5

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Indigenous Translation Under Colonization in Taiwan

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Introduction

Since Michael Cronin (1998, p. 151) declared minority translation the "most important issue in Translation Studies today," there has been a trickle, though not a flood, of research on Indigenous minority translation (e.g., Fenton, 2001; Christie, 2009; Folaron, 2015; Kuusi et al., 2022). Where does Indigenous minority translation fit in minority Translation Studies? Cronin has consistently (starting with 1995, p. 86) stressed the relativity of minority status: some minorities are more minoritized than others. Albert Branchadell (2011, p. 97) built on Cronin's point by defining "absolute minority languages" as languages that are "not presently used as a majority language in any state." Indigenous minority languages are typically spoken by absolute minorities in settler states.

This chapter is a historical survey of Indigenous minority translation in an East Asian settler nation over the past four centuries. Given that it was less than four decades ago that Taiwan's Indigenous people started to think of themselves as Indigenous, this time frame needs justification. The justification is that since the 1980s, local Indigenous people have referred to their ancestors retroactively as Indigenous. Their earliest Taiwanese ancestors were the Proto-Austronesian hunter-gatherer-planters who settled the island about six thousand years ago and diversified into distinct ethnic groups. Starting about four hundred years ago, more and more of these groups were forced to give ground to Chinese settlers and to yield autonomy to a series of settler states (see Table 5.1).

As you can probably guess from Table 5.1, for much of Taiwan's colonial history, a non-Chinese settler minority held power over a Chinese settler majority and an Indigenous minority. Taiwan only became a "typical" settler society with a powerful settler majority and a marginal Indigenous minority after the Second World War.

I have defined my topic as Indigenous translation under colonization in Taiwan to cast a wide net. I am studying "translation" to take advantage of the ways in which scholars in the discipline have used the term. Translation Studies includes not just written translation but also oral, and not just interlingual translation, between languages, but also intralingual translation, within languages, and intermedial translation, between textual and visual media (see Jakobson, 2000 [1959]). Moreover, "cultural translation" embraces the description and transformation of cultures. In studying Indigenous translation and not Indigenous translators, I avoid limiting myself to Indigenous people who see themselves as translators. Indigenous translation concerns Indigenous people but has

DOI: 10.4324/9781003251699-8

Table 5.1 Serial Settler State Rule in Taiwan

Period	*Settler state*
1624–1662	Government of Formosa (Dutch East India Company) in the southwest
1626–1644	Colony of Spain in the north.
1662–1683	Kingdom of Tungning (founded by Koxinga, a.k.a. Zheng Chenggong)
1683–1895	Taiwan Prefecture/Province under the Manchu Qing Dynasty
1895–1945	Japanese Government-General of Taiwan
1945–	Republic of China on Taiwan

been done by "translators" of different identities with diametrically opposed aims. Indeed, the following survey will show that for almost four hundred years, translation has been a double-edged sword, a weapon of both rule and resistance.

The year 1624 marked the start of settler state rule in Taiwan, when the Dutch East India Company established a colony in the southwest. Two pivotal years, 1874 and 1987, changed the character of rule, and the conditions of translation, under the Manchu Qing Dynasty and in the Republic of China on Taiwan, respectively. In 1874, the Qing Dynasty took a step toward accepting the modern notion of exclusive territorial sovereignty as far as Taiwan was concerned. In 1987, the Republic of China on Taiwan ended nearly four decades of martial law and oriented Taiwan toward multicultural democracy. These three years—1624, 1874, and 1987—define the three sections of this chapter, on Indigenous translation under early modern (1624–1874), modern (1874–1987), and postmodern (1987–present) colonial regimes.

For the purposes of this chapter, early modern regimes are characterized by acquiescence to limited state capacity, particularly in the periphery; as the Chinese idiom has it, the mountains are high and the emperor far away. Modern and postmodern regimes both possess expanded state capacity and attempt to assert it over every inch of national territory but are assimilatory and multicultural, respectively. Clearly, Indigenous people in Taiwan have had to adapt to a changing political landscape under colonization, and one of the ways they have done so is through translation, starting in the seventeenth century.

Early Modern Translation From 1624 to 1874

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a Chinese admiral named Shen Yourong launched an expedition to punish pirates based in southwestern Taiwan, which was home to an Indigenous people who are known to history as the Siraya. Shen brought along an official named Chen Di, who wrote the first detailed outsider's account of any of Taiwan's Indigenous peoples. Emma Teng claimed that Chen Di projected ancient tropes of primitiveness upon the Siraya (Teng, 2004, pp. 62–68), but Leigh Jenco has recently argued that the impression of primitiveness is an effect of translations that "impart a strong flavour of cultural chauvinism to Chen's work" (2021, p. 22). Properly translated, Chen Di's account reveals a nonjudgmental curiosity about such apparent paradoxes as the Siraya fondness for the venison of deer that they hunted paired with revulsion to the meat of chickens that they raised (p. 31). I argue that by describing Sirayan culture in some degree of "ethnographic detail" (p. 32) instead of simply othering it, Chen was a cultural translator.

