

# The Role of Language in Advancing Nationalism

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概要（日本語）

## 0. Introduction

This paper on language and politics explores the use of language when it is needed for creating and consolidating a state’s power, such as in wartime. I examine how linguistic resources and devices are used to regulate, reconstruct, and, sometimes, manipulate reality. The operation of political language is to categorize and label events, phenomena, people, and the state’s goals, and to formulate them in a way desirable to regulate and control the ideas and behavior of people.

The paper consists of three parts: the role of language in the perception and understanding of reality; the function of language in the creation and promotion of nationhood; and specific language patterns such as metaphor and labeling that leaders take advantage of, in order to manipulate the thoughts of people.

Firstly, I introduce and critically examine the literature on language, reality, and our conceptual system in relation to political discourse. The discussion starts with a statement of my personal position and belief in *nominalism* and language relativism: the world is constructed by word, and any aspect of language used, in political discourse especially, carries ideological implications.

Hence, I critically analyze the validity of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which is considered to be fundamental to the study of language's role in perceiving reality. In the second section I explore the relationship between nation, people, and language, focusing on the role of language in the formation of nationhood and the advancement of nationalism. This is followed by a discussion of authority in language: what is authority in language, and how does it work in exercising political control?

In the last section I specify what linguistic devices are employed for mass mobilization or for managing public opinion for a certain national cause such as consolidating the state's power or conducting a war. These devices include metaphorical language and categorization.

## 1. Language, reality and our conceptual system

### 1.1 World constructed by word: language and ideology

My analysis of political language proceeds from the philosophical idea of *nominalism*, which had been originally advocated by Roscellinno, and later developed by Ockham, Hume, Locke, Humboldt, and Wittgenstein. The idea also later influenced American Structuralists like Sapir and Whorf. This idea of *nominalism* originally developed as an antithesis to the claim of *Aristotelian realism* that there are natural kinds and categories: that any sort of knowledge of the world in itself or any understanding of cause or of the essence of nature, things, or phenomena was to be acquired by human beings using their own faculties.

Instead, *nominalists* hold that general

terms or commonly used terms are, and can only be, names that human beings attach to things or phenomena. They see the objectives of *Aristotelian realism* as misunderstood: science of this form cannot produce objective knowledge of the world, only the knowledge of the way human beings use words.

I myself would hold a weaker version of this *nominalism*, and I would reject *realism*. I am of the belief that the world is *created* by the way human beings label and categorize things, states, and processes. By extension, I would represent the position of a weaker version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or linguistic relativism, which holds that a linguistic structure to some extent determines the conceptual system of the speaker of the language that he or she speaks. I shall discuss the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and my attitude towards it, in section 1.2.

Ockham (c. 1280-1349) regarded our use of general terms as a reflection not of the nature of the world, but of the nature of our own minds. This is similar to Hume's position, and a more modern form was advocated by Quine (1960, 1969), who maintained that classification expresses a view that reflects our needs and interests rather than the world as it is in itself.

Locke (1632-1704) recognized that the way in which people interpret the meaning of commonly used words often leads them away from the truth. He stated that the words an individual uses are signified by an arbitrary, spontaneous, individual, and private act performed in the mind of the speaking agent. He wrote:

And every man has so inviolable a Liberty, to make Words stand for what *Ideas* he pleases, that no one hath the power to

make others have the same *Ideas* in their Minds, that he has, when they use the same Words, that he does.

(Locke, 1690: III 2.8)

This view additionally implies that we cannot directly confirm whether the idea we signify by a given word is the same as is signified by other people when they use the very same word.

Similarly, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) stressed the subjective feature of language: “Language is, as it were, the external manifestation of the minds of people. Their language is their soul, and their soul is their language” (Humboldt, 1971: 24). He was the first European to combine an extensive knowledge of non-Indo-European languages with a broad philosophical background. This led him to develop a linguistic philosophy that held that the view of the world of one people differs from that of another people by a much greater extent than ever conceived. He further stated that this is due to the extreme differences in the internal structures of their respective languages (Penn, 1972: 46-53). Franz Boas brought Humboldt’s idea with him when he came to America. He then had an influence on his student Edward Sapir.

In brief, according to *nominalist* and *relativist* ideas, a thing comes into being when it is given a name. To carry the idea to its extreme, a thing does not exist until it is given a name. That naming is done on the basis of our subjective needs and interests. There is no objective existence, as the *realists* proclaim. A weaker version of the *nominalists’* ideas is supported here in pursuit of the studies of language and politics. A more modern form of this view is the well-

known Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The account below deals with this hypothesis in more detail, along with its criticisms.

Thus, naming is a function of our mind: our way of thinking and our interests, and not reality in itself. This subjective view is not restricted to the lexical level of language. It can be said that any linguistic aspect of language structure, especially when used in political discourse, whether syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic, or discursal, could carry ethical implications or have ideological significance, depending on the speaker’s value systems.

## 1.2. Language, our conceptual system, and a critique of already existing literature

A more modern form of *relativism* and *nominalism* is the well-known Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which is now a classic on the subject of language, worldview, and our conceptual system.

### 1.2.1. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

In brief, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is based on two assumptions. The first is linguistic relativism, which holds that our worldview is molded by the grammatical structure of the language we speak; in its extreme version, it implies that people who speak different languages can never share the same reality, and this in turn implies that a perfect translation from one language to another is impossible. The second assumption is linguistic determinism, which in its extreme form maintains that we are inescapably passive prisoners of the language we speak rather than active

masters of it.

### 1.2.2. Extreme and limited versions of the hypothesis

There is both an extreme and a limited version of the hypothesis, with variations in between. The extreme version maintains that language determines culture and the two are interchangeable: language is culture and culture is language. As an example of this extremist view, Hoijer expresses the idea in the following terms:

If language and culture have been regarded by some as distinct variables...it is perhaps because (1) they define language too narrowly and (2) they limit culture to its more formal and explicit features, those which are most subject to change.

(Hoijer, 1953: 567)

The limited version admits only that language influences thought. I am myself in favor of this weaker version of the hypothesis. The grammatical structure of one's language to some extent influences the way one perceives the world. However, it is oversimplistic to make the equation: one's language = one's culture or one's thought, for the reasons to be mentioned in the next section. The extreme version is very difficult to corroborate, whereas the limited version is much easier to test and verify (Penn, 1972: 13-16).

