

Preliminary Results of a Community-based Language Revitalization Initiative in Truku Seediq*

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This paper provides an understanding of young people's experiences of participating in a language revitalization project in an indigenous setting. Emerging from a community-based language revitalization initiative that is part of a micro-level language planning project in a Truku Seediq community, this study explores whether the community-based language revitalization initiative has contributed to the goal of stemming further indigenous language erosion at this critical point in the ongoing process of language shift. The project centers on five activities: (i) community theater and interviews, (ii) culture-based and domain-oriented weekly language classes, (iii) a master-apprentice program, (iv) language documentation and archiving, and (v) university-community partnerships. Methodologies include surveys, questionnaires, focus group interviews, and observations. The results of the study show the significance of motivation and suggest four main factors that can contribute to maintaining youth's motivation for learning an endangered language: a strong sense of holistic identity, a culturally-based and domain-oriented language curriculum, an affective and relational language learning environment, and the positioning of the youth as crucial agents of the community-based language revitalization initiative.

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1. Introduction

Can a community-based language revitalization initiative contribute to stemming indigenous language erosion and to the reversal of a critical shift toward dominant languages? How can we raise indigenous people's awareness of the urgency of revitalizing a native tongue? Do culturally-based and domain-oriented language programs contribute to people's motivation to learn their mother tongue? Can youth be the agents for language revitalization projects? A macro-language planning approach taken at the government level has traditionally been employed to address the social problems that involve language. However, more recent approaches view micro-language planning, which occurs at the local level or in interpersonal communication, as essential and necessary in a multilingual and multicultural context (King, 2004; Phyak, 2009). Such approaches are applicable in linguistic situations, such as that in Taiwan, where there is a negative political orientation toward indigenous languages, continuous conflict of language ideologies that is reflected in current language-in-education policies, and ambivalent language identity and ethnicity among indigenous people (Chen, 2006).

Micro-level language planning considers community involvement to be necessary in indigenous language maintenance. More and more researchers agree that both economic and educational development conceived of at the community level or with the collaboration of non-governmental organizations are more likely to be successful than externally imposed and controlled models (e.g., Davis, 1999; Siegel, 1997).

Having grown up as a Truku Seediq (hereafter Truku) in the multilingual and multicultural context of Taiwan, I have felt ambivalent about my ethnolinguistic identity. My personal experience urges me to ask the questions: "How can indigenous people have access to social, economic, and educational opportunities through Mandarin and English yet still maintain indigenous language use and ethnolinguistic identity in the multilingual context of Taiwan? What type of community-based initiative would be appropriate or effective to

attempt a reversal of the critical shift from Truku toward Mandarin?” This paper aims to contribute to research on essential issues of language endangerment and revitalization by taking as an example the Truku speech community.

It is urgent to consider current language shift and language attrition issues from a multi-component view. That is to say, if Truku and other Formosan languages are to survive another generation, rather than relying on top-down national language policy that requires consensus from various political and ethnic groups and long-term planning, it is absolutely necessary to explore the potential of localized language planning that integrates ethnolinguistic, national, and global identities in a multilingual context, as very few plans for localized language planning have yet been proposed, let alone implemented, for any Formosan language.

I will begin with a brief explanation of the motivation of the study in section 2. In section 3, this study’s theoretical orientation in terms of language shift, micro-language planning, and the concept of youth as agents in language revitalization is briefly discussed. Using the example of the Truku speech community, I describe the design and methods of the study in section 4. The findings are presented in section 5, followed by a discussion in section 6. Section 7 provides brief concluding remarks of the paper.

2. Motivation

The motivation of this study is threefold. First, little scholarly attention has been paid to the micro-language planning that occurs at the local level or in interpersonal communication for Formosan languages. Many previous studies center on macro-language planning approaches, which take place at the government level or as part of projects of state formation (Chen, 2006, 2010; Hubbs, 2013; among others). However, as King (2004) and Phyak (2009) argue for other regions, micro-level or localized language planning, supported by national policy and ideology to integrate ethnolinguistic, national, and global identities, is essential in a multilingual and multicultural context like Taiwan.

Second, relatively little attention has been paid to the efforts to revitalize Formosan language that are largely defined by the speech communities. In the past, research on documenting and revitalizing endangered Formosan languages has focused on building

linguistic corpus databases (e.g., Hsieh and Huang, 2007; Yang and Rau, 2005), language-in-education policy (e.g., Hubbs, 2013; Oladejo, 2006), and endangered language acquisition (e.g., Rau et al., 2005). Hsieh and Huang (2007) provide a two-dimensional approach to language documentation, building a database and conducting a sociolinguistic survey to document the language vitality in Kavalan. Yang and Rau (2005) propose an integrated framework that links language archiving, language processing, and creating learning materials.

As for language-in-education policy, Hubbs (2013) examines the one national language policy and multilingual education in Taiwan, and proposes integrating indigenous scholarship and knowledge into the educational system. Oladejo (2006) investigates opinions on some critical issues related to recent educational reforms in Taiwan. In relation to the process of endangered language acquisition, Rau et al. (2005) investigate the context of teaching an endangered language to Chinese adult learners in Taiwan, the phonological and syntactic acquisition process, and applications to language documentation and revitalization in general. While all these perspectives are generally beneficial for the current Formosan endangered language efforts, very few language revitalization initiatives, as noted earlier, are largely defined by the speech communities themselves. Nevertheless, after all, it is the speakers of the speech community who make the final decision to abandon or maintain their own linguistic properties (Brenzinger, Heine, and Somner, 1991).