Later observers also performed the task of the cultural translator, but the different missions they were on tended to color their vision. The missionaries who traveled to Taiwan after the Dutch East India Company established a colony there in 1624, for instance, were dedicated to the salvation of

heathen souls. To this end, they published "spelling books, dictionaries, and translations of Christian texts" (Klöter, 2008, p. 209) in two languages, Siraya in the southwest and Favorlang in the west. Ann Heylen cites a fascinating example of how Christian teachings were adapted in translation. "Thou shalt not kill *and abort children*," exhorted a missionary named Robert Junius in his Siraya version of the prohibition against murder (Heylen, 2001, p. 220, italics mine). The addition was intended to counter the Siraya custom of "mandatory abortion" for young wives (Shepherd, 1995).[1] The longest translations, of the gospels according to Matthew and John, were more literal and published in the early 1660s (Joby, 2020), by which time the colony was *voorgoed verloren*, lost for good, from a Dutch perspective: the Dutch had been driven out by a Chinese pirate named Koxinga (also known as Zheng Chenggong) by 1662.

Whether or not these missionaries translated in order to make the colony easier to govern, a governmental consideration was surely behind a policy change in 1648, when the Company began teaching the Dutch language to the Siraya (Heylen, 2001, p. 224). This *Hollandiseering* (p. 225) of Sirayan society from 1648 on was intended to reduce Dutch reliance on Chinese "interpreters." By the time the Dutch arrived in 1624, the southwest was already home to Chinese pirates, merchants, and fishermen. The Dutch encouraged immigration by Chinese farmers who were accustomed to growing surpluses to sell at markets, unlike the native Siraya. The Dutch relied on Chinese settlers who had learned Siraya, often by marrying Siraya women, to manage relations with local villages.

Tonio Andrade (2007) documented how these interpreters, whom he called "cultural brokers" (p. 2) and "mediators" (p. 4), took advantage of their language abilities and local contacts to get favorable terms for their various business ventures, particularly a man named He Bin, who was also known as He Tingbin or Pinqua. Pinqua grew fabulously rich, profiting with the Dutch East India Company's permission from the mullet catch and the rice harvest (pp. 10–11) and without its permission in a variety of ways, such as from the export of deerskins and venison from the hands of Chinese or Indigenous hunters (p. 22). As a Company envoy to Koxinga (pp. 17–26), Pinqua used intelligence he had gained working for the Company to sell the Company out: it was partly on his advice that Koxinga was able to dislodge the Dutch.

The same period has been analyzed in the light of recent trends in interpreting studies by Chang Pin-ling. Messages had to be relay-interpreted through Indigenous topolects when the Dutch pushed north to Favorlang (Chang, 2014, p. 142). Messages were relayed by interpreters of different backgrounds. In addition to Chinese interpreters, there were Indigenous interpreters, such as a certain Theodore, who had served the Spanish in northern Taiwan before he served the Dutch (p. 140). An Indigenous woman with a Spanish husband guided a Dutch gold prospecting expedition down the east coast (pp. 140–141), and a Japanese man with an Indigenous wife served the Dutch as an interpreter (p. 141). So did Europeans like François Caron (p. 140) and Joost van Bergen (p. 142).

Hence, Chang elsewhere distinguishes between autonomous and heterogenous, that is, European and non-European, interpreters (Chang, 2016, p. 54). Both kinds of interpreters were subject to "ideological manipulation" (Chang, 2014, pp. 147–148). In theory, the effectiveness of ideological manipulation would depend on whether the interpreters were formally engaged or ad hoc (Chang, 2016, p. 54), but in any case, ideological manipulation failed. Interpreters like Pinqua were opportunists, but they were so powerful relative to their counterparts in other colonies that the Dutch had no choice but to put up with them no matter how they behaved (pp. 54–55). Interpreters were "a necessary *evil*" (p. 55, italics mine). In his corruption and cunning, Pinqua was by no means an exception to the rule: Theodore abused his position, too (Chang, 2014, p. 145), not to mention that he served the Dutch after the Spanish were evicted. Even before the Dutch colony fell, some interpreters had already switched sides (Chang, 2016, p. 57).

Termed 通譯 *tōngshì*—a word whose two halves mean "conversant" and "knowledgeable," respectively—"interpreters" who went to work for the Kingdom of Tungning were low ranking and poorly paid (Chang, 2014, pp. 149–150). They were expected to be virtuous, but they tended to supplement their incomes through corruption. Indigenous communities responded in two ways, through revolt and through what could be termed identity manipulation:

> Most aborigine revolts against state authority—Dutch, Cheng [Zheng], or K'ang-his-era Ch'ing [Kangxi-era Qing, 1684–1722]—can be traced to the tyrannies of . . . leaseholders [who had monopolies on tax collection and trade] and their agents in the villages, the Chinese interpreters and foremen.
>
> (Shepherd, 1993, p. 15)

Initially agents of the leaseholders, the interpreters later became the leaseholders (p. 115). Indigenous communities manipulated their identity by convincing the authorities they were "cooked."[2] Cooked savage communities were allowed to choose their own interpreters (p. 15), *and* they could get a tax break (pp. 289–294); to the Manchu Qing authorities they were more valuable as ethnic buffers between Chinese farmers and raw savages than as sources of tax revenue.[3]

The institutional formation of a "cooked savage" identity relates to an unintended consequence of the *Hollandiseering* of the Siraya that played out for over a century after the Dutch had departed. In the late seventeenth century, the Siraya began to put alphabetic literacy to their own purpose: writing up contracts for land deals to "assert their rights over the Chinese" (Heylen, 2001, p. 240). These contracts, called the Sinkan Manuscripts after the place where they were found by Western missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century (p. 241, footnote 194), often juxtaposed horizontal left-to-right alphabetic Siraya and vertical right-to-left graphic Chinese. Dutch goose quills were used to write them, rather than Chinese brushes (p. 240). These contrasts "point in the direction of a separate identity" (p. 242). Translation may have been an additional foundation stone for a separate Siraya identity: the Siraya translated, unlike the Chinese and the Manchus. If the Siraya had any sense of themselves as translators, translation did not sustain their identity indefinitely. The last Sinkan manuscript dates to the first half of the nineteenth century, and institutional support for a cooked savage identity was dismantled in the second half, when the first modernizing project in Taiwan's history was launched (Shepherd, 1993, p. 361, cited in Friedman, 2010, p. 20).

