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LANGUAGE AND ETHNIC POLITICS IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the interplay of language policy and ethnic politics in the context of the Native/Mainlander competition in Taiwan. First of all, languages will be examined as an instrument of group solidarity, be it a national or ethnic one. Second, we will examine how the seemingly simply selection of a phonetic system of street signs initially embarked upon in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, has evolved into a national controversy involving heated debated within not only the National Language Promotion Committee but also the National Legislature, and eventually led to the disgraceful dismissal of the Minister of Education. Third, the focus will be on the recent call by some national legislators for the adoption of Hoklo as a second national language in addition to Mandarin.

Introduction

While Taiwan is endeavoring to consolidate its newborn democracy, ethnic maneuverings seem to be increasingly threatening its peace and security. It is generally agreed that there are currently four major ethnic groups residing in Taiwan: Aboriginal Peoples (原住民族 , 2%), Mainlanders (外省人 , 13%), Hakkas (客家人 , 15%), and Holos (鶴佬人 , 70%). Ethnic competitions would mainly be found along three lines: Aboriginal Peoples versus Hans (Mainlanders＋ Hakkas＋ Holos), Hakkas versus Holos, and Mainlanders versus Natives (Aboriginal Peoples＋ Hakkas＋ Holos) (Shih, 2000a, 1999, 1998).

Owing to differences in race, language, and national identity, ethnic cleavages in Taiwan have so far manifested themselves in the form of clan feuds, electoral competitions, or even armed struggle, not only between the Han settlers and the Aboriginal Peoples but also among the Hans themselves. At first glance, it appears that there is ample space for coalition making and reconciliation among the four ethnic groups since their cleavages are not reinforcing. In the present day, however, the most serious ethnic disputes are prevalently found in the protracted power struggle between the Natives and the Mainlanders.

On the one hand, the Natives are to a large degree descendents of earlier voluntary Han settlers, and have in the main considered themselves Native Taiwanese and recognized Taiwan as their motherland. A collective Natives' identity had developed gradually in the process of land settlement and in the common experience of subordination to discrimination imposed by subsequent waves of alien rulers. For the Natives, the island is their homeland, where their ancestors, determined to settle their home there, had fought with the Aboriginal Peoples and resisted waves of alien rulers. If they were forced back to Mainland China, their near relatives would not be located. On the other hand, the Mainlanders are mainly descendents of those followers of the late Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (**蔣介石**), Kuomintang (KMT, literally Chinese Nationalist Party, **中國國民黨**) expatriates, and political refugees who fled to Taiwan after their defeat by the Chinese Communists (CCP, **中國共產黨**) in 1949. Furthermore, caught in the middle of the protracted disputes between Taiwan and China (People's Republic of China, PRC, **中華人民共和國**) over the sovereignty of this island state, these two ethnic groups have thus far expressed different degrees of sentimental attachment to Taiwan and to China (Shih, 2002, 2001, 2000b).

While the Natives are inclined to identify themselves as Taiwanese but not Chinese and are more sympathetic to the cause of Taiwan Independence, the Mainlanders, determined to retain their Chinese identity, have so far seemed ready to embrace any political formula of integration with China, which in turn would reinforce their distinct ethnic identity. As the term "China" may contain historical, geographical, cultural, racial, or even economic connotations other than political ones, the majority of Taiwanese residents would unconsciously consider themselves either as "Taiwanese and Chinese as well" (**既是台灣人也是中國人**) or "Chinese and Taiwanese as well." (**既是中國人也是台灣人**) Nonetheless, they have yet to arrive at some consensus on their national identity in the face of both vocal and military menaces from China across the Straits of Taiwan.