### 1.2.3. Criticisms

The hypothesis, advocated more than half a century ago, has been subject to a number of criticisms from various aspects of studies of language, culture, thought, cognition, and

reality. The following are some points of criticisms:

#### 1.2.3.1. Ignorance of linguistic and ideological complexities within a culture

One of the criticisms that can be raised is that Whorf's and Hoijer's linguistic relativism presupposes the equation of one culture = one language. According to them, acquiring a language in a certain culture implies acquiring "a set of internally homogeneous, rigid and discrete concepts" (Lee, 1992: 47). As Fishman notes, however, "a basic definitional property of speech communities is that they are not defined as communities of those who 'speak the same language'" (Fishman, 1970: 32). Whorf's equation is oversimplistic in this sense. Also, Lakoff states that in reality "conceptual units are characterized by complex internal structure, with these conceptual networks connecting, interweaving and overlapping with other networks" in complex and sophisticated ways (cf. Lee, 1992: 47). A neglect of such interactional and complex networks within the speech community is one of the flaws of Whorf's neat linguistic relativism. If language is a shaper of one's worldview, and every individual in a culture or community shares the same worldview, as Whorf suggests, conflicts within a culture should not arise, since conflicts usually arise from differences in worldview or so-called ideology. Therefore, the idea of diversity should be extended also to variable structure *within* a single language community and not limited to variable structures *between* different language communities (Kress and Hodge, 1979: 13). Any language is extremely diverse, even internally. Fishman expresses it this way:

The very concepts of linguistic repertoire, role repertoire, repertoire range, and repertoire compartmentalization argue against any such neat classification once functional realities are brought into consideration. Any reasonably complex speech community contains various speech networks that vary with respect to the nature and ranges of their speech repertoires. (1970: 94-95)

Whorf's "neat and simplistic" linguistic relativism presupposes the idea that an entire language or entire societies or cultures are categorizable or typable in a straightforward, discrete, and total manner, ignoring other variables such as contextual and semantic factors. Geyer-Ryan says "each word is inextricably bound up in the dissemination of its social contexts" (1988: 195).

In regard to that point, Bakhtin presented the concept of "social semantic hybrid" (Bakhtin, 1981: 360). Bakhtin points out that, for example, in the following poem by Bertolt Brecht, we can observe "the mutual exclusivity of the two stylistic processes" between the ruler and the ruled.

### Questions from a worker who reads

Who built Thebes of the seven gates?

In the books you will find the names of kings.

Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?

And Babylon, many times demolished.

Who raised it up so many times?

In what houses

Of gold-glittering Lima did the builders live?

...

Every page a victory.

Who cooked the feast for the victors?

Every ten years a great man.

Who paid the bill?

So many reports.

So many questions.

(cf. Geyer-Ryan, 1988: 201-202)

Therefore, more attention should be paid to the way in which "different perspectives, different ideologies interact within a particular language and a particular culture" (Lee, 1992: 48). The implications of this on the study of language and conceptualization is that language should be seen more properly "as the medium of consciousness for a society, its forms of consciousness externalized" (Kress and Hodge, 1979: 13). Indeed, any aspect of language use, including the words, grammar, and discourse of a language, encode a view of the way we see the world. For example, we say in ordinary discourse that "The sun rises," as we perceive it that way, though the sun never rises in a strictly physical sense. It is more appropriate to define language as an external manifestation of one's conceptual system (see section 3.2. for metaphorical language).

### 1.2.3.2. Demythologizing "the great Eskimo vocabulary"?

Pullum (1991) warns that we should not allow ourselves to become naive believers of widely accepted ideas. He casts doubt upon the validity of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, especially, Whorf's theory of Eskimo's<sup>1)</sup> conceptual scheme: "hundreds of words for different grades and types of snow" based on the idea that "primitive minds categorize the world so differently from us" (162). Pullum also criticizes the naivety of people who easily believe the myth, accepting exotic facts about

other people's language (the existence of multitude words for snow) without checking the evidence. He disapproves of the way in which the definition of terms is so uncritically accepted:

When you pose a question as ill-defined as "How many Eskimo words for snow are there?" Woodbury observes, you run into major problems not just with determining the answer to the apparently empirical "How many" part but with the other parts: how to interpret the terms "Eskimo," "words," and "for snow." All of them are problematic. (ibid.: 168)

Pullum then concludes that the list for the terms of snow is still short, "not remarkably different in size from the list in English" (170). Pullum is correct when he notes that we sometimes uncritically accept a myth because of intellectual shortcomings or even negligence.

Similarly, it is observed that in Japanese there are lots of words for rain: *kirisame* (misty rain), *harusame* (spring rain), *hisame* (winter rain), *yuudachi* (summer afternoon shower), *niwaka ame* (same as *yuudachi*), *shigure* (a shower in late autumn or early winter), and *samidare* (early summer rain, May rain). In the Japanese language there are also many distinctions made about rice, which is the staple food: *momi* (unhulled rice), *ine* (the rice plant), *kome* (a grain of rice), *gohan* (boiled rice). Yet, as Pullum points out, there is a problematic issue. We could question how many of these words are actually used in daily speech by a "standard Japanese speaker." Poets and farmers may use them, but normally not ordinary people (just as, when it comes to color terms, in any society, it would

be fashion designers who would use more varieties of terms than ordinary people).

The reality about Inuk is that there may be many, many words for snow that are not used by so-called standard Inuk speakers. Pullum may be right when he points out complexities *within* a culture, and that not all the existing terms were used by "standard" Inuk speakers.

The languages that the Eskimo people speak around the top of the world, in places as far apart as Siberia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland, differ quite a lot in details of vocabulary. The differences between urbanized and nomadic Eskimos and between young and old speakers are also considerable. So one problem lies in getting down to the level of specific lists of words that can be verified as genuine by a particular speaker of a particular dialect, and getting away from the notion of a single truth about a monolithic "Eskimo" language. (168)

This statement of Pullum implies the need for studying individual speakers and suggests that there is no such thing as a "monolithic Eskimo language" that can qualify for scientific description. He is saying there is no monolithic or standard language in any nation or society. There are ideological diversities. There may be lots of words for snow in Inuk, but they are not used by "standard Eskimo speakers," just as various Japanese terms for *rain* and *rice* are not used by "standard" Japanese speakers.

