and 'standard language' (*hyōjungo*), based on the Tōkyō dialect. This was just at the time that the policy of Europeanization was being reconsidered, and national consciousness was on the rise.

The first use of the term Standard Japanese, and its first contrast with dialects, was by the linguist Yoshisaburō Okakura (1890), in *Nihongogaku ippan* ('A Study of Japanese Linguistics'). Okakura argued that "... the separation of a language into parts is a great barrier to the spread of education, [and therefore] we must have dialects surrender to standard speech without delay." (Okakura, 1890, p. 164). In other words, a clear standard – the 'standard language' – and its accompanying the *genbun itchi* style, were essential for contemporary society, particularly in the field of education. If teachers taught in different dialects depending on the region, it would be impossible to produce a stable educational outcome, especially for students.

Thus, the national language reforms were tied to the reconsideration of the policy of Europeanization, as well as to Japanese linguistics and the issue of a grammar education. By this point, the issue of national language was no longer confined to the level of debate over everyday, commonplace language for the democratization of education. The issue had become the artificial strategy of national unification.

4 The concept of *futsūgo* (1894-early 1900s): The national language reforms and national consciousness

4.1 The national language reforms and the Sino-Japanese War

In the mid-1890s, there was a major turning point, the Sino-Japanese War, which began with the Donghak Peasant War in 1894, developing into a war between Japan and the Qing dynasty over the right to rule Korea. In 1895, Japan secured the Treaty of Shimonoseki, where Qing accepted Korea's independence and ceded the Liaodong Peninsula. However, just after the treaty was signed, Japan was required to return the peninsula through the Tripartite Intervention. Japan thereafter adopted the slogan *gashin shōtan* 臥薪嘗胆, literally 'Sleeping on sticks and tasting gall', to call for perseverance in developing Japan and improving its status in the world. As this was the age of imperialism, Japan was striving to catch up to western nations that were seeking

to acquire colonies for export destinations, so was also beginning to deepen its sense of confrontation with those world powers.

Such a nationalistic ideology ushered in a new phase to the issue of the national language reform. As is symbolized by the statement “History is not without examples of nations that have been defeated in literature, though they were victorious in war.” (Ueda, 1895a, p. 37), national language and writing received increasing attention, backed by an awareness of the importance of both the literary and the military arts.

4.2 *Futsūgo* according to pioneers of Japanese linguistics

In the previous period, Japanese linguists who looked at the issue of the national language reforms had developed certain linguistic rules needed for education. In this period, they developed those further into an artificial language with artificial rules for the unification of the populace and the nation. One of the most representative Japanese linguists who advocated this need was the aforementioned Kazutoshi Ueda, who had promoted dictionary compilation projects and coined the word *futsūgo* from Murray’s concept of common words but used in to refer to the shared Japanese language as a whole.

4.2.1 *Futsūgo* as ‘universal normative linguistic system’

In November 1894 lecture entitled “On the Study of the National Language” (*Kokugo kenkyū ni tsukite*), Ueda (1895a) first advocated for the establishment of a ‘standard language’ (*hyōjungo*) based on the dialect of Tōkyō, the capital city of Japan, as the mainstream argument of Japanese linguistics in the previous period. And Ueda goes on to say that he made a “great resolution to create what should be called a ‘common language’ (*futsūgo*) for the entire East, which everyone involved in the arts, politics, or industry of the East should know, from Koreans to Chinese, to Europeans, to Americans” (pp. 29-30). This parallelism between ‘standard language’ and ‘common language’ (*futsūgo*) was not seen in discussions of Japanese linguistics in the previous period and is particularly noteworthy in this second period.

As was shown in Section 3.1.1, Ueda in 1889 aimed to compile a large dictionary containing a large number of words from many different periods, using the word *futsūgo* to refer to the national language of Japan as a whole, as opposed to other national languages. Granted, he was stressing the dictionary as a way to assert Japan’s civilization to increase its authority internationally, but in actuality, he was just collecting a diversity of words within the Japanese language itself.

However, Ueda’s usage of the same term *futsūgo* had by 1894 been colored by the times, and its meaning as a term had changed drastically. His argument was more applied and not of the nature of a detailed definition of words. Simply stated, Ueda had

come to use the word *futsūgo* to describe an established Japanese 'standard language' that could then become a 'common language' that all people related to East Asia should know regardless of their citizenship. By now, *futsūgo* had come to refer to an artificial, unified language - a national language in Japan and the world. That it was unified also meant that it had a limited whole. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the meaning of the wholeness of the aspect of *futsūgo* had completely changed for Ueda within five years.

