

Utilizing the Chinese Language in Japan's Intelligence Activities 1897–1930s: A case study of MOFA officer Iwamura Shigemitsu

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore a new dimension in Japanese diplomatic history by examining how a foreign language can be used to convey, collect, analyze and translate information in a diplomatic network. By focusing on the long-ignored Chinese language specialist and China expert, officer Iwamura Shigemitsu (1867-1943), this paper offers a glimpse inside the intelligence strategies of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in relation to Chinese affairs during the prewar period. Besides investigating the role of the Chinese language in intelligence activities, we also discuss the voluntary aspects of Iwamura's diplomatic work as a middle-ranking officer and his conflicted view of the Chinese language limited by his position as a bureaucrat of imperial Japan.

Keywords: Chinese language, diplomatic history, intelligence activities

1. Introduction

In 1938, amid the second Sino-Japanese war, the instructor of the Chinese learning broadcast program and the part-time officer (*Gaimusho shokutaku*), Iwamura Shigemitsu wrote to his listeners in the "radio textbook (*Rajio Tekisuto*)," "Since there are few people in Japan who understand modern Chinese writings, it is impossible to form a true relationship with the Chinese people based on good will. It is a pity that mutual recognition between us is now insufficient." "Sino-Japanese friendship must be built on learning the Chinese language."¹

Although Iwamura promoted understanding of the Chinese people and Chinese culture through their language, there is no doubt that he was first and foremost a bureaucrat of Japan who prioritized his own country's interests in diplomatic activities. From 1899 through the 1930s, Iwamura held the positions in MOFA of secretary (*shokisei*) and consul in China, and then returned to Japan to serve as secretary diplomat (*shokikan*). In the prewar period, Iwamura was one of the most skilled Chinese language specialist and China expert at the forefront of Japan's diplomacy.

¹ Iwamura Shigemitsu, "Shina gendaibun kōza shōkai," in Rokkaku Tsunehiro, ed., *Chūgokugo kyōhon shūsei*, vol.7(2), Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 1998, p. 63.

Until now, scholars have written specifically on prewar MOFA in relation to Chinese affairs, focusing on the formulation of foreign policy (See Takeuchi Tatsuji, 2011, Inoue, 2018), personnel system construction (See Yajima, 2017, Son, 2006), the consular system and its human resources (See Cao Dachen, 2009). However, there is a lack of research on “non-career (middle-ranking)” China expert officers and how their Chinese language expertise was utilized and how they functioned in intelligence activities. As many scholars have mentioned, the ‘non-career officers who were often not graduates of Tokyo Imperial University or had not passed the diplomatic examination, were isolated from the decision-making process in MOFA (See Brooks, 2000, Motono, 2011). However, because the high-ranking diplomats were not able to read Chinese, the acquisition of information on Chinese matters depended heavily on the analysis provided by China experts specializing in the Chinese language, such as secretary diplomats (*shokikan*) and consuls.

To better understand Iwamura’s diplomatic activities in Chinese affairs and his attitudes towards the Chinese language, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of officer Iwamura in the context of the utilization of the Chinese language in the bureaucratic structure and the routes along which the collected intelligence information was delivered. We gathered MOFA’s official documents, along with published essays, a dictionary, and textbooks written by Iwamura to trace his activities and analyze the evolution of his diplomatic work.

The definition of “intelligence information” in this paper refers to information that meets the stated or understood needs of policymakers and has been collected, processed, and refined to meet those needs (see Mark M. Lowenthal, 2015). In the prewar period within MOFA, apart from military information, different kinds of intelligence (political, economic, social, environmental, health, and cultural) provided important inputs for analysts. In Chapter 2, we provide a brief overview of Iwamura’s acquisition of Chinese boosted by MOFA’s personnel selection policy and how the dictionary he compiled contributed to diplomacy in China affairs. The dictionary was designed to disseminate the correct pronunciation of north Mandarin (1867-1899). Chapter 3 examines how Iwamura undertook intelligence analysis and diplomatic negotiation in the Chinese language after he consolidated his position in MOFA (1899-1926). Finally, in chapter 4, we focus on Iwamura’s expanding range of activities after arriving back in Japan from two perspectives: how Chinese knowledge was utilized within MOFA to facilitate the exchange of academic information, and how it was utilized outside MOFA to educate the Japanese public about the Chinese language through the mass media (the 1930s-1941).

