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# Multi-language education for indigenous children in Taiwan

Cheng-Kan Chen

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

MULTI-LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN TAIWAN

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Cheng-Kan Chen

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
School of Teacher Education  
Program of Educational Studies

August, 2011

This Dissertation by: Cheng-Kan Chen

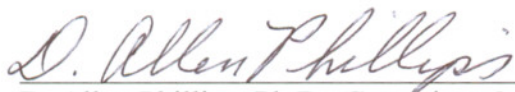
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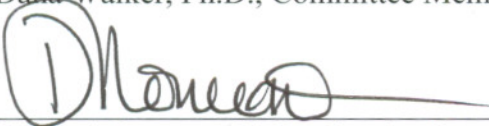
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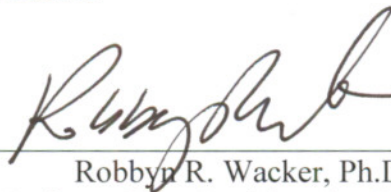
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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study was to explore the language education program implemented for indigenous children in Taiwan at the elementary level. More specifically, this study aimed at gaining insights into the implementation of language curriculum through a qualitative case study of an indigenous elementary school in Taiwan. The researcher's intent was to explore the factors that influenced the implementation of the language education program with regard to curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development and to gain the participants' perspectives on the language education program. Two administrators, eight language teachers, and six community members were selected as participants for interviews. Moreover, these eight language teachers' classrooms were observed. Data were collected through the sources of interviews, observations, field notes, and documents.

The findings in relation to the research questions were divided into three chapters to report the overall implementation of each language area in the language education program, the influencing factors of the implementation of the language education program, and the participants' perspectives on the implementation of the language education program. A number of overarching themes synthesizing the findings were subsequently presented.

The findings suggested that the language education program at the participating school was designed in accordance with the mandated curriculum guidelines. Teachers had the flexibility to deviate from the prescribed curriculum guidelines and to design their instructional goals based on students' needs and classroom schedules. Language resources, including the international youth volunteer, school signs with three languages (Chinese, English, and the Atayal language), English Express Wonderland, and Indigenous Language Wonderland, were conducive to the enhancement of multiple language learning. Teachers sought to improve their instructional strategies through weekly seminars, feedback from observation teachers, self-learning, and professional workshops. Moreover, this research reported the participants' views toward the language education program, the loss of indigenous language among children, indigenous language instruction, and their strategies in promoting indigenous language. Finally, recommendations were drawn from the research findings for elementary schools, language teachers, and policy makers. Recommendations for future research that may contribute to understanding the multi-language education for indigenous children were provided as well.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father, Kuang-Chin Chen, and my mother, Lu-Hsiang Chen, who have been constant sources of unconditional love and unwavering support that sustain me throughout my life.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

The world's minority languages are disappearing at a rapidly alarming rate today. Out of approximately 6,800 known languages spoken in the world, about 95% of these languages are spoken by a mere 5% of the world's population (May, 2008). In other words, this large proportion of languages is kept alive by only a small portion of the population. As the number of speakers is diminishing, these vanishing languages may never be heard. Crystal (2000) presented a simple yet astonishing calculation result, estimating that at least one language may perish every two weeks. Some linguists even pessimistically foresee the decline of these endangered languages and surmise that more than half of the currently known languages are in danger of extinction by the end of this century (Romaine, 2006). In order to raise our awareness of language endangerment, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (n.d.) stresses the importance of caring and preserving our own native languages as follows:

Every language reflects a unique world-view with its own value systems, philosophy and particular cultural features. The extinction of a language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural knowledge embodied in it for centuries, including historical, spiritual and ecological knowledge that may be essential for the survival of not only its speakers, but also countless others (Why should we care? para. 1)

This statement for preserving the vanishing voices of minority groups addresses the immediate concern regarding the precarious circumstances of minority languages in

the processes of assimilation into the mainstream culture and is specifically applicable to the current situation of the Austronesian languages. The Austronesian languages spoken by Austronesian peoples<sup>1</sup> (Council of Indigenous Peoples, 2010) constitute only 2% of Taiwan's total population of 23 million (Government Information Office, 2009).

Austronesian peoples refer to the Aborigines with Malayo-Polynesian roots residing long before the Han Chinese arrived on the island of Taiwan (Beaser, 2006).

Taiwan is a culturally and linguistically diverse country. Apart from the Austronesian peoples, it is generally believed that there are three Han ethnic groups in Taiwan, including Holo (i.e. Southern Min people) (70%), known as the largest subgroup of Han people, Hakka, and Mainlanders (Government Information Office, 2009). Due to the language policy where Mandarin, the national language, was promoted by the ruling Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) to achieve national unity for more than half a century (Hsiau, 1997), the Austronesian languages and other local languages, such as Southern Min and Hakka, have been severely restricted or banned. The promotion of Mandarin is so influential that it becomes an important vehicle for communication for people with different ethnic backgrounds today. The younger generation usually does not proficiently acquire the mastery of their mother tongues except Mandarin. The situation of losing local languages is especially critical among Austronesian peoples, at an attrition rate of 15.8% in two generations and 31% across three generations (Huang, 1995). Since

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<sup>1</sup> The Austronesian peoples are thought to probably originate in south China, where they sailed in canoes to Taiwan, and then later settled on various Pacific islands, such as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Madagascar. Taiwanese aborigines are Austronesian peoples, speaking languages of the Austronesian family.

the lifting of martial law<sup>2</sup> in 1987, Taiwan has been drastically changing in political, economic, and social environments through the process of democratization, leading to an unprecedented freedom of speech and political participation for Taiwanese people (Huang, 2000). Increasingly forceful demands for treating all local languages as equal as Mandarin have been boosted by native ethnic groups. The initial effort in seeking to revitalize Taiwanese local languages can be observed through the mother-tongue education program proposed by some of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) members (Huang, 2000). In 1993, the Ministry of Education (MOE) subsequently incorporated local language teaching into the Native Education curriculum to help students enhance their knowledge and appreciation of local Taiwanese languages, history, geography, natural science, and arts (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 1993). Yet it was not until 2001, when the MOE promulgated the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines to be implemented at the elementary school and junior high school levels, that Local Language was formally included as a required subject in the Language Arts learning area. Elementary students from grades 1 through 6 were required to choose Southern Min, Hakka, or one of the indigenous languages in accordance with the decisions of local governments or schools for a 40-minute period of weekly learning (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2001). The official inclusion of Local Language in school curriculum undoubtedly signifies a great milestone for preserving the mother tongues and native cultures of different ethnic groups in the multilingual society of Taiwan.

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<sup>2</sup> The Provisional Amendments for the Period of Mobilization of the Suppression of Communist Rebellion was implemented in Taiwan in May 1948. In 1949, the government implemented martial law based on these provisional amendments.

Parallel to this growing awareness of the importance of maintaining native languages and cultures was an endeavor to internationalize and globalize the country through the promotion of English at earlier stages where communicative competence became the focus. English was first implemented officially in fifth and sixth grade at the elementary level in 2001 and further promoted downward to third grade in 2005 (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2001). English has been taught as a foreign language (EFL) required for middle schools since 1968 (Tse, 1980), using the grammar-translation approach to stress the correct usage of grammar and the spelling of vocabulary (Yang, 1992). In order to equip a new generation with the capabilities to keep abreast of international developments, where information interactions, technology innovation, and global economy hasten the need for communication with countries all over the world, English language learning, initially acquired as a merely linguistic subject in the previous period, has been learned as a tool for communication since the implementation of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. One of the goals in this reformed curriculum intended for students of elementary and junior high schools to achieve English language competence is to “further cultural learning and international understanding” (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2001). The core competence further suggests that a student, as a modern citizen, is expected to recognize “the trend of the globalization in which countries all over the world are integrated into a global village” and develop “a global perspective with mutual interdependence, trust and cooperation” (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2001). English language learning thus becomes a medium through which students are able to respect and appreciate diverse cultures, to possess international views toward global affairs, and to connect themselves with the latest trends in advanced technology.

This concurrent emphasis on both localization and globalization while maintaining the acquisition of the mainstream language becomes one of the characteristics of the Language Arts learning area in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, where Local Language, Mandarin (Chinese), and English are given considerable amount of attention. At the elementary level, Local Language and Mandarin begin in the first grade, and English usually begins in the third grade. Generally, time spent on each language subject varies. There are approximately five to six periods per week required for Mandarin, one period for English, and one period for Local Language. Some schools may add one more period for English from alternative learning periods. At first glance, the area of Language Arts, if compared with the other six required learning areas, including Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, Arts and Humanities, Science and Technology, Mathematics, and Integrative Activities, seems to take the largest share (20%-30%) of the learning area periods (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2001). However, time allocated for the Language Arts in this present curriculum design is comparatively less than the previous national curriculum where Mandarin was the sole language. Mandarin, for instance, is given five to six periods per week, whereas there were ten periods spent weekly on Mandarin before the implementation of the Grade 1-9 curriculum. Moreover, Local Language and English are the other language subjects required at the elementary level though each of them is given only one or two periods per week respectively.

This shift from the monolingual policy to the multilingual policy for language education at the elementary level has gained the attention of scholars, language teachers, and the general public. First of all, Mandarin is the medium of instruction in elementary

schools, serving as the fundamental and critical tool for learning the contents of other subjects. However, one factor resulting from the implementation of the new curriculum has been an impact on the acquisition of Mandarin. The weekly teaching periods allocated for Mandarin instruction have been reduced to less than approximately ten periods which were previously taught in elementary schools since the implementation of the Grade 1-9 curriculum.<sup>3</sup> The reduction of teaching hours for Mandarin instruction at the elementary level has worried professional scholars, who are apprehensive that this change in curriculum policy will lower students' proficiency in Mandarin, since Mandarin serves as the foundation for comprehending and acquiring other academic subjects (Chen, 2001). Then, the promotion of English at the elementary level implies that the MOE recognizes the need for studying this international language at the early ages so that children can be better equipped as tomorrow's global citizens. This implementation of the English program starting from the elementary school level has inspired the passion for learning English on this island, where bilingual pre-schools or after-school intensive language centers are established especially in metropolitan areas to expose children to additional English language learning (Liu, 2002). In a conference held at National Taiwan University I attended in 2001, one of the professors in the panel session commented that the English program in the Grade 1-9 curriculum was one of the giant fires that boosted the nation-wide English fever. What this English program emphasized was to enhance students' ability in speaking and listening in English, a skill

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the curriculum standard promulgated by the MOE in 1993, weekly teaching periods allocated for the Mandarin instruction were mainly ten periods for Grades 1-2 and nine periods for Grades 3-6. Since the implementation of the Grade 1-9 curriculum in 2001, teaching periods allocated for Mandarin instruction have been reduced to four to six periods for Grades 1-2, to five to 7.5 periods for Grades 3-4, and to 5.4 to 8.1 periods for Grades 5-6.

which had been largely neglected in the traditional English teaching approach in Taiwan, where the grammar-translation method had been the central focus. This new approach in the English education at the elementary level led parents to the belief that their children needed to be provided with extra opportunities to learn English in addition to the weekly one or two hours of English classes taught at elementary schools if they wanted their children to excel in a competitive society. Last, the instruction of Local Language, whose main function is to help preserve the mother tongues, has raised various issues.

Traditionally, local languages in Taiwan have existed in spoken forms only. A lack of standardized orthographic systems to codify the local languages hindered the implementation of Local Language program. While Local Language was intended to increase students' understanding of their native languages, including Southern Min, Hakka, and aboriginal languages, Southern Min, a local language spoken by the Holo people, dominated most of local language classes due to its popular use by the majority of the Taiwanese population (Chen, 2006). Moreover, the implementation of the Local Language course in elementary education is mostly considered a token effort rather than an effective measure to prevent the decreasing use of local languages (Wang, 2003). Since each language subject has its share in the language arts program, it is important to investigate the implementation of each language subject within this reformed language curriculum from the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members in order to understand the issues they are currently encountering.

This study focused specifically on language education for Taiwanese indigenous children and the exploration of the views of teachers, administrators, and community members toward the language program at the elementary level. My reasons for carrying

out this study were twofold. First, the policy of promoting the national language, Mandarin, has had a great impact on the attrition of the local languages in Taiwan, including the mother tongue spoken by the indigenous peoples. This language policy administered approximately 50 years ago has caused most of the indigenous peoples to lose their mother tongues and to shift to the dominant language. According to the most recent report from *Ethnologue*, of the 26 listed individual languages in Taiwan, 22 are living languages and 4 have no known speakers. These four languages, Basay, Ketangalan, Papora-Hoanya, and Siraya, are precisely classified as varieties of Austronesian languages (Lewis, 2009). The shift from indigenous languages to Mandarin was also found in the study of Lin (1995), indicating that 61% of indigenous children communicated with their parents in Mandarin at home, whereas only 37% of them spoke their mother tongues for communication in their family domains. The incorporation of indigenous languages into the reformed language curriculum at the elementary level promoted by the MOE meant that indigenous languages formally received their official status. Moreover, to encourage indigenous students to study their own languages, the MOE announced that those who passed the proficiency test of indigenous languages were entitled to gain 35% extra on the entrance exams of senior high schools, vocational schools, or universities (2006). Measures such as these were intended to preserve and revitalize the indigenous languages. Therefore, it was vital to understand how indigenous languages were effectively implemented along with the required learning of the other two language subjects, and the curriculum planning designed for the language education in a schooling context for indigenous children.



Second, the indigenous peoples in Taiwan have been considered marginalized ethnic groups, receiving inadequate educational resources due to the remote geographical areas where most of them live. Some indigenous schools located far from the industrial and commercial urban areas have had difficulty recruiting teachers for a long-term basis due to the limited quota for full-time teachers. Insufficient funding, inadequate facilities, and lack of support from the community have further deprived students of learning opportunities (Chang, 2000). In addition, rare chances for employment in these areas have resulted in the indigenous peoples' leaving their hometowns and seeking better job opportunities in metropolitan areas. Cross-generational child rearing has been commonly observed in these financially disadvantaged families where grandparents take on the role of parents to provide children with basic necessities, and less academic attention has been placed upon these children to help them adjust to school work (Du, 2000). Moreover, the course content in schools usually has been based on the mainstream culture deviating from indigenous experiences and perspectives. What children have learned in schools may not be correlated with life experiences from their home cultures, which can lead to lack of motivation and inadequate academic achievement. The discrepancies in social environments, language systems, and economic opportunities may cause difficulties for indigenous students to learn and to adjust to the mainstream society. Therefore, it was necessary to understand problems in the language education encountered by teachers, administrators, and community members who were in the forefront of the schooling context and local tribal community so that better instructional practices and educational resources could be provided to create equal educational opportunities for indigenous students.

### Need for the Study

The Language Arts learning area within the Grade 1-9 curriculum design has incorporated three language subjects, Mandarin, English and Local Language, where the mainstream language, the international language, and one self-selected native Taiwanese language are required for elementary school children to learn at different grade levels. In contrast to the one language subject, Mandarin, which has been required for the Language Arts learning area at the elementary level for more than half a century, this reformed curriculum has its uniqueness in integrating both concepts of globalization and indigenization (Chen, 2006; Taiwan Elementary and Secondary Educator Community, n.d.) and it is considered to be innovative and unprecedented (Chiu, 2002). While there was an increasing attention on the Grade 1-9 curriculum from the perspective of curriculum policy and each individual language curriculum implementation, studies with regard to the implementation of the Language Arts learning area incorporating three language subjects were sparse. Therefore, it was vital to explore factors that facilitated or hindered the implementation of language education program and the instructional practices among three language subjects through the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members.

Language plays a substantial role in academic performance, where there remains a space for indigenous children to seek further improvement. Research was needed that shed light on how the Language Arts learning area was implemented through an indigenous elementary school context where Mandarin, English, and Local Language were incorporated into the Grade 1-9 curriculum to design a holistic language education program to be implemented for indigenous children.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the language education implemented for indigenous children in Taiwan at the elementary level. More specifically, this study aimed to gain insights into the implementation of the language education program through a qualitative case study of an indigenous elementary school in Taiwan. The researcher's intent was to explore the experiences of language teachers, administrators, and community members with the implementation of Mandarin, English, and Local Language for indigenous children with regard to curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development. The research may inform future curriculum and pedagogical design and foster pre-service teachers' professional knowledge and skills in the area of the language education for indigenous children.

## Research Questions

### Primary Question

The overarching research question that guided the study was:

Q1 How is the language education program required by the Taiwanese government implemented in an indigenous elementary school, as perceived by the language teachers, school administrators, and community members?

### Supporting Questions

1. How are Mandarin, English, and Local Language respectively taught for indigenous children in an indigenous elementary school?
2. What are the factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of language education program with regard to curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development?
3. What are the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members on the importance and implementation of the language education program?

### Significance of the Study

In an effort to explore the implementation of the language education program in an indigenous elementary school, this study was significant in identifying the possible factors facilitating or hindering the enhancement of the language education for indigenous children at the elementary level. This study was significant in informing the implementation process of the language education program through the perspectives of the administrators and the teachers, in addition to the actual classroom practices of the language teachers. Understanding the challenges and issues from the implementation of language education program in the context of an indigenous elementary school was beneficial not only for language teachers to be better equipped with understanding the learning needs of indigenous children within the trilingual learning framework, but also was conducive for administrators and policy makers to design holistic language and educational policies for Taiwanese indigenous children in the field of language education.

### Definition of Terms

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): English language is instructed in an environment where few immediate opportunities are provided for learners to practice in their native cultures (Brown, 2007).

Indigenous: This term is used throughout the study to refer to what is original and native in Taiwan. It is based on the official translation of the Council of Indigenous Peoples, Executive Yuan, which is the central government organization established to carry out coordination and planning of indigenous affairs.

Indigenous Elementary School: This term refers to elementary schools where the majority of students are from indigenous ethnic backgrounds.

Indigenous Languages: Languages used in the community where indigenous peoples populate. This term can also be used interchangeably with aboriginal languages, ethnic languages, or tribal languages.

International Culture Course: The International Culture course is designed to motivate students' interest in learning English and enhance students' English proficiency through a wide variety of teaching approaches, such as guided reading of picture books and teaching with songs.

Mandarin: Mandarin, also known as *Guoyu* (national language) or *Huayu* (Chinese language), is the official language in Taiwan (Lam, 2008).

### Summary

The language education at the elementary level in Taiwan has undergone an educational innovation with its unique focus on the learning of three language subjects. Contrary to the monolingual curriculum implemented on this island for more than half a century, English and Local Language have been added to the Language Arts learning area to help students connect with the outside world and appreciate native languages and cultural values. English language learning enables students to break the boundaries of limited knowledge and broaden their views toward international affairs, whereas learning Local Language is a way to continue and preserve native cultures and life experiences. With the joining of the two additional language subjects in the learning area, the amount of instructional hours for Mandarin learning has been reduced. Through the exploration of the language education at the elementary level in the context of an indigenous school, I aimed to investigate what factors facilitated and challenged the implementation of language curriculum, what instructional practices teachers administered and how these

instructional practices led to their intended goals, and how Mandarin, English, and indigenous languages were being taught for children from indigenous backgrounds. This research helped build a theoretical framework for researchers and educators in Taiwan and sought to make a contribution to the future studies in the language education of minority groups.

CHAPTER II  
LITERATURE REVIEW  
A Brief Introduction of Taiwan

Taiwan, consisting of one major island, the archipelagoes of Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, and several smaller islands, is located 100 miles off China's coast between Japan and the Philippines. It is an oceanic nation of approximately 36,000 square kilometers (13,900 square miles), which is about the size of the combined states of Maryland and Delaware in the United States (Government Information Office, 2009; Sandel, 2003).

The Ethnic Groups

The total population in Taiwan is around 23 million, consisting of four ethnic groups: Holo (i.e. Southern Min) (73.3%), Mainlanders (13%), Hakka (12%), and the Austronesian peoples (1.7%) (Huang, 1995, p. 21).

*The Holo People*

A large amount of Chinese descendants migrated to Taiwan in the 17th century due to hardship and strife in their native land. Holo is the largest ethnic group migrating to Taiwan from the Quanzhou and Zhangzhou districts in the southern Fujian Province (Southern China). Eighty percent of the Chinese population in Taiwan originated from these two districts as of the end of the Ching Dynasty, with approximately 45% from Quanzhou and more than 35% from Zhangzhou (Lamley, 1981). These immigrants tended to settle in the areas resembling their previous hometowns in China. For instance,

immigrants from Quanzhou chose to settle in coastal regions, whereas those from Zhangzhou tended to gather on inland plains. The Holo People speak Tai-gi, also called Taiyu (Taiwanese), Minnan (Southern Min), or Holo.

### *The Mainlanders*

The mainlanders came from various provinces of China to Taiwan in 1949 due to the defeat of the Kuomintang government in the civil war with the Chinese Communists. There were substantial numbers of soldiers and civilians coming to Taiwan between 1949 and 1950, but the exact number of immigrants during this period has never been effectively calculated (Huang, 1995). It was not until the Taiwan census in 1956 that the estimation of the mainlanders was known to be approximately 1.21 million. The male population was about twice as much as the female population during this period, so half of the male mainlanders sought spouses with native Taiwanese backgrounds. The children born from the intermarriage between mainlander fathers and Taiwanese mothers were still considered to be *Waishengren* (meaning “Mainlanders”) due to the fact that the children’s birthplaces were based on the original homeland information from their fathers. Upon the arrival of the mainlanders in Taiwan, they spoke varieties of Chinese dialects and other minority languages from different parts of Mainland China. Mandarin, which the mainlanders had acquired through education or army service, was used as a lingua franca among them for mutual communication (Tsao, 1999).

### *The Hakka People*

A great number of the Hakka people, originating from the eastern Guangdong Province, also migrated to Taiwan in the 17th and 18th centuries (Young, 1989). The literal meaning of *Hakka* stands for “guest people” or “late comers.” The name, Hakka,



was given by local residents in the provinces of southern China when the Hakka migrated from northern China due to the invasion of northern nomads beginning with the fourth century. The Hakka were not situated as advantageously as the Holo during the late 17th century when Chinese migrated to Taiwan. As a matter of fact, the Hakka were forbidden to come to Taiwan freely, which resulted in the comparatively smaller population of the Hakka. As the Hakka lost their power during the competition with the Holo for limited resources such as land, water, and territory in Taiwan, the Hakka were forced to move to less fertile and undeveloped uplands. The majority of the Hakka live in the Miaoli, Hsinchu, and Taoyuan Counties, speaking the Hai-lu or Si-hsien variety of Hakka. Some of the Hakka live in Taichung, Miaoli, and Changhua Counties, speaking the Da-pu or Rao-ping variety of Hakka. The Hakka speak different varieties of Hakka based on their place of origin, but these dialects are mutually comprehensible among the Hakka people in Taiwan (Kubler, 1985). The attrition of the Hakka language is observed also among the younger generation with the Hakka ethnic background. The most commonly used language at home is Mandarin between the Hakka children and their family members. Only the seniors 50 years old or older on average can still fluently speak the Hakka language in the families (Huang & Chen, 2002). Therefore, the Hakka people are facing the threat of the loss of the Hakka language similar to the situation of the indigenous languages.

### *The Indigenous Peoples*

The indigenous peoples were the first inhabitants in Taiwan thousands of years before the arrival of the Han Chinese (the non-indigenous peoples). The languages spoken by the indigenous peoples belong to the Austronesian language family, also

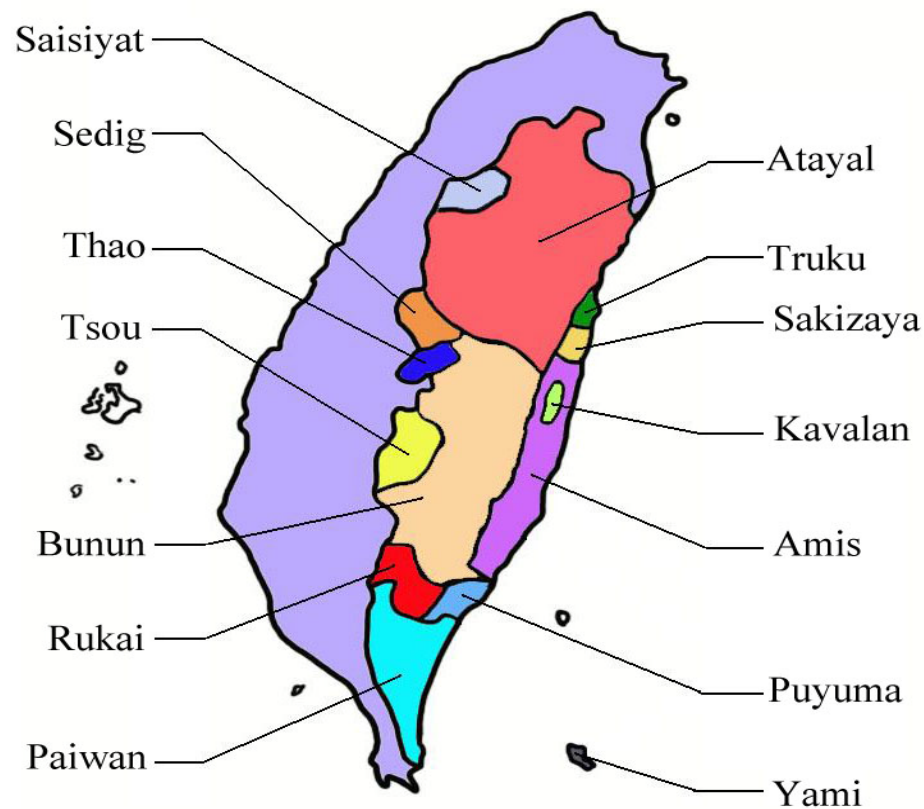
known as the Malayo-Polynesian language family, which is the largest language family in the world, including 1,200 languages and approximately 270 million speakers (Tryon, 1995), encompassing the region stretching from Taiwan in the north to New Zealand in the south, and from Madagascar in the west to Easter Island in the east. Previous studies conducted by several archeologists, anthropologists, and linguists suggested that Taiwan might be one of the residential areas for the Austronesians or even the Austronesian homeland (Bellwood, 1991; Blust, 1984-1985; Li, 2004; Shutler, Jr., & Marck, 1975; Thiel, 1988). The Austronesians began migrating southward from Taiwan to the Philippines dating approximately between 7,000 and 5,500 B.C. They then dispersed from the Philippines to the south, east, and west around 4,500 B.C. (Shutler, et al., 1975).

The indigenous peoples in Taiwan have been traditionally differentiated into *gaoshan* groups (the mountain tribes) and the *pingpu* groups (the plains tribes). The “mountain tribes” refers to the indigenous peoples residing in the mountainous areas and their vicinities. These distant dwelling locations have contributed to their resistance of the acculturation into the Han Chinese communities, so most of these tribes are still able to preserve their own unique cultures. During the past some 300 years, the population growth rate among the mountain tribes was severely limited. Between 1647 and 1655 when the Dutch occupied Taiwan, the mountain tribes were formed as a prevailing group, consisting of a population between 150,000 and 200,000. At the 1905 census during Japan’s colonization, the population of the mountain tribes declined to 113,000 (Chen, 1964). According to Huang (1995), several factors might explain the population stagnation, such as alcoholism, malnutrition, high-risk employment, prostitution, and relatively low yearly income.

The “plains tribes” refers to the indigenous peoples dwelling in the plains areas of Taiwan. They immigrated to Taiwan from between 5,000 B.C. and 2,500 B.C. Scholars have had different ways to classify the plains tribes based on their diverse languages and cultures, and there has been no unified standardization in terms of the differentiation of the plains tribes so far. The most recent view presented by Li (1997) was that the plains tribes are composed of 10 subgroups, comprising Kavalan, Ketagalan (divided by three branches: Basmi, Luilang, and Trobiawan), Taokas, Papora, Babuza, Pazeh, Hoanya, Thao, Siraya (divided by three branches: Siraya, Makatao, and Taivoan), and Qaugaut. The population of the plains tribes was estimated to be between 40,000 and 50,000 during the mid-seventeenth century (Huang, 1995). They had resided on the plains areas located on the western side of the Central Mountain Range before being forced to move to other less-populated areas during the first half of the 19th century. Living intimately with the Han Chinese through intermarriage and long-term contact for more than three centuries, members of the plains tribes have assimilated into the lifestyles of the Han Chinese communities. As a consequence, most of the languages, cultures, and tribal customs of the plains tribes have become extinct.

The total number of the indigenous peoples in Taiwan was estimated to be 507,071 as of the end of April, 2010 (Department of Household Registration, Ministry of the Interior in Taiwan, 2010), with the 14 main tribal groupings currently recognized by the government, including Amis, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Puyuma, Rukai, Tsou, Saisiyat, Yami, Thao, Kavalan, Truku, Sakizaya, and Sediq (Council of Indigenous Peoples, 2010) (see Figure 1). Among these 14 tribes, the classification of the first nine tribes was established during Japan’s colonization. The last five tribes, Thao, Kavalan, Truku,

Sakizaya, and Sediq, have consecutively received their official recognition in 2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, and 2008. Some tribes other than the above-mentioned tribes are still working hard on gaining the recognition from the government today. There are approximately 42 kinds of language variations spoken by these 14 tribes. Each of these indigenous groups is distinguished with the uniqueness of its own indigenous language, tribal culture, tradition, and social structure.



*Figure 1.* Distribution of Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples.

#### Socio-Historical Context

Though the recorded history in Taiwan has existed for almost 400 years, five regimes have ruled Taiwan. Each of these regimes implemented different language

policies at various stages. This section will briefly discuss the language planning in Taiwan, with a focus on its impact on the indigenous peoples.

*Taiwan under the Dutch and the Spanish (1624-1662)*

Prior to the 17th century, Taiwan was an island where indigenous peoples mainly resided. The Dutch regime (1624-1662) was the first that invaded and ruled the southern part of Taiwan. Following the colonial rule established by the Dutch in 1624, the Spanish invaded the northern part of Taiwan in 1626 and continued their colonization until 1642, when they were driven out of the island by the Dutch. The whole island was then under the colonial rule of the Dutch. The major purpose for both the Dutch and the Spanish to govern Taiwan was its critical geographical location which contributed to their economic benefits. During this colonization period, missionaries also came to this island with the purpose of converting the indigenous peoples to Christianity. The Dutch then adopted the language spoken in Xingang (SinKan in Sinkang manuscripts), known as the township of Xinshi in Tainan County today, as the common language for literacy and education (Chen, 1998). The Siraya people learned from missionaries how to codify their language through Romanization and continued to employ this Romanized system in drawing up land leases, sales contracts, or mortgage loans for more than one and a half centuries. The Spanish in the north also helped design Romanized spelling systems. Religious education promoted by the missionaries has resulted in the preservation of the native aboriginal languages through Romanization in churches today (Chen, 1998).

*Taiwan under the Ming Dynasty (1662-1683)*

The Dutch colonization was superseded in 1662 by the Ming Dynasty general Zheng Chenggong, better known as Koxinga in the West. Zheng intended to select

Taiwan as a bastion to launch attacks on the Manchus, who had occupied the northern portion of China, in an attempt to restore the Ming Dynasty. After Zheng, his Ming royalists, and his descendants ruled Taiwan for 21 years, Zheng's grandson, Zheng Keshuang, submitted to Qing Dynasty forces in 1683.

*Taiwan under the Qing Dynasty (1683-1895)*

Taiwan was thus formally integrated into the Qing imperial government. During the Ming and Qing periods, the Chinese language was introduced to the educational system in Taiwan and served as the medium of instruction. In fact, the Chinese language used for the medium of instruction in schools frequently referred to Southern Min or Hakka rather than Mandarin (Tse, 2000). The use of the local Chinese dialects was due to the continuing migration of the Chinese population from the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong in Southern China. The native aboriginal languages were not instructed in schools, and the indigenous people were encouraged to assimilate into the Chinese culture through the acquisition of the Chinese language. *Fan* was the general term adopted to designate the indigenous peoples by the Qing Dynasty and implied "barbarians" in a derogatory sense. Those who inhabited the mountain interior, separated from the Han Chinese groups, and received less exposure to the Chinese language were called *sheng fan* (uncivilized barbarians, referring to unsinicized aborigines in the Chinese concept, with *sheng* meaning "raw" literally). Those who resided in the plains, obeyed laws and regulations, and acquired mastery of the Chinese language were called *shou fan* (civilized barbarians, referring to sinicized aborigines in the Chinese concept, with *shou* meaning "cooked" literally).

*Taiwan under Japanese Colonization (1895-1945)*

As a result of the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the Qing Dynasty was forced to hand control of Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki. During Japanese rule (1895-1945), the Japanese rulers attempted to disconnect all cultural development between Taiwan and China and to integrate Taiwan into the Japanese Empire. They also intended to transform the people in Taiwan into Japanese citizens and to build Taiwan's infrastructure to continue Japan's expansionist policy throughout Asia. In order to eliminate the ethnic consciousness of the Taiwanese people, the Japanese language was promoted and the native languages were discouraged. Three stages of educational planning were designed to achieve the aim of Japanizing the local population.

The initial stage (1895-1919) was generally referred to as the stage of pacification, during which institutes for national language training and public schools were established to instruct the Japanese language, which was usually referred to as the national language during colonial Taiwan. Most of the upper middle class families still preferred to send their children to traditional private Chinese schools, *shu fang* (book houses), to learn Chinese with Southern Min or Hakka pronunciation (Tsao, 1999). Chinese teaching in *shu fang* was considered a barrier to the intention of wiping out the Chinese culture, so the Japanese authorities mandated Chinese readings as the teaching materials for these centers and schools, where everything in reference to Chinese ethnic identity was eliminated. During the stage of assimilation (1919-1937), Chinese, which used to be taught as a required subject, was made to be an elective subject in public elementary schools. Private Chinese schools were banned as well. While the Chinese subject was still

instructed in some remaining private Chinese schools, the teaching focus had shifted to such subjects as Japanese and arithmetic.

The last stage (1937-1945) was the stage of complete Japanization, where the Japanese language was promoted pervasively throughout schools, local governments, and social education communities. Japanese was conducted for all official and business correspondence, and government employees were requested to use Japanese rather than Chinese in private or public domains. Not only was corporal punishment imposed on students who spoke Southern Min, but also monetary fines were imposed as punishment for teachers who spoke local dialects in schools. The already shrinking Chinese subjects were removed from the curricula of all public elementary schools. Simultaneously, the Chinese columns in all the bilingual newspapers were not allowed to appear, and all the Chinese magazines were banned. Moreover, criteria for identifying “national language family” were established by local governments. A family, who considered its members to truly employ Japanese for communication, might be eligible to apply for a “national language family” designation. Having gone through a careful investigation process, this family would be conferred the designation of “national language family” in a public ceremony. Families receiving certificates of “national language family” would enjoy certain privileges. For instance, children in these families might be admitted to elementary and secondary schools reserved mainly for Japanese nationals to receive better teaching quality and to have access to better facilities. Members in these families might be granted special privileges to take up employment with government offices and public administrative organizations. They might also be given priority over others to go to Japan for advanced study and investigation.



Language policies in the sphere of education at the elementary school level designed for Japanizing the local population went through three main stages. First, the Southern Min dialect was employed for studying Classical Chinese. All the lectures and explanations in private Chinese schools and public elementary schools were conducted in the mother tongues of the students. Second, Japanese courses were instructed with the help of Japanese and Southern Min in the beginning, but Southern Min as an instructional language was gradually taken over by Japanese. Third, due to the enforcement of an all-out ban of Southern Min, the course of Classical Chinese was conducted solely in Japanese (Cheng, 1990). With these assimilative and oppressive language policies, not only the Han Chinese but also the indigenous peoples gradually assimilated into the Japanese language and culture.

According to Kubler (1985), the Japanese authorities gave high priority to Japanize the indigenous peoples. In order to achieve this aim, special language schools were established for each tribe. These schools were mainly divided into two major types, called *Fan* (meaning Barbarian) Children Education Centers and *Fan Ren* (meaning Barbarians) Common Schools. The former, Fan Children Education Centers, was mostly established in the northern part of Taiwan, with a special goal to promote Japanese as the first language. The task of teaching was concurrently undertaken by local police, who were responsible for general administration, public security, and school education. Indigenous children could complete this type of schooling system within four years, and it was usually the Government General's Police Department that was responsible for the compilation of the textbooks. The major curricula in this type of school were Japanese and ethics. Its main educational purpose was to help the indigenous peoples to remove

any of their traditional customs considered barriers to Japanese colonization, such as hunting and decapitation, and further nurtured the patriotism of indigenous children toward Japan so that they would better assimilate into Japanese culture.

The latter, Fan Ren Common School, was a type of public elementary school established specifically for indigenous children in 1905. Its forerunners could be traced back to Japanese language institutes implemented since 1896 by the Department of Student Affairs among aboriginal tribes. The earliest language institute was established in 1898 in Hengchun (the southernmost township in Taiwan today). It must be noted that the primary school education was developed into three types of educational systems during the Japanese colonization (Huang, 1995). The first type was designed for Japanese children, who were exposed to the curricula as equal to those in Japan; the second type was designed for the Han Taiwanese, who were exposed to the curricula unrelated to the educational system in Japan; the third type was designed for the indigenous children. Students enrolled in different types of schooling received differentiated curricula and years of instruction. For instance, public elementary schools for indigenous children, unlike the first two types of primary schools requiring a period of six years in their enrollment, called for only four years to complete the program. The main subjects in this type of primary school included Japanese, arithmetic, and ethics. According to the regulation promulgated by the Government General for Fan Ren Common Schools in 1914, the education for the indigenous children was aimed at Japanization through the instruction of ethics, the Japanese language, and knowledge and skills required in life.

Since spreading the Japanese language was the primary emphasis in the curriculum, spoken and written Japanese were taught in these language schools for as

long as sixteen hours per week (Wen, 1957). The establishment of both types of schools for indigenous children was part of the governmental policy designed specifically for ruling the indigenous peoples. Consequently, Japanese has a greater impact on the indigenous peoples than the Hakka and the Holo people. Japanese today is still a lingua franca used for the senior indigenes to communicate with members of other tribes (Kubler, 1985).

*Taiwan under the Kuomintang Government (1945-1987)*

The Japanese government announced its unconditional surrender at the end of World War II in 1945 when Taiwan was returned to the rule of the government of the Republic of China (ROC). In 1949, the Nationalist government of the ROC was defeated by the Chinese Communists and retreated from Mainland China to Taiwan. This movement brought the influx of approximately 1.3 million immigrants from different parts of the mainland (Government Information Office, 2009). These immigrants whose occupations included soldiers, civil servants or teachers and their family members were later labeled as “Mainlanders” (meaning newcomers from Mainland China and their offspring), as opposed to “local people” (meaning earlier settlers) (Chen, 2006). Following the selection of Mandarin, a language close to the Beijing dialect of the Chinese language, as a national language and its standardization in China from the 1910s, the Kuomintang continued to promote Mandarin as the main official means of communication and instruction in schools in Taiwan (Tse, 1986).

In 1946, the Taiwan Provincial Committee for the Promotion and Propagation of the National Language was established. This committee designated six principles as an

outline to promote and implement the national language. The six principles that the committee decided upon were listed as follows:

1. Implement the revival of the Taiwanese dialect and learn Mandarin through comparison between the dialect and the national language.
2. Emphasize the reading pronunciation of the Chinese characters and from them infer the Mandarin sounds.
3. Sweep clean Japanese phraseology and read written Chinese directly in Mandarin so as to achieve the return of writings to their origins.
4. Study the contrast of the various word classes (in Mandarin) and enrich the content of the language and construct a newly-born national language.
5. Employ the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet (MPA) to bridge the gap to the will of the people and amalgamate it with Chinese culture.
6. Encourage people's attitudes toward learning and increase the efficacy of instruction. (Fang, 1965; Kubler, 1985)

The recovery of the Taiwanese dialect was a strategy used to promote Mandarin and suppress the use of the Japanese language. Since there were many similarities between the Taiwanese dialect and Mandarin in lexicon, phonology, and syntax, it was reasonable to learn Mandarin through the assistance of the Taiwan dialect, which was a temporary measure during the initial stage where Mandarin was promoted as the national language. It was not until Japanese was no longer a common language used in the society that the Taiwanese dialect as well as other local languages was banned (Huang, 1995).

According to Huang (1995), the language education in Taiwan after World War II generally can be divided into three stages:

1. During the first ten years, the Chinese textbooks used in schools were instructed in local languages (i.e., Southern Min, Hakka, or aboriginal languages).
2. The Chinese textbooks were recited (read aloud) in Chinese and explained in Southern Min, Hakka, or aboriginal languages.
3. The Chinese textbooks were explained in Chinese.

The last stage where Chinese was employed to explain the Chinese textbooks has become the predominant teaching method since 1956, when the central government

started to promote the Movement of Speaking Mandarin throughout the island, mandating that Mandarin be used in all government agencies, schools, and public domains. A statement, such as “No unified language, no consolidated races,” was even announced to address the importance of Mandarin (Huang, 1995).

In 1951, those who did not have chances to go to school, the so-called illiterate, consisted of more than 20% of the total population in Taiwan (Huang, 1995). It was the general public that needed to receive education through the instruction of Mandarin. Due to the lack of adequate teaching materials and competent language teachers for Mandarin education, local dialects rather than Mandarin were still commonly used in the larger context. In other words, the promotion of Mandarin as a national language did not achieve the expected outcome, and training for teachers in the use of Mandarin still needed to be strengthened.

While native Taiwanese teachers were teaching Mandarin in their own native languages, they would learn the MPA, taking Mandarin classes and listening to the Mandarin programs from the radio (Young, 1989). The Mandarin Daily News, a newspaper printed in Chinese along with phonetic alphabets on the side, was prescribed as a teaching resource for teachers. Hence, they gradually acquired Mandarin proficiency during the process of teaching and learning.

Beginning in 1956, the government started to promote an island-wide Movement for Speaking Mandarin, which mandated that Mandarin should be used in all government sectors, schools, and public domains. All the secondary schools were required to use Mandarin rather than dialects for communication. In 1958, for the purpose of effectively promoting the use of Mandarin among the students enrolled in teacher training schools

and colleges, these students were obligated to pass Mandarin proficiency tests before they graduated. In 1965, all the municipal and county governments and the schools at all levels were asked to implement a plan for strengthening the promotion of Mandarin. One regulation in this plan demanded that Mandarin should be used for communication between teachers and students. This regulation continued to state that students would be punished in accordance with the school rule on awards and punishments, if they violated this regulation to communicate in their own mother tongues. Until 1969, the language policy of the government emphasized the eradication of the Japanese impact on the general public, particularly in the aspects of language and culture (Tse, 2000).

From 1970 to 1986, Mandarin was more forcefully promoted at the expense of the local languages. Southern Min, Hakka, or the aboriginal languages were considered detrimental to the ideology to promote Taiwan as a monolingual context. Although the first television channel started to broadcast in 1962 and in the subsequent year the Broadcasting and Television Program Guidelines mandated that the dialect programs exceed no more than 50% of the total programs, this television station did not strictly follow the rule. Due to the commercial benefits from the viewers, who were mostly Southern Min speakers, approximately 58% of the television programs on this television station were still broadcast in dialects in 1970 (Xia, 1995). However, the 1976 Broadcasting and Television Laws mandated that the amount of dialect programs should gradually decrease. Southern Min programs from the three networks were allowed for only one hour per day and were limited to be broadcast prior to 7:30 p.m. In 1985, the MOE completed the first draft of Language Law, where one of the regulations was that standardized Mandarin should be used in meetings, public affairs, public speeches,

conversations in public domains, school education from all levels, and mass communication on all occasions. The draft was suspended due to the strong opposition from scholars and legislators. The effort in promoting Mandarin as the standardized national language for the use of the general populace thus gradually lost its strength. It was not until the lifting of martial law in 1987 that the Mandarin-Only Movement was superseded by the advocacy of a multilingual society where intent for preserving vernacular languages was encouraged.