### 1.2.3.3. Limitation of Whorf's sphere of interest to fundamental physical concepts

Whorf's analysis of classification of language

and culture is more or less confined to fundamental concepts of the physical world: how to divide space, time, and movements. Indeed, linguistic relativism may reasonably apply to these fundamental physical concepts. In a given highly complex society of today, however, how valid is the assumption that “language determines the way of classifying reality”? To Whorf, language is a “self-contained object,” just as Saussure perceived it. Language is a static object, which already exists and waits to be acquired. To take his idea to its extreme conclusion, human beings are not agents actively involved in classification processes, but solely passive and helpless prisoners of them. Then where and how, is the classification that is basic to all scientific activities made? Kress and Hodge (1979) hold that

the basic system of classification is itself abstract, and isn't manifest until it is made actual by human agents engaged in social interaction.... Classification only exists in discourse.... Classification is a living process. (64)

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis advocated more than half a century ago fails to see such discursual aspects; it limits its authors' view of language to a static object, dealing solely with rather slow-to-change fundamental physical concepts. Again, it considers language to be a “monolithic system rather than a heterogeneous form of human behaviour” (Lee, 1992: 21). It fails to see “complexities inherent in our social structure” (ibid.). Particularly, in a society where power relations are complex and unstable, a great deal of ideological diversity can be found (Fairclough, 1989: 87). Thus the hypothesis

is oversimplistic in terms of range of applicability. Classification is indeed an ideologically creative process. Thus, language realizes and makes sense of a world by classification in the double sense of comprehending it and producing it (Fowler, 1991: 58).

#### 1.2.3.4. Language as action not as a static system

For this reason, there has been a tendency in the last few decades to view language fully as a pragmatic, multifunctional instrument rather than as essentially a descriptive instrument that simply makes propositional statements about the facts of the world. One of the recent developments in sociocultural theory of language has been the movement away from the analysis of structure and towards the study of process and, recently, towards the study of activity rather than the products of activity (Brenneis and Myers, 1984: 6). In terms of the speech act theory of Wittgenstein, Austin, and Searle, language is placed in the sphere of action. Indeed, in everyday situations a sentence is spoken not simply to exercise our speech mechanisms but to perform and effect a certain social act with a certain intention. In this sense, every sentence is a *performative* (Ross 1970) and “social action is seen as the outcome of the externalization of individual intention” (Brenneis and Myers, 1984: 7). A statement is not uttered solely as the externalization of a static mind, as Humboldt and others proclaimed more than a century ago.

By extension, language is a form of action and a means of affecting reality rather than passive reflection of it. Brenneis and Myers continue:

The many functions of language may be of significance in those political processes “defining” the social order — a context of ordering established not only by what is said propositionally but also by who says it, who cannot, the speech situation, and so on. Any of these attributes of a speech act, in relationship to the speech situation, may be the medium for its function (ibid.: 8).

The analysis of such an activity perspective echoes with work in sociolinguistics (Gumperz and Hymes 1972) and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967, Goffman 1974) that examined the importance of individual choice, persuasion, intention, and manipulation of ideas in realizing social actions through the use of language (Brenneis and Myers, 1984: 7). Indeed, human beings use their words to affect and change the world they speak about. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis fails to account for such a dynamic aspect of language.

### 1.2.3.5. Ignorance of diachronic perspective

Diversity of ideology and classification hence does not exist only *within* a language or culture, as some critical discourse analysts have described it in modern literature (Geyer-Ryan 1988, Fairclough 1989, Kress and Hodge 1979, Lee 1992). Discourses that are competing and changing also exist in a diachronic context. Ideological shifts can be found in every moment of historical change. Even the way of labeling a *terrorist* changes with the passage of time. At one moment he is both *freedom fighter* and *violent terrorist*, depending on the speaker’s ideological viewpoint. But the next moment, when he has lost his faith, he is nothing more than an

*innocent victim*. This happened to the former North Korean terrorist, Kim Hyon Hee, in 1987. When her attempt to bomb a Korean Airlines plane at the command of North Korea failed and she was captured by South Korean police, she realized for the first time that she had been *brainwashed* and found herself an *innocent victim*. Language thus encodes social facts and conditions at each given moment of time.

Yuan et al. (1990) have conducted research on some of the changes to formulaic speech that took place in postrevolutionary China and during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. On the basis of a hypothesis that “routine formulae code cultural norms,” they hold that “social change will reveal itself in the formulaic inventory of a language” (61). They demonstrate how formulaic language (e.g., politeness formulae) changes according to the need of a new era to encode new social facts, and also how the new formulae are established on old social norms (ibid.). For example, they discuss how new formulae were made by inserting them into old formulae.

Some old formulae were not completely eliminated but were used instead as a basis from which new formulae were derived. Such formulae had to be syntactically decomposable to allow for the insertion of new constituents.  
(ibid. 66)

For example, here is a prerevolutionary greeting formula and its derivatives:

*ci zhi jingli!*  
“With high respect!”



This formula was originally used in prerevolutionary times, at the end of a letter or a document, to pay respect to the addressee if that addressee was old or of higher social status than the speaker or the writer. However, as its use was confined to people with respect to age and social status, and the social attitude towards age and social status had changed to a large extent, particularly in the Cultural Revolution, the formula did not suit the revolutionary context, in which the social hierarchy was turned upside down, with landlords and local officials losing their power and positions and becoming the targets of proletarian criticism, and the position of peasantry was raised. The proletariat and the Red Guards rejected the old formula and replaced it with new formulae such as

*ci zhi geming jingli!*

“With revolutionary greetings!”

*ci zhi wuchanjieji jingli!*

“With proletarian greetings!”

*ci zhi wuchanjieji geming jingli!*

“With proletarian revolutionary greetings!”