2. The birth of a MOFA officer specializing in Chinese

Iwamura Shigemitsu, the elder son of Iwamura Nariseki, was born in 1867 in Iikura Village, Sōsa District. In his youth, he received an education in classical Chinese (*Kangaku*)

at his father's coaching school.² Influenced by his father's education, Iwamura developed a deep interest in China and went to the Kan-Shin language school to learn colloquial Chinese in 1895 at age 17.³

The above educational background highlights two important aspects of Iwamura's language acquisition relating to the perception of Chinese knowledge in the Meiji period. First, the classical Chinese studies he undertook, as many people did in the Edo and Meiji periods, emphasized learning written Chinese, "Kanbun," rather than its correct pronunciation. Second, from his education in classical Chinese grew an expansive interest in China, which naturally led Iwamura to an interest in the more practical aspects of knowledge. After the establishment of the Meiji government, the need for a better understanding of the Chinese language led to a shift from the utilization of written knowledge to the utilization of colloquial knowledge. This was especially so after the Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade treaty was signed in 1871, and face-to-face communication and negotiations with the Qing dynasty increased in both the economic and diplomatic spheres, giving rise to the learning of spoken Chinese. The Kan-Shin language school was founded with the expectation that when the Sino-Japanese War came to an end, it would be essential to have language specialists fluent in colloquial Chinese and Korean.⁴

In 1895, Iwamura received instruction in colloquial Chinese from two teachers at the Kan-Shin language school. One was Zhang Zifang from Qing China, while the other, Tei Einei, was a former member of the Tōtsūji and had retired from the position of secretary diplomat (*shokikan*) in MOFA. The Tōtsūji, a Chinese translator organization that worked for the Shogunate in the Nagasaki area, was officially disbanded by the new government soon after the Meiji Restoration. Nevertheless, most were offered positions at Tokyo Foreign language school (*Tokyo Gaikokugo Gakkō*) as Chinese teachers or at MOFA as officers. However, from the late 1870s, the new government realized that the southern pronunciation utilized by Tōtsūji was not appropriate for official negotiations with the Qing dynasty in Peking. Instead, it was the northern pronunciation, northern Mandarin, that was regarded as standard.

We conclude that Iwamura learned both southern pronunciation and northern pronunciation in the Kan-Shin language school. In 1895, he then entered another Chinese coaching school, Eikisha, founded by Miyajima Daihachi, where he acquired more precise pronunciation of northern Mandarin from two Chinese teachers who came from northern China. In 1897, Iwamura passed MOFA's examination for selecting Japanese recruits to send to Peking to learn northern Mandarin. Iwamura was the only candidate who passed

² Iwamura Kinenkan. Ed., *Hōei no hikari*, Iwamura Kinenkan, 1940.

³ Iwamura Shigemitsu, "Gaikō to shinago," in Tyugoku bungaku kenkyukai, ed., *Chūgokugo Bungaku*, Vol.83, 1942, p.30.

⁴ Shibusawa Eiichi Seien Kinen Zaidan Ryūmonsha, *Shibusawa eiichi denki shiryō*, Vol.27, Tokyo: Shibusawa Eiichi Denki Kankokai, 1959, p.178.

the exam, despite the fact that he was a Chinese beginner who had completed only 3 years of study. This MOFA exam originated from the recognition that northern Mandarin is the official language, and the lack of Chinese experts accelerated this personnel selection process due to Japan's expansion of economic activities that occurred after the conclusion of the Shimonoseki Treaty (1895). To put it another way, when Iwamura was dispatched to Peking in 1897, MOFA's intelligence system for dealing with Chinese affairs was being reorganized.