In the literature of identity formation, three types of explanation have been offered: primordialism, structuralism, and constructuralism (Le Vine, 1997; Prinsloo, 1996; Esman, 1994). Primordialism, variously known as essentialism, suggests that national identity is naturally born and essentially made up of an objectively observable core, be it in the form of racial/physical traits, or linguistic, religious, and other cultural characteristics. Structuralism, or instrumentalism, would posit that national identity is the result of mobilization by some psychologically deprived elites who have perceived discrepancies in the distribution of political power, economic resources, and/or social status. Constructuralism would suggest that national identity is nothing but constructed or imagined. In the case of Taiwan, conventional and popular understandings of ethnic identity as reflected in ethnic conflict tend to take a primoridial pretense, especially linguistic differences, although structural inequalities are at times summoned to reinforce and intertwined with these dissimilarities.

The purpose of this study is to explore the interplay between language policy and ethnic politics/identity in the context of the Native versus Mainlander competition. First of all, linguistic differences will be examined as an instrument of forging group solidarity as well as maintaining structural inequalities. And then, the main body of this study will concentrate on inquiry into five waves of linguistic/cultural renaissance that have been undertaken by the Natives since the 1970s; the last two waves, taking place in the 1990s and 2000s respectively, will be dealt with separately.

For the former, we will examine how a seemingly simple selection of a proper phonetic system for street signs initially undertaken in Taipei, capital of Taiwan, has evolved into a national controversy involving heated debate within not only the National Language Promotion Commission under the Ministry of Education but also the National Legislature; this eventually led to the disgraceful dismissal of the Minister of Education. For the latter, we will briefly sketch the recent call by some national legislators for the adoption of Holo as a second National Language in addition to Mandarin. Both the views of the pros and cons will be scrutinized in terms of how the issue is discoursed to their respective constituencies.

Linguistic Differences and Structural Inequalities

In terms of racial and cultural stocks, most of the Mainlanders, while originating from various provinces in China, share Han identity, although there are a few Manchurians (滿洲人), Mongolians (蒙古人), Hueis (回族 , Muslims), Tibetans (西藏人), Miaos (苗族), Yaos (傜族) and other minority groups. Among the Natives, except the Aboriginal Peoples, both Holos and the Hakkas are descendents of earlier Han settlers/immigrants. As they both share a similar sense of cultural and racial superiority over the Aboriginal Peoples, neither racial nor cultural characteristics are viable marks for the differentiation between the Mainlanders and the Natives.

Cultural differences, in the broader sense, did play an important role in the development of mutual distrust. After fifty years of Japanese colonization, the Natives must have gained certain Japanese cultural characteristics, unintentionally or intentionally, ranging from custom, housing, food, clothing, to language. And they joined the Japanese imperial armed forces proudly. Given these common experience and collective memory, the Natives had, until the end of the war, developed a hybrid identity which would express itself in both Japanese and Chinese outlooks and yet which could not be effortlessly identified as either Japanese or Chinese. It was therefore not surprising that Mainlanders tended to treat the Natives as Japanese subjects with a suspicious eye.

Linguistic differences appear to have been much more convenient attributes for ethnic identification, if not prejudice or even discrimination, for all relevant groups in

Taiwan. The Mainlanders would employ Mandarin as their mother tongue, the Natives have their own languages: the Holos speak Holo (**鶴佬話** , or *Holo -wei*), the Hakkas have their own Hakka (**客家話** , or *Hakka-hua*), and the Aboriginal Peoples are endowed with more than ten different languages, none of which are in the main mutually unintelligible. The most readily recognizable differences between Holo/Hakka and Mandarin are found in pronunciation and tone. As Mandarin is based on the dialect of Peking, Mongolian and Manchu influence is unavoidable. In contrast, both spoken Holo and Hakka are archaic versions of Han Chinese preserved by refugees from the north when they migrated southward. First, both languages also retain more tones than Mandarin does. Another feature of Holo is that there are often two different languages for literary and colloquial uses respectively. Third, there is no proper character for the colloquial word, or the use was lost somehow. When the Holos and the Hakkas migrated to Taiwan years ago, they must have borrowed some terms and vocabularies from the Plain Aborigines (**平埔族**).