Third, attempts to position youth as the key change agents in (reversing) language shift, as suggested by Fishman (1991: 287), are still lacking in endeavors to stem further Formosan language decline. Youth, as Shohamy (2006: 48) points out, are the ones who set the language policy of the home and want to make decisions on choosing the language(s) they use with their peers and in public domains depending on a variety of considerations. Similarly, Harrison (2007: 8) argues that the “youngest speakers—acting as tiny social barometers—are acutely sensitive to the disfavoured status of their elders’ languages...and may choose to speak the more dominant tongue.” In reality, however, the lack of motivation among youth to join grassroots efforts to revitalize languages has been a big challenge among

indigenous speech communities in Taiwan.¹ Therefore, it is worthwhile investigating the role of youth in Formosan language revitalization efforts at the grassroots level.

3. Theoretical orientation²

3.1 Language shift

It is generally agreed that language shift refers to the loss of functional aspects of a given language (i.e., change in language use), and can occur at the macro or community level. In Taiwan, language shift to Mandarin leading to indigenous language death is currently rampant among the indigenous speech communities. In other words, indigenous languages (ILs) have been in a subordinate position whereas Mandarin has had privileged status in the past century. This is mainly due to early sinicization of the indigenous groups who lived in the lowland areas; governmental policy imposing Mandarin Chinese as the only official language; lack of intergenerational transmission in linguistically still-extant communities; and emigration of younger villagers to neighboring towns (Zeitoun, Yu, and Weng, 2003). In addition, ILs are not used as the medium of instruction in school, so many people feel that learning ILs brings little or no future benefit.

These ongoing changes have already resulted in a shift from the use of Truku to that of Mandarin across generations. Specifically, these changes have brought about a decrease in the domains of use of Truku, the reduction of the number of speakers, and the interruption of intergenerational transmission—the weakening of three factors that are crucial for a language to survive.

3.2 Micro-language planning

Language planning (LP) refers to “deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language code” (Cooper, 1989: 45). There are two levels of LP—*macro* and *micro*—where the former

¹ For example, Kimi Yudaw, the longtime leader of the Indigenous Multi-Cultural Association in Qowgan village, a retired teacher and a Truku speaker, expressed her frustration at failing to motivate the youth to regularly join her ongoing Truku language class (Kimi Yudaw, 2011 personal communication).

² This section draws partially on the author’s unpublished dissertation (Tang 2011).

describes language planning taking place at the government level or during state formation, whereas the latter occurs at the local level or in interpersonal communication (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997; Ricento, 2006).

To relieve the multi-faceted pressures on the language and to boost speakers' confidence as a community, micro-LP is emphasized here and it provides a comprehensive analysis that includes examination of issues related to language policy development, cultural experiences, implementation of language policies, and formal or informal language learning practices. Moreover, as noted above, to achieve the integration of ethnolinguistic, national, and global identities in multilingual and multicultural contexts, it is essential both to engage in micro-level language planning and to ensure that it has macro-level support (King, 2004; Phyak, 2009).

Micro-LP involves collaborative work and partnership between researchers and the community, and between older and younger speakers. Mattessich and Monsey (1992: 11) define collaboration as a well-defined and mutually beneficial relationship that is entered by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The task of preserving an endangered language is so complex that it needs planning and management, the commitment of people with particular skills, and a way to ensure that those involved are acting on behalf of the community as a whole (Crystal, 2000). Furthermore, as Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) emphasized in her model of Community-Based Language Research, linguists need to be actively engaged partners working collaboratively with language communities.

Hence, micro-LP ensures that the community plays a significant role and stays in charge of its own long-term language maintenance. Many linguists agree that only the indigenous community itself can save its language (e.g., Crystal, 2000; Hinton, 2008; among others). In addition, rather than merely focusing on linguistic cause, micro-LP offers a way to relieve the multi-faceted pressures on a language and to provide an opportunity to boost speakers' confidence as a community.

3.3 Youth as agents

As already mentioned, the youth of a community, whose views on language depend on various factors, set the language policy of the home and want to choose the language(s) they

use with their peers and in public domains (Shohamy, 2006). Therefore, in a setting where language shift is already evident, a strong body of agents is needed to have sufficient influence to regain the choice of native language use in various domains. Arguing that youth have the ability to be thoughtful and critical about the underlying causes of language endangerment, many researchers (e.g., McCarty and Wyman, 2009; Messing, 2009; among others) in indigenous language practices emphasize the need to view youth as actors in endangered language contexts.

Moreover, Romaine (2007) points out that the pulse of a language clearly lies in the youngest generation. McCarty and Wyman (2009: 279) disfavour the stereotypical assumption that indigenous youth simply orient away from local communities and identities and toward dominant languages, and argue that young people “negotiate relationships of power, assumptions about languages, and diminishing opportunities for ancestral language learning in rapidly changing sociolinguistic ecologies.” However, they caution that youth cannot be expected to act alone. They need more powerful language policy authorizing agents to support them.

4. Research design and methods

4.1 Truku speech community

The Seediq language is an Austronesian language spoken by the indigenous groups who live in the northeastern part of Taiwan. There are three major dialects, Teuda, Tkdaya, and Truku. The Truku population is around 29,410, but not all of these people are fluent speakers, and the youngsters do not speak Truku. According to Krauss’s (2007) classification for degrees of language endangerment, Truku is categorized as a definitely endangered language, because it is spoken only by the parental generation and above. Similarly, based on Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), Truku is between stages 7 and 8 indicating that parents are not passing the language on to their children and the only remaining fluent speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.

In addition, in terms of the stage of cultural assimilation to another language, the results from the Hawai‘i Assessment of Language Access experiments and proficiency tasks help determine that Truku is at the stage of emergent bilingualism, meaning people become

increasingly efficient in their new language while still retaining competence in their old. This is the stage where there is a real chance to slow down the process of decline and to attempt reversal of a critical shift toward the dominant language (Crystal 2000: 79).³

With regard to language documentation, Truku's documentation can be graded as "fair" in terms of "Amount and Quality of Documentation."⁴ This grade indicates that there may be an adequate descriptive grammar or a sufficient amount of grammars, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality, with or without annotation. Since Truku is defined as a definitely endangered language, language maintenance or revitalization efforts should go hand-in-hand with language documentation at this juncture if Truku is to survive another generation. The situation of Taiwan's other indigenous languages is similar.