After the restoration of Taiwan to the ROC in 1945, the government adopted several measures specifically related to the language education of the indigenous peoples. In 1946, Fan Children Education Centers were changed to elementary schools and governed by the local counties. Article 1 of Education Guidelines in Mountain Areas in 1949 mandated that Mandarin be thoroughly implemented to strengthen national concept. It was Mandarin instructors who were responsible for the task of promoting Mandarin and supervising Mandarin education at schools located in mountain areas. These schools were required to accurately instruct MPA based on textbooks, to hold a monthly Mandarin speech contest in class, and to hold a weekly conference for the Mandarin subject. In 1948, the Department of Civil Affairs held a class for training teachers from mountain areas, with the goal of cultivating qualified Mandarin teaching personnel whose Mandarin proficiency was the main concern in addition to educational level. As the Mandarin instruction played an important role in secondary, vocational, and normal schools, the total teaching hours of Mandarin in the school curriculum were larger than those of other subjects (Cheng, 1999).

In the 1950s, to further popularize Mandarin in mountain areas, the government actively encouraged Mandarin use in the aboriginal tribes and strictly monitored the schedule for promoting the Mandarin language both in written and spoken forms. Students were required to speak Mandarin on campus. Warning point systems were created and implemented to students who violated the regulation. In 1958, the Provincial Government mandated that all the schools in mountain areas should strengthen Mandarin education, Mandarin should be used for disciplining students, and Japanese was forbidden. Whoever violated the regulation would be punished. In 1963, a Plan for Improving Administration in Mountain Areas was proposed for the purpose of integrating aborigines into the general society. The section of language education in this plan addressed the government's decision to actively promote Mandarin, to strengthen the task of Mandarin instructors, and to strictly assess the effectiveness of their task. In 1973, Article 1 from the Law of Mandarin Movement in Mountain Areas regulated that the Japanese language and aboriginal languages commonly used among aborigines should be eradicated for the wider use of Mandarin and for the formulation of the concept of nation and culture (Cheng, 1999).

From 1949 to the lifting of martial law in 1987, Mandarin education in schools was assessed in terms of its implementation progress and achievement. The 1951 Provincial Government Gazette issued an announcement for educators, regulating that Mandarin be used, Japanese be forbidden, and aboriginal languages be used only when necessary. Whoever did not follow the regulation would be dismissed from his employment. In 1955, Mandarin Promotion Group was organized in mountain areas to supervise the promotion of Mandarin education at school institutions. In 1962, the MOE



revised the Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary Schools, where Mandarin was regulated as the medium for instruction and all the native languages were prohibited. Aboriginal languages, which had been used to facilitate instruction during the initial stage after the restoration of Taiwan, were formally banned from school settings. In 1971, the government further implemented several measures to strengthen Mandarin education in mountain areas, which included Mandarin circulating libraries, Mandarin competitions, and funding for promoting Mandarin. These measures implemented at elementary and secondary school levels sought to thoroughly assimilate the indigenous peoples through national language policy (Cheng, 1999).

#### *Liberalization Period (1987-Present)*

The lifting of martial law in 1987 brought new change to the language situation during the Kuomintang government's rule, where Mandarin had played the dominant role in school and society. The government adopted a more liberal and respectful attitude in reference to the indigenous peoples. In 1992, the government proposed a five-year plan to develop and improve the education for aborigines. The promotion of indigenous language instruction was included in the proposal outline, including the following measures: (a) to compile coding systems for aboriginal languages, (b) to design supplementary materials for teaching indigenous languages, (c) to select schools for experimenting with indigenous language instruction, and (d) to evaluate the experimental outcome so as to design strategies for promoting indigenous language instruction. Among them, the first measure was the most significant in contributing to indigenous language education. The aboriginal languages, which had had no writing systems of their own, were codified

through the effort of Professor Paul Jen-kuei Li, a distinguished linguist who has been researching Austronesian languages for more than 30 years.

The indigenous language program was still not part of the official school curricula during the 1990s, but a series of measures were adopted in preparation for the implementation of Local Language instruction beginning in early 2010 at the levels of elementary and junior high schools. In 1993, the MOE designed an outline of teaching materials for aboriginal languages, establishing guidelines for time allocation, practical measures, and orthographic systems. The MOE further sponsored those engaged in the research of aboriginal education and languages. In 1996, the MOE drafted the Education Act for Indigenous Peoples, with the fifth regulation stating that aboriginal languages and cultures had to be preserved. In the same year, the Council for the Indigenous Peoples (CIP), the highest government agency in charge of the affairs of indigenous peoples, was formally established. In 1999, the CIP proposed a six-year plan to revitalize and develop the culture of indigenous peoples. The main emphasis in this plan included: to establish an orthographic system of aboriginal languages, to compile language teaching materials, to cultivate language teachers, to produce audio-visual media for indigenous language instruction, and to promote indigenous language instruction and spread. These educational initiatives of the two government agencies were conducive to the promotion and preservation of aboriginal languages.

In 1998, the MOE established a subject in Native Education at the grade levels three to six, where local languages were incorporated. In 2000, the MOE designed the curriculum of indigenous languages for aboriginal children in elementary and junior high schools to enhance multicultural education. This educational initiative drew on Article 19

of the Education Act for Indigenous Peoples, mandating that the government should provide aboriginal students with opportunities for learning their own languages, history, and culture. In the same year, the MOE announced the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Temporary Guidelines, regulating that Local Language should be offered for students at the elementary school level beginning in the academic year 2001. Students would be required to take one of the native languages, including aboriginal languages, Southern Min, and Hakka, for a weekly learning period of 40 minutes. Through the instruction of native languages, students learned to appreciate and respect the heritage and culture inherited from their ancestors.

#### *English as a Foreign Language since 1912*

Following the educational policy in China, where English had been taught as a required subject since 1912, the KMT adopted the same policy after the restoration of Taiwan (Tse, 1980). In 1945, English was formally included in the middle school curriculum, starting with the seventh grade (Taga, 1976). In 1968, the government started to promote the nine-year compulsory education, in which English was taught from the seventh to ninth grades and was also the only required foreign language subject. A similar situation also applied to the curriculum in universities, where English was the only required subject for college freshmen until 1993 (Chen, 2006). Since English is not a language used in daily communication, English learning in Taiwan has been a mandatory school subject employing a traditional grammar-translation approach with an emphasis on appropriate usage of grammar and correct spelling of vocabulary (Yang, 1992).

With the advent of the era of globalization, English has become increasingly important in business trade, diplomatic relations, academics, and science and technology. Due to the fact that English is the world's lingua franca, the world's second language, many people have had the overwhelming desire to acquire English. Without the basic competence of the world's second language, it will be hard for a person to achieve success in international business, politics, science, higher education, popular culture and other related fields (Duff, 2004; Krashen, 2003). As English in Taiwan is perceived as a global language, it is not only beneficial to the higher education advancement and future career promotion at a personal level but also is a vehicle to enhance international competitiveness in the global market. Therefore, English continues to be promoted to enable the citizens to gain mastery of English so that they may keep abreast of the latest trends in the world.

One of the government's major economy policies in 1993 to promote Taiwan as the operations center in Asia-Pacific region sparked growing interest in promoting English at the national level. In 2002, the e-Generation Manpower Cultivation Plan in a national development plan promoted by the Executive Yuan (EY) stated that English proficiency must be enhanced in order to develop a new generation with innovation and ability to handle international affairs, and this became one of the major goals expected to be achieved before 2008. The EY continued to draft a three-year proposal to promote English starting in 2010. In order to enhance national English proficiency, major goals in this plan included: (a) to cultivate professional English manpower, (b) to establish a real-life English learning environment, (c) to raise city competitiveness through English, (d) to enhance international service quality through English, and (e) to strengthen, integrate,

and support the internalization promotion mechanism. With actual plans to implement each goal, the government sought to enhance its international competitiveness through cultivating its citizens with an outlook on world views. To be able to use English for communication was one goal that these strategies intended to achieve.

Since the lifting of martial law in 1987, recommendations from district councilors and legislators to advocate that English education should be lowered to the elementary school level have never ceased. These suggestions continued to be supported by language professionals, administrators, parents, and EFL practitioners (Hsieh, 2001). This realization of the importance of English gradually became a driving force that motivated parents in the metropolitan areas to send their children to intensive language schools for English enhancement.

In 1993, some local governments permitted English to be taught in their cities and counties. These elementary schools administered English instruction in extracurricular activities rather than in the formal curriculum. Teacher supplies, professional development, curriculum design, and teaching materials were dependent on the planning of each individual local government. In 1998, the MOE started to work on the revision of the English curriculum guideline for elementary schools. Consensus among scholars, administrators, and superintendents for cultivating qualified English teachers and establishing accredited certification was gradually achieved (Hsieh, 2001).

In 2001, English was formally expanded from the secondary level to the elementary level in response to the growing needs for English communication. English instruction was implemented in Grade 5. In 2005, it was further lowered to Grade 3. With the formal English education being implemented at elementary schools, children were

expected to improve and acquire the abilities in English, especially in terms of speaking and listening.

### Language Area in Grade 1-9 Curriculum

The language area in the Grade 1-9 curriculum mainly includes the instruction of three language subjects, Mandarin, Local Language, and English. The subject of Local Language contains several native languages, such as Southern Min, Hakka, and indigenous languages. The Mandarin instruction is designed to nourish basic Chinese proficiency, develop knowledge for its application, appreciate literary works, and integrate information skills. The Local Language instruction focuses on daily usage practice, where listening and speaking are more emphasized than reading and writing. Similar to the Local Language instruction, the English instruction also focuses on listening and speaking at the elementary level. The following will be an introduction of the major learning goals of each language subject in the learning area of the Grade 1-9 curriculum.

#### *Mandarin*

The goal of Mandarin instruction is to enhance comprehension and basic language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing; to help build the effective use of applied Mandarin Chinese in thinking, comprehension, deduction, communication, and appreciation; to inspire interests in reading and appreciate the essence of Chinese culture and literary works, and to help acquire self-directed learning through sources from the Internet and reference books (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003).

*English*

The goal of English instruction includes developing fundamental English communicative skills to apply English in real-life situations; stimulating interest in learning English to enhance autonomous and effective learning, and enhancing understanding toward native and foreign cultures to respect cultural differences (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003).

*Local Language*

*Southern Min.* The goal of Southern Min instruction is to help inspire interest in learning Southern Min; to develop language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; to help think, discuss, appreciate, and solve questions in Southern Min, and to apply the use of Southern Min in learning other subjects (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003).

*Hakka.* The goal of Hakka instruction is to help develop interest in learning Hakka and its culture; to cultivate basic language skills in listening and speaking and then develop interest in reading and writing; to inspire interest in learning Hakka and learn to appreciate Hakka literature; to develop independent and autonomous learning ability through the use of reference books and internet information; to apply Hakka to learning Hakka culture and knowledge in other fields to further expand learning experiences. (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003).

*Indigenous languages.* The goal of the instruction for indigenous languages is based on the concept of multiculturalism in which languages from different ethnic groups are respected and instructed to enhance mutual understanding and social development; to develop a holistic thinking process and enhance creativity through using native languages

and indigenous languages; to design indigenous languages curricula where the instruction of listening and speaking is to be placed before the enhancement of reading and writing; to help acquire indigenous languages via the application of information technology and reference books, and to create an appropriate environment for effective language learning (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003).

The curriculum reform in the language learning area shifting from the monolingual focus, where Mandarin is the sole language subject, to multilingual learning, where English and Local Language are added to cultivate a generation with a global worldview and an appreciation toward local languages and cultures, has brought new perspectives in the language education at the elementary level.

First of all, Mandarin has been the dominant language widely used for communication in the Taiwanese society over the past fifty years. Due to the language policy implemented after the restoration of Taiwan, learning Mandarin has become the national movement for all the citizens at the expense of local languages. Mandarin is a vehicle for instruction in learning the contents of the subjects in school education today. However, one factor that has an impact on the acquisition of Mandarin is the comparatively smaller amount of time allocated for instruction in recent years (Cai, 2008).

Next, under the influence of globalization to keep abreast of the latest trends, the new curriculum introduces English language education from the secondary level to the elementary level in response to the growing needs for English communication (Butler, 2004). One of the goals in the guidelines for developing English proficiency is to address the importance of “cultural learning and international understanding” (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003). The incorporation of international festivals, customs, and



etiquettes into the English curriculum is designed to help language learners appreciate different cultures and develop global perspectives (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003). English learning thus becomes indispensable in developing cross-cultural communicative competence and connecting with the international world.

Finally, the awakening of indigenous consciousness is reflected in the additional language subject, Local Language. Schools may offer Southern Min, Hakka, or indigenous languages based on students' preferences. Local governments may design curriculum guidelines approved by the central government for schools to follow in instructing another local language as well, depending on regional characteristics or school resources (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2003). Although the instruction time for Local Language is limited to only one 40-minute period per week, this promotion of local languages is at least an effort to revitalize the heritage languages and cultures that have been repressed during the era when Mandarin was promoted as the sole state-mandated language in school curriculum.

#### Language Loss and Language Maintenance

As noted above, the administration of Mandarin as the national language over the past fifty years has caused language loss among the indigenous peoples, who constitute approximately 2% of Taiwan's total population. In order to meet the requirements from schooling or employment, they have gradually shifted language use from their mother tongues to the mainstream language. Adding the Local Language instruction to the language curriculum at the elementary level is a way to maintain local languages. In investigating the views of administrators, teachers, and community members toward the indigenous language instruction, I was drawn to the conceptual framework of language

loss and language maintenance to understand how a preservation effort can be made in the face of the decline of indigenous languages.

In general, language loss may be equivalent or related to several terms, such as language attrition, language regression, language erosion, language shift, language change, language death, language obsolescence, and subtractive bilingualism (Kouritzin, 1999). Crystal (2000) referred to language loss as a situation “where a person or group is no longer able to use a language previously spoken” and language shift as “the gradual or sudden move from the use of one language to another (either by an individual or by a group)” (p. 17). The process of language loss may involve contact between at least two language communities, and speakers in one language community may gradually shift to another more dominant language community. Factors that contribute to language shift may be related to “economic and social change, to politics and power, to the availability of local social networks of communication between minority language speakers and to the legislative and institutional support supplied for the conservation of a minority language” (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 153).

The process of language shift from one language to another language may start when the favored language is more functional. Language shift is “a response to social change and is most often observed among minority language groups ceding to dominant speech communities” (Kanazawa & Loveday, 1988). If no effort is made to interrupt the decreasing use of minority languages, the result will be language death, the eventual disappearance of the original language, which often occurs in a bilingual or multilingual scenario (Baker & Jones, 1998). Crystal (1992) described language death as a situation “which arises when a language ceases to be used by a community” (p. 216). He further

considered language loss or language obsolescence to be other terms for language death when language ability disappears in an individual. Language attrition is also another term used to refer to language death, where the speed of language loss is gradual rather than abrupt (Crystal, 1992).

Language shift may occur in a voluntary situation<sup>4</sup> where people in a community express their preference for a certain language associated with newer social identity (e.g. to gain employment, a higher salary or promotion), rather than their original language. The shift from one language to another may be forced as well when the dominant groups seek to make their language compulsory for minorities (Nettle & Romaine, 2000). Speakers of the minority language then are forced to shift to the dominant language as used on a macro level (e.g., politics, administration, or education).

The process of language shift may occur across generations in a family context (Fishman, 1978; Fishman, Hornberger, & Pütz, 2006). Members of the first generation in an immigrant family sustain their native language at home while learning the mainstream language. Members of the second generation may prefer to use the mainstream language with their peers in schools, though they maintain limited use of their native language at home. Gradually, the mainstream language encroaches on the domain where the native language used to be spoken. While members of the third generation usually learn the mainstream language with or without some knowledge of the native language, members of the fourth generation are predominantly monolingual in the mainstream language (Appel & Muysken, 1987). This attrition process from being multilingual or bilingual to

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<sup>4</sup> Nettle and Romaine (2000) identified three types of language loss, including population loss, forced shift, and voluntary shift, although they admitted that many language losses involve some combination of all three categories.

monolingual usually takes place in a context where the mainstream language is desired as a marker of status by the speakers of the minority language. This acquisition of the mainstream language at the cost of giving up the minority language is considered a subtractive bilingual development (Lambert, 1975).

While language loss refers to the decreasing saturation of language speakers, language maintenance indicates the attempt of minority groups to protect and promote their minority language. The continued use of a language among language minorities may be a repercussion of language loss. For the speakers of minority languages, claiming the right to use their native languages can be actualized through the maintenance of their mother tongues. Therefore, language maintenance usually refers to stabilizing the number of speakers, sustaining the native language proficiency among children and adults, and preserving the language use in certain domains, such as homes, schools, or religious organizations (Baker & Jones, 1998). Language maintenance is the effort to preserve the use of a group's native language in situations where political, social, economic, educational, or other forces cause a decline in the status of the native languages as a tool for communication, a medium for cultural development, or an emblem of group or national identity (Nahir, 1984). One example can be found in the language maintenance bilingual programs in the United States established for the purpose of maintaining the heritage languages (Baker & Jones, 1998).

### Language Revitalization

Language revitalization is more than an effort to maintain the status quo for native languages spoken by the minority groups. It is an endeavor to restore the language vitality once existent in endangered languages (Stewart, 1968). As Hornberger (2006)

noted, “Language revitalization goes one step further than language maintenance, in that it implies recuperating and reconstructing something which is at least partially lost, rather than maintaining and strengthening what already exists” (p. 280). People seek to renew the ethnic language because it possesses “important meaning as a badge of identity and key to their continuity as a people” (Hinton, 2003, p. 49). An attempt to document a language when its speakers are still existent is simply a first step. What is more important is to preserve a language through offering training to new speakers and discovering ways to help “people learn the language in situations where normal language transmission across generations no longer exists” (Hinton, 2003, p. 45). In dealing with efforts to restore home languages in both cases of Hebrew and Maori, Spolsky (1995) indicated that language revitalization not only spreads “the language to babies and young children who become its native speakers” but also “adds the functions associated with the domain of home and family” (p. 178). Thus, language revitalization is a way of instilling new vigor into the existent language through increasing the number of new speakers and adding the functions of language related to familial settings.

Fishman (1991) proposed a term “Reversing Language Shift” (RLS) to refer to the attempt to restore the decline of a language. His “Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale” (GIDS) was used as a guide to measure the degree to which a minority language is threatened. The severity of a language loss is ranked analogously to the amount of seismic energy measured by the Richter magnitude scale used for earthquakes. The scale consists of eight stages, where the higher number stands for the riskier situation of an endangered language (Fishman, 1991, pp. 87-109). The basic concept of these stages on

the scale is that earlier stages must be at least partially achieved in order to establish the upper levels. These eight stages on the GIDS are described as follows:

Stage 8: Most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults.

Stage 7: Most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age.

Stage 6: The attainment of intergenerational informal oracy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement.

Stage 5: Xish literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.

Stage 4: Xish in lower education (types a and b) that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws.  
Type a: private schools, alternative schools  
Type b: within the public school system

Stage 3: Use of Xish in the lower work sphere (outside of the Xish neighborhood/community) involving interaction between Xmen and Ymen.

Stage 2: Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either.

Stage 1: Some use of Xish in higher level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence).

Stage 8 is the worst situation for a language because its speakers are limited to a few older speakers who are socially scattered. It is important for linguists to collect grammar, vocabulary, folktales, and proverbs from the older generation who can still speak that language. Stage 7 occurs when a language is spoken by the older generation no longer possessing the ability to bear children. The goal of this stage is to spread the dying language among the children so that it may pass to the next generation and may ensure language continuity. Stage 6 is regarded as the most critical stage for reversing a minority

language due to the emphasis on its informal use at home, in the neighborhood and communities. In other words, family, along with “the family within its community” (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 190), where grandparents, parents, and children adopt the minority language, is the core location where heritage language and culture are maintained and preserved. Stage 5 is a stage where oracy is superseded by literacy throughout homes, schools, and communities. Literacy in a minority language is significant because it promotes another option for communication beyond the limitation of space and time, raises the image and status of a minority language, and offers more employment opportunities for enhancing social and vocational mobility (Baker & Jones, 1998).

Stages 8 to 5 serve as the fundamental foundation for restoring a minority language. The major focus is to establish and strengthen the minority language through the community-based endeavor. These stages result in a diglossic social situation where the functions of the minority language and the mainstream language are separate. Further attempts in seeking to be affiliated with formal institutional systems largely reserved for the majority language will appear from stages 4 to 1.

The aim of stage 4 is to reverse language shift through two types of school education, private schools and minority language curriculum within public schools. The former is founded and supported by the minority language communities. Since this type of school is managed by the advocates of RLS, it is their responsibility to pay the necessary maintenance fee, which may be costly and beyond their budget. The latter may work better since it is sponsored by the central government. The disadvantage of this public school curriculum specifically designed for minority language children is that it

may still be dependent on the government authorities in terms of personnel, funds, and approval (Fishman, 1990). The goal of Stage 3 is to develop local and international economy through a series of minority language enterprises. This economic opportunity helps increase employment for minority language speakers in the local community where minority language use may be strengthened. Stage 2 is to promote minority language use in the regions of local government agencies and mass media. Stage 1 is the ultimate goal of RLS, where the minority language is used in various occupations, governments, workplaces, universities, and mass media. Although the intent from Stages 4 to 1 is to promote minority language usage throughout schooling, job markets, government sectors, and mass communication, Fishman commented that Stage 6, where language vitality results from the informal interactions throughout home/neighborhood/community, is still the pivotal part in leading to the eventual attainment of RLS (1991).

### Language Right

Language right is a perspective that considers language as a basic human right. There are individual rights to the choice of language, just as there are individual rights to the choice of religion (Baker & Jones, 1998). Historically, many minority speakers are discriminated and are then forced to assimilate to the dominant language and thereby change their identity. Some speakers of the minority groups are not allowed to identify with their mother tongues. Therefore, minority groups need to be endowed with language rights more than majority groups do, and formal schooling can play a critical role in the maintenance or the demise of mother languages (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994).

Individual language rights mean that people have their rights to identify with their mother language and have their identification accepted and respected by others. They



have the opportunity to learn their mother tongue orally and in writing through the medium of their mother language in school and can use their mother language freely in public domains (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994). Group language rights, on the other hand, mean that minority groups have their rights to promote their own languages through addressing the importance of preserving heritage language and culture (Baker & Jones, 1998). The implication is that minority groups are eligible to establish and control their educational institutions providing curricula in their own languages and administer their own affairs (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994).

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007, calls on states to work with indigenous peoples based on the essence of mutual respect and partnership. In this Declaration, Article 13.1 proclaims that “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons” (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007). Thus, indigenous languages recognized from a global perspective need to be treasured and preserved as unique cultural heritages.

#### World Englishes and Nonnative Speakers

With the colonization and conquest of British Empire between the 16th and 20th centuries and the emergence of the United States as a world leader in the domains of economics and technology after World War II, English has become widespread throughout the world and been adopted as a dominant language of international communication in different fields (Baker & Jones, 1998). Kachru (1985, 1992) suggested

that the spread of English around the world may be viewed as three concentric circles: The *inner circle* refers to the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English, where it is the primary language. Countries in this circle include the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The *outer circle* encompasses the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language plays a second language role in multilingual settings. Countries in this circle, for instance, include Ghana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Singapore. The *expanding circle* involves those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language. Countries in this circle, for instance, include China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Taiwan, where English is taught as a foreign language. Regions in the *inner circle* use norm-providing varieties traditionally considered standard language models because they are used by native speakers. Regions in the *outer circle* and *expanding circle* respectively use norm-developing varieties and norm-dependent varieties, which are considered the norm breakers (Kachru, 1985).

Because English used in the regions from the *inner circle* is often considered standard language model, the native speakers born and raised from these countries can legitimately lay claim to their linguistic property of real English. However, due to the fact that English has become a global language for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication, several linguists indicated that no single nation, community, and culture have a rightful claim of ownership of standard English in a situation where English is widely spread (Crystal, 2003; Widdowson, 1994). Therefore, English is an international language that serves the communicative and communal needs for a whole range of different communities and naturally stabilizes into standard form to meet the needs for

these communities (Widdowson, 1994). Teaching and learning English can be rendered at an international communication level rather than strictly based on the standard native speaker model.

The place that native speakers and non-native speakers hold in the role of English teachers has been an issue since English has been taught worldwide (Braine, 1999). In discussing the native speaker fallacy that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker, Phillipson (1992) pointed out that it is believed that native speakers possess “greater facility in demonstrating fluent, idiomatically appropriate language, in appreciating the cultural connotations of the language, and in . . . being the final arbiter of the acceptability of any given samples of the language” (p. 194). However, the experiences that non-native teachers have during the process of acquiring English as a second language, their insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their students, and their serving as perfect language models may actually help them become better qualified than native speakers (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Phillipson, 1992).

#### Cases of Language Education for Indigenous Groups

In the following, two programs in New Zealand and Hawai‘i will be introduced to enhance the understanding of the essential components in achieving the revitalization of endangered languages.

##### *New Zealand*

The first settlers in New Zealand were the indigenous Polynesian people known as Māori around 1000 years ago (King, 2001). Isolated from other ethnic groups, the Māori people spoke the Polynesian language. The Māori began to have their initial contact with European culture when Abel Tasman, a Dutch seafarer, arrived in 1642 and

subsequent voyages of James Cook, a British explorer, in the late 17th century (Baker & Jones, 1998; King, 2001). When missionaries settled in New Zealand from 1814 onwards, it was the Māori language that was used for communication between Europeans and indigenes (Durie, 1999). In order to assist the task of preaching more effectively, missionary settlers designed an orthography for the Māori language, along with its grammars and dictionaries (King, 2001).

During the 1840s, the Māori language was still largely used as the medium of instruction in missionary schools to achieve the goal of Christianization. However, the 1847 Education Ordinance regulated that grants for church-based Māori boarding schools be contingent upon the use of English as the medium of instruction (Baker & Jones, 1998; Durie, 1999). The 1867 Native Schools Act further established a system of secular village day schools in Māori rural communities. The medium of instruction in the village schools program was English, and to gain proficiency of English became a major aspect (Durie, 1999). These policies had a great impact on the situation of the Māori language when it was prohibited in schools and official domains. King (2001) commented on the passing of the 1867 Native Schools Act, considering its effect was profound in school education in that “the Māori language was virtually outlawed in schools, and many Māori schoolchildren over the succeeding generations were punished for speaking the language of their home” (p. 120). Spolsky (2003) also regarded this Act as “the major step in the shift of Māori speakers from Māori monolingualism, through an intermediate stage of bilingualism, to English monolingualism” (p. 557).

Since the mandate of English as the language of instruction in the school curriculum in the mid-nineteenth century, English became the dominant language in New

Zealand (Harrison & Papa, 2005). A century after the promotion of English, a sign of attrition of the Māori language was observed among Māori communities. There remained only a few communities where the younger generation of Māori ancestry could speak this language natively (Spolsky, 1989). Benton's (1981) survey between 1973 and 1978 gave a detailed report about this rapid language loss. He found that fluent speakers of the Māori language constituted only a small portion of the indigenous Māori group. Even in areas where Māori were mostly populated, English tended to replace the Māori language and was mainly used as a home language for communication between adults and children. Approximately 20 years later, another survey conducted in 1995 indicated that the majority of Māori adults did not either converse in Māori or had low proficiency of it (Spolsky, 2003). A recent survey conducted in 2001 further showed that 9% of the Māori people who could speak Māori fluently were the group whose age was 55 years or older (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2002).

However, efforts in preventing the process of the loss of the Māori language could be seen from several major educational developments. Bilingual primary schools were established in the late 1970s to enhance the appreciation of Māori language and culture (May, 1999). Problems with bilingual schools involved a lack of teaching and material resources and the degree of wide variability in employing the Māori language as the medium of instruction (May, 1999). By adopting a transitional approach intended to gradually shift to English, this type of bilingual program was not effective in helping Māori students to acquire the Māori knowledge and language (Baker & Jones, 1998).

Alternative Māori-medium (immersion) schools, initiated and administered by the Māori people, were another type of program established during the 1980s (May, 1999).

One typical example of these schools was Kōhanga Reo (literally meaning “language nest”), which was designed to help pre-schoolers to learn the Māori language through engaging in various activities, such as singing, playing, or listening to stories (Baker & Jones, 1998). Kōhanga Reo was launched as a movement that involved the immediate grassroots actions from families, communities, and tribes (McPherson, 1994; Penetito, 2009). The movement of Kōhanga Reo resulted in the subsequent establishment of schools at different levels, including Kura Kaupapa Māori (primary), Wharekura (secondary), and Wananga (tertiary) (Hornberger, 1998; May, 1999; Penetito, 2009). These schools also focused on language, family, and community, and were extensions of the early childhood program, Kōhanga Reo (Penetito, 2009). Therefore, it was then possible for children to receive and complete their education with the instruction of the Māori language from preschool to tertiary levels in New Zealand (Maclagan, King, & Gillon, 2008).

The 1996 census found a sign of language revitalization among the younger generation since it indicated that the number of Māori speakers under the age of 15 was increasing (Spolsky, 2003). To explain this inspiring phenomenon, Spolsky (2003) mentioned four major management activities designed to teach the Māori language to nonspeakers in the field of language acquisition policy categorized by Cooper (1989). These initiatives included (a) a foreign language teaching method, used to teach adults the Māori language; (b) the Kōhanga Reo program, where Māori-speaking grandparents worked as caretakers to pass language proficiency to their grandchildren; (c) Kura Kaupapa Māori, primary schools initially established for children graduating from the Kōhanga Reo programs; and (d) state schools supported by the Ministry of Education to

design a Taha Māori program, where Māori culture was taught to both Māori and non-Māori students. One finding is that the educational setting contributes a great deal to the revitalization of the indigenous language in New Zealand. As Penetito noted, “the education system is playing a central role in supporting and promoting the revitalization and dissemination of *te reo* Māori (the Māori language) as a right for all Māori students and as ‘knowledge worth pursuing’ for all other students” (Penetito, 2009, p. 289).

### *Hawai‘i*

The early inhabitants of Hawai‘i were Polynesians, who sailed approximately 2,000 miles from the Marquesas Islands in the canoes they built to their new homeland of Hawai‘i (Hintz, 1999). These early Hawaiians were later mixed with Tahitians originally from the South Pacific around A.D. 1000 (Hintz, 1999). Hawai‘i had been an isolated island chain until 1778, when James Cook accidentally came upon it. According to Warner (2001), Hawaiian was “a sophisticated language with a long and rich tradition of oral literature” during this time (p. 134). The literature in oral form included chants, “religious prayers, oratory, histories, myths, and traditional sayings and teachings” (Warner, 2001, p. 134). A basic Hawaiian orthography developed in 1826 by American missionaries offered literacy education through missionary schools. The Hawaiian orature was later documented and circulated via Hawaiian language newspapers. Stories, legends, and news items occurring in foreign countries were translated in Hawaiian as well for publication (Warner, 2001).

Hawaiian had been a prosperous language by the 1890s (Hinton, 2003). Since the native monarchy was overthrown in 1893, the medium of instruction in schools was mandated to be English. In 1898, the United States officially annexed Hawai‘i. English

then became a dominant language in government business and education. This regulation had a sudden impact on the status of the Hawaiian language and resulted in its diminished linguistic viability, as Hinton (2003) wrote:

The Hawaiian language overnight became a powerless language with few functions left to serve in the new social order. The language was no longer supported in the schools or in the workplace, and soon stopped being spoken in the home. (pp. 50-51)

For those Hawaiians educated during the period when Hawaiian-medium instruction was banned, they still retained their memories of being inflicted with corporal punishment or humiliation for speaking Hawaiian in schools. Ironically, those who administered the punishment also included Hawaiian teachers themselves. The Hawaiian people were widely imbued with the thought that future prosperity lay in the preferred use of English rather than Hawaiian during this time (Warner, 2001).

The loss of prestige of the Hawaiian language was observed among the Hawaiian people, and this occurred especially within the communication between parents and their children. As Warner (2001) noted, many Hawaiian-speaking parents deliberately chose not to speak Hawaiian to their children but spoke Hawaiian only to each other or to other adults. This contributed to the lack of interest in acquiring the heritage language among their children.

In 1992, the total population in Hawai'i was 1,138,870, among whom 220,747 were of Hawaiian ancestry. There were only about 500-1000 native speakers of Hawaiian (Wilson, 1999). After nearly 20 years, Hailama Farden, the president of 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, an organization holding an annual conference of Hawaiian-speaking elders, stated that there were no more than 200 native-speaking elders remaining (Wilson & Kamana, 2001). All of these native speakers were beyond the age of 70 except for the



residents in the small privately-owned island of Ni‘ihau, where the Hawaiian language was still preserved among a group of approximately 300 native speakers (Warner, 2001; Wilson, 1999). Due to the fact that the Ni‘ihau community was isolated from the outside world, the Hawaiian language was able to maintain its use as the mother tongue (Warner, 2001; Wilson, 1998; Wilson & Kamana, 2001).

The 1978 Constitutional Convention recognized “Hawaiian as an official language along with English” and mandated that Hawaiian language, history and culture be taught in all public schools (Wilson, 1999, p. 99). In 1982, a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree program in Hawaiian Studies was established at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, where the Hawaiian language was used as a medium of education. This B.A. program, later incorporated with a Hawaiian language center in 1990, was developed into a Master of Arts degree program in Hawaiian language and literature as well as a teacher certification program (Wilson, 1999; Wilson & Kamana, 2001). The medium of instruction adopted in these programs was Hawaiian (Wilson & Kamana, 2001).

Inspired by the Kōhonga Reo, the Māori pre-school “language nest” immersion program in New Zealand, a small group of parents and language teachers established the “*Pūnana* Leo,” or “Language Nests,” to provide preschoolers necessary language support through the use of Hawaiian as the medium of instruction in Hawai‘i (García & Baetens Beardsmore, 2009; McCarty, 2003; Warner, 2001; Wilson, 1999; Wilson & Kamana, 2001). In 1984, the first *Pūnana* Leo was opened in Kekaha, Kaua‘i. The next two were opened in Hilo, Hawai‘i and in Kalihi, O‘ahu in the following year (Warner, 2001). The initial concept of this immersion revitalization bilingual program was “to recreate an environment where Hawaiian language and culture were conveyed and developed in

much the same way that they were in the home in earlier generations” (Wilson & Kamana, 2001, p. 151).

In order to reshape this setting as a traditional extended family where children may have interactions with their family members, a physical boundary was established within the school to provide children with rich and immediate access to Hawaiian language and culture. The program developer who had an early childhood certification decided to bring the Montessori methodology into the learning environment where children may be assisted with natural materials rather than commercial preschool materials. Other characteristics in this program also included “Hawaiian family experiences, behaviors, and values—the proper way to interact with adults and other children, actions toward food and animals, spiritual interactions, and the important role of music and dance” (Wilson & Kamana, 2001, p. 151).

The *Pūnana* Leo language nest was designed for a small group of children ranging from three-year-olds to five-year-olds. The mixed-age system would retain some children every year so that they may pass on their knowledge about the Hawaiian language to the newcomers. Although the *Pūnana* Leo could not offer services for children under three, the parents of these children may learn from teachers the language and some teaching strategies as a preparation for these children to explore their learning in the language nest (Wilson & Kamana, 2001).

A typical day in the *Pūnana* Leo usually included the following activities as Wilson & Kamana (2001) described:

There is a first circle in the morning, where the children participate in various activities such as singing and chanting, hearing a story, exercising, learning to introduce themselves and their families in a formal manner, discussing the day, or participating in some cultural activity. This is followed by free time, when

children can interact with different materials to learn about textures, colors, sizes, and so on, and to use the appropriate language based on models provided by teachers and other children. Then come more structured lessons, which can include prereading and premath skills, social studies, and the arts. . . .Children then have outdoor play, lunch, and a nap, then story time, a snack, a second circle, and outdoor play until their parents come to pick them up again. (pp. 151-152)

For those new children who did not understand the language, the Hawaiian-speaking teachers and second-year students would help them go through the daily routine. These children also needed to memorize formulaic statements to establish a fundamental word bank so that it would be easier for them to interact with other children (Wilson & Kamana, 2001).

During the initial stage where the *Pūnana* Leo was established, publication of children's books written in Hawaiian was nonexistent. The adoption of an eclectic way seemed to be a tentative solution to the teaching of Hawaiian literacy. Some English books considered appropriate were selected and introduced in the class, but they were explained in Hawaiian to help children understand the illustrations. Then, the next step was to translate these story books from English to Hawaiian and paste the translation over the English section. It was acceptable that the Hawaiian translation could be somewhat deviated from the English original because the educators in the *Pūnana* Leo wanted the Hawaiian culture rather than the *hoale* (or Anglo) one to be the central focus in the curriculum (Wilson & Kamana, 2001).

Parental involvement was another characteristic in the program. Parents are required to (a) pay tuition (based on income) to support the program, (b) provide eight hours, in-kind service per month at the *Pūnana* Leo, (c) attend weekly language sessions, and (d) attend monthly governance meetings (Kamana & Wilson, 1996). Through the involvement in the *Pūnana* Leo, the young parents were encouraged to learn and use the

Hawaiian language and extend the use of the language from the formal occasions to the private domains (Wilson & Kamana, 2001).

Since the inception of establishing the *Pūnana Leo*, its primary goal had never been to foster a group of children who learned Hawaiian as a second language. The efforts to revitalize Hawaiian were not limited to the use of its vocabulary and sentence structure. Instead, it was the Hawaiian *mauli* (or life force), with which the Hawaiian language was affiliated, that needed to be strengthened. As Wilson and Kamana (2001) suggested, *mauli* not only encompassed the notion of culture, but also incorporated the characteristics of “worldview, spirituality, physical movement, morality, personal relationships, and other central features of a person’s life and the life of a people” (p. 161). In an environment where school education, family learning, community support, and personal relationships were included, the accomplishment of the *Pūnana Leo* developed the communicative fluency of a group of children speakers and the statewide receptivity to the public use of the Hawaiian language. In order to support the Hawaiian language, Hawai‘i established Hawaiian-medium programs all the way from pre-school level through graduate school level (Wilson & Kamana, 2001). The *Pūnana Leo* foundation has made an invaluable contribution to the continuation and revitalization of the endangered indigenous language today.

These two successful models for language revitalization indicate that languages of the minority groups that need to be preserved can be revitalized through the initiation of effective indigenous language programs. Due to the governance of the mainstream political entity, the minority languages were previously perceived as problems rather than resources in countries consisting of different ethnic groups. The minority languages

which were suppressed and forbidden in school and societal settings have led to the development of a generation of monolingual speakers of the dominant language. It is through the effort of schools, communities, and governments that minority languages can possibly be maintained and revived.

In a situation such as Taiwan, Mandarin has been a national language promoted in schools at all levels after the restoration of Taiwan from the Japanese rule, along with the instruction of English as a foreign language starting with middle schools. With the concept of indigenization and internationalization embedded in the Grade 1-9 curriculum implemented in 2001, the learning of both English and native languages was incorporated into the language education at the elementary school level. In addition to Mandarin and English, every elementary student was required to select one of the native languages in the subject of Local Language. This curriculum reform within the school system was especially meaningful to students of indigenous backgrounds because the endangered indigenous languages were expected to be stabilized and hopefully rejuvenated through this indigenous language program.

### Summary

This chapter covered an overview of the literature in three areas related to this inquiry. First of all, I introduced the socio-historical context of Taiwan, its ethnic groups and its language policies from the regimes of the Dutch and the Spanish during the seventeenth century to the present democratic era in the twenty-first century. In the second section, I addressed the Language Arts learning area in the Grade 1-9 curriculum. This was an overview of the guidelines designed for Mandarin, English, and Local Language, including the three subcategories: Southern Min, Hakka, and indigenous

languages. The last area was an exploration of the fundamental conceptions of the study: language loss, language maintenance, language revitalization, language right, and world Englishes and nonnative speakers. Two language revitalization programs were examined to understand factors in contributing to reviving indigenous languages due to the pressing need to maintain and revitalize the language decline of indigenous groups in Taiwan today. In Chapter III, the methodology used for this inquiry is explained in detail.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to explore and understand the perspectives of the teachers, administrators, and community members toward the implementation of the language education program in an indigenous elementary school. The following issues regarding language education were investigated: (a) curriculum design, (b) instructional practices, (c) language resources, and (d) professional development. The understanding of the phenomenon was achieved by utilizing one of the qualitative research traditions—case study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This chapter provides detailed information on the methodology of this research, including the research design, theoretical framework, sampling participants, research procedure, data analysis, and the essential principles for ensuring validity and reliability in this study.

#### Research Design

A qualitative research approach is conducive to a detailed understanding of researched phenomena through the employment of multiple methods in the process of data collection and analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) defined qualitative research in the following paragraph:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative

researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Creswell (2007) also provided a similar definition from the perspective of research design and approaches to qualitative inquiry by commenting:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action. (p. 37)

These definitions clearly explain the nature of qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not determine cause and effect, predict, or analyze a phenomenon through examining the variables of the study. Instead, qualitative research seeks to understand “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Qualitative research is preferred because it can offer a complex understanding of an issue or a problem, minimize the power relationships frequently observed between participants and a researcher, or help improve existing theories so that they may adequately capture the complexity of a problem (Creswell, 2007). Merriam (2009) further stated that the overall purposes of qualitative research are “to achieve an *understanding* of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience” (p. 14). The assumption of qualitative research is that “meaning is embedded in people’s experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator’s own perceptions”



(Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Hence, qualitative research is an endeavor to understand the uniqueness of situations within a particular context. As Patton (1985) stated,

This understanding is an end in itself ... to understand the nature of that setting—what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting—and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. (p. 1)

Several qualitative researchers sought to depict characteristics of qualitative research. The following is a summary of these major qualities within the qualitative domain that serves as the foundation for this research.

First, qualitative research requires the persons responsible for interpretations to go to the field and make observations in order to explore human behaviors within the contexts of their natural occurrence. Then, qualitative researchers are primary instruments for collecting data and analyzing data themselves through document examination, behavior observation, and participants' interviews. Third, qualitative research is about understanding the meanings from the perspectives of the participants rather than the researcher. Fourth, qualitative research requires extensive firsthand engagement in the field in order to understand participant perspectives in naturalistic settings. Fifth, qualitative research seeks to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader through thick description. This often involves reports from multiple perspectives, identification of factors in a particular setting, and development of a larger picture of the issue under study. Last, qualitative research predominantly employs an inductive research strategy. Researchers collect as many detailed specifics as possible at the research site, discover patterns or relationships in the data, and form hypothetical categories (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995).

In this research, the purpose was to explore and understand the views of the teachers, administrators, and community members toward the implementation of the language education program in an indigenous elementary school. The findings of this research were in accordance with the perspectives of the teachers in three language areas, administrators, and community members at the research site rather than my personal perspectives. Moreover, the finding of this research was presented in a thick description by employing inductive data analysis. Categories and patterns were formed to delineate the experiences of the participants in reference to language education in an indigenous elementary school context. I was also the primary instrument in collecting data by personally engaging in the research field, interviewing participants, and observing the instruction of language teachers in the classrooms for a prolonged period of time. Taking into consideration the characteristics of qualitative research as stated above, this present investigation meets the above-mentioned assumptions of a qualitative research design.

#### Qualitative Research Framework

A framework is indispensable for the social research process because it serves as a fundamental skeleton for researchers in exploring the sphere of research. As a structural guidance, a framework is conducive to the understanding and expounding of the research process conducted by every social researcher. Crotty (1998) suggested four basic elements that make up the framework of the social research process, including epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. With regard to these four elements of social research, I propose the framework of my research in Figure 2 and briefly elaborate on it in the following section.