Such formulae are derived from the old formula *ci zhi jingli* by the insertion of elements like *geming* and *wuchanjieji* (ibid.). This insertion was needed so as to express regard for class status (the proletariat, revolutionaries) rather than for age or social status. Interestingly, the change of participants in the formulae results in a different meaning of the word *jingli*. In the old formula, *jingli* meant *respect* for the old and for those of a higher social status, while in the new formulae, it simply means *greeting*, which has a more egalitarian connotation to

suit the new hierarchical order and a new context (ibid.: 66-67). To meet new social realities, new formulae are derived from old ones by the insertion of new constituents, and by changing the meaning of a word.

Thus, the contradiction between an old and a new reality creates a change. More precisely, “the social basis in discourse acts as a motor of change in the system over time” (Kress and Hodge, 1979: 64). Kress and Hodge explain the process of discursive change in society:

New materials and new interests are incorporated into the old system, leading to a different “fit” between language and reality, and a different set of relations between existing categories. The result is that all categories have a slightly altered scope or function within the whole, which is essentially a new system disguised as the old one.... Change can occur more visibly, with the evolution of new categories. (ibid.)

In opposition to this view, Whorf seems to perceive language as a very fixed object. He presupposes that language is an unchanging existence, which remains as it is over time as a shaper of or a constraint upon one’s worldview. With such a static view of language, how does he explain the social and cultural changes that are taking place at any moment of history? Kunio Yanagida, a folklorist, noted that nothing changes as easily as language. Through language change, “the perceptual and cognitive inventory of the language and therefore of the language user will change accordingly” (Kress and Hodge, 1979: 27). As discussed earlier, more recent ideas view language, and classification made by language, as a living process. Despite

these criticisms, however, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is a rewarding academic construct in that it was the first to point out the profound connection between our conceptual system and the language we speak.

## 2. Nation, people, and language

In an exploration of how language resources are used to mobilize people or a nation for a certain cause (e.g., war), it is necessary to look at the literature on the relationship between nation, people, and language.

### 2.1. The role of language in the formation of nationhood

Nationhood is the most primary unit in politics: it is perhaps “the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (Anderson 1991: 3). Anderson (1983) argues that a nation is simply an “imagined community”: imagined because the members of even the smallest nation are unknown and anonymous to one another, yet the image of their fellow citizens’ communion is undoubtedly in the minds of each one’s life (Anderson 1983: 15, 133). Anderson further states that the existence of the community or nation is often *imagined through language* (ibid.: 133), and thus stresses the role of language in imagining and creating the nationhood. In much the same way, Gellner (1964: 169) radically states that “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”

Anderson discusses this importance of language in forming solidarity to create such nationhood in the following terms:

It is always a mistake to treat language in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them as emblems of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dance, and the rest. Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarity*. (Anderson, 1983: 122)

He explains how the role of language in forming solidarity differs from that of national flag and costume, presenting the term “experience of simultaneity.” For instance, language can provide a “special kind of contemporaneous community,” especially in the form of poetry and songs (ibid.: 132). For example, in the act of singing national anthems, however mediocre the words and the tune may be, there is an “experience of simultaneity” shared by all people present. At such moments when people totally unknown and anonymous to each other, utter the same verses to the same melody, the image of unisonance is created. Singing such national anthems or songs as *The Marseillaise* or *Waltzing Matilda*, for example, gives opportunity for “unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community” (ibid.: 133). At this “selfless” moment of simultaneity, nothing but imagined sound connects everybody present.

Just by listening to a certain mode of language with members of a community provides the same “experience of simultaneity”; it may take the form of sutra chanting, as happens more frequently in Asian countries, or the form of *chokugo* (guidance of morals) as used in schools in Japan during the Second World War when mobilization of the nation was an urgent necessity.

Brass (1974) presented the concept of “a pool of symbols” that expresses the internal values of a community or a people, as a tool for mobilization or nationality-formation. Presenting the cases of Sikhs and Muslims in North India, Brass explains the nationalist movements as “the striving to achieve *multi-symbol congruence* among a group of people defined initially in terms of a single criterion (410)”. The symbols are mainly linguistic and religious. In this process of nationality-formation, or “myth construction” in a struggle against opponents, values are affixed to symbols of language or religious identity, depending on the social reality of that community. For instance, when religion was not an acceptable symbol (as happened in postindependence India), the Sikh political leadership relied on and employed the symbol of Punjabi language to create solidarity. In this way, the symbols of group identity that were used to achieve the goal of a community depended upon the political strategies adopted by its leaders. In addition to attaching values to symbols of language or religions, both Muslims and Sikhs in North India used other associated symbols. As Brass puts it,

spokesmen for the Muslim community look for inspiration from the past in the history of Muslim empires; those for the Sikh community find their glory in the history of the Sikh kingdoms and in the valour of the Sikh warriors of the past. In this process of symbol selection from the past, it is often necessary to ignore inconvenient aspects of a community’s history. The process involves deliberate selectivity in search of myth, not truth.

(Brass, 1974: 412)

This echoes Brass’s idea that “assimilation is a subjective more than an objective process” (ibid.: 423). Since the linguistic, religious, historical, and cultural traits of a nation or community may be employed as symbols, “a full-blown and coherent myth may ultimately develop” to promote a sense of nationalism (ibid.: 412).

## 2.2. Ideology of “official nationalism” and “official language”

Notice that there are different types of nationalism and language. To take the simplest examples (or classification), they may originate from above (“official nationalism”) or from below (“popular nationalism”). “Official nationalism” can often be a very obscure concept in terms of language usage. It conceals a discrepancy between the nation as a whole and its political sphere: the discrepancy between national language (language spoken in everyday lives) and official language. A national language has more symbolic characteristics as an emblem of a community than an official language, which is used for practical purposes for communicating at a national level. Let us see some specific cases in multicultural and multilingual societies. In India, for example, where about 845 languages are spoken, English functions as an official language at a national level. This is also true in Malta, where, even after its independence from Britain in 1964, English is still used as the official language. Japan is a rare nation in the sense that it calls its own language *kokugo* (national language), not *nihongo* (Japanese). *Kokugo* is deliberately ambiguous, and it serves to obscure the distinction between language and national authority (Tanaka, 1992: 201 - 202). It is widely believed that

there is no difference between national language and official language in Japan. Note, however, that Japan is not a “monolithic” nation in terms of language. There are many dialects and registers as well; there also exists a gap between the centralized official language (whether written or spoken) and ordinary speech, just the same as in any other country. Nevertheless, the term *kokugo* has the effect of effacing these contradictions and making the national language look as if it were one unitary system.