4.2 Community-based language revitalization projects

Qowgan, located between Hualien city and Truku Gorge National Park, is one of the eight Truku villages in Hualien county, eastern Taiwan. There are 710 residential houses and the Truku population in this village is 2,220, consisting of 1,149 males and 1,071 females.⁵ Nowadays, the majority of the young people work outside the village and many villagers tend to use Mandarin in various domains, which helps them to better access socioeconomic resources in the multiethnic context. However, these changes lead to a frequent contact with non-Truku speaking communities and limit the domains of Truku use.

³ These experiments were combined with three proficiency tasks, and all were completed by 72 participants in four different age groups (Tang, 2011). Crystal states that the stages of cultural assimilation to another language are (i) immense pressure on the people to speak the dominant language, (ii) emergent bilingualism, and (iii) monolingualism in the dominant language.

⁴ This grading scale runs from 0, which refers to complete shift to another language (*extinct* in the UNESCO rubric) to 5, which represents language vitality (*safe* in the UNESCO rubric). The scale was developed by the UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages (Matthias Brenzinger, Arianne M. Dwyer, Tjeerd de Graaf, Collette Grinevald, Michael Krauss, Osahito Miyaoka, Nicholas Ostler, Osamu Sakiyama, María E. Villalón, Akira Y. Yamamoto, Ofelia Zepeda), and published in their report, "Language Vitality and Endangerment" (A document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages, Paris, 10-12, March 2003. Online version: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf>).

⁵ Data is from Jin-mei Village Office, Sioulin Township, Hualien County, Taiwan.

For the reasons discussed thus far, it is worthwhile to investigate and continue Formosan language revitalization efforts at the grassroots level. Language revitalization and language documentation have long been viewed as separate work. However, Penfield and Tucker (2011: 292) believe that large electronic databases (corpora), created by language documentation communities, can provide access to data and be used for the purpose of language revitalization. In other words, documentation should be included while making preservation efforts. Therefore, I follow their definition that language revitalization is a process of re-awakening language that involves language documentation as well.

Therefore, four goals of the project are to: (i) focus on the community itself and its members; (ii) raise community members' awareness of language shift and the significance of preserving our mother tongue; (iii) strengthen the community's mission and mobilization through epistemologically based education and development; and (iv) position youth as the key change agents in (reversing) language shift, and empower them to participate as partners, and sometimes as key directors, of various research processes.

To work toward these goals, the project has focused on five major realms of activity: (1) community theater and interviews (see 4.2.1), (2) weekly language classes that follow a culturally-based and domain-oriented language curriculum (see 4.2.2), (3) a master-apprentice program (see 4.2.3), (4) language documentation and archiving (see 4.2.4), and (5) university-community partnerships (see 4.2.5), in the form of collaboration on the weekly language classes, which mainly happens during the school year (September 2013 to June 2014).

4.2.1 Community theater and interviews

We believe the first step in working with the indigenous people, especially the youth and parents, is to raise their awareness of language shift and the importance of doing urgent language revitalization, and to create a dialogue in situations where people feel a sense of safety and belonging to a community. We incorporate improvisational theater techniques in our workshops and family visitation to encourage people of different generations to share

their experiences of linguistic oppression in mainstream society.⁶ If people are aware of language oppression, they will have a chance to examine their language's current linguistic status, and be more apt to take remedial action for language revitalization. In addition, we show evidence of language shift and convey the significance of preserving our mother tongue at this critical juncture of doing language revitalization as an effort we make together as a community.

4.2.2 Weekly culturally-based and domain-oriented language curriculum

It is widely acknowledged that language shift and attrition are largely determined by notions like attitude and identity. People in the Truku community will need to possess a high level of motivation and a strong sense of security to maintain Truku as the symbolic language of family and community. Therefore, the culturally-based and domain-oriented language teaching program is designed to help individual community members discover who they are and connect them with their ancestors' life experiences in the past, and hence, to maintain the speaker's identity and support their self-perception.

The program is divided into two stages. The first stage (July 2012 to May 2013) consisted of the culturally-based classes to support Truku learning, which were conducted in a bamboo pavilion (*biyi* in Truku) next to a vegetable field in Qowgan village.⁷ The curriculum designed for this weekly class, held on Saturday mornings from eight to ten or beyond was based on a Truku child's socialization process—learning by doing—targeting the younger Truku learners. Therefore, the classes included designing traps, growing vegetables, knowing the names of animals and plants, building a campfire, learning Truku traditional songs and dances, and so forth. The lead elder in this working team, Ciwang, once said, “The most important thing for traditional Truku is the land. Wherever we go, we first build a *biyi*

⁶ Boal (2000) recognizes that humans have a unique ability to take action in the world while simultaneously observing themselves in action, and believes that the human is a self-contained theater, actor, and spectator in one.

⁷ The classroom can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/150656285058267/> and we created a group on Facebook called *Pnkari ta Truku hug* ‘Let’s speak in Truku’. Contents of the weekly class are posted in advance, so all the young members of this group may preview and review the Truku words, phrases, and songs before and after the class.

next to the farming land where we can talk, rest, and discuss our culture with our family members and the young generation.”

At the second stage (February 2014 till present), the domain-oriented approach was adopted due to the needs of the community, a change of the team workers, and discontinuation of the funding. The aim of this stage is to strengthen the youth’s speaking and listening Truku language skills in the domain of church. The classes center on biblical knowledge and take place at the local Presbyterian Church, and the goal is for the youth to have the ability to sing praises, pray, and declare in Truku. The weekly Saturday classes run from ten to eleven in the morning or beyond for those 13 years old and above and from three to four in the afternoon or beyond for those 12 years old and below. The pedagogical materials are mainly based on the *Truku Hymnbook* (Pisaw and Yudaw, 1994), the *Truku Bible* (Pisaw, Taying and Ciyang, 2005), and handouts provided by the elders. In addition to the biblical materials, the elders or teachers teach the youth words and short conversations with different themes, such as the names of the various traditional houses, kinships, and so forth. The youth are then allowed and scheduled to sing, pray, read scriptures or declarations, and present skits in the actual congregation on Sundays.

