

Practicing Community-based Truku (Indigenous) Language Policy:  
Dialogues of Hope at the Intersection of  
Language Revitalization, Identity Development, and Community Rebuilding

by

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## ABSTRACT

The dissertation focuses on one Truku (Indigenous) village in eastern Taiwan and aims to understand the processes and possibilities of bottom-up language revitalization. In 2012, the National Geographic Genographic Legacy Fund supported the village to start a community-driven language revitalization initiative. Drawing on scholarship guided by critical Indigenous research methodologies, critical sociocultural approaches to language policy and planning, and sociocultural approaches to learning, this study is an attempt to generate qualitative ethnographic research to facilitate local praxis.

The major findings are four: Firstly, after decades of colonialism, villagers' lived experiences and language ideological standpoints vary significantly across generations and households, which constraints the possibility of collective endeavors. Secondly, building on previous scholars' emphasis on "ideological clarification" prior to language revitalization, I identify the dimension of embodied ideological differences, using cultural historical activity theory to illustrate how certain "mainstream" artifacts (e.g. orthography) can confine orally dominant elders' capacity to contribute. In a similar vein, by closely examining children's voices and language performances, I highlight children's theory of language as relationship-building and a theory of learning as participation in communities of participation, which stand in stark contrast to adult educators' constructs of acquisition and proficiency in traditional SLA. Finally, inspired by children and elders' voices, methodologically I argue for a relational conceptualization of agency and propose a relationship-oriented language revitalization framework. Such framework values and incorporates existing social relationships in praxis, and requires researchers and

practitioners to humbly recognize the work of power in social relations and develop a trusting, reflective bond with the villagers before rushing to impose agendas.

This dissertation contributes to the scholarship of language policy and planning by incorporating sociocultural learning theories designed to generate praxis-oriented analysis. By contextualizing identity and SLA processes in an Indigenous context, the study also illuminates the affective dimension of language learning and education. Overall this study offers valuable insights for scholars, educators, and practitioners interested in community-based language education. Equally important, this research represents the voices of multiple generations of Truku people, deeply committed to ensuring that future generations remain connected to their heritage language, knowledge system, and ways of being.

## DEDICATION

To Bowtung *payi*, *laqi* Truku, and all my Truku friends involved in the language  
revitalization project...

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

**Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation stems from my one-year praxis-oriented, ethnographic research that aims to understand current Truku language practices and explore alternative language policy together with the Truku Indigenous villager in eastern Taiwan. In this chapter (Chapter 1), I first provide an overview of the historical context of the Indigenous people in Taiwan. I then explain how my interpersonal network and academic conceptual framework motivate and inform the relatively unconventional design of the present study.

The format for the dissertation follows the nontraditional track in which the articles are meant to stand alone, but are compiled here for the purpose of completing the doctoral program. Each article (Chapter 2-4), situated in the broad family of practice theories (Nicolini, 2012; Ortner, 1984), prioritizes a different theoretical lens in order to address a particular aspect of the language shift/ revitalization in the village. All of them together, however, complement each other and map out my multiple attempts to understand the dynamics between structure and agency in the praxis of community-based Indigenous language revitalization. The organization of the dissertation therefore reflects Nicolini's (2012) proposal of "a form of programmatic eclecticism and a toolkit approach" (p. 16) in practice theories. That is, researchers embrace the "plurality" of theoretical lens because the combination of the theories can better capture the multifaceted process of social practice.

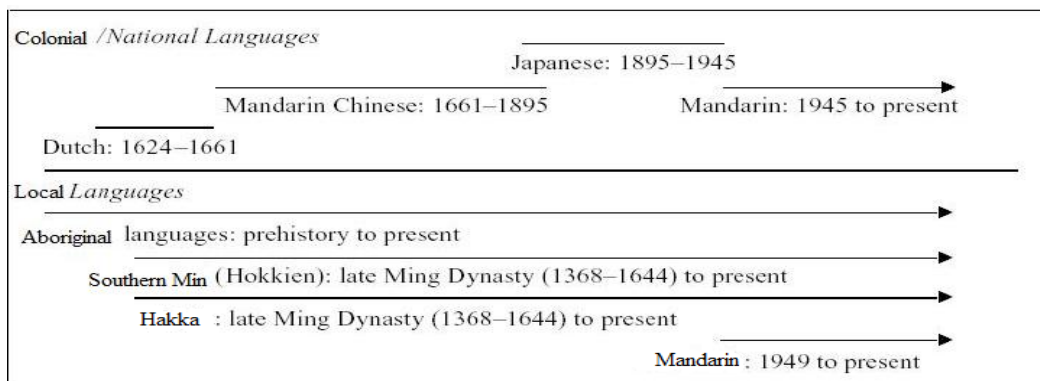
Firstly, in Chapter 2, I tell stories of how my relationship with the villagers was developed and negotiated over time, recognizing the affective, humanistic aspect of knowledge production in praxis. With a heavier emphasis on methodological reflection, this chapter discusses the possibilities and limits of participatory action research in Indigenous language revitalization context. In Chapter 3, I continue to examine some of the significant challenges and contradictions we encountered in the supposedly collective work, this time with special attention to the role of artifacts in mediating elders' capacity to act. It brings analysis to the "meso" spaces of elder participation and highlights the relation between practices and their material conditions. In Chapter 4, I shift the attention to the children and their motivational space for learning the Truku language. Concerned with the primacy of agency, I discuss how we learn from children's improvised initiatives and re-ideologize the value of Indigenous language in their ethics of care and relationship.

Although each chapter engages with different academic discourse communities and is intended to different readerships (i.e. Chapter 2 for Critical Qualitative Research; Chapter 3 for Language Policy and Planning; Chapter 4 for Second Language Learning), they consistently correspond to a collaborative, sociocultural, and praxis-oriented epistemology of being, knowing, and researching. All of them represent an activist researcher's attempt to expand the reflective spaces for future praxis. Furthermore, two of the chapters (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) were co-authored with my Truku mentor, Bowtung Yudaw, who is currently the co-leader of the project. The result of the co-authorship reflects my attempt to always respect the villagers as my teachers and colleagues. Finally, the conclusions chapter reviews the findings and discusses both the theoretical and practical implications of the study for future work.

## Indigenous People in Taiwan

In Taiwan, there are 20 different groups of Indigenous people who have dwelled on the island as early as 4,000 B.C.E. Each of these groups speak a variety of an Austronesian languages (Shepherd, 1993). Their languages take on a special socio-historical significance in historical linguistics because Taiwan is believed to be the original homeland of the Austronesian language family (Blust, 1980, 1995). In the past 400 years (See Table 1.1), colonial power, military control, and coercive assimilation policies critically represent the social injustices these native Taiwanese face from generation to generation. For example, during the Japanese colonial period (1895- 1945), the government created “imperial subjects assimilated into the Japanese national polity” (Ching, 2001, p. 137) through compulsory education in Japanese. After the Second World War, the KMT government from China replaced the Japanese regime and imposed Mandarin Chinese language on all the people in 1946. The 1950s signifies an increasing endeavor to assimilate Indigenous people and resuscitate traces of the Japanese influence through Chinese-centered education (Friedman, 2010; Chun, 1994). Table 1.1 offers a simplified representation of the language history in Taiwan (Sandel, 2003).

▼ **Table 1.1 History of the languages in Taiwan**





The political turning point advantageous to Indigenous people began in the mid-1980s when the Democratic Progressive Party arose. Antagonistic to the KMT's authoritarian regime, some of the hard-core DPP advocates have campaigned for the re-signification of a national identity different from China. The politicians soon realized that the emphasis on the Austronesian people can critically differentiate Taiwan from China (Rudolf, 2003) because China does not have Austronesian populations and languages in its sovereign territory. The Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) was established in a ministry-level to take charge of Indigenous affairs and policies. Since 2001, under the Mother Tongue Language Policy, Indigenous languages have been taught as a subject in some elementary schools; nevertheless, the class time is exceedingly limiting: 1 session (45-min) per week. The changed policies from the top down since 1980s can be summarized as follows (Tang, 2011):

- 1988 Indigenous people made a protest against government's deprivation of their ownership of their lands.
- 1990 The first Indigenous textbooks were in publication.
- 1993 Indigenous people were allowed to use Chinese characters to spell their Indigenous names by the Ministry of Interior.
- 1994 The term *yuanzumin* 'Indigenous people' was adopted by the National Assembly as an additional Article of the Republic of China Constitution.
- 1996 The Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) was established in a ministry-level under the Executive Yuan in Taiwan.
- 1998 The CIP entrusted twelve radio stations with some form of indigenous programs.

2001 Mother Tongue Language Policy: Indigenous languages are offered for one class period per week in elementary schools, starting from the first grade in 2001, second and third grade in 2002, and all of middle school the following year.

2007 The CIP organizes indigenous language comprehension tests and study programs for qualified Indigenous people, to raise their language proficiency.

Even though the official government has opened up “ideological and implementational spaces” (Hornberger, 2006) for Indigenous language preservation since the 1980s, in general most Indigenous people have not been involved in the language policy and planning process, and colonial legacies continue to entangle with people’s language practices. Sun (2010a), an Indigenous philosopher and chairman of the Council of Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan, points out the loss of the Indigenous signifier system (including linguistic and cultural practices) is the most critical factor contributing to the breakdown of Indigenous families and communities (e.g. alcoholism, child neglect). As a cultural insider, he argues, “The destruction of the Indigenous signifier system like language leads to the self-disorientation, subsequent alcoholism, and other social disorder... It cannot be amended by government subsidies and other financial support. Who one *is* can not be replaced by what *s/he has*” (pp. 9-27). Sun’s (2010a) argument calls for a critical understanding of the role of language in the *processes* of identity development (i.e. who one is) and their relevance to some of the contemporary challenges facing Indigenous communities.

### **The Seediq-Truku Community**

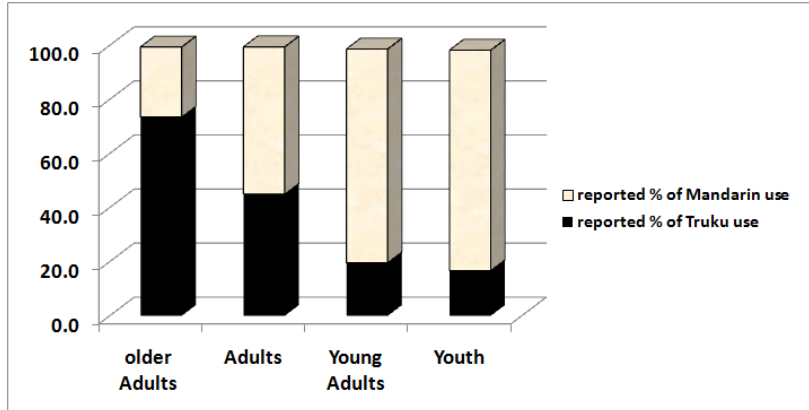
In this dissertation, I focus on the Seediq-Truku people (specifically Truku) in Qowgan Village in Hualien County, Taiwan. The Seediq originated from the high

mountains in central Taiwan, consisting of three different subgroups and dialects: Tkdaya, Toda, and Truku. The Truku are the people who climbed over the Central Mountain and migrated to Hualien County, the eastern part of Taiwan. In Tang’s recent research (2011) on Truku language shift, she surveys the community members’ reported language use and it reflects the “gradual Mandarin preference (26% > 55% > 79% > 82%) and disadvantage in Truku use (75% > 45% > 20% > 17%).” (See Table 1.2 & 1.3) Based on Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (GIDS), she identifies Truku as in Stage 7, close to Stage 8, meaning Truku is spoken mainly among the older generations. As a non-Indigenous researcher having worked with the Truku of Taiwan in Qowgan over the past four years, I also notice the great linguistic heterogeneity across generations. The majority of the youngest generation, it is clear, do not produce Truku on sentence level.

▼ **Table 1. 2 Proportion of reported language use (Tang, 2011)**

Cohort	OA (Older Adults)	AD (Adults)	YA (Young Adults)	YO (Youth)
Truku	75%	45%	20%	17%
Mandarin	26%	55%	79%	82%
Japanese	6%	0%	0%	0%
English	0%	3%	1%	2%
Southern Min	0%	2%	0%	0%

▼ **Table 1.3 Reported % of Mandarin and Truku Use (Tang, 2011)**



### How My/Our Journey Started

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
 I took the one less traveled by,  
 And that has made all the difference.  
 -- Robert Frost

As a Chinese descendant growing up in Chinese-dominant environment, racially I am part of the dominant group who may remain oblivious to and ignorant of Indigenous students' realities. The turning point came when I studied at the University of Hawai'i in 2008 and met my friend Apay Tang, who is a Truku from Hualien County, Taiwan. I remember when I first saw her, she smiled cheerfully at me, her eyes shining the light I couldn't describe. Apay and I started studying together and Apay soon became a big sister to me. I would knock on her door when I was in trouble, calling, "*Daziezie* (Big sister)..." Then she would welcome me in, listen to me patiently, and sometimes open her Bible, an old book that seemed to have been read thousands of times, and said, "*Xiaomeimei* (little sister), let's pray. Let's lift it up to God." A few months later, I decided to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and my friendship with Apay grew into fonder

sisterhood.

In summer, 2009, I was welcomed to her community and met her extended family, especially her maternal aunt Mrs. Tien. Mrs. Tien and her husband Principal Jiang were both hard-working educators in public schools. After retirement, in 2001, they used their pension and founded a non-profit organization *Indigenous and Multicultural Association- Hualien* (IMAH), which aims to provide a nurturing after-school environment for Truku children in the community. The organization also promotes Truku language maintenance. Truku vocabulary cards are pasted around the classroom. I was very moved by Mrs. Tien and Principal Jiang's heart for the children and volunteered to help with the summer program that summer. At that time, I was aware of the critique of the impacts of the dominant language on Indigenous communities; however, little did I know about any alternatives. I continued to speak to children in Mandarin Chinese, the dominant national language.

In fall 2009, I moved onto the PhD program at Arizona State University. Unexpectedly, I was assigned to teach an education course in Teacher's College: "TEL 212 Understanding the Culturally Diverse Child." My students were pre-service teachers who were predominantly middle-class, white females and I was told my responsibility was to teach them about cultural diversity in the United States. I started studying minoritized Americans' educational experiences (Jacob & Jordan, 1993; Nieto, 2009; Spring, 2004). Teaching white students about white supremacy (McIntosh, 1998) and Native Americans' boarding school experiences (Richie, 2008) really helped me to question my own educational and cultural background as part of the dominant group in my home country. In one of my course projects, I decided to interview Apay and her

sibling about their schooling experiences as an Indigenous student at school. I was truly humbled to learn that they faced challenges such as racial and linguistic discrimination that I never had to consider as a member from the dominant group. I realized that I had been ignorant of my “Chinese privilege” and the structural inequality since I was born.

In early 2010, I received the bad news that Mrs. Tien and Principal Jiang got into a bad car accident and Principal Jiang fell into a coma. During that time, Mrs. Tien, at the age of 67, took care of her husband in the hospital during the daytime and came back to the NGO to continue running the after-school program. After a few months, Principal Jiang passed away; all the children cried so hard kneeling down at his coffin in the funeral. Mrs. Tien was all of a sudden left alone to manage the association with a part-time assistant. “I told the children not to come, but they keep coming. What do you do?” she said. That summer, I went back to the community to visit Mrs. Tien and brought my friends to help with the summer program. I did not really think about how much I would be involved in the community affairs in the future. All I knew was that these are good-hearted people fighting for hope and love for the next generation. And my heart was called to be part of this.

In late 2010 and early 2011, Apay and I started to talk to each other more often and prayed together for the community because we were both worried about Mrs. Tien and the association. Meanwhile, Apay and my academic journey started to converge at this point. I was taking Dr. McCarty’s *Language Policy and Planning* seminar and Apay was auditing Language Policy and Planning taught by Dr. Davis at the University of Hawai’i. We would often exchange readings and talked about the possibilities of language revitalization programs in the village. As a non-Indigenous person, even though

I honestly lacked the type of emotional attachment Apay has for the language, my respect and care for her and Mrs. Tien on a personal level eventually became the strongest motive for me to choose Truku language revitalization as my dissertation topic. I didn't know how much I could contribute to the vision of Indigenous language maintenance, yet I cherished by heart the stories Apay told me about her previous educational experiences in Taiwan. I assumed she may be on a solitary journey as the first female Truku to pursue a PhD (just like I am the first female in my family to pursue a PhD) and I wanted to walk with her on this lonely journey together.

In summer 2011, when Apay was pressing on her goal to write her dissertation, I went back to the village alone to help with the summer program and to work on a grant proposal Apay and I had planned to apply. This time, I started to learn Truku more consciously and listen to people's language experiences and life stories more attentively. I had several long conversations with Apay's grandfather, *baki* (meaning 'Grandpa' in Truku), one of the elders in the village who devote their everyday life to Truku dictionary-making. *Baki* told me that when Japan ruled Taiwan, he slapped his own people because he was held accountable to help the Japanese people discipline the troop. He fell into deep silence with a long sigh. *Baki* also shared with me that when he studied in Japanese-only school, he was treated as the second citizen and was unable to have equal opportunities for advancement even though he worked harder than anyone else. *Baki* was not alone. His children and grandchildren retold me the same story of being punished for speaking Truku in school in Chinese-only school. Listening to similar hardships from different generations struck me deeply. Under two periods of colonial rule (Japan: 1895-1945; Chinese: 1945- present), Truku people have never been given ample

cultural space to freely identify themselves with their language and culture. Thankfully, the language revitalization project that Apay and I applied on behalf of the community in summer 2011 (see Appendix A) was granted with \$25,000 from the National Geographic- Genographic Legacy Fund. At the beginning of 2012, I followed Apay to return to the village and we began recruiting villagers to work on the project together.

“Do not overlook the power of friendship. It may not seem to make a difference, yet it can enable us to reclaim our own dignity. Justice without the foundation of friendship can only change external structure; this kind of justice, however, cannot really bring us together,” the chairman of the Council of Indigenous People once said (Sun, 2010b, p. 119). Therefore, I argue that even though the above-mentioned accounts may seem too personal to be considered academic, I intend to emphasize that it is my genuine friendship with Apay out of Christ’s love that initially drew me to the community and further reshaped my academic trajectory. With a transformed heart to serve, I had assumed language revitalization to be a form of “health initiatives” for the Truku people to heal from the impacts of colonial rule (Wong, 2011). I also took a leap of faith in believing that this language revitalization project would be for a greater purpose, that is, for the restoring (Smith, 1999) of the dignity, glory<sup>1</sup> and well-being of the Truku people and the tribe through community-based praxis (Freire, 1970). It is within this personal and local context that my dissertation develops into part of the community-based Indigenous language revitalization project.

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<sup>1</sup> More from a personal and biblical perspective, I believe that people are wonderfully and beautifully created by God at the beginning. God does not make mistakes or degrade certain races or ethnicities. I believe being comfortable and appreciative of “who we are” (esp. ethnic identity here) is well-connected to one’s well-being. Coming to appreciate one’s Indigenous background is a healing journey according to my best friend, Apay, who struggled about her Indigenous identity for years until she established her faith in the promise of God’s Word and engaged herself in language documentation and revitalization research in graduate school abroad.



## **Conceptual Framework**

Penfield and Tucker (2011) note that language revitalization is a complex process that covers multiple domains of research, from language policy and planning to curriculum development, from activism to teaching strategies and methods, and much more. In the following, I will offer a review of the three bodies of scholarship that initially motivated the prospect of community-based language revitalization. Over time, they continue to serve as part of the ideological ballast that drives the local project.

