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Ecologising Seediq: Towards an Ecology of an Endangered Indigenous Language from Taiwan

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Abstract

An ecolinguistic system, like a biological ecosystem, is self-regulating, yet it cannot be entirely self-contained, because words, like living species and the non-living substrates upon which they depend, are border-crossing. As a result, any 'language' is to some extent 'creolised', lexically or syntactically. Creolisation, however, may be perceived as a threat to an endangered language. The Seediq language is endangered, and, like any language, to some extent creolised. Though much less creolised than Ilan Creole, Seediq contains numerous Japanese and Chinese loanwords. Yet many of these loanwords have Seediq analogues. It may be that the Seediq language community has responded to the influx of loanwords by coining new terms based on Seediq roots. If so, their response combines linguistic purism with cultural cosmopolitanism: the loanword is a threat, the concept is not. Regardless, the coexistence of indigenous words with loanwords is part of an ongoing linguistic adaptation to modernity. I try to understand this adaptation in terms of 'language ecology'.

Keywords

Seediq – Austronesian languages of Taiwan – language ecology – ecolinguistics – language endangerment – language standardisation

1 Introduction

This article is an historical overview of the language ecology of Seediq. Seediq is an Austronesian, specifically Atayalic, language. Although as a result of the feature film *Seediq Bale* (directed by Wei Te-sheng, 2011), which used the Seediq

language throughout, it has a high profile among indigenous languages in Taiwan, it is endangered, spoken by fewer than 10,000 people, most of them over the age of 50.¹ The language, however, was not always endangered. In the nineteenth century it was likely spoken by a roughly similar number of people, but across all ages. In this paper I explain Seediq's decline from healthy independence ecologically. In ecolinguistics the attitudes of language users are an important ecological factor. I therefore consider the attitudes of the Seediq people over the years towards foreignisms and 'familiarisms', including species, artefacts, social institutions, and the once foreign but now familiar words for their expression. As one of the first attempts to ecologise a language in Taiwan, this paper adopts a *longue durée* perspective, regarding precolonial linguistic developments in Seediq as adaptations to ecological change and developments since colonisation as adaptations to ecological upheavals over which, until recently, the Seediq have had little control.

2 Language Ecology

The term 'language ecology' was first used in the title of a scholarly work by Einar Haugen (1972), a scholar of Norwegian-English diglossia in Minnesota. The senior figures in the field today started publishing in the 1990s. Peter Mühlhäusler (1996) published on the language ecology of Austronesian, Australian, and New Guinean languages and pidgins, and Salikoko Mufwene (1996, 1997, 2001) published ecological studies of creoles and non-standard varieties of North American English. An ecolinguistics reader was published at the beginning of the following decade (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001). In the past several years, the field has displayed a burgeoning vitality. As of the beginning of 2017 a journal, *Language Ecology*, was launched, and a handbook from Routledge (Fill & Penz, 2018) was inevitable in the current academic ecosystem.

Ecolinguistics² is sometimes just a way of doing sociolinguistics (for instance, Fleming, 2017). In sociolinguistics, language phenomena are studied in terms of social institutions and forces. Scholars who call themselves ecolinguists instead of sociolinguists tend to pay closer attention to ecology as a

1 A study (Chen, 2010) of Atayal found communities at six or seven on Fishman's Graded Inter-generational Disruption Scale, which only goes up to eight.

2 In a recent co-written article (Mufwene & Vigouroux, 2017), Mufwene distinguishes what he does, language ecology, from what Mühlhäusler does, ecolinguistics. I will compare Mufwene and Mühlhäusler below but will use the two terms to mean the object of study and the approach respectively.

metaphor for the context of a language. According to the ecological metaphor, a language is like a species, a population of individuals who freely breed to produce viable offspring, where the viable offspring are analogous to the understandings that result from effective communication. The words in the common language that allows for effective communication are like genes. Genes and words can change over time, but the mechanism of change is different in biology and language. Mufwene (2001) describes a language as a 'Lamarckian species' (p. 16), where parents can pass their acquired linguistic habits to their children. In fact, 'children . . . in turn influence their parents' linguistic behaviors, in some cases more so than their parents influence theirs' (p. 16).