4.2.3 Master-apprentice program

Master-apprentice programs to support indigenous language revitalization, first created in California, feature a one-on-one learning relationship between a “master” (elder, speaker) and an “apprentice” (language learner), who work together intensively for 20 hours every week, speaking only the indigenous language. The program is based on the concept that people learn a language best by being immersed in it for significant amounts of time, without translation to their dominant language.

In this program, whose name in local slang translates as “Big Hands Holding Small Hands,” the master and apprentice go about their daily lives speaking in Truku and doing everyday or special activities together. We offer meetings occasionally, inviting the 20 pairs of participants to share their progress and challenges. We also provide some active language teaching and learning strategies. Participants are encouraged to make their own video clips of their daily interactions and activities and share them with the others during the meetings.

4.2.4 Language documentation and archiving

The materials being documented can be divided into three categories: (1) the traditional songs and stories collected from the elders in the village are transcribed; (2) the contents derived from the weekly classes are videotaped and made into the class units for the pedagogical materials which are posted to the project's Facebook group page or *Sapah Kari* 'the house of language', a newly-developed student initiative language conservation hub;⁸ and (3) the processes of the whole program are recorded and made available to be used to produce video clips for various purposes such as arousing conscious awareness, enriching pedagogical materials with indigenous epistemology, and so forth.

4.2.5 University-community partnership

In university-community partnerships, faculty and students collaborate in a variety of community settings and programs with grassroots groups and community-based organizations; partners are engaged in mutual reflection and analysis of the needs and values of the community, work in partnership for the research endeavour, and use their findings to support social change efforts (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). Concepts that guide these partnerships include the concepts of empowerment and collaboration with each other; therefore, all partners become active members of the research team. The college students who are involved in this weekly language program act as teaching assistants, partners, facilitators, and documenters interchangeably.⁹

4.3 Methods

This study focuses on the weekly culturally-based and domain-oriented language program because of its stability in terms of participants and curriculum, as well as the sufficient time length for observation compared to the other activities. The purpose is to provide a deeper understanding of the youth's experiences of participating in culturally-based and domain-oriented classes in their own village, hence to explore whether the

⁸ *Sapah Kari* (<http://www.sk.ndhu.edu.tw/bin/home.php>)

⁹ The weekly language program collaborates with a class led by Dr Amy Pei-Jung Lee from January to June 2013 and by the author from January to June 2014 in the Department of Indigenous Language and Communication at Dong Hwa University.

community-based language revitalization initiative has contributed to stemming further indigenous language erosion at this critical period of time.¹⁰

Collaborative ethnographic methods (e.g., dialogues, participant observation, field notes, researcher's journals, home visits, interviews, audio-recording) were employed to explain how the youth' linguistic and cultural identity can be strengthened, so they can be empowered to take the risks necessary to support their language choices and imagined future. Data were collected at Qowgan village over an eighteen-month period by the following means: (1) a language assessment survey and language attitude survey conducted around January 2014 (see Appendixes A¹ and A²), (2) a mid-term learning questionnaire administered in July 2014 (see Appendix B), (3) a focus group interview held in July 2014, and (4) the researchers' in-class observations, field notes, and journals (July 2012 to July 2014).¹¹

Twenty to twenty-three young Truku learners ranging in age from six to fifteen years old participated in the culturally-based Truku learning conducted in the bamboo pavilion during this period (July 2012 to May 2013). Approximately twenty young Truku ranging in age from five to twelve years old and ten ranging in age from thirteen to twenty-six years old have been participating in the domain-oriented language program conducted at the Qowgan Presbyterian Church (February 2014 until the present).

All of these participants live and have grown up in Qowgan village and regularly join the program, and all the children can only utter a few lexical items related to greetings or basic terms such as body parts or nature images.¹² The participants were asked to write individually or share in a group about the factors that contribute to keeping them motivated in learning Truku and changes or challenges they have encountered during the learning process.

5. Findings

¹⁰ Youth here refers to those who are between six and twenty-six years old.

¹¹ An English version of the language assessment survey and language attitude surveys can be seen at the website of the First Peoples' Cultural Council (2013a and 2013b).

¹² Tang (2011) discusses the children's language ability and program participation in greater detail.

Generally, for many of the youth, their understanding of what maintained their motivation was associated primarily with the useful content, dedicated elders/teachers, and spiritual mission of the courses. The main factors they felt contributed to keeping them motivated were their sense of having gained the practical capability to speak of the content matter being transmitted and a strong and positive sense of self-identity. These findings were drawn from the surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and observations as follows.

5.1 Language assessment and language attitude surveys

Thirteen young Truku ranging in age from five to twelve years old and thirteen ranging in age from thirteen to twenty years old filled out these surveys. However, for the sake of consistency, only the data from the thirteen teenagers (those 13 to 20 years old) were used so that it could be compared to their responses in the other evaluations, the mid-term questionnaire and the focus group interview. In other word, data from the younger children (from five to twelve years old) were not used here.

The survey contained questions relevant to motivation and attitude. The percentages for different motivations for learning Truku were derived from the responses of the sixteen participants who responded to question number 2.2 (Appendix A¹): “If you are interested in learning the language, please rank your top three reasons for learning the language.” The top three reasons were: “To speak with my elders” (70%); “Learning the language is vital to my culture and identity” (65%); and “To keep the language and culture alive” (35%).