### **Language Policy and Planning**

LPP as a field has shifted drastically from solving “language problems” in post-colonial contexts to investigating the ideological, socio-structural, and historical bases and/or processes of LPP (King, 2003; McCarty, 2011; McCarty & Warhol, 2011; Ricento, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 2002). For example, Spolsky proposes that language policy consists of three components: Language practices (ecology), language beliefs (ideology) and language management (planning), suggesting that, “the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in management” (p. 222). Shohamy (2006) moves on to investigate the mechanisms that mediate between ideologies and de facto language policy; these mechanisms include “rules and regulations, language education, language tests, language in public space, and ideology, myths, propaganda, coercion” (p. 57-58). In a similar vein, informed by a critical sociocultural approach to education policy and practices (Levinson & Sutton, 2001; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009), McCarty and Warhol (2011) also argue that LPP and its related activities can be considered as “mutually constitutive, interdependent, and co-occurring socio-cultural processes” (p. 170) that govern people’s social

positioning and language use. Through critical ethnography, the researchers can expose the overt and covert “policy-making works” (McCarty & Warhol, 2011, p. 183) in social practice and further concentrate on how people (e.g. youth) actively negotiate meanings in relations of power and language revitalization efforts (p. 188). In a word, an anthropological emphasis on Indigenous LPP leads us to take interest in understanding the dynamic interplay of social, cultural, and ideological practices and structures.

Guiding the emerging scholarship of critical ethnographic LPP research is the theoretical framework of language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998) in linguistic anthropology. Language ideologies represent another body of literature but here I only highlight those that are the most relevant to the present research context. Irvine (1989) defines language ideologies as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (p. 255). Collins and Slembrouck (2005) point out that language ideologies are ideas about language that involve not only judgment of language use but also “judgments of person” (p. 192). Kroskrity (2000) conceptualizes language ideologies as “a cluster of concept consisting of a number of converging dimensions” (p. 7): They are a form of discourse constructed in the interests of particular social groups. They are best conceived as “multiple” (p. 12) because different socio-cultural groups (e.g. class, gender, generation, etc) may have divergent perspectives about the role of language in their lives. They are displayed through diverse local speakers’ varying degrees of awareness. They mediate between people’s sociocultural experiences (social structure) and their language use (forms of talk) (p. 21). In general, a language ideologies framework highlights the connection between language and the sociocultural processes,

yet it underscores the work of “power”. It helps me to humbly acknowledge that my language-related research project here also represents a form of discourse to the villagers (Field & Kroskrity, 2009, p. 25-26; Anderson, 2009; Reynolds, 2009; Collins, 1998).

Moreover, addressing the multiplicity of language ideology works in LPP helps us to go beyond “damaging discourses and binary assumptions that Indigenous community members simply orient toward local and global practices” (Wyman, 2009, p. 34) and employ ethnographic research to investigate how people make sense of their Indigenous language(s) and identity. McCarty and Wyman (2009) argue that Native American youths grow up in “dynamic, heteroglossic linguistic ecologies” where multiple language ideologies (e.g. shame and pride) may reinforce or contradict each other. Youth may be mistaken as “semi-lingual” or “language delayed” with their hybrid communication repertoires. The researchers therefore argue, “Simply encouraging youth to speak their languages undermines the day-to-day challenges they face” (p. 284). Similarly, Messing (2009) points out that Mexicano youths experience “ambivalence” in the nexus of multiple ideologies of Indigenusness. Situating the discussion on “linguistic authenticity” in Latin America, Lopez and Sichra (2007) critique that Intercultural Bilingual Education remains trapped in “Indigenous monolingualism” and overlooks the diverse sociolinguistic settings in the communities. Meek’s (2010) language revitalization study with the people in the Yukon Territory in Canada reveals that her and her colleagues’ intentional transformative project is embedded in the local contexts where language ideologies between practices and across groups can contradict with each other. For instance, the use of an orthography system further reaffirms the authority of outside linguists. Meek’s observations of the various “sociolinguistic disjunctures” (p. 50) in the

revitalization process reveal the complexity between planning and practices. Good intentions are not enough.

All the above-mentioned studies remind us that language policy works on the ground are more interactive and heterogeneous than any authoritative, official planner from the top would imagine or predict. Language ideology offers possible explanatory power to why externally imposed language policy and planning has not been able to completely reverse the Indigenous language shift. Although the recent trend in language policy studies has called for attention to language uses and ideologies (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998) as part of the language policy-in-action (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; McCarty, 2011), fewer studies have been able to engage the local community in the critical inquiry process (see exception in McCarty, 2002; McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol, & Zepeda, 2009).

### **Decolonizing Research with Indigenous Epistemology**

Drawing on the scholarship of decolonizing methodologies (e.g. Smith, 1999), I recognize that there is a need for more Indigenous epistemology and decolonizing praxis in academic endeavors. Smith (1999), in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, notes that, “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism” (p. 1). In the Truku community I serve, although people in general are rather friendly towards researchers (especially those from the west), a researcher-led or academic project can steal people’s ability and opportunities to act, lead, create— which, I argue, can be a process of “dehumanization” from Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* framework (1970). Sun (2010a) also cautions that outsider researchers should not think highly of themselves or bring preconceived notions about what community rebuilding should be like. Similarly,

western Indigenous scholars have advocated for the framework of “self-determination, decolonization and social justice” (Smith, 1999, p. 4). A decolonized or decolonizing research project needs to incorporate Indigenous epistemology as much as possible.

Different scholars have attempted to define “Indigenous epistemology” in their own research contexts. Kovach (2005) from Canada offers a relatively comprehensive review:

It includes a way of knowing that is fluid (Little Bear, 2000) and experiential, derived from teachings transmitted from generation to generation by storytelling; each story is alive with the nuances and wisdom of the storyteller (King, 2003). It emerges from traditional languages emphasizing verbs, not nouns (Cajete, 1999). It involves a knowing within the subconscious that is garnered through dreams and vision (Castellano, 2000). It is a knowledge that is both intuitive and quiet. Indigenous ways of knowing arise from interrelationships with the human world, the spirit, the inanimate entities of the ecosystem (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Indigenous ways of knowing encompass the spirit of collectivity, reciprocity, and respect (Wilson, 2001). It is born of the land and locality of the tribe...It is born of the necessity to feed, clothe, and transmit values. As such the method of knowing must be practical and purposeful. Indigenous ways of knowing are organic with emphasis on reciprocity and humor. These ways of knowing are both cerebral and heartfelt...” (p. 28).

From here Kovach identifies “experiences,” “storytelling,” “receptivity” and “collectivity” as the key stones guiding research. Similarly, Bishop (2005) from New Zealand endorses a “relationship epistemology” that views knowledge construction as a process embodied

in human relationships. In the relationship epistemology paradigm, the research agenda is “participant driven” and “it is through the development of a participatory mode of consciousness that a researcher becomes part of this process” (p. 120). Although I am aware that the “Indigenous epistemology” from preexistent literature is not universal and directly applicable to the Truku community context, I still find the focus on relationship and reciprocity resonating fairly well with my experiences and impression of the villagers. They are always hospitable with a big sharing heart. For example, Apay’s auntie would send boxes of peaches to my parents’ house during the harvest season.

The important role of Indigenous epistemology has also been discussed in critical qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) propose that “Critical Indigenous Pedagogy” must be “ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing, and participatory” (p. 10). Here, the component of “performance” emphasizes that reconstructing social representation and imagination is a “sociopolitical act” (Conquergood, p.1998, p.32) that aims to intervene, break, and remake the status quo. Critical Indigenous Pedagogy is also “committed to dialogue, community, self-determination...” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 10) “Dialogue,” according to Freire (1970), is “the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (p. 88). Dialogue requires not only “faith in people” but also an understanding of the reality as “processes” rather than a static entity from the positivist paradigm. Indeed, key words like “collaborative,” “transformative,” “respect,” “trust,” “relationship,” and “dialogue” have guided the design of our Genographic Research Project (see Appendix A).

## **Indigenous Language and Identity Development**

Battiste (2000), in her edited book, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, critiques that “modern” education system legitimates its theory of control, devalues (or misappropriate) Indigenous culture, and eradicates “Aboriginal consciousness.” To restore Aboriginal consciousness from the colonization of cognitive imperialism, she argues that language is the key, “Aboriginal languages are the basic media for the transmission and survival of Aboriginal consciousness, cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions, and values... providing distinctive perspectives on and understandings of the world” (p. 230). Battiste’s words reaffirm the significance of language reclamation in the perpetuation of ways of life or the so-called knowledge system (Romero, 2003).

In Taiwan, Sun (2010a) notes that the awareness of “being Indigenous” is an abstract social construct that evolved from the Indigenous movement. The naming of the category is not grounded in tribal people’s lived experiences. In his article *Exploring the Inner World of the Indigenous People*, he also argues that because of the breakdown of the Indigenous communities and the loss of the rituals and ceremonies, Indigenous people in Taiwan has been at loss of “who I am” for a century, in the anxiety of “self-denial” (p. 182). Consequently, resorting to alcohol becomes a way to self-escape, an attempt to resolve the inner conflict (Menninger, as cited in Sun, 2010a, p. 185). And it is this very inner struggle that I hope our community-based project might bring healing to in the process.

In North America, the Indigenous scholar Weaver (2001) in her quest, “*Indigenous identity: What is it, and who really has it?*” considers identity as “a

combination of self-identification and the perceptions of others” (p. 243). While defining Indigenous identity as “a sense of personhood” linked to traditions, homelands, and history (p. 245), she also cautions us that there is no one kind Indian man. One’s cultural identity may change in different contexts and develop over time. Back to the present research context, I, self-positioned as a respectful and committed ally with the Truku people, do not intend to theorize what Indigenous or Truku Identity *is*. Instead, I attempt to explore how a feminist poststructuralist (Norton-Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000, 2010) or a dialogic and developmental view of identity (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) can help us understand the processual impacts of Indigenous language revitalization in people’s lives— and what the limitations of these western paradigms are.

Norton’s research on language and identity from the field of second language studies serves as a good start to understand the importance of identity in language revitalization activities in the present research context. Building on Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of capitals and Weedon’s (1997) concept of subjectivity, Norton adopts a social constructionist views of identity and emphasizes the role of social identity in language learning and conceptualizes language as “discourse” with ascribed social meanings (Norton-Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000, 2010). Identity is constructed in the power relations and represents ways of “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (Norton, 1997, p. 410). Applying it to one’s language learning process, she proposes the construct of “investment” in replacement of motivation to highlight “the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton, 2010, p. 353;



also see Messing, 2009). Following this, when I work with the villagers, I need to be aware and understand that the participants' diverse subject positions or multiple identities mediate their participatory process.

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain's theory of identity (1998) from the field of anthropology further demonstrate what the process of negotiating between multiple identities in transformative social practices may look like. They combine Bakhtin and Vygotsky's notions of identity and emphasize both the "dialogic" and "developmental" aspect of self. They argue that our identity is not just caught in the tensions of the past histories (i.e. various subject positions constructed by hegemonic discourses) but also develops in cultural practices where our "alternative identity" is constructed, enacted, and recognized. In the later edited book *History in Person*, Holland and Lave (2001) contextualize the same identity framework in various local contexts of enduring struggles. They acknowledge that even though "identities are always in process, we must also address the durable dimensions of history in person" (p. 9). The chart on the right visualizes their key question: "How can we conceptualize the interplay between the local historical formation of persons in practice and the (mediated) place of historical subjectivities in the creation and undoing of enduring struggles? (p.9). I've found Holland's conceptualization of identity having a unique emphasis on the interaction between the past and the present, and the macro and micro— a critically realistic (yet hopeful) perspective to complement Norton's perspective, which seems to be missing further discussion on past histories.

Inspired by the above-mentioned identity framework and contextualizing it in my proactive, post-colonial research context, I argue language revitalization will be the

most meaningful to the villagers when I understand how the identity work— not solely in “micro-international” contexts or the “macro-sociological” context— is relevant in one’s participation (i.e. “meso-international” context) (Lee & Anderson, 2008, p. 191). To put it more directly, more than taking identity as an analytical framework, the present research perceives “identities” as constituted by and constituting the social practice of language revitalization. Therefore, as a researcher, I have intended to start the research with “addressing the creation of openings” (Lee & Anderson, 2008, p. 204) of identity reconstruction and see how identity can be sites of resources (as well as struggles) in our collaborative efforts.

### **Summary**

As I bring together the literature in language policy and planning (including language ideologies), Indigenous epistemology, and identity, they constitute the conceptual framework of the present study. Decolonizing methodologies caution me to give priority to “including the Indigenous understanding, goals, purpose, and voice,” in which Indigenous people reclaim this cultural space and “construct their own distinct paradigms based on Indigenous epistemologies and rooted in self-determination and social justice” (Romero-Little, 2006, as cited in Hornberger, 2008, p. 11). The insights from language ideologies literature help me to pay attention to ideological tensions enacted in layered local contexts and to conceive of language revitalization work as a contentious and complex struggle. Finally, a respect for identity works can humanize the research process. Instead of assuming language revitalization would be immediately healing or empowering to all Truku people, it creates an inquiry space to respectfully

understand villagers' participation in the project in relation to their unique sociocultural trajectories and subject positions.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### **Background: The Genographic Legacy Fund (GLF) Project**

As mentioned earlier, the present research is situated in the local GLF-funded language revitalization project in which Apay is the project manager (see Appendix A). In the original proposal, the project consists of five elements as follows:

- (1) Truku Village Assembly aims to create a collective cultural space for villagers to strengthen community relationships and get involved in language revitalization affairs. Community-based theater may be incorporated (Boal, 2000; Rohd, 1998) into the assembly to collectively explore the challenges and solutions to Truku language loss.
- (2) Master-Apprentice Program (MAP) facilitates native speakers to immerse young adults into a Truku-only environment on a one-on-one basis so that the younger members can develop conversational proficiency in Truku. In MAP, a “master” (a fluent speaker of a language) is paired with an “apprentice” (learner). They then spend at least 20 hours together doing everyday activities and using the language at all times (Hinton, 2001).
- (3) Truku Language, Songs, and Stories Documentation Workshop facilitates the youth participants to document and re-explore the elders' stories and other forms of cultural resources in the community.
- (4) Campfire Trip in summer: Youths will be able to learn about the ancestors'

wisdom and knowledge by learning how to live in the mountains for a couple of days.

(5) Field Trips to other Indigenous communities and spaces outside the community:

During the field trips, the workshop participants can exchange the language revitalization experience with other Indigenous communities and disseminate it to the wider society (e.g. the university where Apay works).

It is important to note that Apay and I, informed by the earlier conceptual framework, have conceptualized local LPP as an ongoing, dialogic process collaborated by the villagers. Therefore, instead of presenting the project and the available funding directly to the villagers, we have actively incorporated the villagers' voices and their sociocultural dynamics into the re-design of the project.

In actual practice, after our a few pilot practices (February- June, 2012)<sup>2</sup> which allowed us to better understand the sociocultural dynamics of the community and people's various forms of involvement, the language revitalization project reached its stability and the project team established a weekly Truku language class targeting the younger Truku learner (age 6-15) (July, 2012- present). The components in the original design are fulfilled and expanded. The family-based Master-Apprentice program (Hinton, 2001) was adapted into a community class with a few elders apprenticing a large group of the youth and the children into Truku ways of living and being on a regular basis. The mountain-camping plan has been implemented differently, with knowledge about the nature taught in mini-lessons on weekends. In general, most of the components of the original design have been implemented except for the community-based theater. At the

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the project at the beginning stage (from Feb. to June 2013), see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bNnyMF2SZw>

completion of the dissertation research, we continue to head towards our mission statement, “To ultimately affirm Indigenous youths’ understanding of their cultural roots and identity, and develop advocates and talents for future Indigenous-related educational programs.”

### **Research Purpose and Questions**

Knowing the project is owned by the whole community and that Apay is the primary project manager, at the beginning I struggled to define the relationship between “my dissertation” and the “community project.” I did not intend to just produce a super-imposed cultural analysis of the project as a traditional anthropologist using constructs that may not resonate with people’s local understanding. With the interests of the community as the priority in mind, after communicating with Apay and the committee members about the concern, the original purposes of the dissertation are two: (1) To document the emerging process of the community-based LPP, and (2) to draw on and share my ethnographic findings with the villagers so as to expand the reflective space for the project team. Nevertheless, in actual practice, I had to become more engaged in facilitating the project for Apay. Juggling between the roles of an ethnographic researcher and a project co-manager, I had focused on producing research findings that constructively address or respond to the immediate needs or enduring challenges in praxis. The overarching research questions, informed both by the local needs and the earlier conceptual framework, are three:

- (1) What is the nature of “dialogue,” or collaboration, in transformative social practice?

- (2) What, and how, can Truku epistemology or ways of knowing inform and guide the local efforts?
- (3) How can the local experiences re-theorize our understanding of identity in language revitalization praxis?

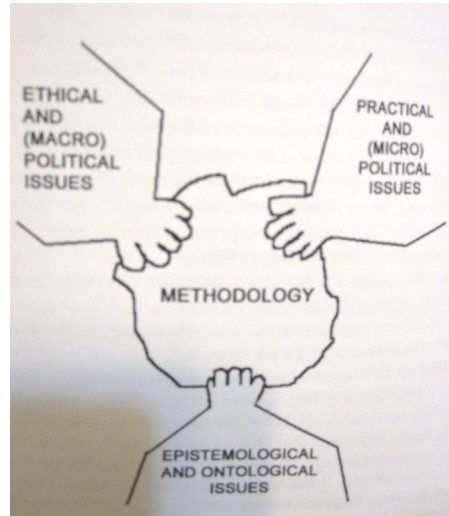
As broadly defined as they are, these questions continue to guide the development of the present dissertation and community project throughout the process. The first question, drawing on the scholarship of critical indigenous pedagogy and the scholarship of language ideology, aims to understand the impacts of language ideological works on reshaping people's forms of participation. The second question intends for outside activist researchers like me to consciously seek for Truku epistemology and value it as community resources for praxis. The third question particularly saves an inquisitive space for us to focus on the role of social agents' identity works in transformative praxis.

Although the following findings (Chapter 2-4) have been written as independent journal manuscripts and each has its own specific research questions, their overall scope of investigation remains within the realm of concern as defined above. For example, in terms of the first research question, which is about dialogue and language ideologies, Chapter 2 presents both successful and failed attempts to dialogue with Truku parents and grandparents, reconsidering the appropriateness of "conscientization" in an increasing heterogeneous Truku community. Chapter 3 emphasizes the role of artifacts in enlarging (or mitigating) the cultural/ideological difference between the modern Truku and the traditional villagers. Chapter 4 shifts the attention to the voices and participation of the Truku children, understanding their theories of language and learning that are opposed to those of the adults. In other words, each chapter similarly engages with the question of

dialogue about language ideology, yet from different stakeholders' perspectives; complimentarily they form a more well-rounded story about collaboration.

## Methodology

Pryor and Ampiah (2004) suggest that research methodology is like “a rubber sheet” that is constantly being stretched and shaped by pulling from “ethical and (macro) political issues, practical and (micro) political issues, and epistemological and ontological issues” (p. 162, please also see Figure 1.1 on the right). Before the fieldwork, I had been heavily influenced by the critical insights from Indigenous and Freirean



**Figure 1.1**  
**Research methodology**

scholars. For example, Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) cautions me that oppressors tend to “believe that they must be the executors of the transformation” (p. 60) and leads to my constant self-examination with humility. Bishop’s (2005) *Relationship Epistemology* encourages me to conceive of knowledge construction as a process embodied in human relationships, which resonates with the “collaborative,” “participatory,” or “reciprocal” spirit in my methodological stance (also see Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Davis, 2011; McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol, & Zepeda, 2009; Mutua & Swadener, 2004; Romero-Little, 2010).