Since Mandarin has for the past half century been imposed as the only National Language (**國語**) and thus enjoying the official status in both education and government, the ethnic line of demarcation between the Mainlanders and the Natives is expediently drawn between Mandarin speakers (**國語人**) and non-Mandarin speakers (i.e., Native Taiwanese speakers, **台語人**). There had been no lack of Natives who perceived that "correct" Mandarin was the minimum criterion for upward mobility; consequently Mandarin was consciously adopted exclusively at home, in the hope that their children's pronunciation would not be marred by their mother tongues.

During the February 28 Incident sparked in 1947, insurgent Natives, anxiously pursuing Mainlanders for retaliation, would provokingly stop any stranger and ask him to speak Holo, the most widespread language in the private life on the island. As a Native may also have been a Hakka, a second test would be given if he failed the first one: he would consequently be required to speak Japanese and to sing the national anthem of Japan, as few Mainlanders were able to speak fluent Japanese. Therefore, immediately after the war, one reliable criterion of judging one's Native identity was speaking either Holo or Hakka, with Japanese as an auxiliary test.

While linguistic differentiations may be conducive to inter-group dissociation, linguistic commonalities may provide for intra-group solidarity. Since the Native pupils had been forced to learn Japanese in school and were punished for speaking Holo or Hakka in public during the Japanese colonial rule, particularly at the heyday of Japanization immediately before the war broke out, Japanese provided the Holos and Hakkas, and even the Aboriginal Peoples, their first common spoken language. Nonetheless, both Holo and Hakka persisted in native-run schools, and Han-wen courses (Han language or literature, **漢文**) had been offered in public schools until the 1930s. It is paradoxical that a language imposed by the former colonists would later be adopted as symbol of solidarity among the Native Taiwanese after the arrival of the Mainlanders. Until recently, elder Native elites, who are at times termed as those with

"Japanese spirit," would communicate with one another in Japanese as a gesture of protesting the KMT rule, keenly aware that the Mainlanders resented anything Japanese so much. Even some Natives who were born after the war and thus had never been enrolled in Japanese schools would at times venture to speak corrupt Japanese with the same reason. At the present time, one of the most popular radio programs favored by Native taxi and bus drives are those playing old-styled Japanese songs, which seem reminiscent of their imagined good old days.

Nonetheless, while language may be conceived as capacity, property, or resource for individuals, it is a form of power for the ethnic group. In this sense, primordial ties are intertwined with structural inequalities. Ostensibly, the so-called National Language Policy promulgated after the war was designed to promote mutual understanding between the Mainlanders and the reunited Taiwanese Compatriots (**台灣同胞**); however, it was generally understood as one of the KMT's attempts to Sinicize the Natives, which reflecting political domination, in turn, had persistently degraded Native culture as vulgar and thus inferior. Since Holo and Hakka were degraded as "dialects" (**方言**) and proscribed in the public sphere, as history had repeated, those Native students who spoke their mother tongues in schools would be punished or fined in tokens.

To the dismay of the Natives, the hours of programs in Native languages per day had been severely rationed since TV became popular in the 1970s. Further, corrupt Mandarin spoken by the Natives had long been ridiculed as *Taiwan Guo-yu* (**台灣國語**), with the intention to humiliate the Natives and to deprive their collective self-pride.[1] Earlier on, Taiwanese figures on TV, if ever, would invariably have been portrayed as those who speak clumsy *Taiwan Guo-yu*. These biased treatments, intentionally or not, had only created resentment, if not hatred, among the Natives. This cultural wall did create mutual alienation, and eventually helped to consolidate separate senses of collective identity on both sides.

While it is not entirely clear whether the former ruling KMT had purposefully used Mandarin to subordinate the Natives, the cultural hegemony may have served as a protective shield erected by the KMT/Mainlander government (a numerical minority). In turn the Natives interpreted it as the continuance of the Japanese colonial practice. Additionally, such cultural hegemony could do nothing but serve to reinforce their sense of inferiority. Since most of the Natives could only command their mother tongues and Japanese, and barely understand Mandarin after the Japanese colonization for half a century, Mandarin, before long, had became one of the most humiliating symbols of domination by an alien regime.