In addition, all participants chose “agree strongly” to items 1-3 in the language attitude survey (Appendix A²): “It is important for members of our community to know their language”; “Our language is vital to our identity and existence as a people”; and “Our language is worth saving” (100%). Furthermore, 80% of the participants felt that providing opportunities for children and youth to learn the language should be a priority.

5.2 Mid-term learning questionnaire

Different from the above-mentioned surveys that assessed their overall motivation and attitude, the mid-term learning questionnaire emphasized general evaluation of the current language class, and was administered to six participants from sixteen to eighteen years old who regularly attended the weekly program. Their responses shed light on our understanding

of the youth's experiences of participating in the domain-oriented classes at the church in their own village. Their responses to the first question of section 2 (See Appendix B) are reproduced in (1).

(1) *Question 1: Being a Truku, should one speak in Truku? If yes, why?*

Student 1: Yes, Truku is our property; the language could help us find ourselves again.

Student 2: Of course! We cannot let our native language go; we should keep it alive.

Student 3: Half half. We could speak Truku and Mandarin all together.

Student 4: Sure! Keeping our language and bloodline is an honor.

Student 5: Yes, this language is given by God.

Student 6: As an indigenous person, one should speak his or her mother tongue.

All but one respondent (Student 3) showed a strong sense of ethnic identity and a strong link between language and being who they are. They viewed language as a property, a living substance, symbol of honor, a gift, or a possession; in fact, the use of affirmative words such as *yes, sure, of course* at the beginning of their statements demonstrates the intensity of this strong connection between language and their sense of self.

Similarly, in their responses to question 2, presented in (2), all of the participants affirmed the indispensability of Truku being used in the specific domain of the Presbyterian Church in Qowgan.

(2) *Question 2: How do you feel if no-one can pray and sing in Truku at our church?*

Student 1: Very strange, and I feel it is the end of the world.

Student 2: I feel we are not Truku people.

Student 3: Sad! We cannot afford not to have it.

Student 4: I feel very awkward, and am not accustomed to it.

Student 5: Just pray!

Student 6: We will lose the blessings of God if the Truku language disappears.

These responses suggest that they viewed their mother tongue as an essential part of life or of being Truku, a true person, a valuable substance, or a channel for receiving blessings; in fact, Student 1 expressed the hopelessness of the world without a native tongue. Student 5 considered the lack of Truku language in the church as a desperate situation that required a supernatural force, i.e., prayer, to restore it. Therefore, the youth's responses here demonstrate that speakers' sense of identity, ethnicity, or spirituality can be determining factors in their language choices.

5.3 Focus group interview

After they finished the questionnaire, the six participants were asked to join in a group interview. The main purpose of this focus group interview was to gain a better understanding about their learning experience in the weekly domain-oriented language program at the church. They were asked two main questions; the following subsections describe their responses.

5.3.1 “What do you learn in this program?”

The first question asked at the group interview was “What do you learn in this program?” According to the respondents, Truku hymns or songs of praise as well as thematic words related to daily life were the two major categories of what they learned that they felt was very useful. However, their comments revealed nuanced views of the purposes of learning them, including biblical knowledge transmission, spiritual stewardship, and family communication. Two respondents indicated that these classes were very helpful for functions such as scripture declaration or song dedication at the church. Some of their comments follow in (3).

(3)

I finally understand the meaning of the lyrics in the Truku Hymnbook...these songs can be heard continuously at our church.

I learn many Truku new words in the different domains...language is our property given by our God.

I get more familiar with Truku pronunciation and orthography...these help me to communicate with my family members a lot better; I know better what the elders at home want me to do.

...even though I learned the words in the class, I was still unable to pronounce them at home.

These extracts show that the participants found some positive value in this type of domain-oriented language program, but also that the frustration of not being able to produce the words learned in the class at home still endured.

5.3.2 “Do you want to keep participating, and why or why not?”

Most respondents expressed that they had enjoyed the classes so far and intended to continue to attend the class regularly except for those times when their attendance was prevented by their participation in other events. However, their responses, shown in (4), showed a different perspective toward the motives for continuous attendance at the class.

(4)

It is fun to learn Truku with my team workers at the church; they take this seriously.

I think the materials that the elders use are very practical, and we can use them in daily life or at the church; therefore, our language will not be lost.

I like the elders because they are so kind and always hope that we can get our language back.

I can learn the meaning of the lyrics in the Hymnbook.

These extracts demonstrate that seeing the practicality of the materials, being influenced by the sincerity of their peers and elders, and having the mission of transmitting the language

can help maintain the youth's motivation to learn. Nevertheless, this positive view was not the case for everybody. A couple of them remained silent when asked this question, and they shrugged their shoulders, perhaps indicating that they were not sure if they would continue to join the class regularly.

5.4 Observations¹³

Respondents' comments revealed a nuanced view toward the community-based language revitalization initiative as a whole. On one hand, young Truku showed interest in learning their native tongue, indicating that they could potentially become agents who actively seek opportunities to learn, as the exchange in (5) demonstrates:

(5) *Grandmother: This is...and that is...(simultaneously speaking Chinese and pointing at the pictures on a sheet of paper to her 6-year old grandson, who was leaning on her arm).*

Grandson: Do not keep using this/Chinese. I do not want to read; I want to read this in the mother tongue (with a tone of intense anger).

This example reflects a tremendous change in this participant's sense of identity. At the beginning of the implementation of this project (February 2012), he was one of the students who refused to join the culturally-based language program. His grandmother explained that long-term encouragement made him gradually accept and start to take part in the weekly program. The intensity of his anger when he responded to his grandmother demonstrates his eagerness to learn the Truku words.

Another example comes from short interactions between the interviewer and a male fifth grader and female fourth grader, shown in (6) and (7). These two children are being raised by their respective grandmothers, who speak a great amount of Truku at home.

