

MANDY SCOTT and HAK-KHIAM TIUN

MANDARIN-ONLY TO MANDARIN-PLUS: TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT. This article focuses on language-in-education policies and planning in relation to the three Sinitic languages taught in formal education in Taiwan today: Mandarin – the usual medium of instruction, and Holo Taiwanese and Hakka – the home and/or ancestral languages of the majority of the population (We use the term Sinitic language to avoid using ‘Chinese dialect’ with its implications of lower status and links with the national and cultural entity of China). These policies will be analyzed in the context of Taiwan’s social and political history, current debates about identity, language rights and resources, and concerns about Taiwan’s status in the international community. Taiwan’s unique situation illustrates the complex relationship between language, ethnicity, national identification, and economic and global concerns. The Taiwan case also demonstrates the power, as well as the limitations, of government sponsored language planning.

KEY WORDS: elementary and secondary language education, language colonization, language in education planning, language policy and planning, multiculturalism, Sinitic languages, Taiwan, writing systems

ABBREVIATIONS: DPP – Democratic Progressive Party; GIO – Government Information Office; KMT – Kuomintang; MOE – Ministry of Education; PRC – People’s Republic of China; ROC – Republic of China; UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

INTRODUCTION

Taiwan, known officially as the Republic of China (ROC), has been governed as a separate territory since 1949, though its international status remains ambiguous. Taiwan is a relatively small island, 394 km long and 144 km across at its widest point, which is situated only 130 km from the eastern coast of the People’s Republic of China (PRC or Mainland China). It is a highly urbanised industrial society, with almost 70% of its 22.66 million residents (as at September 2004) living in metropolitan areas (GIO, 2005).

The population is made up of four main ethnic groups: Aboriginal, Mainlander, Hakka and Holo.¹ While it is not always clear how the percentages of these groups are calculated, the population is generally said to comprise about 73.3% Holo, 13% Mainlanders, 12% Hakkas, and 1.7% Aborigines (Huang, 1995: 21). Although language use does not always equate with ethnic group, it is the languages associated with these four groups that are a major focus of language-in-education planning in Taiwan today; the English language being the other major policy focus.

While the aboriginal inhabitants of Taiwan are important in terms of defining current day Taiwanese identity, a detailed discussion of aboriginal languages is beyond the scope of the present article, which will be devoted to the situation of the Sinitic languages, Mandarin, Hakka and Holo. To do this, it will be necessary to examine briefly the social and political history of Taiwan in relation to immigration and colonization and the harsh language policies followed by successive governments since the late 19th century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Most of the settlers who began to arrive in large numbers in Taiwan in the late 17th century came from Fujian province in mainland China. They brought with them their Southern Min (Minnanyu) 閩南語 and Hakka 客家 languages², with the former being in the majority. The new arrivals quickly outnumbered the Austronesian speaking aboriginal peoples who had lived in Taiwan for thousands of years. By the end of the 19th century, less than 150,000 of the population of about 2.5 million were aborigines (Su cited in Chiung, 2004: 103; Tse, 2000). Intermarriage with aboriginal women was common, especially with those of the western plains, which had an influence on the culture and languages of the immigrants, particularly the majority Holo speakers, as well as sinicising the aboriginal population (see Brown, 2004).³

¹ This last group are commonly referred to as 'Taiwanese' but we will use Holo since Taiwanese, as we will discuss later, is now used to encompass other groups on Taiwan.

² The term Southern Min only began to be used in the 1950s. In the Qing period the language was known by the two main areas where it was spoken, Quanzhou 泉州 and Zhangzhou 漳州, while in the Japanese period it was called Hokkien or *Taiwanhua*. Hakka was called *Guangdonghua* by the Japanese government.

³ An old Taiwanese saying reflects this: [有唐山公, 無唐山媽] we have mainland *Han* grandfather but no mainland *Han* grandmother).

Under the control of the Qing dynasty from the late 1600s until Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895, the spoken language of the officials would have normally been some form of spoken Mandarin (*guanhua*), but the most widely spoken language in Taiwan became Holo, with pockets of Hakka in areas where Hakka speakers from the mainland had settled. Reading in one's own mother tongue used to be a common practice in Sinitic language areas. In *han-oh-a*⁴ 漢學仔 (traditional private schools), where students learned *han-bun* 漢文 (Classical Chinese), local languages were used as the medium of instruction, texts were read in *wenyanyin* 文音音 (literary pronunciation) and explained in colloquial language.