The quotation from Section 4.1 is in fact from this lecture. Based on the date and his expressions, it is clear that Ueda was alluding to the Sino-Japanese War. Attention had been turned to the unity of Japan as a nation both domestically and internationally by the nationalism in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, and the term *futsūgo* played (or was made to play) a role in that context.

4.2.2 *Futsūgo* as a 'normative linguistic system'

In Ueda's example, the relationship between a 'standard language' and a 'common language' was not fully discussed, so a clear definition was not formulated, though they both certainly referred to the Japanese national language. In other words, we can surmise that since domestically Japanese was used as a common language, it had thereby increased its value as a unified language, and as a result, it could become the Japanese national language, useful domestically and internationally at a high level.

It was Ueda's student, Kōichi Hoshina who went on to clarify these two phrases as terms. Firstly, Hoshina (1901) presented the following definition: "*futsūgo* 普通語 (Common language = *Gemeinsprache*)" (Hoshina, 1901, p. 48). Most likely, he was directly adopting Ueda's 1889 use of the term and its expansion of the debate from the lexical level to that of the language as a whole.

Secondly, he also defined 'standard language' (*hyōjungo*) as an artificially polished Tōkyō dialect, but this was not so different from Okakura's and Ueda's examples. However, Hoshina went on to envision a further step. After the establishment of the 'standard language', when it eventually unified the national language and came to be used as the common, unified language throughout the country, then it would finally be called the *futsūgo*. The relationship between 'standard language' and 'common language' should be clear: After a 'standard language' is established and becomes unified throughout the country, it can finally be called a 'common language'. Both 'standard language' and 'common language' undergo a process of artificial unification that eventually leads to universalization. At that point, a Japanese national language is finally envisioned.

Furthermore, given that they use the same translated terms, that they structure their arguments the same as parallelism between 'standard language' and 'common language' (*futsūgo*), and that they were teacher and student, I believe that Ueda's and

Hoshina's arguments are in agreement. The creation of a 'standard language' that was necessary for the establishment of the *genbun itchi* style of writing coincided with the heightened national consciousness, raising the Japanese national language – the *futsūgo*, or common language – to a level where it could be used both domestically and abroad. It was not only an important presence in all of Japan, but also a prerequisite for competing with the rest of the world, and a norm that established its position among world languages. The theories of these teacher-student pioneers of national linguistics succeeded as terminology and as concepts due to their combined efforts. The term *futsūgo* had traveled a far distance from being an everyday, commonplace language for the democratization of education in the first period.

5 Conclusion

The term *futsūgo* referred to an ideal, unified language for national language establishment and education, and was characterized by the 'created norms' of the modern state. However, in the process, it was used in multiple fields over multiple periods, resulting in multiple conceptual meanings.

In this paper, the term was viewed over two periods. The first period (1880s-1894) was concerned with education but aimed to establish everyday, commonplace language and script that was familiar to the populace. Specifically, lexicographers selected everyday-use words, and Nativist studies scholars selected modern colloquial language; indeed, *futsūgo* corresponded with 'common' language. However, by the 1890s, the policy of Europeanization was being reconsidered, and national consciousness was on the rise.

The second period (1894-early 1900s), with the start of the Sino-Japanese War, saw an increase in the national consciousness in strengthening both literary and military arts, with a desire for the establishment of an artificially unified language with artificial rules that would unify the populace and the nation. Examples of *futsūgo* in this new context reemerged with Kazutoshi Ueda, who established the theoretical foundations of modern Japanese linguistics, and who had first used the term *futsūgo* during the first period. The natural shift from the populace's everyday commonplace language to a unified national language became possible through the linguistic logic, or mediation of terminology, seen in the single (but ambiguous) word *futsūgo*.

This study has examined examples of the word *futsūgo* in the centralized nation. There is still room to research new perspectives from the side of the register of 'dialects' that were thought to have needed correction. This is because the discussion of 'common language' and 'standard language' has not sufficiently examined the perspective of the descriptions (self-identification) of those who were using the regional dialects.

For example, it is typically thought that the contrasting consciousness between dialects and common/standard language began in regions where the dialect was furthest from Tōkyō, such as in Okinawa. On the contrary, when seen from the perspective of how those using 'dialects' perceived their language, it is now known that the regions of Okinawa and Kyūshū were slower in considering their language 'dialects' than the regions in the mainland. In the future, I would like to expand the scope of my inquiry to include new terms and regions and elucidate a more bi-directional view of language between the center and periphery.

Acknowledgments

This paper is based on a manuscript that was to be presented at the International joint symposium "Embodiment in the Age of Imperialism" at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Asian Studies, on May 14-16, 2020, which was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic. In preparing this paper, I have received valuable advice from Nagisa Moritoki Škof (University of Ljubljana), Yasuhiko Komatsu (Aoyama Gakuin University), and Loren Waller (Yale University).