Modern Translation from 1874 to 1987

When an American merchant ship called the *Rover* was wrecked and its crew killed by Indigenous people in southeastern Taiwan in 1867, Charles LeGendre, the American consul to Amoy, tried to forge an agreement between the Qing court and a chief named Toketok concerning the treatment of shipwrecked sailors (Barclay, 2018, p. 163). Communication was mediated "by relay through chains of interpreters" (p. 114). Two chain links were William Pickering, who had picked up Chinese working in Singapore and Hong Kong, and Miya (p. 60), who had learned Paiwanese, Toketok's language, living on the frontier.

Relay interpreting was supplemented with force seven years later in 1874 when Japan launched an expedition to punish Paiwan villages for the killing of the crew of a Ryūkyū tribute ship that had been blown off course in 1871. During negotiations, the Qing had to backtrack on its claim that the "savages" were beyond the pale of civilization and therefore not its responsibility, tantamount to an admission that this part of southern Taiwan was outside its jurisdiction. In the end, the Qing paid an indemnity, and Japan recognized its "suzerainty" (p. 19).

In the wake of the so-called Mudan village incident, the Qing increased state presence in the southeast; half-hearted, and temporary, efforts were made to educate the aborigines of the Rift Valley (Friedman, 2010, pp. 22–23), but these efforts did not include translation. An attempt to "enter the mountains and pacify the indigenes" was launched, in vain (Barclay, 2018, p. 122). Taiwan's alpine aborigines would live "beyond the pale" for a few more decades.

After Taiwan was yielded to Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, the new colonial authorities planned to assert sovereignty over the whole island, including the mountains. To gain knowledge of the mountains, the authorities encouraged low-ranking Japanese men to marry daughters of chiefs, who could then serve as cultural brokers (Barclay, 2005). After the last Indigenous chiefs submitted to the authorities in the 1910s, the Japanese had less and less need for the daughters, who were abandoned, or their fathers the chiefs, who had to yield more and more control to Japanese or Japanese-educated Indigenous elites. These elites did not leave written translations behind, as had Sirayan scribes; rather, they left traces in their languages by introducing modern vocabulary, from technological innovations like "train" to legal abstractions like "rights" (Sterk, 2021a).

The authorities also relied on anthropologists to supply the knowledge upon which colonial rule depended, although the anthropologists preferred the identity of social scientist to state agent. These anthropologists were the first to study Taiwan's aborigines scientifically. At the time, scientific study meant dividing "multiform, ethnically diverse 'manpower absorbing' societies" (Barclay, 2016, p. 57)—in which intermarriage also contributed to ethnic diversity—into putatively distinct "tribes" based on language, culture, and race.

Meaning "person" or "people," words like *tayal*, *seediq*, and *bunun* were "translated" into lingonyms, ethnonyms, and racial types. Premodern Atayal (derived from *tayal*) village communities dwelled in domains that did not even stretch as far as the eye could see, but according to the Japanese, the Atayal inhabited a traditional territory of thousands of square kilometers; in a sense, "the Atayal" were created cartographically (Barclay, 2018, p. 10, figure 2).

Scientific study also involved a denial of coevalness (Barclay, 2001, pp. 117–118), according to the evolutionary models that passed for social science in those days. Japanese anthropologists observed Taiwan's Indigenous population during "pacification" or soon after submission, at a time when many aborigines had armed themselves with muskets (Lin, 2016) and clad themselves in garments containing red thread produced on industrial looms (Barclay, 2018, pp. 161–189). Based on this observation, they assigned them to earlier space-times.

Nearly a century later, Atayal anthropologist Da-wei Kuan critiqued colonial science and social science in terms of translation. Colonial natural scientists "translate[d] barbarian land into a space represented by the categories of strata, rocks, soils, species, by the numbers of area, length and elevation, with which the policy of 'managing the water through the management of mountain' was made possible" (2009, p. 92). Colonial scientists conducted these studies to determine to what extent mountain forests could safely be exploited, for excessive logging would increase the risk of flooding. So too, colonial social scientists insinuated, might swidden cultivation: "The cultivation techniques in Atayal ways of living, were described as 'childish, obscure and harmful'" (p. 92).

Japanese studies of Indigenous "ways of living" included, for the first time in Taiwan's history, interlingual translations out of Indigenous languages. The quality of the translation was uneven. Seediq songs were translated fancifully by an ethnographer in the *Savage Races Survey Report*, published in 1917 (Sterk, 2020a, pp. 81–85).[4] Seediq myths were translated rigorously by a linguist in *The Myths and Traditions of the Taiwan Takasago Tribes*, published in 1935 (pp. 71–72). In general, the songs and myths were meant to prepare young Seediq men for a life of headhunting and an afterlife on the other side of a rainbow bridge. Seediq backtranslations of one such song and

one such myth were incorporated in the screenplay of *Warriors of the Rainbow*. Released in 2011, this epic feature film explained the Musha Rebellion, the last armed resistance against colonial rule in 1930, as a headhunting expedition (pp. 80–81).