Japanese Period 1895–1945

Japanese colonisation had a massive influence on Taiwanese life and on its language situation. The economy was modernised, good transport systems were established and public schools were established. Schooling was a major avenue for the promotion of Japanese, the new national language. Publications in Chinese and private Chinese schools were initially tolerated but progressively controlled and eventually banned after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937. Japanisation became especially intense after 1937. For example, Holo was proscribed in 1939, and a “Name-changing Campaign” to encourage Taiwanese families to adopt Japanese names was launched in 1940. Taiwanese were rewarded for speaking Japanese at work and at home. The policies proved very successful. While Japanese did not become the home language of many Taiwanese, Huang (1995: 96) estimates that 51% of the population understood the language in 1940, rising to 71% by 1944. Taiwan therefore evolved into a diglossic society, where Japanese was the High (H) official language of administration and education and hence the language of power and prestige.⁵ As Chen (2001: 98) notes “Japanese was the only language in which most educated people on the island could read and express themselves effectively on formal occasions and topics”.

This colonial language policy had a number of repercussions. Rather ironically, it gave the Taiwanese people a common language and helped to foster a feeling of ‘Taiwanese identity’. This led to a

⁴ Transliterations into Holo or Hakka are hyphenated, in contrast to the non-hyphenated *hanyu pinyin* used to transliterate Mandarin – unless another romanised form (e.g. Kaohsiung, Taipei) is in general use in Taiwan and/or the West.

⁵ See Ferguson (1959/96).

Taiwanese literature movement, with some local languages, particularly Holo, coming to be used in writing. In addition, the wide use of Japanese and increase in bilingualism had long lasting effects on the local languages, particularly the widely spoken Holo, which borrowed many words and even some grammatical features from Japanese. This helped to further differentiate Taiwanese Holo from closely related Southern Min (*Minnanyu* 閩南語) on the mainland.

The period of Japanese occupation also meant that Taiwan was largely isolated from the language reform movements and promotion of Mandarin as the national language on the Chinese mainland in first few decades of the 20th century.

1945–1987

The return of Taiwan to Chinese control in 1945 heralded a dramatic change in language policy. Like the Japanese before them, the Kuomintang (KMT) 國民黨 government followed an assimilationist language policy. They tried to eliminate Japanese culture and language, progressively discouraged the use of local languages, and vigorously promoted Mandarin as the national language (the term for Mandarin used in Taiwan is *guoyu* 國語, which means ‘national language’). The ‘nation’ was now the Republic of China, declared on the mainland on 10 October 1911, and which the KMT assumed would again soon become re-established on the mainland. The period between 1945 and 1987 has been characterised as “Mandarin-only with the suppression of vernacular languages” (獨尊國語、壓制方言, Huang, 1995:113; Tiuⁿ, 2005:11).

This Mandarin-only language policy severely disadvantaged local Taiwanese, the majority of whom could not speak Mandarin. Indeed, the main aim of this policy can be said to have been to maintain the control of the majority by a minority (Cheng, 1990: 21).⁶ The newly arrived mainlanders (up to 2 million people, including 600,000 troops), supporters of Chiang Kai Shek who fled to Taiwan after their defeat by the communists on the mainland in 1949, took over positions of power and prestige in Taiwan. These new arrivals and their children are the group now known as mainlanders (*waishengren* 外省人), while the ‘native’ Taiwanese, in other words the residents of Taiwan before 1945 and their descendents, are known as *benshengren* 本省人 (literally ‘original-province person’).

⁶ As Gates (1981: 263) points out, if communication had been the priority concern, it could have been more effective to use Taiwanese Holo as a lingua franca rather than Mandarin.

As in the Japanese era, schooling was a major focus for language planning. The medium of instruction became Mandarin, the right to vernacular education was denied, and children were punished for speaking their home languages, even among themselves in the playground. Local languages in general were not given any legal status. In fact, the status of local languages can be compared to that of a “banned” language (Ong, 1993). These restrictive language policies were seen by many as a form of political discrimination imposed on the local population (Gold, 1986:113; Hsu, 1989:198).