In actual fieldwork, with my unexpectedly changing subject position from an ethnographer to an activist researcher (see Chapter 3), the research methodology has moved from a pure ethnographic documentation to one with a participatory action stance.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) define the participatory action research (PAR) as “aiming to create circumstances in which people can search together collaboratively for more comprehensible, true, authentic, and morally right and appropriate ways of understanding and acting in the world” (p. 578). A critical participatory action research involves “a spiral self-reflective cycles” (p. 563):

- Planning a change
- Acting and observing the process and consequences of the change
- Reflecting on these processes and consequences
- Replanning
- Acting and observing again
- Reflecting again, and so on

Kemmis and McTaggart further suggest that in the process of participatory action research, the same people are “practitioners of community development” as well as the “practitioners of the meta-practice” (p. 575). A participatory action framework well captures the changing research context and overcomes the research-practice dichotomy. Guided by a PAR framework, I have positioned this dissertation research as assisting the stages of “acting and observing the process and consequences of the change” and “reflecting on these processes and consequences.” Through home visits, interviews, and group discussions, I have continued to bring in ethnographic findings to dialogue with some of the villager participants. The idea is that the villager participants themselves are the “community research collaborators” (CRCs) (McCarty, 2011, p. 35) and the critical change agents who can incorporate the research findings into the project design and implementation.



The following are a method kit that I have often drawn on as an “engaged ethnographer” (i.e. an activist researcher). The methods are intended to help me (1) to understand how project participants construct their language experiences and ideologies from their particular familial, educational, and sociocultural contexts, (2) to explore how Truku epistemology constitutes the local endeavors, and (3) to explore ways to collectively transform the hegemonic discourse and practices.

**Participatory Observation.** As an outsider of the Truku community, I started the research with participatory observation. The anthropologist Davies (1999) suggests that participatory observation is more of a research strategy consisting of a variety of methods than a unitary research method. Some of the important issues a researcher needs to consider include: (1) long-term involvement in people’s lives, (2) the balance of observation and participation roles, (3) the importance of learning the language, (4) the selection of key informants, and (5) the conscious examination of one’s relationship with the informants (p. 71). Coming from the methodological stance of humanizing research, Paris (2011) further complicates the notion of participant observation, and argues that researchers need to establish genuine friendship with the participants — a mutual humanization process that is “not only ethically necessary but also increase the validity of the truths we gain through research” (p. 137). And such relationship is fostered not through fieldnotes taking, but through “authentic participation in activities that matter to participants” (p. 144). In actual fieldwork, I have consciously positioned myself as a learner, a listener, and a friend, participating in many of the daily activities of the villager participants, such as harvesting vegetables, cooking, celebrating birthdays, cleaning, etc.

**Interviews.** As the present dissertation values a sociocultural understanding of Truku families' language ideologies, life history research offers a good way to situate people's language ideologies in their wider social and historical contexts. As life history interviews require solid relationship with the participants, participant selection or recruitment is a mutual process. It deeply resonates with Paris's (2011) critical reflection, "Participants chose to work with me in addition to being chosen by me" (p. 140). In my case, villagers become willing to share their life stories only when they can trust me and see me as more than an acquaintant.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) propose that good qualitative interview should guarantee:

The goal of understanding how the person you are interviewing thinks is at the center of the interview. While a loose interview guide might provide some structure for the encounter, getting all the questions answered or all the areas covered is not the purpose of the interview. The researcher has to be captive to the larger goal of the interview—understanding—not to the devices, gimmicks, questions, or the like that were invented as strategies and techniques of obtaining information. The researcher must always be prepared to let go of the plan and jump on the opportunities the interview situation presents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.106).

Bogdan and Biklen highlight that the interviewer needs to stay flexible and listen attentively to what truly matters to the participants. Similarly, Dr. Romero-Little has always reminded me that genuine listening is the key method in doing research with the Indigenous communities. In fieldwork, I have made conscious efforts to listen to the

words and silence of my participants with my heart. Still, the attempt was hardly made successful until I built a genuine friendship with them.

**Narrative.** Park (2011) employs narrative inquiry (Wortham, 2001) embedded in ethnography to investigate the Korean heritage speakers' identity development, which offers a nice exemplar study of understanding identity construction in changing, multiple social contexts. Wortham (2001) argues that "autobiographical narratives may give meaning and direction to narrators' lives and place them in characteristic relations with other people" (p. 9). Applying Bakhtin's concept of dialogic self, Vitanova (2005) suggests that "narrative spaces, in this view, become the intertextual ground for contesting others' voices, reaccentuating their utterances with new meanings, and reinterpreting the self through another... narratives may also become zones for agentive possibility" (p. 156). In the present study, allowing the project participants to reflect on their project experiences not only offers a precious site for me to investigate their identity development in language revitalization practices, but also provides an important opportunity for them to make sense of their contested subject positions and the conflicting inner voices. Narrative inquiry itself is a site of reconstructive possibilities and identity development.

**Digital Archive.** As it is expected by the funding the agency, the Genographic Legacy Fund, the activities and workshops in the community-based project have been digitally documented. In order to reflect on processs of the project implementation, one of the key participant, Bowtung Yudaw, and I regularly reviewed the video recordings of the Saturday Truku language class for children. Data like this sheds light on how

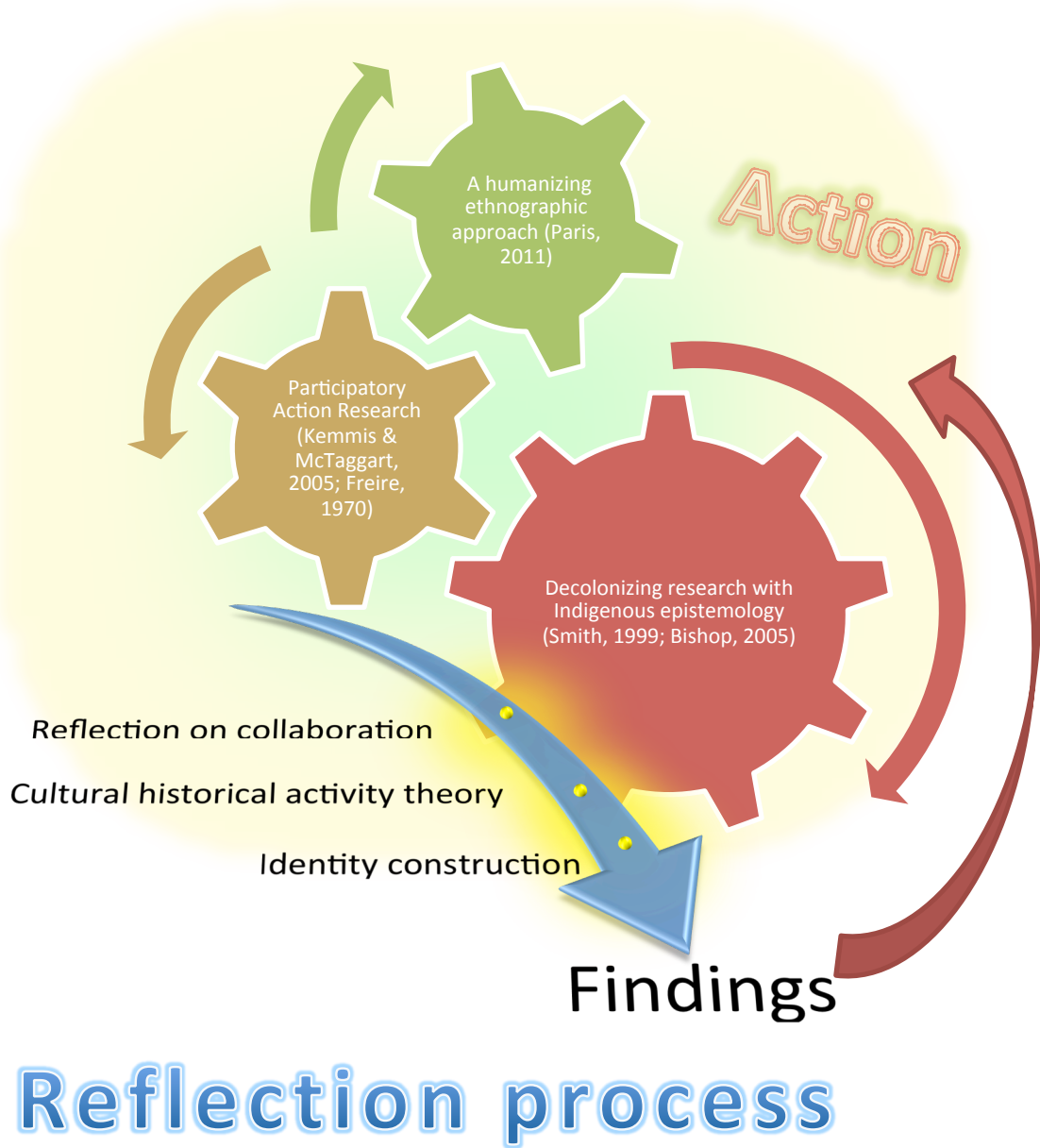
children's identities and learning opportunities are constructed in their moment-by-moment interaction with each other and the teachers (Chapter 4).

**Reflexivity.** Considering that knowledge construction is embodied in human relationships (Freire, 1970; Bishop, 2005; Smith, 1999) and is particularly collaborative, intersubjective in the present study, I constantly went through “reflexive epistemological and narrative practices” (Foley, 2002, p. 459) to examine how my own voices—“my subject positions, social locations, interpretations, and personal experiences” (Denzin, 2005, p. 666)—co-construct this interpretive, ethnographic research. Specifically, I kept a reflection journal and acknowledged the more active role of the researcher in the actual production of data. In addition, as Davies (1999) reminds us, “If the self is continually under construction, then ethnographers’ experiences when they participate in social interaction in another society clearly alter their own selves in accordance with the cultural expectations of others” (p. 24). Such a turn to intrinsic multi-layered reflexivity is not an attempt of “self-absorption.” It intentionally positions researchers as a “much less imperial, authoritative learner” (Foley, 2002, p. 475). Paris (2011) also argues that researchers cannot pretend our relationships with the participants do not change us. Instead, the participants humanize us as much as our work humanizes them. Therefore, while exploring how our collaborative work shape participants’ identities, I must also acknowledge how it shapes mine. It is an exploration of what makes the “radical conversion” (Freire, 1970, p. 60) possible, which I believe is one possible locus of transformation.

Figure 1.2 represents the methodology that was developed to understand the nature of Truku language revitalization praxis in Qowgan village. Both a humanizing

ethnographic approach (Paris, 2011) and a decolonizing stance (Smith, 1999) guided the progression of the participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). The blue arrow at the bottom represents the attempt to reflect on the action, and the three yellow dots signify the analytical lenses used to reexamine the action. The first lens (Chapter 2) reflects on the methodology of PAR and explores the nature of collaboration among the participants. Also, because PAR itself does not offer specific analytical tools to examine the process, I further drew on other theoretical/analytical frameworks, such as Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Chapter 3) and Sociocultural Approaches to Language Learning (Chapter 4), to deepen the level of analysis. The findings were again brought back to the community to inform follow-up praxis. The cycle between action and reflection showcases my intention to do research that meaningfully serves the Truku people.

**Figure 1.2 Methodology of praxis**



## **Summary**

In brief, the present dissertation is designed to be collaborative, decolonizing, praxis-oriented, and reflexive. It views “research itself as a social practice” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 559) and strives to expand Truku cultural space and opportunities for agency. Theoretically, it combines the fields of indigenous language revitalization, second language education, and community advocacy, and aims to seek for a praxis-oriented theoretical framework to understand the complex relationship among language, identity, ideology, and practice in Indigenous community spaces. Methodologically, as applied linguists are interested in offering solutions to language-related real-life problems, the present study explores an alternative, democratic, humanizing way of doing language policy and planning research that prioritizes local knowledge, voice, and engagement. Accordingly, it can provide valuable insights for scholars of any fields who are interested in community activism in contemporary Indigenous community contexts.

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CHAPTER 2  
REFLECTION ON COLLABORATION AND DIALOGUE  
IN POSTCOLONIAL PRAXIS

Man-Chiu Amay Lin with Bowtung Yudaw

*“Our lives begin in and are lived in relationships with others. The quality of these relationships directly affects our abilities to become knowers.”*

(Thayer-Bacon, 1997, p. 241)

**Introduction**

In the scholarship of Indigenous language revitalization and education, researchers have shifted from viewing Language Policy & Planning (LPP) as a top-down process to suggesting the imperative for engaging local communities in the dialogues and development of language-related programs (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999; Grenoble, 2009; Hill, 2002; Hinton, 2001a; McCarty, 2002; Romero-Little, 2010). The need for community-based language planning can potentially benefit from two recent methodological developments in social science. One is Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993); the other is Indigenous Methodologies (IM) (Bishop, 2005; Smith, 1992; Smith, 1999). Although both methodological approaches value the collective participation, inquiry and action of ordinary people in bringing transformative practices, Indigenous scholars have reminded us that critical pedagogy must be “localized,” grounded in the specific local

history, cultures, and community relations that operate in each indigenous context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 6; Smith, 1999).

Two years ago, with my connection with some of the Truku (Indigenous) friends in eastern Taiwan and my awareness of Smith's critique on traditional western or colonial science, as an applied linguist, I challenged myself: Could I do something transformative together *with* the Truku people in my dissertation rather than producing "things already known" to the people (Smith, 1999, p. 3)? Could we tell alternative stories besides language loss? At around the same time, in June 2011, my Truku colleague Apay from the field of linguistics asked if I would be interested in helping her and her people process the application documents for the National Geographic Genographic Legacy Fund, which is known for "supporting projects and raising awareness about the cultural challenges and pressures faced by indigenous and traditional peoples" (The National Geographic Society, 2013). Therefore, over the summer, I worked on the proposal with Apay and two retired schoolteachers who were known as Truku language advocates in the village and beyond.

When the project was approved in December 2011, reminded by my previous reading in decolonizing methodologies, I became keenly aware that our preparatory process was not as participant-driven as it should be. I asked Apay, who was ready to return to the village after her PhD graduation from an American university, to stay flexible and leave great room for future project organizers and participants' input. In the meanwhile, I just became a PhD candidate, trying to finish off my dissertation proposal and start my fieldwork. Originally the study was intended to be an ethnographic study that can document the emerging process of the community-based LPP. I also added a "participatory action research" (PAR) component (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005) to the



design in case there may be a need for me to facilitate the praxis and dialogue with the project team on whatever challenges encountered.

Freire (1970) defines dialogue as “the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.” That is, to make social transformation possible, revolutionary activists need to “dialogue with the people about their view and ours” (p. 96) rather than directly impose ideas on people. That is, activists need to learn about how people’s views of the world reflect their situation in the world and bring “their felt needs” (p. 116) into the dialogue. Also, in dialogue, activists are also encouraged to facilitate opportunities for people to generate a new, critical attitude towards their reality, that is, to recognize the interaction of the various dimensions of total reality instead of perceiving them in fragments. Participatory Action Research inherits Freire’s pedagogical emphasis on dialogue, aiming at “creating communicative action and public discourse” that address problems and issues of injustice experienced by people (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007, p. 321). Since my initial encounter with Freire’s work, I have been truly humbled and inspired by his notion of dialogue, I have strived to position the dissertation research as collaborative endeavors that are intended to inform all of us about the language-related challenges and to explore ways to overcome them.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to describe and reflect on this year-long (and ongoing) experience of collaborating with the Truku villagers to co-organize and sustain a community-based language revitalization project. Although the value of collaborative research has been widely recognized in areas like critical studies, feminist studies, indigenous studies, and engaged anthropology, in reality, the practice and processes of collaboration are far more complicated than just positioning villagers as

collaborators/co-investigators and I as a participant researcher. Reflection on the struggles we encounter suggests the imperative to go beyond seeing the Indigenous people as a collective in praxis. Drawing on feminist studies' critique on Freire (Weiler, 1991) and postcolonial studies' notion of discrepant identities (Subedi & Daza, 2008), I argue that in order to move onwards and upwards in praxis, it is as important to discuss local politics as I respectfully understand it as processes of historically accumulated contradictions in colonial conditions.

Furthermore, reflections on the difficulty to dialogue with the villagers challenge the assumption of empowerment, the possibilities of the "communicative space" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 580), and the silenced dialogue about exiting (Figueroa, 2012) in the PAR framework. As I highlight the struggles in praxis, I also reflect on my shifting identity positions as a researcher and the positive role of emerging relationship in reshaping subjectivities and achieving collaboration. The experience highlights the significance of relational epistemology (Bishop, 2005; Thayer-Bacon, 1997) in praxis and foregrounds the affective dimension of social change, which is less discussed in PAR.

Although the scope of the collaboration stories in this study may be considered as an attempt at Participatory Action Research rather than a real participatory action by standard, my honest reflection on the struggles, inadequacies, and even the modest success of attempting an alternative research approach may enable us to reconsider some of the theoretical and methodological assumptions inherent in a PAR framework in Indigenous contexts (also see Maguire, 1993). This chapter can be read in a way that tells stories of the limits and possibilities of postcolonial praxis (Subedi & Daza, 2008).

Methodologically it also calls for the fusion of participatory action research, Indigenous methodologies, and ethnographic studies in illuminating the complex processes of praxis.

In the following sections, I will first provide the historical context of the Truku village and the people. Moving on to the empirical portion, I will tell my collaboration story with the villagers, focusing on both the challenges and opportunities for transformation. A major part of the story is co-constructed with one of the female elder (*pavi*), Bowtung Yudaw. I then conclude with a methodological reflection on the use of critical pedagogy in Indigenous language revitalization context.

### **Truku People in Qowgan**

In Taiwan, there are 14 officially recognized groups of Indigenous people who have dwelled on the island as early as 4,000 B.C.E. with their own unique cultures and languages, forming self-sufficient, kinship-based communities. However, under the Japanese (1895- 1945) and Chinese (1945-now) regimes, the government assimilation policies and its industrial capitalist-based economy have forced many Indigenous people to leave the homeland and radically disrupted their original economic/cultural systems and community relations (Lai, 2006; W. Liao, 1984; Sung, 2011). In this study, the Seejiq-Truku people (S. Liao, 1984) used to dwell in the mountains practicing hunting and agriculture. Starting from 1914, the Japanese colonizers forced the Truku people to move to the plains for easier social control. The government intentionally dislocated people from the same village (*alang* in Truku) into different areas to prevent riots. The Qowgan village, where the present research is situated, was originally established by the Japanese police and consisted of villagers from several different *alang* (e.g. *Tbula*, *Sklian*,

*Rbuq, Qmuhir*). As the Chinese government took over, the economic policies further concentrated on incorporating the Indigenous people into the market economy, making “money” the major medium for value exchange (e.g. 山地平地化, 山地三大運動). Starting from the late 1960s, many Truku young men worked outside the village as labor-intensive workers sending remittance home. The migration from the mountains to the lowlands altered ways of cultivation (Lin, 2011, p. 30). Some of the first and second generation of the relocated Truku people may still travel back and forth between the lowlands and the highlands. Ever since 1986, when the *Taroko National Park*, where many Truku elders call home, was established, the majority of the Truku people have been completely forced to leave their homeland and even banned from hunting, gathering, and any other related activities. “When we came back from hunting, there is no road in the National Park; the police are waiting for us” (personal communication, June 5, 2013), a Truku hunter shared.