In the aftermath of this rebellion, a series of bilingual language primers were published for use by Japanese policemen in Indigenous villages around the colony. Many example sentences in the primers had a transparently governmental aim, for instance, reminders of Japanese military supremacy intended to dissuade the natives from resistance in chapters with titles like "Submission." One such sentence ironically inspired the most famous speech, an expression of anti-colonial defiance, in *Warriors of the Rainbow* (Sterk, 2020a, pp. 74–78). "The Japanese may outnumber the leaves in the forest and the rocks in the river," says Mona Rudo, the Seediq chief who led the rebellion, in the Chinese subtitles, "but my will to resist is more adamant than Mount Qilai!" The speech, however, was filmed in Seediq, and in the Seediq translation of the Mandarin-language screenplay, the rocks transformed into grains of sand—amplifying the metaphor—and Mount Qilai morphed into a mountain on which plenty of picante plants grow: in Seediq translation, Mona Rudo turns out to be much harder to swallow than the Japanese had ever imagined.

The rest of the Japanese colonial period is a reminder of how effective ideological manipulation can be. Having been termed *banzoku*, "savage tribes" such as the Atayal, the Seediq, and the Bunun, Taiwan's Indigenous peoples were renamed *Takasagozoku*, meaning Takasago tribes. This was a more respectful term of address in that Takasago was an old Japanese term for Taiwan. Hoping to win Japanese respect, even to become Japanese, many Takasagozoku youths, including survivors of the Musha Rebellion, volunteered to fight for Japan in the Second World War (Barclay, 2018, p. 30).

In 1945, Japan surrendered Taiwan to the Republic of China (ROC), which Chiang Kai-shek ruled through the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese Nationalist Party. When the nationalists retreated to Taiwan after the loss of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, Taiwan's Indigenous people were subject to another round of ideological manipulation. No longer Takasagozoku, they were now 山地同胞 *shāndì tóngbāo*, "mountain compatriots," even though the most populous people, the Amis, were traditionally coastal. Educated in Mandarin from the 1950s, Indigenous children were punished for speaking ancestral languages in school (McNaught, 2021, p. 129). This was arguably an attempted "linguicide" (Zuckerman, 2020, pp. 189–190), but most families continued to speak their ancestral languages at home and in church.

Partly to secure American support, Chiang Kai-shek let Western missionaries into Taiwan in the 1950s. Christianity spread through Indigenous villages. Indeed, the church became the main agent of Indigenous translation in Taiwan under martial law (1949–1987). Although Chiang made half-hearted efforts to suppress Bible translation, which might undermine the effectiveness of the monolingual national language policy (Stainton, 1995, p. 156, cited in Friedman, 2010, p. 30), Christian texts continued to be translated (Li, 2013, pp. 81–144).

Several studies focus on bible translation into Bunun. Yang Shu-yuan discusses the localization of Christian concepts like God in terms of native concepts like *Dihanin*, meaning "the sky," "celestial phenomena," and "the arbiter of right and wrong" (2008, p. 56). In other words, Bunun Christians arguably came to understand their new religion on their own terms. Rik De Busser discusses the linguistic influence of Bible translation, arguing that it has been positive (2019, p. 242), particularly in establishing the Isbukun dialect as a standard (p. 254, see also De Busser, 2018).[5] Missionaries to the Bunun helped reinforce this standard by compiling dictionaries in it. Students of the language had the choice of Bunun-French or Bunun-English dictionaries (Li, 2013, pp. 52–53).

Missionaries who translated the Bible or compiled dictionaries worked with native informants who were illiterate, at least early on. De Busser (2019, p. 350) highlights the role of the Yushan

Theological College and Seminary in promoting Indigenous literacy. By the 1980s, many Indigenous theologians were literate in their ancestral languages. As in the early modern period, when Siraya scribes translated to defend their property rights, Indigenous activists in the postmodern era have translated to defend their human rights.

Postmodern Translation from 1987 to Now

When the KMT relaxed control of society in advance of the lifting of martial law in 1987, Indigenous activists, many of whom were graduates of the Yushan Theological College and Seminary, organized. They founded the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (AIA) at the end of 1984. One of the first things the AIA did was to translate the term "aborigine" as 原住民 *yúanzhùmín*, meaning "original resident citizen." I have translated *mín* into "citizen" because it usually implies a state context, which is fitting; as Paul Barclay implied with his term "indigenous modernity" (2018, p. 13), Indigeneity is a modern concept.[6]

In the late 1980s, relatively radical activists demanded a return of Indigenous sovereignty, in the form of lands that the Japanese had confiscated and the Chinese had inherited. Moderates yearned for recognition (Simon, 2020) and persuaded the government to recognize them as "Indigenous" on individual and "tribal" bases in constitutional amendments in 1994 and 1997. Although the local Indigenous movement emerged out of the opposition to the KMT, which had instituted martial law and monolingualism, it was the KMT that implemented Taiwan's Indigenous policy in the 1990s, as part of a pivot to democracy. This policy can also be understood in terms of geopolitics: it is one of many ways in which Taiwan (the ROC) can present itself as different from China (the PRC) (Rudolph, 2016, p. 424). Table 5.2 shows the sixteen Indigenous tribes that were officially recognized at the time of writing.[7]

David Reid considers the word "tribe" a misnomer, because the "indigenous groups of Taiwan are not necessarily tribal in terms of their social organisation" (2010, p. 8, cited by Hsu, 2016, p. 76). On this view, "tribe" is a mistranslation of 族 *zú*, which most scholars today would prefer to