Iwamura left Japan in September 1897, then spent three years in Peking before he was appointed to the position of secretary (*shokisei*) at the Zhifu (Yantai) consulate. His study of Chinese in Peking, which was geographically centered around the Japanese Embassy, brought opportunities to get acquainted with Japanese officers and Chinese bureaucrats and celebrities. For example, Iwamura was once appointed as an interpreter for Li Hongzhang in the Japanese embassy.⁵ The broad relationship he had with the Chinese people motivated Iwamura seek further improvement in his language skills, and this may be the reason he decided to compile a dictionary of northern Mandarin.

The dictionary, 'A New Chinese Dictionary (Peking Pronunciation),' was compiled by Iwamura over seven years, during which time he was studying in Peking and serving at the Zhifu consulate. The dictionary was first published by Hakubunkan in 1905 and the preface contained the following, "Nowadays, as the friendship between Japan and the Qing dynasty is deepening, communication between us is also growing and prospering. I am happy to see that the number of Japanese people studying the Qing language and their new essays is increasing. Therefore, some textbooks on conversational Chinese or articles concerning the current circumstance (*Jibun*) have been published following this trend. However, the fact that an appropriate dictionary has not been compiled appears to be an oversight. Lamenting this situation, I used my free time to work on this dictionary and have named it 'A New Chinese Dictionary.'⁶ As the dictionary's name suggests, it introduces the correct pronunciation of northern Mandarin, aiming to solve the problem Iwamura had long been confronted with, that most Chinese textbooks used in Japan remained traditional types containing no phonetic symbols as a guide to pronunciation.

Thus 'A New Chinese Dictionary (Peking Pronunciation)' was one of the first dictionaries for Japanese learners containing phonetic symbols published in the early 1900s.⁷ The dictionary used the romanization (Latin alphabet) system created by Thomas Francis Wade

⁵ Iwamura Shigemitsu, "Gaikō to shinago," in Tyugoku bungaku kenkyukai, ed., *Chūgokugo Bungaku*, Vol.83, 1942, p.32.

⁶ Iwamura Shigemitsu, "Jijo," in Iwamura Shigemitsu, *Peking seion shin jiten (A New Chinese Dictionary (Peking Pronunciation))*, Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1905.

⁷ After around 1900, a succession of Chinese dictionaries compiled by the Japanese were published. Ishiyama Fukuji published two Chinese-Japanese dictionaries, "Shinago jii" in December 1904, and "Nikkan jii" in July 1905.

in 1867 and further divided the northern pronunciation into 405 categories from ‘A’ to ‘Yung,’ with each pronunciation category accompanied by its Chinese characters along with their meaning. The pronunciation table was followed by the index of Chinese characters, which provided a convenient way to look them up.⁸

Furthermore, we consider that “A New Chinese Dictionary” might have been of considerable significance as a reference book for MOFA’s intelligence activities in Qing China.⁹ In the appendix of the dictionary, basic information on the Qing dynasty government was posted including, ‘Qing dynasty government system,’ ‘Local officials,’ ‘Outline of Qing dynasty army,’ and ‘Officials’ names and their English translation,’ “Trade areas on sea and land” and “Location and jurisdiction of the Japanese consulate in Qing China”, which suggests it was a dictionary written with a concern for those officers in MOFA who were not familiar with the Chinese language.