As late as the 1990s, the mother tongues of the young generation had degenerated into everyday-life languages, since they neither had any formal course nor any incentive to learn them. For those Natives who had been better educated, they would be fluent in Mandarin, but awkward in either Holo or Hakka. This phenomenon was especially remarkable in Taipei. Fortunately, for the Native masses entangled in the structure of

vertical division of labor, Holo or Hakka is their main media of daily communication as long as they swear off any hope to seek a job in governmental institutions.

Native Renaissance

In the past decade, Taiwan has witnessed a renaissance of both Holo and Hakka in cultural industries, such as primetime series and news reports on TV, and song writings.[2] The approval of Holo and Hakka has been singularly noticeable during election campaigns, when Holo and Hakka are deemed imperative to attract Native voters in the numerical majority. Even the KMT candidates have been obliged to follow the same populist fashion traditionally adopted by the then opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, **民主進步黨**). Understanding the power of the Native languages, Lee Teng-hui of the born-again KMT (himself a Hakka assimilated by the Holos) could not help using Holo during his presidential campaign in 1996. In the 1998 mayoral election of Taipei, the KMT candidate Ma Ying-giou (**馬英九**), a Mainlander, appealed heavily to the Holo constituencies in their language. In the same vein, James Soong (**宋楚瑜**), a Mainlander who broke away from the now naturalized KMT, would took pains to campaign in Native languages and posed himself as a candidate of rainbow coalition in the 2000 presidential election.

What has been less noticed by the masses and, to certain degree, been purposely neglected by the media are the grassroots efforts at constructing Native Taiwanese identity in opposition to the imposed Chinese national identity under the official nationalism imagined by the KMT and the Mainlanders. Taking a culturally nationalist perspective, probably borrowed from German Romantic Nationalism in the 19th century, cultural engineers tend to define an exclusive Taiwanese national identity in terms of proficiency in Taiwanese (i.e., including Holo, Hakka, and Aboriginal languages, but excluding Mandarin). The site of competition is found in the selection of a phonetic system for all sorts of purposes.

Five waves of Native linguistic, if not cultural, renaissance can be discerned. The first wave arose from the confrontation between the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT, **台灣基督長老教會**) and the KMT government over the confiscation of the New Testament in Romanized Native languages in the earlier 1970s. As the only religious group steadfastly withstanding the control from the KMT party-state, the PCT, originating in Canada and Scotland, had stood up to challenge the legitimacy of the government, and eventually called for the exercise of the right to self-determination on the part of the Native Taiwanese in 1979. As the Native languages symbolize the persistence of spiritual resistance, linguistic differences had been summoned to reinforce the resentment against the official assimilative measures. Until now, the PCT Romanized "Plain Word" (**白話字** , hereafter RPW, or variously as *Gau-lo*, **教羅**) is still

one of the most popular phonetic systems among the Native elites, particularly those within the DPP.

The second wave of cultural revitalization, known as Folk Literature Movement (FLM, **鄉土文學運動**) came in the late 1970s not as a linguistic movement per se, but as a zeal to express literature in Native languages, especially Holo, in contrast to the orthodox anti-communist literature and the sanctioned romance fiction. The most conspicuous characteristic of the FLM was the Native novelists' readiness to express their concepts and styles partially in Holo, and to a lesser degree in Haka, rather than wholly in Mandarin. Clothed in a romantic yearning for returning to the mother earth outside Taipei (center of the garrison state), the anti-Mandarin FLM was disguised as nationalist, even though its proponents were reluctant to reveal whether it was Taiwanese or Chinese one. For the authorities in charge of cultural affairs, as long as Taiwan was conceived as a part of China, explicitly or implicitly, the FLM was not to be proscribed, especially at a time when the KMT was facing diplomatic isolation and domestic unrest in the earlier 1980s.