### 2.3. Centralized bureaucratic language and the real usage of ordinary speech

George Orwell has criticized centralized bureaucratic language, particularly in his well-known essays “Politics and the English Language” (1946) and “Propaganda and Demotic Speech” (1944) (discussed in Milroy and Milroy, 1999: 36).

Orwell’s criticism focuses on the huge gap between the centralized bureaucratic language of people in power and the common usage of ordinary people. He takes a position that is against the standard ideology, which encourages prescription in language, and he supports “demotic speech.” He argues against “stilted bookish language” (“context-free elaborated code,” to use Basil Bernstein’s term), and maintains that this language is useless for communicating with ordinary people. He argues against the emptiness and artificiality of propaganda slogans and political jargon, seen in words like *objectively*, *counterrevolutionary*, *capitalist*, etc. (discussed in Milroy and Milroy, 1999: 36). Yuan et al. (1990: 74) term this type of vocabulary “empty phraseology” whose meanings are vague, general, and abstract, but useful for producing a feverish

atmosphere (ibid.).

Orwell is criticizing these linguistic abuses as attempts to exert power in a covert way. They are not usually observed in the colloquial speech of ordinary people but are found in centralized, official speech and documents, and they are spoken or written as “standard English.” He condemns authority found in language use that is the result of standardization by “institutionalists” (Milroy and Milroy, 1999: 37).

Institutionalism regards language “as an institution which exists independently of the individuals who perform linguistic acts” (Taylor, 1990: 10). Institutionalism

denies the relevance of individual agency and of the normative mechanisms by which agency is influenced; the science of language is conceived to be independent of political issues of authority, power, and ideology. (ibid.)

Contrary to this view, Orwell and critical linguists hold that language is inseparable from political issues. “Official” language in English is characterized by a relatively high proportion of words borrowed from Greek and Latin. Access to this elaborate vocabulary is not easy for ordinary people. Interestingly, such classical words originating in Greek and Latin in English are equivalent to *kango* (words of Chinese origin) in Japanese, which commonly uses a mixture of *kango* and *yamato-kotoba* (traditional Japanese words) (Suzuki, 1990: 129). *Kango*, being an elaborate vocabulary, gives the same impression of formality and impersonality as do words of Latin and Greek origin in English. To obtain the same effect, the Nazis also employed classical German styles in their political propaganda. There

seems to be a tendency for more words of classic origin to be used, the stronger the controlling system becomes. These elaborate terms have the function of concealing emptiness of thought, and of preventing those who are not adequately familiar with the classical language from having access to the ideas expressed (Milroy and Milroy, 1999: 37).

In the nineteenth century some scholars of language and literature radically objected to foreign loanwords in English. They opposed overcentralized and “artificial” forms of language, and they considered the real and “natural” form of language to be the vernacular speech of common people (ibid.). They favored replacing a voluntary system of speech with that of an institutionalized system by transferring from a normative prescription mode to a descriptive mode. In Japan, since modernization, there has been a similar movement towards linguistic purism, to replace the overreliance on Chinese vocabulary with greater use of traditional Japanese words.

#### **2.4. Print-language and the development of nationhood and nationalism**

Gellner argues that an empire does not require literacy, but nationalist movements do. Revolution is inseparable from the movement towards literacy. Anderson argues that “everywhere [that] literacy increased, it became easier to arouse popular support” (Anderson, 1991: 80). This is because all nationalist or “totalitarian” movements (Nazism, fascism, communism, etc.) have differed from classical authoritarianism in that they not only ruled over the nation but they have attempted to enforce their authority by means of the controlled and

organized mobilization of all the masses; propaganda, public opinion, and mass communication were always of great concern to them (Pool, 1973: 463, 465). This was the process by which “the new mid-class intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite the masses into history” (Anderson, *ibid.*).

The role of language in nationalist movements is well exemplified in the case of the Irish independence movement. During the campaign, Irish Gaelic played a significant role in mobilizing the people into the movement, and its use was very much encouraged. Once independence was achieved, however, the Irish Gaelic language became almost extinct.

As an example of how language creates nationhood, we must look at the development of print-language in connection with the formation of nationhood. Anderson argues that “print-language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language” in itself (1983: 122). Print-languages set the basis for national consciousness by presenting a sense of “simultaneity in homogeneous, empty time” (1991: 25). Because of the development of print-language and the spread of newspapers in the nineteenth-century Europe, people came to form vague images of compatriots simply by reading a newspaper, and thus through print-language (*ibid.*: 77). There was no particular need to know anybody individually. This happened in nineteenth-century Europe, where Latin had been superseded by vernacular print-capitalism for approximately two centuries. Thus, print-language generated national consciousnesses and formed nation-states (*ibid.*: 46, 77).

To reiterate, Anderson argues that national

print-language is “of central, ideological and political importance in nationality-formation,” because print-language lays the foundation for national consciousness and creates nationhood by presenting a sense of “simultaneity in homogeneous, empty time” experienced by people in the community. This can be observed in Japan’s case during the Second World War, too. Following the outbreak of the China Affair in 1937, and as the war structure was gradually built up, the government intensified its control over newspapers, particularly from 1938. With the need for a development of national consciousness, the government urged local newspapers to amalgamate into national newspapers. In this way the government was able to speak through the united organs and at the same time save newsprint. As a result of this shift from local to national newspapers, the circulation of local newspapers was halved, from about 12 million before the war to 6 million in 1944, while the circulation of national newspapers such as *Asahi*, *Yomiuri-Hoochi*, and *Mainichi* increased during the war. This government measure obviously strengthened the power of major newspapers, with the number of subscribers of the top 54 newspapers continuing to increase monthly by 84,000 from September 1942 and reaching 12,747,160 in July 1943. The rate of circulation is almost one paper for every household (*Japan Year Book*, 1943-44: 752-753; Shillony, 1981: 92; *Asahi Shinbun Hanbai 100 Nen Shi*, 1980).