Language ecology is then the context to which the linguistic species adapts, thereby yielding linguistic diversity. Mufwene asks, 'Could random evolution alone, acting on an erstwhile unified and uniform proto-system, really have led to so much diversity without the intervention of ecology?' (p. 15). According to Mufwene, the diversity can only be explained ecologically. Ecology is 'the decisive factor that rolls the dice' (p. 21), making some ways of talking more advantageous than others, at whichever level; ecology encompasses idiolects, familects, the secret languages of ritual groups or age sets, the lingos of occupations or subcultures, the speech styles of a city or region, and national languages. Indeed, the ecological metaphor contains contextual recursion, where ecosystems are nested inside ecosystems. In whichever context, an ecolinguist is interested in the choices that people make between alternatives. These alternatives are akin to the different alleles of a gene. They might be grammatical forms, or they might be lexical items. For instance, I might choose to say 'winter hat' to be sure I am understood, or 'toque' to affirm my Canadian identity. Whatever I choose, the choice is theoretically motivated by some anticipated advantage. The advantage might be to the individual, but it can also be to the group to which the individual belongs. Group cohesiveness, even if the group is stigmatised or patronised (as in Gullah, on which see Mufwene, 1997), can be helpful to the members of the group.

While Mufwene is in general quite hopeful about the prospects of languages like Gullah, Peter Mühlhäusler's outlook is bleak. In his *Linguistic Ecology: Language Change and Linguistic Imperialism in the Pacific Region* (1996), Mühlhäusler laments the decline of diversity in modern society as a result of national programmes of linguistic standardisation. In an age of linguistic standardisation, the sociolinguist Helmut Kloss could credibly claim that languages with fewer than 50,000 speakers are not viable (1977, cited in Mühlhäusler, 1996: 264), but Mühlhäusler reminds us that for most of human history, most languages were viable with just a few thousand or even a few hundred speakers. Less-spoken languages are less viable today, according to Mühlhäusler,

because ‘imperialism’ in various forms has ‘disturbed’ or ‘disrupted’ the local ecology:

In terms of our ecological metaphor, the life support system for the traditional languages has changed dramatically, and whilst some of them may have either thrived or found a secure niche for their survival, a very large number of others are under increasing threat of disappearance. In Australia, certain plants and certain species of marsupials have thrived following increased irrigation by farmers or selected cultivation for commercial purposes (e.g. macadamia nuts or grevilleas) but the overall amount of diversity has been very rapidly reduced and the situational support for complex indigenous systems is diminishing. (Mühlhäusler 1996: 54–55)

Clearly, ‘imperialism’ has had as massive an impact on language as it has had on the environment. Mühlhäusler quotes Alfred Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism* (1986) throughout and is himself doing the linguistic analogue of Crosby’s study. It seems to me that with the emphasis on ‘imperialism’, the ecology in language ecology is no longer just a ‘metaphor’; imperialism has resulted in a decline in ecological diversity that has interrelated environmental and linguistic dimensions. Monocrop agriculture is part of the same process as monoglossia.

Imperialism’s impact also has an economic dimension, which Mühlhäusler discusses in terms of dependency. He writes, ‘The structural dependency of the pidgins on outside languages mirrors the economic dependency of their users on outside providers, as does the large-scale influx of loan words from “modern” languages into the traditional ones’ (1996: 54). ‘Mirrors’ may simply imply analogical thinking, but, again, Mühlhäusler’s appeal to ‘imperialism’ suggests a single causal process with environmental, linguistic, and economic dimensions. Instead of speaking their traditional languages adapted to and informing their traditional ways of life, indigenous peoples now speak a settler language adapted to and informing another style of life. Rather than taking or making most of what they need from their surroundings, indigenous peoples now have to specialise, to learn a skill or a trade so as to participate in the economy on which, in turn, they become dependent. This is supposed to be about choice, whether of language or of occupation. Christian groups like the Summer Institute of Linguistics that introduce English to the natives in the name of ‘choice’ fail to persuade Mühlhäusler, who affirms that ‘the very notion of choice is part of the conceptual garbage that twentieth-century big business in the USA is trying to push on to the rest of the world (fifty-seven varieties of Heinz,

twenty-five McDonald's burgers, ninety-nine flavours of American ice-cream, etc.), that choice is culturally irrelevant in a Melanesian context and that . . . the dice are very heavily loaded against the traditional culture' (1996: 168). Though speakers' choice is a part of any linguistic ecology, there is now, according to Mühlhäusler, too much choice of an ironically homogenising kind. Now that Melanesia has been flooded with homogenising choice, irreparable damage has been done to the cultures and the languages of the peoples who live there.

What about contemporary efforts to create an artificial ecology to foster vulnerable languages in countries like New Zealand or autonomous constituent countries like Greenland? Mühlhäusler's outlook is bleak: 'Standardization and graphicization of languages have led to a significant decline in non-prestige varieties. Speakers prefer language forms indexical of status to those indexical of location' (1996: 68). It seems that Maoris and Greenlanders have chosen to speak English and Danish and there is little we can do about it. Mühlhäusler is relentlessly negative about the effects of 'imperialism', but perhaps we can put a positive spin on what is still very much an ongoing process: let us emphasise less how imperialism has impacted indigenous peoples and more how indigenous peoples have adapted to 'modernity' in their own culturally specific ways. One adaptation might be deciding to speak settler languages, but another is trying to revitalise indigenous languages and thereby restore diversity. The lesson of Mühlhäusler's approach to language ecology is that language decline and revitalisation have to be understood holistically, in social, political, economic, and environmental contexts.