The third wave of cultural revival surged as the Taiwanese Language Movement (TLM, **台語文運動**) in the second half of the 1980s. For the TLM advocates, the emphasis was on how to exhaustively express their mother tongues in writing. Therefore, they were not satisfied with fragmental substitution of Taiwanese (Holo or Hakka) for Mandarin. In order for this goal to be upheld by the intellectuals, at least, a three-pronged approach was pursued: compiling dictionaries, composing literature, and writing system standardization. While TLM clubs and magazines were flourishing, the protagonists were divided over the most efficient writing system to be promoted. While some would prefer sweepingly replacement of Han characters with any Romanized phonetic system (**全羅**) and few would insist the search for proper Han characters for all Taiwanese from ancient publications (**全漢**), most would strike a balance and welcome the hybridity of a Han-character core and supplementary Romanizations (**漢羅**) if no proper Han characters were unambiguously available particularly for those ideograms borrowed from the Plain Aborigines.

Taiwanese Phonetic Movement

The fourth wave of linguistic renewal, designated here as the Taiwanese Phonetic Movement (TPM, **台灣拼音運動**), starting from the second half of the 1990s, would center on the standardization of the phonetic system -- although other aspects of the last phase of modernization would be maintained. Since the KMT took refuge in Taiwan after in 1949, it had implanted a Chu-ing-fu-hau phonetic system (thereafter CIFH, **注音符號**) originally designed in China for Mandarin teaching.[3] For the purpose of Romanization, the KMT retained the Wade-Giles system (**威妥瑪式**) in contrast to the Chinese Pinyin system (**漢語拼音** ,

hence CPS) adopted in China after the war. It is noted that neither system is adequate for representing Holo or Hakka as they both are excessively dissimilar to Mandarin in terms of etymology and tonality. Hence, the supporters of the TPM, as well as their predecessors, those TLM backers, have been earnestly busy designing their own "authentically" Native phonetic system. However, the seemingly bipolar competitions between the Native and the Mainlanders have so far become a triangular contest with the Native Holos and Hakkas divided.

Five phonetic contests have been protractedly waged since the second half of the 1990s, with the last one culminating into the fifth wave of linguistic rebirth in the form of language right, which is to be discussed in the next section. The first battleground in these latest phonetic competitions was located in the ad hoc Educational Reform Review Committee (**教育改革審議委員會**) under the Executive Yuan (**行政院**) in 1996.[4] While considering the introduction of mandatory English courses in primary schools, some committee members suggested that demanding the replacement of the CIFH system with the 26 symbols of English. The appeal was endorsed by the committee chair Li Yuan-che (**李遠哲**), the first Native Taiwanese (but in actuality, a naturalized Taiwanese-American) Nobel Prize Laureate and President of the Academic Sinnica. The following rationale was provided in the final report of the committee: "While actively planning and preparing properly adequate English courses for pupils in primary schools, [ought to] study the possibility to design a General Phonetic System (hereafter GPS, **通用拼音系統**) in order to release children the burden of learning different phonetic systems under Mandarin, mother tongues, and English" (Yu, n.d.: 4).

Second, as the appeal was tantamount to abolishing the CIFH system, it drew strong resistance from the much resented National Language Promotion Commission (NLPC, **國語推行委員會**) under the Ministry of Education. The NLPC fought back, with the help of the National Economic Planning Commission (**經建會**), and called for the immediate implementation of the so-called Second Form of the CIFH system (CIFH 2nd, **注音符號第二式**); this was originally designed in the 1980s to counter the much popular Chinese Pinyin system for overseas Chinese but had never been well accepted, under the pretext of internationalization for the sake of promoting economic growth. And the Ministry of Transportation was also prompt to order its subordinate authorities, including the local governments, to add a CIFH 2nd subtitle for all new street signs in the future.