Table 5.2 Officially Recognized Tribes in the Republic of China

Tribe	*Year of recognition*
Amis	1997
Atayal	1997
Bunun	1997
Kanakanavu	2014
Kavalan	2002 (previously Amis)
Paiwan	1997
Puyuma	1997
Rukai	1997
Saaroa	2014 (previously Tsou)
Saisiyat	1997
Sakizaya	2007 (previously Amis)
Seediq	2008 (previously Atayal)
Truku	2004 (previously Atayal)
Thao	2001 (previously Tsou)
Tsou	1997
Tao	1997

translate as "ethnic group" but which most Indigenous people also understand in terms of ancestry. There is a further complication, in that "tribe" is also used to translate 部落 (*bùluò*, "Indigenous village"). Reid claims that the Mandarin terms *zú* and *bùluò* are "accurate" (ibid.) in that they distinguish between two different types of community, imagined community and village community, but Minna Hsu (2016, p. 76) points out that both terms are colonial.

Ethnonyms like Atayal—泰雅族 *Tàiyǎzú* in contemporary Mandarin—were once labels for traditional territories on Japanese maps that masked hybridity, but they have, following acceptance by the ROC government, by Western Bible translators, and even by Indigenous elites like Da-wei Kuan, become self-fulfilling prophesies.[8] As for *bùluò*, it is arguably imprecise in that it covers local terms for village communities of different sizes and social structures: Seediq villages were traditionally about fifty people, Siraya villages well over five hundred. On the other hand, *bùluò* around the country have a lot in common today as a result of accommodation to colonial policies (Friedman, 2018). Products of colonization, *bùluò* and *zú* are now terms by which Taiwan's Indigenous people understand their place in the nation.

Nine *zú* were officially recognized as Indigenous in 1997, but the new Indigenous policy provided for further recognition. To receive recognition, representatives of tribes like the Sakizaya (see Rudolph, 2016) had to demonstrate their distinctness by describing their traditional cultures in written Mandarin. Each Mandarin-language description is a cultural translation, in several senses. Cultural practices like the hunting of muntjac deer, weaving with ramie fiber, or millet planting depended on knowledge that had been tacit or procedural and that was now made explicit and declarative, in Mandarin. Translated into Japanese by ethnographers and linguists, lyrics and myths were now relay-translated into Mandarin or translated directly into Mandarin (Sterk, 2020a, pp. 63–67, 85–89). To some extent, the Indigenous cultural translators were autoethnographers, but they were also reliant on Japanese ethnographies that had been translated interlingually into Mandarin. By retranslating these colonial ethnographies intralingually into their own texts, Indigenous cultural translators were arguably recovering cultural sovereignty (cf. Christie, 2009).

Some Indigenous cultural translators have sought to recover cultural sovereignty in the absence of recognition, most notably among the Siraya, who disappeared from the historical record in the last nineteenth century only to reappear in the late twentieth as a new Taiwanese identity was being developed (Brown, 2004). Siraya activists may be more interested in developing a distinct Siraya identity than in supporting a Taiwanese one. Over the past twenty years, they have been using the Dutch-era translations of the Gospels according to Matthew and John as well as the Qing-era Sinkan Manuscripts both to understand the grammar of their language (Adelaar, 2011) and to revitalize it (Adelaar, 2013).

Law is another sphere for the struggle for cultural sovereignty. According to Christopher Upton, litigants in Indigenous courts today fear that "customary laws translated into the language of the non-Indigenous majority could lead to interpretations inconsistent with ordinary understandings and Indigenous people's loss of control over their customary laws by non-Indigenous actors charged with interpreting them" (2022, p. 1013). As Upton puts it, juridical translations of Indigenous cultures have been "thin" (cf. Appiah, 2000 [1993]). Wu Tzung-mou (2016) argues that Indigenous customs can be translated more or less accurately, if not thickly, into Western legal concepts. Another legal scholar, Hung Chun-chi, argues (2021, p. 67) that Indigenous peoples possess a *sui generis* right to "narrate, negotiate and translate" their cultures that can be protected in terms of "intellectual property," even if the cultures are "hybrid."

The kind of postmodern hybridity that Hung has in mind is distinct from the hybridity of the modern period. Porting iPhones and sporting clothes purchased at Uniqlo, contemporary Indigenous people reify their traditions as much as they practice them. They may participate in

"traditional" rituals on special occasions, sometimes as performances for tourists. Indigenous individuals who have mastered "traditional" crafts sometimes take commissions from museums.

Marzia Varutti adopted "cultural translation" as a rubric for the study of Formosan Indigenous representation in museums. She explained this rubric in the following terms:

> In cultural translation, a culture is not merely translated from one context to another; in the process, all elements of the translation—the translator, the receiver, and the object of translation—are transformed. Cultural translation is a practice of cultural production that entails a transformation—expansion, reduction, or distortion—of meaning.
>
> (2014, p. 103)

Varutti applies this rubric to the descriptions that curators write about material objects, which are described very differently depending on where the curators are and what national narrative they subscribe to, Taiwanese or Chinese. A Tao canoe is positioned very differently in Taipei, Taiwan, and Shanghai, China.

Cultural Translation in Indigenous Cultural Production

Scholars have also adopted the rubric of cultural translation to study Indigenous cultural production. Huang Hsin-ya positions Indigenous writers who write in Mandarin as follows: "The Sinophone Indigenous writers are intercultural translators/mediators, who work to explore and challenge the clear-cut boundaries" (2013, p. 252). Some scholars see this work as constructive. Chen Chih-fan, for instance, believes that the case of a Rukai writer named Auvinni Kadresengan exemplifies James Clifford's ideal of Indigenous cultural translation as "native resurgence" (2019, p. 174; citing Clifford, 2013, pp. 52–64).