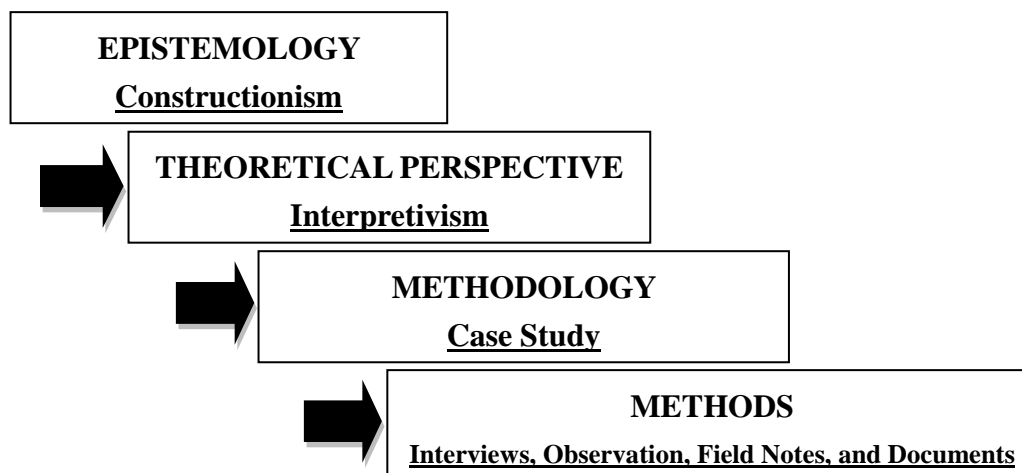


Figure 2. Chen's research framework modified from Crotty's (1998) research model.

*Epistemology: Constructionism*

Epistemology is associated with the theory of knowledge inherent in the theoretical perspective and in the methodology the researcher has chosen (Crotty, 1998). As Crotty (1998) stated, an epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (p. 3). Hence, epistemology provides a philosophical grounding for researchers to ascertain what kinds of knowledge are both adequate and legitimate (Maynard, 1994). Constructionism is the epistemological approach that I adopt in viewing and making sense of the nature of existent human knowledge.

The essential assertion of constructionism is that “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). In the constructionist view, meaning is constructed rather than discovered. Truth or meaning exists “in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Crotty (1998) further explained that humans construct meaning rather than

creating meaning and what humans have to work with is “the world and objects in the world” (p. 44). As a consequence, Crotty (1998) interpreted constructionism as follows:

It is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (p. 42)

This passage conveys a clear idea that human beings are not the exclusive source of constructed meaning or truth. As we engage with the world and with objects in the world, we construct meaning. The world and objects in the world may be meaningless in themselves, but they share a partnership with human beings in the generation of meaning (Crotty, 1998). It is through the interplay between object and subject that meaning is born. As Crotty (1998) argued, “Objectivity and subjectivity need to be brought together and held together indissolubly” (p. 44).

As a constructionist researcher, I believe that human experience or knowledge is constructed through the inseparable relationship between a sphere of subjective reality and the objective domain of the external world (Crotty, 1998). Meaning or truth is constructed through my participation in the human world I am interpreting. During the engagement process between the researcher and participants, human understandings of the world are co-constructed symbolically (Hatch, 2002). Therefore, knowledge claims and their evaluation are gathered through the description and explanation of the world within a conceptual framework (Schwandt, 2000).

#### *Theoretical Perspective: Interpretivism*

Theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for research process and grounding the logic and criteria of the methodology (Crotty, 1998). This is a way of looking at the world and how we make

sense of it. It also involves knowledge and therefore includes a certain understanding of how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). Geertz (1973a) pointed out that a system of significant symbols constituting culture are fundamental to the governing of human behavior because these symbols are “used to impose meaning upon experience” (p. 45). Therefore, individuals seek to understand the world and develop subjective meanings toward certain objects or things from their experiences (Creswell, 2007). The theoretical perspective I adopt in this study is interpretivism, a philosophical stance striving “to understand and explain human and social reality” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

Schwandt (1994) explained that interpretivism is an endeavor to develop a natural science of social skills and an attempt to apply the framework of logical empiricist methodology to human inquiry. The origin of interpretivism can be traced back to the thought of Max Weber, a German sociologist who proposed the concept of *Verstehen* (understanding) employed in the human and social sciences. This interpretative approach is in contrast with *Erklären* (explaining), the explicative approach focusing on causality in the natural sciences (Crotty, 1998). While the natural sciences are primarily concerned with quantifiable consistencies and empirical regularities, the human and social sciences tend to focus on unique and individual aspects. Weber drew our attention to the need to focus social inquiry on the meanings and values of acting persons (Crotty, 1998). Consequently, it is through experiences of individuals that interpretative understanding of social action and human reality are achieved.

As an interpretivist, I believe that “to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). In this study, inquiry under the framework of interpretivism was designed to understand the meaning established through the

phenomenon of implementing the language curriculum in the classroom and school contexts. Therefore, the interpretivistic approach was adopted to understand and describe the views of teachers, administrators, and community members toward the implementation of the language education program in an indigenous elementary school context, how teachers actually interpreted and analyzed their instructional practices, and how these instructional practices led to the intended goals.

*Methodology: Case Study*

Methodology means the strategy, plan of action, process, or design behind the chosen methods and shows how the use of methods links to the desired outcomes (Crotty, 1998). Methodology is the research design that connects the collected data and the drawn conclusions to the initial questions of the study (Yin, 2009). This research design refers to plans and procedures that “span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 1). Under the framework of epistemology and theoretical perspective, I adopted a case study as my methodology and provide a definition and discussion of case study methodology in the following section.

The term *case study* originated from its association with *case history*, which was commonly used in clinical fields, including psychology and medicine. The original roots of case studies in modern social science can also be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s through anthropology and sociology. A case in point of this is the fieldwork conducted by Bronislaw Malinowski, who was forced to stay in the Trobriand Islands for three years and thereby gave a detailed account of the local population from the perspective of participant observation (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993).

Case study researchers have sought to define the nature and appropriate usage of this research genre and developed a considerable amount of texts and approaches. Miles and Huberman (1994) considered the case a kind of phenomenon taking place in a bounded context. Supporting the concept of boundedness, Merriam (2009) viewed the case as “a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 40). Stake (2006) also illustrated that “a case is a noun, a thing, an entity; it is seldom a verb, a participle, a functioning” (p. 1). Case study in Crotty’s (1998) lists of methods is a technique or procedure used for data collection and analysis. The end product of a qualitative case study, according to Merriam (1988), is “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). These definitions seek to illustrate the nature of case study research from different perspectives. Additionally, Yin’s (2009) explanation provided a comprehensive framework in understanding the logic of a case study design, as he wrote:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that
  - investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
  - the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.
2. The case study inquiry
  - copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
  - relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
  - benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18)

The meaning in this passage is two-fold. The first part indicates that a case is within a bounded system. The second part illustrates that case study may be regarded as a methodology, encompassing research design as well as data collection and data analysis. Therefore, a case study can be understood as an exploration and a holistic description of a

bounded phenomenon through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and can be reported through a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Merriam (2009) further defined three additional characteristics that are essential in defining case study research design: (a) case studies are particularistic in that they are centered on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for the revelation and representation of the phenomenon; (b) case studies are descriptive in that the researcher provides a rich and thick description of the phenomenon under study; and (c) case studies are heuristic in that the researcher deepens the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study by bringing about the discovery of new meaning, extending the reader's experience, or confirming what is known.

This research qualified as case study because it was a bounded system, in which the researcher sought to explore the views of the teachers, administrators, and community members toward the language education program in a predominantly indigenous elementary school. Moreover, it followed these three characteristics. First, it was particularistic in that it was centered on the particular situation of language teaching in language curriculum. Second, it was descriptive in that it addressed the purpose of exploring and describing elementary teachers' experience in teaching Mandarin, English, and Local Language in an indigenous elementary school as well as the views of administrators and community members toward the implementation of the language education program at the elementary level. Third, the aim was to provide a rich, holistic description of the language education program and the views of the teachers, administrators, and community members toward the language education program in an



indigenous elementary school that would illuminate readers' understanding of its goals and practices. I hoped that these descriptions would provide teacher educators, program designers, and researchers with information about what is occurring in a predominantly indigenous elementary school context. Therefore, this case study was an intensive, holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon.

Stake (1994; 1995; 2000) identified three types of case study research: (a) intrinsic case study, (b) instrumental case study, and (c) collective case study. This current study is regarded as an instrumental case study based on the purpose of the study. According to Stake (2000), a case study would be identified as instrumental case study "if a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (Stake, 2000, p. 437). An instrumental case study is used when the researcher seeks to accomplish something other than understanding a particular case (Stake, 1995). Therefore, I looked at the case in depth, scrutinized its context, and detailed the ordinary activities, all of which helped me to pursue the interest of how the language education program was implemented in a predominantly indigenous elementary school and facilitated my understanding of the views of teachers, administrators, and community members toward indigenous language instruction.

#### *Researcher's Stance*

The researcher in a qualitative case study is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009; Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman, 2005). This suggests that the researcher is personally involved in the phenomenon where he/she

conducts the data collection (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007), and the data is described and interpreted through the researcher's views and perspectives. It is likely that there are some biases stemming from the process of data collection and analysis. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) noted, the researcher's opinions, prejudices, and other biases may have an impact on the data. To this, Gadamer (2004) commented that it is impossible to eliminate or set aside prejudice or prejudgment because of the inescapable condition of being and knowing. To achieve understanding of ourselves and our world is dependent upon having our prejudgment. Therefore, LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) proposed that qualitative researchers describe and report their life experiences, bias, and initial assumptions about the research topic. Patton (2002) further mentioned that the principle for the researcher in qualitative inquiry is "to report any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation" in order to build investigator credibility (p. 566). I situated myself in the research stance through narrating my personal and professional experiences to inform the readers about the perspectives on which the delivered voices and interpreted stories were grounded. The following is a depiction of my role as a researcher in this study.

I grew up in a family where the loss of my mother tongue was evident. Influenced by the dominant language commonly used in the community, my parents spoke to me in Mandarin rather than the native language with which they were familiar. This mother tongue of my parents was called *Fuzhouhua*, a dialect spoken by the people living on the northern part of Fujian Province located in Southeast China. By listening to their conversing with each other in this dialect at home, I developed some sort of understanding in terms of listening comprehension. However, I could barely articulate a

phrase in this dialect for communication. My parents and I sometimes encountered inquiries from friends or relatives as to why the mother tongue of my parents was not successfully transmitted to my sisters and me. As I recall, it seemed my parents had never provided a definite and satisfactory answer or explanation to these challenges. I believe it was because Mandarin was the mainstream language so strongly promoted in the public domain and school settings at that time that my parents and I simply adopted Mandarin as a communicative language in the family.

As a speaker and user of Mandarin, the official language in Taiwan, I never encountered any difficulty getting along with other people during the journey of my studies or my teaching career until I moved to a small town where the majority of the population was of the Holo background. Based on the limited Southern Min I learned from the media in the past, I became gradually socialized with the residents and improved my use of Southern Min. My three years of living in this township broadened my use of this native language to some extent. For instance, I was able to recognize the Taiwanese pronunciation of this town when its name was announced out loud through the speakers on trains while I was commuting. I also learned how to purchase daily groceries from street vendors in my unskilled Southern Min and acquired an understanding of the basic components of the general religious ceremonies conducted in Southern Min in a local church.

The experience of learning Southern Min in an authentic context inspired me to pay more attention to the preservation of other native languages in Taiwan, including indigenous languages. This led me to believe that all of us needed to maintain the languages of our parents' in some ways lest those languages be lost among their

descendants. I felt that each family should strive to treasure its own native language and seek every possible way to restore and maintain its cultural and linguistic heritage.

## Research Methods

### *The Settings*

Qualitative research is more flexible in terms of the selection of participants than quantitative research. Since one of the characteristics of qualitative research design is its emergent nature, this allows researchers to modify their research approach during the process of data collection (Gall, et al., 2007). The type of selection method practiced for this study is purposeful sampling. The goal of purposeful sampling is to select participants who are likely to provide rich information in reference to the purposes of this study (Gall, et al., 2007). Merriam (2009) further elaborated the goal of purposeful sampling by describing it as the most appropriate sampling strategy “when the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight” into the inquiry of the study (p. 77).

This study was designed to examine the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members on the implementation of the language education program in an indigenous elementary school in Taiwan. In this study, the selection of indigenous elementary schools was based on the criteria regulated by Article 4.6 of the Education Act for Indigenous Peoples, where the definition of indigenous schools is given in the following:

Indigenous priority schools refer to elementary or secondary schools with an indigenous student intake exceeding a prescribed number or ratio; said number or ratio shall be specified under the Enforcement Rules of the Education Act for Indigenous Peoples. (Education Act for Indigenous Peoples, 2004)

This definition of indigenous priority schools was further explained in terms of the population of students and the region of schools.

The prescribed number or ratio in elementary or secondary schools refers to either the number of indigenous students in indigenous region exceeding 1/3 of total students or the number of indigenous students in non-indigenous region exceeding 100 students or 1/3 of total students; which situation to apply is affirmed by educational administration. (Enforcement Rules Governing of Education Act for Indigenous Peoples, 2005)

In order to investigate the language education for elementary indigenous students, the school I selected was one of the indigenous elementary schools that met the aforementioned criteria. The school was located in a township where the population of the indigenous peoples constituted around 45%.

Yulung Elementary School (a pseudonym) was formerly a Fan Children Education Center established in 1915 in Wagi (also a pseudonym), the southernmost township of a county, situated in the northern part of Taiwan. It was designated as a model school in mountainous areas by the Civil Administration Department of Taiwan Provincial Government in 1948. A junior high school was established in 1968 and later a kindergarten was also established in the same location in 1986 to allow the school campus to accommodate schooling for the children from K-9 living in the local community. There was only one class in each grade level at Yulung Elementary School, where the total number of students was approximately 100 and more than 80% of the student population was of the Atayal ethnic background. In this regard, Han Chinese students were relatively few, with the total population around 20 students. Compared with schools located in urban areas, this elementary school was quite small in terms of its size and population.

Indigenous language instruction was initially implemented in 1990 in this school. Teaching materials, handbooks for teachers, compact discs, and cassettes in reference to indigenous language instruction were edited and designed by experienced professors, tribal members, and pastors in the local community to teach school children in the hope that indigenous languages could be revitalized through the formal schooling and education system, through the awakening of ethnicity awareness, and through the promotion of community and family. An exhibition room was established to store Atayal cultural and historical relics, such as equipment used for cloth-weaving, traditional Atayal clothes, Lubu (a musical instrument played by the Atayal to convey messages or to express adoration between lovers), mortar and pestle used to crush, grind, and mix millet, equipment for fishing and hunting, and traditional indigenous houses. Some of these aboriginal cultural artifacts were later borrowed by a nearby Atayal museum for enriching its exhibition collection.

The mission of Yulung Elementary School was intended to help children grow up healthy and self-confident, become thankful and tolerant, develop the ability to care for and inherit tradition, and learn to plan and implement. To reach this goal, local natural resources and community activities were integrated into the school-based curriculum, where five different thematic units in instruction throughout the whole academic year include: appreciating the beauty of Atayal weaving arts (from September to November), bird-watching season (from December to January), season of hot spring and cherry blossom (from February to March), journey of Makino bamboo (from April to June), and Atayal cultural festival (from July to August). Through participating in various hands-on activities, observing and exploring social and natural resources, students can become

familiar with the unique indigenous culture, better understand the community where they reside, and apply authentic real-life experiences to their classroom learning.

The school was built near the mountain foothills and its altitude was approximately above 1,240 feet. The area where the school was located was frequently rainy and wet in the winter due to the sub-tropical monsoon climate. It usually took about ten minutes for students to reach the school by walking from the bus stop. Since the school was built halfway up the mountainous region, they needed to climb up a long series of ladders to reach the front door, through which they entered the campus. Alternatively, students could choose to keep walking for another five minutes along the narrow asphalt road that barely allowed two cars to pass through to reach the back entrance. During the days while I was collecting data in the school, I found children seem to be fully aware of the limited space on the road. They would automatically form a straight line when they went to school rather than walking side by side on the road. On the other hand, some of the rambunctious children, without paying attention to the passing cars or scooters, chased each other with joy and ran for their classes. These were the children I would have asked to remain on the side of the road to avoid possible accidents if I had been there. Fortunately, a community bus that connected nearby indigenous villages with the school offered convenient services for children. A small area in front of the back entrance was reserved for the bus to stop to pick up and drop off children.

The Atayal human figures and totems were not only seen on the outer mountain walls of the school but also found on campus. The main design of Atayal totems was rhombus, symbolizing the protective eyes of the ancestors. According to the Atayal

legend, the eyes of the Atayal ancestors would eternally protect and guide their descendants without being limited by the boundary of time and space. Almost all the school signs were decorated with rhombus patterns on the bottom of the signs or on their four sides. On the wall of the hallway that connected the science classroom and the educational administration building, an Atayal boy and an Atayal girl of cartoon figures in traditional indigenous clothing happily presented their welcome to the visitors with the following message in three languages (see Figure 3): *Pqasun simu mita balay* (in Atayal), *非常高興見到您* (in Chinese), and *Glad to meet you* (in English).



Figure 3: School sign (Glad to meet you!) printed in three languages.

Yulung Elementary School on average ran seven periods a day. Students usually went to school for their breakfast at 7:45 a.m. and finished their last period at 3:40 p.m. After school tutorial classes were also offered for students during some of the weekdays. Students who attended these tutorial classes would keep studying in the school until 4:30 p.m. There was a lunch and nap break at noon lasting for one hour and 20 minutes and there was a 15-minute chore time in the afternoon. The language education program at the participating school included three language subjects, Mandarin, English, and Mother



Language. Mandarin was given the largest amount of time for instruction, which included normally four or five periods. Another one or two periods of Reading Guidance were added to strengthen the literacy of students. English was instructed for two periods from Grade 3 to Grade 6. One alternative period of English Conversation was given to students of Grade 1 and Grade 2. Because an experimental project of Activation Curriculum was implemented for all the elementary schools in this county in the academic year of 2010, all grade levels added another two periods of International Culture, where English was the major instructional content. Mother Language possessed the least share of the language education program, including only one 40-minute period of instruction every week. Students could take this opportunity to learn their mother tongue, the Atayal language, through the teachers of the Atayal background. Interestingly, the Paiwan language was also instructed to accommodate the needs of a few Paiwan students in the school. Coincidentally, the school found that these Paiwan students happened to study from Grade 1 to Grade 4. Atayal and Paiwan were then instructed concurrently every Wednesday morning so that the Paiwan students could be pulled out to learn their mother tongue. To arrange all four classes of Mother Language from Grade 1 to Grade 4 in one morning was convenient for the teachers of Atayal and Paiwan, who worked part-time only at the participating school.

### *The Participants*

Participants in the research included eight teachers and two administrators at the participating school, and six community members living or working in the local township. Through interviewing the participants and observing the classes of the teachers, I gained more information about how the language education program was implemented for

indigenous children and the perspectives of my participants about indigenous language instruction. The background information of my participants is summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. Portraits of the participants will be presented further in Chapter IV (for school personnel) and Chapter VI (for community members). All participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of School Personnel*

Name	Ethnic Group	Education	Occupation	Subject Taught
Mr. Chin	Southern Min	Bachelor	Administrator	
Ms. Fan	Southern Min	Master	Former Principal	
Shu-Yuan	Southern Min	Bachelor	Teacher	Mandarin
Hua-Mei	Atayal	Bachelor	Teacher	Mandarin
Ju-Chao	Mainlander	Bachelor	Teacher	Mandarin
Walis	Atayal	Bachelor	Teacher	International Culture
Ms. Liu	Mainlander	Master	Teacher	International Culture
Mr. Ma	Atayal	Junior College	Teacher	Atayal Language
Mr. Peng	Atayal	Junior College	Teacher	Atayal Language
Ms. Sung	Paiwan	Junior College	Teacher	Paiwan Language

Table 2

*Demographic Characteristics of Community Members*

Name	Ethnic Group	Education	Occupation
Pastor Chung	Atayal	Bachelor	Retired Pastor
Mrs. Hsueh	Atayal	Grade 3	Grocery Store Owner
Ms. Lao	Atayal	Junior College	Retired Nurse of Elementary School
Pastor Shih	Atayal	Bachelor	Pastor
Mr. Tung	Atayal	Master	Former Principal of Elementary School
Mr. Wu	Atayal	Doctor	Former Chairman of Parents' Association

I contacted the principal of Yulung Elementary School through an international phone call after I successfully passed my proposal defense. I made a visit to him when I returned to Taiwan and provided him with a brief overview of this study. The language teachers and administrators were subsequently contacted after he gave his consent to my conducting research in his school. The community members were also identified and contacted through the referral of the administrators and teachers. Details of individual participatory roles, numbers of interviews and observations, and the research timeline were explained further through face-to-face conversations. Final selection of my participants was based on the willingness of the participants involved with the context of this school and this community.

*Methods for Data Collection*

Methods refer to the concrete techniques or procedure used to collect and analyze data in response to research questions (Crotty, 1998). Researchers are usually involved in certain activities in order to gather and analyze the data while conducting research. These

activities, as Crotty (1998) delineated, are research methods. The multiple sources of data adopted in this study included interviews, observations, field notes, and documents, which were intended to help achieve a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

*Interviews.* One of the major sources of data collection in qualitative research is interviewing. As Patton (2002) noted, the assumption of qualitative interviewing is that “the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 341). Using the technique of interviewing enables us to “find out what is in and on someone else’s mind, to gather their stories” (Patton, 2002, p. 341). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) also commented that the purpose of interviews is to “gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (p. 103). As a result, interviewing often reveals much more than what the qualitative researcher can detect or assume from observing a phenomenon (Simons, 2009).

The interview formats employed in this study included one-on-one, standardized, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews. One-on-one interviews are advantageous in that they commonly involve face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participant and strive to establish “the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual self-disclosure” (Johnson, 2002, p. 103). Mutual trust and rapport are built between the investigator and the informant so that the latter is facilitated to actively engage in shaping the dialogue with the former. In standardized interviews, sometimes called highly structured interviews, questions are designed and the order of the inquiry process is arranged in advance. The major purpose of standardized interviews is to collect common socio-demographic data from informants, such as history of employment, level of formal

education, and so forth (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews comprise a combination of more and less structured questions or include flexibly worded questions (Merriam, 2009). This type of interviewing has the quality of being open-ended as well. It seeks to explore the issue or problem without designing the pre-structured questions or wording. Therefore, the researcher may be able to address forthcoming situations, respond to the worldview of the participant, and bring new insight into the topic (Merriam, 2009).

In this study, interviewing was indispensable in that it was used to gather valuable perspectives from teachers, administrators, and community members toward language education program within an indigenous elementary school context. Through multiple in-depth interviews, I gained understanding of the backgrounds of my participants, the instructional practices, their experiences with indigenous students' learning, and other issues with regard to language resources and professional development. The information gleaned from the analysis of in-depth interviews facilitated the researcher to better understand the implementation of the language education program in the setting. More descriptions about the procedures of conducting interviews will be presented in the Data Collection section.

*Observations.* Although the major source of qualitative data in this study will be obtained from interviewing, simply relying on what participants reveal in reference to their views and experiences is insufficient. Direct observation of participants in a natural setting may help the inquirer better “understand and capture the context within which people interact” and the understanding of the context “is essential to a holistic perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 262).

Merriam (2009) presented several reasons for an investigator to collect data through observation. First, the researcher will have an opportunity to notice what the participants consider daily routines during observations, which may lead to his/her making sense of the phenomenon. Second, the researcher may use observations, along with interviewing and document analysis, for triangulating emergent findings. Third, observations may offer more knowledge of a specific context or an incident so that they will serve as indicators for further interviews. Last, observation is beneficial to a qualitative researcher in that observing an activity or a situation can be made directly through the lens of the investigator. The researcher may gain new insights into a phenomenon, or discover some inner feelings that the participants are hesitant to share with the researcher during the process of interviewing.

In this study, the purpose of observations was to collect firsthand data from the research site, to describe the instructional practices of teacher participants and later analyze how these practices led to the intended goals, and to discover factors that facilitated or hindered the implementation of the language education program. Observations were centered on the research questions to help me triangulate emergent findings. Moreover, what I had witnessed at the research site served in subsequent interviews to illuminate the perspectives of the participants.

*Field notes.* Bogdan and Biklen (2007) divided field notes into two types of materials: descriptive and reflective. The former is a word-picture account of settings, people, actions, and conversations through the observations of the researcher. It is through the best effort of the researcher that the details of what has occurred at the site are objectively recorded and portrayed. The latter is a reflection of the observer's

personal thoughts and concerns during the process of the inquiry. The emphasis of reflective field notes is to record the researcher's "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices" (p. 122). Miles and Huberman (1994) further supported this viewpoint by indicating that reflective remarks help contribute substantial meaning to the descriptive account and strengthen coding. The researcher is simultaneously aware of what is happening in the setting and records his/her feelings, reactions, insights and interpretations (Patton, 2002). The reflexive parts of field notes, sometimes called a fieldwork journal (Merriam, 2009), are introspective written accounts of the researcher's ideas, fears, mistakes, confusion, and reactions to the experience in the field.

In this study, I used descriptive field notes to document my observations of the school context, instructional activities, interactions between teachers and students, and views of the participants. In addition, I used reflexive field notes to record my preconceptions, personal thoughts, concerns, impressions, and new insights, which I would note as soon as possible after leaving the research site (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). These detailed field notes of all interviews and observations served to identify and mitigate the effects of the potential bias and prejudices (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006), and as an additional source of information (Spradley, 1980).

*Documents.* Unlike interviews and observations designed specifically to address the research question for data collection, documentary data are usually produced for reasons other than research. Documents, according to Merriam (2009), refer to "a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand" (p. 139). In a broad sense, this definition includes various genres and media forms, such as

novels, newspapers, songs, diaries, psychiatric interviews, and so forth (Holsti, 1969). Documents can also be defined as artifacts, including both “symbolic materials such as writing and signs and nonsymbolic materials such as tools and furnishings” (LeCompte, et al., 1993, p. 216), which comprise data revealing people’s sensations, experiences, and knowledge, and implying opinions, values, and feelings (LeCompte, et al., 1993). Merriam (2009) stated that documents “are a product of the context in which they were produced and therefore grounded in the real world” (p. 156). Grounding an investigation in the context where the problem is being investigated is “what the naturalistic inquirer is working toward” (Guba & Lincoln, 1996).

Thus, the investigator collects documents in multiple contexts which will shed light on the research questions in order to triangulate data. The collection of documents in this study included curriculum guides, textbooks, teacher-made aides, teaching resources, teacher handbooks, lesson plans, handouts, worksheets, enrollment records, minutes of meetings, and government documents. These documents provided invaluable resources as evidence for the findings from the researched phenomenon.

#### Data Collection Procedures

General procedures for data collection of this research encompassed two phases, initial meetings and subsequent interviews and observations.

##### *Phase I: Initial Meetings*

After passing the proposal hearing, I searched for the information on indigenous elementary schools through the MOE website in Taiwan and then contacted the principal of Yulung Elementary School. After the principal gave me permission to conduct my research, I then contacted my participants and explained to them the outline of my



research. As soon as the University of Northern Colorado's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved my study (see Appendix A), I scheduled a meeting with teachers and administrators for initial interviews. A consent form (see Appendix B) was given to each participant at the beginning of each interview. I explained the procedures of this research in detail after each participant signed the consent form. The participants were informed of the intent of the study, reasons for interviewing them and choosing their classes, procedures for inquiry, procedures for establishing a non-interruptive presence in the classrooms, and methods for reporting research findings. The community members were also contacted later through the referral of the administrators and teachers at the research site and were presented with similar details about the procedure of the research.

#### *Phase II: Interviews and Observations*

The purpose of interviewing in qualitative research is an attempt “to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1). The essence of in-depth interviewing, as Seidman (2006) advocated, is “understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). Through focusing on a range of topics with regard to the language education program at the elementary level, the in-depth interviewing was designed to investigate the first-hand experiences of the interviewees to elicit the depth, detail, and richness, that Geertz (1973b) termed *thick description*.

A standardized semi-structured interview protocol generated in accordance with the research purpose and questions acted as a guide through the interviewing process. In an attempt to address the research questions, the interview included a set of questions

using similarly modified probes for each participant. The purpose was to gain information about the demographic information, general educational and professional backgrounds of the participants, and their views toward the implementation of the language education program in the contexts where they were associated.

In order to make the interviews easier for the participants to comprehend and elicit the best information, all interview questions were first translated into Chinese and then conducted in Chinese. Although two of my participants were senior indigenous peoples whose native languages were Atayal, they were able to communicate with me in Chinese without major difficulty. Therefore, all the interviews for this research were conducted in Chinese, but the research questions for each group of my participants were slightly different. An interview protocol (see Appendix C), which included open-ended questions related to the purpose of this study, was used to provide structure to the teacher interviews. Another interview protocol (see Appendix D) was prepared for my administrator participants. Questions for the community members were listed in the other interview protocol (see Appendix E). One advantage of connecting open-ended questions to the highly structured part in the interview format is to allow the researcher to respond immediately to the informant and the related topic (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, this interview method is flexible enough to formulate questions for increasing further understanding of the phenomenon or reconstruct the order of questions during the process of interviewing.

In this study, I chose to conduct one-on-one, standardized, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews in order to gain access to the participants' professional backgrounds and their views toward the implementation of the language education

program in an indigenous elementary school. This approach effectively elicited information from the participants to respond to this study in their own words. The participants were free to share their views with the researcher in their own words rather than being hindered by the wording or the order of questions that had been determined ahead of time. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Some portions of the interviews were translated into English for the purpose of data analysis. In this study, I conducted my interviews for 16 participants. Because some of the participants were interviewed more than once, the total time for my interviewing was approximately 50 hours.

The data generated from observations provide “a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview” (Merriam, 2009, p. 117). In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research site, the teacher participants were asked to select their classes for observations, which would provide a basis for further analysis and interpretation. My stance as a researcher during observations was that of a naturalistic observer, who did not attempt to alter a situation in any way but merely observed and recorded events as they naturally occurred (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006).

Each selected language class was scheduled for observations for at least five 40-minute class sessions within the duration of three months. There were 70 observations in total. The main purpose of the observations was to gain understanding of the contexts where teacher participants performed their instructional practices. In addition to classroom observations, the school gatherings, cultural events, websites, playgrounds, students’ lunchrooms, and signs around the school were observed. I kept detailed field

notes during observations, audio-taped all the observation sessions, and photographed some scenes appropriate for research purposes. Each field note was dated and timed to facilitate the data analysis process. The observations focused on classroom activities, the proportion of instructional and target languages being used, the interactions between teachers and students, the use of teaching materials and textbooks, the instructional activities designed for students, the classroom physical settings, and my own behaviors as a naturalistic observer in this research site. Using naturalistic observation was beneficial to this research in that I was able to unobtrusively observe a case study phenomenon without intervening in the classroom routines and procedures.

In addition to observing teachers' instructional practices in the classrooms, my observations included language use at various locations, such as the school playground, lunchrooms, front offices, and language events, such as flag raising ceremonies and singing competitions. The pivotal part of the observations focused on the use and support of each language, including Mandarin, English, and Local Language. In sum, the data of the observations provided useful sources to validate and cross-examine findings, a process of triangulation from multiple perspectives (Patton, 2002).

### Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis can be viewed as both science and art (Schwandt, 2007). It is an activity that involves the processes of data organization, reduction, description, and interpretation. To those advocating that qualitative analysis is a science, analysis in qualitative inquiry is to dissect the whole corpus of data—including field notes, transcriptions, the fieldwork journal, or memos—through categorizing its segments and to establish a pattern for the whole through relating these categories to one another. To

those arguing that qualitative analysis is an art, this type of analysis is viewed as an understanding which cannot be thoroughly defined with regard to procedures. Despite the diverse views of art or science supported by different researchers, qualitative analysis involves a variety of procedures that are employed to work back and forth between data and ideas to generate findings (Schwandt, 2007).

Creswell (2007) indicated that the central procedures of qualitative data analysis include coding the data (i.e., breaking the data into meaningful sections and assigning names for these sections), combining the codes into broader categories, and displaying the data and making comparisons in the data graphs, tables, and charts. These procedures are based on the perspectives of qualitative researchers in their fields in critical ethnography, systematic approach to analysis, and ethnography and case study analysis (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Madison, 2005; Wolcott, 1994). No matter what strategies or processes the researchers adopt to make sense of the phenomena, Simons (2009) commented that all of them “involve sorting, refining, refocusing, interpreting, making analytic notes and finding themes in the data” (p. 119).

With regard to the data analysis procedure of case study approach, Creswell (2007) proposed the following steps, drawing on the general categories of data analysis and representation (i.e., data managing, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing and visualizing): (a) create and organize files for data; (b) read through text, make margin notes, and form initial codes; (c) describe the case and its context; (d) use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns; (e) use direct interpretation and develop naturalistic generalizations; and (f) present in-depth pictures of the case through the use of narrative, tables, and figures. It is the model of Creswell

(2007) that this study employed in the process for analyzing and interpreting the qualitative data.

During the initial process of data analysis, I organized my data into files and converted files to text units. The interview transcripts, observational notes, documents, and field notes, along with initial memos and integrative memos (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), were organized on index cards or into various file folders and computer files. Following the organization of the data, I began the process of repeatedly listening to the recorded interviews and reading the entire interview transcripts in order to get an overall sense of the interviews before breaking them into parts (Agar, 1996). Meanwhile, I scanned my field notes from observations and wrote memos in the margins of the field notes or transcripts to develop initial categories. These initial categories were supported by evidence that portrayed the different views and multiple perspectives of participants on activities and issues from the source of data (Stake, 1995).

In the next procedure, I employed description, classification, and interpretation as the methods for data analysis. Description, as Creswell (2007) stated, is a good place to start during the process of data analysis after managing and reading data and “plays a central role in ethnographic and case studies” (p. 151). I described the context of the particular setting of the participants, locations, and events in detail. Then, I took my qualitative information apart and looked for categories, themes, or dimensions that could be used for my final narrative. In addition to description and classification, I discussed the outcomes of the inquiry and presented larger meanings through the process of interpreting and understanding what was occurring at the research site.

Creswell (2007) also mentioned that the heart of qualitative data analysis in this procedure of description, classification, and interpretation is forming categories. Category formation can be generated through constantly comparing one particular incident with another incident from interviews, field notes, or documents (Merriam, 2009). Some guidelines that Merriam suggested in employing constant comparative method were adopted to achieve the efficacy of categories: (a) to reflect the purpose of the research, (b) to be exhaustive (i.e., to place all important data in a category), (c) to be mutually exclusive (i.e., only one category for a particular unit of data), (d) to be sensitizing (i.e., exactly capturing the meaning of the phenomenon), and (e) to be conceptually congruent (i.e., the same level of abstraction properly characterizing all categories at the same level) (Merriam, 2009).

My last procedure for data analysis presented an in-depth picture of the research site through employing an inductive analysis where the raw data from multiple sources of information were formed into specific broad themes that would lead to answering my main overarching research question. My final narrative was based on several manageable themes developed from the multiple sources of my data to describe participants' perspectives on the language education program in an indigenous elementary school context.

### Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to one set of criteria for judging the quality or goodness of qualitative inquiry. It is the quality of the investigation and its findings that would make it noteworthy to the audiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam (2009) stated that all researchers need to present insights and conclusions that are true to readers in dealing

with the issues of validity and reliability, as it is often indicated as the criteria in quantitative research. Understanding is the primary rationale for the investigation for qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). This concept of understanding, as referred to by Wolcott (1994), is “something one can pursue without becoming obsessed with finding the right or ultimate answer, the correct version, the Truth” (pp. 366-367). In order to advance knowledge and practice in the field of education, researchers need to be confident that their studies are rigorously conducted and that the results are trustworthy. In other words, investigators need to ensure the credibility in constructing and conducting interviews, in analyzing the documents, and in drawing the conclusions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established four criteria serving as the naturalistic investigator’s equivalents to conventional criteria: (a) credibility (parallel to internal validity), (b) transferability (parallel to external validity), (c) dependability (parallel to reliability), and (d) confirmability (parallel to objectivity). Qualitative terminologies, including credibility, transferability, and dependability, are used as criteria to enhance the trustworthiness of the provided information in the study.

#### *Credibility (Parallel to Internal Validity)*

Credibility addresses the issues about whether the findings of a research truly capture the reality of the phenomenon being investigated. As Guba and Lincoln (1989) stated, credibility focuses on establishing “the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders” (p. 237). Mertens and McLaughlin (1995) further explained that the credibility criterion in qualitative research asks whether “there is a correspondence between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and



the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints” (p. 53). One assumption underlying qualitative research is that “reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing” rather than “a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured” (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). Reality is “a multiple set of mental constructions . . . made by humans; their constructions are in their minds, and they are, in the main, accessible to the humans who make them” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 295). Therefore, interpretations of reality can be accessed directly through the methods of observations and interviews in qualitative research since human beings are the main instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009).

Merriam (2009) suggested six fundamental strategies to enhance internal validity, including (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term observation, (d) peer examination, (e) participatory or collaborative modes of research, and (f) researcher’s biases. Triangulation is a technique to confirm the emerging findings through the use of multiple investigators, sources of data, or methods. Member checks help the findings become more plausible when data, analytic categories, and tentative interpretations or conclusions are brought back to the members of the participating groups from whom the data are initially collected. Long-term observation is a method of gathering data where the investigator invests sufficient time at the research site or repeatedly observes the same phenomenon to develop the validity of the findings. Peer examination provides the inquirer an opportunity for checking the emerging findings through the comments of a colleague. Participatory or collaborative modes of research are designed to involve participants throughout the research process from identifying a problem of mutual concern to better understanding the underlying causes for the problem (Merriam &

Simpson, 1995). Researcher's biases are usually addressed in the beginning of the research through the clarification of the researcher's assumptions, worldviews, and theoretical orientations. These strategies are conducive to the improvement of the probability where findings and interpretations will be found credible.

In this study, several strategies, based on the proposal of Merriam (2009), were employed to enhance internal validity. First, I sought to triangulate my data through multiple sources of data. I interviewed teachers, administrators, and community members to gain their views toward the language education program implemented for indigenous children. I also conducted observations in the classrooms to understand how multiple languages were taught at various locations on campus to capture a general idea about how language curriculum is designed at the elementary level. Moreover, I compared data from interviews, observations, field notes and documents to see whether emergent findings remained the same "at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently" (Stake, 1995, p. 112). From these multiple sources of data, I developed a holistic and multidimensional picture of the implementation of language education program for indigenous children. Then, I brought my tentative interpretations of the data back to my participants for accuracy. Throughout the data collection process, I discussed the themes emerging from the interviews and observations with the participants and obtained immediate feedback from the respondents. The involvement of the participants in determining the emergent findings was helpful to clarify the basis for interpretations, to assess the overall adequacy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and to ensure that the language education program was accurately portrayed. Next, I was engaged in observing the research field over an intensive period of approximately three months during the process

of data collection to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. My time spent in natural settings provided me with unique opportunities to capture glimpses of the teaching and learning of multiple languages and language use from indigenous children. Last, I clarified my role as a researcher and acknowledged that my own experiences could influence how I interpreted what I saw and heard, as explained in the previous section of this Methodology chapter.

*Transferability (Parallel to External Validity)*

Transferability refers to the issue of generalization in reference to case-to-case transfer (Schwandt, 2007). It pertains to the possibility that what is found in one context by a piece of qualitative research can be applied to another context. In the qualitative tradition, the findings are not generalized in the same way as those found in the quantitative research; instead, they are transferred by the reader or the user to other similar situations (Merriam, 2009). Patton (1990) suggested that the investigator in qualitative research “provide perspective rather than truth, empirical assessment of decision makers’ theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound extrapolations rather than generalizations” (p. 491). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further contended that the investigator in naturalistic studies is less concerned with the possibility of transfer than the reader or user and noted that the naturalist’s responsibility “ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible” (p. 298). Through studying a particular case in great detail, the reader can discover concrete universals and generalize or transfer them to subsequent similar settings (Erickson, 1986; Merriam, 2009). Correspondingly, Stake (1978) proposed the concept of naturalistic generalization, where people look for similarities “in

new and foreign contexts” through “full and thorough knowledge of the particular” (p. 6). Therefore, a qualitative researcher chooses a single case or small nonrandom sample for his inquiry because the inquirer “wishes to understand the particular in depth” rather than seek to “find out what is generally true of the many” (Merriam, 2009, p. 224). By concentrating on a single phenomenon or a small group of nonrandom participants, the qualitative researcher aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the significant factors representative in the phenomenon through holistic description and explanation instead of attempting to “accumulate *empirical* evidence about contextual similarity” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298).

To enhance generalizability of the findings in a qualitative study, Merriam (2009) suggested three basic strategies, including (a) rich and thick description, (b) typicality or modal category, and (c) multisite designs. Rich and thick description of a phenomenon contributes to the understanding of whether the described research situation is similar or close to the other situations; that is, whether the findings in the researched phenomenon are transferable. Typicality or modal category is intended to identify and describe characteristics of phenomena to help users to make comparisons with other similar types (LeCompte, et al., 1993). Multisite designs refer to the use of several sites or cases to maximize the diversity in the phenomenon to allow the reader to apply the findings to other situations. To enhance the transferability of research findings, the following strategies, including rich and thick description and multisite designs, presented by Merriam (2009) were adopted in this study.

First, as a qualitative researcher, I provided readers with ample descriptions of various instructional practices involving the multiple languages taught in the participating

school throughout the study. Detailed information in reference to the findings was presented as much as possible to help readers judge whether these findings could be applied to their own similar contexts. Second, I recruited 16 participants, including teachers from three language areas, administrators working at the research site for a prolonged period of time, and community members involved in various services in the local township, to maximize diversity in the research phenomenon. The application of these strategies was beneficial to strengthening the transferability of the research findings.

*Dependability (Parallel to Reliability)*

“Dependability” in qualitative research means to ensure that the process is “logical, traceable, and documented” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 164). Yin (2009) pointed out that the goal of reliability within a case study is to minimize the errors and biases and conduct the research for an auditor to repeat the procedures and reach the same results. Merriam (2009) also stated that reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. However, due to the nature of qualitative research, reliability in qualitative research should be viewed differently. As for the same research phenomenon, researchers may describe and explain the world based on their own perspectives or experiences. Due to these different interpretations of what is happening, “there is no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense” (Merriam, 2009, p. 205). Therefore, replication of a qualitative study in the social sciences will not produce the same results.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested using the terms of “dependability” or “consistency” as a substitute criterion for reliability because this naturalistic view is broader than the conventional one, where reliability is typically demonstrated by

replication. In other words, a qualitative researcher seeks to ensure that the results are consistent with the data collected rather than to demand that the subsequent study will achieve the same results. To enhance the dependability of this qualitative case study, several techniques suggested by Merriam (2009) were adopted to ensure the dependability of the results would be achieved: (a) stating the investigator's position, (b) triangulation, and (c) audit trail.

First, the researcher should explain the assumptions and theory behind the study, the selection and description of participants, and the social context from which data are collected to ensure that the findings are dependable (LeCompte, et al., 1993). I provided this information in the relevant sections of this chapter. Second, triangulation, a strategy also used to enhance credibility, was explained in the section of credibility through the use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Third, an audit trail is a strategy to ensure the dependability of the results through the detailed description of research procedure, including how data is collected, how categories are derived, and how decisions are made. With regard to the audit trail in this research, I described my observations and took field notes in detail as soon as possible after observing or interviewing. I included verbal descriptions of the setting, the people, the activities, direct quotations, and my observation comments. I constantly asked myself about the possible meaning of the emerging themes throughout the process of data analysis. These descriptions, along with interview transcriptions, collected documents, and files in my computer for data management, were documented as adequate amount of evidence for deriving my findings, through which interested researchers could reconstruct the process. Table 3 summarizes the techniques used in this research to enhance trustworthiness.