Third, as the spark had been inflamed both horizontally and vertically, the General Phonetic System proponents piloted by Yu Bo-chuan (**余伯泉**) began soliciting backing from the Taipei Municipal Government, which was for the first time run by the former opposition DPP under Mayor Chen Shui-bian (**陳水扁**, 1995-1998), by forging a loose coalition with supporter of the TLM in 1997. The strategy employed by Yu was to mobilize TLM sympathy by emphasizing the balance between indigenization, also known as Naturalization (**本土化**), and internationalization; this pitted Native

languages against Mandarin. Eventually, the Municipal Bureau of Education was convinced to offer the GPS in primary schools, with the understanding that the GPS would be adopted not only for Mandarin but also for Holo and Hakka. Moreover, the Municipal Government also resolved to use the GPS subtitle on any renovated street signs; later on, the Taipei Rapid Transit also adopted the GPS for the all routes, one of which, so far, extends to the Taipei County. The CIFH 2nd favored by the central government, that is, the National Language Promotion Commission, was strategically stalled by the mayor of the capital.

Fourth, the National Language Promotion Commission swiftly struck back in early 1998 by introducing a Taiwanese (read "Holo," not Mandarin) Language Phonetic Act (TLPA, **台灣語言音標方案**) for Holo, mainly to preempt the efforts of some Taiwanese-Americans who had earlier applied to the International Standard Organization (ISO) for registering the RPW of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan the 10646 Status (UNICODE standard, see Yu, n.d.: 6). At this time, while the semi-official Information Industry Promotion Foundation was summoned to register the TLPA to the ISO externally, linguists belonging to the Taiwan Language Association (TLA, **台灣語文學會**) went to the front (Yu, n.d.: 5-6). In appearance, while the grandiose aim was to guarantee the capabilities of the information industry to compete in the world market, the exact dispute was over what proper phonetic system would represent Holo-Taiwanese internationally. In reality, the contest was over the monopoly of the educational market in case the government should decide to embrace one phonetic system for teaching Native languages.

Somehow, Mainlanders within the National Language Promotion Commission seemed to have successfully misled their Native counterparts, who were largely also members of the TLA, to separate their respective linguistic markets--that is, Mandarin and Holo. Considering the fact that the TLPA was only a slight revision of the RPW, they failed to expect that the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, who challenged why their 170-years-old RPW should be replaced by the newborn TLPA, would react strongly. Some DPP legislators even furiously demanded the abolishment of the NLPC (Yu, n.d.: 6). Nevertheless, the NLPC seemed to have eventually discovered that the grassroots backed RPW would be a helpful counterbalance against the intellectually sponsored General Phonetic System within the Holo Taiwanese.

At the fifth phonetic contest, Chinese Pinyin system was formally brought into the fore. Immediately when the newly elected KMT mayor of Taipei Ma Ying-giou took office in 1999, the half-implemented General Phonetic System came to full stop, pending whether to embrace the cumbersome CIFH 2nd sanctioned by the National Language Promotion Commission. For the Chief of the Municipal Bureau of Civil Affair Lin Cheng-Hsiou (**林正修**), a Hakka who had in the past actively participated in the anti-KMT movement but now were recruited by Ma, there seemed to be some hidden-agendas on the part of the Holos to gain the upper hand of the Hakas whenever a phonetic system was heralded.

Meanwhile, Mainlanders in the central government also appeared uneasy for the coming presidential election next year. Various ad hoc committees were called up and then dissolved without reaching any consensus. To everyone's surprise, the Minister of Education Lin Chin-chiang (林清江), a Native Taiwanese, resigned from his post for ailing health. The Vice Premier Liou Chao-hsuen (劉兆玄), a Mainlander, took advantage of this chaotic opportunity and took over the decision-making authority. After appeasing the GPS supporters and thus pacifying further exposure from the media, the seemingly honest Liou abruptly announced that the government would welcome a third option--Chinese Pinyin System--at a time when the Legislature was in summer recession. Since CPS had never been on the agenda, not to mention seriously discussed, Liu's dogmatic decision style drew violent criticisms as his integrity was disgracefully tarnished. Eventually, fourteen nonpartisan county magistrates together with some national legislators signed an ultimatum demanding him not to employ the CPS on any further street signs before the coming presidential election.