Other scholars are more critical. Chiu Kuei-fen (2009, pp. 1073, 1082) and Liou Liang-ya (2012, p. 813) studied the writers Syaman Rapongan and Topas Tamapima respectively as would-be cultural translators who have become alienated from the Indigenous communities they claim to represent. To compensate for their alienation, and to give the reader an impression of indigeneity, these writers include Indigenous words in their stories, as if the meanings of the words cannot be captured in Mandarin (Chiu, 2009, p. 1074; Liou, 2012, pp. 820–821).[9]

The most in-depth discussion of the translatability of Formosan Indigenous fiction is by Richard Chen (2020) in his article on English translations of Topas Tamapima's classic short story "The Last Hunter." Chen argues for the literal translation of apparently "unnatural" features of Tamapima's Mandarin, which Chen discusses in terms of "interlanguage," in order to uphold the "ethics of difference" (Venuti, 1998, cited in Chen, 2020). Hence, Chen approves of "misbehaving" mist in one translation. While it is true that mist does not misbehave in "common Han Chinese [or English] habits of language and thought," it is impossible to ascribe the locution to Bunun habits of language and thought without further investigation. The misbehavior of mist is clearly personification, but not necessarily a relay cultural translation, from Bunun to Mandarin to English.

The rubric of cultural translation should apply to the production of literature in Indigenous languages and its translation as well, but so far it has not been applied to the few works that have been produced (Li, 2013, pp. 192–193). A few ancestral-language poems, essays, and short stories are recognized every year in a competition held by the Ministry of Education. Ironically, the compositions have to be translated before they can be judged. The Indigenous Languages Research and Development Foundation (ILRDF) has sought to seed the languages by translating Western classics like *The Little Prince*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Alice in Wonderland* into

them over the past few years, but aside from a few comments about the translation of the title of *The Little Prince* (Palemeq, 2016, p. 63), the translations have not been studied.

Scholars have also studied films in terms of cultural translation. Lin Wen-ling, for instance, argues that two Amis documentaries from the turn of the millennium undermine "existing essentializing and fixating stereotypes" that "continue to construe and constrain Indigenous representation/translation" (2001, p. 198). To undermine the stereotype of the drunken aborigine, the filmmaker Mayaw Biho "translated and transformed the meaning of millet wine" (p. 206) by placing it in its traditional, ritual context.

The alter ego of the abject aborigine is the noble savage, who features in *Warriors of the Rainbow*, a Taiwanese national allegory (Sterk, 2020a, p. 3) that transcended its Mandarin-language screenplay because it was filmed in Seediq translation. In my thick description of this film (Sterk, 2020a), I delved into the century-long cultural translation process that culminated in the Seediq shooting script in order to highlight the Seediq translators' perspectives. I demonstrated how they debated the translation of terms in the Mandarin-language screenplay with rhetorical appeals to "tradition." One translator claimed that 逃 *táo*, Chinese for "flee," should be translated into *tutuy*, meaning "wake up" or "get up" and not *qduriq*, "flee," because no self-respecting Seediq warrior such as Mona Rudo or his father Rudo Luhe would ever shout *qduriq*. But the chief translator did not agree, and *táo* was translated both ways: Mona Rudo shouts *tutuy*, his father *qduriq* (p. 9).

Through such debates, Seediq translators have been translating their tradition into an "alternative indigenous modernity" (p. 4). The redefinition of *mgaya* is a case in point. In 1930, *mgaya* was literally "to follow *gaya*," the tradition of headhunting. That is what *mgaya* means in the film when Mona Rudo hears about it at his father's knee, but by the time the film was released in 2011, *mgaya* could be construed as meaning to follow a body of explicit, written law that forbids headhunting (p. 122). Any account of the translation of a cultural keyword like *mgaya*, let alone of the cultural context Indigenous translators are operating in, therefore has to be very thick (p. 125, cf. Appiah, 2000 [1993]).

In two recent articles, I argued for the pedagogical potential of subtitled films and music videos to translate Indigenous languages and cultures into terms that ordinary viewers can understand and imitate. In particular, I argued that Atayal-made films made in a context of concern about language shift tend to be translated pedagogically, addressing young Atayal and non-Atayal audience members alike as language learners (Sterk, 2022a). In another article (Sterk, 2022b), I argued that a pedagogical approach tends to be adopted in the translation of popular music lyrics from Mandarin into Indigenous languages and in the titling of music videos. I went on to make the institutional argument that rewarding outstanding Indigenous-language pop musicians at the Golden Melodies, Taiwan's analogue to the Grammys, is a cost-effective way for the government to indirectly support language revitalization through translation, which I consider in the next subsection.

Interlingual Translation in Indigenous Language Revitalization

Finnish scholars Päivi Kuusi et al. (2017) highlighted the roles that translators can play in minority language revitalization. Like Finland, Taiwan has been conducting an experiment on the effectiveness of translation in language revitalization.

Taiwan's Indigenous languages need revitalizing because, partly as a result of the monolingual language policy under martial law, many young people had shifted away from their ancestral languages to Mandarin by the 1990s. Since then, the state has attempted to make up for the linguistic damage it had inflicted by implementing an Indigenous language education policy (McNaught, 2021). The Indigenous Languages Development Act, passed in 2017, significantly augmented

funding for language revitalization and created the ILRDF, which liaises with a network of local Indigenous language development offices around the country. I mentioned ILRDF in the previous subsection in connection with the translation of literary classics into Indigenous languages. Investments have also been made in language primers, proficiency tests, dictionaries, Wikipedia, and television programs. All of these investments have directly funded translation.