The concept of solidarity forming means that one has full confidence in the simultaneous, steady, and anonymous activity of one’s compatriots although, say, an American will never meet or even learn the names of “more than a handful of his 240,000-

odd [sic] fellow-Americans” (Anderson, 1991: 26).

In the newspapers, we are thrown into “a world of plurals”: buildings, offices, shops, streets, and cars. *We American (Indonesian, Japanese, Germans, whatever)* readers are “plunged immediately into calendrical time and a familiar landscape... described in careful *general details*” (ibid.: 32). Even if someone reads about a car accident and a dead man, he or she does not care seriously who the dead individual was: he or she visualizes the *representative* body, rather than the specific personal life of the dead man (ibid.). Nevertheless, one also confirms the existence of many of one’s compatriots who are reading the newspaper at the same time, but whose identity or *personal* life one does not, and need not, care too much about. One again experiences “the simultaneity of homogeneous, empty time” (Anderson, 1991: 25).

Print-language also has the function of impersonalization, objectification, and quantification of people and events. For example, the various experiences during the French Revolution were formed by millions of printed words into an incident or a concept on the printed paper and, eventually, into a model (ibid.: 80). Hobsbawm concluded that the French revolution was not planned, initiated, or led by an organized party or movement, or by a group of people aiming to implement a systematic reform in the modern sense (Hobsbawm, 1964: 80, discussed in Anderson, 1992: 80). But once it had taken place, “it entered the accumulating memory of print.” The uncontrollable series of experiences that perpetrators and victims both underwent during those events, became a thing or a static concept — with its own name on the printed page as *the French*

*Revolution*. People questioned why *it* arose, what *it* aimed for, why *it* succeeded or failed. However, the systematic analysis of reality in a more concrete sense — *what* really happened, or “it-ness” — was taken for granted as if it had been an already existing program from the onset, and it was not questioned too much (Anderson, 1991: 80-81).

## 2.5. Criticisms

One criticism to be raised against Anderson’s view that language creates nationhood is that he perceives language solely as a tool to regulate human behavior. Language controls people, language forms a people — and never vice-versa, according to his view. Cannot people control language as well? Fischte, the German philosopher, defined people as “a group of those who develop their own language by the continuous exchange of thoughts.” One counterargument is the creation of an antitotalitarian language by underground activists in the “totalitarian” states of Eastern Europe. Wierzbicka (1990) has carried out research on the development of “antilanguage” from the lexical to the discursive level in Poland, where “‘the antilanguage’ is most people’s mother tongue” (5), although normally “antilanguage is nobody’s mother tongue” (Halliday, 1978: 171). Wierzbicka observes that the antilanguage actually results from official propaganda.

Here we find a view of language that is the direct opposite of Anderson’s; language is *generated* by a community, and a community is not only the invention of language. Halliday links the notion of antilanguage with that of anti-society in the following terms:

An antilanguage is not only parallel to an anti-society: it is in fact *generated* by it. (1978: 164)

This is an example of language generated by a certain community, as opposed to Anderson’s model. One of Anderson’s flaws lies in his treatment of community or nation as an imagined entity, as if something without real substance. Nevertheless, as this example shows, a community is not necessarily an imagined entity, it can be composed of people each with individual agency, which involves volition, responsibilities, and active-energy input, and it functions as an agent to create, change, and sometimes even direct the course of history.

## 3. War, peace, and language: linguistic devices for control

Thus far the role of language in forming a sense of community or nationalism has been discussed in general terms. Next I shall consider what specific linguistic devices are employed to mass-mobilize for a war or to manipulate public opinion for a certain cause. These devices include metaphor, categorization, and the like.

### 3.1. Language and war

As we saw in the section on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language not only reflects reality, but it also *affects* reality and makes changes to it. In the same way, language not only mirrors history and politics (Wierzbicka, 1990: 1), it also profoundly *affects* them. I disagree with the view of one war analyst who states “the violent reality of war exists outside language; everything, including language, melts into the brutal reality of war” (Nishitani,

1992: 3). This view devalues the role of language, which dynamically operates in the discourse of war.

Language has the power to mass-mobilize, and it was used for this purpose by, for example, Hitler during World War II. Language has the power, by metaphor, categorization, or the like, to construct the image of an *enemy* (as we shall see in section 3.2.). In modern politics, too, language can be used to accelerate the potential for war or militarization. Expressions like “to live with nuclear power” or “nuclear power is brighter than thousands of suns” entail an assimilation process into our daily lives and can even evoke war sentiment in a subtle way.

This view owes a lot to the literature of postmodernists, such as Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and also to the general semantics view, which has been influential in America since Alfred Korzybski published *Science and Sanity* in 1933. The above writers offer the belief that the misuse of language is a major cause of human conflict and endangers the future of the human race. Anatol Rapoport also discusses the role of language as a factor in accelerating militarization from the perspective of general semantics. And, as we shall soon see, P. Chilton has written extensively on the role of language as an agent promoting militarization.

## 3.2. Metaphor as political language

### 3.2.1. The role of metaphor in our conceptualization

Metaphor can be a powerful linguistic tool in thought control. Until quite recently, metaphor was generally taken to be confined to a specialized area of literary language or poetry. Metaphor was thus marginalized, or

even disregarded by linguists. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), however, radically defined metaphor as a conceptual phenomenon as well as a linguistic phenomenon. They believe that the crucial role of metaphor is not only in language but profoundly in the way we make sense of and talk about the world. They express this view in the following terms:

Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish — a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought and action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. ... The concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and consequently, the language is metaphorically structured...metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words...on the contrary, human thought processes are largely metaphorical.

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3-6)

This argument powerfully echoes Whorf's idea that our worldview or cognitive systems are structured through language. Metaphor plays an important role in language at a number of different levels: from the level of word meaning to the more general level of discourse.