3 The Nearly Blank Slate of Language Ecology Research in Taiwan

An ecological approach to Taiwan's languages seems promising, but there is almost no such research. In the only scholarly work about Taiwan to use 'linguistic ecology' in the title, Scott Sommers (2010) explains Mandarin dominance sociolinguistically, in terms of social institutions and forces. After 1949 the Kuomintang instituted a monolingual national language policy through the print media, as well as the education system and other channels of upward social mobility. The linguistic choices people made are no surprise, given their options. As a result of their choices in this context, Mandarin became the prestige language of the island. Taiwan has attempted to institute multilingualism since the lifting of martial law in 1987, but the attempts have been half-hearted and mostly ineffective.

There are some related studies on Formosan indigenous languages that use different terminology. For instance, linguistic anthropologist Kerim Friedman's

dissertation (2005) examines the revitalisation of Amis in terms of Bourdieu's concept of 'language market'. Revitalisation would be easier if a single dialect was selected, synecdochally, to represent each language, in order to create the largest possible language market in each case. The alternative, producing materials in each dialect, 'requires the preparation of textbooks, dictionaries, and course materials for each variety' (Friedman, 2018: 95). In Taiwan, pedagogical materials have been prepared in each dialect.

There is also related scholarship on 'language contact'. The most interesting case, which can serve as a comparison for Seediq, is the world's only Japanese creole, Ilan Creole, so named because it is spoken in the south of Ilan County. According to Chien and Sanada (2010), Ilan Creole is mainly Japanese in lexicon, with a strong influence of Sqliq Atayal on the phonology, and a mixed grammar that simplifies both Japanese and Atayal forms. Surprisingly, there is very little C'uli' Atayal influence, even though the same percentage of the population spoke C'uli' when the creole was in formation. Less surprisingly, there is almost no Seediq influence, because only a small proportion of the population spoke Seediq, specifically an Ilan variety of Seediq called Tawsay. The presence of Seediq speakers, however, is why the creole formed: here and nowhere else in Taiwan, the Japanese forcibly amalgamated villages that spoke different languages. Seediq and Atayal cultures are very closely related, so closely that Japanese ethnographers assumed they were the same, but the Seediq and Atayal peoples separated some 1,600 years ago (Li, 2001: 272) and Seediq and Atayal are no longer mutually intelligible (so they are not dialects of the same language). It was in order to communicate privately that both sides adapted certain Japanese vocabulary words that they were learning at school to the Sqliq Atayal sound system. As a result, they developed a new language that nobody's parents or teachers could understand.

4 A Linguistic Paleontology of Seediq

The study of Ilan Creole could only start during the Japanese period, but the story of the language ecology of Seediq should begin in precolonial times. Seediq is Austronesian, originating in Proto-Austronesian (PAN).³ Something like PAN as it has been reconstructed was spoken in coastal China in communities that headhunted and possessed metalsmithing, pottery-making, dog-, pig- and chicken-rearing, rice and millet planting, weaving, and seafaring capabilities. Probably as a result of population pressure, these communities colonised

3 Robert Blust's reconstructions of PAN from words in contemporary languages are listed in his and Stephen Trussel's online comparative dictionary at: <http://www.trussel2.com/acd/>.

Taiwan and spread their languages around the island, mostly replacing the languages and cultures of the hunter-gatherers who lived in Taiwan before the arrival of the Austronesian, meaning 'south island', peoples. The Austronesians are so called because about 6,000 years ago (Blust, 1996: 30), speakers of a variety of PAN headed south from Taiwan to the Philippines, and eventually their descendants would spread their languages and cultures west to Madagascar, east to Easter Island, and south to New Zealand.

Researchers who study the Austronesians rely on archaeological and linguistic evidence. Those who approach Austronesian cultural prehistory through linguistics describe their research field as 'linguistic paleontology', a coinage of Ferdinand de Saussure (Blust, 1996: 29). Linguistic paleontologists try to reconstruct PAN roots. Whichever roots reconstruct, words for headhunting, millet, and so forth, characterise the lifestyle of PAN speakers, which can be located in a likely homeland. The linguist Robert Blust is particularly associated with this approach. The attitude in the field towards cultural 'development' has changed over the past several decades. As recently as 1996, Blust talked about the Austronesian dispersal in terms of a 'culture loss' whereby 'a simple model of unilineal progress in material culture becomes completely untenable' (Blust, 1996: 31). For instance, in Polynesia, knowledge of grain crops, weaving, metals, and even dogs was lost (p. 32). Indeed, evolution is not progress, but it is less about loss than about adaptation. In a recent work, the archaeologist Peter Bellwood writes of the Austronesian settlers 'constantly adapting' (2011: S374) to different ecologies, which they transformed simply by living in them.