(6) *Interviewer: What do you think if Truku is or is not spoken?*

Boy: If you can speak Truku, you could use it at home and ask others to

¹³ The observations reported in this section are derived from the author's conversations, participant observation, field notes, journal, or interviews from July 2012 to the present.

speak it.

Girl: If it is not spoken, Truku people will be wiped out, and disappear completely from this earth.

(7) *Interviewer: Do you enjoy attending the weekly language program?*

Girl: Yes, I do because I can learn how to grow different plants and know their names in my mother tongue.

In these examples, the respondents showed their understanding of the strong link between language and ethnic identity, and their willingness to take part in and enjoyment of the language program based on practical and traditional knowledge.

However, on the other hand, some parents and adults expressed their frustration and disagreement about transmitting the native tongue to the younger generations, as in (8).

(8) *A forty-year-old father: We are in a different era; we should let our children learn Chinese and English for better future education.*

A thirty-two-year-old mother: As a mother, I don't even know how to speak Truku. How am I able to teach my kids?

An about forty-year-old male: It is alright not to use or learn Truku; speaking Chinese will do. Perhaps we won't be discriminated against this way.

An about fifty-year-old male: Even if we speak Truku to the young ones, they do not understand anyway. Don't waste time!

6. Discussion

Three main points about factors that contribute to community-based language revitalization initiatives are supported by the limited data presented and discussed in this paper. First, the data in this paper confirm that people's sense of inner identity is a determining factor for their language choice that can lead to either more frequent or less frequent use of an endangered language (Norton, 1997).

The youth who participated in this study have a strong sense of the connection between their mother tongue language and their identity. The intensity of the participants' positive reaction to learning Truku seen in their responses in this study is uncommon among Truku speech communities. One reason for this is that Sioulin Township, where most Truku live, is perceived as an unprestigious region by the dominant society. Because of this attitude, speakers are very likely to make the decision to abandon the language, shifting away from it to the language of the majority group (Sasse, 1992).

A second reason is that negative attitudes emerge toward a minority group's language when there exists an uneven distribution of languages in a multilingual setting, as in Taiwan. However, because the youth who participate in this project have strong religious beliefs that all they possess, including ethnicity, language, and culture, are properties given by God, they feel that being stewards of these spiritual gifts is a mission and a source of prestige. Hence, it is reasonable to suppose that these youth's willingness to learn more about their own culture and language is motivated by their strong sense of their spiritual, ethnic, and individual identities, although this is not the case for all youth.

The next point is related to the maintenance of a supportive and stable language learning environment, which, as Curwin (2010) suggests, seems to play a defining role in how motivated students are to learn. The affective and relational language learning environment created by the culturally-based and domain-oriented classes has helped prompt members of the younger generations to participate in the community-based language program regularly. Three out of the four responses presented in (4) above are related to affective and relational factors such as encouragement from friends or parents, companionship of family members and peers, and teachers' or elders' sincerity and expectations, and these responses imply that these factors help the youth maintain their participation in the process of endangered language learning. Moreover, examples (5) to (7) suggest that children who have had socialization in Truku at home tend to have higher motivation to learn Truku.

Finally, the results of the language assessment and language attitude surveys (section 4.1) and the participants' comments in example (4) suggest that the practicality and necessity of being able to speak Truku in these specific contexts plays a crucial role in maintaining the youth's motivation. The materials being used in the culturally-based and domain-oriented

language programs meet their perceived needs. This is consistent with what has been advocated by some critical researchers: that we should value children's voices to generate culturally relevant and dialogic practices that better meet their needs (Soto and Swadener, 2005). The top three motivations they chose—"To speak with my elders"; "Learning the language is vital to my culture and identity"; and "To keep the language and culture alive"—could also be viewed as the course objectives that have been incorporated into the curriculum design of this ongoing community-based language program.

7. Conclusion

The notion of the community-based language revitalization initiative acquires special importance in the study of the use of endangered languages in multilingual contexts. The micro-level culturally-based and domain-oriented language programs implemented in the Truku community that is the site of this study have contributed to raising people's motivation to learn their mother tongue. In the context of Taiwan, there is a continuous conflict among languages that is fueled by the language ideologies in the current language-in-education policy, and the inability or unwillingness of parents or elders in indigenous language communities to effectively implement language interventions aimed at language revitalization. These linguistic struggles strengthen the use of the dominant language—Mandarin Chinese—and cause the erosion and further decline of Formosan languages.

Hence, community-based language revitalization initiatives can play a crucial role to help stem further Formosan language erosion. Specifically, the results of the study presented here suggest four main factors that contribute to maintaining the motivation of the learners of endangered languages: a strong sense of identity; culturally-based and domain-oriented language programs; an affective and relational language learning environment, and positioning the youth as crucial agents for language revitalization. A community-based language revitalization initiative should foster these factors.

However, it is too simplistic to suggest that effective language revitalization can be entirely based on bottom-up strategies any more than it can be completely dependent on top-down policy. Rather, at this critical stage of indigenous language endangerment,

revitalization efforts must be both bottom-up and top-down; both the community sphere and the government sphere must be engaged in order to motivate language learning and acquisition. This paper can only be a very modest beginning in dealing with the issue of community-based language revitalization initiatives in an indigenous setting. The lack of teaching methodologies and pedagogical materials with indigenous epistemology are significant problems in multicultural and multilingual contexts, and their in-depth investigation are worthwhile topics of future research.

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Appendix A¹: 語言評估調查 Language assessment survey

一、Truku 語言評估調查

基本資料:

年齡: _____

性別 (請圈選): 男 / 女

社區/部落: _____

語言/方言: _____

1. 對此語言的了解與接觸

1.1 你說此語言的能力?

- 流利
- 尚流利; 自己能明白但還是有些問題
- 不是很好; 知道很多單字及片語, 但還是不太能對話
- 知道一些單字, 但無法成句
- 一點都不會

1.2 你認為你對此語言的了解程度?