### 3.2.2. Metaphor and ideology

Metaphor can be a tool for “thought control” because of its ideological potential. As a specific example of this, let us consider briefly Chilton’s language of nuclear weapons, or *Nukespeak* (1985), the term that refers to words and rhetoric used by specialists and officials of nuclear strategy. This term derives from George Orwell’s “newspeak” in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which concerns the way to exercise mass control. Chilton says, “metaphor plays an important role in our conceptualizations, and that is not to be dismissed as mere rhetorical ornament — but so assimilated to our cognitive processes that they go unnoticed” (Chilton, *ibid.*: 121)

One interesting aspect of *Nukespeak* has to do with the kind of nomenclature applied to weapons. The naming of weapons systems rests on broad cultural prototypes. Let us consider the terms used in U.S. Defense reports, given in Table 1. We notice that most of the names given are heroes, animals, or gods, or associated (syntagmatically) with these attributes (e.g., *Eagle*, *Blackhawk*, *Sergeant*, and *Hawkeye*).

Some terms in the table suggest the intended function of the weapon, such as a threat, violence, or sinister aims (e.g., *Prowler*, *Intruder*, and *Harm*). Obviously, the naming was based upon familiar things we can easily associate with. Also, names from Greek classical mythology were adopted: *Jupiter* (the ruler of Heaven), *Vulcan* (the god of fire), *Poseidon* (sea god and earthshaker), *Hercules* (hero of mythic strength), and *Trident* (his three-pronged spears represent control of the oceans). All these names connote supernatural power and

control (Chilton, 1985: 55). As another recent phenomenon, mediaeval chivalry has been evoked by names such as *Lance* and *Mace*: the metaphorical construction of these weapons as hand-held instruments has operated through names such as *Harpoon* and *Tomahawk* (*ibid.*). The naming process is

part of an attempt to promote their acceptance, to incorporate them into our everyday understanding of the world, to legitimate them in terms of our past and our cultural heritage (Lee, 1992: 84).

It is a linguistic strategy of “negotiating nuclear discourse with the non-military public” (Chilton, 1985: 55). The same rhetoric is used not only at the level of word meaning but also at a more general level of discourse. The following catchphrases have been used to hide the destructive features of nuclear weapons: “to live with nuclear power,” “nuclear power is brighter than a thousand suns,” “secondary casualties” (to minimize the image of casualties among noncombatants). The whole effect is *distancing* through *abstraction*, by connoting “positive strength rather than negative destruction: to switch meaning of specific object and effect to more generalized, emotive conditioning” (Chilton, 1985: 57).

**Table 1. The Nomenclature of Weapons Systems**

Source: P. Chilton, *Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate: Nukespeak Today*.  
 London: Frances Pinter, 1985, p. 56

<b><i>Animals: wild or aggressive</i></b>	<b><i>Descriptive names</i></b>
Jaguar	Hawkeye
Bear	Hellfire
Bison	Honest John
Bushmaster	Patriot
Cobra	Quickstrike
Sidewinder	Harm
Copperhead	Seafire
Eagle	Intruder
Blackhawk	Sergeant
	Captor
<b><i>Harmless</i></b>	Thunderbolt
Frog	Stinger
Badger	Redeye
Sparrow	Peacekeeper
	Prowler
<b><i>Non-animals: gods</i></b>	
Titan	<b><i>Traditional weapons</i></b>
Poseidon	Tomahawk
Vulcan	Lance
Hercules	Rapier
Jupiter	Mace
Thor	Harpoon
Atlas	Thunderbolt
Phoenix	Trident
<b><i>Heroes</i></b>	
Minuteman	
Pershing	
Honest John	
Hawkeye	

### 3.2.3. Employing religious discourse

Religious discourse is often applied to the naming process to give the impression that some *awesome* power of divine origin was involved. For example, Hitler renamed his nation *Reich*, avoiding the term *Staat*, because *Staat* sounds artificial, while *Reich* connotes supernatural power and control and echoes the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire. The term *Reich* was first used by the Holy Roman Empire (962-1806), then by the German Commonwealth (1871-1918). *Reich* was more appropriate than *Staat*; the former has a more classical and solemn connotation than *Staat*, which possesses a more modern connotation of Renaissance origin. In wartime Japan, too, a classical language style was used in an extensive way for militarists' slogans.

Americans also justified their *westward movement* of the nineteenth century by utilizing the high-sounding religious phrase, *manifest destiny*; it sounds as if their movement were favored, guided, and protected by divine providence. By the use of such religious discourse, the real initiator or agent of the policy will be obscured, with the connotation that the legitimacy of the movement derives from divinity rather than from the people.

### 3.2.4. Creating an image of an enemy through metaphorical process

As Hitler stressed in his book *Mein Kampf*, constructing an image of an enemy is an important rhetoric when waging a war. Creating an enemy image is also a metaphorical process; that is how leaders conceptualize an *enemy* or how they want

their people to perceive the *enemy*. During World War II, the Japanese called American soldiers *kichiku beiei* (beast-like American and British people). During the Vietnam War, American soldiers were indoctrinated with the idea that what they were killing were *commies*, not human beings, in the Vietnamese villages. For the same purpose, the murder of a village postman in Ulster, England may be reported as an *assassination*, while destruction of Vietnamese villages may be described as *pacification*. Construction of an *enemy* is based on the simplified categorization process of dichotomization: *us* and *them*. This process entails dehumanizing, the transformation of human individuals into depersonalized objects (Fowler et al., 1979: 128). This is a kind of replacement process by which a particular kind of individual can be replaced by noun phrases indicating larger abstract entities (ibid.: 162). Such impersonalized naming leading to depersonalization is "a routine feature of official discourse" (ibid.). The use of a generic pronoun such as *us* presumes that the interests of all of *us* are unitary and undivided, although this is not the case in reality (Hartley, 1982: 81-83). In this discourse, a class of agents is simply related to a class of actions in a simplified manner, with complex variables ignored, as a collectivization strategy (Fowler et al., 1979: 163). In this way, each discourse is formed in a certain direction in order to rationalize and justify policy and goals utilizing the power of metaphor.

## 4. Summary

This paper started with a discussion of the relationship between language, reality, and

our conceptual systems. Some literature on nominalism and Whorf's linguistic relativism was presented, accompanied by criticism of these ideas. Criticism focuses on Whorf's lack of perspective on complexities and dynamism in a culture and on diachronic perspective on language, and on the limitation of his interest to a fundamental physical sphere. When pursuing studies of political language, the view of language as a dynamic entity is essential because power relations in a society are very complex, diverse, and subject to constant change with time.