Many of the ecologies Austronesian speakers entered in Taiwan must have been home to other, pre-Austronesian people. What happened to these other people? The extreme cases would be that they adopted a settler language, or that they were exterminated by settlers. There are stories of massacres like the well-known Saisiyat myth, but surely not all Austronesian colonists committed genocide; the truth must lie somewhere in between. Among the Seediq there is a story of a village of little people, who take a Seediq hunter prisoner and treat him like a pig, until he escapes (Nawi, 2009: 92–96). But surely not all relations with prior inhabitants were hostile. There might have been intermarriage between settler men and native women. Pre-Austronesian cultural material might have been adopted, including lexicon.

Seediq has a lot of lexical outliers.⁴ The word for 'dog' in Seediq is *huling*, while the word for dog in PAN is *asu* (Simon, 2018: 18). *Asu* in Seediq means

4 One example that is sometimes cited of an outlier is the word for 'pig', *boyak*. The Seediq have two words for pig, *boyak* and *babuy*, wild and domesticated. *Babuy* is from the PAN for wild pig, and its cognates are common in Austronesian languages, for instance *baboy* in Tagalog.

'boat', but seems originally to have meant 'trough', as in what a pig eats out of. It likely came to mean boat when Seediq people, mostly Truku, migrated through the mountains of central Taiwan to the east coast in the mid-eighteenth century (Li, 2001: 272), though it is of course possible that it originally meant boat (Sayama, 2011: *qianpian* 53 footnote 2). At any rate, the Seediq words *huling* and *asu* do not seem to be of PAN provenance.⁵

Whatever its provenance, the Seediq lexicon would have adapted to the local lifestyle: headhunting, hunting, gathering, horticulture of rice, foxtail millet and proso millet and sweet potatoes, and weaving in small communities of fifty-odd souls. As examples of words relevant to their lifestyle that we can trace to PAN, we can cite headhunting (*gaya* in Seediq, which also means moral order, versus *ŋáyaw* in PAN, where the *g* in *gaya* and the *ŋ* in *ŋáyaw* are both velar) and weaving (*tinun* in both PAN and Seediq). They also retained a PAN word for unhusked rice, *beras*. PAN words that were not suited to the local way of life were dispensed with. Hence, the Seediq dispensed with the PAN vocabulary of seafaring. The Seediq did not even have a word for 'sea', which they now call *rcilung paru*, 'big lake'. Words for concepts like 'sea' were like seeds with no appropriate soil in the mountains. What did germinate was a discourse of reciprocity in daily life: the term *msbarux*, meaning to help one another out with work, is grammatically reciprocal, as is *mddahun*, meaning to share or reconcile with kith or kin or with the ancestral spirits.

Kari, the word for speech, as in the speech of a certain community, is from PAN. The relevant communities are *alang*, small band-based villages, where *alang* is cognate with the Atayal *qalang*, 'fence', both words originating from the PAN **qalad*.⁶ It makes sense in a Seediq context to analyse *kari* by *alang*. In other words, each *alang* had its own 'lect'. There were alliances of *alang* that may have corresponded to the three dialects in central Taiwan that are today termed Toda, Tgdaya, and Truku, and which first appear in historical records in the early eighteenth century (Sung, 2016: 1–2).⁷ Seediq linguistic variation is

But *boyak* appears to be uniquely Seediq, perhaps part of a pre-Austronesian stratum of the language. It may be, however, that *boyak* is from the PAN for domesticated pig, *beRek*, and there was a switch between wild and domesticated pig from PAN to Seediq.

- 5 The linguist Arthur Holmer (Pawan) suggested by email that some mechanism like the secret men's language in Atayal (Li, 1983) might have obscured cognate relations, that words as seemingly divergent as Seediq *huling* and PAN *asu* might somehow be cognate.
- 6 The same relation between fence and what is fenced, a village, holds between the German Zaun and the English 'town'. Thanks to Kevin Bättscher (Teymu) for pointing this out.
- 7 According to the linguist Erin Asai, there were two Seediq dialects, a western dialect that has developed into Tgdaya today, and an eastern (Ogawa & Asai, 1935: 559). What seems to have happened since 1935 is that slight differences between two varieties of the eastern dialect became the basis for a distinction between Toda and Truku.

illustrated by differences in pronunciation, for instance, the word for ‘person’ is *sediq*, *seediq*, and *seejiq* in Toda, Tgdaya, and Truku respectively. *Gaya*, the word for headhunting and moral order, is also pronounced *waya* and *gaga*, and is sometimes even spelled *gaza*. Inter-marriage and other kinds of interaction cross-fertilised the dialects, preventing them from moving so far apart as to impair communication. But the level of lexical diversity, even today, in a community of under 10,000, should impress people who grew up speaking standardised languages.