When the defeated Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian was inaugurated as the second popularly elected President in May 2000, protagonists of the General Phonetic System were in euphoria as Chen had advocated the GPS as mayor not long ago. The newly appointed Minister of Education Tseng Chi-Lang (曾志朗), protégé of Li Yuan-che, had formerly expressed goodwill to then rebellious GPS activists, some of who were subsequently appointed as members of the National Language Promotion Commission. However, before long, these reformers met strong-willed opponents from their conservative counterparts within the NLPC. While old guards of the CIFH system upheld the CIFH 2nd system, some non-linguistic believers of the Taiwanese Language Movement suspected the real intention of the GPS was Mandarin use only, thus leaving the "general" application to Native languages, especially Holo, as an empty promise. In the meanwhile, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was determined to defend their longstanding RPW. Finally, the designers of TLPA from the Taiwan Language Association were also present in the NLPC.

Facing mounting pressure from the Legislature, the National Language Promotion Commission finally reached a resolution in September 2000 to apply the GPS to Mandarin, and the applications on Holo and Hakka were pending for further discussions. At first glance, champions of the GSP had somehow miraculously maneuvered a united front among the Native members against their Mainlander counterparts by creating a Taiwan versus China dichotomy. In other words, the General Phonetic System was renamed as the Taiwanese Phonetic System against the Chinese Pinyin (Phonetic) System for popular appeal. The victory was soon disillusioned by the reluctance of the Minister of Education Tseng Chi-Lang to approve that suggestion. It is not clear yet why he should have endorsed the GPS in the beginning anyway.[5] Apparently, while he may have shared the disposition against both the traditional CIFH and the CIFH 2nd systems, he was not ready to embrace wholeheartedly the GPS, which at this moment had been posed as the last cultural stand against China. Also, pro-China elements in the Educational

Committee of the Legislature looked watchful of his predisposition as a self-styled nonpartisan minister.

At the same time, the Taipei Municipal Government joined the battle by arguing that the Chinese Pinyin System was the best option for international linkage (國際接軌), particularly for such a cosmopolitan city as Taipei since foreigners would only understand the CPS. With the encouragement from the opposition KMT, Tseng Chi-Lung finally felt confident enough to reveal his true preference for the CPS, contending that other alternatives would render Taiwan isolated internationally since data banks in the libraries all around the world had switched to the CPS. Whether or not his contention was true or not, Tseng's opportunist posture unavoidably led to an open confrontation in 2000 with his deputy Fan Hsuen-lue (范巽綠), former DPP legislator and veteran of the Educational Committee. And his recommendation for adopting the CPS was stuck down by the Executive Yuan. When the cabinet was reshuffled in 2002, he was forced to step down, as the ruling DPP government was no longer mindful of the blackmail potential of the oppositional parties.

Second Official Language

After the legislative election in 2001, there emerged a quasi-bipolar party system at the national level, with a Pan-Green and a Pan-Blue camp representing the Natives and the Mainlanders respectively. Within the Pan-Green camp, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU, 台灣團結聯盟), an alliance of Native defectors from the KMT and some pro-independence breakaway elements from the DPP, is campaigning heavily to elevate Holo as a second Official Language (官方語言).[6]

In recollection, there have been some suggestions to include all languages in Taiwan as Official/National Languages in the spirit of multiculturalism. Nonetheless, as the DPP is moving to the center with the hope to snatch those supposed median voters, it has embarrassingly appeared ambivalent in regard to the linguistic issues, which partially explains why the former Minister of Education Tseng had been unwilling to take any serious reform measure. In order to alleviate the political tension resulting from linguistic monopoly of Mandarin, the government in recent years has permitted the teaching of Native languages in primary schools. So far, only a token couple of hours per week are sanctioned. The efforts of the TSU represent the latest development of Native linguistic, if not national, renaissance manifested in the Official Language Movement (OLM, 官方語言運動). Articulating the cause in terms of ethnic equality/justice, this newest course of action would find its moral justification from language rights as one the fundamental human rights.