Students have had the option of taking once-a-week classes in Indigenous languages since the 1990s (McNaught, 2021, pp. 129–130). The primers used in such classes employ both idiomatic translation that conveys meaning and literal translation to teach grammar. The contents balance traditional and modern life (Li, 2013, pp. 157–160). The same is true of the language proficiency tests that have a translation component and that thousands of people take every year, very few at the higher levels, for the benefit they bring in college admission (McNaught, 2021, pp. 130–131). Over the past few years, Indigenous language learning in Taiwan has gone digital (McNaught, 2019), with a dedicated website of multilingual materials: http://web.klokah.tw/.

Dictionaries produced by missionaries under martial law were reassessed by language experts like Yukan Batu (Chen Shengrong), who discovered numerous mistranslations in Danish linguist Søren Egerod's Atayal-English dictionary (Li, 2013, p. 56). To avoid such mistranslations, a new, cooperative model of dictionary compilation was adopted where Indigenous language experts worked with Han Taiwanese linguists (Li, 2011). Dictionaries for Taiwan's officially recognized Indigenous languages were compiled on this model in the aughts and are now online at https://e-dictionary.ilrdf.org.tw/. As with the language primers and proficiency tests, the dictionaries cover the "modern" lifestyle young Indigenous people now live, but they also remind them of the traditional one. In the Seediq dictionary compiled by the linguist Sung Li-may and the language expert Dakis Pawan, for instance, the example sentence for *baciq pada* explains that it is a species of oak whose acorns are a favorite food of the muntjac, *pada*. This explanation exemplifies a hunter's ecological knowledge (Sterk, 2021b).

The websites for the sixteen dictionaries have been regularly updated with terminology in order to further modernize Indigenous lexicons. Teams around Taiwan translate terms from the same lists. This is therefore a top-down attempt to modernize the languages. Bottom up, Indigenous peoples borrowed words from Japanese and Chinese throughout the twentieth century. Term translators happily record these loanwords; I found no language purism in my study of the Seediq term team (Sterk, 2021a, p. 67; cf. Kuusi et al., 2022, p. 148). In addition to recording loanwords, term translators coin terms, either as calques such as *dgiyaq puniq*, literally mountain of fire, from the Mandarin word for volcano (Sterk, 2021a, pp. 67–68), or adaptations such as *sapah skiya*, literally "flying house," meaning airplane (Sterk, 2020a, p. 157).

Wikipedia is another frontier of terminology translation. Seediq Wikipedians, for instance, coined a term for "electoral alliance," *pnspuun* ("together") *psgao* ("sorting") ("Indigenous Perspective," 2021, 33:11). Indigenous-language Wikipedia translation is also state-supported. With funding from the Ministry of Education, the Center for Aboriginal Studies at National Chengchi University helped the Atayal, Amis, and Sakizaya communities get their wikis into the Wikimedia Incubator in 2016 and 2017. Atayal and Amis have the most speakers, but Sakizaya, one of the smallest language communities, was the first to leave the incubator, in 2019, demonstrating that motivation and organization can be more important than population size (Li, 2020).

A final way the state has been directly supporting language revitalization through translation is by producing bilingual television programs on TITV, the Taiwan Indigenous Television station. Eliana Ritts (2022) reported on an episode of a quiz show called "Language Heroes" where contestants translate certain words in hit songs. A line in the chorus of Rihanna's "Umbrella" ended up as "stand under my *urad'săn, rad'săn*, *rad'săn*, eh, eh, eh," where *urad'* is the word for

"rain" in Amis and 傘 *săn* the Mandarin for "shade." At moments like these, the show "creatively re-imagines the game show genre to overcome some of the many challenges that face contemporary Indigenous language learners" (Ritts, 2022).

The anchors who deliver the news in Indigenous languages on TITV are also language heroes. Iwan Nawe, a Seediq anchor, reported to me during an informal interview that she sight-translates the Mandarin-language news stories, having prepared them beforehand by checking vocabulary with language experts and, if necessary, coining new terms. Sun Chia-hui (2014) points out that the Indigenous news translator's task is not just linguistic but also cultural. Tao viewers do not approve of public discussion of cervixes, referred to euphemistically as "inside the place where women give birth." So how was the Tao anchor supposed to report on cervical cancer prevention (p. 26–27)? It is by taking up such tasks that people like she are translating, meaning transforming, their cultures.

Conclusion

Douglas McNaught claimed that "positive changes in educational policy over the past three decades" have had a "negligible" impact on literacy in Indigenous languages (2021, p. 131). This claim applies to translation as well, with two caveats: The experiment on translation's effectiveness in language revitalization is ongoing, and translation has surely had a considerable impact on the literacy of the translators themselves.

Now that the state is supporting Indigenous translators directly and indirectly, is a double-edged sword that the colonizer has used to rule and the colonized to resist still an apt metaphor for Indigenous translation? I have stuck with the metaphor after reflecting that such a sword cuts both ways no matter who wields it. In weaponizing translation, Indigenous people have been transformed by it. In some sense, they have taken the sword to themselves, defining their identities in acts of translation. And over the past few decades, they have joined forces with descendants of colonizers to take the sword to components of the colonial system, whether to remove them or to improve them. In this way, Indigenous translators have been using the sword not just to sever but also to suture.