Along with the promotion of Mandarin, the government also promoted Chinese culture at the expense of any attention to Taiwan. Taiwanese culture was ignored and banned, as evidenced by the lack of interest expressed by major cultural organisations towards local artistic expression in the form of operas, plays, folk songs and literature ‘*xiangtu wenxue*’ (鄉土文學), and the suppression of local culture (Chang, 1994: 121; Wachman, 1994: 105). The language and cultural policies of the KMT thus became a source of political tension. This contributed to the various inter-ethnic conflicts between *benshengren* and *waishengren* (known as *shengji wenti* 省籍問題), and may also have served to reinforce the emergent sense of Taiwanese identity (Wachman, 1994:107).

THE CURRENT LANGUAGE POLICY – ‘MANDARIN-PLUS’ AND MULTICULTURALISM

It is against this backdrop that we can understand why language became such a central issue when power began to shift from the mainlanders to the majority ‘native’ Taiwanese (*benshengren* 本省人) in the late 1980s. The lifting of martial law in 1987 and the legalisation of opposition political parties has led to democratisation and liberalisation, and policies to make the local languages legitimate means of expression and valued communicative tools.

The period after 1987 to the present is often characterised as having a “multiple and open orientation” 嚮多元開放 (e.g. Chen, 1998). “Taiwanisation” 台灣化 or “localisation/indigenisation” 本土化 has become prominent and in competition with the Sinicisation that dominated previous language policy in Taiwan. Opponents of these developments emphasise this aspect by referring to “Taiwanisation” as “Desinicisation” (去中國化). However, the

official policy is not to totally replace Mandarin by local vernacular languages, but to change the policy from “Mandarin-Only” to “Mandarin-plus” (Chen, 2001).

More tolerance and recognition is now shown towards local languages. Punishment for speaking these languages at school was officially prohibited in 1987 (Huang, 1995: 57–58), legislation and policies severely restricting the public use of local languages were rescinded, and active measures have been taken by the government and various island-wide and regional organisations to promote these languages. At the same time, government hostility toward Taiwanese native culture has dissipated, which has inspired a renaissance of everything that can be called “Taiwanese” (Bosco, 1994: 399).

Holo is now commonly heard on radio and television, and is widely used in advertising, business and official meetings, especially in the south of the country. The current president, Chen Shui-bian, representing the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), is a native speaker of Holo and frequently uses the language.⁷

Hakka has also been promoted. For example, in 1988, a Hakka organisation established the *Huan Wo Muyu Yundong* 還我母語運動 (Return our mother tongue movement), which demanded the implementation of a multilingual language policy, an increase of mother tongue mass media coverage, and mother tongue education. Partly in response to such community movements, the government established the Council for Hakka Affairs [客家委員會] in 2001 “to preserve the mother tongue and revitalise the traditional culture of Taiwan’s 4 million Hakka” (GIO, 2005). Colleges of Hakka Studies have been set up at several universities, and a Hakka television channel was opened in 2003.

To avoid Holo being seen as a new contender for hegemonic power along the lines of Japanese and Mandarin before it, and in the spirit of political reconciliation, the current DPP government’s language and cultural policy is one of multiculturalism. It has been proposed that the term Taiwanese, [台語/台灣話 taiyu/taiwanhua], which since Japanese times has been generally used to refer to “Holo”, should now relate to all languages on Taiwan, and to their speakers. The urge among different ethnic groups to be recognised as Taiwanese and as equals seems to suggest that a supra-ethnicity,

⁷ It should be noted that even at the height of the Mandarin promotion campaigns, the pragmatic usefulness of Holo for speaking directly to the people was recognised and exploited by politicians, especially during election periods.

somewhat similar to Taiwan national identity, is forming. The political implications of Taiwanese is certainly not welcomed by the PRC and *tongpai* (those in Taiwan who support unity with China), since it consolidates the identity of all people in Taiwan as Taiwanese, rather than Chinese.⁸ It also threatens the status of Mandarin as the national language.

Language tolerance has become an ideal medium for social-political reconciliation (Erbaugh, 1995:82). Official ideology about local languages has changed from 'language-as-problem' to 'language-as-right' (cf. Ruiz, 1984), largely in response to the efforts of community-based language movements. The new policy of 'Mandarin-plus' seeks to replace 'language wrongs' with 'language rights' for local languages. To avoid accusations of desinicisation, activists strategically cited the PRC's minority language policy to urge the government to implement a multilingual language policy and greater support for local languages (Erbaugh, 1995:86; Tsao, 1997).

THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL LANGUAGES

Despite the rising status of local languages and the increased use, particularly of Holo, in H domains such as local government, there is concern that the non-Mandarin languages are in danger of being lost due to the success of the KMT Mandarin-only language policy. Mandarin has made inroads into the L domains where local languages were once dominant (Figueroa, 1985: 85–86; GIO, 2005). Therefore, even though the diglossic disparity has been reduced, the multilingual situation in Taiwan has become unstable.

Of the Sinitic local languages, the data for Hakka indicates the most rapid loss.⁹ In 2003, it was estimated that only 65.2% of all ethnic Hakka in Taiwan could speak Hakka fluently (i.e. about 7.8% of the total Taiwanese population). Of these, only 36.3% between 13 and 29-years-old could speak Hakka well; this figure falling to 11.6% for the under tens (GIO, 2005). For Holo too, there has been "a shift toward the predominance of Mandarin as

⁸ Data from a 1996 survey indicated that 35% of respondents identified as Taiwanese, 16% as Chinese, and 45% as both Taiwanese and Chinese (Tse, 2000). A more recent survey indicated a decrease in joint identity: 60.2% of respondents identified as Taiwanese, 17% as Chinese, and only 17.8% as both. (Hai, Straits Exchange Foundation, 2006).

⁹ The loss of aboriginal languages has been even more marked, but will not be discussed in this article.

evidenced by its growing use in the intimate domain” (Lee, 1981: 121). Other studies have also found a considerable shift towards Mandarin in the domain of workplace, friendship, and home (Hsiau, 1997:308; Huang, 1988:301; Young, 1989:323). This situation has led many people to believe that Holo could also be in danger.

This concern about language loss and shift to Mandarin in the younger generation, plus arguments for the recognition of language as rights by language activists was a major reason for the introduction of ‘mother tongue’ education in all primary schools from 2001.¹⁰

LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICIES FOR MOTHER TONGUES

As in previous periods of Taiwan’s history, schools are seen as an important locus for the implementation of language policies. In the early 1990s, local languages were taught in some prefectures governed by the then opposition party (DDP), and in the late 1990s, local languages were introduced as part of local education classes. Since 2001, with the implementation of a Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum for Primary and Junior High Schools (國民中小學九年一貫課程) by the Ministry of Education (MOE), all primary school children in Taiwan have been required to study at least one local language at school. These classes are known officially as ‘local (or vernacular) languages education’ (*xiangtu yuyan jiaoyu* 鄉土語言教育) and are generally referred to as ‘mother tongue education’ (*myu jiaoyu* 母語教育) in public discussion (Zhang, 2002: 110).

Under the new 9-year Integrated Curriculum, Mandarin plus the local languages and English comprise the “language subject area” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003: 59). English language, which has long been part of the high school curriculum, was added to the standard primary curriculum in 2001, the same year as mother tongue education. Thus the current language-in education-policy promotes both internationalisation 國際化 and indigenisation 本土化.

The introduction of mother-tongue education programs into primary schools has had to overcome many obstacles, as discussed below. Some of these are similar to the problems facing primary

¹⁰ The term mother tongue, like the term ‘local languages’ that we use in this article, refers to local languages (Holo, Hakka and Aboriginal languages). It excludes Mandarin and any other languages which may be the home languages of residents of Taiwan.

school English programs, most notably the need for qualified teachers. Other problems are quite different. In addition, the level of resources and support for the two language areas has been quite unequal.

Teacher Certification and Training

In 2002, the MOE estimated that Holo alone from grade 1 to grade 4 could require at least 3,000 mother tongue teachers. In response to this need, the education authorities have taken several measures to recruit and train teachers. The first step was to set up a certification system. The first vernacular language teacher certification test was held by the MOE in 2002.¹¹ About 7,400 candidates took this test, which consisted of a written and an oral part. Those who passed the test then needed to participate in teacher training programs to be eligible to teach a local language at a primary school. Until there are a sufficient number of qualified teachers, mother tongue classes are being taught by school teachers who can speak Hakka or Holo, and *zhiyuan jiaoshi* 支援教師 (supplementary teachers) who hold vernacular teacher certification, but may not have professional knowledge or adequate teacher training.