Table 3

*Trustworthiness Criteria and Techniques in Qualitative Research*

Qualitative Term	Quantitative Term	Techniques
Credibility	Internal Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• triangulation</li> <li>• member checks</li> <li>• long-term observations</li> <li>• researcher's biases</li> </ul>
Transferability	External Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rich description</li> <li>• multisite design</li> </ul>
Dependability	Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigator's position</li> <li>• triangulation</li> <li>• audit trail</li> </ul>

## Summary

In this study, a qualitative case study method was used to investigate the language education program at an elementary school with high numbers of indigenous students. These participants, including teachers from three language areas (English, Mandarin, and Local Language), administrators, and community members in the study delineated the language teaching and learning in a bounded case context. Data were collected through the sources of interviews, observations, field notes, and documents. The data were analyzed to present a rich description of the single case, an indigenous elementary school context, in an attempt to understand the implementation of the language education program from the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members. The findings of this study are separately reported in Chapter IV, Chapter V, and Chapter VI to answer each of the three supporting research questions, which form a fundamental

understanding of the study's inquiry regarding the multi-language education for indigenous children in Taiwan.



## CHAPTER IV

### OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM

#### Prologue

To enhance the reader's understanding of the background of the research, this chapter provides a general introduction of the language education program at the participating school to answer Research Question 1: How are Mandarin, English, and Local Language respectively taught for indigenous children in an indigenous elementary school? The overall information includes the time allocation of each language, the availability of curriculum and materials, teachers' qualification and their instructional approach, and the class size. This chapter also presents the portraits of the school and the participants. To protect the privacy of participants, pseudonyms have been used for all locations and individuals. The factors of curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development influencing the language education program are presented in Chapter V. The participants' perspectives on the language education program are presented in Chapter VI.

#### Yulung Elementary School

In October, 2010, I flew to Taiwan to begin collecting data for my research. Because I had been away from my home country for three years, my heart was filled with longing to see my family members and my friends. Meanwhile, to the unknown journey of data collection ahead of me, I looked forward to entering into the research site and

meeting with my participants in person. I made a phone call to the principal at the participating school as soon as I arrived in Taiwan. I had promised to do so a week earlier while I was still in the States. His voice at the other end of the line sounded much clearer to me than that I previously heard through international communication. As soon as I introduced myself and expressed my intent again briefly, I was able to set up an appointment with him for further conversation on the same day.

The trip from my home to the participating school would take me approximately two hours, including the time waiting for the buses and the walking tour between the destination and the participating school. I usually took the bus at the bus stop across the street from my home to the neighboring city and transferred by another bus to Wagi township, where the participating school was located. On my way to Yulung, I often noticed the gradual change of the scenery through the window of the bus, from busy, sometimes congested traffic, where taxis, buses, automobiles, motorcycles, and pedestrians hurried along the street, to a narrower and winding road surrounded by green mountains.

I met with the principal during the time when Typhoon Megi was about to hit the island with heavy rains. It was a rainy afternoon. I rushed into the back entrance of the school while carefully folding my dripping umbrella to avoid causing the floor to be too slippery. Following the direction of the security guard, I quietly passed by several classrooms on the first floor and reached the principal's office at the end of the hallway. The principal had been appointed to the participating school only two months before my visit. During our short conversation, I found he was a principal with abundant administrative experiences and leadership. With his assistance, I was referred to Mr. Chin,

the director of academic affairs, who also kindly agreed to help search for the language teachers that could possibly meet the selection criteria of my participants. Knowing from the principal that Mr. Chin had worked at the participating school for years, I asked him whether he would be willing to participate in my research and subsequently obtained his verbal consent. The following is the background information of the administrator, Mr. Chin.

Although Mr. Chin's birthplace was Tainan, a city located in the southern part of Taiwan, his ancestors could be traced back to those living in Fujian Province in Southern China several centuries ago. He investigated the origin of his ethnic background under the request of his high school history teacher and made the conclusion that he is a local Taiwanese, a Holo (i.e. Southern Min). He graduated from a national normal university in the southern part of Taiwan majoring in English. In his time, students who graduated from a national normal university were still sponsored by the government and were assigned their teaching profession. Under the suggestion of one of his relatives, he came to the school for his one-year internship and stayed as a full-time teacher since then. He had a wealth of experience in serving various administrative duties, including sections of counseling affairs, student affairs, and academic affairs.

The initial reason for Mr. Chin to select this indigenous school as a site where he devoted himself to working was due to its geographical location. He was attached to the beautiful scenic spot, the fresh air, high mountains surrounding the workplace, and acceptable traffic condition. The more time he spent with the students and the teachers in the school, the more friendship he found from them. He had never had any contact with indigenous students before he came to the school. In his mind, indigenous children had

their own uniqueness. If teachers had never experienced getting along with indigenous students, these teachers needed to spend some time discovering how to deal with their students. In fact, he thought that the purpose of education was intended to educate students regardless of where they were. In addition, he thought there was a need for a relatively stable teaching team in the indigenous school. Taking all these factors into consideration helped him decide to continue his profession in the school. In order to develop his professional knowledge, he was working on his Master's degree, majoring in educational administration at an urban normal university.

Mr. Chin once told me during our multiple interviews that he could probably be considered the third senior teacher at the participating school to the best of his knowledge. From him and the documents he provided, I gained much first-hand information about the implementation of the language curriculum. He recounted:

At that time, each school was developing a theme as its own school-based curriculum. I then started thinking of our indigenous culture. Perhaps we could follow the four seasons to design our curriculum because the characteristic of each season always remains the same. We came up with the idea that we might blend the natural components with the humanistic characteristic together.

The school-based curriculum was designed in accordance with the thematic unit of the Atayal weaving in September at the beginning of the first semester. Students were expected to learn the basic skills of weaving and understand the cultural meaning of weaving because the major feature of the Atayal people was weaving, according to Mr. Chin. As winter approached, bird-watching would be incorporated into the curriculum because mountain hiking trails in the neighborhood were established for the purpose of bird-watching. The third thematic unit was the season of hot springs and cherry blossoms because hot springs were one of the local characteristics and cherry blossom trees were

imported from Japan to attract tourists. When the summer vacation approached, the journey of Makino bamboo would be the fourth thematic unit because the community where the participating school was located was famous for its rich production of Makino bamboo. Mr. Chin explained that one of the thematic units, the Atayal weaving, was a type of indigenous culture, while the rest of the thematic units were more related to the resources from the local natural environment. Because language also played a substantial role in enhancing the cultural heritage, the participating school compiled the textbooks of the Atayal language for teaching indigenous students.

The total number of students at Yulung Elementary School was around 110, where the majority of the students were of the Atayal ethnic background, a few of those were from other indigenous backgrounds, and the Han Chinese students were fewer than 10. Mr. Chin replied to my inquiry of the student demographics profile with a smile that “Han Chinese students at our school are actually an ethnic minority.” There was only one class for each grade level, where the average number of students for each class was approximately 17. The participating school was qualified for Educational Priority Areas (EPAs) plan support due to the high percentage of indigenous students. To apply for the funding of the EPAs, the school needed to report student data to the MOE based on several indicators, such as the rate of students from single-parent and grand-parenting families, the rate of students from low-income families, and the rate of students from families where one of the parents married a foreign spouse. Mr. Chin stated that the total percentage of all of these indicators had exceeded 40 percent. He further explained that families with foreign spouses at the participating school mostly meant that an indigenous father married a foreign bride. The percentage of students from these families with

foreign spouses was considerably low, only one or two students in a class. However, the rate of students from single-parent and grand-parenting families was fairly high.

### *Curriculum Design and Teaching Materials*

The teachers at the participating school would design their curriculum plan for the academic year. The curriculum design would be based on the instructional planning of the textbooks for the courses or on that of the self-compiled materials. The group of each learning area would investigate these curriculum plans and then submit them to the committee of curriculum development for the final confirmation. Mr. Chin pointed out that there was sometimes only one teacher within one learning area because of the insufficient personnel quota at Yulung Elementary School. Therefore, it happened that a teacher would have to examine the curriculum plan he designed for his own course. Even the committee of curriculum development did not consist of the teachers from the same learning area to review the curriculum plans submitted to them. He stated:

Everybody has his own expertise in the teaching profession. Unless there are major mistakes, we will point them out or offer our suggestions. Otherwise, these curriculum plans won't need to be revised drastically. After all, once the teachers complete designing the curriculum plans, it will be their responsibility to implement them.

With regard to Mandarin and English, the teachers of these two subjects would design their curricula based on the core competencies of the mandated curriculum guidelines, according to Mr. Chin. There were textbooks provided for the subjects of Mandarin and English, so teachers responsible for instructing these two subjects would consult the contents of these textbooks during the process of preparing the curriculum plans. According to Mr. Chin's observation, teachers in charge of the instruction of Local Language would design their teaching materials or use the textbooks compiled by the

Center for Aboriginal Studies. The curriculum plan of the Local Language, as with Mandarin and English, also needed to be submitted to the committee of curriculum development for further review.

*Time Allocation for Each Language Subject*

Time allocation for each language at the participating school was arranged in accordance with the area learning periods of the mandated curriculum. In Taiwan, each elementary school class period lasted 40 minutes. In the field of Mandarin, five periods were designed for students of Grade 1 and Grade 2 and those of Grade 5 and Grade 6 and four periods were designed for those of Grade 3 and Grade 4. Then, in the field of English, two periods were distributed for students from Grade 3 to Grade 6. In addition, some alternative periods would be added to the fields of Mandarin and English to enhance students' language learning. Lastly, in the field of Local Language, one period was allocated for students from Grade 1 to Grade 6. The participating school usually provided the Atayal language for the majority of the students from the Atayal background. However, the Paiwan language was also provided for a few Paiwan students since the academic year of 2010 due to the request from the parents of these students. Table 4 summarizes the area learning periods allocated for each language in the Language Arts learning area at the participating school.

Table 4

*Weekly Area Learning Period Allocation of Language Curriculum at Yulung Elementary School*

Grade Level	Mandarin	English	Local Language
Grade 1	5		1
Grade 2	5		1
Grade 3	4	2	1
Grade 4	4	2	1
Grade 5	5	2	1
Grade 6	5	2	1

*Note.* Periods were 40 minutes each.

*Mandarin*

In the field of Mandarin, I interviewed three teachers, Shu-Yuan, Hua-Mei, and Ju-Chao, whom I called by their first names, and observed their classes of Grade 5 and Grade 1 respectively. In the following, I provide the background information of these three participants.

*Shu-Yuan.* Shu-Yuan, a fifth-grade Mandarin teacher, who graduated from a national university, formerly a teachers college in southern part of Taiwan, was a Fine Arts major. In her time, students who graduated from normal universities or teachers colleges were not guaranteed that they could be assigned jobs for teaching due to the new government policy, so Shu-Yuan needed to apply for the teaching profession through the examination administered by the school that had vacancy for teachers. During the first year after she graduated, she taught Fine Arts in a junior high school and a senior high school near her hometown. After passing the recruitment examination administered by



the participating school, she was employed as a substitute teacher where she served as an administrative deputy concurrently with teaching. A year later, she was assigned to be the homeroom teacher of a sixth-grade class of students. A homeroom teacher at elementary schools in Taiwan was expected to teach major subjects; that is, the subjects that required relatively more teaching hours, such as Mandarin and Mathematics. Shu-Yuan gained constructive feedback and comments about her Mandarin teaching through the other teacher observing her Mandarin instruction in the classroom during this year. Although Shu-Yuan was in her fourth year of teaching at this participating school, she would like to make the best use of her spare time through various workshops to work on instructional materials and methods to develop her professional knowledge.

*Hua-Mei.* Hua-Mei was the observation teacher of Mandarin for the students of Grade 5 and served as the section chief of information technology. She graduated from a national university of education, majoring in Mathematics and Science Education. Although she was an Atayal, growing up in the community, most of her time for schooling was spent in another city. As a recommended indigenous college student, she knew a teaching vacancy was reserved for her in the community. Having worked in a neighboring indigenous school for one year, she returned to the participating school and worked as a regular teacher. In addition to serving as an administrator in the department of academic and student affairs, she had experience teaching various subjects, such as mathematics, rhythmic movement, integrative activities, and Mandarin.

*Ju-Chao.* Ju-Chao had been eager to be a teacher ever since she was a little girl. She graduated from a national university of education, majoring in Elementary Education, where she also took 40 required credits to enhance her professional development in

counseling and guidance during her junior and senior years. She was the homeroom teacher for the Grade 1 students, instructing Mandarin, Mathematics, and Life Curriculum. She had been teaching in the participating school for five years and served as the coordinator of language arts while the research was conducted. Her essay on exploring personal reading history was selected as one of the winners in a project held by the MOE for promoting extensive reading at the levels of elementary and junior high schools.

All of these three teachers had experience in teaching Mandarin and sought various opportunities to improve their language teaching through the workshops for teacher training. Both Shu-Yuan and Hua-Mei stated that they had received the basic training in teaching materials and teaching methodology when they were college students, so they felt competent in teaching Mandarin. For some years, Yulung Elementary School had been involved in conducting an eight-year multiple intelligence experimental project, where a teacher would be assigned to observe teaching and learning in the Mandarin and Mathematics classes. Because Hua-Mei was assigned to observe Shu-Yuan's Mandarin class, they decided to pull out one period from Mandarin to focus on teaching composition, which would be instructed by Hua-Mei. To this, Mr. Chin stated that the school would respect the professional decision of both instruction and observation teachers because only they knew what would be the best for their students.

Both Shu-Yuan and Ju-Chao had been seeking ways to improve their instructional practices and the Mandarin proficiency of their students. Ju-Chao mentioned that the biggest challenge for her in teaching indigenous children was that she needed to "fight with" their pronouncing the second and third tones of the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet

because the children were heavily influenced by the accents of their mother tongue. Moreover, literacy (meaning the ability to recognize Chinese characters) was generally low because students did not spend sufficient time in practicing how to read and write at home. Shu-Yuan also indicated that the students in her fifth-grade class did not receive solid basic literacy training because of the turnover of their homeroom teachers during the beginning grade levels. They would incorporate different ways of teaching techniques, such as physical movements, visual arts, sketching, and rhythm, into the Mandarin instruction and the daily classroom routines.

I walked into their Mandarin classrooms sometime after the mid-term examination and enjoyed attending their classes, where both Shu-Yuan and Ju-Chao were teaching their lessons based on the syllabi of the provided textbooks for their 5th and 1st grade classes. In Shu-Yuan's class, I observed three lessons, where the first two lessons were designed for the instruction of narrative essays and the last one was designed for traditional Chinese poetry. Shu-Yuan used both methodologies in her instruction, including top-down and bottom-up approaches. In the top-down approach, she encouraged children to share their experiences with others through questions and answers before teaching how to write specific characters and explaining idiomatic phrases. In the bottom-up approach, she would start with teaching difficult characters and explaining the sources of idiomatic phrases before discussing the central idea of each paragraph with her students and helping them come up with important messages that authors sought to convey. In Ju-Chao's class, the experiences of teaching first graders were different from those of teaching fifth graders. I observed her class when students had just completed the first phase of learning the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet (MPA) and moved on to the next

phase of learning simple Chinese characters. Ju-Chao pasted on the blackboard big posters with the enlarged lesson from the textbook and used flash cards on which both Chinese characters and their corresponding MPAs were printed to facilitate her teaching (see Figure 4). In teaching the students of the upper and the lower grade levels, both Shu-Yuan and Ju-Chao placed emphasis on the correct pronunciations of difficult characters and gave students clear instructions on how to differentiate some words with similar radicals and sounds.



Figure 4: Enlarged Mandarin textbook lesson pasted on the blackboard.

The process of recruiting the participants for my research went well except that the English teacher, who was responsible for the English language instruction for students from Grade 1 to Grade 6, declined to participate. Mr. Chin suggested that I

might contact the teachers of International Culture, a course based on an experimental project entitled Activation Curriculum that had been recently implemented by the local government to promote English for school children at the elementary level. I was referred to Walis and Ms. Liu, the two teachers in charge of International Culture at the participating school. Having explained the content of my research to them, I obtained their consent except that Ms. Liu only agreed to be interviewed rather than to be observed. In the following, I introduce the Activation Curriculum, the teaching goal of International Culture, my two participants, Walis and Ms. Liu, and their instructional emphases.

Due to the idea that English is an instrument for international communication, the implementation plan of the Activation Curriculum experiment project promoted by the local educational bureau introduced several initial thoughts for this project, including effectively cultivating children's international competitiveness for the future, eliminating children's different language levels caused by socioeconomic backgrounds, and reducing economic burden on parents. Through the implementation of this experimental project, the educational bureau hoped that children would receive exposure to the international language and culture at a young stage, develop their confidence and interest, lay a solid foundation for learning English, and become citizens equipped with multilingual skills in the new generation. Some of the teaching goals in this curriculum included lengthening children's exposure to the language to enhance fundamental competence and activating teachers' instructional methodology to increase students' interest. This experimental project applied to all the elementary schools under the jurisdiction of local government. Students would be provided with three additional class periods, where two periods were allocated for teaching International Culture and one period was allocated for teaching

Advanced Reading. Suggested instructional methods for International Culture included guided reading of picture books, teaching with songs, reader's theater, broadcasting, short essays for reading comprehension, and remedial instruction.

Like English Conversation, International Culture at Yulung Elementary School, where one alternative period was allocated for the students of Grade 1 and Grade 2, did not require teachers to use any mandated textbooks or teaching materials. Mr. Chin stated that teachers could decide what was considered to be the most appropriate for their classes. The planning of the Activation Curriculum experimental project at the participating school, according to Mr. Chin, was that two periods were allocated to International Culture for students from Grade 1 to Grade 6, where English instruction was preferred, and one period was allocated to Advanced Reading for students from Grade 1 to Grade 4, where Mandarin instruction was preferred.

### *International Culture*

*Walis.* Walis (his Atayal name) was an Atayal, living in one of the indigenous villages in the vicinity of the participating school. He graduated from a national university of education in the northwestern part of Taiwan, majoring in Language and Literacy Education. The Department of Language and Literacy Education was an integrated program of Chinese language and English language studies during the time when he was a college student. Due to his interest in teaching English as a second language, he took most of the selected courses related to this field, such as Selected Readings on English Picture Storybooks, Teaching Phonics, and Designing English Learning Activities and Materials after meeting the requirement of minimum credits for Chinese language studies. During his internship at an indigenous elementary school, he

had a chance to take the place of an English teacher who left for Australia. Walis designed his teaching plan based on the teaching materials left by the previous teacher, but he incorporated songs and games into his instructional activities. The following year he was assigned to support English teaching at another elementary school to fulfill the requirement of substitute military service. Again, he integrated theme songs into his English classes to motivate his students rather than focus on traditional memory drill of vocabulary or phrases. After he completed his substitute military service, he resumed his post as an English substitute teacher at the indigenous elementary school where he previously worked. Considering the factor of transportation convenience, he decided to move to the participating school where he was assigned concurrently as a section chief of student activities and a teacher of International Culture for students of Grade 6.

*Ms. Liu.* Ms. Liu received a bachelor's degree in Arts Education and a master's degree in Fashion and Communications Design. She had taught at two alternative schools and received training from a privately-managed public school that promoted a humanistic approach of nurturing children before she was recruited to teach at Yulung Elementary School. Having enrolled in the doctoral program of Curriculum and Instruction at a university of education for two years, she decided to apply for the teaching position and successfully passed the recruitment examination.

As a senior teacher devoting herself to studying the alternative pedagogy, she had some experience in translating the teaching materials from English to Chinese and managing the affairs of receiving the lecturers from abroad in some workshops intended to provide teachers with an alternative educational philosophy to supervise their students. As a doctoral student, she also had to present her research at various regional and

international conferences. All of these experiences were possible reasons for her to be selected among many people who competed for the teaching position at the participating school. She was assigned concurrently as a section chief of registration and a teacher of International Culture teaching students from Grade 1 to Grade 5.

Because International Culture was a newly added course at the participating school, both Walis and Ms. Liu designed their courses based on their different expertise. Walis preferred to search for materials from the Internet as the major sources for his instruction. The teaching materials he collected were related to children's daily experiences. The selected vocabulary and sentence patterns would be instructed through songs and activities. The main goal of his instruction was to stimulate students' interest in learning English. Ms. Liu preferred to lead children to the appreciation of international culture, where arts and aesthetics were integrated into her instruction. She would introduce songs related to seasonal change and festivals from other countries to help children experience the connection between language and culture. She also taught poetry of artistic conception and folk songs, accompanied by the instruction of physical movement, to enhance children's interest in English. Both Walis and Ms. Liu avoided adopting traditional ways of learning English, such as practices and drills; instead, they integrated various activities and materials into their instructional methodologies to achieve the goal of the prescribed curriculum.

As indicated previously, English was a required subject starting from Grade 3. Even though the two periods of International Culture were not added to the curriculum, Mr. Chin stated that one alternative period of English Conversation was allocated for students of Grade 1 and Grade 2. In other words, English had been taught for students of



all grade levels at the participating school before the Activation Curriculum experimental project was implemented. The English teacher used *Hi ABC* and *Hi English* published by Hess Bookstore or self-compiled materials as the major teaching materials, along with posters presenting different scenarios, number and alphabet flashcards, classroom language posters, audio CDs, dice, timer, toy hammer, sentence strips, pocket charts, and workbooks to teach vocabulary, chants, short stories, and simple conversations. The English teacher had been working at Yulung Elementary School for years as a regular teacher, while Walis and Ms. Liu were newly employed as substitute teachers. Overall, the resources available for English instruction were greater than those available for the instruction of Local Language.

Basically, the curriculum plan of Local Language, like those of other languages, included several items, such as educational goals for the academic year, competence indicators, thematic units corresponding to competence indicators, amounts of learning periods, and assessment methods. Teaching materials indicated in the curriculum plan of Local Language often contained self-compiled materials, the textbooks compiled by the Center for Aboriginal Studies, or the textbooks compiled by school staff. The teaching goal was intended to enable students to correctly speak the equivalents of traditional indigenous daily expressions in their mother language related to topics such as relatives, housing, food, and clothing. Indigenous cultures were also incorporated into the curriculum to help students become familiar with the traditions and customs of their ancestors through indigenous songs, aboriginal handicrafts, stories, and jokes.

In the field of Local Language, two teachers, Mr. Ma and Mr. Peng, responsible for teaching the Atayal language, and Ms. Sung, responsible for teaching the Paiwan language, were interviewed and observed in the classes of all grade levels.

### *Local Language*

*Mr. Ma.* Mr. Ma, who graduated from a teacher junior college during the 1970s, was a senior teacher at the participating school. In addition to teaching Science and Technology, he was responsible for observing mathematics classes and providing his feedback to mathematics teachers. As an indigenous Atayal resident, he was familiar with the Atayal culture and customs in the local area. Many of the parents or the relatives of the students who were studying at Yulung Elementary School had been his students. During the time when the participating school was promoting native language instruction, he was involved in the committee for editing textbooks of the Atayal language. Mr. Ma was a regular elementary teacher and a qualified teacher of indigenous language, so it was natural for him to be assigned to teach the Atayal language for students in the upper fifth and sixth grade levels. He was also responsible for teaching Integrative Activities, where he integrated the indigenous culture into the school-based curriculum to help students better appreciate their roles in the community and develop understanding toward their homeland.

*Mr. Peng.* Mr. Peng, graduated from a junior college of marine technology and commerce, worked full-time as a security guard in the administration of a large reservoir. After he passed the Proficiency Test of Indigenous Language (PTIL) and completed the 36-hour indigenous language teachers' training program in 2002, he started to teach Atayal in schools located in different areas and became one of the teachers in the

Aboriginal Language and Culture Classroom, which was also entitled Language Nest, established by the Indigenous Peoples Bureau. He specialized in integrating Atayal into the songs that students were familiar with in his Atayal classes. He also excelled at analyzing the questions of the PTIL. He admitted that he had little passion for being a teacher of the Atayal language when the government initially implemented the instruction of Local Language in school curriculum. However, having spent more time teaching students the Atayal language, he was aware that his mother tongue was severely endangered because more and more Atayal students were unable to speak their own language. His mission in teaching Atayal was to revitalize the Atayal language and culture, and to help students discover their self-worth and develop their ethnic identity of the Atayal people. He taught the Atayal language to students from Grade 1 to Grade 4 at the participating school.

*Ms. Sung.* Ms. Sung was recruited to teach the Paiwan language to students from Grade 1 to Grade 4 beginning with the fall semester of 2010 due to the request of the parents of Paiwan students, who constituted only a small percentage of the total student population at the participating school. Ms. Sung graduated from a college of medicine and management majoring in Nursing and Midwifery. Having passed the PTIL, she successfully completed training courses designed for indigenous language teachers for more than 300 hours. In addition to teaching Paiwan at several elementary and middle schools, aboriginal community colleges, and aboriginal language and culture classrooms, she was involved in editing aboriginal language magazines, dubbing for some Paiwan teaching programs produced by Taiwan Indigenous Television, and coaching students participating in national Paiwan language contests. Ms. Sung did not intend to be a

Paiwan language teacher when she took the PTIL in 2002. In fact, she was curious about the way the PTIL was administered because she knew there were no characters for indigenous languages. When she realized that Romanized symbols were utilized in the PTIL, she worked hard for the test through learning these symbols by heart. This experience of preparing for the PTIL helped her recall the Paiwan language she used to communicate with her people living in the indigenous village. Driven by the mission of transferring heritage culture and language, she devoted herself to the teaching career of the Paiwan language.

Among the three teachers, Mr. Ma used the textbooks compiled by the participating school staff as the teaching materials and the other two teachers designed their materials for the students. Mr. Ma would start with the section of the vocabulary and guide students to pronounce each word correctly. To indigenous children, some vocabulary related to indigenous culture needed to be explained further. Mr. Ma would help them understand it better by providing the necessary background knowledge. The lesson would be taught after students had been familiar with the meanings of difficult words. This approach was helpful for advanced learners who had become skilled in reading through the writing system of the Romanized alphabet. Because Mr. Peng and Ms. Sung taught students from Grade 1 to Grade 4, they would focus more on practicing the basic vocabulary and daily communicative expressions. Their classes were arranged simultaneously so that the Paiwan students could be pulled out for learning their mother language. Therefore, Ms. Sung's classes were much smaller than those of other teachers. Some of her classes even had only one student sitting face to face with her in the meeting room arranged as her classroom.

## Summary

This chapter provided a general introduction of the language education program at Yulung Elementary School. Information regarding how time was allocated on each language, what curriculum and materials were available, teachers' qualification and their instructional approach, and the class size was presented to answer the first supporting question in relation to how each language area was respectively taught in an indigenous elementary school. The amount of instructional time distributed to each language was slightly different, with Mandarin allocated the most, English the next, and Local Language the least. With the implementation of the local government's policy, International Culture was added to increase the instructional time for English. Teachers could design their curriculum plans and materials based on the prescribed curriculum guidelines. Teachers who graduated from universities or colleges of teacher education were prepared with the basic training for teaching elementary students. To qualify for teaching Local Language, teachers needed to pass the PTIL and attend relevant teaching courses for a regulated amount of time. The methodology of teaching Mandarin focused on the instruction of Chinese characters, idiomatic expressions, and exploration of the key meaning in the paragraph. The methodology of teaching International Culture focused on using different activities to inspire students' interest in learning English. The methodology of teaching Local Language focused on learning the basic skills of listening, speaking, and the writing system of the Romanized alphabet. In the next chapter, I present the factors that facilitate and hinder the implementation of the language education program.

## CHAPTER V

### INFLUENCING FACTORS

This chapter provides the influencing factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of the language education program. The findings of these factors are presented from the aspects of curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development in order to answer Research Question 2: What are the factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of language education program with regard to curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development? The following report discusses the various factors influencing the implementation of each language area based on the data collected from the research site.

#### Curriculum Design

The design of language education program at Yulung Elementary School followed the curriculum guidelines mandated by the government. The guidelines indicated that the language curriculum should help students achieve the basic ability in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and familiarize students with cultural learning and customs. Each language area was divided into several learning stages based on knowledge structure and psychological development of learning. Competence indicators were also established for each learning stage to achieve curriculum goals. In addition to the four basic language skills, competence indicators in Mandarin included the ability of using the Mandarin

Phonetic Alphabet (MPA) and literacy, and those in Local Language included the skillful application of phonetic symbols. The English area introduced competence indicators through several aspects, such as language proficiency, interest and method in learning English, culture and customs.

The participating school established the curriculum development committee in accordance with the mandated curriculum guidelines to help determine the learning periods for each learning area and formulate a comprehensive curriculum plan for an academic year. Teachers were responsible for completing their curriculum plans, where instructional goals, competence indicators corresponding to learning area, thematic unit, learning periods, and types of assessment would be specified. All the curriculum plans would be submitted to the educational bureau to be documented at the beginning of the academic year.

With regard to teaching materials, the textbooks had been compiled in accordance with the curriculum guidelines and submitted to the authority for review before they were selected by teachers for classroom use. Competence indicators of different learning stages in the curriculum guidelines were listed for textbook compilers' references. Instructional suggestions and assessments of each language competency were given for teachers to consult. However, the compilers and instructors were allowed to flexibly integrate these principles into their teaching materials and instructional practices based on the suggested stages of competence indicators.

Learning periods in the language curriculum of the participating school were based on the guidelines of the Grade 1-9 curriculum, where the amount of instructional time allocated for Mandarin was more considerable than those for both English and Local

Language. However, due to the decision of the school committee of curriculum development and language policy of local government, additional learning periods were allocated for Mandarin and English. Thus, Local Language was designated the shortest amount of instructional time among the three required language subjects in the language curriculum.

A glance of the weekly class schedules (see Table 5) from all grade levels helped me better understand the instructional time allocated for each language. In Taiwan, each learning period was equal to 40 minutes of instruction in elementary schools. The instructional time for Mandarin was five learning periods for all grade levels except the students of the third grade and the fourth grade levels who received four learning periods. Two learning periods of English instruction were allocated to students from Grade 3 to Grade 6 and one learning period of Local Language instruction was allocated to students of all grade levels. However, alternative learning periods were added to enhance students' language acquisition. For instance, additional two periods of Reading Guidance were allocated to the students from Grade 3 to Grade 6 and additional one period of Reading Guidance was allocated to those in first and second grade. One period of English Conversation was also allotted to the students in first and second grade. Furthermore, due to the experimental project of Activation Curriculum from the local government policy, students from Grade 1 to Grade 4 received three additional periods, including one period of Advanced Reading and two periods of International Culture. Fifth and sixth grade students received two additional periods of International Culture. According to Mr. Chin, the director of the academic affairs, Advanced Reading was more related to Mandarin instruction and International Culture was more related to English instruction at Yulung



Elementary School despite the initial curriculum goal, which was much broader than these. With the additional instructional time distributed to Mandarin and English, the weekly one period for Local Language instruction, described as “a vase for decoration only” by Pastor Shih in the community, continued to retain the smallest share of time among all the language subjects being instructed.

Table 5

*Weekly Period Allocation of Language Class Schedule at Yulung Elementary School*

Grade Level	Mandarin	Reading Guidance	Advanced Reading	English	English Conversation	International Culture	Local Language
1	5	1	1		1	2	1
2	5	1	1		1	2	1
3	4	2	1	2		2	1
4	4	2	1	2		2	1
5	5	2		2		2	1
6	5	2		2		2	1

*Note:* Periods were 40 minutes each.

The purpose of adding the alternative periods of Reading Guidance to Mandarin instruction, according to Mr. Chin, was to increase the quantity of instructional time for students’ reading and to improve students’ language and literacy abilities. He further recalled his observation of increasing attention given to English by the government in recent years, stating:

Later on, I think it is because of the policy. More and more importance was attached to the learning of English. English has been extended downward to Grade 3 and Grade 4. Even English is taught in Grade 1 and Grade 2 now. Since the Activation Curriculum was implemented, the learning periods of English have exceeded those of Local Language because there is only one period for Local Language.

Mr. Chin stated that if compared with the previous curriculum standard, the amount of time for Mandarin instruction in the Grade 1-9 curriculum appeared to be reduced. Because the instructional periods were scheduled based on a regulated

percentage allocated to each learning area, adding more class periods to one subject would inevitably lead to lessening the instructional time allocated for the other subjects in the same learning area. With the additional two class periods of International Culture from the experimental project of Activation Curriculum at the elementary level, Mr. Chin pointed out that the instructional time for English was closer to that for Mandarin.

With regard to Local Language, where students were provided with one class period per week, Atayal had been the major target language because the majority of students at the participating school were of the Atayal background. It was not until this year that more families of the Paiwan ethnic background moved into the local community. As a result, parents of these families made their request through the assistance of homeroom teachers for teaching their children in their mother language. They demanded that Yulung Elementary School provide their children with their mother language, Paiwan, just as other schools could offer the same mother language to their children. To accommodate their needs, Mr. Chin started to arrange curriculum schedules for these students. He found that there was at least one student enrolled in the level from Grade 1 to Grade 4 who could be scheduled to attend the Paiwan class concurrently when their classmates were scheduled to attend the Atayal class. This coincidence was helpful and convenient for him in recruiting indigenous language teachers.

He stated that he was pleased to see these parents notice their rights and send their request to school. The participating school used to have students from other indigenous backgrounds, such as Saisiyat, Amis, and Truku, but none of the parents of these ethnic groups made the same request as those of the Paiwan ethnic group. He surmised that this was perhaps due to the fact that the Paiwan people tended to be more cooperative than

other ethnic groups in making their voices heard. In sum, students at the participating school were required to learn Mandarin, English, and Local Language. International Culture was added to enhance students' English proficiency. Two indigenous languages, Atayal and Paiwan, were taught concurrently during the instructional time of Local Language to meet the needs of indigenous children from different ethnic backgrounds.

### *Mandarin*

Through the efforts of the former principal, Ms. Fan<sup>5</sup>, the participating school several years ago had implemented an eight-year experimental project, where the theory of multiple intelligences was applied to teaching and learning to meet the implicit needs of indigenous children and relate the teaching content to their cultural experiences in the community. Teachers were trained through various workshops to understand the importance of tailoring their instruction to students and to use students' strengths to help them improve in the learning areas where they had been weak. Several teachers held beliefs that adopting an alternative educational philosophy in designing their curriculum would be beneficial to their students.

*Influential alternative pedagogy.* Teachers who taught Mandarin at Yulung Elementary School unanimously used the textbooks compiled by a privately owned company. Mandarin teachers usually would each receive a teacher's handbook, workbooks, word cards, and other supplementary materials to facilitate their teaching. Although the textbook publisher provided teachers with adequate service, Shu-Yuan revealed that she did not specifically prefer using the textbook selected by the school. She

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<sup>5</sup> Ms. Fan received her master's degree in education and obtained a certificate of completing 40 graduate-level credits in Educational Psychology and Counseling from a national normal university. She had worked in the participating school for more than 15 years.

explained that the textbook usually included 14 lessons and to finish teaching all of these 14 lessons in one semester was extremely difficult because of time constraints. Teachers needed to slightly modify their teaching schedule so that they would not feel they were cramming their students. She said:

In addition to learning new words, phrases, and how to make sentences, students need to know how to appreciate and analyze the essays. My role is to provide them with sufficient knowledge in paragraph analysis and appreciation. Reading as many essays as possible does not guarantee that they will achieve this point.

Shu-Yuan mentioned a teacher development workshop on alternative pedagogies that had a great impact on her instruction in Mandarin. She said that the lecturer, invited from Germany, in the workshop kept asking the attendees such questions as “What is observation?” and “What is thinking?” These questions forced her to reflect upon her instruction and the real needs of her students, not only physically and mentally, but also spiritually. When she returned to school from the workshop, she discovered she had a different view toward the textbook she was using. It seemed to her that each lesson in the textbook was a separate room and there was no connection between each room. She felt that the lessons in the textbook were not integrated into a whole entity. In order to teach these lessons, she said that she needed to devote a great deal of energy to finding the “feel” that the article tried to convey. Only when she found the “feel” within the article would she be able to continue her teaching. If she simply went through the article, she said, “You will find students are not related to you. And when they are not related to you, you know you haven’t taught them this lesson at all.” Rather than directly telling students the answers, she would provide students with more questions for them to think. There had been a gradual change of pedagogical emphasis from one-way operation to the teaching mode of question and answer in her classroom since then.

*Bringing indigenous culture into classroom.* Shu-Yuan believed that the teachers needed to understand some background knowledge related to the indigenous culture and customs when teaching indigenous children. As a teacher in an indigenous elementary school, she would address the importance of maintaining Atayal traditions. She would bring the concept of *Gaga*<sup>6</sup> into her class and discuss with the students the traditions passed down from their ancestors for children to follow. She recounted:

They [The Atayal people] use the totem of rhombus to represent the eyes of their ancestors. The colors for this representation are mostly red, black, and white. You have to emphasize their cultural traditions in the class because these children have been assimilated into the culture elsewhere for some time. Then, you may want to discuss *Gaga* with them. *Gaga* is similar to the concept of Ten Commandments. It is their law. No stealing, no adultery, that kind of thing! You tell them they cannot commit anything evil so that they may be allowed to see their ancestors after passing the rainbow bridge. You keep telling them all of these things until they internalize the messages they receive in the class.

Shu-Yuan said the indigenous culture components could be blended into any school curriculum. She taught these children how to design the rhombus and other geometric shapes with different colors in her Mandarin class while explaining the ancestral teaching to her students. The shared beliefs of the Atayal people were that they were not supposed to violate *Gaga*, the ancestral instruction; otherwise, their violation would result in the punishment from the spirits. Shu-Yuan thought it important to teach the content from the perspective of indigenous traditions so that students would feel they were related to the knowledge learned from their teacher. Collecting the information on the Atayal cultures and traditions from books, museums, and television programs, she explained that the information had to be absorbed into a stage more than just the surface level of knowledge. It was not until this stage that she would unreservedly introduce the

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<sup>6</sup> *Gaga* is the traditional moral value of the Atayal group and is the core concept of Atayal social cultural standard.

concept of *Gaga* to her students. “*Gaga* in my teaching would not be just a voice immediately disappearing into the air, but a genuine spirit and a time-honored tradition that should be maintained,” said she.

*Composition.* In Shu-Yuan’s Mandarin class for the fifth graders, Hua-Mei usually played the role of an observer, documenting the parts where Shu-Yuan needed to be reinforced during her instructional practices or making suggestions of possible instructional activities to help Shu-Yuan improve her pedagogy. While Shu-Yuan was teaching Mandarin in front of children, Hua-Mei would sit at Shu-Yuan’s desk with a laptop, opening a document in the Google Docs Viewer, and typing her observation records on a keyboard. In addition to teaching Information and Computer Education, Hua-Mei collaborated with Shu-Yuan in the instruction of Mandarin, where Hua-Mei was responsible for one weekly period of composition.

Hua-Mei stated that the Mandarin proficiency of the students in Shu-Yuan’s class needed to be strengthened because she learned from the experiences of previous teachers that these students had little foundation in the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet and literacy when they began their Mandarin learning during the first two years at the participating school. Normally speaking, in her opinion, students of upper grade levels would be able to express their thoughts through writing well-organized short paragraphs or essays if they were familiar with basic vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns. Hua-Mei stated that she sought to increase the breadth of students’ knowledge in writing through the introduction of multiple sources, including the materials used for junior high school students. Some rhetoric terms which exceeded the level of fifth graders would be introduced and incorporated into the composition class if students showed no difficulty in

understanding them. Through the instruction of structuring sentences and paragraphs and the cooperation with the Mandarin teacher, Hua-Mei hoped that students' writing ability would be enhanced.

*Integration of physical movement and art.* Mandarin teachers, including Ju-Chao, learned to integrate physical movement into their curriculum designs. The circle time in the morning was introduced through a wide variety of activities, such as songs and bodily movement, to wake up children to prepare for the courses they would attend during the day. Ju-Chao explained:

We think most of these students need to keep doing something, not listening. So you have to give them a lot of physical things. There is no way they would sit over there. If they do so, they will be absentminded and in a trance.

In addition to physical movement, art instruction was introduced in the regular courses to enhance students' ability in reading and story-telling. Teachers would draw the content of stories on the blackboard and explain the stories in detail for children to present them through their own drawings. Ju-Chao said that students would be able to appreciate the essays visually when the essays were presented in pictures. To Ju-Chao, teaching Mandarin was a way to jump from the norm where students were to be compared through their grades and assessments, and to help children build not only the necessary core competence but also the confidence in learning.

### *International Culture*

*Flexibility.* Both Walis and Ms. Liu indicated that teaching International Culture allowed them to work with their students with great flexibility. Walis stated that it was a curriculum where teachers could design whatever could be applied to daily living for children to learn in English. Topics, such as boarding an airplane, ordering food in a

restaurant, eating at McDonald's, or table manners tips, could be integrated into the instruction of International Culture. English learning was not necessarily taught in a traditional way, such as memorizing vocabulary. Instead, English could be taught in a creative way to motivate children and help children enjoy learning English. The information Walis received from his supervisor was “no teaching materials assigned for International Culture and you can teach whatever you want to do.” Moreover, no grades were required to assess students, so he did not feel under any pressure at all in teaching this course. Ms. Liu also stated that the enormous flexibility of International Culture allowed her to develop her own curriculum.

The method for Walis to design his curriculum was to come up with a big topic and then smaller topics, which were later connected by several new words. He would prepare some sentences for classroom commands and introduce these new words through games or songs to his students. There would be no tests given to his students, so one easy way was to conduct a game of vocabulary or sentences to ensure they had learned the new words or sentences by heart. For instance, students could be divided into two groups and everyone was given a hammer to hit the vocabulary flash card pasted on the blackboard. Walis would tell students to imagine that they were big fish and wanted to eat something called *Cheese*. Students were supposed to hit *Cheese* rather than *Hamburger* or *French Fries* after hearing the command from their teacher. If they could hit the vocabulary flash card correctly, it meant they understood the meaning of the vocabulary represented by the flash card. The main purpose of all of the activities in his curriculum design was to stimulate his students in learning English rather than to cause them to fear English.



Likewise, Ms. Liu would teach children English songs and physical movement, focusing more on the content of international culture, where not only British or American cultures but also cultures of Africa, India, Egypt, and other countries were introduced. She would help her students know the daily activities of children living in the rest of the world because she believed most of the information that her students received on the outside world came from the mass media only, such as television, rather than from their autonomous reading of books or articles. Therefore, she hoped her instruction would bring a global view for her indigenous students, who had localized knowledge about international cultural exchange when living in the tribal community. In a lesson of teaching students how to make pyramids, she explained to them that the Egyptian language had been extinct because of its difficulty and could only be understood by a few archeologists. In another class, she would share with her students what she read about the language policies of some African countries, where English became the official language overnight so that these countries could increase the competitiveness of their citizens. Students would usually reflect on their own situations and experiences through the stories she recounted in the classroom.

### *Local Language*

*Insufficient time for instruction.* With the weekly 40-minute class of Local Language, all of the three teachers, Mr. Ma, Mr. Peng, and Ms. Sung, indicated that what they could provide for their students was extremely limited. For instance, Mr. Peng, indicated the weekly 40-minute class for mother language instruction was insufficient for children to acquire their mother language proficiency. To master a language, learners should speak as frequently as possible and immerse themselves in the language

environment. He suggested that children speak to their parents or grandparents in the family with the new words they learned from school. If they did not practice speaking their mother language at home, what they learned from school could be very little. Mr.