The double-edged sword metaphor occurred to me when I read Ann Heylen's comment about "linguistic resources for rule and resistance" (2001, p. 199) in her study of literacy among the Siraya. It then reminded me of Vicente Rafael's 1988 study of subjugation and subversion in seventeenth-century Christian translation in the Philippines. Recently, Laura Rademaker (2021, p. 312) compared the Philippines to New Zealand in respect to colonial translation, claiming that in both countries, translation "simultaneously instituted and subverted colonial rule."

New Zealand's settler colonial system was founded on a mistranslation of the word "sovereignty" in the *te reo* version of the Treaty of Waitangi (Fenton & Moon, 2003). Since the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975, the settler state has admitted that no Māori signatory of the Treaty was relinquishing "sovereignty." But rather than returning sovereignty, the state has instead shared it with the Māori, including by translating.

The Waitangi Tribunal, for instance, is also known as Te Rōpū Wincludeakahau i te Tiriti o Waitangi; it is an organ of the Ministry of Justice, or Te Tāhū o te Ture. Translation has proven to be a "double-edged tool" (Fenton & Moon, 2003, p. 37) that can be used for both colonization and decolonization (p. 38). Given that New Zealand has decolonized by revamping, not dismantling, the colonial system, the Kiwi case also lends support to the claim that "translation may . . . contribute to ensuring cohesion, preventing the linguistic borders from becoming political ones" in settler states (Kuusi et al., 2022, p. 140).

What about in Taiwan? No treaties were ever signed with Taiwan's Indigenous peoples, and the status of their sovereignty remains unresolved. President Tsai Ing-wen did not mention "sovereignty" in her historic apology on August 1, 2016, but she did refer to Taiwan's Indigenous peoples as the "original owners" of the island nation and promised "to delineate and announce indigenous traditional territories and lands." She then had her apology translated into Taiwan's sixteen officially recognized Indigenous languages as a gesture of reconciliation. Therefore, it seems that in Taiwan as in New Zealand, settlers have tried to ensure cohesion through translation. Direct and indirect state support for language and cultural revitalization through translation may be dulling the edge of radical demands for the return of Indigenous sovereignty in Taiwan and New Zealand. Be that as it may, translation will continue to be a means and a metaphor of transformation for Indigenous activists in settler states around the world, whether they are radicals or reformers.

Notes

1 The aim of proselytization did not leave Dutch missionaries incapable of observing the Siraya. Much of what we know about the Siraya is from the quills of missionaries such as Candidius. Their observations can inform attempts at multidimensional explanation, for instance of the Siraya institution of mandatory abortion (Shepherd, 1995). Christopher Joby explains how Candidius and Junius both translated culture by relating the unfamiliar to the familiar. Candidius likened pomelos to lemons (Joby, 2024, p. 10) for European readers, while Junius compared a kingdom to a village for Siraya converts (Joby, 2023, p. 32).

2 Literally "ripe" or "cooked," 熟 *shú* meant civilized as a result of contact with Chinese settlers, and contrasted with 生 *shēng*, literally "raw," meaning uncivilized (Teng, 2004, pp. 122–148). A few Qing-era Chinese travellers and Manchu officials transcended such black-and-white terms, such as the traveller Yu Yonghe, who left a fascinating record of the communities he visited on his trip up the west coast in the last decade of the seventeenth century, and the anonymous official who transliterated *mata*, the Siraya word for the young men who worked as message-runners, into Chinese and Manchu in a palace memorial (Tsai, 2008, p. 33).

3 The ethnic buffer policy helps to explain official neglect of written translation into Indigenous languages during the Qing: the Qing had no interest in assimilating cooked savage communities through translation. Such an institutional explanation complements the cultural explanation that Sinocentrism explains why the Chinese and the Manchus did not translate into Indigenous languages (see Chang, 2014, p. 148).

4 See Lin & Jian, 2014 for a discussion of another case of fanciful aboriginal song translation, in this case by a Taiwanese (rather than a Japanese) musicologist.

5 I argued (Sterk, 2020b) that Toda-dialect translators have reacted competitively to the selection of the Truku and Tgdaya dialects for Seediq bible translation. However, their published translations are "tea table books" (p. 146) that exemplify "the symbolic dimension of translation" (Kuusi et al., 2022, p. 140) for minority translators who understand the majority language.

6 Since the 1990s, "aboriginal" has been abandoned in favour of "indigenous" by "activists eager to shift the focus from primordialism to human rights" (Friedman, 2018, p. 80 footnote 1).

7 A recent ruling by the Supreme Court has brought the Siraya and other plains Indigenous peoples "one step closer to recognition" (Hioe, 2022).

8 I mentioned Da-Wei Kuan's critique of the Japanese colonial regime in the section on modern translation. Kuan has also criticized the Chinese colonial regime for "the mistranslation of indigenous knowledge" (2009, p. 134) according to "the fixed cartographies of the modern state" (Kuan, 2009, p. 135). Elsewhere he has referred to a mistranslation of the Atayal understanding of dwelling place into the "modern concept of 'territory'" (Kuan & Lin, 2008, p. 111). Yet he has also made strategic use of the "Atayal people's traditional territory" as defined cartographically by Japanese ethnographers in order to protest a plan for a national park in the middle of it (cf. Barclay, 2018, p. 249).

9 Andrea Bachner (2016, p. 127) discusses the linguistic hybridity of Indigenous literature from Taiwan in terms of "bigraphism."

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