The second step is training. However, the time allocated for local language teacher training course is very limited, only 36 or 72 hours. These training courses usually consist of three domains: (1) introduction to local language teaching, which includes topics related to the language, literature and culture; (2) local language ability, which includes topics related to local linguistic knowledge and a written and spoken ability training course; (3) language teaching professional training, which includes courses related to teaching methods and teaching materials.¹² These three domains are offered through a total of 15 required courses and 8 electives courses, each course lasting about 3–8 hours. Obviously, it is not possible to master these subjects in such a short time.

This contrasts with the planning and training programs for the first generation of English teachers for primary schools in 2001. Of the 3,500 people who passed a preliminary English test (which

¹¹ For lack of legal foundation, this certification test has been held by local governments since 2003.

¹² The promotion of vernacular languages in junior high and primary school [國民中小學鄉土語言教學推動情形] http://class.eje.isst.edu.tw/files/20021025_國中小鄉土語言教學推動情形/國民中小學鄉土語言教學推動情形.htm

45,000 people took) in 1999, 1900 completed up to 2 years of training to become qualified English teachers (Scott & Chen, 2004).

The limitations of short term mother tongue teacher training have been criticised as covert discrimination, and proponents of local languages have pushed for adequate and formal training of local language teachers. To respond to this, the MOE is encouraging universities to establish Taiwan language and literature departments or graduate programs to foster future local language teachers.

Teaching Methodology and Materials

The new Integrated Curriculum provides guiding principles for teaching methods and teaching materials. It recommends the use of communicative language methods for oral teaching, for both English and local languages. For the latter, the curriculum suggests that the teaching of reading should begin with simple and interesting stories or short essays, with particular attention to the learning of characters unique to the local language. The use of special local words and syntax is emphasised in the teaching of writing (MOE, 2000). As for teaching materials, the guidelines suggest that those for Hakka and Holo should be useful, interesting, coherent, and connected to everyday life. Literary content is also emphasised.

The development of teaching materials for Hakka and Holo also required decisions about which of the various varieties of these languages to accept as the standard. Since Holo is more widely spoken, the distinctive accents or words of different regional varieties do not cause serious communication problems. Even though the government has not set up a standard for Holo, most textbooks favor the use of *Lam-po'-im* 南部音 (Southern Holo variety, represented by Tainan), while *Pak-po'-im* 北部音 (Northern variety, represented by Taipei) is included in pronunciation notes or by a contrasting chart showing the systematic differences between Southern and Northern Holo.

The situation with Hakka is more complicated since there are several quite distinct varieties. The two most widely spoken are *Sixian*, “which is considered the standard Hakka language; and *Hailu*, which has been strongly influenced by [Holo]” (GIO, 2005). These are the varieties reflected in the phonetically based written texts in primary school textbooks and in the accompanying listening materials. However, attempts have been made to reflect the local accents rather than force a standard, thus beside *Hailu* and *Sixian*, candidates taking the oral test in the recently introduced

island-wide Hakka Proficiency Exam can also choose the other three varieties of Hakka (*Zhao'an*, *Zhaoping*, and *Dapu*).¹³

The Holo and Hakka textbooks currently used in primary schools typically use Chinese characters and two phonetic scripts, one based on the Latin alphabet and the other on a system now almost unique to Taiwan, *zhuyinfuhao* or *bopomofo*.¹⁴ As there is no agreed written standard for either of these two languages, the same word may be written with different characters or different phonetic ‘spellings’ in different textbooks.

These textbooks have been produced by the teachers themselves and outside experts or scholars, either separately or cooperatively (Kang, 1996: 374). There are no prescribed textbooks for local language teaching; each school can choose their own as long as these are approved by the relevant education authority. Many schools have adopted commercial textbooks, which are well printed and accompanied by teaching aids, such as flashcards, CDs, and teachers’ guides. However, compared with teaching materials compiled by local teachers, these commercial textbooks generally fail to integrate community culture. Teachers may compensate for this by using oral literature, such as folksongs, proverbs, folktales, jokes, and riddles, as supplementary materials.