3. Intelligence analysis and diplomatic negotiations in the Chinese language

Iwamura's career as an officer in MOFA officially started in 1899 when he was appointed to the position of secretary (*shokisei*) at the Zhifu consulate. We consider this appointment may have arisen directly from his study experience in the Japanese embassy (Peking), as he did not pass the diplomatic examination. After serving as secretary in Zhifu, he was transferred and assumed the position of consul at the Zhengjiatun consulate (1916), Nanjing consulate (1919), and Tieling consulate (1921). This chapter focuses on the period after Iwamura consolidated his position at MOFA and examines how his ability in Chinese was utilized in collecting and translating intelligence information and in negotiating with the local Chinese.

First, we provide two typical examples of Iwamura’s Chinese translation activities and information gathering. In 1915, Iwamura published “Table showing China’s new administrative areas (*Shina Shin Gyōsei Kuiki-hyō*)” from Seimukyoku, a department in MOFA, as a response to the change in administrative districts along with their names due to the establishment of the Republic of China (1912). Iwamura collected the information from the China central government gazettes, the Chinese local gazettes, and other “trustworthy” publications, and then reorganized this information for his table. He also added a specific explanation entitled “Outline of Local Administration in China.” The work, which was confirmed by the administrator of the 1st department in Seimukyoku, Koike Chōzō, was totally voluntary and was compiled outside official work time.¹⁰

⁸ Thomas Francis Wade, *Yü-yen Tzū-erh Chi, a Progressive Course Designed to Assist the Student of Colloquial Chinese, as Spoken in the Capital and the Metropolitan Department: In Eight Parts, with Key, Syllabary, and Writing Exercises*, London: Trübner, 1867.

⁹ The dictionary was sold in China soon after its publication relying on Hakubunnka’s expanding business in China. See Rokkaku, 1999.

¹⁰ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B02130303400, 表紙(政-68) (Diplomatic Archives)

Iwamura's analysis of China's situation through locally published gazettes, newspapers, and magazines was applied in the subsequent consulate period. In 1917, when serving at the Zhengjiatun consulate, he drafted a diplomatic report entitled "A matter concerning China's newspapers and their employees," expressing a concern that "Newspapers in Zhengjiatun were without any Japanese editor."¹¹ After he became consul at Nanjing, in January 1920, a report entitled "Survey of Newspapers in China" introduced major Chinese newspapers published by Chinese people in Nanjing, Zhenjiang, Wuhu, and Anqing. Iwamura categorized these newspapers as follows: "government organ," "newspaper promoting commercial activities," and "newspaper with an editorial policy of rejecting Japanese commodities." Then he clearly remarks on the owner, chief journalist, date of first issue, and circulation of each newspaper. As mentioned above, the ability to read and comprehend Chinese articles was indispensable for collecting and analyzing Chinese newspapers and magazines. We should also note that the detailed information reported to MOFA was not derived from a single, short sampling period but was obtained over a long period of accumulation and monitoring Chinese public opinion.

Second, Iwamura's ability in Chinese was put to practical use in diplomatic negotiations, which helped him establish relationships with local Chinese officials. Since serving as consul at Zhengjiatun from 1916, Iwamura had been keeping an eye on the telegram and telephone business around the consulate. Since the Five Manchuria-Mongolian Railways Agreement of 1913, MOFA regarded the Siping Street-Taonan railway line, then under construction, as the essential infrastructure by which to expand its influence. This placed them in competition for this initiative with the Japanese army and the Ministry of Communications (*Teishin-shō*).¹² Because Iwamura also recognized Zhengjiatun as a key point in Manchurian trade, he tried to strengthen its telegraphic and telephonic networks with other areas in Manchuria¹³. From January to November 1917, he had been proactively proposing to MOFA about connecting telegraph wires at Zhengjiatun to the military lines and establishing a "merged Japan-China telephone office" for the public's benefit,¹⁴ with the former proposal being approved by MOFA, but the latter was shelved.