Traditionally, the land is Truku people’s “blood” (regarded as life), and the mountain is “home;” people are subjects to Nature and vice versa (*Association of Truku Culture Promotion- Bsurung, Hualien*, p. 140). Exposed to the colonial government’s various forms of legitimated violence and abuse, generations of Truku people have gradually changed their economic practices, resulting a life highly dependent on the world outside the village, the market, and money. It has also made the lives of the breadwinners highly mobile and unstable, which inevitably impacted the family dynamics and children’s socialization process (Lai, 2006). Traditional Truku culture and education (*meodus Truku*) are connected to surviving and living in the nature; nowadays, in contemporary Truku society, children no longer “follow the footsteps of the older

generation” (*tuhuy rudan*) working in the mountains or fields (Yang, 2001). “I asked my boy to go hunting with me, he complained it’s too tiring... I prepared rice for breakfast, he asked for hamburgers instead,” a father shared (personal communication, November 16, 2012). His narrative highlights the challenges of passing down traditional practices to the younger generations in contemporary times.

Furthermore, mandatory education, first in Japanese and then in Chinese language, has replaced family education and further subjugated generations of Truku children to studying the colonizer’s language and history, demoralizing Indigenous languages and cultures as backward or uncivilized. For example, Truku children were taught Japanese in school and some youths were trained to be Japanese language teachers for their elders. In public space, speaking a language other than Japanese would result in police beatings. Later on the Chinese government enforced Chinese-Only policy (1950s-1980s) to erase traces of the Japanese influence (Friedman, 2010; Chun, 1994). For almost three decades, students were physically punished for speaking their “dialects” in Chinese-dominant mandatory education system. A 60-year-old grandfather shared, “At home our parents spoke both Japanese and Truku. In school, if I spoke in Truku, we would be shamed to wear two wooden plates ‘SPEAK THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE’ in the front and on the back,” an experience that resonated with all the people of his generation (personal communication, April 4, 2012). This grandpa is not alone; almost every Truku villagers above the age of 40 voluntarily brought up their experience of being corporally punished (“*smipaq*”) by teachers when it comes to the Truku language.

One Truku elder, who have lived through two colonial periods with three different names (in Japanese, Chinese, Truku), vividly summarizes the contemporary

Truku sociolinguistic context: “Our language is like a child beaten by two adults” (personal communication, June 17, 2012). Indeed, after more than 100 hundred years of two colonial regimes, the Truku people have not been given sufficient cultural space to practice, experience, and/or develop their cultural knowledge from their ancestors. Although the political sentiments towards to the Indigenous cultures and languages have shifted drastically in the past decade, in general ordinary Truku people have not been involved in the planning process. In Tang’s latest research (2011) on Truku language shift, she surveyed the community members’ reported language use and it reflects the “gradual Mandarin preference (26% > 55% > 79% > 82%) and disadvantage in Truku use (75% > 45% > 20% > 17%).” Nowadays younger grandparents and parents are used to speaking Chinese to the little children. The elder Yudaw Pisaw expressed his vision and support for future Truku language revitalization endeavors in his reference letter to the funding agency—the Genographic Legacy Fund:

*“Nowadays, young generations do not speak our own language and do not know who they are, which saddens me very much. Truku language is not merely a language; it represents our identity. If one does not know how to speak Truku, one cannot know who s/he truly is. Hence, this funding will be much meaningful and helpful for raising awareness of the linguistic and cultural challenges Truku currently faces. If people are aware of the significance, not only Truku community will be empowered but also it will be a testimony for the rest of the indigenous group in Taiwan. If this project is implemented, it will be likely that they will be influenced and are willing to transmit their language and culture to their next generations”* (documented and translated by Apay Yuki).

Thus, it was with this understanding of the macro historical context and the support of the elders that Apay and Man-Chiu (the author) decided to initiate a community language revitalization project and raise the villagers' critical consciousness of language loss in 2012.

### **What It Was Like at the Beginning**

In the original proposal, the project consisted of different activities, such as the Master-Apprentice Program (Hinton, 2001b), Truku Language, Songs, and Stories Documentation Workshops; many of the ideas were borrowed from successful community activism and language revitalization efforts in other Indigenous communities. In actual practice, the project started with a village assembly inviting people to come together and discuss the issue of Truku language shift and endangerment. Apay and I organized it via the *Indigenous & Multicultural Association- Hualien* (Apay's aunt's local NGO) inviting people to come together and discuss the issue of Truku language shift and endangerment. The initial intention of the assembly was to listen to the villagers' voices while making good use of the public forum to recruit community collaborators for the project. Apay, the host, reported to the participants her dissertation findings— the assessment of language attrition across generations in the village. She compared the Truku language to an ill patient in the hospital that needed immediate care. She further emphasized the link between one's Indigenous language and ethnic identity, "If there is no Truku language, there are no Truku people." In general the concern of losing the entire Truku ethnic group because of language loss was a commonly accepted discourse in this assembly and beyond.

Then we broke into five groups discussing three questions: “(1) Why is it that we’re losing the Truku language? (2) Why do we need to revitalize our language? (3) How do we revitalize our language?” Reflecting on the cause of Truku language loss, most groups attributed it to the lack of use of Truku at both home and school spaces. For example, “contemporary school education is all about Chinese.” “Young parents tend to communicate with the children in Chinese.” “The seniors do not take the initiative to teach; the children do not want to learn, either” (poster notes, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012). When it comes to the follow-up actions for language revival, some villagers emphasized Truku language revival must start from home, others held the school and the local NGO accountable for children’s education. For example, “We would like the after-school program (held by the NGO) to further children’s Truku language learning.” “Parents should communicate with the children in Truku” (poster notes, February 11, 2012). Although the assembly seemed to produce a public discourse favorable to the cause of language revival, not many people showed up again in our second meeting when Apay and I tried to recruit villagers to organize the language revitalization plan. Even when a project staff team of 6 people was formed, one or two villagers would miss the meeting (or even resign) without advance notice, and we had to look for other villagers.

On the one hand, I was quite encouraged to hear that the villagers highly support the vision of language revival. For example, “It is imperative to bring our language back right now; otherwise it’ll be too late. We will be doomed if we still ask for rewards at this point. It’s about keeping our Truku identity.” Or “we need to work on it very hard. But you have to- we have to work on it with strenuous efforts. No matter what- we need to persevere with tears” (public speech in assembly, March 17, 2012). On the other hand, I



was quite confused to see people's seemingly lack of follow-up initiatives to be in charge of the project. It was until later did other villagers revealed to me that there was a lack of strong material incentives for participation. "People want money. They need money to support their family. When the reward is lower than their expectation, they would rather work elsewhere. It's next to impossible to expect people to volunteer collectively for public affairs," one villager explained (personal communication, October 12, 2012). In retrospect, I was ignorant of people's financial concerns and had assumed that the project would be empowering to the people once they were positioned as their own language revitalization policy-makers and "community research collaborators" (McCarty, 2011, p. 35).

Meanwhile, Apay was hired as an assistant professor and burdened with heavy workload during the weekdays. Therefore, unexpectedly I had to become more engaged playing the major motivating and coordinating role in moving the project forward. Yet I felt uneasy with it, which may have been complicated by the fact that I was conscious of my race as *teywan* (the Chinese) or *kmukan* (the invader) and intentionally positioned myself as a learner. In one informal conversation with an elder, who is a grandfather of three children, he suggested, "Perhaps we can try to revitalize our language starting from several Truku families... inviting the adults who have grandchildren to join us..." (personal communication, March 23, 2012). His words resonated with the fact that the success of the language revitalization in Hawai'i and New Zealand also started from the conscientization of a few Indigenous families. Several other villagers also approved of the idea because kinship has been a basic, organizing unit of Truku life (Liao, 1984). Therefore, instead of addressing the issue to the whole community, we started exploring

the possibility of family-based language revitalization. This time Apay and I decided to hire two senior villagers, Madaw and Rubiq, as part-time committed staff to recruit families to participate in the project. Six families, including Madaw and Rubiq's families, were identified because these families had participated in the earlier meetings and seemed to show interest. Rubiq and I paid weekly visit to these families teaching their children some conversational Truku through self-made handouts. Madaw held regular meetings with these families and organized monthly get-together events or cultural activities. In other words, the project organizers were also the major participants.

In the process, I acted as both a coordinator of the project and an ethnographer observing and inquiring how the participants respond to these efforts. Fishman's reminder of "ideological clarification," (1991) that is, to discuss our divergent views on language renewal (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998; Fishman, 2001; Kroskrity, 2004) before language revitalization, is easier said than done. In response to decades of relocation and colonialism, generations of Truku people have readjusted themselves to the dominant cultures, yet their forms of adjustment diverge greatly across generations, households, and socioeconomic levels. Some Truku families maintain more of a traditional way of living and being, whereas some conform to the dominant economic and educational practices more. "My father didn't practice hunting at all. Hunting is the traditional way. People can work in big cities. Truku people do not necessarily have to learn how to hunt nowadays," a 60-year-old villager responded when asked about the government control over mountain land use (personal communication, June 14, 2012). In contrast, another 60-year old village critiqued, "Nowadays it's all about conservation. Hunting is banned illegal. How can the government conserve the animals but not our

human life?” (personal communication, November 23, 2012). People’s cultural ideological affiliation with “the ancestors’ way” (*endaan rudan spiyaw*) and their actual practices fall on a continuum; there is not a prototype of the Truku family in the village we dwell in (*Knkingal sapah ini pntka*) (personal communication, September 30, 2012).

These differences among the families are not only embodied but also value-laden. Reaching mutuality of ways of doing for the project can be a threat to one’s way of being and believing. For example, some Truku insisted that language revitalization should concentrate on teaching Truku through the Romanized alphabet, some suggested that we could learn Truku through experiencing traditional cultural practices, some argued that culture-related Truku vocabulary (e.g. *rapit*, *bowyak*) is not useful in daily life, and others continued to practice hunting secretly and argued language and culture are inseparable. Each approach was deeply embedded in their unique social memories and cultural trajectories. In group discussion, when one’s knowledge and experience were privileged, another person could feel uncomfortable or unfulfilled being positioned as a learner and a listener (personal communication, March 25, 2012). Additionally because these families did not necessarily have preexistent relationship with each other, the idea of asking families to disregard differences and come together for language revitalization eventually did not sustain long after a few months.

Neither do individuals necessarily have a coherent sense of being. It is undeniable that all of us, more or less, work with both passion and fear. Madaw, who was once a prominent alderman for the Truku, explains:

*“I have thought about the role of Indigenous cultures for long. Our national development never takes into consideration the value of Indigenous cultures.*

*Our culture is always our own and cannot be associated with civilization. It cannot be seen as modern. Neither does it lead to the path of success. Although we promote our mother tongue, there are no follow-up incentives. Whether to value Truku becomes a difficult choice.”* (personal communication, April 5, 2012)

The lack of mobility opportunities related to Truku language use in contemporary society is a common concern among many young Truku parents. A young Truku father’s narrative vividly portrays the Chinese-dominant environment he is subject to on a daily basis:

*“Now the mother tongue is promoted, but, what about in society? Can you use it? For example, if we want to buy the train ticket, does the government allow a customer from a particular Indigenous group to speak his/her own language? Does the government designate different ticket agents to speak different languages so that every ethnic group is treated fairly?”* (interview, Sept. 8, 2012)

Here I refute Freire’s description that the oppressed “have no consciousness of themselves as persons or as members of an oppressed” (p. 46). People are not naïve about the oppression, yet they are pressured to compromise for survival on a personal or family level.

The most difficult moment came when Apay could not help but felt compelled to commit more energy to teaching and various administrative tasks in her university. “I was overwhelmed by preparing three new courses, co-organizing an international conference, and doing various administrative tasks at the new school during the initial stage of this project...I found myself remaining interested in doing this project in the village, but simultaneously feel obliged to help the indigenous students who are equally

facing some academic challenges in their lives,” she wrote. As Apay was still learning to navigate between two very different spaces she was committed to, I struggled between the dual roles of being an ethnographer/ally and a project co-manager/activist at the same time. In many nights of struggles and contemplation, I learned my challenge was not personal but structural. I saw myself fighting against the structural constraints (e.g. the lack of the symbolic and economic capitals of Truku in the market, modern people’s dependence on currency in most aspects of life), generations of colonial debts (e.g. loss of cultural spaces, land, and family stability; assimilative policies), and started to make sense of the powerlessness. I also came to acknowledge I am no less selfish than others. If it were not for my dissertation, I would not have committed myself to living in the village for a year. If Apay and I could not afford to “run the risks [the revolution] requires” (Freire, 1970, p. 47), how could we expect the villagers to do the same? At that time, we were indeed double-minded on this transformative journey in similar and different ways, suffering from the “duality” of giving oneself away for the public and securing one’s future.

Whenever I wanted to give up, a child’s innocent voice lingered on my mind, “Not speaking Truku is not fair to both the old and the young. The elders have to learn the Chinese language. The children have got no opportunities to learn Truku” (informal conversation, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012). My interviews with some grandparents and parents assured me that the Truku language still means a lot to them. “Of course we want our children to be able to speak in Truku. We just (pause) hide it in our heart,” a mother in her 20s confessed to me after months of acquaintance (personal communication, September 14, 2012). “I feel sorry for the children nowadays. They don’t know how to

speaking in Truku. In the future when people ask ‘How come you say you’re Truku but you don’t know your language’, aren’t they going to feel ashamed of themselves?’ a grandma in her 60s said (personal communication, June 15, 2012). The teacher of the Truku language in elementary school also encouraged me, “You can give away yourself first; people may learn to give after seeing your acts of giving” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). I kept these words in mind and continued to make efforts with my colleagues and the Truku families, oftentimes just trying to drag along and persevere.

### **Genuine Friendship and Dialogue**

Finding the villagers who have adamant determination to revive the ancestors’ cultural resources is difficult since the Truku people have been forced to migrate to the plains and adjust themselves to the changing socio-economic context as early as the 1910s. During the beginning months I tried to stay motivated and encouraging in front of the villagers hiding my frustrations inside. At the same time, I could not explain the complexity of the work to my birth parents because they, being racially Chinese, were confused enough about the direction I was heading to. Sometimes I felt lacking a sense of belonging in either places; sometimes I felt like leaving everything behind and hiding myself from the world.

I did not leave; I was blessed with Bowtung Yudaw, a female elder, whom now I call my Truku mother by heart. In the following we are going to tell our story together. We recall the experience together and present it in a dialogic manner with her narrative marked in italics. Her narrative is first presented in Truku and translated into English to maintain the originality of her voice for readers who understand and feel in Truku. Here I

will also call her as *payi*, which is used to respectfully address a female elder in Truku. The narratives were first recorded in Truku, and then translated into English for the readers.

*Yaku o Bowtung Yudaw ka ngahan mu. Pusu rudan tama mu spiyaw o pnaah dgiyaq Mksquid ngahan na. Miyah nami tbalax Sakula da ni paah hiya do sjiqun ku Qowgan hini. Kika sapah mu sayang da. Pnaah ku bilaq ita ku tuhuy tama mu mniq yama. Tama mu o tgmisa knan paxa libaw qbhuni ni dmangar qowlit, dahaw rapit... mnsa nami dgiyaq, msuwal o mtaqi nami tadus pusu qhuni, qmuyuh o taqi nami rxngaw. Mnsa qmita qlubung ka tama mu, djiyal pada, bowyak, mirit, dmayaw ku mapa dhuq biyi. Piaqun nami ni gigun da. Mdngu do squun nami rpun da. Rima idas kingal hangkawas ka samat kika damat nami bunga ni masu. Saw kika tnhayan mu rudan asi saw sndamat. Lmlung ku endaan mu paah bilaq bitaq sayang. Asi ku peuyas, tama, wada su inu hug?*

*Tama wada su inu?*

*Empuru ku dapil qaqay su.*

*Ana su wada inu hug,*

*Empuru ku liyus endaan su.*



**Figure 2.1**  
**Bowtung's father,**  
**Yudaw**

*My name is Bowtung Yudaw. The ancestors from my dad's side are from the village of Mksquid in the mountains. Our people were relocated to the lowlands named Sakula; then I married my husband and moved to Qowgan, which I consider my home now. Since I was little, I followed the footsteps of my father and lived in the mountains. My father taught me how to set different traps for different animals—birds, mountains rats, flying squirrels, etc. At night we rested on the flat ground under the trees. On rainy*

*days we rested in the rock's shade. I also followed him to catch the Formosan Reeve's muntjacs, wild boars, and goats by traps and helped him carry the animals to our bamboo pavilion. We dried the meat by fire and then kept it in the storage for 5 months to a year. We cooked it along with sweet potatoes and millets. These are some of the cultural practices my father taught me and I miss those days very much. As I recollect my experience from childhood until now, let me just sing a song for you "Father, Where Are You Going?"*

*"Dad, where are you going?"*

*I am going to follow your footsteps.*

*Wherever you go,*

*I am going to follow your trails."*

I first met *payi* during my visit to children's home as a volunteer teacher in the local after-school program. On the dinner table were a lot of traditional Truku foods, including the mountain bamboo shoot and the meat from wild animals. *Payi* offered me the raw liver of the Formosan muntjac; to show respect and appreciation, I took a bite with courage, which she still praises now saying I passed her test. At our first encounter, *payi* impressed me deeply with her genuine hospitality and strong Truku identity. "Children already learn Chinese at school; at home I insist they speak in Truku," she responded when I asked about her take on Truku language use at home (personal communication, March 16, 2012). It was until later did I learn that *payi* at the age of 56 is one of the few Truku grandmas (*payi*) alive who have received traditional Truku education by following the footsteps of the older generation (*tuhuy rudan*) and being socialized into traditional Truku values and cultural practices. When she was in Grade 3,



she decided to drop out from public school and learn about hunting from her father. Originally her father was unwilling to let girls like her to tag along, but she continued to follow him secretly and he finally let her join. The song she sings above characterizes this unique experience at childhood.

Not only does *payi* speak highly of Truku ways of living, but she is also conscious of the impacts of the government control on the lives and future of the Truku children. Since the government established the so-called *Taroko National Park* on Truku people's homeland in 1986, hunting has become illegal. At the beginning *payi* could not believe it, yet when she and her husband were arrested by the police and confronted by a group of journalists, they had no choice but to surrender. She often says to me, "We [Truku hunters] do not rob. Neither do we steal. But we are treated like criminals" (personal communication, May 28, 2012). Years of protests did not change the policy and many Truku hunters, including them, gradually adapted their ways and looked for jobs outside the village. "We Truku do not have freedom now and we are actually very miserable now. The generations after me are not inherited with any traditional practices and values due to government's strict control over our use of the natural resources," *payi* has repeatedly articulated the complex relationship between government control, loss of Truku education in families (*ini tuhuy rudan*), and the change of contemporary Truku communities (e.g. alcoholism, welfare dependency) (personal communication, May 10, 2012). When I explained to her the purpose of the project in March 2012 (i.e. restoring the glory of the Truku and helping the future Truku children to know who they are through relearning the language), *payi* greatly approved of the idea of "restoration" and started coming to every project meeting and workshops on weekends and actively

participated in organizing the project. Although *payi* is not the only villager who appreciates the vision of the project or feels “awakened” by the issue of language loss (personal communication, July 17, 2012), she is the only Truku villager who stays committed to the project without any record of absence.