Opponents of mother tongue education have emphasised the various obstacles faced by the new language-in-education policy. However, supporters usually reply that these are just practical limitations that can be solved; one just needs to “supply what is lacking” (c.f. Fasold, 1984: 254).

THE SUBORDINATE STATUS OF MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION IN THE MANDARIN-PLUS POLICY

While the introduction of local languages into formal schooling has helped to raise their status, there are many shortcomings. For example, both school and commercial editions of local language materials tend to represent a ‘backward-looking’ image of local culture. The hidden message of the materials tends to reproduce the

¹³ For details see <http://www.hakka.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=7034&CtNode=235&mp=233&ps=>

¹⁴ *Zhuyinfuhao* derives from Chinese characters and somewhat resembles Japanese kana. It was developed in 1912 by the Republic of China to promote the new spoken standard language, i.e. Mandarin (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003: 49). It is still used by young Taiwanese children to learn to write and pronounce Mandarin.

stereotype of local languages as suitable only for humorous and informal situations, unrelated to modern life or serious and formal situations.

Mandarin still has the lion's share in language policy support. Mother tongue classes are generally limited to 1 hour a week, compared to 7–10 hours a week for Mandarin and the language is taught as a subject rather than being used as the language of instruction. Moreover mother tongue classes are optional in junior high schools and there are no current plans to teach local languages as a subject in senior high schools.

In addition, mother tongue classes are competing with English language programs. The MOE only made English compulsory for the last 2 years of primary schools in 2001, but this was extended down to Grade 3 in 2003. Due largely to parental pressure, many education authorities, especially in urban centers, now begin teaching English programs in Grade 1 (Scott & Chen, 2004).¹⁵ English is usually given more emphasis than the mother tongues. While in the lower grades mother tongue may have equal or more class-time than English (i.e. one period a week), two English classes a week is common in Grades 5 and 6. Many schools also try to create some kind of English language environment outside of class time by broadcasting English songs or dialogues and having bilingual signs in English and Mandarin around the school. While the official emphasis is on speaking and listening, it is accepted that reading and writing English will be a necessary next step.

Nevertheless, some education authorities and individual schools are emphasising local languages. At least one regional education authority is taking the 'Mandarin-plus' policy further by encouraging the wider use of local languages in its schools. The southern city of Kaohsiung, the second largest city in Taiwan, has instituted a 'Taiwan mother tongue day' [台灣母語日] when staff and students are encouraged to use their own local languages as much as possible in all classes. This policy, which applies to junior high schools as well as primary schools and kindergartens, was formulated by an NGO (Southern Formosan Association), emphasising the bottom-up nature of much local language policy, and is monitored by unannounced spot checks by education officials, members

¹⁵ It is common for parents to spend considerable amounts of money sending their children to bilingual (Mandarin/English) kindergartens, after-hours *bushiban* 'cram schools', and even overseas to study in an English-medium environment (Scott & Chen, 2004).

of the NGO, and schoolteachers. The NGO is thinking of promoting this idea in the rest of Taiwan.¹⁶

The use of mother tongue as medium of instruction is still rare in Taiwan. Chen (2005) reported on a mother tongue-Mandarin bilingual education conducted in two primary schools in Tainan County. The students received their “moral and health education” in Holo. The results were quite positive: students improved their language abilities in both mother tongue and Mandarin, relationships between students and teachers improved, and students enjoyed learning Holo.

Under the new 9-year curriculum, methods of language integration are often mentioned in the discussion of local language teaching. Tiuⁿ (2004) has suggested the extensive use of mother tongue by incorporating ideas of content-based teaching, topic-based teaching, experiential learning, project-based teaching, task-based teaching and activity-based teaching. Si (2004) provided principles and examples of integrated teaching of local languages: (1) the integration of Holo with Mandarin based on contrastive analysis; (2) integrated teaching of mother tongue with Society Studies classes, based on the assumption that local languages are closely related to local culture; (3) integrated teaching of mother tongue with the Fine Art and Humanities, such as the use of music, performing arts and games. Community oral literature such as songs, proverbs and folktales are often introduced into the classrooms.