Around December 1918, Iwamura was told that the Beiyang government was planning to build new utility poles between Zhengjiatun and Siping Street. In order to investigate the truth of this information, he visited the telegram bureau under the Ministry of Transport and the branch office of the Mukden Telephone Company to inquire of the two office

of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

¹¹ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B03040838900, 20. 鄭家屯分館(1-3-2-21_2_005) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

¹² Kato Kiyofumi, *Mantetsu zenshi: kokusaku kaisha no zenbō*, Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2019.

¹³ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B07090437300, 2. 四平街、鄭家屯間(5-1-9-0-6_001) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

¹⁴ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B07090437300, 2. 四平街、鄭家屯間(5-1-9-0-6_001) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

directors. Later in the report to MOFA, he translated the officers' replies into Japanese. These contained detailed explanations for the current construction of telephony and telegraphy on the same wire, the telegram fees, telephone charges, and the construction schedule.¹⁵ From February to March 1918, Iwamura continued reporting on the construction of this project.¹⁶ The report in March on areas covered and fees of the telephony business was first received by the 1st Department of Tsūshōkyoku in MOFA, then was circulated to the Consul General of Japan, and Consuls General stationed at Changchun, Tieling, Liaoyang, and Niuzhuang, and was further delivered to the Ministry of Communications, which indicates that the intelligence information provided by Iwamura was regarded as vital within the MOFA.

We also consider that Iwamura's negotiations with a broad network of local Chinese had a motivation to reduce the tension between Japan and China. In April 1919, Iwamura reported the establishment of the “Japan-China Friendship Association” at Zhengjiatun. In this official letter to MOFA, he first emphasizes his supervision of the Japanese residents who devoured the Chinese people's profits and hurt the feelings of the Chinese public and bureaucrats. After some strict controls were imposed by Iwamura, the number of Japanese residents of good character that worked in companies and banks increased in Zhengjiatun. Consequently, there was a gradual increase in the number of Chinese who formed a more favorable attitude towards Japan, and the influential Chinese people in this area planned to establish a social institution for promoting friendly relations. When they discussed this with Iwamura, he gave his immediate agreement and assistance.¹⁷ Iwamura's negotiations in the Zhengjiatun area also include assisting local public works, explaining Japan's China policy to the public, and clarifying how the rejection of Japanese commodities was not in their best interests.¹⁸

4. Expanding activities in cultural diplomacy and language education

Iwamura's consular era in China ended in 1926. In 1927, he returned to Japan to serve as a secretary diplomat (*shokikan*), during which time he was involved in Chinese affairs on a larger scale. In chapter 4, we focus on the process by which knowledge about China and

¹⁵ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B04011028400, 清国ニ於ケル電線関係雜件 6. 四平街鄭家屯間電線架設ノ件(1-7-4-32) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

¹⁶ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B04011022000, 支那ニ於ケル電話関係雜件 滿洲ノ部 第二卷 1 1. 鄭家屯, 四平街, 昌図, 公主嶺間ニ長距離電話完通ノ件(1-7-4-26_1_002) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan). JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B12081425200, 7. 鄭家屯滿鉄沿線各地長距離電話(B-3-6-12-10_1) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

¹⁷ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B03030215500, 2 大正8年1月31日から大正8年5月24日(1-1-2-12_1_004) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

¹⁸ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B03030215600, 3 大正8年5月28日から大正8年11月3日(1-1-2-12_1_004) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

the Chinese language accumulated up to that time was utilized within MOFA to facilitate the exchange of academic information in the Eastern Culture Project (*Tōhōbunka jigyō*), and outside MOFA to educate the Japanese public about the Chinese language through the mass media.