Peng stated:

After they have learned mother language for several years, they are not guaranteed they will be fluent speakers. A successful [model] of ethnic language instruction should be expanded to families, villages, and daily activities. You teach your children mother language for 40 minutes a week and they don't use it at home, their proficiency levels in it remain the same when they complete their education from elementary school, junior high school, to senior high school. They know a few words, phrases, and spelling rules. That's about all. They still make mistakes in word order. This is because they don't apply what they have learned to their families, villages, and daily activities. Also, the elderly never make the request to their grandchildren [to speak their mother language]. Even the elderly know how to speak Mandarin.

Mr. Peng continued to state that to master a language required one to practice it

frequently and to apply it to one's daily life. He stated:

You'd better speak your mother language at home with your parents or your grandparents. If you don't do so, it will be easy for you to forget what you learn. We have only one period a week. I teach them a new word this week and they forget it next week because they don't practice it at home. We are not like Mandarin, which has so many periods. Students study Mandarin in morning sessions, too. They study their mother language only one period a week, but they don't speak it very often at home. That's the reason why they don't learn a lot.

Mr. Ma adopted the textbooks compiled by the participating school for his students in fifth and sixth grade (see Figure 5). During his instruction, he occasionally wanted his students to correct those mistakes he found from the textbooks. He mentioned that some mistakes might not be noticeable to teachers who were not of the Atayal background. He stated:

The Atayal teachers often use those sentences in their mother language, so they know these nuances more clearly. If one or two sounds in a sentence are spelled differently, we will find it weird and won't be sure what it means. So, we will tell students to correct those parts.



Figure 5: Local Language (Atayal) textbook.

Because Mr. Ma had experiences in compiling the textbooks for the Atayal language, he was familiar with the compilation process, where traditional Atayal folksongs and church music were incorporated into the teaching materials designed for different grade levels. He said the mistakes in the teaching materials were only minor. There were many ways for him to understand students' proficiencies of the Atayal language through the use of the textbooks. He liked to ask his students some questions in Atayal or ask them to translate a sentence from the textbooks. After he completed the instruction of the vocabulary section, he would read the vocabulary in Chinese or pronounce the vocabulary in Atayal for students to spell out using the Roman alphabet. He stated it was almost impossible to teach students knowledge about mother language and indigenous culture within one period a week.

Similar to the instruction of Mandarin, teachers responsible for the instruction of mother language needed to teach students how to comprehend the selected readings rather than simply focus on how to read the vocabulary. Mother language teachers could have worked on many areas, such as sentence-making, vocabulary practice, or translation if they were given sufficient time to teach. Due to the time constraint, Mr. Ma stated that not everything could be taught within the limited amount of time. Therefore, he could only teach students how to read a paragraph and then explain the meaning of the paragraph for them. The main purpose of mother language instruction was to help students use their mother language in their daily lives, but it seemed to be hard to achieve this goal in reality.

*Teaching materials.* Although Mr. Peng was familiar with the indigenous language textbooks compiled by the Center for Aboriginal Studies, he preferred to design the teaching materials based on the needs of the students from different levels. In his opinion, teaching materials should be divided into several levels to accommodate the needs of children from different age groups, such as kindergarten, lower grades (first and second grades), intermediate grades (third and fourth grades), upper grades (fifth and sixth grades), and junior high school. Choosing materials designed for the children of specific levels would be easier for him in his instruction. He stated, “Sometimes it will take us so much time to design the materials on our own and they possibly will not be very well organized.” Due to the wide distribution of the Atayal ethnic group, the accent spoken in one region was not necessarily the same as that spoken in another region. He suggested that professionals from different regions, including the northern region and the

central region, should be recruited to compile teaching materials that could meet the specific needs of children.

Ms. Sung used the textbook compiled by the Center for Aboriginal Studies as her major teaching material, but she stated that there still remained significant space for its improvement, and it was important for a teacher to adopt other materials as a supplement to the textbook. To Ms. Sung, one of the difficulties in teaching at the participating school was that the distribution of the textbooks had been postponed ever since the semester started. Up to the time when the semester was about to finish, the textbooks had not yet been released to the students. Therefore, Ms. Sung thought that teachers needed to design their teaching materials for their students. What she liked to use in her classroom was conversational practice to encourage her students to speak the indigenous language freely. One of the teaching materials she liked to use was a book compiled by a retired teacher, who collected children's songs known to her students in terms of the melody they learned in music class. Sometimes she brought art and craft materials to class to teach students how to make weaving crafts and glass beads (see Figure 6) so that they would become familiar with the Paiwan equivalent terms for those indigenous handicrafts. For more advanced level students, she would introduce culturally relevant stories to help them understand the traditional Paiwan culture. She explained that the Paiwan could be divided into four classes of chiefs, nobles, warriors, and common people under the strict hierarchical system. The Paiwan civilization also claimed equal rights to both men and women. Therefore, the children in Ms. Sung's class could be instructed to participate in the cultural inheritance of their ethnic group. She stated, "Indigenous children need to know where they come from and to show concerns for their tribal affairs."



*Figure 6:* Weaving crafts and glass beads in Paiwan class.

Ms. Sung also liked to come into contact with English teachers in the hopes that they could support her indigenous language instruction with their extra supplementary teaching materials. The alphabet cards and flashcards used in English instruction could be easily adopted in her classroom to convey the similar spelling system and useful vocabulary. She even used some of the vocabulary flash cards in *Disney's World of English* as supplementary materials during the early years of her career as an indigenous language teacher. She stated that the privately-owned companies showed little interest in investing money in designing supplementary materials for indigenous languages when they considered the cost and profit. These materials could perhaps be designed and released by the government rather than the businessmen. She stated: "If we want to design the teaching materials for a total of 14 tribes in the country, we can include almost everything about the unique culture of each tribe. It would be awesome!"

*Classroom management.* Because both Mr. Peng and Ms. Sung were not the regular teachers and they came to school for their teaching only once a week, they

encountered some difficulties in classroom management. Comparing his teaching experience at the participating school with that at other schools, Mr. Peng stated that he had to shout and yell in the class sometimes because of the comparatively larger number of students at the participating school. Teaching at other schools was much easier for him because there were only two or three students in one class.

Mr. Peng stated that every indigenous teacher had a mission to devote what he knew about the mother language to his students. As a support teacher of mother language, he felt that he did not earn sufficient respect from his students. Moreover, indigenous children, in his opinion, were in general more outgoing and easier to be distracted. By asking these children to remain quiet, he would threaten them that their homeroom teacher might punish them to stand on the wall if they kept talking. He usually had to make effort to maintain the order in the classroom and this would make him feel rather exhausted.

Although Ms. Sung had a smaller class at the participating school, she was frequently bothered by the fact that students tended to forget to bring their notebooks and handouts to the class. She thought that notebooks were necessary for students to take important lectures and document the learning records for themselves. Parents were also able to catch up with their children's learning process from these notebooks and handouts, which could serve as a bridge for communication between parents and teachers. However, Ms. Sung was annoyed with students' frequent negligence in bringing their notebooks and handouts to the class. When students did not document and reveal their learning progress at school to their parents, it was difficult for parents to comprehend the instruction of teachers. She thought that it was essential for students to attend the class

with their notebooks because they needed to take notes to facilitate their learning. Although she met with her students only once a week, she was really frustrated with their forgetfulness. To provide students with teaching materials, she had to spend time making the copies of her handouts for her students repeatedly.

### Instructional Practices

#### *Mandarin*

*Meeting Children's learning preferences.* Shu-Yuan stated that it was more difficult for indigenous children to pay attention to her instruction than Han Chinese children did. Children at the participating school could be trained to sit in their seats obediently, but they would be absentminded while sitting there. She thought teachers should "follow the game rules of their students" and modify their teaching styles to match students' learning preferences. Most importantly, teachers should keep experimenting and revising their own instructional methods in a classroom comprised of students with different temperaments. Shu-Yuan further explained that everyone was presumed to have four different temperaments, including wind, fire, water, and earth, and some temperaments could be stronger than the others. Teachers with powerful fiery temperament might be easily irritated when they supervised different students in one class. She stated that some students might eventually obey their teachers. However, other students might not be willing to do so. She concluded that it was the teachers who needed to change themselves so that they could teach their students in accordance with students' inherent endowment.

Moreover, in the Mandarin class, Shu-Yuan discovered that her students were visual and auditory learners, who could hardly digest the Chinese characters that their



teachers forced them to study. Teachers insisting on teaching indigenous children in the way that they had learned from the educational institutions located on the plains would ask why these children had difficulty in understanding some simple questions and would definitely feel frustrated. To these teachers, Shu-Yuan suggested that they should design innovative ideas in their teaching. She mentioned a method of teaching idiomatic phrases appropriate for children in her class, stating:

Let me share with you a pretty good method I am using in my class now. My students, similar to African Americans, have great feelings for rhythms. After I ask them to circle the important phrases in the textbook, I will lead them to read from the first phrase to the last one. These phrases may be Chinese idioms or set phrases, containing two words, three words, or four words. I will demonstrate how to read these phrases with beats and rhythms for them. For instance, I will say, “*húlún | tūn- | zǎo- |--!*<sup>7</sup> *húlún | tūn- | zǎo- |--!*” My students enjoy reading phrases in this way. If there is no beat or rhythm in your demonstration, they will definitely fall asleep or lose their minds in class.

When she started to teach Mandarin during the first year, she recalled she had wanted to help her students to reach a certain level in mastering the usage of Chinese set phrases, comprehending the vocabulary and idiomatic phrases, and acquiring the proper stroke order of certain Chinese characters. She would use the teaching methods she had learned from her teachers in her class, hoping that her students would make great progress in their academic achievements. These teaching methods might be helpful to those who had already had the basic concept of the Mandarin subject, but they might be less helpful to those medium- and low-achieving students in the class. Shu-Yuan kept wondering why her students could not distinguish the difference between certain words, would repeatedly make the same mistakes in using the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet, and

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<sup>7</sup> The idiomatic phrase *hú lún tūn zǎo* (囫圇吞棗) literally means “to gulp down a whole date.” Its extended meaning is to swallow information without digesting it or to read an article without actual comprehension.

forget the Chinese characters that had been taught previously. Knowing that frustration could not be the solution to the problem, she modified her way of teaching for those students, helping them revise their assignments, lessening the amount of their homework loads, and encouraging them to speak up more in class.

Similar to Shu-Yuan's experience in teaching the fifth graders, Ju-Chao tended to help students acquire skills in using the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet and simple Chinese characters through the instruction of art and physical movement. She stated that teachers should help students carry out more physical activities rather than simply asking students to listen to long lectures. It would be an ineffective teaching for students if teachers kept talking and talking. One important thing for teachers to keep in mind in teaching indigenous children from remote areas was that they should keep their tempo constantly changing because children's advancement in learning did not progress speedily.

*Enhancing vocabulary and Chinese characters.* In order to help students build up the vocabulary, Shu-Yuan encouraged them to consult their dictionaries in the class through regularly holding the contests of dictionary consultation with some small tangible prizes. "I remember I have read an article somewhere. It seems to indicate that people are expected to learn 20% with their eyes, 40% or 60% with their mouths--exactly which percentage I forgot--and 80% with their hands," said Shu-Yuan. As a result, she hoped her students would strengthen the basic learning of the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet and increase the amount of vocabulary in the process of thumbing through their dictionaries.

Shu-Yuan would practice writing all the Chinese characters and search for the supplementary materials about the topic of the lesson before she walked into the classroom for her teaching. She said:

I usually go through every section I plan to teach, such as vocabulary, phrase-making, and Chinese set phrases so that I will know what problems my students are likely to encounter. Besides, I must study all the information in the teacher's handbook before class to get a general overview of the lesson content. My own feeling is that it would be a classroom model to appeal to students' senses of seeing, hearing, and feeling if I could successfully write the difficult characters on the blackboard, explain the key points to my students, and say something that touches their hearts in one class.

Shu-Yuan further explained that Chinese characters could be analyzed into different components. To facilitate the understanding of the formation of Chinese characters, she would draw students' attention to the radicals and the components that represented the phonological information. She would introduce some categories of Chinese characters, such as pictograms, ideograms, combined ideograms, and phonograms, and give students some helpful tips to relate the meaningful phonetic components to the identification of the whole characters. Bringing these fundamental principles to class would be helpful for her students to recognize and memorize the Chinese characters they learned.

*Reading Instruction.* An activity Shu-Yuan preferred to do in class was to encourage each of her students to read a self-selected book from the bookcase in the back of the classroom. When students finished reading one book, they would be given a yellow card. They could exchange a collection of ten yellow cards for a little prize with their teacher. Shu-Yuan explained that the purpose of reading activity was to help students develop reading habits. She was not really concerned with the types of books they read and how they read these books as long as they could maintain the habit of reading one book a day. Only when a few students claimed that they had read a surprisingly large

number of books a day would she check with them to see if they fully comprehended the book contents. Shu-Yuan stated:

Some students will come to tell me they finish reading 15 books a day. I will say this is unacceptable because they have only flipped through those books. . . . Some of the books in the bookcase are full of pictures. Others are simply written with words. I have found they often read encyclopedias for the love of the photos inside. I will gradually replace these picture books with the books of purely words. This is a trap I set!

She recalled her reading experience in the past when she read extensively the books or newspapers her mother had borrowed from the school library. She was never required to write essays or reports after finishing reading those extracurricular materials. She thought that to assign students to write their reflections in reference to the outside reading materials would only destroy their interests in reading. Therefore, her strategy was to help students get accustomed to reading books based on their preferences. Hopefully, the reading materials of this activity could be extended from books to newspapers if the vocabulary level in the whole class could be increased in the future.

Because there was only one class at each grade level, Shu-Yuan would have to observe the students at a lower grade level to roughly understand the learning outcome of those in her class. This observation would give her a general idea about whether her students fell behind in certain areas during the learning process. Shu-Yuan said she would design some activities to enrich her students' vocabulary and phrases because she felt there was a need for her students to strengthen these areas. Having completed the activities of circulating the important words and phrases and leading the students to repeat them with beat and rhythm, she would analyze the content of the article and summarize its main idea to help students gain a deeper appreciation of what the author tried to convey. Asking students to draw the lesson content on their workbooks was

another way to help students relate their understanding to visual representation. Shu-

Yuan stated:

There must be a true meaning in each lesson even though it is sometimes boring to the students. There was a time when my students almost fell asleep during the introduction of the lesson *Walden*. I thought to myself, No way! So I asked them to read the whole lesson again and to take their workbooks out of the desk drawers. . . . Then I asked them to start drawing the pictures about the lesson. I said, what is in your mind while you are reading this lesson? A moon hangs up in the sky? A man is fishing at the pond? What else is there by the pond? Perhaps some willow trees and a little fox? And a cabin built by the man?

She would demonstrate how to draw this picture on the blackboard while asking her students these questions. Initially, students might copy the teacher's drawing rather than develop their own imagery. However, they gradually developed their own way of representing the mental seeing and understanding about the lesson. Shu-Yuan believed that this activity was favorable for those lessons conveying vivid images and stimulating reflections.

### *International Culture*

*Stimulating interest in English.* Walis mentioned that the ideal instructional goal for him was to stimulate his students' interest in learning English. The flexibility with teaching International Culture allowed him to select any instructional materials which he thought might motivate his students and enhance their learning. He stated:

No teaching materials and examinations are required in the Activation Curriculum, so my students will not be evaluated based on the results of their examinations. . . . The moment when I went into the classroom, I told them not to have any pressure from this class. All I have to use is rewards, which have been enough to encourage their participation in the class.

Having read the books written by Ron Clark and watched the films about his story and his teaching on YouTube, Walis discovered that Clark's teaching style was greatly related to the learning style of indigenous children, who preferred learning through

singing, dancing, and playing games. Impressed with Clark's way of teaching, Walis decided to integrate these lively activities into his instruction of vocabulary and sentence patterns. To these indigenous children, Walis stated, "Learning English through the use of songs, chants, or games was to establish a point where they could remember what they have learned for their next stage in junior high schools." "We do not live in an English-speaking country, so we cannot expect our students to memorize every English word," added Walis. If Walis found his students repeatedly singing the song he taught in the class, he knew those words or sentences had started to be built in the minds of his students. He believed that the vocabulary or sentence patterns stored in their memory would be triggered and renewed when these children came across the same ones in their textbooks later on.

Walis reiterated that children might be most likely to internalize some vocabulary several years later after having been immersed in singing these English songs. When they were required to memorize some vocabulary in preparing for the entrance examinations during the years of their junior or senior high schools, it might occur to them that they had seen these words before. Walis described this process as word association, stating that it would be easier for people to learn something by heart if they could connect it with their memory. People would know how to read and pronounce this word even though they didn't know the meaning of the word. It would be a lot easier to comprehend this word after they consulted it from the dictionary. To these children, learning English through songs might give them some prior knowledge, which would be helpful to them in grasping the meaning of vocabulary in an article.

I really don't want the preparation for examinations to become the central focus of my class. The more they sing the song, the easier it will be for them to

memorize the lyrics. I only tell them the outline of the song, but not the meaning of each word. Do you know the special way that the children in Taiwan learn English? Whenever they are given an article in English, they will consult a dictionary immediately for an unknown word and write the Chinese equivalent under the English word. But English grammar and Chinese grammar are not exactly the same! Even if you write all the Chinese equivalents under all the English words in an article, the structures of those sentences are in the wrong order and are still incomprehensible to those children!

Walis said he did not want his students to develop this bad habit, so he only gave a general meaning of the song rather than asking them to memorize the meaning of each new word. He believed that it would be easier for them to learn the song lyrics for vocabulary if they were given enough time to learn how to sing the song.

*English singing contest.* Walis had started to lead his class to the preparation for the English singing contest of elementary and junior high schools in the east district since October. The English singing contest was one of the projects implemented by the local education bureau. The purpose of this contest was to motivate students in their English learning, to stress the importance on English pronunciations, and to offer opportunities for students to share their experiences with others through the activity of singing English songs. Walis selected *Seasons of Love* from the Broadway musical *Rent* for his students to practice singing. Downloading a song version without people's singing from YouTube as the accompaniment, he taught his students to understand the meaning of vocabulary, correct their pronunciations, improve their vocal skills, and prepare for a stage performance. The location frequently used for their practice was the auditorium on the first floor near the back entrance of the campus. A large projector screen on the wall showed the video clip with the original singers singing *Seasons of Love* on the stage for students to practice singing along with the melody. When the music was playing, Walis would establish a beat by clapping and pointed out some notes for his students to pay

attention to through a wireless microphone. Having practiced for a couple of weeks, the students in Walis's class won the Excellence Award and were chosen to participate in the English singing contest held at the county level.

Walis stated that he had not asked these indigenous children to sing and perform as professional singers during rehearsals. He also thought it unnecessary to ask students to have perfect singing skills, such as exact sounds and pitches. The teachers of other schools might place particular emphasis on students' stage clothes or properties, but this was not the emphasis of Walis. What he wanted from his students was to present this song in a natural, casual, but harmonious way. For the forthcoming singing contest to be held in less than a month, Walis intended to use the same song except that he asked students to deliver some English lines before and after the main singing part. Rather than choosing a few children who were good at English pronunciations, he opened up opportunities for those who were interested in speaking those lines. "If I choose those students good at English, the rest of students would think I pay attention to them only," explained Walis.

Walis created a short script for his students to keep in mind. To help students to have simulated experiences as if they were on the singing contest site, he asked his students to switch their practice location from the auditorium to the stage on the sports field. Walis explained to them what they were supposed to do; mainly, students could adopt different postures, such as sitting, standing, or kneeling, near the front part of the stage. One student would start with expressing his preference for *Seasons of Love* by saying, "I think the song we choose is very beautiful." The rest of the students on stage would wholeheartedly agree with him, saying loudly "Yes, you're right!" Then, another



two students would respectively mention that they knew how to sing the song, but they would sing it in an undistinguished tone. Their singing would be met with loud boos from their classmates. Next, it would be the turn of Wei-Wei, a lead singer in the class, who would draw the attention of the audience. “*In truths that she learned,*” sang Wei-Wei smilingly. His low sultry voice immediately was followed by a burst of applause from his classmates. The student that expressed his preference for the song in the beginning would remind everyone of the need to practice it at that moment by saying, “O.K. We have to stop now and get back to our practice.” Upon hearing this, all the students would unanimously stand up from their places and remain standing there for a few seconds until the music played. When the piano motif of the song began, they would return to the choir stair on the central part of the stage and begin their singing *Seasons of Love*. In order to help students become familiar with their lines in sequence, Walis asked the whole class to act out the short script in Chinese and to rehearse for the contest in English several times before they eventually appeared on the stage.

The final version of *Seasons of Love* in Walis’s class ended with the monologue of a girl who left the choir at the end of singing presentation, walked toward the front, and sat cross-legged on the stage. “What’s love? How can you measure love? No, you can’t.” The girl asked the questions to the audience and answered them by herself. Then, the boys and girls sang out loud together the theme of the song with some variations of the lyrics and the notes.

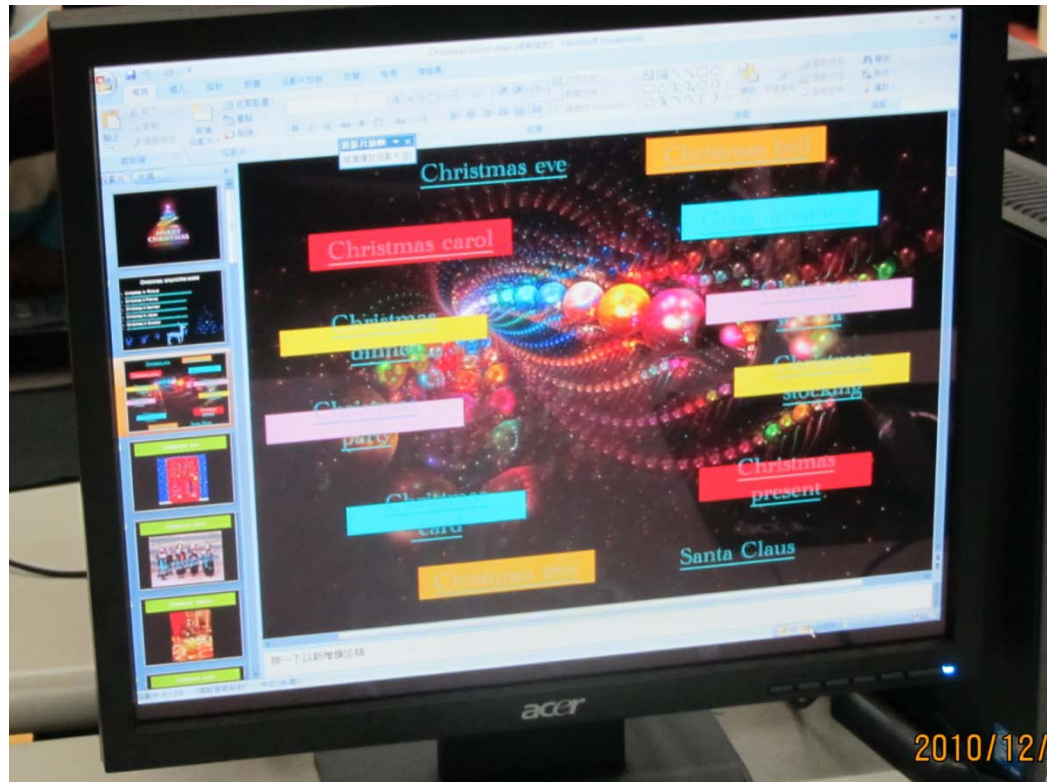
Boys sang:	Girls sang:
<i>Five hundred twenty-five thousand</i>	<i>Five hundred seasons</i>
<i>Six hundred minutes,</i>	<i>I’m lovin’ it.</i>
<i>Five hundred twenty-five thousand</i>	<i>Five hundred seasons</i>
<i>Moments so dear.</i>	<i>I’m lovin’ it.</i>
<i>Five hundred twenty-five thousand</i>	<i>Five hundred seasons</i>
<i>Six hundred minutes</i>	<i>I’m lovin’ it.</i>

*How do you measure Five hundred  
A year in the life? Seasons*

I met Wei-Wei on the stairs the following day and asked him the result of their singing contest. Although he was rushing downstairs, he replied to me with a radiant smile, “We won the first prize.” I later learned that they not only won the Excellence Award but also the Best Performance Award in this contest. For some time after the singing practice ended, I still heard him occasionally sing “*In truths that she learned*” during the break in Walis’s class.

*Theme teaching—Christmas.* One of the thematic units in Walis’s syllabus was Christmas traditions around the world, where he introduced Christmas in Finland, France, Germany, Japan, and Sweden. He conducted the first half of the unit in the computer classroom, where each individual student could watch the PowerPoint presentation linked to websites that showed Christmas traditions, parades, and markets in different parts of these countries with the explanation of both English contents and video clips (see Figure 7). The class began with the questions and answers between Walis and his students as one of the warm-up activities. He asked his students what they knew about Christmas by using interrogative sentences, such as “What is Christmas?” and “When is Christmas?” Many students shouted out their answers almost at once by saying, “A holiday on December 25,” “The birth day of Jesus Christ,” or “Happy moments!” Walis went on to explain:

We say “Merry Christmas” when we would like to give our blessings to other people. “Merry Christmas” means “Happy Christmas.” Christmas is a yearly festival, similar to the Mid-Autumn Festival or Dragon Boat Festival we have here. . . . Christmas used to be associated with a kind of religion ceremony for Christians, but it is more related to festive activities now. People have great expectations for the arrival of Christmas in December and tackle planning for its celebration.



*Figure 7:* PowerPoint presentation of Christmas vocabulary in the International Culture class.

Walis summarized the main idea from the English content in his introduction of traditional Finnish Christmas while waiting for the running of the video clip on line. He stated that families in Finland initiated preparations for Christmas one month in advance. Santa Claus was expected to arrive and to distribute presents to each family after the meal on Christmas Eve. Walis also added that people in Finland would bathe themselves in the hot springs during the Christmas evening and the hot springs were similar to those in the tribal community where he and his students resided. Santa Claus would visit every family during the evening as this was part of a Finnish Christmas tradition. On hearing this, a student immediately asked, “Is this a real story about Santa’s visit or a fantasy?” “Of

course! It is a fake!” said some other students. “A man will bring presents to the family, but he is not Santa!” corrected another student.

Students were quiet suddenly because the video clip of Christmas in Finland was finally able to be viewed. It showed a variety of dishes on the table, including ham, potatoes, salmon, rice porridge, turkey, and so on. Walis explained to the students that the members of this family on the video clip were enjoying the big meal for Christmas. Several students looked at the screens of their desktops with admiration and said, “How wonderful it is!” One student said, “How I wish this house were my home!” “Don’t you know I only eat instant noodles at home?” admitted another student to Walis. Without responding to this student, Walis kept explaining that “Sometimes turkey will be included in a traditional Finnish Christmas meal.” When they saw a child select a slice of Swiss cheese with his fork from a platter with pizzas, toasts, hams, cherry potatoes, and Swiss cheese passed by his mother, one girl shouted, “Oh! It is so disgusted!” Another girl confirmed to the rest of the students that what they had seen was a kind of food called “cheese.” A boy suddenly yelled with assurance, “Half of those cheese slices must have been bitten by a mouse!”

Walis obviously was not disturbed by students’ rambling comments on the content of the video clip during his lecture about the topic of Christmas traditions around the world. He continued to introduce Christmas markets in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. What was more appealing to the children in the classroom was the snow scene shot on a great lake with a boat berthed at the quay as the foreground. One student said to his teacher, “It must be fun in the snow!” Walis stated that “To foreigners, especially Americans, if there is no snow during Christmas season, Christmas won’t be like

Christmas. They think there should be snow at Christmas to get some Christmas atmosphere.” One student loudly interrupted, “We don’t have frost, not to mention snow!” To this lament, Walis said, “I had a conversation with Florence<sup>8</sup> yesterday. Do you know what people in New Zealand do during Christmas? They go swimming in the ocean!” A student asked why it was so. “It’s because Christmas season in New Zealand is summer,” replied Walis. He explained that due to the different locations of Taiwan and New Zealand, Christmas in New Zealand happened to be in the summer time and Christmas in Taiwan happened to be in the winter time. Having heard the teacher’s statement, a boy expressed his thought in this conclusion, “Our Christmas has always been in the winter time every year!” Another boy challenged his comment ruthlessly, stating, “Then when else do you think it can be?”

After the introduction of Christmas traditions in different parts of the world, Walis showed the next slide, where he planned to teach vocabulary related to Christmas. When giving his lecture, he liked to play some Christmas songs for the students as the background music. Again, he notified the students that it was unnecessary to memorize the spelling of these words. It would be great for these students if they could get acquainted with half of the vocabulary during the first class. There would be chances for these students to come across and review Christmas vocabulary later in their lives anyway. Therefore, he asked his students not to worry about the vocabulary part because most words were paired with the word *Christmas*, which meant the vocabulary lists were related to the meaning of Christmas.

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<sup>8</sup> Florence is a 20-year-old Korean, serving as an international volunteer from New Zealand for the participating school. More details about her will be described in the section of Language Resources in this chapter.

Walis used phonics to teach his students to recognize the letter that corresponded to the sound and designed colorful slides of vocabulary to enhance students' comprehension. In the instruction of *Christmas Eve*, he drew students' attention to the letter *E* from the word *Eve* through the use of his laser pointer and asked students to pronounce /i/. In the instruction of *Christmas Carol*, he drew students' attention to the letter *C* from the word *Carol* and asked students to pronounce /k/. Similar instruction also applied to the letters of *Or*, which should be pronounced as /ɔr/ in the word *Glass Ornament*. Although the same letter could sometimes represent different sounds elsewhere, he wanted his students to correctly master the pronunciation of the vocabulary he taught. The vivid pictures used in the slides helped students associate the images in the context with the definition of the vocabulary. The date of 24 in the slide which was used to teach *Christmas Eve* reminded students of the evening of Christmas. This slide, which showed the banquet—roast turkey, sausage, roast potatoes, etc.—was useful in teaching *Christmas Dinner*.

In addition to the 12 words Walis intended to teach for this thematic unit, he taught three sentences that were useful for students to learn as Christmas greetings, including: *Have a wonderful holiday season*, *Wish you a merry Christmas*, and *Wish you peace, joy and happiness*. Walis asked them to relate the word *season* to *Seasons of Love* they had practiced for English singing contest over the past few months. He broke the word *wonderful* into three syllables *won-der-ful* and used phonics in his instruction to help students understand the pronunciation of each syllable so that students could read the word out loud easily. Because the Christmas greeting in the last sentence incorporated three wishes, *peace, joy and happiness*, Walis asked his students to pay special attention

to the intonation in the English context, where a rising tone for *peace* and *joy* and a falling tone for *happiness* should be used. He demonstrated the intonation patterns several times until students mastered the fundamental skills in their utterances.

Similar to the introduction of Christmas traditions around the world, Walis sought to explain each word with a narrative that could help students connect it with their own personal experiences. He selected a girl as the addressee in the instruction of *Christmas card*, saying “Dear Lucy, Merry Christmas! I hope you will make steady progress with your schoolwork and find your Mr. Right soon!” Several students immediately said, “Wow!” Walis stated that people could always greet their friends through writing different messages in Christmas cards. Moreover, having taught approximately three or four words, he would review them through a strategy where he read the new word out loud and his students defined it in Chinese. He would conduct this practice several times until most of the students in the class could comprehend the meaning of the vocabulary with no difficulty. The reviewing process would serve as an adequate preparation for the hammer game, which was one of the activities to enhance the comprehension of the vocabulary.

When it came to the vocabulary game, students were so excited that they begged their teacher to let them join the game. Walis put the first six words he had taught in one slide and invited two students at a time to stand in the back of the classroom. After Walis randomly selected one word from the list and pronounced it, these two students were supposed to run from the back of the classroom to the front and whoever hit the target word on the projector screen first would be considered the winner. The tool that each student held with his hand used to be a yellow plastic hammer, but it could be replaced by

a computer mouse if the projector screen was not available in the classroom. Of course, the student that did the first hitting was not necessarily the one that provided the correct answer, but Walis would give him a second chance to review the word until the student could pronounce it with no difficulty.

Another way that Walis used to help students strengthen the vocabulary was to ask them to guess the meaning of the word when one of the students drew a picture representing the word on the blackboard. This activity of drawing and guessing was undertaken after Walis finished the second half of the vocabulary. It was more challenging to the students because they were supposed to guess the newly learned word in English by looking at the drawing on the blackboard. Some students tried to read out loud those words, but they obviously got stuck in the middle of offering their answers. Again, Walis asked the whole class to repeat after him to ensure that the students were familiar with each word's definition and pronunciation before and after this activity.

There had been an activity conducted at the end of every instruction section for Walis to know whether his students fully comprehended the content of his teaching. The slide following the exercise of Christmas greetings was a game activity that helped students practice speaking the Christmas greetings they had learned in the previous period. Walis asked his students to leave their chairs and form a circle. These students would start to pass a ball around the circle while singing a Christmas song. When they were told to stop singing, the one holding the ball should speak one of the Christmas greetings, and the two students next to him should keep turning around in their places until he finished speaking. Those who made three mistakes in total should be awarded "lovely punishments," announced Walis. Having explained the activity to the whole class,



Walis led the students to sing *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* and pass the ball to a student standing next to him. The ball fell off the student's hand and was picked up by another student. This student passed the ball immediately to the next one. The ball was passed faster and faster from one student to another when the speed of the Christmas song was gradually increased. All of a sudden, Walis said, "Stop!" A boy holding the ball confusingly looked at his teacher. Walis said, "What are you waiting for? Tell us a Christmas greeting!" Walis then pointed to the other two students standing next to the boy, saying, "Hey! You! And you! It's your turn to turn around now!" On hearing this, they started turning in a fast speed. He then turned toward the boy who had not spoken any sentence, saying, "You have to give us a Christmas greeting now! Otherwise, they'll get dizzy!" Looking at the slide on the projector screen for a few seconds, the boy finally squeezed a sentence, "Have a won--der--ful ho--li--day sea--son!" This activity stimulated students' interest in learning longer phrases within a limited amount of time and helped students develop basic expressions in the context of the Christmas season.

Walis asked his students to find a Christmas story from the resources in the library or the Internet, summarize the main idea of the story, and write down their thoughts about the story as one of their homework assignments. They were also invited to share their Christmas plans with the whole class through the pictures collected from newspapers, magazines, or the Internet. It would be fine if they would like to draw these pictures by themselves. Walis showed a slide of his Christmas plan as a sample for students' reference. In this sample Christmas plan, he proposed to decorate his house with ornaments of different colors, prepare Christmas dinner, sing Christmas carols, go to church on Christmas Eve, play in the snow, deliver Christmas presents with Santa Claus,

and throw a pajamas party. He encouraged students to be as creative as possible in designing their Christmas plans. When speaking of the pajamas party, Walis suddenly announced that he would like to invite the whole class to his house on Christmas Eve and those interested in enjoying a Christmas dinner with him should bring their pajamas or casual clothes for the party. Besides, three students would be selected and given mysterious presents for their innovative Christmas plans at the party. This announcement made the students feel so excited that they wondered whether they were the only class that was invited. When they received the positive answer from their teacher, some of them started to worry that they did not have any pajamas to bring to the party at all.

*Use of website materials.* In order to help the students build their background knowledge of Christmas, Walis prepared six Christmas stories, including The Birth of Jesus Christ, Christmas Tree, Christmas Carol, Christmas Wreath, Christmas Stocking, and Santa Claus. The source of these Christmas stories was mainly collected from the video clips of YouTube or the materials from some websites. Walis inserted these links or the materials into the slides so that it would be easier for students to watch the short film or read from the slides. Most of the slides contained information which was collected from the websites in Chinese, so it was useful for him to tell these Christmas stories based on the slides. If the video clips were presented in English, Walis would do the translation simultaneously while students were watching them. The Birth of Jesus Christ was the first story that students voted for Walis to introduce in the class. Walis literally translated the English language appearing on the screen into Chinese for his students, who had been familiar with the story because of their knowledge of Christianity. At the end of sharing Christmas stories with the students, Walis suggested that students

search for similar stories by themselves from the abundant resources of the websites, where some of the stories allowed people to share their religious beliefs or faith and other stories could be simply folklores or legends.

Walis was not heavily reliant on lesson plans in his instructional practice, such as when to engage students in warm-up activities, when to demonstrate language focus, or when to summarize the text, because he was concerned that the detailed description of the procedures for his creative teaching ideas would be restrictive. Instead, he preferred to outline an overarching structure for his presentation in the class, including when to design several subthemes under a major thematic unit, when to play video clips at the YouTube video sharing site, or when to introduce students to a number of interesting activities. To Walis, the Internet was a beneficial educational portal, from which he frequently obtained great information and ideas. He stated that he would bookmark the websites including some teaching plans or chants for later use. Integrating his own teaching ideas into web resources helped his students actively participate in the learning process.

The instructional practice in Walis's class included vocabulary instruction and the introduction of foreign Christmas culture, which was mostly obtained from Internet sources. The vocabulary instruction also extended to commonly used phrases or sentences appropriate for students to enhance their communicative skills. The introduction of foreign Christmas culture was to increase students' understanding of the background knowledge of the content so that the vocabulary or idiomatic expressions they learned would not deviate from the meaningful context. The plan that Walis designed for this course indicated that he intended to increase students' interest and ability in learning English as a foreign language through singing activity and instruction

of thematic units. During the whole semester, he led his students to become familiar with several themes, such as self-introduction, camping, popular music, and Christmas around the world. He also supervised his students in attending the English singing contest where they learned how to pronounce the song lyrics correctly and develop their listening comprehension so that learning English would not be considered a mechanical drill for rote memory, a method which had frequently been adopted in a non-English speaking country. Although there were no formative assessments used to measure the learning process of students, Walis encouraged students to write their own thoughts based on the articles that they collected from a variety of information sources, demonstrate creativity to develop their plans for celebrating a festival, and share their plans summarized in the sketchbooks containing their hand-drawn pictures and short compositions.

#### *Local Language*

*Vocabulary instruction and indigenous culture.* For children of lower grades, Mr. Peng preferred to teach vocabulary through the use of the pictures of animals and plants because he knew most of these children did not know how to speak their mother languages. He would also teach these children some simple sentences, such as *I am hungry, I want water, or I am ill.* He stated:

I can't offer them a lot because I'm afraid they won't be able to digest everything I've taught in the class. If you teach them a lot in one class, they tend to forget most of it because the next period for them will probably be Mandarin, plus they probably won't use what I've taught at home.

Therefore, the strategy he adopted for these children was to teach a certain amount of vocabulary, where he would make sure they understood the accurate pronunciation of the Romanized alphabet. Having reviewed the previous lesson, he would integrate a few more new words into familiar songs to inspire children's interest. One of the children's

favorite activities was the spelling contest, where he would divide the class into two groups according to sex. Both groups were supposed to write the alphabet on the blackboard based on the word Mr. Peng pronounced. For instance, he would say *bazing* (meaning *eggs*) for girls and *ngta* (meaning *chicken*) for boys in a loud voice and ask children to guess its spelling. Whichever group that came up with the correct answer would be considered the winner.

Then, a series of animation videos were displayed regularly for children to appreciate the mythology and ritual culture of each indigenous tribe. These animation videos depicting the Atayal verbal folklore or oral literature could help children significantly grasp the essence of the Atayal tradition. The meaning of facial tattoos, for instance, could be conveyed effectively through cartoons, according to Mr. Peng. "If you simply explain with your words instead of pictures, children will not catch the meaning," said he.

Another teaching activity Mr. Peng would adopt as one of the effective features in his instruction was field trips, where he would lead his students to a hillside near the campus. He would take this opportunity to help children identify the native plants, wild vegetables, insects, grasses, stones, and soil; teach them how to speak those corresponding words in Atayal; and review what they had learned in the classroom. He added that he could not go very far because he had to be mindful of the safety for his naughty students. These teaching methods also applied to the children of intermediate grades except that he would place more emphasis on the pronunciation of each letter. The differences and similarities between the phonetic symbols pronounced in indigenous

language and English would be further explained for students who had acquired some basic knowledge of English lest they should be confused with the two spelling systems.

Because the students of the first grade had not learned many Chinese characters, Mr. Peng would teach the mother language with the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet, which was concurrently instructed for the first graders in Mandarin class. He would deliver the verbal commands, such as *Stand up*, or *Sit down*, in Atayal to help students get accustomed to listening to these imperative sentences in their mother language. He would not start teaching how to combine the consonants and vowels until his students began second grade. In his opinion, the basic vocabulary of relatives, *yaba* (meaning *father*), *yaya* (meaning *mother*), *yutas* (meaning *grandfather*), and *yaki* (meaning *grandmother*), should be taught to the beginners. Other commonly used vocabulary, including the numbers from 1 to 10, body parts, natural objects, and animals, should also be taught gradually for the learners. Mr. Peng stated that children would be taught to practice speaking short sentences containing two words after they had mastered each single word. For instance, he would explain to his students that *agay* referred to *painful* and *balay* referred to *very*. Students would learn to speak *agay balay* when they tried to express *very painful*. These short expressions would serve as the fundamental patterns for children to practice conversation.

*Enhancing Students' Motivation.* Mr. Peng frequently encouraged his students to learn their mother language with effort because he believed it would be easier for them to learn other languages once they learned to speak their mother language fluently with flexible tongues. He would like to use his school experience in learning languages to give advice to his students, stating:

We may not be very good at such subjects as math or physics, but I believe we indigenous peoples have our talents in language learning. I used to encourage these children to master our mother language as much as they could. I said, "If you are proficient in your mother language, you may very well be mother language teachers or anchormen on television in the future! If Indigenous Television needs reporters to collect information in the field, you may interview people in your mother language. With your flexible tongues, it'll be easy for you to learn German or Spanish when you go into high school." My students would be stunned for a while as soon as they heard me say this. And then they would listen to me with silence. I have had this idea for a long time and this has been my personal experience!

Mr. Peng's positive school experiences in foreign language gave him confidence in the language ability of indigenous children. Although he met with his students only once a week, he was ready to offer his advice and encouragement whenever it was necessary. Thanks to the mother language instruction for indigenous children, the Romanized spelling system at least was not completely strange to them, according to Mr. Peng. He observed that some children knew how to pronounce in Atayal without understanding the meaning but some seniors used Atayal in the conversation without knowing its spelling system. "I happen to be situated between these two generations. I know both Mandarin and the Romanized alphabet. So my mission is much greater!" said Mr. Peng with a smile.

Ms. Sung suggested that teachers should design teaching techniques based on children's inherent qualities instead of traditional value judgment. Teachers could motivate children at young age through pictures rather than complicated characters to create visual association. To the first graders, listening practice was the major goal. Although Ms. Sung believed some words were impossible to pronounce with the assistance of the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet (MPA), she would choose the MPA as a basic writing system to help her students to become familiar with the pronunciation of

indigenous language (see Figure 8). It was not until children entered third grade that they would rely less on the MPA in recognizing indigenous language. Some students by this stage had developed the ability of comprehending the Romanized spelling system, so they could know where to mark syllables and read the manuscript she prepared out loud without difficulty. Because some words in indigenous language could not be completely represented by the MPA, Ms. Sung suggested that the MPA could be used temporarily for the beginners in indigenous language instruction and later it could be gradually removed from the instruction when the learners were more proficient in indigenous language.