Living in such small communities meant the Seediq were politically ‘acephalous’ (Simon, 2012: 172), without need for a permanent institution of leader. Instead, they used a word for elder sibling, *qbsuran*, to refer to men of influence who ran village affairs. Other words for leader are loanwords from Taiwanese *thulang* (from *thâulâng* 頭人) or Japanese *bukung* (from *bukon* 撫墾), suggesting that the notion of such an institution was introduced in the late nineteenth century, by which time camphor laurel loggers were working the slopes and the firearm had been introduced; the opportunity to concentrate wealth and the means of defending it put hierarchical pressure on what had been egalitarian communities.⁸ Seediq hunters used money to trade for commodities like salt and for metal goods that could only be obtained through far-flung trading networks; the word for money, *pila*, is a Mon-Khmer loanword that originally meant silver. The fact that its incorporation into Seediq predates the arrival of the Japanese suggests that the Seediq were using money to buy and sell things even before colonisation. The words for gun and bullet are Seediq linguistic adaptations: *halung/puniq* (depending on dialect) and *bbali* respectively, meaning literally ‘pine tree’⁹ /fire, and the horny-toothed ardisia (*Ardisia cornudentata*). The fruit of the horny-toothed ardisia is spherical, as were the balls Seediq hunters loaded into their guns.

5 Loading and Unloading the Seediq Linguistic Dice

The Japanese took control of the island of Taiwan in 1895 but did not confiscate Seediq guns until the Seediq submitted to the colonial authorities in the late

8 Camphor laurel loggers made profitable arrangements with indigenous headmen in Miaoli. I have no direct evidence of this happening in Seediqland, but the word *tncakus*, literally the person to whom a camphor tree (*cakus*) belongs (*tn-*) is suggestive: if there is a word for the owner of a camphor tree, camphor ownership was probably important in the society at a certain time in history.

9 *Harung* is *Pinus taiwanensis*. The resemblance between *harung* (a kind of pine) and *halung* (gun) is too close to be accidental in a language where *r* and *l* are often confused, particularly when *harung* wood was turned into tinder to light gunpowder in *halung*.

1900s: Mona Rudo's village, Mhebu, submitted in 1907. *Alang* leaders, including Mona Rudo, the leader of the attack on the Japanese at Musha in 1930, were taken to visit Japan to impress them with Japanese power in 1912. Police stations and schools were built in the *alang*. From that time on, Seediq's introduction to modernity was much more rapid than it had been, and mediated through Japanese. There was a large influx of modern vocabulary, but unlike in Ilan Creole, existing Seediq words were for the most part not replaced. Words that entered the language in the Japanese period became more or less fully incorporated into the living linguistic system. For example, 'policeman' in Japanese romaji is *keisatsu*, and in Iwan Nawi's Toda Sediq translation of Wei Tesheng's screenplay, the term *mkesacu* is used (Nawi, 2014: 118). It is not completely Toda Sediq in sound: if it were it would be *mksacu*, where the first two vowels range between *u* and schwa. But it is not completely Japanese either, because of the prefix, which verbalises the noun into 'to be a police officer'.

In addition to adopting loanwords, Seediq speakers also coined neologisms. *Alang Tanah Tunux* is Japan. It literally means 'the band-based village community of the Red Heads'. Red Heads is because the first Japanese people the Seediq saw were soldiers wearing red hats. More subtly, but more interestingly, the meaning of *alang* has been semantically extended to mean nation-state. Another example is *hei seediq*, which means literally 'bodies of people', in other words 'population'. *Pskuwan pila* means 'post office', literally 'a place where money is caused-to-be stored', because the post office was also a bank. *Sapah ptasan* means 'police station', literally 'a house where one writes'. *Ptasan* was originally for facial tattooing, but was extended to mean writing. When you look at quantities of linguistic data you start seeing linguistic permutations and combinations: *bbali doku* is 'chemical bomb', where *bbali* is Seediq and once meant the fruit of the horny-toothed ardisia, then bullets, but was now extended to mean 'explosive device', and *doku* is a Japanese loanword, meaning 'poison'. Another thing you see is competition between loanwords and neologisms, like *gako* and *sapah muuyas* as translations for 'school'. The latter is *sapah*, 'house', and *muuyas*, meaning originally 'sing'. One of the main ways children learn is by singing or reciting.¹⁰

The year 1930 is another ecolinguistic watershed, especially for Tgdaya Seediq people. In 1931, the survivors of the Tgdaya villages that attacked an assembly