Iwamura was a China expert with an academic turn of mind. We can conclude this from a series of articles entitled “Books (and Newspapers) needed for Chinese studies,” published in the academic magazine “Toyo Jiho” in 1915 and 1916. In the first article of this series, he pointed out several shortcomings affecting Chinese research in Japan and wrote, “Although there are individuals referred to China experts, unless you read a wide range of books, you can never become familiar with the situation in China.”¹⁹ He then introduced the major newspapers and magazines published in Japan and China, which were classified into “maps,” “politics and other general circumstances (nationwide),” “legal system and administration,” and “decrees and treaties.”²⁰ In this scholarly and comprehensive introduction, not only Japanese and Chinese publications, but also Western’s publications written in English and German were introduced, which suggests that Iwamura might also have been literate in Western languages to some degree. Regarding what motivated him to write these articles, Iwamura explained, “It has been 20 years since I aspired to study China, and even though I spent more than ten years in China, I was always hindered by secular affairs and could not proceed with in-depth research.” “I would be very gratified if these articles could serve as a reference for young researchers.”²¹ We can surmise that his aspirations in the academic field came into collision with diplomatic affairs.

From his return to Japan in 1917, Iwamura commanded a high degree of trust within MOFA, which often sent him on business trips to China, and he was at the forefront of various diplomatic situations, taking a leading part in negotiating directly with the Chinese. However, we consider the most essential role he played within MOFA during the 1930s was that he was the person primarily in charge of the Eastern Culture Project (*Tōhōbunka jigyō*) as an academic specialist. In 1929, Iwamura traveled to Kyoto to deal with some office work at the Kyoto Institute of Oriental Studies Academy. On November 9, 1930, Iwamura was at the opening ceremony of the new office building for the Kyoto Institute, in the company of Tsubogami Teiji, the General Manager of the Cultural Affairs Department (*Bunka jigyōbu*).²²

¹⁹ Iwamura Shigemitsu, “Shina kenkyū ni hitsuyōnaru shinbun to tosho,” in Tōyō kyōkai. ed., *Tōyō Jihō*, Vol.206, 1915, p.53.

²⁰ Iwamura Shigemitsu, “Shina kenkyū ni hitsuyōnaru tosho (2),” in Tōyō kyōkai. ed., *Tōyō Jihō*, Vol.207, 1915, pp.44-48. Iwamura Shigemitsu, “Shina kenkyū ni hitsuyōnaru tosho (3),” in Tōyō kyōkai. ed., *Tōyō Jihō*, Vol.208, 1916, pp.60-66. Iwamura Shigemitsu, “Shina kenkyū ni hitsuyōnaru tosho (4),” in Tōyō kyōkai. ed., *Tōyō Jihō*, Vol.209, 1916, pp.45-54.

²¹ Iwamura Shigemitsu, “Shina kenkyū ni hitsuyōnaru tosho (4),” in Tōyō kyōkai. ed., *Tōyō Jihō*, Vol.209, 1916, p.54.

²² JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref.B05015020200, 4 3. 岩村書記官京都府兵庫県へ

Iwamura further demonstrated his abilities as a China expert specializing in Chinese Studies in 1932, when he was appointed to go on a business trip to Europe and North America in order to investigate the current situation of “Eastern Studies (*Tōhōbunka*)” in the West. According to the official documents, the objective of the trip was to make connections with academic societies in the West. The investigation guideline includes the directives “to investigate the schools, institutions, and other organizations related to Eastern Studies, along with the books, museums, and expositions,” “to investigate various business facilities that influence Eastern culture,” and “to investigate general business that could be a reference for cultural business management.”²³ The first part of the above guideline refers to a solid investigation of academia, while the second and the third parts are more characteristic of cultural affairs and cultural policies, the professional areas in which Iwamura was also recognized as an authority by MOFA.