Despite its limitations, the introduction of local languages into the realm of formal schooling has helped to implement both status and acquisition planning. However, corpus planning is also necessary if Hakka and Holo are to become more than spoken vernaculars. At present, they lack much of the vocabulary of the more academic and official registers because of the social and political history of language planning in Taiwan. This lack reinforces the low status of the languages and limits their use to informal and domestic domains, which encourages code switching into Mandarin in more formal situations. Here we see a vicious cycle in operation: the lack of status planning for local languages has resulted in their lack of corpus development; and the lack of suitable corpus development, in turn, causes the difficulty or excuses for not promoting their status and functions.

¹⁶ Personal communication with the Head of the Taiwanese Languages Policy of the NGO, Tiuⁿ Hok-chu, 5 December 2005.

WRITING SYSTEMS

A vital aspect of corpus and acquisition planning is the development of standardised writing systems for Holo and Hakka. This will enable them to stand alongside Mandarin as languages that can be used in all facets of modern life. As Chen (1999: 205) says, a written code is essential for the standardisation and elaboration necessary to enable a language “to be learnt as a subject and [become] the medium in which all modern knowledge can be taught at an advanced level”. However, there is by no means universal acceptance of the need for autonomous writing systems for these languages. Many Taiwanese see the developing written standards as merely aids to vocabulary learning or, in the case of phonetic systems, as aids to correct pronunciation.

Many of the barriers to the development of real writing systems for these Sinitic local languages are tied to the culture and traditions of the mainland and the previous language policies of Taiwan itself. The KMT policy regarded Holo and Hakka as mere dialects of Chinese. As Chen points out, there have been very few texts written in Chinese dialects, and “dialect writing has always been held in low esteem by both the literati and the general public” (Chen, 1999: 117). Furthermore, the KMT considered any writing based on non-northern Mandarin to be a threat to national unity (ibid: 129).¹⁷

Moves to establish real writing systems for Holo and Hakka in Taiwan are therefore often seen as closely allied to moves for Taiwanese independence, which is rigorously opposed by the PRC authorities and by *tongpai* in Taiwan. This, together with the fact that many Taiwanese see little immediate or long term benefit of being literate in their mother tongue, means that support for fully autonomous writing systems is, at least for the present, not widespread.

As with all aspects of language planning, ideology and power relations play a major part in the current debates about written standards for Holo and Hakka, and the status of these

¹⁷ Interestingly it seems that the Communist regime may have also come to this conclusion after they came to power on the mainland. Certainly any ideas of writing vernaculars using phonetic writing systems were abandoned, as were proposals to replace Chinese characters with a written form based on the Latin alphabet to aid modernisation and universal literacy.

orthographies, no matter what linguistic and practical arguments are put forward.¹⁸ It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss this aspect in detail, but it should be noted that there have been long running and heated discussions about graphization, for example whether Holo and Hakka should be written in a logographic syllable-based character script like Mandarin, in a phonetically based script or, especially in the case of Holo, in a mixture of both (see Chiung, 2001; Tiuⁿ, 1998). The use of a phonetic script can be seen as supporting Taiwanisation or Desinicisation. Using the Latin alphabet would almost certainly reduce the influence of the Chinese language – both classical and modern Mandarin – on local languages, while making it easier to incorporate loan words from other languages, especially English.

Such debates illustrate a traditional connection in Taiwan and China between orthography and national identity. They follow from a long-standing distrust and lack of acceptance of dialect writing, and a perceived link between Chinese characters (particularly traditional full form) and Chinese identity.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It has long been recognised that the school alone cannot revive and maintain a language (see for example, Fishman, 2001). Some schools are only too aware of this and work with local communities to encourage increased use of the local languages by children. For example, one primary school in a Hakka speaking area near Taitung in the southeast of Taiwan works with nearby shopkeepers. Children speaking Hakka to buy items receive coupons that can be exchanged for awards at the school.

One of the authors has also been actively involved in promoting the use of Hakka by encouraging schools, family and community to work together (Tiuⁿ, 2005). Recognizing the vital importance of family and community support for inter-generational transmission and revitalization of mother tongue, he has used various marketing strategies to raise language awareness and provide ways of constructing a mother tongue-friendly environment in school, family and community.

¹⁸ This is equally true of Mandarin, clearly seen in the recent contentious decision of the Taiwan government to adopt *tongyong pinyin* as the official transliteration system rather than the internationally recognised *hanyu pinyin* system.