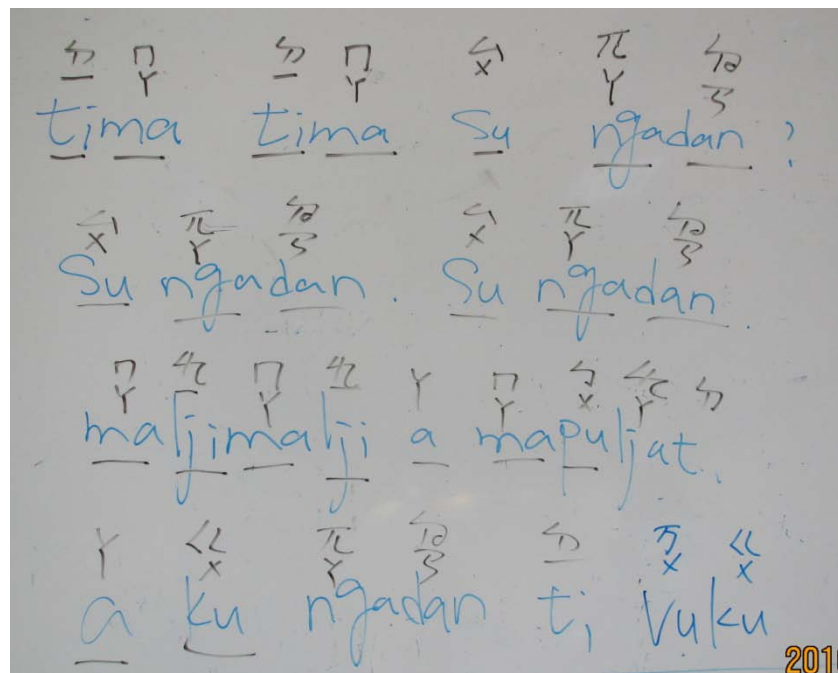


Figure 8: Teaching Paiwan with the assistance of the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet.

Ms. Sung would encourage her students to participate in the language contest to increase their confidence in the Paiwan language proficiency. The speech contest had been a type of language contest requiring that each participant should memorize three manuscripts and deliver his speech from one of the three manuscripts based on a lot he



chose during the speech contest. Because the requirement to memorize three manuscripts in the speech contest was challenging, children sometimes were not willing to participate in it. Ms. Sung usually had to communicate with children and their parents to obtain their consent to attend the speech contest. Ms. Sung was not especially concerned with which child would be the final winner since each representative was her student selected from different schools where she taught as a part-time indigenous language teacher. She believed that children would take great pride in themselves when they were selected as representatives. One disadvantage of the speech contest, according to Ms. Sung, was that children tended to memorize their manuscripts and forget them immediately at the end of the speech contest. Because children could not remember the meaning of the manuscript and apply its language usage to their daily lives, a recitation contest replaced the speech contest on the recommendation of mother language teachers. She thought every student would be a good actor, performer, or speaker as long as he was given a stage to stand on. She also believed that not only the administrators of a government agency but also indigenous peoples should take advantage of every opportunity to present and propose their unique language and culture. Taking part in the language contest was one way to achieve this aim.

### Language Resources

#### *International Youth Volunteer*

Walis stated that the school expected the arrival of international volunteers through a project implemented by the education bureau to assist English teaching in elementary schools in Taiwan. This project was put into effect in cooperation with an international student-run organization entitled AIESEC (Association Internationale des

Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales), where students might find opportunities for voluntary work abroad to develop themselves in a global environment. The education bureau of the local city launched this project in the hope that children in Taiwan could be connected with the world and endowed with a global perspective through their interaction with international volunteers. One advantage of this project was that these students and recent graduates from other countries would have numerous opportunities to share their background stories with local children and experience unique festivals and cultural events in Taiwan. Moreover, the purpose of this project was intended to increase the resources of English teachers at the elementary school level in Taiwan, to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas in educational resources, and to help children appreciate different cultures so that they would generate their interest in learning English and improve their English proficiencies in basic reading and speaking. It was the international volunteer whom Walis planned to invite to his class as the guest speaker.

In early December, Florence, a Korean-born volunteer from New Zealand, participated in the flag-raising ceremony taking place on the schoolyard with the students at the participating school. The principal tied an Atayal kerchief around her head to represent the friendly welcome from the school. A student representative gave a speech to welcome Florence as a member of the school and acknowledged her contribution to the school located in this remote area. Having made a brief self-introduction, Florence indicated that international volunteers were required to be prepared to face the challenges of different cultures and adjust themselves to different lifestyles in foreign countries. While this sounded to be the hardest part for international volunteers, many opportunities

were provided for them to gain global experiences and expand their knowledge of current events. She was pleased to have this opportunity to experience the Atayal culture in the community, and she also hoped that students could improve their speaking through frequently interacting with her. The whole ceremony during the chilly winter morning wound up with the song *Seasons of Love* joyfully presented by Walis's students.

#### *School Signs and Library Collection*

In order to help students acquire Mandarin, English, and Atayal, Mr. Chin stated that the school sought to establish a language learning environment where three languages were presented through school signs. "You have to take a closer look at the languages printed on those signs. In fact, there're three languages, not two languages. Atayal is spelled in the Romanized alphabet, so it is easily mistaken as English." The three languages were engraved on the wooden plaques hung at the entrance of each classroom indicating its function, such as 禮堂 (in Mandarin Chinese), *Auditorium* (in English), and *linhyanna qwasan biru* (in Atayal) (see Figure 9). Little colored stones were assembled to present *Lokah Tayal* (meaning Go Atayal!) as the decoration for the bottom wall of the stage on the schoolyard. In the fifth grade classroom where I observed, Shu-Yuan carefully pasted newspaper clippings and sentence strips in both Chinese and English on the front and back walls and doors. The major sources of the clippings were from those of Mandarin Daily News. The sentence strips, such as *What day is today?* and *It's Tuesday.*, were arranged as the content of the English Directory Assistance (see Figure 10). The books stored in the library were generally classified in accordance with the languages in which the books were written. The Chinese books were shelved based on their different categories, which were the major collections in the library. The English

books were stored on some other shelves for students' references. The Local Language textbooks designed for the instruction of different indigenous languages were shelved on one wall of the library. Mr. Chin stated that establishing a multiple language environment was an initial idea to help students to be exposed to some language input outside of their classrooms.



*Figure 9.* School sign (Auditorium) printed in three languages.

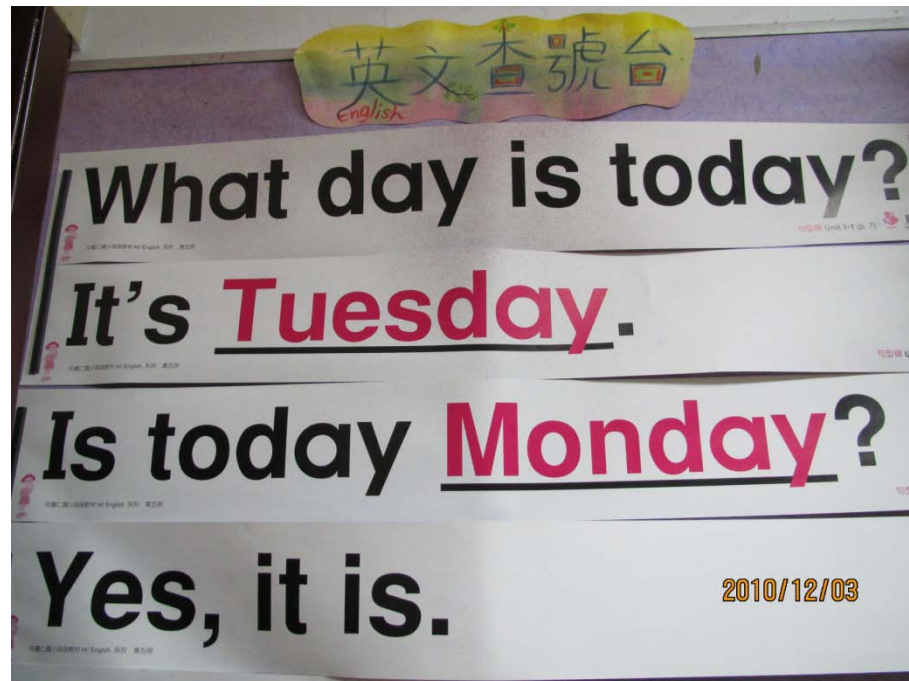


Figure 10. Sentence strips of English Directory Assistance.

#### *Mother Language Day*

The participating school used to proclaim every Friday as the mother language day, where an indigenous language teacher was invited to instruct some vocabulary or sentences during the flag-raising ceremony in the morning. Mr. Chin stated that teachers of non-indigenous background could take this opportunity to learn some phrases or sentences in Atayal. Short sentences and phrases were broadcast after lunch for students to practice conversation in Atayal. Some children were also invited to take this opportunity to speak and explain the sentences in their own mother language. Since the flag-raising ceremony was moved to another weekday, this activity had not been undertaken for some time. Mr. Chin pointed out that implementing the activity of mother language day might not achieve the intended result despite the fact that the initial purpose of Mother Language Day was to encourage people to speak their mother languages.

However, some teachers of non-indigenous backgrounds would probably speak Southern Min to each other because it was their mother language. Indigenous children would reply to their teachers in Southern Min if they could understand their teachers in Southern Min. Moreover, Mr. Chin stated that it was difficult to establish the context of the Atayal language for students. Because people were limited by their own mother language ability, they tended to repeatedly use those basic vocabulary and phrases in their greetings and conversations.

#### *Care Association for Indigenous Peoples*

The main task of this association was to use the after-school time to help students solve their problems with academic subjects, where English and Mandarin were included. The Care Association for Indigenous Peoples was mainly supported by a neighboring local church. Some of the substitute teachers at the participating school, also the members of a local church, were recruited to the care association to assist students with the homework from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on every Tuesday and Thursday. Mr. Chin said that he had partaken in the service of helping students study the academic subjects before more teachers were involved in supervising their students. The leader of the local church was willing to provide the teachers and students with the church itself as the location for students' after-school learning without any charge. In the past few years, some students at the participating school were sponsored to go to the neighboring countries for sightseeing during the winter and summer vacations. The most recent trip was to China, where students had chances to immerse themselves in Chinese language and culture.

### *English Express Wonderland*

English Express Wonderland was an English learning center launched by the local government to help students achieve the communicative ability in English. Assisted by the Adventist Education Holdings, the first English Express Wonderland was established on the site of an elementary school in the local county. Students could practice their English with American teachers through a five-day immersion camp, including pronunciation, reading, physical education, and mathematics in the morning, outdoor activities in the afternoon, and singing, dancing, and drama in the evening. Chinese teachers were invited to help students solve their problems with English. The fifth grade students at the participating school had attended this immersion program for three years. Students would be divided into four levels based on their English proficiencies. Mr. Chin stated that the students at the participating school had been placed at the middle two levels previously and were placed to the last two levels during the academic year when this research was conducted.

### *Indigenous Language Wonderland*

Similar to the program of English Wonderland, the local government established an Indigenous Language Wonderland at the other indigenous elementary school in the local township to help indigenous students experience speaking their indigenous languages and develop knowledge about their traditional culture. In addition to the integration of language education, cultural education, and ethnic education in the five-day camp, the teaching process emphasized the interaction among all the participants. Teachers responsible for the indigenous language instruction in the Language Nest, a project held by the government to promote indigenous language and culture, were

recruited to teach indigenous languages depending on students' different ethnic backgrounds. Mr. Chin stated that Indigenous Language Wonderland provided students with a language setting where they could experience speaking their mother languages through various activities. He hoped that students' exposure to mother languages would not be limited to their participation in Indigenous Language Wonderland. Family and community could play more important roles in helping students acquire their indigenous languages and cultures than an activity lasting for only a short period of time.

#### *Environmental Print and Language Use*

During the process of my data collection, I had opportunities to visit a Presbyterian church, a local church, the home settings of several participants, an indigenous village where students studying at the participating school lived, aboriginal shops on the main street, an Atayal museum, a public service center, and a community library. The majority of the environment print was presented in Mandarin Chinese with a few exceptions, such as the signs used to guide tourists to points of attraction on a bulletin board map placed next to the bus stop or the bilingual explanations of English and Chinese for the exhibitions of Atayal tradition and culture in a local museum. The presentation of the Atayal language was rarely seen because it had been an oral language for a long period of time.

The language used at the participating school was predominantly Mandarin, based on my observations on several occasions and events. While I was observing classes of different languages, students were especially interested in the digital recorders I brought to their classes. They often pointed to the three digital recorders on my desk and asked what they were for. Sometimes some of them would guess that these metal things in



rectangular shape could be cell phones, but they were immediately corrected by other classmates, who pointed out that these rectangular-shaped metal things were used for recording sound. In the fifth-grade class, students were taught to say prayers before taking their lunch meals. Students would wait in line in their classrooms to take their portions of meals from separate food boxes prepared by the school kitchen before they had their meals at their own desks. They were taught to express their thanks through singing and deliver their prayers to Heavenly Father before they started to have their meals. Because it was the fifth-grade Mandarin class where I began my data collection, I became familiar with several students, among whom Ting-Ting, a slightly overweight boy, was the one that seemed to be interested in where I came from, where I lived, and when I planned to come to his class for observation. He always approached me with a friendly smile and wanted to have a conversation with me. Children I met in the first-grade Mandarin class also told me how they liked the little lights and ornaments used to decorate the Christmas tree after I brought it from my home and set it up in their classroom weeks before Christmas. From my personal experience with talking to students, observing the conversations between students and teachers, or observing the conversations among students, Mandarin seemed to be their first language.

The language outside of the school context was mainly Mandarin as well, except in a few locations, where not only Mandarin but also indigenous language was used. For instance, in an indigenous village where I interviewed Mrs. Hsueh, a 75-year-old grocery store owner, I was able to meet with pre-school children, elementary school students, parents, grandparents, and adults. One young grandmother even voluntarily tried to translate some parts of the answers provided by my participant for me when she

overheard the conversation between my participant and me. This was because some of Mrs. Hsueh's Chinese was hard for me to understand. People came to the grocery store to make phone calls or purchase candies, bottles of millet wine, and other miscellaneous items. During school hours, I often found one or two school-aged children staying at home. Mrs. Hsueh would ask them in Atayal why they did not go to school, and these children would reply to her in Mandarin. Pointing to a group of men and women who stood chatting with each other outside her grocery store, Mrs. Hsueh said it was interesting to see them talk in Mandarin Chinese simply because one of the conversation group members was not of indigenous background. I also heard people greeting and speaking to each other in their indigenous language. A mother interested in my intent of visiting this village approached me. I found later that she was actually a Southern Min even though she was able to speak fluent Atayal. She explained that she acquired the Atayal language after moving to this tribal community because of her marriage to an Atayal man. My impression with the language use in this indigenous village was that the majority of the adults still maintained their indigenous language and frequently used it in their daily lives.

#### Professional Development

The majority of teacher participants in this study received their bachelor's degrees relevant to either their professional fields or the basic practical knowledge of teacher preparation. Some of the teachers were working on higher degrees or seeking to enrich themselves through continuously reading articles or books regarding new knowledge in teaching strategies. The two support teachers of Local Language, Mr. Peng and Ms. Sung, were also able to receive regular training in indigenous language instruction to enhance

their professional development. In the following, I introduce the workshops based on the experimental project, and peer observation feedback, how teachers enhanced their practical knowledge through their efforts in improving their professional backgrounds, and workshops for Local Language teachers.

#### *Experimental Project Workshops*

Since the multiple intelligence experimental project was implemented at the participating school, a series of professional development workshops had been conducted to provide ideas for integrating multiple intelligences into curriculum design and instruction. Lecturers were invited to share their ideas with teachers about various topics, such as language curriculum theory and practices, teaching method through visual arts, teaching reading and the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet through multiple intelligences, and incorporating art into indigenous instructional activities through multicultural education. A study group was formed to help teachers become committed to studying assigned textbooks, through which they would learn how to modify their teaching methods depending on students' different learning styles and their physical and mental development. The topics that the textbooks covered included incorporating multiple intelligences into teaching and learning, assessment, students' achievement, instruction and leadership. Teachers became more capable of inspiring children's learning interest through creative and artistic activities, such as book discussion, role playing, and reflective drawing based on students' personal life experiences.

#### *Peer Observation Feedback*

Teachers were also expected to observe, document, and report their students' unique characteristics in regular meetings so that they would know how to facilitate

effective strategies for classroom instruction through collaboration with their partners. An observation teacher was assigned to Mandarin classes to document students' learning process so that the teacher responsible for the instruction was able to help each student learn his less skillful subject through his own strength. Shu-Yuan, the fifth-grade Mandarin teacher, thought the feedback from her observation teacher was extremely beneficial to her because the constructive comments would point out the parts where she needed to explain more, keep track of whether students were attentive to her lecture, and provide her with suggestions to improve her teaching techniques. In a document where the observation about her Mandarin classes was recorded, she was provided with suggestions, including how she might ask students to pay attention to the section that she was explaining by pointing to it with their hands, offer helpful advice to students who practiced making sentences, encourage students to express themselves through positive feedback, and praise her students without simply giving the same adjective phrase, such as "Very Good." Therefore, Shu-Yuan was able to reflect on her instructional practices based on the feedback provided by her observation partner. Through the cooperation between the observed and the observer, teachers were able to understand their own teaching strengths and weaknesses, and they could find the possible ways to solve the difficult problems arising from the process of teaching.

### *Self-Learning*

Shu-Yuan always sought to find ways to improve her instruction through learning from books or people that could enhance her teaching. She was especially interested in learning innovative strategies to help her improve teaching and designing instructional activities. Shu-Yuan was quite confident in the instruction of Mandarin, thinking that

teachers would be capable of teaching Mandarin if they worked hard in preparing their lessons. To Shu-Yuan, the examination-oriented way of traditional teaching was not typically difficult because the main emphasis in class was to give students as many drills and quizzes as possible. Teachers following the traditional teaching methodology did not always encourage students to engage in various activities, not to mention inspiring students to express their ideas through drawing in the Mandarin classes as she did. This traditional teaching methodology was not the one that Shu-Yuan intended to apply to her classroom, so she would take every opportunity to gain new ideas to improve her professional development whenever she was available. Because the participating school usually provided teachers with seminars every Wednesday afternoon, during which teaching strategies from different learning areas would be shared, she often paid attention to the lectures presented by other teachers so that she could review the teaching techniques she had learned before and adopt some new ideas to enrich her teaching content. Attending the courses offered by the local bureau and reading the books related to pedagogy also helped her comprehend the emphasis of a teaching process and teaching techniques. Shu-Yuan revealed that she was reading a recently popular book entitled *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire: The Methods and Madness Inside Room 56* written by Rafe Esquith, from whom she was especially interested in knowing how the teacher successfully implemented his teaching methods and philosophy to inspire students to learn actively.

Walis, responsible for International Culture, also devoted his spare time to studying for his teaching career. After Walis completed his substitute military service, he resumed his teaching profession at an indigenous elementary school where he previously

had worked as a student intern. Having worked there for one year, he was employed concurrently as a substitute teacher and as the chief of student activities section in Yulung Elementary School. One reason for him to consider moving to the participating school was due to his need to attend the evening classes for TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) at a downtown language institute. Yulung Elementary School was obviously a better choice for Walis in terms of the shorter distance to the downtown area. Walis explained that one needed to pass the Teacher Selection Examination (TSE) in order to become a formal teacher, and eligibility for attending the TSE required one to hold a teacher certificate, along with a TOEFL score that reached a minimum level. Some workshops or seminars held for the purpose of enhancing teachers' professional development were restricted for formal teachers rather than substitute teachers. When the school received the documents indicating the announcements of the workshops or seminars, it was usually formal teachers that would be contacted for their willingness to attend. Walis knew this very well and indicated that the priority goal for him to work for his teaching profession was to become a formal teacher as soon as possible so that he would be offered the opportunities of teacher training commonly reserved for formal teachers. Moreover, Walis developed his long-term plan of studying either abroad or in Taiwan for his master's degree of English Instruction, where he believed he would receive better training in English teaching and knowledge in language development and learning. Studying for the TOEFL was an adequate preparation for him to achieve his major goal.

### *Indigenous Language Professional Workshops*

Becoming a qualified indigenous language teacher required one to complete a 36-hour professional workshop, in addition to successfully passing the PTIL. This professional workshop held by the CIP provided an opportunity for those who passed the PTIL in the area of indigenous language instruction. Different professional workshops might include indigenous language teaching methodology, development of indigenous language materials, indigenous language and culture, compilation of indigenous language dictionaries, and computer multimedia applications. Some advanced professional workshops, such as technique for indigenous language translation, technique for indigenous language questions setting, and indigenous language news editing and broadcasting, were designed recently to enhance indigenous language teachers' professional knowledge, curriculum design, classroom management, and professional development.

As a native speaker of the Atayal language, Mr. Peng found it interesting to attend the workshop in reference to indigenous language syntactic structure for his professional development. He said that he had not understood that verbs were placed in front of subjects in the structure of his mother language until he learned it from the linguistics instructor in the workshop. "Strictly speaking, we had never received any formal training in education or curriculum design. We only know how to speak and read our language. We teach our kids based on our learning experiences," said he. Thus, the knowledge of its syntactic structure was helpful to him in understanding what he had taken for granted. Even though he was able to converse fluently with others in Atayal, he was interested in knowing how to explain some grammatical terms, such as patient focus and agent focus.

He picked up a textbook he used in the professional workshop from his baggage and pointed to a section on one of the pages, saying that “You see! I want to know what these terms mean!” He would also like to know why some conjunctions needed to be placed after verbs in some cases. “I’ve found I know how to use it, read it, and make a sentence, but I don’t know how to explain it,” said Mr. Peng. Although he had completed two 36-hour workshops so far, including indigenous language writing systems, which introduced some knowledge about syntactic structure, and indigenous language translation, he showed a great interest in learning the structure of his mother language. He stated:

I’m not interested in how to set questions or compile teaching materials. I really don’t have enough time for those things. What I need is something like syntactic structure. . . . I want to know what my teacher is talking about and what those proper nouns refer to. I’ve found I know how to use them, but I don’t know how to explain. I attended the classes with other indigenous language teachers and the funny thing is we didn’t know how to speak our language when we returned home. We became afraid of making mistakes and then we found it unnatural to speak our language.

Sometimes children would ask him why some sentences were formed in certain ways. To these questions, all he could suggest was to ask his students to repeat after him in the class. He thought it was acceptable to teach and learn the language in a natural way; that is, without deliberately figuring out the rules of language. However, it would be more helpful to his instruction if he could better understand and explain the structures of his mother language in syntax and grammar.

Ms. Sung, born in a Paiwan village located in the eastern part of Taiwan, had served temporarily as a Japanese teacher in a language center and a tour guide of a travel agency before she decided to take the PTIL. She stated that the initial purpose for her to take the PTIL was to examine her own proficiency level of the Paiwan language rather than to be an indigenous language teacher. While she was preparing the PTIL, she found



many of the phrases and idioms that she used to speak were gradually remembered. Ms. Sung recalled that her friends in the indigenous village were surprised at hearing the result of her passing the PTIL because she had been living away from her village for a period of time. Even though she successfully passed the PTIL, she had no intention of becoming a mother language teacher.

She explained that people passing the PTIL had not been qualified to teach their mother language yet. They had to attend a workshop offering a total of 36-hour training courses to receive a certificate in professional development. Only people with both the proof of indigenous language proficiency and the certificate were eligible to teach the subject of mother language in school. The certificate of professional development in teaching mother language, to Ms. Sung, was “like a license for you to keep for future use.” She was immediately recruited to teach at an elementary school when she became a qualified mother language teacher. Starting from there, she continued to teach at several other elementary and junior high schools in the urban area while attending follow-up training classes in teaching materials and methods. Because she thought teaching Paiwan was similar to teaching English in terms of designing strategies and activities, through which students were motivated to learn how to speak both languages, she even attended several workshops designed for English language teaching and adapted those innovative ideas for her classroom instruction.

What challenged an indigenous language teacher was, according to Ms. Sung, that he or she would be expected to teach not only indigenous language but also indigenous culture, which included such classes as drama and dance. She stated:

It is hard to be an ethnic language teacher nowadays. You have to learn many things that you have never touched upon. People always think an ethnic language

teacher can do anything. It is wrong! I often tell them an ethnic teacher is responsible only for the language part. Drama and dance are not included in our knowledge domain. But sometimes we have to teach the aspect of culture. . . . You then have to force yourself to learn these things. Take me for example. For my part as an indigenous person, I know nothing about singing. But I force myself to be an all-dimensional teacher. Although I haven't got one hundred percent to this point, I did try to play a number of different roles in my teaching career.

Fortunately, Ms. Sung stated that more courses with different areas of emphasis were available for indigenous language teachers so that they could select these courses based on their preferences to improve their professional development. She said:

Courses in the professional workshop have been improved a lot. They used to be combined together. Now similar courses are grouped into one category. If you find you need to enhance any part you are not familiar with, you can have more choices. If you would like to learn how to be an anchor, there is a course ready for you! If you are interested in learning the traditional music and dance for indigenous peoples, you'll have this opportunity to learn it!

As an indigenous language teacher, Ms. Sung stated that she still continued studying for a certain number of hours annually. She believed that a teacher needed to constantly absorb new knowledge of teaching methods and reflect upon the instructional practice commonly used while working with students. Simply focusing on teaching without acquiring new instructional techniques would make teachers stressed and exhausted. Therefore, a teacher always needed to find the balance in terms of his time devoted to teaching and self-learning.

### Summary

The findings indicated several factors influencing the implementation of the language education program. From the aspect of curriculum design, the language education program at the participating school was designed in accordance with the mandated curriculum guidelines. Teachers had the flexibility to deviate from the prescribed curriculum guidelines, and modify their curriculum plans based on students'

needs and classroom schedules. Teachers of Mandarin and English were free to select textbooks published by textbook publishing companies and were provided with supplementary materials to facilitate their teaching. However, the Local Language teachers mostly used their self-made teaching materials due to the late arrival of the textbooks and the shortage of the supplementary teaching materials designed for different age groups.

From the aspect of instructional practices, Mandarin teachers helped students relate their comprehension of essays to visual representation and integrated art and physical activities into their teaching. The International Culture teachers stimulated students' interest in learning English through teaching songs and the cultures of the English-speaking countries. The Local Language teachers tended to teach indigenous languages through group competition, animation videos, and field trips.

From the aspect of language resources, the international youth volunteer was invited to assist students' English acquisition. A language learning environment printed with Mandarin, English, and Atayal was established to familiarize students with three languages through school signs. English Express Wonderland and Indigenous Language Wonderland were efforts from the local government to help students experience learning English and indigenous language respectively through a five-day camp.

From the aspect of professional development, teachers were able to attend seminars on language curriculum and theory and were assigned observation teachers to give constructive feedback. Teachers were also eager to improve their instructional strategies through self-learning. To enhance the instruction of Local Language, teachers were provided with a wide variety of professional workshops in reference to indigenous

language and culture, indigenous teaching methodology, and indigenous language materials.

This chapter reported and elaborated on the findings of the research gathered from the eight language teachers and the two administrators. The findings were presented through the aspects of curriculum design, instructional practice, language resources, and professional development to answer the second supporting research question in relation to the factors facilitating or hindering the implementation of the language education program at the elementary level for indigenous children in Taiwan. The next chapter presents the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members on the importance of the language education program and indigenous language instruction.

## CHAPTER VI

### PERSPECTIVES OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM

This chapter presents the findings in relation to the perspectives of the language education program based on the interviews from teachers, administrators, and community members in order to answer Research Question 3: What are the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members on the importance and implementation of the language education program? The first section of this chapter also presents the portrait of the township where Yulung Elementary School was located and the background information of the community members. To protect the privacy of participants, pseudonyms have been used for all locations and individuals. The emergent themes, including views toward language education program, observation of language loss, views toward indigenous language education, and strategies in promoting indigenous language, are presented in the rest of the sections.

#### Wagi Township

Wagi was a township located in the southernmost part of a county in the northern part of Taiwan. It consisted of five indigenous villages, where the population of the indigenous peoples was approximately 2,600, constituting roughly 45% of the total population in Wagi. Most of the indigenous peoples in this township were of the Atayal ethnic group. The Atayal students from these indigenous villages constituted the majority of the indigenous students at Yulung Elementary School.

Wagi, famous for its environment and natural resources, was a popular area that attracted many tourists traveling from its neighboring cities. It was a point of attraction during all seasons, where visitors could view cherry blossom in the spring, camp by the brooks in the summer, embark on a maple tour in the fall, and bathe in hot springs in the winter. Most of the residents in the local community near Yulung Elementary School earned their living from tourism because of the natural hot springs. Other tourism-related businesses included selling traditional Atayal handicrafts, and managing restaurants and guesthouses (Chang & Yu, 2003). Few of the indigenous people actually owned these commercial stores although they had once owned the land where these stores were established. Due to the lack of business and managerial skills, most of the indigenous people sold or rented their land at a low price and became simply the employers of these tourist companies (Lin, 2005).

In recent years, Taiwan began to import foreign workers due to their comparative advantage of cheap labor. This policy, designed to enhance the economic development in Taiwan, had caused unemployment problems for indigenous people, who mostly received inadequate education and had to enter the labor market. Most of the labor forces returned to their indigenous villages from urban areas after the employment opportunities were reduced. All they could do for a living was the odd jobs with irregular payment in the community. Excessive alcohol use, drug addiction, and juvenile deviation were problems commonly seen in the villages when these indigenous people were in an economically disadvantaged predicament (Chen, 2001).

*Information of Community Members*

Through the referral of Mr. Chin and some of my participants, I contacted the following community members and obtained their consent to assist my research through interviews. All of the community members were of the Atayal background and two of them were born during the rule of Japanese regime.

*Pastor Chung.* Pastor Chung was a retired pastor of a Presbyterian church located in another indigenous village in this township. He studied at the Fan Children Education Center from Grade 1 to Grade 4 during Japanese colonization. The frequent air raids in the war forced him and other schoolmates to quit studying when he was a fourth grade student. When Taiwan was returned to the rule of the government of the Republic of China, he began to have opportunities to know some other Han Chinese, from whom he learned Southern Min. It was not until Grade 6 that he started to learn the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet and Chinese characters. During his third year as a junior high school student, he quit his schooling due to illness. The traditional aboriginal methods of healing people, such as seeking help from gods, were not effective. Gaining help from a theological student preaching the gospel in his village led him to believing in Christianity. Having graduated from a Bible institute located in northeastern part of Taiwan, he was appointed to work in the Presbyterian church of his village, where he served as a missionary and later a pastor for thirty-eight years. The damage to his optic nerve started to weaken part of his vision when he reached the age of 30. Twelve years later, he was blind. Although the visual condition in his life frustrated him physically and spiritually, he continued to maintain independence as much as he could through adapting his daily activities.

*Mrs. Hsueh.* Mrs. Hsueh had received Japanese education before she was a second-grade student. She started to learn the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet in the third year of her elementary schooling when Taiwan was returned to the rule of the government of the Republic of China. Later, she met some soldiers from Mainland China stationed in the vicinity of the indigenous village to help build public facilities. From these mainlanders, she learned how to speak Mandarin. It was hard for people to make a living after the end of World War II, as Mrs. Hsueh recalled. Due to the insufficient food supply, she quit studying at the elementary school so that she could help her mother clear the lands on the mountainous areas for cultivating yams, taro, and millet. When she was seventeen years old, she moved from a nearby village to marry her husband and raised four girls and two boys, along with numerous grandchildren. There was no difficulty for all the family members to communicate in Atayal when they were together for celebrating festivities.

*Ms. Liao.* Ms. Liao had been working as an indigenous language teacher for 15 years while serving as a nurse at the participating school. She was involved in the compilation of textbooks for indigenous language instruction with other Atayal teachers. As she recalled, the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet was used as the phonetic symbols to represent the indigenous language during the initial stage of compiling textbooks. The Romanized alphabet was adopted later as the representative phonetic symbols. Having retired from the participating school, she continued to teach a number of preschoolers indigenous language at a neighboring nursery. According to Ms. Liao's experience in indigenous language instruction, students usually had a great interest in learning their mother language at the initial stage, but they would lose their interest if they were taught



grammatical structures. Therefore, Ms. Liao liked to design instructional activities to engage her students to learn how to express their daily routines in indigenous language.

*Pastor Shih.* Pastor Shih, born in the northeastern part of Taiwan, was a resident pastor of a Presbyterian church located in one of the indigenous villages near the participating school. The church where Pastor Shih served was founded in 1947 and was regarded as a relatively large church in the community in terms of the population of the believers. Before he was entrusted to be in charge of this church in 2007, he served at different churches, including a church in Japan where he spent seven years helping people from China to know more about Christianity and another church located in a remote aboriginal community in Taiwan. Pastor Shih used Atayal and Mandarin to preach Sunday sermons or deliver messages in the Bible Study and Prayer Meeting to accommodate seniors and young people.

*Mr. Tung.* Mr. Tung graduated from a national university in Taipei with a master's degree in Ethnology. He had worked at the participating school as a teacher and the director of student affairs before transferring to a neighboring indigenous elementary school as the director of academic affairs and later the principal. He was temporarily employed by the township office as an indigenous language instructor and worked in the education advisory group for indigenous peoples as a research fellow. Being a local Atayal resident for more than fifty years, Mr. Chang was familiar with the Atayal language and culture. He worked as the director for the preparatory office of a local Atayal museum, helping compile several Atayal instructional materials and writing animation materials based on stories from Atayal folklore.

*Mr. Wu.* Mr. Wu, serving as a research fellow of plant biology at a national university, was the former chairman of parents' association because his children had been enrolled in the participating school. He was an assistant of a county representative and the director of Care Association for Indigenous Peoples in the community. He had also been involved in the afterschool program held at the local church for some time to help students improve their academic subjects. Mr. Wu was sent to a neighboring city for his elementary school education under the care of his grandmother even though Mr. Wu's father was the principal of an indigenous elementary school in a remote area located in western Taiwan. Mr. Wu explained that it was because his father wanted his children to receive better educational resources in that city. He learned to speak Atayal, his mother language, during the years when he lived with his grandmother.

#### Views toward Language Education Program

##### *Environment, Time Allocation, and Teaching Techniques*

Shu-Yuan thought it possible to learn multiple languages only if learners could be exposed to the setting in which many languages were spoken. She used English teaching in her class as an example and stated that the English teacher felt frustrated with her students' learning of the vocabulary from *Monday* to *Sunday* because it took these students approximately one month to become familiar with these words. According to Shu-Yuan, part of the reason was that English was spoken only within the context of the classroom and the instructional time reserved for this English teacher remained only two periods a week. If people were given the environment similar to Europe, where Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, and English were spoken, she believed that they could learn these languages as fluently as people living in Europe. Moreover, she thought the way

teachers instructed the languages had a great impact on the language learning of students. If teachers knew how to teach their lessons interestingly, demonstrate their teaching skills successfully, and manage their classes effectively, they would be great language teachers no matter what languages they taught. There should be a tacit agreement between teachers and students in terms of classroom management. Students would understand what their teachers tried to express through the speeches, signals, or gestures. Due to the lack of mutual understanding between teachers and students, she found that the knowledge of some teachers could not be transmitted to their students even though these teachers received excellent training in their professional development. Environment, time allocation, and teaching techniques were factors that had a great impact on students' learning in the language education program.

When asked whether she felt the instructional time allocated for Mandarin was insufficient, Hua-Mei thought it acceptable for fifth graders to have five learning periods of Mandarin because Reading Guidance and Advanced Reading would make seven periods in total for these students. She believed that other subjects, such as Social Studies, could also enhance students' reading ability and literacy.

Ju-Chao's central educational idea in her role as a Mandarin and homeroom teacher was to find possibilities within the educational system. She stated that every teacher claimed their instructional time was compressed, but she would suspect whether it would be better for students when more instructional time was allocated to Mandarin.

She stated:

Sometimes I don't think the Mandarin instruction is simply teaching ㄅ, ㄆ, and ㄇ, or one stroke after another. Students can have many other practices. For instance, you can speak standard Mandarin to students, which I think is very important! When you distribute food to children, you can tell them the names of different

vegetables or soups. When children say “*Thank you!*” to you [with an accent of indigenous language], you can say “*Thank you!*” to them [with the correct intonation]. These examples are related to life and life is part of the curriculum.

In her opinion, policy referred to the thought and action of policymakers. What she could endeavor was to find possibilities within the constraints of policy. If insufficient time was allocated to Mandarin, she would incorporate Mandarin into daily school activities, one of which was the morning circle activity.

*Similarities of Phonetic Symbols and Instructional Approaches*

Walis mentioned that one’s first language might influence his second language acquisition based on the theory he learned from linguistics. Because some of the phonetic symbols representing the pronunciations of English and Atayal were similar, this sometimes caused confusion among the children learning these two languages. Children tended to pronounce Atayal in the same way as they pronounced English, but they forgot that some phonetic symbols in one language should be pronounced differently in the other language. Walis explained, “For instance, in English, the letter *c* in a word is sometimes pronounced as /k/ or /s/. But the letter *c* in our mother tongue should be pronounced as /tz/.” He recalled that another phonetic symbol easily confusing the learners was the letter *t* because it should be pronounced as /d/ in Atayal rather than /t/ in English. According to his observation, children learning these two languages simultaneously might not be able to distinguish the different pronunciations represented by some of the phonetic symbols in both English and Atayal. In order to help students figure out the different systems in pronunciation and thereby become proficient in different languages, he concluded that constantly practicing the target languages seemed to be an effective solution.

Because Walis also partially supported Atayal instruction in the junior high school, he expressed his view about teaching the Atayal language to me during the first interview. Walis stated that there had been no writing systems for aboriginal languages, including the Atayal language. Thanks to the missionaries in the past, aboriginal languages were preserved through the use of the Romanization system. The missionaries thought it important to establish writing systems because children were able to learn their mother tongues through these writing systems. Walis pointed out that more than half of the Romanization symbols were pronounced in the same way as the Atayal language. Having learned English for a period of time, he found the similarities between them and believed that the Romanization system was helpful to the learning of the Atayal language, especially in terms of its pronunciation. Even though people did not understand the meanings represented by the Romanized symbols, Walis asserted that they should be able to master the pronunciation of the Atayal language without any difficulty because the process was similar to pronouncing phonics. People might make some mistakes in accentuating syllables, but they would eventually be on the right track if they received the correct instruction.

In Ms. Sung's opinion, English and ethnic language could be instructed simultaneously without difficulty in the language education program. As a practitioner teaching ethnic language, she believed that it would be acceptable to teach English and ethnic language concurrently, saying:

I never give up the idea that English can be related to ethnic language in some way in terms of teaching. I am even thinking that if I pick up an English book and translate its content into ethnic language, I am sure children won't feel alien to it. I really hope so!

Likewise, Walis thought that his background in Language and Literacy Education could be applied to the instruction of different languages. If he had a strong foundation in English instruction, he could apply the teaching skills in English to indigenous language instruction in terms of the similarities in language teaching methodology. Unfortunately, there was no quota for indigenous language teachers to receive formal teaching positions within the educational system.

Nowadays, indigenous language instruction is mostly taught by tribal elders. They don't have any background knowledge on linguistics or teaching materials and methods. The only teaching method they use is, "Come! Repeat after me!" Or something like that. But children will get bored with this kind of teaching and they will lose their interest in learning the language. If you have some background knowledge on education, teaching materials and methods, or linguistics, and you know how to stimulate the learning process of children, it will be easier for these children to enter the place where you try to lead them to. It requires techniques and methods to reach this stage.

As an Atayal, Walis felt responsible for stabilizing his ethnic language and improving his teaching skill in the Atayal language. However, there were few teachers that could demonstrate effective teaching strategies of the Atayal language. In contrast, he found that English teaching was so popular on the island that many TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) training institutes would provide him with the most updated information on English instruction. These helpful tips in English teaching could be easily applied to indigenous language instruction.

An English teacher I know of is a formal teacher at one elementary school in Nantou. She used to apply all the techniques she had learned from English teaching to indigenous language instruction. And what she did was a great success! Whenever a workshop or seminar related to indigenous language instruction is held, she will be invited [to Taipei] to give a talk in one of the sessions. This is a teacher who understands the instructional techniques of indigenous languages very well, but it is unlikely that I can keep learning from her all the time.

Walis restated that his professional knowledge would be developed if he could spend two or three years specializing in English Instruction or TESOL. Once his professional knowledge was established, he could apply it to indigenous language instruction.

*Viewpoints on Multiple Language Learning*

Ms. Sung stated that she, along with other language professionals, had been invited by a public television program to present her viewpoint about children's learning multiple languages. She observed that there seemed to be considerable pressure for children who were required to learn many languages and children seemed to be less attentive to their ethnic languages. This attitude also applied to the Hakka language and Southern Min. In contrast, most parents value English because they viewed English as a language beneficial for their children's future employment and better working environment. Ms. Sung felt that these parents tended to place great emphasis on learning English.

She also observed that the comparatively lower level of Mandarin proficiency among students did not result from being required to learn the two subjects, ethnic language and English, in the language education program. She stated that children in general did not give a satisfactory performance in Mandarin writing because of spending too much time on computer rather than studying ethnic language and English. She commented:

I don't think studying ethnic language or Southern Min for one period a week would influence children's Mandarin acquisition. The interference may mostly come from the outside, such as the computer. It's the virtual world they choose to live. After all, there is only one period a week for mother language class!

Mr. Chin thought that Mandarin undoubtedly was a basic language to learn in terms of its importance as an official language for every citizen. Although English was

helpful for students to gain international exposure, he believed the experience of indigenization was more important than that of internationalization to the children living in this community. According to his experience, most children would return to this community because of the affiliation to their ethnic group and hometown when they completed their education. The job opportunities that this community could offer them were related to tourism business due to the involvement of the community in indigenous tourism. He said:

In the beginning, most tourists were from Japan. Later, we found more people visiting this area were from mainland China. To be honest, visitors from Europe or America were very few! So, I used to speak to my students that “you’d better try to master English in order to help you better communicate with tourists from foreign countries.” Then, they would reply to me: “There is no use speaking English here because the visitors are mainland Chinese or Japanese.” True! This is what my students consider in terms of the reality. Judging from the future practicality, Atayal is more useful than English to them because the indigenous language is definitely much more appealing to tourists than English.

Shu-Yuan thought the most important language for school children should be their mother language. “If they don’t speak their own mother tongues, they will be disconnected from their ancestors and they won’t be able to communicate with their grandparents,” said she. Shu-Yuan hoped that children would at least understand their grandparents when they heard their grandparents speaking to them in Atayal. She commented:

This situation is similar to the younger generation of the Hakka or Holo backgrounds. Some of the children can comprehend their mother tongues, but they can barely speak the languages. Of course, the ideal situation is that children can comprehend their mother tongues and speak the languages with no difficulty. So, I think one’s mother language should be ranked as the most important language for children to learn in the language education program.

Even though students needed to learn Chinese language because “we are the people involved in this [mainstream] culture” and learn English because “we want to make



friends with other countries,” Shu-Yuan thought the mother language and its culture was interrelated. “And once you lose your culture, it can never be restored. So culture is your root!” She was pleased to see the government start to pay attention to the education of mother language.

As an Atayal teaching Mandarin composition for fifth graders, Hua-Mei thought that English was much more important than one’s mother language because of the need of English as a common language for communication in the larger context in the next 10 or 20 years. English was needed especially in Yulung area because English could be a language used to communicate with tourists. Although she was not an expert in English, several friends of hers, who were also indigenous peoples, were proficient in English, which brought many opportunities for them to exchange their experiences in ethnic awareness with some aboriginal groups in other countries.

In Walis’s opinion, one’s mother language, which was Atayal in his case, should be secured and taught first because speaking a mother language was related to the awakening of one’s ethnic consciousness. He described how he grew up without mastering his mother tongue in the following.

In the beginning, my mom and dad spoke to me in our mother tongue and I replied to them in Mandarin. When I grew up, they were used to my speaking in Mandarin and started to speak Mandarin to me directly.

There were still some opportunities for him to use his mother language to this day.

Whenever his mother spoke something in Atayal, he would respond to her in Atayal if he knew how to. Otherwise, he would simply answer in Mandarin.