References

- Amano, S. (2019). *Gengo geijutsu ni okeru onsei to moji: Jutsugo o chūshin toshite (Voice and script in the linguistic arts: Focusing on technical terms)* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Aoyama Gakuin University (housed in the University Library in 2020).
- Fukui, K. (1907). *Nihon bunpōshi: Kyōiku narabini gakujutsujō yori mitaru*. Tōkyō: Dai Nihon Toshō.
- Hirai, M. (1949). *Kokugo kokuji mondai no rekishi*. Tōkyō: Shōshinsha.
- Hirai, M., & Yasuda, T. (1998). *Kokugo kokuji mondai no rekishi*. Tōkyō: Sangensha.
- Hokama, S., Ōno, S., & Marutani, Z. (1981). *Okinawa no kotoba*. (Nihongo no sekai) Tōkyō: Chūōkōron-sha.
- Hoshina, K. (1901). Futsū no gengo. In K. Hoshina. *Kokugo kyōjuhō shishin*. Tōkyō: Hōeikan Shoten.
- Itani, Y. (2006). *Okinawa no hōgen fuda: Samayoeru Okinawa no kotoba o meguru ronkō*. Naha-shi: Bōdāinku.
- Kondō, K. (2008). *Hōgenfuda: Kotoba toshintai*. Tōkyō: Shakai Hyōronsha.
- Konno, S. (2014). *Jisho kara mita Nihongo no rekishi*. Tōkyō: Chikuma Shobō.
- Maejima, H. (1899). Kanji gohaishi no gi. In H. Maejima. *Kokuji kokubun kairyō kengisho*. Tōkyō: Shūeisha.
- Murakami, R. (2005). Shōgakkō kokugoka seiritsu to Okinawa chiiki futsūgo gainen ni chūmoku shite. *Ryūkyū Daigaku Kyōikugakubu kiyō*, 67, 15-34.

- Murray, A. H. (Ed.). (1884). General explanations, The vocabulary. In *The Oxford English dictionary* (1st ed., pp. vii-viii). Retrieved from <https://public.oed.com/history/oed-editions/#first-edition>
- Ochiai, N. [Naozumi]. (1889). Futsūgo ni tsukite. *Kōten kōkyūjo kōen*, 1(4), 24-40.
- Ochiai, N. [Naobumi]. (1890-1891a). Nihon no bunshō (enzetsu hikki). In Kokugo Denshūjo (Ed.), *Kokugo kogiroku*. Tōkyō: Kokugo Denshūjo.
- Ochiai, N. [Naozumi]. (1890-1891b). Futsūgo no kisoku. In Kokugo Denshūjo (Ed.), *Kokugo kogiroku*. Tōkyō: Kokugo Denshūjo.
- Ogasawara, T., & Funaki, T. (2001). Kindai kokugoka seiritsuki ni okeru futsū gainen no kentō. *Kōbe Daigaku Hattatsu Kagakubu Kenkyū Kiyō*, 9(1), 65-76.
- Okakura, Y. (1890). *Nihongogaku ippan*, Vol. 1. Tōkyō: Meiji Gikai.
- Ōtsuki, F. (1889). Honsho hensan no taii. In Ōtsuki, F., *Genkai*. Ōtsuki Fumihiko (self-published).
- Sato, H. (Ca. 1889-1891). Kokugo o kaigai e yushutsu subeki ron. *Kōten Kōkyūjo Kōen*, 6(58), 50-59.
- Sato, S. (1991). Futsū to futsūgo to: konogoro omoishi koto jakkan. *Kokugo Kokubungaku*, (30), 1-17.
- Shibata, T., & Ōno, S. (Eds.). (1977). *Nihongo 11: Hōgen*. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten.
- Ueda, K. (1895a). Kokugo kenkyū ni tsukite. In K. Ueda. *Kokugo no tame*, Vol. 1. Tōkyō: Fuzanbō. (2nd ed., 1903).
- Ueda, K. (1895b). Nihon daijisho hensan ni tsukite. In K. Ueda. *Kokugo no tame*, Vol. 1. Tōkyō: Fuzanbō. (2nd ed., 1903).
- Ueda, K., & Matsui, K. (1915). *Dainihon kokugo jiten*. Tōkyō: Fuzanbō: Kinkōdō Shoseki.
- Yamada, B. (1892). Shogen. In B. Yamada. *Nihon daijisho*. Tōkyō: Nihon Daijisho Hakkōjo.