10 The data cited above is from unpublished translations of the screenplay of Seediq Bale by Dakis Pawan for the feature film and by Iwan Nawi into Toda (Nawi, 2014). The problem with the data is that we have to assume Dakis Pawan and Iwan Nawi know from their parents and grandparents how people spoke in the Japanese era, but it has the advantage of yielding more than one way of saying the same thing, unlike a list of loanwords based on a large Tgdaya dictionary (Palemeq, 2014).

of Japanese people at Musha on 27 October 1930 were moved north of Puli, called Hori in those days, to Kawanakajima. There was as a result a process of 'koinéization' (Mufwene, 2001: 5) or dialect-levelling, where the features of different Tgdaya *alang*-lects mixed together. There was an influx of loanwords into the language as Seediq people began planting crops introduced by the Japanese like *budo* (grapes) and *daykong* (radish). To prevent trench foot, people wore shoes (*kucu*) and slippers (*sulipa*).

The Japanese language started to edge Seediq out, starting with a few 'model natives' like Obing Tado. Born in 1913, Obing Tado, the widow of Hanaoka Jiro, was educated in Japanese, and went by the name Takayama Hatsuko, changing her surname to Nakayama in 1932 when she remarried. After the war she took another name, Kao Tsai-yun, but continued speaking Japanese at home, and I am told that at the end of her life she spoke Japanese better than Seediq. Her son must have learned how to speak Seediq, but her grandson did not.¹¹ In an earlier draft of this paper, I wrote that Japanese at this time was like an invasive species, but to describe it in this way sounds disrespectful to people like Obing/Hatsuko, who made a choice to keep speaking it.

Since 1945 Mandarin has been edging Seediq out. Today it is relatively rare for people in their forties to speak the language fluently; it is more common for people in their fifties. But people in their sixties, people born in the 1950s, mention having to reacquaint themselves with the language after having left the village for school, military service, or work. Increased mobility, both social and geographical, meant that young people were more likely to marry a non-Seediq speaker and less likely to live in a Seediq-speaking community. It was much easier for a Taipei-based Seediq-speaking husband and his Paiwan-speaking wife, for instance, to speak Mandarin at home than learn each other's languages. The ecology was no longer conducive to passing the language on, especially when the language was stigmatised and suppressed: students were punished for speaking anything but Mandarin at school. Another change to the language ecology was the introduction of television in the 1960s, which must have reduced the relative use of the language in homes where both parents spoke Seediq, because television programmes were in Mandarin and, to a lesser extent, Taiwanese. Any parent can tell you how much of a guilty relief it is to be able to sit their children in front of a screen. The church was a positive effect in those days.¹² American missionaries sometimes learned the language,

11 See Tang Shiang-chu's 2014 documentary *Pusu Qhuni* for details.

12 In his recent article in this journal, Rik De Busser (2019: 342) points out that while Peter Mühlhäusler (1996) is right to say that missionaries suppressed indigenous languages in some cases, Christianisation has been beneficial in other cases. Bunun is one of those

conducted linguistic research, and compiled dictionaries. By the 1980s and 1990s Seediq ministers and priests were taking over and using the language in their services. There was an east coast Truku New Testament by 1963 and a mass in central Taiwan Truku in 2003 (Li, 2016: 292, 294), and there is an ongoing effort to translate the Bible into Tgdaya.

In terms of way of life, communities were resilient. The form of life defined by *msbarux* persisted, part of the Seediq adaptation to/of capitalism (Wang, 2014). People planted cash crops like mushrooms, cabbage, and tea, and referred to them using loanwords if they did not have a Seediq word handy, like *ngiro* for 'mushroom', but they continued to practise reciprocity in sharing their labour. Indigenous intellectuals, however, under the influence of the indigenous movement in the 1980s, often felt that their language and the way of life it inscribed were threatened. They made active efforts to document and revitalise it. For instance, Temi Nawi, a former Catholic nun, compiled language and culture materials from the 1980s on. She published many volumes of transcriptions of oral stories, hunting techniques and implements, plant knowledge, and the art of weaving, which she herself practised. Much of her work was intended for the children she taught at her home in Kawanakajima, renamed Qingliu after the war and referred to as Gluban in Seediq, long before they had the option to take a mother-tongue language class once a week in school. As Temi saw it, the traditional vocabulary was being forgotten as people abandoned a traditional lifestyle. She had to document the language before it disappeared, so that it could be revitalised.

As people adopted a modern lifestyle, there was a flow of Mandarin loanwords into Seediq, terminology such as *sinyongka* (credit card, from *xinyongka*), *tenhuwaka* (phone card, from *dianhuaka*), and *huwapiyaw* (receipt, from *fapiao* or, in Taiwanese-accented Mandarin, *huapiao*). These words have clearly been incorporated into Seediq, because they are no longer tonal, and are pronounced according to stress patterns in Seediq, for instance with penultimate stress in Tgdaya. But the number of Mandarin loanwords is very low compared with the number of Japanese loanwords, because more and more people were speaking Mandarin.¹³ While they still spoke Seediq, fluent Mandarin speakers would code-switch into Mandarin when they wanted to express an idea for which they had a word in Mandarin but no word in Seediq. As a result,

other cases, and so is Seediq. I hope to do a study of the influence of Christianity on Seediq along the lines of De Busser's fascinating study of Bunun.