Although these issues are still waiting for further open debates and thorough deliberation, ethnic elites are anxious to provide their interpretations for their own constituencies. For the Mainlanders, the underlying intention of the OLM seems to stand

for implementing, in the minimum sense, the Natives' plan to de-Chinese ingredients in Taiwan, and to the extreme, their disguised agenda to assimilate the Mainlanders. Some Hakka have gone so far as to suggest that the proposed Linguistic Equality Act is nothing but the Holos' selfish conspiracy to consolidate their political power in the form of language rights. Others would ridicule the pointless venture either because the Native languages are too primitive or because they are only dialects.

Substantively, there is no intrinsic difference between a national and an official language as adopted in the European context, according to research conducted by the OSCE (n.d.). Nevertheless, the notion of a "national language" has been an open wound as it has uninterruptedly symbolized the Japanese colonist rule and the alien KMT regime for the past century. As a result, even if all Native languages were elevated to the status of National Language, the impression of political domination would linger while the intended integration effect is not automatically guaranteed, given the fact that national identity is still in flux. On the other hand, if it is decided that there would be one National Language only and multiple Official languages at the same time, still, at issue is which language would be selected as the National Language: while some would retain Mandarin, some would welcome Holo.

What has stuck everybody most is President Chen's remark that English should be considered as a quasi-Official Language so Taiwan is prepared to face the encroachment of globalization. Agitators of both the Taiwanese Phonetic Movement and the Official Language Movement share a feeling of delusion by the DPP. This time, the heaviest blow came neither within (the Mainlanders), nor from China (CPS), but from internationalization.

Conclusions

On balance, the demarcation between the Mainlanders and the Natives is not so much based on linguistic differences as on their dissimilar degrees of attachment to the island. Until recently, most Mainlanders had tended to treat Taiwan as their temporary residence, particularly during the reign of Chiang Kei-shek, who insisted the paranoiac myth of retaking Mainland China. Consequently, the possibility of identifying themselves with the island was impeded by the disposition of being provisional residents. For those prosperous Mainlanders, the prospect of a CCP invasion of Taiwan had prompted them to send their descendants overseas, mainly in the United States. Their fear had been aggravated by the anticipation of a Native takeover, if not revolution, and hence the ensuing retaliation by the Natives.

It remains to be seen whether or not the Mainlanders would consider the above-mentioned linguistic revitalization on the part of the Natives as nothing less than reversal discrimination. In a changing political atmosphere, especially the power transfer from the KMT to the Native DPP, young Mainlanders appear much more willing to learn Holo

in order to fare better in job opportunities, or, in the worst scenario, to disguise themselves as Natives in case ethnic conflicts break out. Similarly, it is yet not clear whether the Mainlanders would interpret the self-adjustment as a form of forced assimilation. It is much less certain whether these developments would reinforce their group solidarity and ethnic identity.

Finally, in the spirit of multiculturalism (see, for instance, Parekh, 2000) and reconciliation, genuine linguistic equality should take the place of linguistic hegemony that has agonized Taiwan. In the interest of peace-building among ethnic groups, we suggest the introduction of a Bill of Language Rights, either independently or within the broad framework of the forthcoming Bill of Rights that the government is seriously considering to draft.

Notes

1. A former chair of the Department of Agricultural Economic, National Taiwan University, a Mainlander, was said to scorn former President Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) when Lee applied for a teaching position to his *alma mater* after he had received his Ph.D. from Cornell University in the 1960s: "Your Mandarin is too poor to be qualified as a college teacher!"
2. There has also been a growing awareness among some young Natives who purposely insist on speaking only Holo or Hakka, partly due to their reaction to the agony they had gone through in the primary school and high schools, and partly due to the growing alarm that their languages and related cultural marks will become extinct ultimately.
3. Here are some examples: ㄅ (=b), ㄆ (=p), ㄇ (=m), ㄈ (=f), ㄉ (=d), ㄊ (=t), ㄋ (=n), and ㄌ (=l).
4. This part of accounts is based on Yu (n.d.) and the author's personal observation.
5. Possibly it was to curry favor with Li Yuan-che as an educational reformer, which subsequently earned him the ministry.
6. The author was invited by the TSU to testify on this issue at a legislative hearing held on March 19, 2002.

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