However, status planning remains a problem. While local languages are highly valued in some ways by the majority of the population, due to arguments related to 'language as a right', political reconciliation, or as a symbol of identity/identification, few consider the possible capital value of the local languages. In contrast, there is no doubt about the high capital value of Mandarin, now spoken by 90% of the population of Taiwan (Chen, 1999), and a growing international language. Indeed Taiwan is beginning to see Mandarin as a valuable export – many international students want to add Mandarin to their own linguistic repertoires. Likewise the status and global value of English, the other language being promoted through the education system, is not in doubt.

More status planning for local languages is required. One way this is being done is through the previously mentioned Hakka Proficiency Test. Many Taiwanese, both Hakka and non-Hakka, are preparing for this exam in the expectation that the certificate may give them an advantage in the employment market. There has been a proposal to legislate to make a certificate in one non-Mandarin local language a prerequisite for certain jobs. Another way is to raise awareness of the educational value of local languages. Even though UNESCO (1953) has suggested the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction for as long as possible, the educational advantages of mother tongue education are largely unknown to the public (see Fung Ping, this volume). Research on the benefits of bilingual education should be widely disseminated.

There may also be some complacency about the current situation due to the fact that the link between language and ethnic identity is not as clear as it used to be. Many Hakka people, for example, speak Holo and Mandarin but still identify as Hakka. Speaking Mandarin is no longer necessarily associated with being a *waishengren* among the younger generation. It does not carry with it any necessary sign of allegiance with the mainland. Mandarin has become a language of Taiwan. The second generation of *waishengren* are beginning to identify as Taiwanese, in the newly expanded definition of what this entails (Tse, 2000; Yip, 2004). Another challenge for language activists who promote the revitalisation of local languages is thus to make active multilingualism a part of Taiwanese identity and a marker of social, if not necessarily economic, capital.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the turn of the 20th century, language planning and language in education policies have been an important part of political, economic and social life in Taiwan. The heavy-handed top-down policies of the Japanese and KMT have been a spectacular success in terms of promoting first Japanese and then Mandarin as the H languages. While failing to eliminate the local languages, these policies firmly established them as the L varieties.

The current policy of 'Mandarin-plus', as a top-down approach to language policy, is attempting to remedy the past wrongs of language suppression. However, although it is promoting language tolerance and removing language discrimination, it is doing little to reverse the decline of the local languages. Mother tongue education only enjoys a subordinate status, to both Mandarin and English. Becoming media of instruction, not just subjects, would strengthen the local languages and help to reverse language shift. To prepare for this new status, the development of a corpus suitable for education settings, and the preparation of relevant teaching materials and in-service and pre-service teacher training should be undertaken as soon as possible. New Zealand's Te Kohanga Reo (languages nests) have been cited as a model to save local languages by establishing mother tongue kindergartens (e.g. Tiuⁿ, 2004). However, there are few real examples; the so-called bilingual kindergartens which are very popular in Taiwan are bilingual in Mandarin and English, never Mandarin plus local languages.

In addition to being further integrated into the whole school program, school-based local language policies should be complemented with home and community efforts to revitalize the languages and promote intergenerational transmission of local languages. In the current democratic environment in Taiwan, bottom-up language policy initiatives from language activists and community groups have been an important driving force behind language revitalization efforts, and will continue to be so. The development of top-down language policy outside the school can support these efforts, for example making proficiency in a local language a positive advantage, or even a requirement, for certain areas of employment.

As well as status and acquisition planning, there remains a need for corpus planning. Past language policies have resulted in Holo and Hakka lacking much of the vocabulary of the higher registers,

which encourages switching to Mandarin and reinforces the L status of the local languages. This is exacerbated by the lack of a standardized writing system for either language. The strong historical link between a unified writing system for all Sinitic language varieties and national identity makes debates about the form and status of written Holo and Hakka particularly significant and heated – on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Devising and promoting full orthographies for these languages thus relates directly to Taiwan's status as an independent state and the identity of the people who live there.

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MANDY SCOTT

*Department of Anthropology
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Australian National University
Canberra, Australia
E-mail: Mandy.Scott@anu.edu.au*

HAK-KHIAM TIUN

*Department of Chinese Language and Literature
National Taitung University
Taitung, Taiwan
E-mail: peter@cc.nttu.edu.tw*