*Miyah namu miing knan siida o, “miyah nami pstutuy kari rudan” msa namu. Kika qnpahang ku o ana bi rabang kida. Mqaras ku balay. Lmlung ku nanak laqi jidai sayang, magu mu nanak uri, ini bi kla rmngaw kari Truku gruq rudan. Saw sgalu. Lmlung ku tuhuy ku rudan mu suxal o, “aji bi tuwa shngiyun gruq rudan” msa ka tama mu. “Kika asi ka kmpriyux ka lnlungan mu ni jiagi ta bi tgmisa kari Truku ka laqi” msa ka lnlungan mu. Wada lisaw ni uwa siida o mkla lmlung laqi ku Truku ka yaku.” Saw nii lnlungan dha ana bi rapang mqaras ku balay. Kika hniji kari rudan spiyaw.*

*At that time when you [Man-Chiu and Apay] came to visit me, you said, “We came to revitalize the Truku language.” I listened to your idea and thought it’s great. I was very joyful about it. Thinking of the fact that contemporary Truku children, including my own grandchildren, do not know how to speak in Truku, I felt sorry for them. I recollected my experience of working with dad and his words: “We cannot forget what our ancestors have taught us.” I therefore thought to myself, “Let me turn a new leaf and let’s work together to teach our children the Truku language. When these children grow up, they will know who they are.” Thinking of this, I feel joyful and determined. This is about being responsible for passing the language down to the next generation.*

Additionally, different from the rest of the people in the project team, *payi* has not been double-minded about the direction we’re heading for at all possibly because she has experienced and practiced the Truku way and surely recognized its values for

children's future. Speaking in Truku and being Truku is more than an ideological stance; it is a way for being connected to her father and the mountains, where "my [her] spirit lies" (personal communication, December 20, 2012). When the project team struggled to continue the project after 5 months of attempts, *payi* initiated the idea of establishing a regular Truku language class for children on weekends as an alternative to the earlier family-based language revitalization model. She encouraged us, "It's like planting seeds and growing vegetables. You have to work on it for a while before it can bear fruits. If we give it up in the middle, it will be a great pity" (personal communication, July 25, 2012). Without *payi*, the project would have ceased.

*Payi* is also my mentor in the villager. During the early stage of our acquaintance, she would initiate phone calls and drop by my place almost every other day. For example, she would call me at 5 a.m. and we would walk to the mountains or near the seashore to inhale and breathe in the fresh morning air. She taught me how to saw the bamboos and make traditional Truku musical instruments. She took me to pick unique plants *sangas* and make herb tea from the scratch. She showed me how to disassemble meat from skin and cook a wild goat (*mirit*) skillfully. She prepared lots of Truku food for me to take home for my birth family. My learning from *payi* is not just through interviewing and field-notes taking but also through participating in her daily activities and building genuine friendship with her. Originally I was not aware she was consciously apprenticing me into traditional Truku practices and values. In a sense, just like how *payi* followed the footsteps of her father, she has taken me as her child and allowed her to follow her footsteps. Our relationship continued to grow as I participated in her daily activities and became more like "*laqi Truku*" (a Truku child) in her eyes. The process

resonates with Paris' (2011) argument in humanizing research that "genuine relationships and moments of inspiration are fostered in authentic participation that matter to the participants" (p. 144).

As for me, an activist researcher from outside, *payi*'s care (and much of Apay's family members) have helped me to gain a sense of belonging and family connectedness on the Truku land and provided me with the family comfort and communicative space I desperately need as a non-Indigenous person practicing Indigenous language revitalization. In Thayer-Bacon's relational epistemological theory (1997), we as humans need to experience "caring" relationships with others in order to "develop a sense of 'self'" and "become potential knowers" (p. 241). Thanks to *payi*, I came to experience and embody part of the villagers' realities as a legitimate family member of *payi*'s instead of observing them from a distance. I noticed myself wanting to learn Truku more diligently to reach mutuality with her. My self-positioning as a researcher was critically reconsidered when once at dinner table, *payi* held my hand, shared her concern about Truku children's future, and asked me to press on ("*Kmbrax!*") (personal communication, June 6, 2012). Ever since then, I have critically reminded myself that what we are doing is more than a project, a dissertation, but a concerned grandparent's vision and hope, which now become mine. The process is similar to the Kaupapa Maori approach in which a researcher participates culturally and respectfully establishing family (whanau) relationships with other participants (Bishop, 1998, 2005). For *payi*, the project has also made an impact on her life as she narrates in the following.

Maxal empitu hangakawas  
 keikon ku da. Paah quri rudan ungat  
 戀愛 ka suxal. Paah 3 laqi mu siida do,  
 kuru bi endaan mu. Paah hiya do, 12  
 hangkawas ka qmpahan mu teking  
 kuru balay. Bukuy do musa ku yama  
 qmita qlubung ni mapa ku samat dhuq  
 ku sapah brigun ka samat. Pila. Ida  
 pila. Duri o musa ku miing 蘭花金線



**Figure 2.2**  
**Bowtung told stories to children in Truku**  
**for the first time (April 7th, 2012)**

蓮. Ida pila kana. Dsun mu sapah brigun mu teywan. Ida pila o. Dngaun mu tro laqi  
 ppatas uri. Ini ku usa yama siida do, mniq ku siyaw elug smbari ku spiki. Showbai ku  
 karaoke, ida pila. Smbari ku qsurux ni paji, muda ku rima alang, ita pila. Keeman ni  
 jiyen o ini ku qmi. Ida pila wax! Huya sun da, endaan mu o ida pila. 為了錢, 樣樣都會.  
 Tsuqi naqih kuxul mu da, asi ku mimah sinaw, ni mkan spiki. Psukan ku mringay ku. Tkla  
 ku da ga, “aji bi tuwa maxun ka sinaw do wax” msa ku lmlung da. Ana rapang ka laqi  
 kmukan Amay nii miyah pstutuy kari Truku laqi sayang. Embahang ku rmnagw ka Amay  
 do, “payi, jiaqi saku hug, yi?” Kibi su lnglungan mu paah suxal. Mqaras ku balay wax!  
 “Asi kmpriyux ka lnglungan mu.” Paah hiya ka nmaxan mu sinaw, qnqan mu spiki, wada  
 mu asi lxani kana. Ini ku tungux da. Asi ku skingal tgmisa gruq rudan spiyaw ka laqi.

*I got married at the age of 17. At that time, there weren't things like falling in  
 love. Since I gave birth to my three children, life became more than miserable. I worked  
 for 12 years as a construction worker. Then I went back to the mountains hunting*

*animals in exchange for money. I also picked mountain orchids and sold them to the Chinese people for money. I needed to raise my three children and supported their education. When I stopped practicing hunting, I opened my own betel nut stand in the village. Then I expanded my business—I ran my own karaoke bar & restaurant; in the meantime, I drove a small truck to five different villages selling vegetables and fish every day. Just for money! I worked nonstop and hardly slept day and night. Just for money! What should I do? At that time, I just worked for money. To make money, I learned everything. When I felt bitter or sorrowful, I just drank alcohol and chewed betel nuts. When I was drunk, I went crazy. When I was sober, I thought to myself, “I cannot drink alcohol like this!” It is a blessing that the Chinese child Amay [Man-Chiu] came to the village to revitalize the language. I listened to her as she said, “payi, could you help me?” She told me something that I’ve longed for from before. I was so happy. “Let me just turn a new leaf!” I just quit alcohol and betel nuts. I don’t take them anymore. I just set up my mind to revitalize what my dad has taught me by passing it down to the Truku children.*

Therefore, in a way my collaborative relationship with *payi* is reciprocal. It is a mutual humanization and restoration process. Her socializing me into Truku culture and language practices helps me to relate to Truku language and culture on a personal level, as a daughter, a friend, and an outside activist. The family-like relationship has opened new doors of being, learning, and researching for me (also see Bishop, 1998; Thayer-Bacon, 1997). For *payi*, the project provides her with an opportunity to be reconnected with the past that she is deeply nostalgic for. It also facilitates a space for her more traditional experiences to be recognized and appreciated in the hegemonic discourse of modernity.

In the process, I have also learned that participatory action research requires more than relationship building—my relationships with the villagers and the land come along with a responsibility to them. At the early stage of our collaboration, *payi*'s only and greatest concern was whether my commitment was short-term. "Some villagers think that you are taking advantage of me. But I know I can trust you. Yet, I do not want to do this with you if your commitment is short-term. Will you be gone the next day?" (personal communication, May 10, 2012). In the following months, she continued to bring up the topic of whether I would be coming back to the village again after graduation. Originally I entered the village positioning myself as a bridging facilitator (*hakaw*) as I assumed that the community can gradually govern the project on their own in the future. People's doubts and *payi*'s concern have pushed me to re-examine my understanding of their needs and my commitment every day. As Freire reminds us, "Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. Their conversion is so radical as not to allow of ambiguous behavior" (p. 60). I have come to realize that reconstructing the language practices and policy from the bottom up requires time, faith, and actual support along the way. That vision cannot simply be the construction of one's dissertation or a text to be published. This endeavor needs to be pursued constantly and responsibly. The realization aligns with Brayboy's (2013) reminder for critical educational anthropologists: "We must not only count on being in relationships, but we must also more purposefully recognize our responsibilities of being in them, nourishing them, and insuring the general welfare of those people and things with whom we are in relationships" (p. 7).

## Continuing the Project

It is until *payi* joined our team and took the lead that we were able to incorporate more Truku ways of doing into our project design. Ever since then (July), a regular Truku language classroom was established and continues to prosper (see Figure 2.3). We taught children how to greet, sing, and pray in Truku. “Whenever there is a public event, we can send these children to perform. If the villagers see children capable of doing so, they would be very amazed and eager to teach their children Truku as well,” *payi* shared her strategy (personal communication, June 15, 2012). We also combined *payi* and other villagers’ expertise in traditional songs with children’s interests in singing. With *payi*’s increasing support and involvement in the project, we have been able to find the faith and ways to persist. “I really like to see my children singing and dancing with joy. It brings joy to my heart as well,” a mother said after she saw her daughter perform in school (interview, July 15, 2012). “Now my grandson comes back home saying loudly in Truku ‘Grandpa, grandma, I am back!’ (*baki, payi, miyah ku da*) (laughing)...he [the grandson] sings the Truku songs loudly at home as well, not watching cartoon anymore (laughing),” a grandfather shared with us his observation (informal conversation, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012).



**Figure 2.3 Our regular Truku language classroom**



Additionally, through dialoguing with *payi* and being connected to her social network, I have gradually increased my ethnographic understanding of the community heartbeat. We have worked more closely as a team to contextualize language revitalization efforts in the local socio-cultural dynamics. For example, as cross-generational parenting is the norm in the village, we took advantage of children's special bond with the elders, and combine elderly home care with language revitalization (Figure 2.4). Children, named as Truku Visiting Angels, became a lot more encouraged to practice speaking in Truku so as to communicate with the elders. The villagers came to hear about and understand our sincerity in this endeavor as we marched with the children singing the Truku songs on the way to the elders' home. We also visited Apay's university and shared our stories of struggle and success (Figure 2.5). It is partly through these opportunities of public performance and recognition that children find the motivation and confidence to speak Truku. Most of all, *payi*'s wisdom has taught me that is through genuine care for each other — between the staff, between the elders and the children— that we find the joy, energy, and purpose to keep going.

**Figure 2.4 Care for the elderly**



**Figure 2.5  
Group presentation in National Dong Hwa University**



## Methodological Reflection

Park (1993) notes that one purpose of participatory research is “to provide space for the oppressed to use their intellectual power to be critical and innovative in order to fashion a world free of domination and exploitation” (p. 3) (also see Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). However, just as feminist scholars (Ellsworth, 1989; Weiler, 1991) have challenged the danger of simplifying people in the unitary category of the oppressed and overlooking the internal difference of the category, our empirical study testifies that the discourse of “community-based” LPP may unwittingly assume the notions of bounded, monolithic community structures. In reality, Qowgan village, formed by dislocated villagers from different areas, is an administrative unity under colonial control; contemporary individualistic market-based economy further creates social and economic stratification among people (Lin, 2011) and hampers the opportunities for solidarity. “Now people work on their own (現在都嘛各做各的),” a man in his 30s responded when asked about the possibility of collective endeavors (personal communication, July 15, 2012). As some middle-class Truku people have owned more economic and cultural capitals to join the modern knowledge economy, their interests and aspirations diverge vastly from some of the traditional Truku people, who still support the value of physical labor and endurance, the spirit of diligence and persistence (*drumut qmpah*), and a self-sustainable life. The complexity of community dynamics challenges the possibility of the communicative space in an ideal PAR design. It also resonates with PAR researchers’ recent self-critique: In reality “participatory action research groups are internally diverse” and they generally “have no unified center or core from which their power and authority can emanate” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 580).

The heterogeneous nature of the community is further complicated by the ambivalences of the social actors (including the first author) in the structure. Subedi and Daza (2008) draw on postcolonial theory and argue for the importance of understanding the discrepant nature of identities in postcolonial praxis. In praxis, I have naively assumed that the identity of being Truku is sufficient to mobilize people for collective identity; however, in reality, not only is the ethnic identity differently formed across different life trajectories, but it also intersects with other identity positions (e.g. being a responsible parent who can bread home in the market economy). Young Truku parents' struggle between cultural revival and economic prosperity is deeply rooted in the structural constraint of the lack of economic capitals of Truku language in the market and a systematic dependence on the currency. One local anthropologist Tsou (personal communication, August 1, 2012) argued that contemporary Truku families and subjectivities are rather close to the diaspora population (Kalra, Kaur, & Hutnyk, 2005), whose "understanding of belongings and identity challenge the fixity of identity invoked by ethnicity" (p. 16). When I begin to go beyond the category of "Indigenous/ Truku" or "community," and understand "culture" as "trajectories" that have been disrupted, stagnated, redirected, resisted, or readjusted in a multiple directions, it becomes clear why language revitalization may not be as empowering.

Blinded by a mechanistic, instrumental view of community and language, at the early stage, I have made multiple mistakes as an activist researcher. One of the mistakes was the assumption that people could naturally come together for collective work because they are all Truku. As we modified the design and recognized family as a unit of cooperation, I again made the mistake in seeing every Truku family as being similar to

each other if not identical, overlooking the unique cultural trajectories each household underwent. In retrospect, instead of trying to create new working relationship among the families, on a community level, I should have started from understanding the strength and dynamics of preexisting social network in the increasingly heterogeneous community. On a family level, I should have recognized that each family has its unique histories and dynamics of division of labor. Without assuming that the identity of Truku is made relevant all the time in the language reversal process, I should have attempted to understand how daily language use is implicated in the construction of the social identities and role that are made relevant in naturalistic social interaction (e.g. being a busy mother, being a communicable grandmother, being a loving grandchild).

Participatory action research without in-depth ethnographic understanding of the dynamics of each family context and their complicated interacting relationship with other sociocultural contexts (also see Curdt-Christiansen, 2013) explains why the earlier efforts failed.

Although my earlier attempts with the villagers challenge the possibility of the communicative space in an ideal PAR design, my positive collaborative relationship with *payi* suggests that that dialogue is more likely to take place when our subject positions complement and strengthen each other. In a way the project, where my academic subject position is situated, facilitates an opportunity for *payi* to fulfill her hidden aspiration for the next generation, including her own grandchildren. It also allows her to take a proactive approach to resolve her frustration at the cultural maladjustment of contemporary Truku people (e.g. alcohol as a way of escape). For me, *payi*'s subject position as a devoted project participant helps me recognize the meaning and purpose of

our endeavors. Her mother-like care for me relieves the heavy emotional labor load I carry as I pull part of myself out of my own family and cultural roots and try to find a sense of belonging in a new place. By nature, the dialogue itself is layered. It takes place not just between the social actors who encounter each other. The encounter has created another level of dialogue between one's past, present and future, that is, between payi's past and present, and between my present and future. The dialogue is woven both inwardly and outwardly— within individuals and between individuals.

Another key factor that kindles the possibility of the dialogue and collaboration is the genuine display of vulnerability and incompetence of an outside activist researcher like me. In the beginning months of our collaboration, *payi* often said to me, “I want to help you because I feel compassionate about your situation—you're alone here and have little support network. If it were for someone else, I would not have helped him/her” (personal communication, July 12, 2012). Similarly, another devoted villager Tumun Kingjiang shared how my manifestation of vulnerability moved her heart to join the community project:

*“When Apay and Amay (Man-Chiu) first asked me, ‘Is Truku language important?’ I thought to myself, ‘It’s important.’ But the message went in one ear and out the other. Later they asked me again, ‘What if Truku language is gone forever in the future?’ I said, ‘That will not do!’ Still I didn’t feel touched to commit myself to this... until one day when Amay put together all her documentation into a documentary and invited the villagers to watch it. After we watched it, because she misspelled some of the Truku words in the subtitles, a senior elder blamed her on the spot. Amay stood rooted in front of the villager*

*audience. I happened to sit right before her and saw a lot of tears rolling in her eyes, but she had to hold them back. Right at that moment, I felt deeply moved. If a Chinese person can make such great sacrifices for the Truku people, why can't we be like her, that is, to motivate and lead our own people to learn our ethnic language? Ever since then, I have worked together with them. In the past months, my children have made rapid progress in Truku language and I am very happy about this.*" (public speech in National DongHwa University, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

As Tumun's speech reveals, my subject position as a disheartened activist has humanized her. Especially in the present context where many Truku people of the adult generations have long been cheated by the dominant race (*teywan*) and bear distrust against the Chinese, I argue that having such heart-to-heart encounter with our collaborators is as critical as doing "ideological clarification" (Kroskrity, 2009) and exploring divergent ideas. From a humanity perspective, what makes collective praxis possible is not only one's capacity to love, but also one's humility to admit one's limit so as to empower others' capacity to love and help. Dialogue thus becomes a mutually humanizing form of communication (Freire, 1970).

Indeed, villagers like Bowtung, Tumun, and Apay provide the very encouragement and support I need as a human. They help me persevere in the project as much I help them and their community. Thus, a community project is no longer just a project, but a mutually uplifting struggle that has led to an enduring friendship. Our experience resonates with Paris's (2011) methodological stance of humanizing research, which "requires that our inquiries involve dialogic consciousness-raising and the building of relationships of dignity and care for *both* researchers and participants" (p. 137). In a

similar vein, *payi* often emphasizes, “做人要互相, 我們部落很重感情, 一起工作要培養感情 [Being reciprocal is a way of being a human. We people here value relationships. When we work together, we have to get together and nurture the relationship].”

Most important of all, the collaborative process requires more than my positioning of villagers as collaborators and myself as a participant researcher. As I entered the field with the vision of research as transformative social practice (Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993), *payi*'s concern about my departure date suggests that Truku research ethic code in response to critical research goes beyond “issues of individual consent and confidentiality” under the IRB regulation (Smith, 2000, p. 214). LeCompte, in McLaughlin's (1993) *Naming Silenced Lives*, points out the responsibility of critical scholars:

There is a critical link missing in much purportedly emancipatory research. It begins and ends with the illusion that self-awareness alone is sufficient to bring about empowerment. To go beyond consciousness-raising requires a greater commitment. If researchers truly wish to empower those whom they study, they must redefine their own activities far beyond production of a document describing events, recorded, and analyzed. (p. 14)

Like Mangual Figueroa (2012) who struggles with the question of departure (or exiting) in her ethnographic research with the minority Latino community in the U.S., I found myself unprepared to understand “the relationships and responsibilities beyond the traditional confines of the field” (p. 140). For a while, I struggled to understand until when I can claim I have fulfilled my responsibility to the community members who have welcomed me. If Truku language revitalization and education is a decade-long process, to



what extent could I say I have fulfilled the commitments I made when Apay and I invited *payi* and other villagers to join the project? In establishing collaborative relationship with the villagers, I have learned that I occupy a privileged position in making sense of the world when I say bottom-up language revitalization is about raising awareness; in reality, people are oftentimes aware yet have fewer social and economic capitals to change the system. If long-term accompany and commitment are what the now co-leader (*payi*) asks or expects from me, the project can effect change only to the extent that I have been changed (also see North, 2010; Maguire, 1993).

Freire (1970) proclaims, “Dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love” (p. 89). What is love? Critical pedagogy scholars Darder and Miron (2006) define love as “a political principle through which we struggle to create mutually life-enhancing opportunities for all people... grounded in the mutuality and interdependence of our human existence” (p. 150). In Freire’s words, “love is commitment to others” (p. 89). In the process, I have come to see that although commitment is a choice, commitment is an evolving, reciprocal process of mutual influence. I was ambivalent earlier—it is Apay’s friendship, *payi*’s care, and many village children’s love for me that brings me back to the village after a temporary departure, and my return further strengthens the commitment of the team.