13 In the online dictionary at https://m-dictionary.apc.gov.tw/sdq/Search_1.htm, for instance, there are five Taiwanese, 11 Mandarin, and 100 Japanese loanwords by my count, and the proportions in Palemeq (2014) are similar.

Seediq stopped developing the lexical means to express new aspects of modern life.

Over the past decade there have been various systematic efforts to externally reinforce the language, as if building a hothouse for language. These efforts have followed upon recognition of indigenous peoples as indigenous in the 1990s, with further recognition by application over the past two decades. For instance, the Seediq used to be considered Atayal. In 2004 the Hualian Truku applied for and won recognition as a distinct people, much to the consternation of the Seediq of Nantou in central Taiwan, who consider Truku a dialect of Seediq, which, on the criterion of mutual intelligibility, it is. Nantou Seediq, consisting of three dialects, was recognised in 2008, under the name Sediq. This dual recognition of Seediq has resulted in dual coverage of Truku and Tgdaya, which represents Seediq in Nantou, in newscasts and in dictionary and reference grammar compilation. There are separate weekly Truku and Tgdaya news segments on Channel 16.¹⁴ There are separate Truku and Tgdaya online dictionaries. There are separate Truku and Tgdaya reference grammars published by the Council of Indigenous Peoples. And there are separate Truku and Tgdaya terminology translation committees.

Terminology translation committees are composed of fluent native speakers, often the same people who served as consultants for the dictionaries and grammars. In this way, indigenous languages in the future might display ‘founder’ effects (Mufwene, 1996), where the speech quirks of a few people become common in a future language community, like the traits of a biological population following an evolutionary bottleneck. At any rate, terminology translation committees have been convened for all 16 officially recognised indigenous languages. Four years of results—yielding some 500 terms for each language—are published on the website for the online dictionaries for the 16 languages. The results for each language have been arranged into sets of ten; it is not possible to search all the terms at once. Each committee translates the same list of terms. The terms are organised into categories like the natural world, geography, administration, and so forth. There is no attempt to reflect a native ontology.

In 2016, the first year in which results were published, there were only Tgdaya terms for Nantou Seediq. But during the years since 2015, each term has been translated into Tgdaya, Toda, and Truku. The Nantou Seediq terminology translation committee has become tridialectal. There is a single Nantou Seediq

14 I am planning a study of these indigenous language news broadcasts, which are all sight-translated: the news presenters get a written Mandarin translation, which they ‘sight-translate’ into their respective languages.

newscast, online dictionary, and reference grammar in Tgdaya, but the leaders of the revitalisation movement are doing as much as they can to develop each dialect equally.

There is an interesting trend in Nantou Seediq term translation: in the first year, about a quarter of the terms were translated as loanwords, while since then almost all the terms have been either calques or adaptations of Seediq words. There are a few loanwords from Mandarin or Japanese, like *hanpaw* for 'hamburger' and *koro* for 'cola', but most of the new terms are calques or adaptations. I originally assumed this turn towards calques or adaptations reflected language purism. But none of the members of the committee evince language purism; none of them admit to being linguistic nativists. I now think they have chosen to avoid loanwords not out of linguistic nativism but to address the issue of fluency in Mandarin. Seediq speakers today are so fluent in Mandarin that they may spell hamburger *hanpaw* and cola *koro*, but they will tend to pronounce them in perfect Mandarin as *hanbao* and *kele*.

There are some interesting neologisms in the Nantou Seediq lists. For instance, the word for 'fossil', translated from *huashi* in Mandarin. The term in Seediq is *wada mgqperas*, where *wada* is a preterite auxiliary verb, and *mgqperas* means 'turn to cement'. *Huashi* can be a verb phrase in classical Chinese, as in *hua wei shi* 化為石, literally 'turn into stone', but in modern Mandarin *huashi* is a noun meaning 'fossil'. In other words, a noun in Mandarin has become a verb phrase, *wada mgqperas*, in Seediq translation. Each character in *hua-shi* has been translated into a morpheme in the word *mg-qperas* in Seediq, so that *mgqperas* is a calque. Another example is an adaptation of existing linguistic resources. 'Organic' in Mandarin is *youji* 有機, literally 'having vitality', where *ji* is short for *shengji* 生機. It was translated from Mandarin into *uka gncahu* in Seediq. This is an adaptation, because *uka* and *gncahu* have nothing to do with the *you* or *ji* in *youji*. *Uka gncahu* means 'without venom', where *gncahu*, 'venom', has been semantically extended to include pesticides and herbicides. *Uka gncahu* is organic in the sense of organic vegetables, not organic in the sense of organic chemistry. This more creative example is obvious in meaning, and therefore easily adoptable by the language community.