Whenever my mom wants to reprimand us, she will use her mother tongue. She is extremely good at using her native language [whenever she gets angry]. Sometimes when she asks us to fetch something for her, to go for a meal, to take care of my brother, or to say something she doesn’t want other people to know,

she will use her mother language, too. As a matter of fact, there are still some chances for me to practice my mother language except that these chances become few now.

Unlike his mother who knew how to speak Atayal as well as Mandarin, Walis's grandmother had been unfamiliar with Mandarin before Walis was enrolled at the elementary school. He stated:

My grandma didn't know how to speak Mandarin when I was little, so she kept speaking her mother language to me. This turned out to be the opportunity for our mutual learning. When she spoke to me in her mother tongue and I replied to her in Mandarin, I kept improving my listening comprehension in our mother language and she kept improving her listening comprehension in Mandarin. Finally, her ability in Mandarin became better and my ability in Atayal is limited to listening. My speaking was not as good as my listening because I didn't have much time practicing my mother language. Why did my grandma speak fairly good Mandarin? It was because she had too many grandchildren. Not only did she have to speak Mandarin to me, but also she had to speak Mandarin to other grandsons and granddaughters. . . . Why did we speak our mother tongue poorly? It was because we had to go to school. In fact, we spent most of our time studying in schools and speaking to each other in Mandarin.

From Walis's standpoint, he thought that his mother language should be listed as the priority language for school children to learn. The next important language would be Mandarin because it was a necessity for everyone living in Taiwan. The least important language was English because it could be considered a personal interest for which one could learn English anytime at a later stage or to be a language competency which might be helpful in promoting career success.

However, judging from the general use of a language, Walis thought that English would be much more important than the mother language because English was still considered a language for international communication and competition enhancement. "If there were foreign guests visiting your school and you had a good command of English, you would be assigned to receive them and it would be natural for you to be highly

regarded by your principal or director,” said Walis. Considering the fact that English could bring real benefits in workplace, he would rank English as the second important language for people to learn. Moreover, the Atayal language spoken by Walis could be divided into two major dialects, Squliq and C’uli’. It was the former that Walis used to communicate with his family members. Walis stated that the Atayal language could further divided into several language systems depending on its distribution among different regions. Because of the differences in dialects, people of the same Atayal background could barely communicate with each other. Unless he happened to meet people of the same backgrounds from other tribal community, he would not have real communication with them or put his ethnic language into use. “To speak the truth, the only time I use my ethnic language is limited to the time when I am in the village,” confided Walis. The mother language would be placed as the least important in Walis’s view in terms of its actual use for the need in a larger context.

Pastor Chung thought that mother language and Mandarin were both important to children because children mastering these two languages could serve as translators between people in his generation who were proficient in mother language and those who understood simply Chinese. If the elders encountered some phrases or sentences that they were unable to express in Mandarin, children would be able to translate them into Mandarin. Likewise, if the elders needed to figure out the messages that children brought from school, children could also translate these messages for the elders in the family. With regard to English, he knew from television and radio that many parents would send their children to kindergartens to learn English because of its importance as an international language. However, he was worried that learning English at a young age

would interfere with the acquisition of both Mandarin and indigenous language. He recalled his experience of language learning during the period of Japanese colonization, mentioning that he had to obey the regulation that Japanese should be used as the main language in school and Atayal should be used at home. Considering the importance that Mandarin was an essential language for education and mother language was indicative of the heritage of indigenous peoples, he thought English probably could be learned later through a language setting where people could use it naturally to communicate with each other in their daily lives.

From the perspective of ethnology, Mr. Tung stated that ethnic language should be ranked as the topmost language for indigenous peoples to learn. However, young indigenous people in contemporary Taiwan tended to speak Mandarin rather than ethnic language because it was convenient to communicate with each other in Mandarin wherever they went in their daily lives. Even tribal elders in the community were forced to speak Mandarin to young children, who communicated with their teachers and classmates in Mandarin in the kindergarten during the day. Mr. Tung reiterated that “Children don’t even understand their grandmothers who start to speak in their indigenous language. So even grandmothers have to accommodate these children with their broken Mandarin.”

Ms. Sung thought that Mandarin was the most fundamental language for people to learn, ethnic language was the mother language, and English was a foreign language for personal need. She stated:

From the viewpoint of practicality, Mandarin is an essential language and we must learn it. . . . English can be learned at a later stage. Some people can still learn to speak fairly good English when they are older. But if you don’t learn the

basic ethnic language when you are young, it will be impossible to learn it when you grow up.

She indicated that people were not able to preserve their mother languages in the past because of the lack of a standardized writing system. However, thanks to the orthography designed by the professionals in linguistics, Ms. Sung thought that people needed to make an effort in preserving their mother languages through frequently contacting the elders who could still speak their native languages fluently. She stated:

Some elders still know different tenses, such as present progressive tense, future tense, and past tense. I was shocked, too! I only discovered this when I came to this field. It was so beautiful! These elders still use these phrases, such as *I eat, I am eating, I have eaten*. I thought *I eat* had included everything. There used to be no writing systems for these elders! How marvelous! They are such wise men!

Mr. Peng thought that each language required for children at the elementary level to learn had its specific purpose. Mandarin was required because the content of each subject was taught in Mandarin. English was a language used to raise the nation's competition in a global market. Ethnic language should be preserved for every ethnic group because it was a heritage that needed to be passed down to the next generation. He reiterated that mother language should be learned naturally rather than analyzed grammatically and indigenous children should speak and practice their mother language more with their parents at home.

In Mr. Peng's opinion, the most important language for indigenous children was ethnic language among the three required languages because only when indigenous peoples identify with their own languages should they claim themselves as indigenous peoples. Mr. Peng stated, "Unless you give up your claim that you are one of the indigenous peoples, you may not be entitled to identify with your ethnic language. Don't claim yourself that you are of the indigenous origin while you don't speak your own

language. Isn't that absurd?" Mandarin was ranked as the second important language because "it was the national language and used to teach every subject." "If my children were born in the United States, I might probably think English should be listed as the next important language after Mandarin because all the content knowledge is instructed in English," said he. In terms of English, Mr. Peng said:

I will rank English as the third important language because it is a world language. If a child goes abroad in the future, he can communicate with not only Americans but also Japanese or Koreans in English. Once there were a couple of Japanese teenagers coming to our church. We communicated with them in English, using some vocabulary plus body language.

Although each language was ranked based on its importance from his perspective, Mr. Peng stated that "all of them are, as a matter of fact, equally important."

Interestingly, Mr. Wu, an Atayal who had been the chairman of parents' association at the participating school, seemed to hold a somewhat different viewpoint from those of other participants, believing that all languages should be learned as naturally as possible and thus adopting English as a major communicative language in his family between parents and children. He stated that using English to communicate with his children was not an intentional decision but something natural. According to Mr. Wu, English seemed to receive much more attention in his family than the rest of the languages, which was probably related to his experiences with his temporary involvement in a research team in some European countries. In his opinion, English was an instrumental language after all for mutual communication on the global platform and the indigenous language was one of the mother languages more related to the local area.

### Observation of Language Loss

Mr. Chin stated that the Atayal language was mostly used among the seniors rather than the young people in the community. The parents at the participating school, some of whom had been his students before, hardly spoke the mother language during the time when they were students. These parents basically did not have much difficulty in listening, but it was hard for them to speak the language. In his opinion, language learning usually included four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning indigenous languages required one to be able to understand the Romanized spelling system through reading and even to spell the words out by using the Romanized alphabet. To be able to achieve these skills would be hard for the learners. According to Mr. Chin's observation, most of the young people understood the mother language spoken by their grandparents, but Mandarin was still the major language for people to communicate with each other in their daily lives.

When asked about her observation of students' use of their mother language, Shu-Yuan indicated that her students spoke the Atayal language only on some occasions. For instance, they would express their pain by saying "agay! agay!" when they fell down. They would say "t-h-moq! t-h-moq!" when they would like to go to the restroom. She explained:

In fact, they do not speak their mother language fluently. Even those who are in their thirties or forties do not speak their mother language fluently, either. Only those who are in their fifties and above know how to speak Atayal well. . . . According to my observation, the reason why some children can speak better Atayal is that they quit their studying after graduating from junior high schools and stay in their tribal community for a long period of time.

Mr. Peng also observed the loss of mother language among the children in the community. He revealed that he had not thought it important to teach the children in the

community their ethnic language. Nor had it been necessary to encourage the indigenous peoples to become seed teachers to promote their native languages as long as they could speak and use them. He said:

I used to be surprised at such a job as teaching ethnic languages and think it ridiculous why ethnic languages needed to be taught! They should be the languages you communicate with your fathers and mothers in your lives. [I wondered] how our mother languages would be taught. When I came to school, I realized many kids didn't speak our ethnic language. Our government wanted to promote this task because we rapidly lost our mother languages. If you take a walk in this community, you'll find children gather together, speaking Mandarin everywhere.

According to Mr. Peng, some parents born in the early 60's could still speak their mother language and some parents born in the late 60's would know some vocabulary but occasionally make the word order mistakes in their speaking. However, parents born in the 70's or later could seldom speak their mother language. Mr. Peng commented, "If parents did not know how to speak their mother language, how could you expect their children to speak it?" Some children raised by their grandparents might be able to speak their native language to some extent. "They may know some simple vocabulary and understand what others are talking about. But they are not fluent speakers and they also make mistakes in their speaking," said Mr. Peng.

Mr. Peng continued to state that some parents of the children in his generation deliberately spoke Mandarin rather than their mother language at home in order to hasten the Mandarin learning of their children. These children later received more formal education, but they could not speak their mother language very well. In contrast, those who did not study as hard as the above-mentioned children stayed in the tribal community with other indigenous peoples, so they could use their mother language more



fluently. Mr. Peng concluded that “Children seldom speak their mother language nowadays. And whenever they speak it, they speak as if they spoke another language.”

The loss of the mother language was also indicated in the interview of Mrs. Hsueh, a grocery owner in the village. She observed that children who lived with their grandparents were more capable of speaking their mother language than those who did not live with their grandparents because these children did not have chances to learn from their grandparents. She stated:

When we finished cooking, we would want everybody to come to the table to eat together. We asked our great-grandchildren to fetch us some bowls and chopsticks in Atayal. They would keep saying something like this, “What did you say?” I would say to them, “You go to school to learn Mandarin, but you need to learn your mother language when you return home.”

There were four generations in Mrs. Hsueh’s family because they tended to marry when they were young. According to Mrs. Hsueh, the generations of her children and grandchildren were still able to speak their mother language. However, her great-grandchildren, who were enrolled in the participating school, could barely speak their mother language.

To the current situation of the Atayal language, Pastor Shih appeared to be somewhat pessimistic. He stated:

The [Presbyterian] church is a church that ministers to predominantly Atayal congregations in this community. If the church does not maintain [Atayal] any more, I think, from my pessimistic point of view, the Atayal ethnic group, which I mean the next generation of young people, will not be able to speak it at all. . . . The present teenagers will become parents one day. At that time, I doubt how many of their children will still speak the language. . . . The spelling system of the Romanized alphabet that children learn from schools is only for ordinary conversation but not for the real life. If you touch upon something deeper, they may not be able to understand it. This is how I see the language situation today. . . . How sad it is! This is the failure of our past educational system!

Pastor Shih suggested that the government should keep in mind what language could be considered fundamental, what language could be considered secondary, and what language could be learned later on in planning and designing the language education program for students at the primary level. He believed that all parents would be willing to bring up successful children in every aspect. Most parents might think it important to follow the trend in learning international language but neglect their mother tongue because the latter was restricted to a relatively small domain in its use. In his opinion, an indigenous person with a strong belief should realize that every language was a gift from God and it was his duty to treasure and preserve his mother language. "Culture exists only through language. That's why people stress the importance of saving indigenous language. If one day our ethnic language disappears, where will our culture exist?" he stated. Under this circumstance, the indigenous culture would be no more than a collection of artifacts exhibited in the museum.

Walis thought it was environment that had a substantial impact on the gradual loss of his ethnic language. If one was determined to master a language, he had to be exposed to the environment where he could practice it with other people. If the tribal elders could communicate with their grandchildren in their mother language only rather than Mandarin, Walis believed the younger generation of the indigenous peoples could make a considerable improvement in listening or speaking the mother language. "Look at those uncles or aunts of 40 some years old. They speak Mandarin all the time. Everybody is essentially communicating with each other in Mandarin," explained Walis. It seemed unlikely that a minority language could be maintained in an environment where people did not have the opportunities to practice.

He also noticed a phenomenon where the ethnic language gradually declined from the previous generation to the next generation. For instance, people in the generation of Walis's grandmother and mother spoke Atayal. Then, people in the generation of Walis spoke the language containing the mixture of Atayal and Mandarin. When it came to the generation of Walis's first-grade brother, these children spoke Mandarin only. "This is very interesting! The lower the age level is, the less percentage it is for people to speak their mother tongue," commented Walis. Even though he was determined to learn his mother language, he was faced with several barriers. He recounted:

Take me for instance. It was not until I was a college student that I gradually became aware of the issues related to ethnicity. It's kind of late for me to start learning my mother language. The reason why I am not very proficient in it is that many things have been bothering me and I can't fully concentrate on learning it. Besides, if I still live in this community, I will have many opportunities to learn my mother language. But if I pass the teacher selection exam and am given a chance to teach in a school located in a plains area, I won't be using it that much because I will be living outside of this community.

With regard to this, Walis seemed to be pessimistic about the destiny of his mother language by stating:

We lack of the environment for maintaining our mother tongue. There is nothing we can do. Our language is destined to gradually disappear in the sweep of history. It seems to be a tendency by nature! . . . Everybody will finally become monolingual, speaking only his national language in his country.

#### Views toward Indigenous Language Instruction

##### *Learning Indigenous Language in a Family Setting*

In the Local Language course, the participating school not only invited an Atayal teacher to accommodate the needs for the majority of the students from the Atayal background but also recruited a Paiwan teacher to assist the learning of a few Paiwan students. To this arrangement, Shu-Yuan thought it was helpful because the need of each

individual child could be taken care of. However, she thought that local languages should not be instructed as courses for students to learn because students could not learn their mother languages faster out of their school contexts. She recounted:

When I was little, I used to live with my grandfather and my grandmother, who spoke Southern Min to me all the time. We would never treat Southern Min as a course that we had to study. When I was a college student, I took *Materials and Methods for Local Language Teaching*. In this course, we were supposed to learn Southern Min through Romanization symbols, which was extremely hard for me! Nowadays they [indigenous children] also need to use Romanization symbols to learn aboriginal languages, so I said to myself, “It must be really hard for indigenous children to learn their mother tongues!” In fact, I think what school can do is very limited. Elementary students usually stay in school for seven or eight hours a day. When they return home, they cannot get access to the language they learn from school. I think whatever the school tries to advocate is in vain.

In Mrs. Hsueh’s opinion, children needed to practice more with their family members, especially the elders, to enhance their acquisition of mother language. She always felt pleased to listen to children speaking their mother language in the family and willing to help children practice and correct some of their pronunciations. She stated:

The little kids came home and wanted to practice with me what their teachers taught in school. They started to count the numbers, such as *qutux* [one], *sazing* [two], *cyugal* [three], *payat* [four], *magal* [five], *tzyu* [six], *pitu* [seven], *spat* [eight], *mgeru* [nine], and *mopuw* [ten], and then they asked me whether they were right or not. I said, “I am so happy to know you can speak our language!” I asked them what else they learned and they said, “*pira kawas su?* [How old are you?]” They said *pila* rather than *pira*. I would correct them because *pila* would mean *money*.

Because children would sometimes mispronounce the vocabulary that their teachers taught in school, she suggested that family members had better review the lessons for children so that children could enhance the learning of their mother language.

The best way to teach indigenous language, according to Pastor Chung, should be instruction within the family. Parents should seek every opportunity to communicate with their children in their mother language at home. He recalled his experience in learning his

mother language, stating that “We used to sit beside our parents when they spoke the mother language to us. It was natural for us to learn it without difficulty.” The instructional time for children to learn their mother language was limited to one class period a week. To this, he said that “Children would easily forget what they learn in their mother language classes because they would also need to study other subjects, such as Mathematics or Mandarin.” Children tended to lose their interest in their mother language because they needed to start from the beginning and review their lessons each week. Therefore, in his opinion, family should be the best location to instruct indigenous language.

### *Cultural Heritage*

The more Mr. Peng devoted his time to teaching his mother language and exploring his ethnic culture, the more he was concerned for the indigenous children in the community, where most of them could barely speak their native languages. To him, this assimilation of the community resulted from the influential culture of the metropolitan area located within a reachable distance. Worrying that the loss of the indigenous language for children seemed to be inevitable, he discovered that his occupation as a mother language teacher became all the more important. He stated:

If our children don't know how to speak our mother language, how can we claim we are indigenous peoples? Look at the indigenous peoples in food, clothing, housing and transportation. Every aspect in our lives is the same as that in the city. There're so many vendors here! What we eat and what we use are no different from what the people eat and use on the plains! The only thing different is language. If our language is assimilated and no longer spoken by our children, what stance will we stand to claim we are indigenous peoples except our blood? We almost forget the essential language and culture of our own.

Since the restoration of Taiwan from the Japanese rule, the area where the community was located had been specifically developed for the tourism business because

of its popularity for sightseeing. Mr. Peng recalled that his parents, who had received Japanese education, helped their Han Chinese employers sell *omiyage* (meaning souvenirs in Japanese) in the store and they had to communicate with the tourists from Japan in Japanese. Having been brought up in this environment, Mr. Peng acquired some Japanese as well as his mother language from his parents. Mr. Peng also remembered the time when Mandarin was promoted as the national language and the indigenous peoples were not allowed to speak their native languages. He said:

When I was studying at elementary and junior high schools, I sometimes heard people say, “Who are speaking the dialects? They have to be fined or stand up to receive their punishment.” If I were caught speaking my mother language at home, some people would say, “Hmmm! I will report this to your teacher.” All of these experiences made me very nervous.

Mr. Peng thought that it was appropriate for the government to promote indigenous languages because the government needed to compensate for the mistakes made by the wrong policy in the past and restore the justice for the indigenous peoples.

In addition to the four periods arranged during one weekday morning for his mother language instruction, Mr. Peng spent some of his available time teaching those indigenous children studying in the urban areas. Although the number of indigenous children at the participating school was relatively higher than that of indigenous children studying in the urban areas, Mr. Peng preferred to teach the students at the participating school because he thought they identified more with their indigenous origins. He said:

It is easier for me to teach those kids in the urban areas because two or three students can be grouped into one class. In contrast, I have to shout to these students here. . . . But I won’t give up my mission for this community.

According to Mr. Peng, the relatively large population of indigenous students and the attention that the teachers and the principal at the participating school paid to their

students helped these indigenous students identify more with their native cultural and language heritage.

To Ms. Liao, the retired nurse as well as the former indigenous language teacher at the participating school, the purpose of teaching indigenous language was to ask students not to forget their heritage. She often told her students that they should not forget their own mother tongue when they learned other languages. Forgetting their heritage language meant that the race speaking the language perished. Speaking their mother language was also a bridge to connect the relationship among family members. She was thankful for the government that implemented the Romanized alphabet to preserve the indigenous language so that the speed of losing the indigenous language was not extremely fast.

#### *Beyond Romanized Spelling System*

As a full-time pastor working hard at preaching and teaching, Pastor Shih was not involved in promoting indigenous language instruction at the participating school. He knew that pastors, due to their familiarity with the Atayal language, had been welcomed by schools and valued by indigenous tribes. The government also recognized the contribution that pastors had made to the preservation of indigenous language. In terms of indigenous language instruction, he pointed out that teachers should have in-depth knowledge in indigenous language more than simply teach students to pronounce vocabulary through the Romanized spelling system at the beginning level.

The church services were conducted in Atayal and Mandarin to meet the needs of both the elders and the youth. Pastor Shih stated that there would not have been extra chances for people in the community to learn the Atayal language if he had not taken

advantage of the time when people attended the church to read the Bible in Atayal. After all, Pastor Shih thought church was a location that still preserved the mother language to some extent.

Ms. Sung thought that indigenous languages should align with the other subjects on the same grade level curriculum and content standards. Children would fail to understand and lose interest in learning their mother language if it was disconnected with the content of other subjects. For instance, she stated, speaking and listening practices should be instructed as the main emphasis for the first graders because these children had not been familiar with the writing system of indigenous languages. However, if some children had started to learn English at a younger age and had known the alphabet and its pronunciation more than others, teachers could provide them with Paiwan phonetic symbols and pronunciation exercises in the instruction. Individual differences of students could still be observed in the classroom of indigenous language.

She explained that a few children from slightly better-off backgrounds might be sent to English language centers to start learning English at an early age. But oftentimes, most parents who had migrated to the northern part of Taiwan for the sake of job opportunities might neglect their responsibilities of educating their children. She stated:

Parents can't spend time teaching their children because they are busy working all day long. When they return home, they may be exhausted because their work required manual labor. . . . Generally speaking, ethnic language is spoken very little at home. When parents tend not to speak it, how can you expect their children to speak it? We, as ethnic language teachers, feel very frustrated, but we cannot blame these parents. Some of these parents are young and they don't even know how to speak it at all.

Ms. Sung stated that an influential factor for indigenous language learning was due to the environment where only a few speakers still communicated with each other in



it. “It is natural that children lose their interest in learning their mother language because they don’t hear people speak that language. . . . After all, they are the disadvantaged group, the minority.” said she. Given the larger context, she thought that self-identity played an important role in the enhancement of mother language. As long as indigenous peoples identified with their individual ethnic culture, they would be motivated to learn their mother language. She lamented that some of them indulged themselves in self-pity or had a feeling of inferiority so that they felt ashamed to admit their status as indigenous peoples. One noticeable feature in her class was to enhance the confidence of the students and ask them to bravely admit that they were indigenous peoples. She talked about her experience in chatting with her students in the Paiwan language while riding on the Mass Rapid Transit train. She described:

I was so happy! They felt the same way I did! People around us asked us what language we were talking about. We said we were speaking our indigenous language. Some of them said it was pleasing to their ears! Now you can teach them whenever they want to learn! Sometimes I must confess I am a busybody. I even teach foreigners if they want to learn my language. They pick it up very fast because the Romanized alphabet is very clear to them.

*Incentive to Learn Mother Language*

Shu-Yuan stated that students would continue studying for their academic work and spend some time studying their mother languages for the purpose of preparing the Proficiency Test of Indigenous Culture and Language (PTICL). Once they passed the PTICL, they would receive some extra scores in their entrance examination. What motivated these students to study their mother languages was due to the potential benefits that might be influential to their academic future. If they studied their mother languages for the sake of passing examinations, Shu-Yuan stated that the ability of these students in using their mother languages was still very limited.

Ms. Fan, the former principal of the participating school, considered the policy of the PTICL to be short-term. She calculated that the parents who were around 30 years old should be the students at that time when the Atayal language instruction was initially implemented during the early 1990s. She stated:

How come we are still promoting indigenous language all over the country now? And we even use the PTICL as a portal to screen our students. Students who passed the PTICL would receive their benefits from the 35% bonus points on the entrance exams and those who failed to pass the PTICL would receive the yearly decreased percentage of the extra scores. This policy will start to be implemented next year, but I think it is only a short-term policy.

She thought that this policy would not make a significant contribution to the enhancement of children's indigenous language acquisition because language should be an instrument for communication. If children were not provided with the language environment and the opportunity for using the language was limited, children would not consider learning their mother language as their priority. She stated that language should be used in one's daily life rather than in the classroom.

Mr. Tung stated that since indigenous language education was implemented in the school curriculum, the government seemed to have paid much attention to address the importance of maintaining mother language on the surface. In reality, the overall effect upon mother language maintenance was limited. In his opinion, the mother language would become easily acquired by children only when it was spoken and taught by their parents at home. In other words, he suggested that parents should be able to fully communicate with their children in ethnic language at home. However, it was hard for him to find a family that could still serve as a paradigm in this modern world.

He said that indigenous language instruction in the language curriculum turned out to be examination-oriented because indigenous students, after passing the PTICL,

could gain extra scores for their high school or college entrance examinations. Some students who had had no interest in learning indigenous language were motivated to learn it automatically for the sake of its practical concern. According to his observation, some students who passed the PTICL were not necessarily better than those who failed to pass it because they simply applied the strategies that they learned from school to the proficiency test without actually using the language. He suggested that professionals should research a feasible scheme where syntactic structure of indigenous language could be internalized by students.

As a research fellow in the advisory team for indigenous education and an indigenous language instructor of local township office, Mr. Tung heard many people express their opinions on indigenous language education. Some opinions were mostly from parents, who mentioned that implementation of indigenous language instruction in language education program was an additional burden to their children. Others were from scholars and government officials, who insisted that indigenous language instruction should be provided for school children in order to maintain and preserve their mother languages. He stated that it all would depend on some time to prove which party was correct, but heritage language and culture would disappear soon if no action was implemented. Even if the effect on maintaining mother languages was insignificant, he thought any action would be better than no action at all.

Similar to Mr. Tung's view, Walis observed that most of the children in the community did not have their own thoughts about learning their mother language and few of them were serious in learning it. These children would feel contented as long as they

could lead a happy life. It was the PTICL that served as an incentive to motivate them to learn their mother language. He said:

Unlike the elderly would think this community is our root and we need to learn our mother language in order to inherit our culture and language, these children don't have such thoughts and missions [as the elderly] and show no interest in learning it. . . . They would feel, "I will leave this tribal community sooner or later because I want to be a singer or a dancer. And I won't live in this village anyway." Why do they want to learn their mother language? There is only one factor, which is to gain extra scores on their entrance exams.

Walis further explained that indigenous students could benefit from the 35% bonus point on the entrance exams if they passed the PTICL. However, if they failed to pass the test, they would still gain extra scores because of their status as indigenous people, only that the percentage of the extra scores would decrease progressively with each passing year.

Walis stated that the government policy was intended to motivate indigenous children to learn their mother languages, but it somehow became "something that could be manipulated."

Some parents would tell their children, saying, "You should learn [the indigenous language]! After you learn and pass it, you can get the extra scores." Their starting points were not like: It is your culture and your language, so you have to learn it. . . . [This exam] can't be of much help for children to use their ethnic languages. Children learn their ethnic languages only because of the exam and they pay no attention to them after the exam. It is an incentive, but it can't encourage children to widely use their ethnic languages. The good intention [of the policy] somewhat spoils!

While most of the participants were fully aware of the PTICL promoted by the government to encourage indigenous students to study their mother languages, Mr. Wu did not support the implementation of PTICL, along with other similar certification systems, which was used as the criterion to examine one's language proficiency. He mentioned that he was proficient in Hakka because of growing up in the area where the majority of the Hakka people resided. Although he was an Atayal, he was able to

communicate with his neighbors in Hakka fluently. In his opinion, those who passed the proficiency test of a certain language did not necessarily master that language. He suggested language learning should be something natural—no matter what language people would learn, they should frequently practice speaking their target languages as if they spoke their mother languages.

### Strategies in Promoting Indigenous Language

#### *Promoting Mother Language at Home*

Mr. Peng stated that the mother language should be promoted from various strategies. Family, in his opinion, had a substantial impact on mother language preservation. Parents should teach their children in their daily lives how to express themselves in their mother language. The steadily accumulated phrases and sentences in the process of teaching and learning throughout the years would be sufficient for children to become fluent speakers of mother language. Parents could motivate their children in every situation so that learning their mother language turned out to be something interesting. He liked to take his son as an example, indicating that his son, brought up in the Atayal-speaking family, showed a strong interest in learning his mother language. Mr. Peng's wife, an Atayal teacher in a nursery school, was willing to take every opportunity to teach their son their home language, including the spare time when both of them were watching TV or having their meals. Mr. Peng pointed out that his son would still make mistakes in his pronunciation and speak with an accent somewhat unlike a native Atayal, but he believed that constant practice under the guidance of parents should be an effective way to help his son gradually achieve fluency in his mother language.

Ms. Sung was responsible for a couple of Language Nests in the greater metropolitan area in addition to serving as an indigenous language teacher at several schools. The initial goal of establishing language nests in this area was designed to help indigenous peoples become more aware of the importance of their mother languages and to extend their mother language use to family and community based on the successful experience borrowed from New Zealand in revitalizing indigenous language and culture. Ms. Sung stated that teachers interested in teaching in language nests should pass a proposal before they were able to recruit students. The curriculum in her language nests was mainly designed for parents and children from community, indigenous village, and family.

Ms. Sung thought that the purpose of revitalizing indigenous language could not be achieved exclusively by teachers but also parents because it was parents who accompanied their young children most of the time at home. The curriculum objective of language nest should be set reasonably so that children could reach its standard. In her opinion, it would be acceptable that children could learn to speak simple sentences about daily activities in her language nest and practice them at home because most children were not familiar with their mother language. Thanks to the Romanized spelling system, Ms. Sung thought that children could learn how to pronounce and practice their mother language and meanwhile, their mothers could correct the pronunciations of their children even when they returned home. According to Ms. Sung, more strategies were needed to encourage parents to speak to their children in their mother language at home.

Ms. Sung would never hesitate to share her teaching experience with the parents because she thought it was one of the ways to effectively revitalize indigenous language.

She would communicate with them to understand their attitudes toward ethnic language maintenance before inviting them to participate in her class. Parents' participation played a substantial role in the maintenance and revitalization of indigenous language. She stated:

If parents are not concerned about this work, it will be useless to simply rely on teachers. So I ask parents and their children to follow me and learn with me. I dislike parents who don't take a serious attitude to their learning or don't recognize our effort. . . . I was born in the 50's. My class includes the parents born in the 60's, 70's, and even 80's. This is what we call language maintenance. We have lost our language for decades, which we can't do anything about. But I don't want to keep losing my language anymore!

Some parents graduated from Language Nest programs would be encouraged to attend more classes offered by indigenous education center for the preparation of the PTIL. According to Ms. Sung's advice, passing this proficiency test would not necessarily mean they had to be indigenous language teachers. Nor should it imply that their lives would be free from worries after obtaining the certificate for teaching indigenous language. All she could do was to share her personal experience with these parents, telling them that "you have to identify with yourselves and to be concerned with this matter." She also encouraged them to actively participate in and complete all the classes so that they might enhance the understanding of their mother language and increase their knowledge in teaching skills. Ms. Sung hoped that these parents would lead others to the spread of indigenous language in the same way as they learned from the experience that she had been through. When more parents followed her suggestion to participate in professional development program, they would be formed as a team, where the members could work together toward the common goal of language maintenance and revitalization.

*School Support*

Although the indigenous language speech contest at the county or township levels had been held for several years in the community, Mr. Peng stated that its purpose should develop the ability for basic indigenous language conversation and encourage the participation of children at a younger age. Language contests, in his opinion, should not be exclusively restricted to speech contests, where the participants prepared their messages in advance through drill and practice. He stated:

People attending the contest used to memorize the written manuscripts. The speaker used to choose one of the three topics provided by the sponsor. In fact, being able to talk to others in mother language is all the more important. If the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet contest can be held for the first graders, indigenous language contest could also be held for the beginners.

He suggested that the government should run indigenous language contest starting from those children at the kindergarten level. To engage young children in the activity of language competition would definitely please the elders in the community. Big prizes could be awarded to those who put in outstanding performances, through which children would start learning basic vocabulary and practicing with the elders in the family. A list including a fixed number of words could be prepared as the content of vocabulary contest, where children could be awarded depending on the number of words they were able to recognize from the word bank. Indigenous language singing contest could be designed to encourage children to sing traditional folk songs. Children could be assigned simple idioms and phrases for conversation contest or recitation contest. These types of indigenous language contest could be arranged in sports competition or annual traditional ceremony and divided into different levels based on age or community groups. He believed that a series of systematic contest activities with grand prizes from the local



level to the national level could effectively encourage indigenous peoples to learn and practice their mother language.

Mr. Peng hoped that all the indigenous teachers who knew how to speak their ethnic language would communicate with students in ethnic language on a weekly specified day. He stated:

I have seen English phrases, like *Very good!* or *How are you!*, posted on each stair when I go to other schools. We don't have to do this. What we can do on Mother Language Day is ask each class to sing a folk song, learn a short phrase, or a sentence in mother language. As time goes by, we will virtually learn many conversational phrases. At the end of the semester, we will award the top ten students who memorize the most. The status of mother language should be raised much higher! This is all a means to an end of saving mother language.

Ms. Sung hoped that the school would provide students with a classroom specifically for indigenous language instruction. As a support teacher at the participating school, she knew it was impossible for her dream to become true. She stated:

Most importantly, we don't have our own classroom. It will be a pity if the classroom can't be decorated based on seasonal themes. If we have a classroom reserved for indigenous language instruction, I'm sure teachers would love to help with its decorations. . . . Now the classroom we are using is designed for the purpose of faculty meeting, so I don't think it will work. We have too many restrictions because our students are few.

Ms. Sung continued to explain that her students would be motivated to learn their mother language if they were provided with a classroom setting that displayed indigenous artifacts. However, due to the limitation of indigenous language instruction, where only one period a week was administered for her students, she admitted that it would be extremely difficult to actualize her dream.

### *Community Funding*

To the best of Mr. Peng's knowledge, the funding provided by the government for the community to promote mother languages was adequate. If possible, he would

coordinate all the mother language teachers to discuss the problems that they had encountered in mother language instruction. Teachers could brainstorm in designing effective activities, such as the aforementioned ones to promote mother language. The representatives of the local government could be invited to listen to the voices of these teachers. He stated that “Some people would take pictures as evidence of the activities they hold. Then, they get their pay. I don’t like this. We need to regard ethnic language inheritance as part of our lives!”

The task of mother language promotion should not fall to the school only. In Mr. Peng’s opinion, instruction related to mother language was only a part of the knowledge that schools were responsible for spreading among children, and it was not considered to be an important academic subject in school. What was more important was that the community members, including tribal elders, village heads, township principals, and director generals, should achieve consensus about the implementation of mother language policy. He stated:

These community members should value [mother language instruction]. If they don’t value it, it will be difficult for you to ask children to value it. . . . We need community members and local representatives to work together in designing good policy. Once the community members value mother language, it will be easier for teachers to instruct it in school.

He also suggested that the policy makers in the community should not only encourage children to speak their mother language in the villages but also annually award a family who could serve as a successful role model of mother language for other families to follow. The family members could share their testimony of learning and speaking mother language with other people in the community. The awarded family, according to his analogy, should be like a lamp, shining upon everyone in other families

so that each family would be passionate about speaking the mother language. He further explained:

We can appoint the senior in each tribal community and each village to identify families where parents and children can speak to each other with great proficiency in mother language. A tag can be hung on the wall of the model family to praise the achievement of speaking mother language. Making a tag won't cost a cent! Half of the monthly electricity bill for that family can be reduced within a certain period of time. The commuting cost the children in that family pay could be borne by the water resource fund from the local government. . . . Once that family is identified, it will be marked as a nobleman of aristocratic status. And every family will follow its footsteps.

Mr. Peng thought that revitalizing mother languages required maximum effort from those who owned resources. If they were not proud of their mother language and failed to consider that educating children in and about their mother language should be the topmost task, what they did was only a waste of resources and a consumption of budget from the government. Simply relying on the weekly 40-minute instruction was insufficient. Language contest should include children of kindergarten or first grade. How to create incentives to attract people to learn mother language with enthusiasm and endow them with great sense of honor were some of the questions where everybody could brainstorm.

Despite the fact that school and family had limited impact on establishing children's ethnic identity, Mr. Tung suggested funding should be provided to those families where mother language was spoken on a daily basis.

It all depends on what the elders in the tribal community would like to do for their families. Even the whole environment is detrimental to cultural heritage and development. If you are willing to promote your mother tongue at home, it will still be manageable! We can use each family as a unit.

Most measures that the government sought to implement were more focused on the economic need for indigenous peoples than language and culture inheritance in the past.

“How many families will be concerned about how to preserve indigenous language and culture? Some of the indigenous peoples even have to worry about where to get their three meals! They have to take odd jobs so that their stomachs can be taken care of,” he stated. Even though it would be hard for the government to assess and evaluate the extent to which mother language was actually used in the families, Mr. Tung said it would be worthwhile to encourage parents who recognized the importance of ethnic language to promote mother language usage in their families. These families could annually apply for funding from the government so that they could wholeheartedly devote their time and effort to the promotion of learning and speaking mother language on various occasions. He believed that this measure would have a significant impact on the promotion and dissemination of mother language at all levels through the assistance of the government within a duration of five or ten years except that the government needed to consider its own financial resource.

#### *Caring Intervention from Government*

Aiming at revitalizing indigenous language, Pastor Shih proposed a rather radical plan where children were forced to speak it as the primary language and to take Mandarin and English as elective courses. He knew his proposal would be challenging to the policy makers. However, if no further action could be done to restore the ethnic language, he would probably hold a pessimistic view of the next generation—the indigenous peoples would eventually disappear and the indigenous culture would be replaced by the culture of other ethnic groups.

He further explained that it could indeed become a burden for the indigenous children in this competitive society to be compelled to speak their ethnic language when

the public power from the government intervened in implementing the education for indigenous children. According to his opinion, the intervention of public power could be interpreted as the government's concern, where every indigenous child could be provided with the education in his mother language as his first and foremost goal. In a context where the mother language had been gradually diluted by the mainstream language, Pastor Shih stated he had no other alternative but to call for the government to step in so that the minority group would not assimilate into the majority group.

Pastor Shih proposed that indigenous children should be provided with a type of school where the main purpose would be to cultivate at least a group of children that could maintain the ethnic language and continue spreading its use to the next generation. The school resources should be supported by the government rather than the parents. Although the parents would be willing to send their children to this type of school, it would not necessarily mean that parents were likely to afford the necessary expenses. Instead, the government should be responsible for all the resources spent on their children. To help these children better adapt to the larger context where Chinese was the mainstream language, Mandarin would also need to be taught because of its necessity after they had acquired sufficient knowledge of the ethnic language. His vision for a type of school established for indigenous children was revealed in the following excerpt:

I think mother language should be given a higher regard more than anything else from the standpoint of saving mother language. Mother language requires special attention and Chinese should also be taken into consideration to help children increase their competitiveness in this society. Then, international language should be strengthened so that they will gain a global perspective. This group of minority children is supposed to preserve the ethnic language and pass it on from generation to generation. Without the government's support, the current approach is hopeless for me. . . . We can provide a favorable environment for children to grow up. . . . If parents are promised that their children will receive excellent education, parents will be willing to send their children to this type of school. So,

if there is a chance for the minority ethnic group to receive their traditional culture, the culture can be inherited and passed on.

According to Pastor Shih's observation, the parents of indigenous children in general were busy dealing with their everyday living. If parents were asked to participate in the program of restoring their language, an incentive should be offered to them through the social concern. Children should be provided with a context, where speaking mother language was valued and encouraged, when they returned home from their school. Mother language would be fully used in the family between children and their parents with determination and self-awareness. The community could also hold a contest through the assistance of the government to encourage these families to produce a short video clip documenting the dialogues in mother language among the family members or to inspire them to produce a drama performed in mother language for the public. They could decide on their topics and write their scripts related to their daily experiences. Pastor Shih stated that these activities would be much more effective in promoting mother language than the recitation contests, where students were simply provided with paragraphs for them to read aloud. Besides, he commented that students could not internalize the content of these paragraphs at all because these paragraphs provided for them were written by others rather than students themselves.

He concluded that the type of school he proposed would be similar to the type of school reserved for elites, who could be provided with advanced academic classes. Parents did not have to worry that their children would perform less successfully than others in this type of school where children would be taught entirely in mother language because other mainstream languages would be provided as well. A package of measures aiming at saving mother languages would be taken to encourage family and community

to use it as a medium for communication. The measures should be as comprehensive as those in the old days when native languages were forbidden. However, he stated that people in modern times would rather receive encouragement than punishment in cooperating with the administration. Through such measures as engaging people in language contests, offering them with sufficient incentives, and endowing them with their rights to speak their mother language, he believed mother language could be gradually restored.

In order to maintain and revitalize indigenous languages, Mr. Tung recommended two important concepts for indigenous peoples; one was their concern for mother language maintenance and the other was the implementation of that concern—to speak to their children in their mother language. He said earnestly that the perspectives of parents toward their ethnic language would decide how much effort parents wanted to take in helping their children maintain their mother language.

In this fast changing modern world, to what extent you identify with your ethnic language, your attitudes, and your values will determine how you are going to help your children. Honestly speaking, many seniors brought up during Japanese rule would say something like this: Why bother learning indigenous language? Why not learning Japanese? Why not learning English? For example, the late township mayor used to say something like this: There is no use learning indigenous language from the viewpoint of economics or utilitarianism. If you can speak English or Japanese, you can find better jobs in the urban area than the jobs you may find when you know how to speak indigenous language.

Mr. Tung stated that people in general held different attitudes toward indigenous language instruction, and oftentimes those who had not received Japanese education would strongly advocate indigenous language should be inherited and passed on to the next generation.

Factors such as the context where children were situated, the school curriculum, or the philosophy of life that children developed had a substantial impact on their language learning according to Mr. Tung. Children, if fostered by the tribal elders who strongly identified with their ancestral culture and language, would regard their ethnic language as important resources. However, in a pluralistic society, such as Taiwan, he thought it would be hard to provide children with a context that focused on the development of ethnic identity unless the government could establish an ethnic school located in an autonomous region with the curriculum of indigenous culture and language specifically designed for indigenous children. Unlike some advanced countries, the idea to promote an autonomous region for indigenous peoples in Taiwan would hardly be actualized due to the fact that many Han Chinese and indigenous peoples had co-inhabited for a period of time and the country was too small to distribute additional land for indigenous peoples to foster their unique cultures. He stated that it also would not work if the ethnic school could be established in an autonomous region located on some outer island away from Taiwan.

#### *Development of Qualified Teachers*

In addition to learning environment and teaching materials, Mr. Tung stated that indigenous language instruction should consider another factor--teacher development. People recruited to teach indigenous language were mostly pastors, church elders, or community elders rather than regular teachers because the majority of regular teachers were prepared by general teacher education programs and barely spoke the language. He suggested that courses related to indigenous language instruction should be offered at education universities, teacher education programs, or other academic institutions so that



teacher candidates would be provided professional development in teaching indigenous language. A department with an emphasis on indigenous language instruction could also be established to help them improve their knowledge of the subject matter and develop the skills and abilities of teaching indigenous language.

### Summary

Findings from the qualitative inquiry were presented in this chapter as four major themes, including views toward language education program, observation of language loss, views toward indigenous language instruction, and strategies in promoting indigenous language. These emergent themes were co-constructed by my participants and me through combining several sub-themes that emerged throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Within the framework of these major themes, direct quotes from the interview transcripts were used to report the findings of the research.

In this research, the participants expressed their views toward the language education program encompassing three language subjects. Mandarin was considered a basic language to learn due to its importance as an official language for every citizen and a target language used to learn other academic subjects. While English was useful for enhancing international communication in a global market, indigenous languages should be preserved so that the invaluable cultural heritage could be passed down to next generation. Then, the similar representation of the phonetic symbols in English and the indigenous language might be confusing for learners; however, students should be able to master the rules of pronunciation after they were provided with adequate instruction. Moreover, the instructional approaches in English could be applicable to teaching

indigenous languages due to the similarities of teaching methodology in these two language areas.

The loss of mother language was observed among children, who might appear to comprehend the elders in the tribal community to a certain extent but would use Mandarin as the major language in daily communication. With regard to indigenous language instruction, the participants indicated that Local Language should be learned to help indigenous children identify more with their native culture and language heritage, self-identity was conducive to the enhancement of mother language, and the purpose of teaching indigenous language should not be examination-oriented—simply help students with the preparation of the PTICL. Lastly, the participants also offered several strategies in promoting indigenous language, including the frequent use of the mother language in the home setting, allowance and public praise provided to those families endeavoring to promote the indigenous language, the establishment of a type of ethnic school with its emphasis on indigenous language and culture in curriculum design, the regular holding of indigenous language competition for different age groups, and the development of qualified teacher candidates in teacher education program.