### **Conclusion**

As a non-Indigenous scholar, initially I entered the village with the passion to “help” revitalize the Truku language and restore the dignity of the people from colonial

oppression. Nevertheless, our empirical case challenges the ontological assumption of the “communicative space” or “dialogue” in an ideal PAR design. After more than a year of praxis, I have been humbled to denaturalize my cultural presuppositions “as a cultural being and member” (Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Murri, 2008, p. 309) of the discipline of critical pedagogy. Villagers with his/her unique subject positions do not necessarily feel empowered when positioned to be change-makers or researchers themselves. The present study suggests the imperative of combining ethnographic research with critical Indigenous pedagogy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) so as to let part of people’s sociocultural dynamics reshape and strengthen the purpose of postcolonial praxis.

Most importantly of all, this field experience has taught me the power of comradeship and love in making collaboration possible. Thayer-Bacon (1997) notes that “the quality of the social relationships people have will affect the ideas being constructed/deconstructed, especially in terms of whether or not the ideas have the opportunity to be expressed” (p. 241). Payi’s co-constructed narratives with me further demonstrate that genuine relationship building not only increases the validity of the truth we share with each other (Paris, 2011), but also expands the space of collective action in a participatory action research framework. The chairman of the Council of the Indigenous People, DaChun Sun (2010), once said:

Do not overlook the power of friendship. It may not seem to make a difference, yet it can enable us to reclaim our own dignity. Justice without the foundation of friendship can only change external structure; this kind of justice, however, cannot really bring us together. (Sun, 2010, p. 119)

Although critical pedagogy motivated the present study, in the process I have recognized that resistance against the structural constraints will continue to be a complex process filled with contradictions and struggles. Nevertheless, *payi*'s wisdom of care humanizes me and shows me a shimmering glimpse of truth on the journey: Language revitalization as postcolonial praxis is more than passing down the cultures and language; it is the love being passed down that makes the process meaningful and life-changing.

*Our* journey converges... and continues...

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## CHAPTER 3

### RETHINKING PARTICIPATION IN LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION BY USING CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY

Man-Chiu Amay Lin and Bowtung Yudaw

#### **Introduction**

Scholarly endeavours in reversing language shift (RLS) have successfully elevated the visibility of the rights of minority language speakers, especially in Indigenous contexts (Fishman, 1991; Hinton, 2001a, 2013). Traditionally, a framework, model, or step-like procedure is proposed to revitalize endangered languages – for example, Fishman’s (1991) “Eight Stages of Language Endangerment and Suggested Interventions,” Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997) “schema for language-in-education policy development,” Hornberger’s (2006) integrative LPP framework, and Hinton’s (2001a) 8-steps toward language revitalization. While these frameworks have been invaluable in helping us understand language revitalization processes from a global perspective, as their proponents point out (Hinton, 2001a, p. 6; see also Anderson, 1998, 2009; King, 2001; Meek, 2010; Sims, 2005), these processes are, in reality, much more complex, contested, and “messy” when enacted in practice.

In recent scholarship in critical language policy studies, researchers have shifted from viewing LPP as a top-down process to investigating the ideological, socio-structural, and historical bases of LPP, and the ways that top-down (official, *de jure*) and bottom-up (tacit, *de facto*) LPP are “counterpoised” processes (López, 2008; see also King, 2001; McCarty & Warhol, 2011; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 2012).



For example, Shohamy (2006) highlights the mechanisms that mediate between ideologies and de facto language policies, including “rules and regulations, language education, language tests, language in public space, and ideology, myths, propaganda, coercion” (p. 57-58). McCarty and Warhol (2011) also argue that LPP and its related activities need to be considered as “mutually constitutive, interdependent, and co-occurring socio-cultural processes” (p. 179) that govern people’s social positioning and language use.

This chapter builds on and extends this body of work. Although a critical, sociocultural LPP orientation helps us understand the dynamic interplay of sociocultural and ideological practices, there remains a need to involve local stakeholders – in this case, Indigenous-language speakers – on a more equal basis in the critical inquiry process (see exceptions in Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Bishop, 2005; McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol, & Zepeda, 2009; Romero-Little, 2010). In this article we argue that collaborating with local stakeholders in the LPP process is necessary if our ultimate goal is to produce new speakers in naturalistic settings (King, 2001; Meek, 2010). Hill (2002), for example, notes that the “rhetoric of advocacy” common in much of the linguistic-anthropological literature on language endangerment may not resonate well with the language experiences and beliefs of members of “endangered-language” communities themselves. Working with Kaska people on Kaska language revitalization in a northern Athabaskan community in British Columbia, Meek (2010) finds that institutionalization of Indigenous language in government and linguist-led LPP may alienate the very speakers who use the language in naturalistic settings (also see Ciriza-Lope & Shappeck, 2013; King, 2001). Linguistic experts’ critical reflection as such signifies the limitation of institutions in

understanding and addressing “the inherent dynamics of Native oral language traditions” (Sims, 2005, p. 104), further suggesting the imperative for engaging local communities in the dialogues and development of language-related programs (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999; Grenoble, 2009; Hinton & Ahlers, 1999).

As the need for this shift to community-based LPP has become more widely recognized, the emerging challenge we raise from our empirical work is how to address the dynamic and heterogeneous nature of Indigenous (or non-dominant) communities (Gutiérrez & Arzubiaga, 2012; Huang, 2012), where people’s lived experiences diverge significantly from each other due to changing colonial impacts at different historical periods and stages of people’s lives. Going beyond taken-for-granted notions of bounded, monolithic community structures, we ask: If revitalization efforts come from the grassroots level, what binds people together in these efforts? What are the critical mediating practices between individuals and larger communal structures that create affordances or constrain opportunities for collective efforts?

### **Community-based Truku Language Revitalization**

In this chapter, we reflect on and re-examine our experience of working on a local Truku language revitalization project in eastern Taiwan. The Truku people, one of the Indigenous groups in Taiwan, used to dwell in the mountains practicing subsistence hunting and farming and have experienced involuntary migration several times in the recent century. During the Japanese colonial period, Japanese conquerors demanded that the Truku move to the plains for the convenience of military control. After the Chinese government arrived and began industrial development in late 1960s, the fact that the majority of the young people started working outside the village (Li, 1979) further

changed the social and economic landscape of the community. Under the modernization project of the nation, the Truku people have been forced to shift away from a mountain-land-based way of living to the one that depends highly on the market and currency. The change of economic practices and sphere has also transformed traditional child socialization practices (Yang, 2001) and limited the domains of Truku language use. Children now spend more than 8 hours in Chinese-speaking public school starting from age 3. In Tang's recent research (2011) on Truku language shift, a survey of community members' reported language use showed the gradual Mandarin preference and attrition in Truku use across generations. Based on Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (GIDS), Tang identifies Truku as in Stage 7, close to Stage 8, meaning Truku is spoken mainly among the older generations.

In June 2011, Apay Ai-yu Tang, a local Truku scholar in linguistics and a close friend of the first author, was informed of the funding opportunity from the National Geographic Genographic Legacy Fund, which is known for "supporting projects and raising awareness about the cultural challenges and pressures faced by indigenous and traditional peoples" (National Geographic Society, 2013). Drawing on the insights from three local senior Truku language advocates, the ethnographic interviews with several adult parents, and successful examples in other Indigenous contexts, Apay (the project manager) and Man-Chiu put the ideas into paper and submitted a proposal on behalf of the community. The project, with its ultimate goal of strengthening Truku language transmission across generations and helping the younger generation grow knowledgeable and confident in their cultural background, originally consisted of several different activities, including the Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program (MALLP; see

Hinton, 2001b, for a discussion), Truku language, song, and story documentation workshops, community-based theatre, and occasional field trips to other Truku communities.

Ideally community-based language revitalization should be conceptualized as an emerging, dialogic process co-shaped by the villagers, their histories, and current sociocultural dynamics; however, in reality, application for grants normally requires communities to propose plans ahead. Therefore, when the project was approved in December 2011, Apay and Man-Chiu were aware that the preparatory process did not involve as many villagers as it should, and therefore continued to leave great room for villagers to reconstruct the project and take ownership in it. Over the past year, Man-Chiu was invited by Apay to serve as an engaged ethnographer (Low & Merry, 2010) for the project, documenting community meetings and activities and bringing in participants' voices to inform praxis.

In actual practice, the project started with a village assembly inviting people to come together and discuss the issue of Truku language shift and endangerment. An elder suggested that since contemporary Truku life remained bounded by family ties, it would be wiser to start from family-based language revitalization rather than conceive of the community as a collective unit of mobilization. After a month of advocacy and recruitment, six Truku families (including the second author), friends and neighbours of these families, and two researchers (including the first author) together formed the "language revitalization team." For half a year, the team met weekly and organized bi-weekly parent-child activities for families, attempting to create a collective space for Truku language learning and cultural practices. The family-based gatherings have

gradually evolved into a regular Saturday Truku language class for children up till now, with some families withdrawing and new families joining over time.

The challenges raised from our empirical work are multifold. For example, how can the villagers be more engaged in the project? How can we understand villagers' various forms of participation in the project, including silence? What can we do when many fluent speakers of Truku do not feel comfortable teaching in front of children? What is the role of cultural practices in language revitalization? How can people work together collectively despite their divergent views and approaches towards language loss during the meetings? Penfield and Tucker (2011) note that language revitalization is "complex, unending, and ever-changing" and covers domains of "linguistic analysis, language policy and planning, curriculum development, teaching strategies and methods, materials development, activism and much more" (p. 293-294). In our context, the project team have not only struggled with issues related to teacher training, curriculum development, but have also been challenged by the increasingly dynamic and heterogeneous nature of contemporary Indigenous communities and thus the possibilities of collective endeavours (Huang, 2012; Lin & Tang, 2012; Tang & Lin, 2011). It becomes imperative to go beyond positioning villagers as collective change-makers and seek for an analytical framework to constructively understand some of the critical meditational practices that shape the limits and possibilities of collective actions.

### **The Present Study**

Committed to the ethics of producing meaningful research for the community (Smith, 1999), this chapter was motivated by the first author's desire for an alternative

analytical framework to understand the dynamics of community-based LPP from a systemic and developmental perspective. How can we expand the critical sociocultural paradigm of LPP (e.g. McCarty & Warhol, 2011) towards praxis-oriented analysis that not only captures the local sociocultural dynamics but also generates insights to inform future practices? How can we reconceptualize local challenges as potentials for development? Concerned with the primacy of praxis in community-based LPP, she turned to explore how a Vygotsky-inspired cultural-historical activity theoretical approach (Engeström, 1987, 1999; Leont’ev, 1978, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978) can offer a holistic and developmental understanding of the planning-practice interface in empirical work on language revitalization. Said to be “one of the best-kept secrets of academia,” (Engeström, 1993, p. 64) and also known as activity theory (AT), cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) conceptualizes human actions “in the broader perspective of their motivational and systemic context” (Sannino, Daniels, & Gutiérrez, 2009, p. 3), and seeks to “analyze development within practical social activities” (p. 1). Drawing on the CHAT framework, she re-examined the digital archive of the language revitalization meetings and activities over 2012. Over 50 entries of audio/video recordings were first transcribed with particular attention to participants’ turn-taking, and were then coded based on the CHAT components, for example, “artifacts in use.”

In the meantime, she followed the approach of “sharing” in decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999) in which researchers are responsible for “sharing the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented” (p. 16). As she frequently shared the CHAT framework and her preliminary analyses with her Truku mentor—Bowtung (the second author), who is

currently the local co-leader of the project, their discussion not only validated the analysis but also motivated Bowtung to elaborate on the accounts, testifying the analytical rigor of CHAT in illuminating the complex processes of local LPP. Due to space constraints, we are not able to go into the details of the evolving collaborative process (see Lin, 2013). In brief, the analytical process was essentially iterative and dialogic.

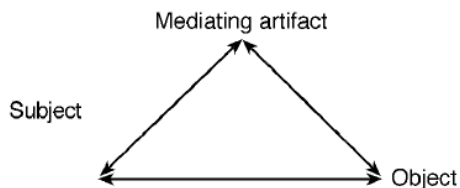
This chapter therefore grows out of our dialogue and reflection on the early stage of the language revitalization efforts through a CHAT lens. We propose that CHAT directs our attention to the notion of mediation and locate the space of agency by re-examining the role of certain cultural artifacts (e.g. literacy) in LPP praxis. We then situate contradictions or disturbances of our local praxis in a multilayered network of activity systems and produce more dynamic, constructive understandings of unexpected frustrations and contradictions, rather than attribute them to the level of random actions and incidents. The third generation of activity theory, a particular uptake of CHAT, facilitates this much-needed space for reflection and expansive learning among practitioners and researchers.

In the following, we will first describe the historical development of cultural-historical activity theoretical approach and its defining principles. We then move on to the empirical part of our study, describing two major challenges encountered in a local language revitalization effort, and applying CHAT to re-interpret them. Inspired by activity theory, our analysis has provoked a kind of “critical hindsight and foresight,” beginning to offer a means for constructive feedback and collective reflection for the project team and illuminating the complex nature of LPP activities in local contexts.

## Cultural Historical Activity Theory

Having evolved through three generations of research, cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) was first articulated through Vygotsky's (1978) idea of mediation in child development and learning, and further developed by Leont'ev (1981) and Engeström (1987) to understand larger-scale, collective transformations. In the first generation of CHAT, Vygotsky argued that human activities are basically object-oriented, characterized by the triad of subject, object, and mediating artifact (Figure 3.1). The use of tools and signs (e.g. language) mediates the relationship between subject and object, all of which together constitutes an activity system, which is a unit of analysis. Vygotsky's triangular model establishes two defining characteristics of CHAT: It assumes that "human life is fundamentally rooted in participation in human activities that are oriented toward objects" (Sannino et al., 2009, p. 1), and it highlights the role of tools and signs in mediating the dialectical relationship of subject and structure (Engeström, 1999, 2001; Lantolf & Throne, 2006).

**Figure 3.1 Vygotsky's model of cultural mediation of actions**

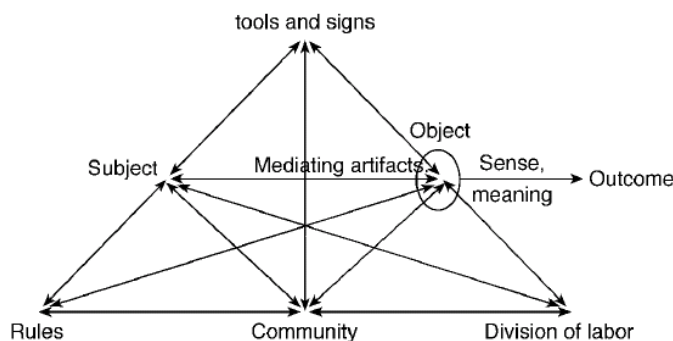


In the second generation of CHAT, Leont'ev (1981) attempted to go beyond individually focused analysis by explicating the societal and collaborative nature of human actions. Engeström (1987) further expanded Vygotsky's original triad to a graphically represented model that incorporates three more components: Rules,



community, and division of labor (Figure 3.2). Within a collective activity system, the actions of individuals are analyzed in relation to the tools and signs (e.g. oral language, an orthographic system, digital devices), the community and its rules (e.g. historical and local social-material conditions), and the division of labor (e.g. social roles, social interaction, identity). Incorporating governing rules, communities, and division of labor enables analysts to focus on the issue of power, for example, by asking who decides what the object of activity is and which artifact is prioritized. This conceptual framework brings together local human activities and the larger socio-cultural, historical structures, making a systemic examination of a collective activity possible (Lantolf & Throne, 2006).

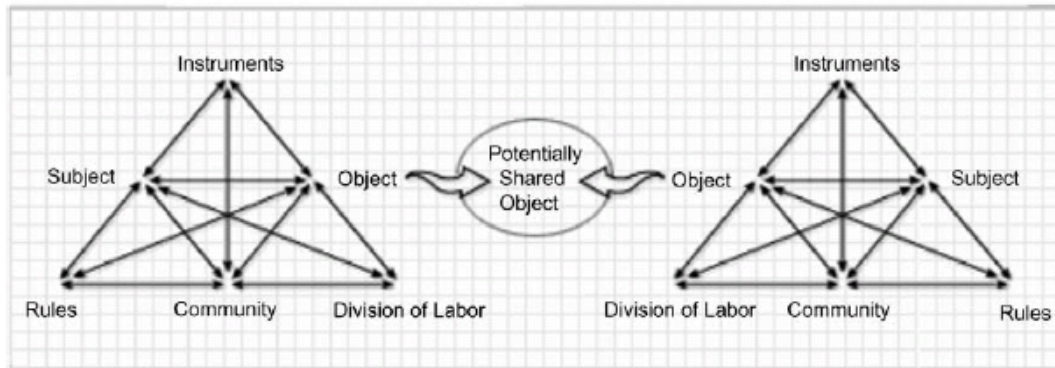
**Figure 3.2 The structure of a human activity system** (Engeström, 1987, p. 78)



As we have illustrated, an activity system is collective, artifact-mediated, and object-oriented. Engeström (1999, 2001, 2011), the leader of the third generation of CHAT, further advanced the model to a developmental method. He focused on the idea that individuals are in “a multilayered network of interconnected activity systems” (Engeström, 1999, p. 36). In the activity network, what seems to be disturbances or interpersonal conflicts on the surface are in fact contradictions and tensions that have been “historically accumulated” within one activity system and/or across activity systems

(Engeström, 2001, p.137). In analysis, researchers are interested in investigating such contradictions and positively reconceptualise them as potentials for qualitative change. Figure 3.3 offers a representation of the contradiction of the objects between two interacting activity systems. Here CHAT analysts may first work with practitioners to conduct careful historical and sociocultural analyses of the activity systems and then seek for ways to expand the spaces for “shared object(s)” through designing and implementing of a new mediating tool (Nummijoki & Engeström, 2010). Furthermore, because intervention may lead to other contradictions within or across the system(s), researchers continue to form new objects and models to improve the design, thus expanding cycles of learning. Therefore, the object in activity network is noticeably “a moving target, not reducible to conscious short-term goals” (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). Also known as the theory of expansive learning (Engeström, 2011; Engeström & Sannino, 2010), this developmental method has been found particularly useful in analysing learning in multi-organizational, hybrid workplaces (e.g. Daniels, Edwards, Engeström, Gallagher, & Ludvigsen, 2010; Yamazumi, 2009). CHAT has also been more widely applied to educational research recently (Engeström, 1998; Hedegaard & Fler, 2008; Nussbaumer, 2012; Roth & Lee, 2007; Saka, Southerland, & Brooks, 2009), including multilingual or bilingual contexts (Gutiérrez & Arzubiaga, 2012; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejada, 2012).

**Figure 3.3 Third-generation CHAT framework** (Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning, n.d.)



CHAT has thus evolved through three generations of research. Here we argue that the third generation of CHAT can offer great potential for understanding the processes of community-based language planning for several of its key features. First, as a “practice-based theory,” it encourages researchers to engage with “future-making practices” (Sannino et al., 2009, p.1). Such an epistemological stance is very compatible with the present research context as we believe community-based research should generate constructive implications for ongoing work. Secondly, the “object-oriented” nature of an activity system helps analysts place the goals and motives of individuals (“subjects”) in the centre of our sense-making process, and thereby better explain any qualitative differences in people’s ways of participation and practice.