- 很好; 都能明白人家對我所說的
- 大多明白對話內容, 但並非完全
- 只知道一些單字及片語, 但無法成句
- 一點都不會

1.3 你目前正在學習此語言嗎(例如在社區/部落、和一位耆老、或在學校學習)?

- 有 沒有

1.4 你認為你大約可以說幾個單字(對此語言)?

- 0 1-20 21-40 41-100 101-200 201-300 301-400 400 以上

1.5 你認為你大約可以了解幾個單字(對此語言)?

- 0 1-20 21-40 41-100 101-200 201-300 301-400 400 以上

1.6 你認識幾位會說此語言的人?

0 1-3 4-6 7-10 10 以上

1.7 你多久會和會說此語言的人接觸?

每天 每週 每月 有時 從來沒有

1.8 你知道會說此語言的人有哪些嗎? 請列出他們的名字:

1.9 你和你家人有多少時間會使用此語言?

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有

1.10 目前你家有誰還在說此語言(複選)?

奶奶 爺爺 爸爸 媽媽 哥哥姐姐/弟弟妹妹 沒有 其他_____

1.11 你在你目前的工作場合使用此語言的頻率多高(包括在田裡工作、狩獵、釣魚、製作手工藝等)?

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有 不適用;不知道

1.12 若你在工作,你如何使用此語言或聽見此語言? 例如,此語言在某特定時段或地點才會被使用? 或者,你只會和特定的工作人員、顧客使用此語言嗎?

1.13 你在你目前的學校使用此語言的頻率多高?

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有 不適用;不知道

1.14 若你目前在學校,你如何使用此語言或聽見此語言? 例如,此語言在某特定時段或地點才會被使用? 誰使用此語言呢?

1.15 目前在社區/部落活動中使用此語言或聽見此語言的頻率多高(例如,運動、製作手工藝活動、或各種部落聚集?)

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有 不適用;不知道

1.16 在各種部落聚集中,你如何使用此語言或聽見此語言?例如,此語言在某特定時段或地點才會被使用?

1.17 目前在傳統或各項慶典中,使用此語言或聽見此語言的頻率多高?

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有 不適用;不知道

1.18 在各項傳統或慶典中,使用此語言或聽見此語言的頻率多高?

1.19 目前在教會,使用此語言或聽見此語言的頻率多高?

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有 不適用;不知道

1.20 在教會中,你如何使用此語言或聽見此語言?

1.21 目前在原民會的各项活動中,使用此語言或聽見此語言的頻率多高?

總是 有時候 很少 從來沒有 不適用;不知道

1.22 在原民會的各项活動中,你如何使用此語言或聽見此語言?例如,此語言在某特定時段或地點才會被使用?

2. 學習此語言的興趣

2.1 你會有興趣學習此語言嗎?

有 沒有 不確定

2.2 若有興趣, 學習此語言的前三項理由是:

- 學習此語言對自我及文化的認同很重要
- 一位或一位以上的祖先說此語言
- 可以和我的小孩或家人溝通
- 可以和朋友溝通
- 可以和耆老溝通
- 可以在各種部落聚集中使用此語言
- 可以在傳統或各項慶典中使用此語言
- 可以在工作場合中與同事溝通
- 可以增廣見識
- 對此國家有所屬感
- 能用此語言讀一些書籍和文件
- 能使用一種只有特定族人可以了解的語言
- 能使這個語言及文化繼續傳承下去
- 其他_____

Appendix A²: 語言態度調查 Language attitude survey

二、Truku 語言態度調查:(量度 1 表示非常同意, 量度 5 表示非常不同意)

1. 部落族人知道他們自己的語言是很重要的
非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
2. 一個人的語言對自身的認同和存在是很重要的
非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
3. 我們的語言是值得保存的
非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
4. 我們的語言不好學
非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

5. 我們的社區/部落應竭力教導那些不會這語言的人

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

6. 提供家庭如何繼續在家使用 Truku 的方法是個好的策略

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

7. 學校應該要教我們的語言

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

8. 在工作場合中鼓勵人們使用自己的語言(Truku) 是很重要的

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

9. 在部落聚集中鼓勵人們使用自己的語言(Truku) 是很重要的

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

10. 在傳統或各項慶典中鼓勵人們使用自己的語言(Truku) 是很重要的

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

11. 在原民會的各项活動中鼓勵人們使用自己的語言(Truku) 是很重要的

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

12. 我們應優先提供哪一群學此語言/Truku(1 最優先，5 最後面):