The trip, in which Iwamura was accompanied by Shionoya On, a professor of Chinese literature at the Tokyo Imperial University, started from Tokyo and first stopped off at Kyoto and Kōbe, and then went on to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Malay, and India. After seeing Arabia and parts of Africa, they entered Europe by landing in Italy and going to Germany, France, and other so-called “culturally developed countries” on the continent and Britain. The trip finished after concluding his investigation in the US and Canada, and Iwamura returned to Japan in January 1933. In December of the same year, he gave a speech at MOFA entitled “Current status of eastern academic research in Western countries.” Discussing the current status of “Eastern Studies” in the 14 countries he had visited, he added, “We have to deepen our research in China studies,” and “In order to promote communication in the cultural field, it is best to partner with eastern researchers in other countries.”²⁴ The speech was later published under the same title by the Cultural Affairs Department (*Bunka jigyōbu*) in the following year. Although it is still unclear how the results of the overseas investigation were passed on to MOFA or the Eastern Culture Project (*Tōhōbunka jigyō*) except for the above lecture and publication, Iwamura’s participation in the Eastern Cultural Project continued through the 1940s. From 1938 to 1942, he was installed as councilor at the Tokyo Institution of Oriental Studies Academy, a position

出張ノ件 昭和四年十二月(H-1-3-0-1_003) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan). JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref. B14091263300, 本省並在外公館員出張関係雑件ノ本省員及在外公館員本邦内出張ノ部 第一ノ二卷 3. T/6) 坪上貞二 (岩村成允) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

²³ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref. B05015023700, 5. 岩村公使官一等書記官欧米諸国ニ出張ニ関スル件 昭和七年五月(H-1-3-0-1_004)(Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

²⁴ JACAR (Japan Center of Asian Historical Records) Ref. A15060166900 (第1画像目から), 欧米諸国に於ける東洋学術研究の現状 (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan).

created to examine research-related decisions and other affairs within the Tokyo Institution.²⁵

Having discussed that Iwamura was a Chinese expert whose language ability was widely utilized in translating, collecting and analyzing intelligence information within MOFA, it is important to stress that in the 1930s, his language proficiency (cultivated in a diplomatic context) was transferred into popular education through the mass media. We do not consider Iwamura's involvements in popular language education as official intelligence activities regulated by MOFA. Still, the circulation of Iwamura's "diplomatic Chinese" in public indicates that the knowledge cultivated within MOFA could be made available to the Japanese public in the long term.

In 1932, at the request of the Tōa kenkyūkai, Iwamura published a modern Chinese textbook entitled "Common Knowledge of Modern Written Chinese (*Jōshiki to shite no shina gendai bun*)" which included basic expressions for social intercourse (*Nichiyōbun*), such as "Expressions for receipts," "How to address envelopes," "Expressions for telegrams," and formal expressions used for office work (*Kōbun*) such as "Expressions for official documents," "Expressions for issuing a command," and "Expressions used when making inquiries." In 1939, Iwamura published "Understanding Modern Written Chinese: newspapers (*Gendai Shina bun shakugi: shinbun hen*)" at Tōyō bunka mikō tosho kankōkai, explaining how to read newspapers by dividing them into eight categories.²⁶ Besides compiling textbooks, from August 1938 to December 1941, Iwamura was in charge as the instructor in the domestic radio broadcast program, "Chinese Language Course (*Shinago Kōza*)," produced by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (*Nihon hoso kyokai*), during which period his post at MOFA had been changed to that of "part-time officer (*Gaimushō shokutaku*)." Through this radio program, the electronic media, Iwamura's standard pronunciation of northern Mandarin reached Japanese listeners in remote areas. It has been widely recognized that the Japan Broadcasting Corporation was an influential nationwide media organ during the pre-war period.

The increase in the number of Chinese textbooks for public use published in the 1930s, in particular after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, suggests a boom in learning Chinese among the Japanese.²⁷ We conclude that Iwamura's participation in popular Chinese education was largely influenced by this wartime need for greater

²⁵ Tōhō Bunka Gakuin, ed., *Tōhō Bunka Gakuin Ichiran*, Tokyo: Tōhō Bunka Gakuin, 1938.

²⁶ It was divided into "How to read miscellaneous news," "How to read political articles," "How to read articles on social issues," "How to read articles on economics," "How to read articles on culture," "How to read articles on international issues," "How to read advertising material," and "How to read editorials."