Findings in this chapter contributed significantly to answering the third supporting research question—the participants’ perspectives on the importance and implementation of the language education program. The next chapter presents a summary of major research findings and recommendations.

## CHAPTER VII

### SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose for this study was to examine the language education program implemented in a Taiwanese indigenous elementary school. I hoped to gain an understanding of how each language was taught in an indigenous elementary school through investigating the implementation of language education program in multiple aspects of curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development. Furthermore, I hoped to gain new insights about the language education for indigenous children in Taiwan through obtaining the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members on the importance and implementation of the language education program. This chapter includes a summary of research findings, recommendations for elementary schools, language teachers, and policy makers, and recommendations for future research.

#### Summary of Major Findings

This section provides a summary of the findings in response to the research questions. I sought to present a holistic perspective on the overarching themes that synthesized the findings based on the interviews and observations from my participants, along with the documents collected from the research site and my own field notes. Major factors influencing the implementation of the language education program are identified through the following aspects: (a) time allocation and constraints in language curriculum,

(b) textbooks and teaching materials, (c) instructional practices to enhance language and culture, (d) availability of language resources, and (e) personnel and professional development. Lastly, the overarching themes regarding the participants' perspectives on language education program, indigenous language instruction, and strategies in promoting indigenous language are presented as well.

#### *Time Allocation and Constraints*

The language education program, with the incorporation of Local Language and English, has become a language learning area where Mandarin, English, and Local Language are required for students to learn at the elementary level. The instructional time allocated for these three subjects was based on the mandated curriculum in the participating school, where five 40-minute learning periods of Mandarin were allocated to lower grades and upper grades and four learning periods to intermediate grades. Two learning periods of English were allocated to students from the fourth grade to the sixth grade and one learning period of Local Language was distributed to students of all grade levels.

Alternative learning periods in the participating school also were allocated to Mandarin and English based on the instructional and learning needs. Two alternative learning periods of Reading Guidance were allocated to students from the fourth grade to the sixth grade. One alternative learning period of Reading Guidance and English Conversation was allocated to lower grades. Since the 2010 academic year, the participating school had started to add three more class periods to its language curriculum in accordance with the Activation Curriculum experimental project regulated by the local government. Therefore, two periods of International Culture, which could also be entitled

“Living English,” were distributed to students of all grade levels. One period of Advanced Reading was distributed to students from the first grade to the fourth grade to enhance their Mandarin proficiency. While additional instructional periods were distributed to Mandarin and English, Local Language maintained its initial instructional time, which was one weekly 40-minute period.

It is noteworthy to mention that two indigenous languages, Atayal and Paiwan, were concurrently instructed in the field of Local Language in the participating school, where the majority of students were of the Atayal background. The Atayal language had been taught for years to meet the needs of Atayal students residing in this community. The newly added course of the Paiwan language was offered due to the demand from a few Paiwan parents who appealed for their children through homeroom teachers that their home language could also be taught in school. The simultaneous instruction of two indigenous languages was given to students from the first grade to the fourth grade levels and arranged on every Wednesday morning for the conveniences of one Atayal teacher and one Paiwan teacher respectively.

Although the instructional time in the language learning area of the Grade 1-9 curriculum allocated for Mandarin was comparatively less than that of the previous curriculum standard promulgated by the MOE in 1993, Mandarin learning opportunities could be additionally obtained from alternative learning periods, one period of Advanced Reading from Activation Curriculum experimental project, and after-school classes. With the combined periods of both English and International Culture, the instructional time allocated for English language learning became closer to the instructional periods for

Mandarin. Local Language was barely supported because it received the least amount of time.

The insufficient allocation of time in indigenous language instruction resulted in several problems. One of the problems was that the teaching content was limited to the introduction of vocabulary and phrases due to the time constraint. For instance, Mr. Ma thought that it was difficult for him to provide students with further explanation of the lesson after helping students with the recognition of new vocabulary because of the limitation of time. Students simply received the general idea from a lesson rather than the hidden or the profound meaning of a sentence. Mr. Peng stated that a weekly 40-minute-class period was insufficient because learning a mother language required time and practice. When children did not practice using the vocabulary they learned from their teacher in the home setting, Mr. Peng thought that children's acquisition of indigenous language was restricted to the vocabulary or sentences learned in the classroom.

In addition to the insufficient time for language instruction, classroom management was another problem. Ms. Sung complained that students always forgot to bring their notebooks or handouts to the classroom. It was observed that students came to the classroom without bringing their teaching materials distributed in the previous period. Ms. Sung then had to go to the office of academic affairs to make copies of these teaching materials for her students. Mr. Peng also indicated that he sometimes had to shout and yell to the students in his class and he was aware that he was not respected highly because of his role as a support teacher, who came to school to teach only once a week.

Indigenous language teachers tended to work at several schools due to their employment status as support teachers. They would usually have to seek administrative support for their instruction when they were employed to a school. Ms. Sung indicated that an indigenous language teacher sometimes would easily be marginalized or ignored because he or she might not be known to the school staff. Although she came to school for teaching indigenous language only once a week, she believed an indigenous language teacher should actively express the support she needed in terms of teaching and learning. Moreover, in order to motivate students' interest in learning the Paiwan language, Ms. Sung brought self-made teaching materials for her instruction to the meeting room, the temporary classroom for the Paiwan language. Some of the teaching materials had to be stored temporarily inside the lectern in the corner of the classroom for students' use in the subsequent week. The inconvenience that Ms. Sung encountered in her instruction resulted from the lack of the offices specifically reserved for indigenous language teachers who worked only weekly at schools. This made administrative support all the more important in enhancing indigenous language instruction. Huang (2007) indicated that school's administrative cooperation is vital in enhancing indigenous language instruction. Time constraint, classroom management, and the lack of administrative assistance were found to be hindering factors that influenced the implementation of indigenous language instruction.

#### *Textbooks and Teaching Materials*

Although the government allowed the textbook companies to compile and publish textbooks based on the mandated curriculum, the books that publishing companies interested in designing and compiling were mainly restricted to Mandarin and English

due to the expected profit that could be earned from the market. Teachers in the participating school selected Mandarin and English textbooks from one of the major three textbook publishing companies, where supplementary teaching tools, such as flash cards and posters with enlarged lessons from textbooks, were provided for teachers to encourage better class participation. The teachers of International Culture did not specifically choose to use any published textbooks, not because teachers could not find appropriate English textbooks for their students, but because great flexibility was given to teachers to design their curriculum and instruction. Thus, International Culture teachers preferred to design teaching materials on their own. Most of the teaching materials were collected from the web resources, including YouTube video clips and ESL (English as a Second Language) teaching strategy links, or resources based on an approach to humanistic pedagogy.

Compared with the well-designed textbooks of Mandarin and English for teachers' selection and decision, teaching materials in the class of Local Language were somewhat inadequate due to the late arrival of the textbooks. To overcome the difficulty where textbooks were not provided for students on time in the semester, Mr. Peng and Ms. Sung, the teachers of the Atayal and Paiwan languages, designed their teaching materials for their students. Mr. Ma, the Atayal teacher of the upper grades, temporarily adopted the textbooks compiled by the participating school years ago. To compile these Atayal textbooks, many native speakers of the Atayal language had been involved in researching and developing appropriate teaching materials for students. The previous textbook contents, including lessons, vocabulary, sentence patterns, pronunciation drills, and translation, were adequate for instructional practices during the absence of the expected



textbooks. However, the number of those previously published textbooks was not sufficient for all the students. It was observed that three or four students had to share one textbook in the sixth grade class. The teacher also occasionally needed to ask students to correct the vocabulary spelling mistakes found from different parts in the textbook.

Moreover, both Mr. Peng and Ms. Sung unanimously mentioned the textbooks compiled by the Center for Aboriginal Studies as their major teaching materials and references. Entrusted by the MOE and the CIP, the Center for Aboriginal Studies in National Chengchi University started to compile and develop indigenous language textbooks to meet the needs of students from different indigenous backgrounds. However, these two indigenous language teachers pointed out that these textbooks were more appropriate for the students in the higher proficiency level than those in the beginning level. For the lower grades, they preferred to use their self-made teaching materials to compensate for the insufficient parts in these textbooks. Huang (2007) suggested that the contents of these textbooks should be divided into several levels for learners with different language proficiencies. Each level should further emphasize the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In alignment with her suggestion, these language teachers hoped that teaching materials in accordance with students' different age levels could be designed to facilitate their instruction for students of different age groups.

#### *Instructional Practices to Enhance Language and Culture*

Language teachers in the participating school adopted effective instructional strategies to accommodate the specific needs for their students. Some teachers were greatly influenced by the alternative pedagogical approaches through the multiple

intelligence experimental project implemented in their school. These teachers preferred to incorporate audio and visual components and physical movements into their instructional practices to assist students' comprehension of the learning contents. For instance, both Shu-Yuan and Ju-Chao, the Mandarin teachers of the fifth and first grades, would teach certain idiomatic phrases or the basic recognition of the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet through the integration of rhythmic reading patterns, singing, and physical movements. They believed that these instructional strategies were beneficial to student's Mandarin acquisition and appropriate for students' learning styles. Moreover, they both would prefer to inspire students to draw the reflections on their workbooks so that students could better appreciate and absorb the lessons taught in the classroom. They also believed that teachers should demonstrate correct language usage and pronunciation when engaging in daily activities and should have some basic understanding of indigenous language and culture. Ju-Chao thought that teachers were supposed to be artists, whose speech and behaviors would leave an imprinting mark on children at their young ages. Shu-Yuan would incorporate topics related to indigenous culture into her Mandarin instruction to familiarize students with their own ancestral teaching and tradition.

Kramersch (1993) indicated that cultural awareness and the learning of a second culture can help learners attain second language proficiency. In the International Culture class, Walis would use a wide variety of teaching strategies to enhance students' acquisition of vocabulary, phrases, intonation, sentence patterns, and global culture. I was fortunate to have opportunities to observe how he helped students prepare to participate in English singing contests at both the district and county levels. Walis sought to familiarize students with the correct pronunciations and the lyrics from the self-selected

Broadway theme song and to help students repeatedly practice singing this song. As International Culture was a newly implemented course across the local county, Walis mentioned to me that homework and assessment were not specifically required. However, he would adopt a game activity for him to tell whether students could comprehend a new word or a sentence he taught. He would also ask students to design their itinerary plans for Christmas Eve on their workbooks and then to present their itinerary plans orally before their classmates. These instructional strategies were used to ensure students to acquire their knowledge in English language and culture through a nonthreatening teaching and learning atmosphere. Therefore, children could apply what they learned in the English classrooms to the real-life situations, which was also the intended goal for this newly added course.

Although the instructional time allocated for Local Language was restricted to 40 minutes a week, teachers made the best use of this limited schooling time through different approaches to enhance students' comprehension of their home languages and cultures. Teaching tools, such as Romanized alphabet strips or flash cards, were adopted to facilitate their instruction. Videos with three-dimensional animation were displayed to familiarize students with the legends of indigenous peoples in Mr. Peng's Atayal class. Ms. Sung also brought beads, threads, scissors, and construction papers for children to practice threading glass beads and weaving, which were considered traditional indigenous handicrafts in Paiwan tribes. Mr. Ma would help students know how to pronounce each word, along with a detailed explanation of the indigenous cultural knowledge associated with the word. He would lead students to read a short essay after

they became familiar with the vocabulary in the essay. The Chinese translation would also be provided for students after they finished reading each short essay.

All of these three Local Language teachers used similar teaching strategies, including the use of songs to familiarize children with their indigenous languages and the introduction of indigenous tribal traditions to enhance their ethnic identity. And each of these three teachers was slightly different in his or her teaching methods. Mr. Ma's approach of guided reading was applicable to students of higher proficiency level because the fifth and sixth grade students had already acquired some knowledge of the Romanized alphabet. Mr. Peng preferred to use group competition activity to enhance students' vocabulary. Lastly, Ms. Sung's classes were so small that she sometimes had only one student. The relatively small number of students was advantageous to her because it would be easy for her to understand the levels of her students. However, the weakness of this low teacher-student ratio was that she had to keep talking and practicing with her students within a 40-minute period session. She was often observed as the only partner to communicate with her students in pair practice activity.

#### *Availability of Language Resources*

The availability of funding provided the participating school with sufficient teaching resources that could facilitate students' learning. Most of the teacher participants indicated that their specific requirement for instructional tools could be fulfilled as long as they submitted their application for purchasing supplementary teaching materials. Ms. Liu, the International Culture teacher, for instance, planned to ask students to perform an English drama at the end of the second semester. Provided that she decided to teach students how to design and dye their own clothing, she might purchase some pieces of

clothing through the school funds. Mr. Chin also stated that school facility provided for teachers to enhance instruction was adequate because a single beam projector and a computer were provided in each classroom. It was observed that Walis and Mr. Peng were the two teachers who frequently made use of these resources in teaching English language and culture through YouTube video clips and traditional indigenous folktales through videos with three-dimensional animation.

The school signs printed in Chinese, English, and Atayal were intended to establish a language environment where language concepts could be supported not only in the classroom, but also in the context of the school. The library books included not only those published in Chinese and English, but also teaching materials for indigenous languages. It was observed that students at times came to the library to flip through books or magazines published in Chinese rather than in other languages. Mother language day was an activity that had been held in the participating school to enhance students' proficiency in their home language. Due to the limited vocabulary in Atayal, mother language day turned out to be "simply a formality," according to Mr. Chin. These internal language resources in the participating school sought to support Mandarin, English, and the indigenous language. Mandarin was still a dominant language in terms of its frequent and functional use. How to safeguard and promote students' ethnic language required the school authority's attention and effort. Therefore, some indigenous language teachers suggested that the activity of mother language day should be implemented again to compensate for the weakness of indigenous language instruction to which insufficient time was allocated.

The external language resources provided children with different exposures in acquiring Mandarin, English, or their home languages. For instance, Care Association for Indigenous Peoples supported by the local church offered an opportunity for children to strengthen their academic skills for school requirements, including Mandarin and English. English Express Wonderland was a five-day immersion camp designed to help children to gain experiences in studying abroad without actually leaving Taiwan. Indigenous Language Wonderland was another five-day immersion camp designed to encourage children to speak their indigenous languages and learn their traditional cultures through interacting with their indigenous language teachers. Florence, the international youth volunteer, was an additional language resource to the participating school because children were encouraged to practice speaking English with her and apply what they learned from the English textbooks to real communication. She was invited to Walis's class to introduce New Zealand (Aotearoa in Māori) through a PowerPoint presentation, where she made a comparison between Taiwan and New Zealand and introduced the aboriginal people and some of their culture and language to children. Students were impressed with her fluency in English, but they were more interested in her Korean background and wanted to practice speaking Korean with her. The concept of internationalization was not restricted to the awareness of English culture and language but extended to the appreciation for the language and culture of other countries. These external language resources were beneficial to students in motivating their interest and scaffolding their learning in multiple languages.

### *Personnel and Professional Development*

Some of the language teachers in the participating school were substitute teachers, meaning they could not receive the same benefits as regular teachers did. The teacher preparation programs in Taiwan had developed a large number of teacher candidates recently; however, due to the increasingly low birth rate, the number of classes had to be reduced year by year. The increasingly low birth rate also had an impact on the personnel quota reserved for regular teachers. Most schools would rather recruit substitute teachers than regular teachers to avoid the predictable excess of teachers for fewer students in the near future. In this study, these substitute teachers, along with the regular teachers I interviewed and observed, with their professional educational backgrounds, were passionate about teaching and willing to devote their time to developing teaching materials and methods appropriate for their students through weekly school-held workshops, self-learning opportunities, peer observation feedback, and alternative pedagogical seminars held during winter and summer breaks.

There remains much room for improvement in enhancing the professional development for indigenous language teachers. To become a qualified indigenous language teacher, he or she was required to attend a 36-hour professional workshop after successfully passing the PTIL. These professional workshops were basically held for those support teachers of indigenous language. Regular teachers were also provided with similar professional workshops to enhance their teaching strategies in indigenous language (Huang, 2007). These professional workshops were designed to enhance the quality of teachers; mainly, to improve their knowledge, skills, and practice to enable students to learn better. However, as Huang (2007) indicated, simply relying on attending

a few workshops was insufficient to prepare teachers to work effectively with their students. In other words, their professional knowledge in classroom management, child development, or language acquisition needed to be strengthened to adequately deal with the real situations in the classroom. These professional workshops, held mostly during weekends or weekdays in a university located in the northern part of Taiwan, were optional for these indigenous language teachers to attend. Teachers might be willing to attend the professional workshops held during the weekend, but the courses provided to them were sometimes too intensive to be fully digested and absorbed within a short period of time, according to Ms. Sung. Moreover, the current educational system did not prepare and develop teacher candidates to receive professional training in indigenous language instruction so that they would be qualified to design appropriate curriculum and instruction of indigenous languages. A long-term planning of teacher preparation program would be conducive to the implementation of indigenous language instruction.

#### *Language Education Program*

The participants held similar viewpoints toward the language education program, where Mandarin, English, and Local Language were required; that is, each language played an indispensable role in students' language learning. Mandarin was regarded as the national language for every citizen to learn as well as an official language necessary for fundamental schooling. English was treated as an international language to help students broaden their worldview to keep abreast of the latest information around the world, and Local Language was an ethnic language associated with one's ethnic identity and cultural heritage. Some participants thought that English was more important than Local Language due to the instrumental purpose of English for the future career or potential



opportunity. One Atayal participant even adopted English as his home language for daily communication with his family members. However, other participants believed that Local Language was more important than English not only because of the need to preserve their ancestral language but also because of its practical use for tourist business in indigenous community.

Some participants thought that the similar representations of phonetic symbols in English and Local language were confusing to students. For instance, the letter *t* should be pronounced as /d/ in Atayal, which might cause the problem of language interference in the process of teaching and learning because the letter *t* usually was associated with /t/ rather than /d/ in English. This pronunciation rule would be puzzling for students who had been familiar with phonics, a method that sought to connect spoken English with its represented letter. On the other hand, some participants observed that part of the grammatical structure of Atayal was similar to that of English, which was beneficial for students in learning Atayal and English simultaneously. For instance, the expression of the English sentence “*Thank you very much!*” is similar to that of “*mhuway su balay!*” in Atayal because *mhuway* stands for *thank*, *su* for *you*, and *balay* for *very much*. The experience of learning the Atayal language structure could be applicable to that of learning English or vice versa. As long as students were able to distinguish the different rules applied for Atayal and English, it should not be a major problem for them.

With regard to learning the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet (MPA), the basic phonetic alphabet for students in the first grade to prepare them to transcribe Mandarin and acquire Chinese characters, some participants suggested that students should be taught to speak and listen to Mandarin Chinese in a natural setting before they were

taught to understand the abstract phonetic representation of the MPA. These participants believed that language should be learned as part of one's life and should be instructed and acquired as naturally as possible. Therefore, they believed Mandarin language learning should start from the natural conversation between mothers and children, as with learning indigenous language and other languages. In general, the participants believed that learning multiple languages was helpful for students to compare and contrast the differences and the similarities among languages.

#### *Indigenous Language Instruction*

The participants in the study, especially the majority of community members, mentioned their concerns about the loss of their mother languages, questioned the possibility of preserving indigenous language through a weekly 40-minute instruction, expressed their views toward preserving indigenous languages through the incentive of the PTICL, and offered strategies to revitalize their indigenous languages. It was observed that children seldom used their mother language in both the school context and the community. The main language for children to communicate with their counterparts and teachers was Mandarin in the school setting. Because their listening comprehension performed much better than their speaking proficiency in their indigenous language, children tended to use Mandarin to reply to the tribal elders who spoke indigenous language to them.

It was observed that the indigenous language of Atayal was preserved much better in the tribal community than the regions outside it. The tribal elders spoke their mother language fluently and understood some Mandarin. Some older adults were observed to be bilingual, able to communicate with the elders in Atayal and with young children in

Mandarin. One of the pastor participants in the study indicated that his church in the community was one of the few locations where the Atayal language was partially used in sermon delivery, prayer group meeting, and Bible study to accommodate the senior adults in the congregation. Considering the fact that most of the young people were not proficient in the indigenous language, he would briefly translate his sermon to Mandarin to help them better understand the content. Therefore, indigenous language was more frequently used in the church and the tribal community than the school context.

To the indigenous language instruction implemented in the school setting, the senior community members held a positive attitude toward teaching their mother language. They were pleased to notice the young children starting to practice their mother language with them at home and willing to play the roles as facilitators to help those children learn their mother language. However, some participants questioned the possibility of preserving indigenous language through a single weekly 40-minute instruction, thinking that this implementation was more a symbolic meaning than a meaning in essence.

The participants thought that indigenous language should be learned naturally in one's daily life rather than be taught as an instructional course. Home settings would serve as better locations for learning indigenous language than school classrooms. It was suggested that students should practice their conversations frequently with their family members in indigenous language so that their home language could be acquired and internalized. The past language policies had resulted in the attrition of indigenous languages throughout different political regimes. Therefore, promoting indigenous language through schooling was an appropriate policy because it was the justice that

should be returned to the indigenous peoples. Moreover, teachers responsible for indigenous language instruction could familiarize students in lower grades with the pronunciation through speaking and listening practices. For students in lower grades, the Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet (MPA) could also be used to represent the pronunciation of indigenous language because children in first grade were required to receive intensive learning lessons of the MPA and they were still unfamiliar with the Romanized alphabet. The Romanized alphabet could be introduced later when children acquired some fundamental knowledge of English pronunciation because of the similar representation phonetic symbols for English and indigenous language.

One function of indigenous language instruction was to help indigenous students prepare for the PTICL so that they could gain extra scores in high school and college entrance examinations. With regard to this policy, which was used to encourage students to study indigenous language, most of the participants thought that the PTICL was simply a short-term incentive because those who passed the PTICL probably were merely familiar with test-taking strategies but did not necessarily acquire sufficient knowledge in indigenous language. It was the instrumental motivation rather than the integrated motivation that students chose to devote their time to studying their mother language. If indigenous language would be implemented in the family and the community and adopted as a language frequently spoken in everyday life, relying on this language policy to promote children's use of their ethnic language was definitely insufficient. A series of more thorough supplementary measures from school, family, community, and government are needed to maintain the mother language for indigenous children.

### *Strategies in Promoting Indigenous Language*

The participants indicated that children's home settings should serve as a location to promote one's mother language and thus parents' roles became all the more important in helping children inherit their ancestral culture and language. It was suggested that parents should teach their children the mother language in their daily lives so that children could naturally acquire this language proficiency. Parents could seek every possible way to stimulate their children's interest in practicing their mother language. This was especially true for parents who accompanied their young children at home. These parents were encouraged to acquire knowledge in their mother language from all the courses they attended in indigenous language and culture classrooms so that they could become fluent speakers to help their children. Parental effort could play a critical role in helping children improve the mother language proficiency.

Language environment conducive to the acquisition of indigenous language should be established in school settings. Sentence strips printed in indigenous language, for instance, could be pasted on the campus walls for children's viewing. Tribal elders could be invited on Mother Language Day to teach indigenous language for children to learn. Moreover, as one indigenous language teacher indicated, a classroom could be designed and established specifically for the purpose of instructing indigenous language. With the establishment of an indigenous language classroom, more teaching aids and indigenous artifacts could be demonstrated and displayed to enhance language learning.

Families that could recognize the importance of and accordingly promote their mother language should be eligible to apply for annual funding from the government. These families should also be acknowledged for their constant effort to promote mother

language. One obstacle for the government to promote mother language was that most aboriginal families were concerned more with practical issues, such as financial problems or employment, than cultural and language inheritance. Some participants thus suggested that social welfare or government funding could be distributed to family units, where mother language was fully used among the family members. These family units would become exemplary models for other families to follow.

To prevent indigenous children from losing their mother language, some participants suggested that a type of school exclusively designed for indigenous children should be established and sponsored by the government. Children studying in this type of school would be mainly instructed in their ethnic language, along with other languages helpful for their academic competitiveness in the mainstream society. Hopefully, this type of school could cultivate a group of children who would inherit and pass on their mother language and culture.

#### Recommendations for Elementary Schools

The findings of this research revealed a number of recommendations for elementary schools, language teachers, and policy makers in designing a language education program that accommodates the language learning needs of indigenous students. First, the educational recommendations are drawn for elementary schools. Due to the small size of the participating school, the number of teachers responsible for each language area is limited. One advantage of small-scale teacher personnel is that it is easier for teachers to reach their consensus in curriculum design through mutual communication and coordination. However, teachers need to improve their practical knowledge in language instruction not only through monthly group meetings, where they

have opportunities to share their teaching strategies in the language area they are responsible for, but also through a series of workshops or on-site training seminars, where they can obtain professional knowledge from scholars or practitioners in instructional materials and methods. Therefore, elementary schools are encouraged to regularly invite language professionals to demonstrate innovative teaching tips to help teachers enhance their instructional skills.

In the case of the participating school, team teaching was conducted because of the implementation of the multiple intelligence experimental project. The Mandarin teacher was allocated an observation teacher in the classroom to document students' learning process, make comments and suggestions regarding the teaching strategies, and record the reflections of the observed teacher and the observer. However, teachers of the other language courses were not provided with similar opportunities to receive constructive feedback from their observation teachers. Research indicated that collaborative reflection and peer observation discussion and feedback have the potential to facilitate teachers' professional knowledge (Manouchehri, 2002). Therefore, elementary schools are encouraged to establish a communicative platform for teachers to share teaching experiences and resources with one another. Teachers are expected to improve their instructional practices through dialogue and interaction with their colleagues and peers.

According to some participants, who taught language subjects and served as the homeroom teachers, the students in the participating school did not receive sufficient support and attention from their parents. In other words, these parents did not set high educational expectations for their children and seldom participated in their children's

learning activities in school. Research indicated that parental involvement has a significant impact on students' academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). In order to effectively assist students' language learning and academic development, the cooperation between teachers and parents is indispensable. Therefore, parent-teacher conferences are recommended to be held regularly in schools, which can provide parents with opportunities to understand their children's progress in academic and emotional development, school curriculum goals, and learning areas that may need parental support.

#### Recommendations for Language Teachers

The professional backgrounds of the language teachers in the study were not directly related to the language areas that they were responsible for teaching. Although International Culture was a newly added course based on the Activation Curriculum experimental project, its purpose was to stimulate children's interest in learning English and teach English through a non-traditional approach, and to encourage children to apply their knowledge from textbooks to their daily conversations. In the case of teaching children English, teachers are expected to develop their professional knowledge in basic pronunciation, linguistics, language acquisition, or child language development. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to participate in conferences at the national or international levels, where symposium and book fair on English teaching are provided to enhance professional development, or to become a member of professional associations, such as Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

The Mandarin teachers were observed to utilize multiple intelligence strategies to guide students to comprehend their instructional contents. These strategies, including



physical movement, drawing, and visual aids, were designed to allow students to explore their unique learning styles and appreciate their own strengths. According to the teaching experiences of the participants, the interactive instructional approach would be more accepted by indigenous students than the traditional lecture approach. Teachers are encouraged to direct and activate students' thinking and creativity through classroom discussion, questions and answers, and group activities so that students can be stimulated to express their ideas through the appropriate use of Chinese vocabulary, idioms, and phrases. These ideas generated during the brainstorming process, along with the correct choice of words and sentence patterns, can facilitate students to formulate and practice short paragraphs and essays.

Ideally, indigenous language instruction should be conducted in an immersion style, where the mother language is used solely in the classroom context. This teaching goal is difficult to achieve due to the fact that most indigenous children do not speak their mother language fluently. However, teachers are recommended to speak their mother language as much as possible and minimize their Mandarin use to facilitate students' language learning. Teachers can use gestures, actions, pictures, and so forth, to convey their ideas so that students may be able to at least partially understand what is being instructed through these clues. Teachers are also encouraged to improve their teaching and course planning strategies through the participation of professional workshops and seminars to engage students in learning activities that are interactive and rich in target language.

### Recommendations for Policy Makers

Professional workshops held by the MOE and the CIP have been provided to teachers who have passed the PTICL and the indigenous teachers who have been employed as the regular teachers in elementary schools. In order to become competent language teachers, continuously participating in a number of professional workshops is necessary. The policy makers are encouraged to establish a program where curriculum and instruction in reference to indigenous language and culture are designed. Huang (2007) suggested that this teacher preparation program should provide three teacher training emphases including Indigenous Language and Culture, Indigenous Language Practices, and Indigenous Language Education. The representative courses from each of these three emphases might be Introduction to Austronesian Linguistics, Indigenous Language Listening and Speaking, and Teaching Materials and Teaching Methods. Indigenous students who are preparing to be teachers are especially encouraged to receive pre-service training in this four-year university program so that they can be qualified teacher candidates responsible for indigenous language instruction in the future.

The frequent use of mother language among all the members at home is suggested as an effective strategy to enhance children's mother language proficiency. Most participants in this study agree that the best way for children to learn their mother language is to practice its use in their family domains rather than in school settings. When the mother language is used between the adults and their children, the shared beliefs, values, wisdom, and understanding are able to be conveyed from adults to young children (Fillmore, 1991). However, due to the language policies in the past, most indigenous parents in Taiwan, similar to their children, have lost their mother languages and

encountered difficulties in speaking fluently with their family members. To require parents to speak to their children to the best of their abilities in indigenous languages seems to be impractical and unrealistic. Besides, parents should not be blamed for their negligence in teaching their children mother language because these parents may belong to the generation that has lost the mother language. Therefore, the policy makers are encouraged to establish evening or weekend classes, where tribal elders can be invited to teach language and culture courses for parents in the community. Parents are also encouraged to bring their young children to community classrooms to learn their mother language together. It is hoped that the establishment of these classes for parents can eventually develop an interconnected group of committed parents involved in revitalizing indigenous language and proud of their use of indigenous language in formal public situations and their private lives, as with the parents of the *Pūnana* Leo language nest in Hawai‘i.

Teaching materials play a vital role in the enhancement of teaching and learning in the language classroom. Compared with the numerous different kinds of teaching materials in Mandarin and English, the teaching resources for Local Language appear to be insufficient, and there remains much opportunity for improvement. Huang (1995) indicated that mother language teaching materials should be incorporated with the introduction of language structure to develop the basic proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Daily expressions and indigenous cultures can also be integrated into mother language teaching materials to stimulate students' interest in learning mother language through the teaching of children's songs and folklore. The Center for Aboriginal Studies has spent years compiling indigenous language teaching materials through the

enormous amount of effort made by tribal elders, chiefs, teachers, governmental officials, farmers, and pastors. This is a great step to the revitalization of indigenous language.

Therefore, it is recommended that listening and speaking practices should be emphasized for beginning level learners to become familiar with basic skills in pronunciation and meaning of vocabulary. Natural conversation recorded by native speakers on various cultural and historic topics can be used for students who have rudimentary knowledge of indigenous language. Materials designed for teaching reading and writing should be prepared for students at advanced level to help them achieve fluency in literacy. To appeal to children's innate dispositions such as curiosity and willingness to explore and discover, it is recommended for policy makers to recruit language professionals and multimedia designers to build audio and video lessons, interactive games and quizzes, and short video clips where dialogues may be filmed for learners to practice.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The current research was designed to investigate how languages, including Mandarin, English, and Local Language, were taught in an elementary school with predominantly large population of indigenous children. Factors influencing the language education program were investigated with regard to the aspects of curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development. The views of participants, including administrators, language teachers, and community members, toward the language education program were also examined. Future research might focus on the exploration of one of these three language areas to understand factors that influence teachers' instructional practices and students' language development and literacy acquisition. In seeking to investigate these factors, it is hoped that effective

instructional strategies and teaching materials can be developed and designed to help students' achieve adequate language proficiency. Future research can also build and expand on the findings in this study for further exploration. More thorough investigation in terms of the allocation of instructional time, curriculum design, teaching training workshops, teacher preparation programs, teaching materials, parental and community support, and language achievement assessment, as well as the relationships among these factors, can be further explored.

This study provided a holistic insight into the implementation of the language education program from multiple language classrooms and interviews with participants through a case study of one indigenous elementary school, where the majority of students were of the Atayal background. Since this study was limited to only one elementary school located in a community on the margin of an urban area, comparing and contrasting the teachers' experiences and participants' viewpoints toward the language education program between two indigenous elementary schools is another area for exploration. It will be of interest to explore the language education program implemented in another indigenous elementary school located in a far more remote mountainous area to understand the challenges and dilemmas that educators encounter on the front line with regard to teaching resources, teacher quality, language context, and language support from school, family, and community.

The research findings were drawn from the viewpoints of teachers, administrators, and community members toward the implementation of language education program in an indigenous elementary school. Whether the adoption of different phonetic symbols in multiple language instruction facilitates or hinders language acquisition is presented

through the viewpoints from the above-mentioned participants except those of students. Future research might include students from different grade levels to listen to their voices and investigate their attitudes regarding their language use at home, language preferences, their difficulties in learning multiple languages, and the importance of learning each language. Parents of these student participants can also be included to cross-examine their language learning and usage in the family, their expectations on their children's language development, and their perceptions of multiple language learning.

One finding suggested that there might be similarities in the instructional strategies between indigenous language and English because indigenous language is frequently taught as a second language and English is taught as a foreign language in the context of Taiwan. Future research should continue seeking adaptive teaching models and teaching materials based on second language acquisition theory and methodology to provide pre-service and in-service teachers with more innovative ideas in enhancing their curriculum design and instructional practices in the field of indigenous language instruction.

### Conclusion

This journey of dissertation writing has provided me with numerous opportunities to explore the language education implemented with a group of minority children and with first-hand experiences in observing the instructional practices in different language classroom settings. Stemming from my personal interest in the language education for indigenous children, I launched this research project, exploring the factors influencing the implementation of the language education program with regard to curriculum design, instructional practices, language resources, and professional development, and

investigating the participants' perspectives on the language education program. Through the exploration of the viewpoints of administrators, teachers, and community members, I have gained more understanding regarding the implementation of different language areas for students at the elementary level.

This research experience has broadened my knowledge of the language loss pattern, where the first language is mainly spoken in the first generation, the ethnic language and the majority language are interchangeably used in the second generation, the third generation often learns the mainstream language as the first language and acquires limited proficiency of the first language, and the fourth generation is monolingual in the majority language (Kouritzin, 1999). Mandarin, the mainstream language, has become the major communication language for indigenous children in the contexts of school as well as community. Although the indigenous language instruction is implemented in the school setting to provide students with the exposure of their home languages, the limited instructional time allocated for local language learning achieves little effect.

The simultaneous emphasis of globalization and indigenization is a major breakthrough in the language education program for school children in Taiwan. Different from the previous language curriculum, where Mandarin was the sole learning subject, the English language has been chosen as a major language to be taught to ensure students achieve international awareness and competitiveness, and the Local Language is incorporated into the language curriculum to enhance students' knowledge of their own native language and culture. Situated between the trends of globalization and localization, children respond to the need for bridging the global societies and cultures through

learning an international language and develop the local subjectivity and identification through learning mother language and culture. It is expected that children are endowed with multiple language abilities and multicultural appreciation through the implementation of this language education program. For indigenous peoples, the task of revitalizing their mother languages and cultures is all the more significant due to the invaluable language resources (Ruiz, 1984) and unique cultural heritage. Therefore, the efforts of revitalizing endangered languages should be made not only from the government and the education system but also from the indigenous groups themselves. Through the efforts of revitalizing the threatened languages, more positive attitudes regarding ethnic identity and collective self-esteem can be cultivated among the indigenous groups, more opportunities of speaking the mother tongue can be created in wider domains for younger indigenous generation, and more attention can be paid from the government to design well-developed education system to accommodate the real needs of indigenous children.



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APPENDIX A  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER



October 5, 2010

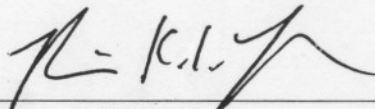
TO: Maria Lahman  
Applied Statistics and Research Methods

FROM: The Office of Sponsored Programs

RE: Exempt Review of *Language Education for Indigenous Children in Taiwan*, submitted by Cheng-Kan Chen

The above proposal is being submitted to you for exemption review. When approved, return the proposal to Sherry May in the Office of Sponsored Programs.

I recommend approval.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Co-Chair

10-5-10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The above referenced prospectus has been reviewed for compliance with HHS guidelines for ethical principles in human subjects research. The decision of the Institutional Review Board is that the project is exempt from further review.

IT IS THE ADVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE STUDENT OF THIS STATUS.

Comments:

APPENDIX B  
CONSENT FORM



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Language Education for Indigenous Children in Taiwan

Researcher:  
Cheng-Kan Chen, Doctoral Student  
Program of Educational Studies  
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Research Advisor:  
Madeline Milian, Ed.D.  
School of Teacher Education  
Phone: 970-351-1683  
Email: [Madeline.Milian@unco.edu](mailto:Madeline.Milian@unco.edu)

**Purpose and Description:** As part of my doctoral program, I am studying the language education program implemented for indigenous children in Taiwan at the elementary level. The primary purpose of this study is to understand the implementation of the Language Arts learning area within the Grade 1-9 curriculum through the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and community members and you have information that may help me gain a broad perspective.

In order to better understand how languages are taught for indigenous children, I am asking for your consent to be included in the study. Your participation will include one or more of the following:

- **Attending interviews:** I will ask you some questions in relation to your background information, your views toward language learning and curriculum design, and your experiences with indigenous children's language learning. The interview session will last approximately from 45 minutes to one hour depending on your availability and convenience to complete the interview questions.
- **Allowing me to observe your instructional practices in your classroom:** I will observe your 40-minute classes for approximately five times during a period of three weeks to help me understand your instructional practices and how these instructional practices lead to your intended goals.
- **Providing me with documents in relation to language education:** I will ask you to offer me documents related to language curriculum, e.g., your course syllabi, lesson plans, handbooks, textbooks, and so forth.

I plan to audio record the interviews and parts of the observations and transcribe everything that helps me understand the research topic for later analysis. The audio files will be stored on a password protected computer. All transcripts and

observational notes will be stored in a locked file cabinet. I will be the only person who has the access to these data. To further help maintain confidentiality, these data will be coded with pseudonyms so that they will not be identifiable. The consent forms will be stored separately from the audio files to maximize confidentiality. The data will be retained by the researcher for five years and will be destroyed after the research report is completed.

Potential risks in this project are minimal. I foresee no risks to you beyond those that are normally encountered in a professional conversation that is audio recorded and/or in a language classroom that is being observed and recorded. Risks will be minimized by your willingness to share with me and/or my role as a non-interruptive observant in the classroom.

Your contribution will enhance the opportunity for new understanding in the field of language education at the elementary level. The significance of this study lies in its attempt to identify the possible factors facilitating or hindering the enhancement of the language education for indigenous children.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Please feel free to phone me if you have any questions or concerns about this research and please retain one copy of this letter for your records.

Thank you for assisting me with my research.

Sincerely,

Cheng-Kan Chen

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Participant's Signature

Date

---

Researcher's Signature

Date



APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

## Interview Protocol for Teachers

### **Demographics and Educational Background**

1. Please tell me about your personal and professional background (ethnic group, your home language, and years of teaching).
2. Please tell me about your past experiences in teaching Mandarin (English or Local Language).
3. Where did you complete your credential and relevant training?
4. What kinds of language courses have you taught?
5. What pre-service and in-service trainings have you received that are related to the elementary Mandarin (English or Local Language) education?

### **Views toward Language Learning, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum Design**

6. Please tell me about your views toward the learning of multiple languages (i.e., Mandarin, English, and Local Language) at the elementary school level.
7. Among the languages being taught in the school, which do you think is the most important? Why?
8. How do you design the instructional activities for the state-mandated curriculum of Mandarin (English or Local Language)?
9. How does your school expect you to implement the curriculum and teach Mandarin (English or Local Language)?

### **Teaching Experiences in the Indigenous School Context**

10. Please share your views about language learning for indigenous children.
11. Please share your experiences in teaching Mandarin (English or Local Language) for indigenous children. What are some instructional practices that you use to accommodate their language development?
12. How do you consider the specific needs of indigenous children when designing the instructional activities?
13. In your opinion, what are some factors that support or hinder language acquisition of indigenous children?

14. What are your instructional goals for indigenous children and how do your instructional practices lead to your intended goals?
15. How does your school support your instructional practices for indigenous children?
16. How do you think the school context could influence your instruction for indigenous children?
17. How much do you cooperate with other language teachers in teaching indigenous children?
18. What are other potential variables that facilitate or interfere with your instruction for indigenous children?
19. In your opinion, what kinds of language learning events or activities that your school provides contribute to language attainment of indigenous children?
20. How does the network function between the school, the teachers, and the parents?
21. What recommendations would you make for teachers, administrators, community members, or policy makers to effectively enhance language education for indigenous children?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ADMINISTRATORS

## Interview Protocol for Administrators

### **Demographics and Educational Background**

1. Please tell me about your personal and professional background (ethnic group and years of working as administrators).
2. Please tell me about your past experiences in supervising a school that educates indigenous children.
3. Tell me about the school.

### **Views toward Language Learning and Curriculum Design**

4. Tell me about your views toward the learning of multiple languages (i.e., Mandarin, English, and Local Language) at the elementary school level.
5. Among the languages being taught in the school, which do you think is the most important? Why?
6. How does your school design its language curriculum?
7. How do you support teachers in following the guidelines of the state-mandated curriculum of Mandarin (English or Local Language)?
8. What are some resources that your school adopts to help language instruction?
9. How are teaching materials selected for language courses?
10. How do you recruit language teachers in your school?
11. What do you think about the language proficiency of the students in your school?
12. What are some extracurricular activities designed for students' language learning?
13. How does your school establish specific language contexts for students?
14. How does your school solve problems that hinder the implementation of language curriculum?

### **Working Experiences in the Indigenous School Context**

15. Please share your views about language learning for indigenous children.
16. In your opinion, what are some factors that support or hinder language acquisition of indigenous children?

17. How much do you cooperate with other administrators in helping language learning of indigenous children?
18. In your opinion, what can your school do with regard to language learning events or activities to facilitate language attainment of indigenous children?
19. What do you think about the connection between school and community in terms of language education?
20. How does the government support language acquisition for indigenous children?
21. What difficulties have you encountered in administering language learning programs for indigenous children and how do you overcome those difficulties?
22. What recommendations do you make for teachers, administrators, or policy makers to effectively enhance language education for indigenous children?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

## Interview Protocol for Community Members

### **Demographics and Educational Background**

1. Please tell me about your personal background (ethnic group and years of working as school board members or community members).
2. What is your role in the community and the school?
3. Please tell me about your past experiences in learning Mandarin (English or Local Language).

### **Views toward Language Learning and Curriculum Design**

4. Tell me about your views toward the learning of multiple languages (i.e., Mandarin, English, and Local Language) at the elementary school level.
5. Among the languages being taught in the school, which do you think is the most important? Why?

### **Experiences with Indigenous Children's Language Learning**

6. How can parents help children to learn Mandarin, English, or Indigenous Language at home or in the community?
7. In your opinion, what are some factors that support or hinder language acquisition of indigenous children?
8. In your opinion, what do you think should be included in language education for indigenous children?
9. In your opinion, what can your school do with regard to language learning events or activities to facilitate language attainment of indigenous children?
10. In your opinion, what kinds of language learning events or activities that the community provides will contribute to language attainment of indigenous children?
11. How does the community establish specific language contexts for indigenous children?
12. What events take place in the community that can support the languages taught at school?
13. What do you think about the connection between school and community in terms of language education?



14. What recommendations would you make for teachers, administrators, community members, or policy makers to effectively enhance language education for indigenous children?