Additionally, with its notion of multiple activity systems, CHAT acknowledges the complexity of people’s contexts or the heterogeneous nature of community. Such a systemic perspective may generate a more ethnographically informed understanding of any seemingly individual, idiosyncratic, or accidental deviations in social practice. It also suggests the object in activity theory can be “a nexus of power and resistance” (Lantolf &

Throne, 2006, p.223); thus, to identify “a shared object” across activity systems requires constant dialogue, negotiation, or the application of new mediating means. In other words, instead of imposing a single LPP “blueprint” or project design, through a CHAT lens, we as community researchers and practitioners shift our attention to understanding how subjects are embedded in multiple activity systems, what they intend to achieve, and how common aspirations can emerge. Methodologically, CHAT requires that researchers be involved “throughout the course of the development, stagnation, or regression of the activities” (Sannino et al., 2009, p. 3). In our case, we have been engaged in local efforts to revitalize the Truku language. Before we leave this discussion, we would like to elaborate on the idea of mediation, which occupies a foundational space for agency in CHAT (Engeström, 1999; Lantolf & Throne, 2006).

### **Mediating Artifacts: History, Literacy, and Agency**

Gutiérrez and Arzubiaga (2012) note that what distinguishes CHAT from other development theories is “its attention to the culturally mediated nature of human psychological activity” (p. 204). Mediational means, including symbolic artifacts (e.g. language, literacy) and physical tools, have both a subjective (ideal) and an objective (physical) aspect (Cole, 1996). That is, not only does an artifact exist in the material reality, but it is also linked to the history of its uses and thus connotes particular ideological stances (Cole & Griffin, 1986; Lantolf & Throne, 2006; Scollon, 2001). As Scollon (2001) argues, “mediational means inevitably embed the power and authority structure of society” (p. 120). For example, in traditional linguist-led language revitalization work, an orthographic system, usually represented by the Romanized alphabet, is invented and used as a mediating artifact to document the language, produce

learning materials, instruct in the language, etc. However, what the alphabet represents is an abstraction that often remediates and reorganizes forms of knowledge (Cole & Griffin, 1986). It may evoke the discourse of modern education and divide the community into two separate groups—the “educated” or schooled class vs. the “illiterate” or orally dominant class— unintentionally disempowering the latter (King, 2001). This is a case in point of how a symbolic tool may amplify the abilities of some while constraining others; therefore, the affordance and constraints mediated by artifacts also signify the close relationship between mediational means and agency in activity theory. In the third generation of CHAT where intervention work or design is common, researchers believe that “an introduction and collaborative application of new tools,” that is, “re-mediation” (Engeström, 1999) is key to transformation and innovation. Rethinking the use of artifacts, at the nexus of both history and emerging activity, can potentially expand the spaces for agency and development in language revitalization.

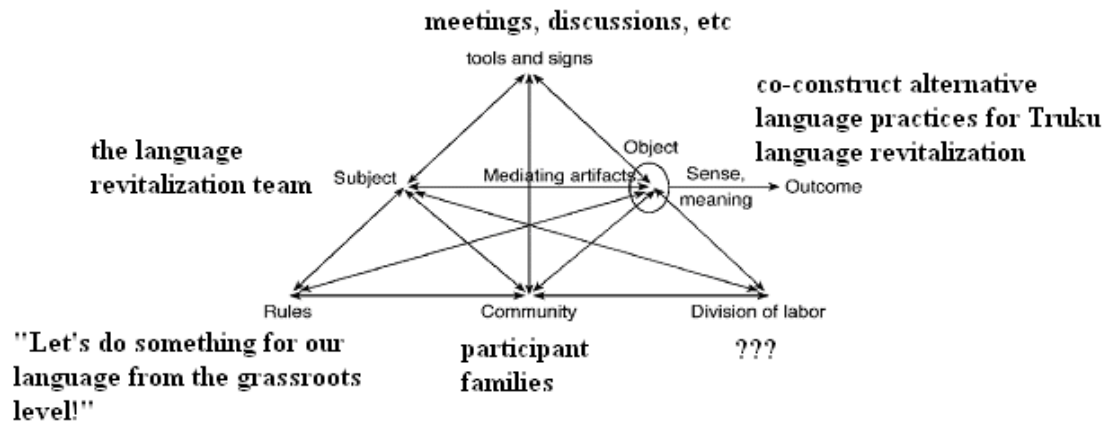
In Indigenous language revitalization and education, the role of print literacy has been contested. Some scholars raise the concern that the use of literacy may contradict with the local language ideologies that promote orality, multimodal texts, or other forms of local knowledge (e.g. Brandt, 1982; King, 2001; Meek, 2010; Menezes de Souza, 2002; Sims, 2005). Meek (2010) points out that “the dichotomization of language practices along an oral-literate axis” results in several “sociolinguistic disjuncture” (p. 91) in the Kaska community. For example, some teachers remain uncomfortable about teaching the language in a written form while the students would like to learn how to write the language. In fact, New Literacy Studies research (mostly on non-Indigenous contexts) has raised the same concern—the use of literacy has its own ideological consequences

and the particular kind of literacy promoted at school may cause ideological and socio-political struggles between communities that are used to different practices (Scollon, 2001; Street, 2000, 2006). Overall, we argue that CHAT's emphasis on mediating artifacts helps us to reflect critically on the use or non-use of print literacy and other forms of semiotic resources and tools in our ongoing community-based LPP.

### **Looking Back Using the CHAT Framework**

Using an activity theoretical framework, Figure 3.4 illustrates the intended design of the project. The “subject” represents the language revitalization team who work together towards the goal of language revitalization (“object”) through discussing with each other in meetings. The undergirding “rule” of the design is that Indigenous people can be language policy-makers themselves rather than being dictated to by the government. The “division of labour” in the emerging activity system is not clear in the design, implying that everyone can contribute to the community. Unfortunately, when the team began we were not aware of how our efforts were mediated by the instruments we used and how the instruments reinforced pre-existing rules of the community and made equal participation inaccessible, – processes that will be addressed in the next section. (Many of the narrative accounts from the project participants have been translated directly into English for the sake of space. Some important quotes are presented in both the original and English languages to capture the true power of the words.)

**Figure 3.4 Original design of the language revitalization project**



### **Artifacts, Power, and Participation**

One of the main challenges encountered by the project team is knowing how to organize among ourselves and facilitate a collective cultural space and an engaging atmosphere in which villagers across generations can actively teach and/or learn Truku. Madaw (all names are pseudonyms except for the co-author), a retired public servant, highly approved of the idea of “activities as language lessons” in the MALLP (Hinton, 2001b); he therefore took the initiative to design and present the lesson—Growing Vegetables in Truku (*Mhuma Pajiq*). In the following, we present a vignette of one of the project gatherings in the early stage of the development.

*In our sixth meeting, we planned to meet in front of grandma Miroko’s house to better reflect our aspiration to involve ordinary villagers. At around 6 o’clock in the evening, people slowly came, at slightly different time and finally the seats (arranged in a circle) were full. After the introduction, Madaw went to the front and introduced the agenda which was also written on the whiteboard... Then he distributed the handout, which contained the expressions related growing*

*vegetables. He went over the nouns, the verbs, and sentences sections of the handout. “Repeat after me, come on!” He reminded the other villagers a few times in Chinese to make sure they were following. Some older adults read the handout with seemingly great difficulty, their eyes squinting. Two elders gave the handout to their grandchildren and sat there listening. After a while, some of the children started to leave the seats, and played among themselves. After Madaw went over the handout, he asked the families to practice these words because he would take children to look at these vegetables in the field next time. One senior pastor, with years of experiences in reading and writing in Truku, stood up and noted that several words were misspelled. The participants listened to him quietly and spent another 5 minutes on the handout correcting the “typos” on the handout (Man-Chiu’s field notes, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012)*

In this scenario, towards the end, the energy of participants seemed to dwindle. The lack of excitement from the children and some adults frustrated the organizers as well. Yuyuh, who has had years of experience teaching language in school, suggested, “I feel what’s missing is how to make the lesson interesting. Can we possibly do some language games? For example, next time when we teach, we can design, like putting together the words and play a vocabulary game.” Rubiq, an elder whispered and responded, “like teaching in school.” Our group reflection seemed to be entrenched in the school education framework, evoking terms like “vocabulary games” and “lesson.” Madaw, the producer of the vegetable handout, was frustrated with himself because he had not been socialized into doing traditional activities and knew no better way to teach children besides the school practices (“handout”). We unwittingly missed the original

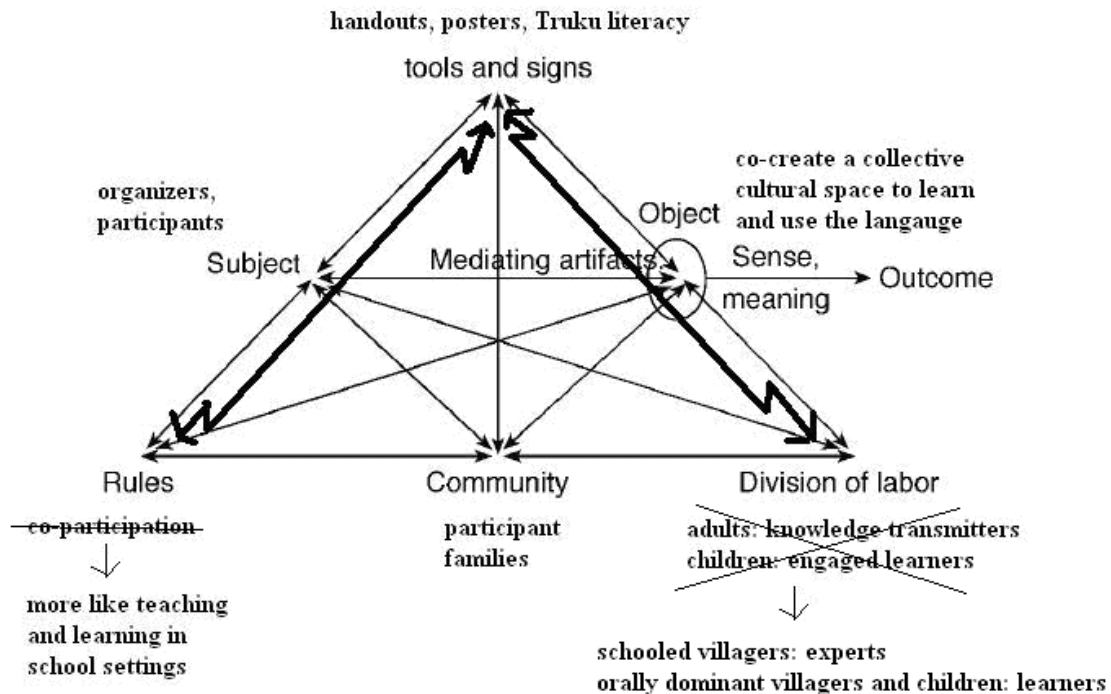


principle of “learning the language by doing” because at the time the language revitalization team consisted of predominantly the “schooled” people who did not know about traditional cultural activities (including the first author) but oftentimes assumed the role of speaking and planning. The emphasis of the role of artifacts in CHAT challenges us: If artifacts play a significant role mediating the activity system, can our dominant use of print literacy as the major artifact constrain some villagers’ agency, that is, their “socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112)?

The assumed presence of written Truku may benefit outsider researchers or advocates including the first author; however, it may limit other adult parents or grandparents who are used to using the language in naturalistic settings or who do not go to church or to school and have little experience with Truku literacy. Analysing different subjects’ participation from the earlier vignette through a CHAT lens, it sheds light on the inadvertent error: People who can read the Romanized alphabet unwittingly privileged the written form of the language, which actually distanced us from the goal of co-creating a collective cultural space to learn and use the Truku language. In Figure 3.5, the two lightning-shaped arrows indicate contradictions in the activity system of the gathering. The artifact—written Truku—was inaccessible to two elders, who simply gave their handouts to their grandchildren. The intended rule in our local LPP—“co-participation”—became difficult a single form of artifact was privileged. It also widened the power relations between the organizers and participants through the stagnation of the division of labour, immediately positioning the schooled classes as the language experts and the rest of the group as learners. If we had held the meeting in the vegetable field and used other artifacts such as oral language, soil, seed, shovel, in the participatory process,

other adult parents might have had more agency to demonstrate their competence, taking on the role of a knowledge transmitter rather than a passive learner in the chair.

**Figure 3.5 The dominance of print literacy as the major artifacts in gatherings**



Quickly, the realization dawned on the first author why some parents often responded, “*ini ku kla qmita romaji*” (“I don’t know how to read the Romanization letters”) when they were invited to be the language teachers for children. Additionally, as she re-examined the videotapes of all the gatherings with parents and children (32 sessions in 2012), it became surprisingly revealing that in almost all sessions, literacy-related visual aids (handouts or posters) had been taken for granted and used as the major or part of the learning materials. In some cases, it unfortunately lowered the quality of education when the villager teachers, not used to reading Truku words, had to fix their eyes on the poster when teaching Truku instead of having eye contact with the children. Consequently, the younger children lost their attention in the process of learning. This

resonates with Hinton's (2001c) warning that "writing may slow and impoverish language learning" (p. 241) when the Indigenous members are not familiar with the writing system.

In CHAT, each artifact is linked to the history of its uses and particular ideologies. The assumed role of written Truku resonates with the common use of an orthographic system in many Indigenous language revitalization initiatives led by scholars or institutions from outside (see exceptions in Brandt, 1982; Sims, 2005). It can also be traced back to the 1950s when foreign missionaries and local pastors collaborated to translate part of the Bible into Truku initially using the Chinese phonetic symbols (e.g. ㄅ ㄆ ㄇ ㄉ). Starting from the 1980s, a new writing system using the Romanized alphabet (e.g. a, b, c, d) was invented and adopted for Bible translation. The release of the new Truku Bible (*Patas Suyang Kari Truku*), available in print since 2003, met some resistance from the villagers who were unfamiliar with the new system. For years the church took the responsibility of teaching Truku believers the Romanized alphabet after Sunday service (personal communication, September 14, 2012). This particular written form of Truku has also been in use in children's Truku language class at school (45 minutes/ week). Overall, the alphabetically written Truku has achieved its normalized status especially among the churchgoers and the schooled class of people, yet to what extent people are familiar with it differs greatly from person to person depending on individuals' educational and religious socialization experiences. It was under these multi-layered contexts that the role of print literacy prevailed without some of the project organizers' (including the first author's) critical awareness of its hegemonic impact.

From the theoretical framework of language ideologies, one can argue that people's perception of language use, whether as oral or written, is grounded in the unevenly distributed social experiences (Kroskrity, 2000) and thus creates contradictions in ways of seeing and doing. The CHAT framework elevates the analysis to the level of praxis by critically acknowledging the relationships between components: "It is not, per se, the individual elements of the system that help analysts account for human functioning and development; rather, it is the relations between these elements that form the analysis and support intervention and transformation" (Lantolf & Throne, 2006, p. 224). In our local LPP context, it is not just the difference in language ideologies (oral language vs. written language) that results in dissonance in collective space; it is the constantly negotiated and potentially transformable interconnectedness between artifacts, rules, and division of labour here that account for the contradiction, struggles, and missed object in group dynamics.

### **Beyond Literacy-based Artifact**

The first author's self-critique of the use of literacy-based artifact resonates well with the voice of one of the project participants, Bowtung (the second author). Spending her childhood and adolescent years with her father hunting and farming in the mountains, Bowtung is one of the few contemporary Truku people who experiences and appreciates traditional Truku ways of living and teaching (Yang, 2001). Her depth of passion and knowledge about the Truku language and culture quickly drew her to the project and she moved from the role of a project participant to an active organizer. In our critical reflection of the norm of school-related artifacts (e.g. posters, pens, handouts, chair, table, etc) in community work, Bowtung notes that in general many of the contemporary

community meetings on tribal affairs (including those of the current project) did not give non-schooled villagers a chance to speak. “They [villager leader, tribal office, or director of program] hold the microphone standing in the front, as if we just have to listen to them. ‘It’s not like that!’ We have our ideas, too shy to speak, because we know they treat us like fools” (phone conversation, February 15<sup>th</sup> 2013). Her insights confirm that certain artifact-mediated social organization (e.g. how seating is arranged, who holds the microphone and controls the turn of speaking) reinforces the unequal power relations between the white-collar, schooled Truku and traditional Truku people.

Capper and Williams (2004) note that “the most difficult contradictions to use as springboards for growth are those that are ‘invisible’ or ‘undiscussible’... invisible contradictions include anything that is ‘taken for granted’...” (p. 9-10). In our case, it was not until CHAT made visible Man-Chiu’s cultural assumptions about language and literacy did Bowtung begin to reveal her earlier dissatisfaction with the use of written Truku in the project. “Siqa ku rngaw 那時候我不是很高興, 小孩子根本不是這樣教. 假如我們要教小孩子, 我們要做給他看, 我爸爸以前就是這樣教我啊! (I was too shy to express my opinions. At that time I was not happy about the project. Children should not be taught that way. If we want to teach children, we have to do it and show it to them. That’s how I was taught by my father!” (personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Although the CHAT-inspired critical dialogue occurred one year after the project, early in September 2012, Bowtung, without orally opposing the use of written Truku, implicitly exercised her agency through action: Bringing in her own cultural artifacts to project meetings and suggesting the integration of growing vegetables into the language curriculum. In the following excerpt, she brought millet seeds (*masu* in Truku) to teach

the project organizers how to *sow millet* (*tmkuy masu* in Truku). (Transcription conventions include: *italics* signal speech in Truku spelled based on the local writing system; pictorial characters 中文 are Chinese; (parentheses) contain descriptions of non-verbal activity; “quote marks” represent English translations.)

(Bowtung mixed the beach sand with the millet seeds and explained along with her body language while the others listened and paid attention to her hand movement.)

01 Bowtung: *Qtai, ggi han.*

“Look, select some seeds!” (grasping a handful of seeds and started sowing, with the millet seeds in her loosely held fist)

02 Others: (Watching and observing)

03 Imi: 這樣喔?

“Like this?” (trying to imitate Bowtung’s hand movement, asking in Chinese)

04 Bowtung: *Kiya kiya. Kika tmkuy masu o.*

“Yes, yes, this is sowing millet.” (looking at Imi’s hand, talking in Truku)

05 Imi: *Oh tmkuy masu?*

“Oh!... (turning to Bowtung) sowing millet?” (asking in Truku)

06 Bowtung: 就是灑種小米

“Which means sowing millet”

07 Imi: 種小米! 喔 小米!

“(Pause) planting millet! Oh millet!” (in Chinese)

08 Bowtung: 不是種- 鋤頭挖喔 灑(手勢) *tmkuy*. 灑小米

“Not planting. We didn’t use a shovel. ‘Sowing’ (in Truku language)  
Sowing millet (translating into Chinese)”

(videotape archive of planning meetings, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

In this verbal exchange, Bowtung took on the role of a master apprenticing others into the traditional cultural practice of sowing the millet. She engaged the other villagers not only with her oral language but also with her body language (hand movement) and the actual tools (millet seeds and beach sand). Her language use was highly contextualized, synchronizing with her hand movements. In line 5, Imi, a young Truku lady still learning Truku, seemed to pick up Bowtung’s verbal cue (*tmkuy masu*) and asked for clarification “Oh! (turning to Bowtung) sowing millet?” The follow-up turns continued to clarify the meaning, mixed with both the Truku and Chinese languages. Later on (line 8 and afterwards), Bowtung clarified that *hmuma* and *tmkuy* are two different verbs collocated with different farming tools. *Hmuma* (“Planting”) is associated with the use of a shovel; *tmkuy* (“sowing”) only requires the use of hand and should be the right verb to go with *masu* (“millet”). Bowtung’s way of language teaching highlights more of a social interactionist approach to language learning (Vygotsky, 1978); through social interaction, the learners cue the teachers into facilitating the appropriate language experience that they need for learning. When we apply the CHAT framework to re-examine the process, it becomes clear that the actual use of the artifact, millet seeds, along with the embodied knowledge (“sowing millet”) has expanded Bowtung’s agency to control her turn of speaking in interaction and improvise a language and culture lesson for the group. She would not have been able to take the lead if the project team had focused on putting the farming-related words on paper and teaching it to the children.