A final example shows the danger of a creative approach. It is a combination calque-adaptation from Mandarin to Seediq. In Mandarin, 'volcano' is *huoshan*, literally 'fire-mountain'. This is a creative description of a natural process that has become a dead metaphor. The metaphor comes to life again in Seediq translation. But instead of simply calquing *huoshan* as *dgiyaq puniq*, meaning 'mountain of fire', the members of the terminology translation committee added another word, *spreqan*, to produce *dgiyaq spreqan puniq*. *Spreqan* is a location verb derived from a root that means to split open. That is what happens to

a volcano. It splits open and fire, or lava, comes spewing out. I asked committee members why they had not simply calqued it and was told that a volcano is not made of fire, it spouts fire. They wanted to convey this dynamism in the translation. I love the literary quality of the translation! But the problem is that nobody can remember it. I asked three different members of the committee, and nobody remembered how they had translated *huoshan*. If the committee members do not know it, nobody does. So they will have to find ways to disperse all the coinages through the language community via personal networks, testing, the media, social media, and education.

Research has been done on mother-tongue education (Pawan, 2009), where the language is taught once a week for less than an hour per session, but immersion is necessary if the goal is actually to give young people the ability to speak the language. There are immersion kindergartens for each of the dialects, and an experimental Toda elementary school, but most classes at this school are taught in Mandarin, not Toda Sediq. Teaching subjects in any dialect of Seediq in elementary school would involve the development of domain-specific discourses in the language, and if Seediq is ever taught in junior high or high school there will be discussions about organic chemistry in the language. But the curriculum, one hopes, will also include practical knowledge of the traditional lifestyle in its local ecological milieu, a kind of knowledge that is not valued in a liberal arts education. Though a liberal arts education is designed to set the mind free, it leads to dependency on the modern economy and alienation from the natural environment. Only when students also learn indigenous knowledge, which is to some extent linguistically inscribed, will they enjoy true freedom of choice.

6 Conclusion

Although the future of Seediq is obviously not a matter about which conclusions can be reached, certain very preliminary answers about its past and present can be given. Because Seediq villages in Nantou were never forcibly amalgamated with villages whose inhabitants spoke a different language, a Seediq-based creole never developed. There have been slight changes to Tgdaya Seediq phonology, such as the merger of final *-l*, *-r*, and *-n* to *-n*, under Mandarin influence (Holmer, 1996: 25). Topic-comment sentences may be more common now than they were, also under Mandarin influence, but syntactically, Seediq mostly retains its verb-object-subject order to this day. Linguistically, the adaptations in Seediq have mostly been lexical. Earlier, most neologisms were adaptations, later loanwords, especially after 1930, but

neologisms for the most part did not replace existing Seediq words. In the past half-century there has been a language shift from Seediq to Mandarin, with the result that few people under 50 today are fluent and that Seediq has stopped developing its lexicon to express all aspects of modernity. Today, with government support, Seediq elites are trying to reverse the shift, to shift back to Seediq. They are employing calques or adaptations instead of loanwords to solve the problem of code-switching. They are trying to develop three distinct dialect-based standards equally. In general, they are trying to maintain and restore the diversity that, presumably, is as important to resilience culturally as it is environmentally.

But there is no going back to the way the language once was. The contemporary language ecology is a hybrid of native and newcomer, and Seediq people accept their hybridity: there is no purist rejection of foreign species, concepts, artefacts, or ways of life, or the words used to refer to them. Unlike Peter Mühlhäusler, Seediq people would like to have their 99 flavours of American ice cream, and they think they can have their language, too. In general, they disagree with or contradict Mühlhäusler. Seediq people who are concerned about language revitalisation are choosing language forms that are indexical of location: Tgdaya, Toda, and Truku are topolects, and language revitalisers emphasise that the three should be treated equally. Moreover, written standardisation—of three distinct standards, Tgdaya, Toda, and Truku—which Mühlhäusler saw as so detrimental to a language ecology, is the approach revitalisers are taking. Finally, they see a role for the government to play in supporting the development and dissemination of linguistic standards.

Around the world, there have been more or less successful state-assisted revivals of indigenous languages like Seediq via written standardisation in states with a single indigenous language like Greenland and New Zealand, but it remains to be seen whether the same success can be enjoyed in such a multilingual state as Taiwan. But given that the old monolingual national language policy was so successful in postwar Taiwan, it is not a matter of necessity that the new multilingual and multidialectal language policy will fail. Several thousand was once a norm for a viable language population; perhaps in some post-modern language ecology it will be normal once again.

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