²⁷ These textbooks cover a variety of topics, including conversation, "Jibun," and modern writing. They were compiled by by lecturers on Chinese at the official language school and by private school seminars and training centers in the army. See Rokkaku, 1985.

understanding of the Chinese language, but his textbooks are characterized by the polite expressions and manners of Qing dynasty's bureaucrats, thus distinguishing his work from textbooks written for soldiers. However, although Iwamura promoted the idea that "Sino-Japanese friendship must be built on gaining an understanding of the Chinese language,"²⁸ he excluded from his textbooks those modern articles which convey a mood of Chinese nationalism or anti-Japanese sentiment. Thus, the friendship was an imaginary one and based on the illusion that the Chinese are people who are friendly towards, even submissive to Japan. Iwamura, who advocated the above idea as a MOFA officer, eventually positioned the Chinese language in a place that served imperial Japan.

5. Discussion

This paper has discussed the Chinese language utilized to convey, collect, analyze and translate information in a diplomatic network by conducting a case study on Iwamura Shigemitsu, an officer of MOFA. Following the chronological sequence of events, we have found Iwamura's acquisition of the Chinese language received a significant boost from MOFA's personnel selection policy in the late 1890s, which was a strategy responding to increasing intelligence activities after the conclusion of the Shimonoseki Treaty. "A New Chinese Dictionary (Peking Pronunciation)," Iwamura's first linguistic contribution to MOFA, strengthened diplomatic activities in China by providing language training for those officers dealing with Chinese affairs. From the time he consolidated his position as a China expert in MOFA, Iwamura's intelligence activities can be roughly divided into two spheres: collecting and analyzing the open intelligence information posted in local Chinese publications; and negotiating with the local Chinese in the interests of MOFA. Both required a mastery of language. In particular, the former could only be performed effectively based on the accumulation of knowledge on Chinese affairs over an extended period. We have also discussed the voluntary aspects of Iwamura's intelligence activities by examining the compiling of the "Table showing China's new administrative areas" and other related diplomatic reports, revealing that although some diplomatic decisions could only be made by high-ranking diplomats, fundamentally, the immediate actions taken in relation to local situations depended on Iwamura's analysis.

Iwamura's language ability and his expertise in Chinese studies led to his involvement in the Eastern Culture Project, where he was considered by MOFA to be the China expert in both academic and cultural policy. We also noted that, in the 1920s, there were other MOFA investigations into cultural policies of western countries toward China²⁹. These

²⁸ Iwamura Shigemitsu, "Shina gendaibun kōza shōkai," in Rokkaku Tsunehiro, ed., *Chūgokugo kyōhon shūsei*, vol.7(2), Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 1998, p. 63.

²⁹ For example, in 1925, the Cultural Affairs Department (Bunka jigyōbu) published "Ōbeijin no shina ni okeru omonaru bunka jigyō kaisetsu." Also, in 1929, MOFA published "Ōbeijin no shina ni okeru omonaru bunka jigyō." These two books introduced the schools, institutions, hospitals, churches founded as a result

historic resources can be studied from the perspective of international cultural relations among Japan, China, and the Western world during the prewar period.

As mentioned above, the paper has discussed the manifold ways of utilizing the Chinese language in intelligence activities and the versatile role played by middle-ranking officer Iwamura. Language utilization can serve as another lens to view how information was communicated and transferred in prewar Japan's diplomatic activities. Also, this knowledge of the language was disseminated to the public in an unofficial way while conveying the ideology which was naturally formed through Iwamura's experience of working in the diplomatic sphere. Scholars have written specifically on Tōsūji (interpreters) who worked for the shogunate and interpreters in the postwar diplomatic arena (See Kimura, 2012, Okayama, 2011, Torikai, 2007); therefore, a further study on the various roles performed by language experts as educators and scholars along with their intergenerational relevance throughout modern Japanese history deserves more attention.

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