_____ 兒童 _____ 青少年 _____ 耆老 _____ 學生 _____ 家人

13. Truku 的書寫系統不重要

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

為什麼? _____

14. 我會願意協助一個語言學習課程

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

為什麼? _____

Appendix B: 期中母語課程學習評估 Mid-term learning questionnaire

1. 母語課的教材難易度剛好

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

2. 母語課的課程內容很實用

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

3. 母語課安排的時間很妥當

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意

4. 星期六的母語課不好學

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

5. 我喜歡上星期六的母語課

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

6. 星期六母語課的老師們都很認真

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

7. 母語課的課程內容很有趣

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

8. 教會有提供母語課是很重要的

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

9. 耆老們親自教導我們母語是很重要的

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

10. Truku 的書寫系統的教導很重要

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

11. 星期六母語課書寫系統的教導很足夠

非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

12. 我喜歡母語課老師們的教法

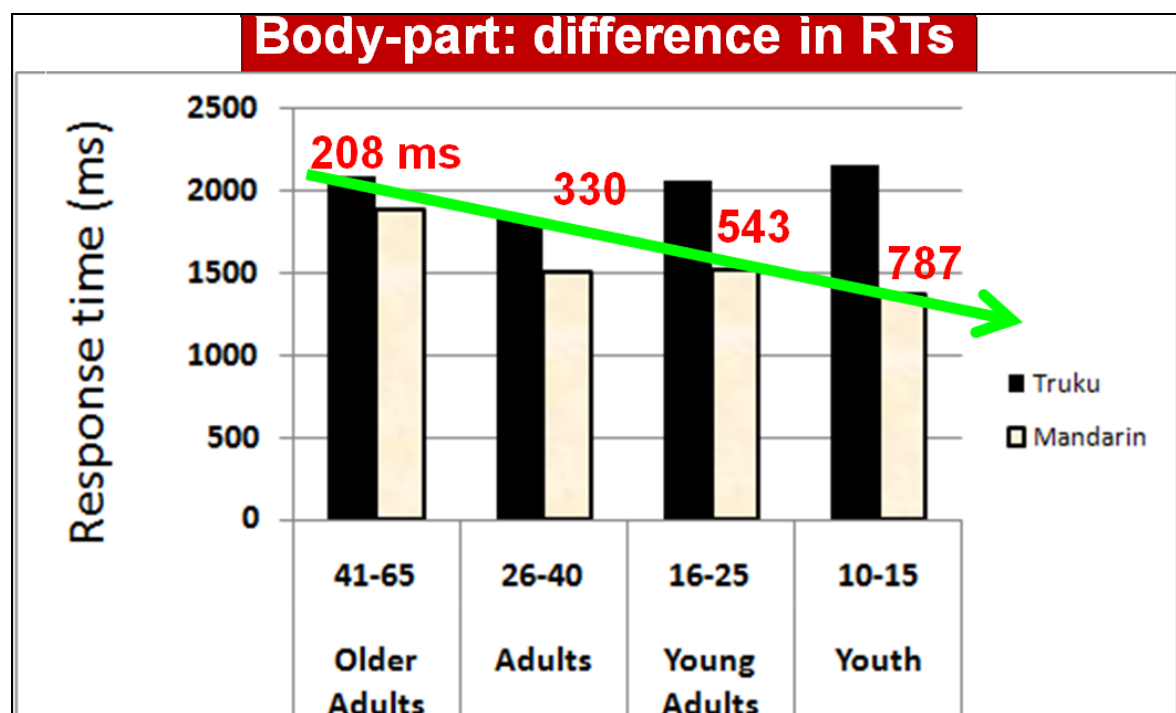
非常不同意 部分不同意 普通 部分同意 非常同意
為什麼?_____

二、簡答:

1. 身為一位 Truku 族人, 應該要說自己的母語嗎? 為什麼?
2. 若教會以後沒有人會用母語禱告或唱詩, 我的感覺是?
3. 上完 3-6 月的母語課後, 我有什麼獲得、心得、或改變(最好能舉例)?
4. 若可以, 我希望教會的母語課可以在以下這些方面做些調整: (1) 老師、(2) 教學法、(3) 教材、(4) 其他。

Appendix C: 師徒制訪視程序單 Master-Apprentice program survey

1. Truku 族群因語言流失而消逝，家中權力轉移，個人信心遞減



2. 課前評量

Emptgsa 師父: _____ Laqi matas 學徒: _____

開始前，請問學徒: (5 非常喜歡/非常好; 3 普通; 0 非常不喜歡/非常不好)

(1) 對 Truku 語喜歡程度 1 2 3 4 5

(2) 說 Truku 語感到很驕傲 1 2 3 4 5

(3) 會看圖說字 1 2 3 4 5

(4) 會讀羅馬字 1 2 3 4 5

(5) 會說____則 Truku 故事; 會唱____首 Truku 歌曲/詩歌;

其他: _____

3. 語言評估調查 (see Appendix A²)

4. 一對一，全族語教學/20 小時師徒制學習記錄表(Appendix D)

師父預期學徒日後可以:

- (1) 說_____個 Truku 單字
- (2) 說_____則 Truku 故事
- (3) 會唱_____首 Truku 歌曲/詩歌
- (4) 其他：

5. 課後訪視及評量

Appendix D: 師徒制學習記錄表 Record of the Master-Apprentice program

Emptgsa 師父: _____ Laqi matas 學徒: _____

教授時數: 共 20 小時 內容: 看圖說字, 看圖說故事, 或讀羅馬拼音

1. 學徒初期語言態度評估:

(1) 對 Truku 語喜歡程度 (5 非常喜歡; 0 非常不喜歡): 1 2 3 4 5

(2) 說 Truku 語感到很驕傲 (5 非常驕傲; 0 不感到驕傲): 1 2 3 4 5

(3) 想學 Truku 語是因為: _____

時數	日期	時間	內容	Emptgsa 簽名	Laqi matas 簽名
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					

18					
19					
20					

2. 學後評量

部落或社區為本—賽德克族太魯閣群語言復振策略初探

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本文探討以部落或社區為本—賽德克族太魯閣群語言之復振策略，屬於微觀層面的語言規劃之一。藉由提供青年參與以原住民文化及領域為導向之語言復振計畫經驗，進一步探討這種以部落或社區為本的復振策略，是否能在此關鍵時刻有效地減緩日益嚴重的瀕危語言轉移現象。本策略主要採用的執行方法包括：(i) 社會戲劇和訪談法，(ii) 以文化及領域為導向之語言課程規劃，(iii) 師徒制語言教學，(iv) 語言數位典藏，及 (v) 大學與部落夥伴關係。研究方法包括問卷調查，焦點小組訪談和觀察。研究結果顯示維持部落或社區年輕族人母語學習動機之重要性，並且發現強化全方位的身份意識、發展以文化及場域為導向之課程計畫、創造情感和關係本位的語言學習環境、及提供青年主導的機會，對瀕危語言學習及部落或社區為本的語言復振策略執行相當有助益。

關鍵詞：語言復振、部落/社區為本策略、瀕危語言學習動機、青年主導、以文化及領域為導向之語言課程規劃