The second part of this paper concerned the role of language in creating nationhood and advancing a sense of nationalism. Some literature on these subjects was introduced, accompanied by criticisms of these ideas. Benedict Anderson's well-known idea of "imagined community" was presented along with his view on how national print-languages can contribute to the formation of nationhood ideologically and politically. Next, Brass's idea of a "pool of symbols" or common possession by a nation of symbols as a historical or a cultural heritage, was introduced. These symbols are commonly presented to people in order to generate solidarity by leaders of the time, in the form of poetry, popular songs, or slogans, or in textbooks. This myth construction process involves employing metaphorical or religious discourse because myth-formation for assimilation is a subjective, not an objective, process. It could be said that the more national solidarity is essential, the more the rhetoric of this "pool of symbols" is used for mobilization purposes.

The final section dealt with metaphorical language in political discourse as specific

linguistic patterns to be employed for mass-mobilizing public opinion or for particular national goals.

As we have seen, metaphor makes it possible for human beings to be transformed into dehumanized objects (e.g., being referred to as a *threat*, an *axis of evil*, or an *enemy*), whereas, conversely, inanimate objects are personified (e.g., by naming weapons after animals or heroes) all for the purpose of manipulation of the thought and conduct of people.

Thus, some of the meanings from the basic words and to a more generalized level of discourse are implicated in metaphorical language. We could easily become victims of metaphorical processes constructed out of our own conventional conceptual system by leaders of the time. The underlying idea exploited is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which explains how a language can reflect and control the conceptual system of its speakers.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observe that metaphor is not only an issue of language but also one of thought and behavior. This view implies that official discourse is not just a means by which the leaders of the time intend to enforce a particular view on a public that sometimes could be easily taken in. A more serious implication here is that, as the metaphors of *Nukespeak* suggest, official discourse is a way in which leaders conceptualize the discourse of nuclear weapons (discussed in Lee, 1992: 90). Metaphor encodes the pattern of thought that formulates such discourses. Thus, according to Sauer (1988: 87), Nazi propaganda, metaphorically treating the Jews not as human beings but as the *enemy*,<sup>2)</sup> was not simply a static level of misconceived ideas but

more dangerously a part of “dynamic processes of actual socialization.”

Thus, by conducting a careful analysis of the language of metaphor, critical linguists may have revealed not only the characteristics of propaganda or a deviant form of language use, but more basic problems regarding the *patterns of thought* that are deep-seated within such propagandistic discourses (Lee, 1992: 90).

The varied topics discussed in this paper are interrelated. The more a society is under bureaucratic or state control, there seems to be a linguistic tendency for certain patterns of political language involving metaphorical, ideological and religious discourse to emerge.

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- 1) The term “Eskimo” that appears in Pullum’s discussion is nowadays considered offensive. The term “Inum” is preferred.
  - 2) “For National Socialism and for the National Socialist Reich, Jews are the enemy” (12 March 1941, cited in Sauer, 1988 : 86).

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## 概要

### 国家統合のための言語の役割

本稿では Benedict Anderson (1983) が定義づけたように、国家を「想像の共同体」と捉え、国家帰属意識や国家アイデンティティーを構築していく過程で、言語がどのような社会的役割を果たしてきたのかを考察した。

まず第1章では、言語と現実認識の関係について扱った。唯名論 (nominalism) や、サビア及びウォーフによる、言語相対論 (linguistic relativism) を取り上げ、言語には、私たちを取り囲む現実を理解する助けとなる認識的効果がある反面、私たちの思考を規定し、時にコントロールする危険性を伴う働きがあることを述べた。時の指導者は、言語のこのような思考操作的機能を用いて、戦争時等、国家の統合や動員が必要な際に、望むべき方向に民を密かに導いてきたのである。

唯名論や言語相対論は、言語と現実認識の関係を明示した先駆的功績であるものの、一方で、言語には、ダイナミックで、複雑・混成的な面があることや、時と共に変化していく面があることを軽視している傾向があり、これらを批判点として述べた。

第2章では、言語、特に新聞を中心とした活字が、国を統合し、ナショナリズムを育むために、どのように役立ってきたかを述べた。Anderson が、国家を「想像の共同体」と呼んだように、本来スルク、抽象的理念であるものを、具現化していくためには、共同体に属する者たちの共通のシンボル (a pool of symbols; Brass 1974) を意識させ、「個人的には知らずとも自分と同じような人間の多数同時的存在」を、国家的な活字 (national print language) である新聞等を媒介として、広げていくことが必要であった。たとえ

ば19世紀のヨーロッパにおいて、それまで絶対的であったラテン語が諸国のことば (vernacular) にとって代わられていく過程で、諸国における新たな国家的な活字は、資本主義の波にのり新聞等のメディアを通して流布し、近代国家アイデンティティーの形成に大きな役割を果たした。このように国家アイデンティティーの形成とは、国家について共通あるいは類似した考えやシンボルを内面化することで、民を社会化していくことである。

ナショナリズムの構築とは、斯く内部の類似関係の誇示と併設して「私たち」以外のもの、ないしは外部者への差異を形成していくことでもある。「われわれ対彼ら」、「善玉対悪玉」のように、人為的に対比関係を表出していくフィクションの創設でもある。第3章では、差異構築のための具体的な言語使用の例として、隠喩 (metaphor) を主に考察した。野獣、侵入者、有害物といった悪のイメージを「彼ら」や「彼ら」を使用対象とした兵器等にラベリングすることにより、「自分たち」と「彼ら」の対比関係を明らかにし、「われわれ」の社会的結束をはかっていく。これは、抽象性の高い隠喩的言説に基づいており、時には内部的な矛盾を外部化する過程でもある。まとめるに、共同体や国家という「幻想」が成立し、存続するためには、内には共通のシンボルやエートス、外には、異質な差異的存在を捻出し、その言説を常に、国家的言語の力によって、発信・流布し続けることが求められるのである。

Key words: Benedict Anderson; imagined community; nationalism; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

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