## **New Contradiction: Language and/or Culture?**

Bowtung's proposal of teaching children to grow vegetables also included building a bamboo pavilion (*biyi* in Truku) next to the vegetables field. "For Truku people, the most important thing is land. Wherever we work, the first thing we do is to build a 'biyi' next to our farming land. That's where you can rest and discuss with your children about work," she shared (personal communication, September 22, 2012). Some villagers raised the concern of whether by doing so we would have prioritized culture over the language and missed the target of helping children to learn Truku. "Because our ultimate goal is language (*kari*)- although experiential learning is important, but it feels like we change the priority?" the project manager asked. Based on the triangular framework of CHAT (Figure 3.5), Bowtung as the "subject" has expanded the "object," the goal of the project, to knowing about both Truku language and cultural practices, drawing on other semiotic resources (e.g. farming tools) into the activity system. Using the CHAT framework, we clearly recognized it as a contradiction of objects (project goals) at stake and through discussion Bowtung was able to make more explicit her view:

*Endaan nami paah brah ka tnsaan nami laqi Truku ka romaji ni uyas Truku, gaku uri o scisa ita mtka romaji uri. Lmlung ku naqih kuxul mu. Qowak nanak ini tuku. Cisaun ta qmpah ka laqi kika mha mkla balay. Huya sun ka hmuma bunga, masu, sari, paji, kika balay bi tgmisa. Saw kika tgmisa rudan dhuq ta meudus.* ("At the beginning we taught children the Truku language through the Romanized alphabet and songs. School teaches children the same thing. I thought about it and felt sad. Knowing how to speak in Truku is not enough. True education involves doing and working, for example, how to grow sweet



potatoes, millets, taro, and other vegetables. Truku education from the elders is a way of life.”) (personal communication, July 20, 2013)

As a matter of fact, the dichotomy of language or culture is not even an issue for Bowtung. Truku culture has always been lived and her language use has always been contextualized and embedded in Truku ways of living and doing. Cultures and language are like threads of a rope interwoven into each other; they cannot be separated from each other. Bowtung’s theory of language aligns more with ecological perspectives of language learning which “focus on the way individuals *relate to the world* and to each other by means of linguistic and other sign systems” (van Lier, 2002, p. 147, also see Lantolf and Appel, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978).

Although Bowtung’s insight does not contradict Madaw’s (in the earlier vignette) idea of learning and using the language in cultural contexts, Bowtung has placed language and culture on an equal footing while Madaw does not necessarily value the acquisition of traditional cultural practices as part of the goal. “We can just show children how to grow vegetables...Just practice it a little bit... When they are engaged physically, they remember better – just for this purpose, it cannot be taken as a profession though,” Madaw stated his position in one of the earlier meetings (project meeting, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012). In Man-Chiu’s informal conversation with Madaw, he has also expressed ambivalent views on the role of Indigenous language and cultural transmission in the overwhelming climate of assimilation:

*“I have thought about the role of Indigenous cultures for long. Our national development never takes into consideration the value of Indigenous cultures.*

*Our culture is always our own and cannot be associated with civilization. It cannot be seen as modern. Neither does it lead to the path of success.”*

(personal communication, April 5, 2012)

In real life, Madaw’s family history and cultural practices reflect more of a modernist way of life. His father did not rely on the mountain resources for a living but emphasized on modern education as the path to success. Although Madaw is about the same age as Bowtung, Madaw did not start learning about Truku ways of living until recently.

Madaw’s opinion may resonate with some of the white-collar (more formally educated or schooled) villagers’ experiences. For example, one of the former project participants

Taku expressed:

*“If we incorporate culture into the project, we have to learn to grow plants from the past, like sweet potato and millet, but children do not eat those things at all now. We will not grow plants like this. When it comes to hunting, no one is doing hunting now. What we want is modern life. Words related to hunting are rarely used. What we need to pass on are words like ‘refrigerator’ ‘train’, ‘telephone,’ etc. We should emphasize everyday conversations, instead of taking children on a field trip and visiting our ancestors’ homeland.”*

(personal communication, April 26, 2012)

From the excerpt, Taku oriented more to modern ways of living. The challenge of incorporating Taku’s idea in the project is, however, that some villagers still go hunting and grow sweet potato and millet. Another difficulty with Taku’s proposal of using words related to (his) modern everyday life is: Many modern terms have two word forms. For example, for the word “television,” the colonial borrowing *telivi* is commonly used by

people while the newly codified form *sasaw samaw* invented by the local dictionary-making committee is rarely used on the street. Focusing exclusively on modern terms may privilege one form of living and entrench us into a “sociolinguistic disjuncture,” that is, the discontinuity between ideologies and practices, that has existed for long in the village due to former government-led language revitalization efforts (Meek, 2010, p. 50-51, also see King, 2001).

How can we reconcile the diverse perspectives among the participants? From a CHAT framework, if we conceptualize each household as a network of generational activity systems, the dissonance among the project participants actually reflects historically accumulated disturbances and contradictions in a multilayered network of activity systems. Instead of blaming the villagers for not working collectively, we can better understand the complexity by tracing back to the colonial contexts when the Japanese government forced the Truku people to leave their mountain homeland and the Chinese government demonized traditional Indigenous ways of life as backward or barbarian. Over time, the Truku people have adjusted their ways to the dominant culture yet their adjustments may take different forms across different family contexts. Some Truku families maintain more of a traditional way of living and being whereas some conform to the dominant economic and educational practices more. People’s cultural ideological affiliation with “the ancestors’ way” (*endaan rudan spiyaw*) and their actual practices fall on a continuum; there is not a prototype of the Truku family in the village we dwell in (*Knkingal sapah ini pntka*) (personal communication, September 30, 2012). Earlier ethnographic study in the village also suggests great discontinuity of language and

cultural practices and ideologies across generations, households, and even one's life trajectory (Lin & Tang, 2012; Tang & Lin, 2011).

Applying CHAT enables us to untangle the complexity here because transforming contradictions into potential of growth is central to CHAT analysis. The third generation of CHAT acknowledges that as people are part of multiple activity systems, the process of resolving the contradiction is necessarily “a process of concept formation” (Sannino et al, 2009). In our case, what constitute “language” and the purpose of “language revitalization” are embodied, embedded, and distributed differently in individuals' diverse experiences and future prospects. The creation of shared concepts necessarily involve “confrontation,” “contestation,” “negotiation,” “blending,” loaded with “affects hopes, fears, values, and collective intentions” (p. 611). CHAT's positive conceptualization of contradictions encourages us to regard local conflicts and uncertainty as an opportunity to reconstruct “shared objects” (Figure 3.3) among the villagers. Going beyond the abstract notion of language revitalization, the project organizers and participants have started to ask more fundamental questions: What is language revitalization? What kind of Truku and for what purposes? Community-based LPP is an emerging process in which a shared goal is always a contested space that needs to be sought for and negotiated.

## **Discussion**

In the present language revitalization project, we share our experience of working with our Truku villagers to explore the possibilities of practicing language planning from the grassroots level. We argue that it is important to go beyond seeing the

community as a collective unit and understand how villagers' forms of participation are mediated by the existing power relations and the normalized artifacts in use. For example, when our earlier planning meetings about the Truku language curriculum were facilitated by the "literate" or "schooled" villagers (e.g. retired public servants, teachers), the hegemonic use of written Truku and activity rules confined the participation of the more traditional, orally dominant elders. Penfield and Tucker (2011) remind us that many of the standard pedagogical practices to language may not be compatible for use in various endangered language communities. "There should be an understanding of traditional ways of transferring Indigenous knowledge and a willingness to learn as well as teach" (p. 298).

Their insights resonate with our CHAT-informed analysis, which leads to the critical questions: When villagers are positioned as collaborators, teachers, or policy-makers, are they given the right tools to exercise their agency? Or, are they confined by the artifact-mediated social organization which has been taken for granted by the privileged class (including the first author)? With different artifacts being associated with different theories of language and learning, our dialogue further illuminates the contradiction of an academic theory of language (i.e. language as an autonomous system to be acquired, as represented by the first author) and some villagers' ecological approach to language learning (i.e. language as a way of relating to the world and others, as represented by the second author). We argue it is critically important to ask in future community-based LPP: Who set the rule of participation? Can the artifacts used seem strange to some people? What other semiotic resources and physical tools can be drawn on to make the process more inclusive? By no means does this mean that we oppose the

use of a Romanized alphabet in Indigenous language education; instead, we advocate for a critical awareness of all the semiotic resources used in community LPP as each artifact is “built on a history of relationships and influences” (Gutiérrez & Arzubiaga, 2012, p. 212) and may powerfully attract or unwittingly alienate the very villagers we want to reach.

Kroskirty (2009) points out that “conflicts of beliefs, or feelings, about languages... are the inevitable outcome of the interaction of Indigenous, colonial, post-colonial, and professional academic perspectives” (p. 71), highlighting the need for community members to do “ideological clarification,” that is, to discuss their divergent views on language renewal (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998; Fishman, 2001; Kroskirty, 2004). In our actual LPP praxis, we have noticed that ideological clarification is a very complex process because the conflicts of beliefs can exist not just between individual but also within an individual (e.g. “Modern” Truku’s ambivalent views about the role of Indigenous language and culture in contemporary society as represented by Madaw). We have chosen to privilege the voice of the more traditional, orally dominant speakers of Truku (as presented by the second author) partly because these elders are less double-minded about their stance and have shown consistent commitment to the project. Such choice initially resulted in the withdrawal of participation of some villagers. Nevertheless, the integration of actual cultural practices and language learning has proven to be more engaging and motivating to our Truku children. The modest success we celebrated has gradually clarified people’s doubts and oppositions along the way. Kroskirty’s “ideological clarification” is, therefore, better construed as a slowly emerging process

mediated not just by oral dialogue and meetings, but also by some villagers' attempts to give new ideas a try in practice despite possible objections from others.

Theoretically, we have also attempted to advance the scholarship of critical ethnographic approaches to language policy research by seeking for more praxis-oriented analysis to guide community work. How can we envision contradictions as potentials for growth? We argue that CHAT, with its attention to the culturally mediated nature of human activity, provides a robust theoretical and analytical framework to understand the instrumental aspects of language revitalization. Rather than falling into the dichotomy of macro- and micro- contexts, CHAT brings analysis to the “meso” spaces of community participation, highlighting the role of “artifacts,” “divisions of labour,” and “rules” and their inter-relationships in mediating our LPP processes. Rather than being paralyzed by the multiple contradictions and disturbances in the process, we argue CHAT offers powerful tools for us to identify the contradictions, conflicts, uncertainty that consistently appear across our meetings and activities. Recognizing the interconnectedness between artifacts and other mediating components further expands community scholars and practitioners' space for agency. Furthermore, the third generation of CHAT helps us to identify contradictions in a multi-layered network of activity systems and understand that the creation of “shared object” requires collective sense re-making and relationship-rebuilding in the increasingly heterogeneous community. In doing so, we do not fall into the pitfall of concluding that people “don't care” about their language, but rather take the time to respectfully understand how various forms of participation reflect their diverse subject positions that have been historically and socioculturally constructed.

Methodologically, we have also demonstrated how CHAT can be used to facilitate the dialogue between the collaborators to achieve mutual understanding. At this point, CHAT has helped some community-based practitioners (the authors and the project manager) to start reflecting on and dialoguing about the ideological contradictions that were invisible and/or undiscussible to us earlier. In the near future, we plan to share our analysis with the project team and bring in the triangular model of CHAT (Figure 3.2) to facilitate project meetings and discussions. Pedagogically, our focus on a traditional elder's voice offers a valuable reminder for future community-based Indigenous language education. We argue if we want to position non-schooled elders as teachers for children, it is important to patiently and respectfully learn about their ways of teaching, doing, and being rather than confine them to school-like language teaching practices.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter brings in a powerful praxis-oriented analytical framework to resolve the complexity involved in community-based language revitalization. We propose the use of the third generation of cultural historical activity theory to develop more robust theory of language planning and methods to help capture complexity, variation, and construction in community-based LPP. As the theme of this issue concentrates on a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between language policy and planning activities, we demonstrate that CHAT as a development-oriented, practice-based analytical framework has guided us to collaborate with each other in a more culturally responsive and respectful manner. As it helps us to move beyond an exaggerated or simplified understanding of the structural constraints, it also



empowers us with tools to seek for the affordances that have been missed due to the assumption from more dominant stakeholders in the activity system (e.g. the schooled villagers, the researchers). Just like the millet we sowed takes time to grow, CHAT teaches us that community-based LPP is an emerging, dialogical process that takes time to fully prosper.

We are working towards a community harvest!

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## CHAPTER 4

### REVISITING AGENCY BY LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF CHILDREN

*Adult: Why do you want to learn Truku?*

*Nine-year-old girl: I want to protect my grandparents.*

*-- From the first village assembly meeting, February 2012*

#### **Introduction**

In an age when one's linguistic needs, rights, and values are subject to the economics of the linguistic marketplace (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), creating a space for heritage language maintenance has always been a question of the interaction between structure and agency. Particularly in the context of Indigenous language shift where many Indigenous children worldwide are learning their ethnic language as their second language, some studies broadly conceptualize agency as reconstructing transformative practices (e.g. Hinton & Hale, 2001; Hornberger & Swinehart, 2012; Joseph & Raman, 2012; McCarty, Nicholas, & Wyman, 2012; Patrick, Budach, & Muckpaloo, 2013). Other studies emphasize communities' ambivalent attitudes to the competing ideologies of development and decolonization (e.g. Baéz, 2013; Howard, 2009; Kamwangamalu, 2009; Lopéz, 2009; Messing, 2009; Recendiz, 2009). Language shift/ revitalization is an extremely complex phenomenon that offers a unique opportunity to further our understanding of the possibilities and nature of agency (Ahearn, 2001).

In the meantime, although past studies in Indigenous language education have increasingly prioritized the voices of community members, including those of the parents

and the youths (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; McCarty & Wyman, 2009; Romero-Little, 2006; Romero-Little, Ortiz, McCarty, & Chen, 2011), what remain excluded, are the voices of the children. In contrast to Fishman's (1991) intergenerational language transmission model that positions children as passive learners (Reynolds, 2009), current language socialization research has shown that children and their peers are active socializing agents to each other and to their adult caretakers (e.g. Baéz, 2013; Luykx, 2005; Ren & Hu, 2013). In early childhood educational research, critical researchers also advocate for the need to research "with" children and value their voices to generate "culturally relevant, dialogic practices" (Malewski, 2005, p. 220) that better meet their needs (also see Bucholtz, 2002; Cameron et al., 1992).

Concerned with the primacy of praxis and the much-needed inclusion of children's voices in Indigenous language learning, in this chapter, I privilege the voices of the children and discuss how an ethnographic understanding of children's theory of Truku language and learning can illuminate and advance the praxis of Indigenous language revitalization, which is understood as a recursive process of action and reflection. As an engaged ethnographer, specifically, I ask: What do children's stories and participation tell us about their theories of language and learning (Brayboy, 2013)? How can we make use of children's voices to inform pedagogical practices? Bringing together insights from social theories of learning (Wenger, 1998), poststructuralist theories of identity and language learning (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011), and language ideologies in linguistic anthropology (Kroskrity, 2000; Field & Kroskrity, 2009), I argue that in the context of Indigenous language education, agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn 2001, p. 112) should be

understood as a collective— An emergent process of attaining mutuality and rebuilding relationship among different communities of stakeholders, between elders and children, between children and the researchers, between children themselves. Such a relational take on agency also implies the need for the effort to respectfully position one’s interests and needs in relation to others’ in praxis.

The present study contributes to contemporary studies of language learning, identity, and agency by bringing in a praxis-oriented empirical case in an Indigenous site and highlighting the affective and relational dimension of language learning and local activism. It also advances the scholarship of Indigenous language policy and planning (McCarty & Warhol, 2011) by including “the child perspective” (Hedegaard, 2008). In the following sections, I first introduce the present research context and then elaborate on the theories guiding the present research design and analysis. Moving on to the empirical portion, I discuss how children’s social identities and theory of learning recursively inspired adults to critically reexamine the language revitalization praxis. I then conclude with a critical reflection on the nature of agency and the possibility of collective agency in indigenous language education praxis.

### **Truku Language Loss and Revitalization**

The Truku people, one of the Indigenous groups in Taiwan, used to dwell in the mountains, practicing subsistence hunting and farming. They have experienced involuntary migration and drastic sociocultural change several times in the recent century. During the Japanese colonial period (1895- 1945), the government created “imperial subjects assimilated into the Japanese national polity” (Ching, 2001, p. 137) through compulsory education in Japanese. Growing up bilingual (i.e. acquiring Truku and

learning Japanese) therefore became a common childhood memory among the Truku great grandparents aged around 80. After the Second World War, the KMT Party from China replaced the Japanese regime and formed the new colonial government “the Republic of China.” This time, in order to resuscitate traces of Japanese and other vernacular cultural influence, a rigid Mandarin-Chinese-only language policy, was imposed on all students in school (Friedman, 2010; Chun, 1994). A 60-year-old grandfather shared, “At home our parents spoke both Japanese and Truku. In school, if I spoke in Truku, we would be shamed to wear two wooden plates ‘SPEAK THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE’ in the front and on the back,” an experience that resonated with all the people of his generation (personal communication, April 4, 2012).

Additionally, since the national modernization project began in 1960s, many Truku young men have been forced to shift away from a mountain-land-based way of living to one that depends highly on the market and money. The drastic change of cultural practices and decades-long Chinese-dominant education has further resulted in changes to child socialization practices (Yang, 2001) and limited the traditional domains of use for the Truku language. One Truku elder’s words of wisdom vividly explain the current situation of language endangerment: “Our language is like a child beaten by two adults” (personal communication, June 17, 2012). Indeed, after more than 100 hundred years of two colonial regimes, the Indigenous people have not been given sufficient cultural space to practice, experience, and/or develop their cultural knowledge from their ancestors.

As a non-Truku scholar accepted by the some Truku elders as “our Truku daughter” (太魯閣的女兒) (field notes, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012), I have been drawn to Truku language education through my genuine friendship with some of the villagers and

children in Qowgan Village, an administrative unit composed of several relocated Truku clans from the past. In 2012, the Genographic Legacy Fund granted the villagers the financial resources that would allow villagers to establish a community-based Truku language classroom for the children. The project features the establishment of a free Truku language program for children on Saturdays. Up to the present, there are around 20 children attending the program regularly. With my close friendship with the project manager (a local Truku scholar in linguistics) and academic interests in community activism, since February 2012, I have been involved in this local endeavor as an engaged ethnographer (Low & Merry, 2010), and continue to facilitate the reflective space for the project by bringing in ethnographic findings to dialogue with the team. In the process, one of the major challenges encountered by the project team was children's lack of motivation in learning Truku. The present paper therefore evolved in response to the immediate local demand for understanding children's theory of language and learning to improve the pedagogical practice.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Sociocultural Approaches to Learning**

The present study draws on Wenger's social theory of learning to conceptualize the dynamics of learning as communities of practice (CofP). According to Wenger (1998), people are always in "a nexus of multimembership" (p. 159-160), that is, engaged in multiple communities; subsequently, members may deal with conflicting forms of identities or individuality as defined by different communities. A community of practice (CofP) therefore cannot be designed; instead, it slowly emerges with sustained

interpersonal engagement and substantial negotiation of meanings. With conflicts being inevitable, what makes a community of practice possible, Wenger argues, partly lies in the development of mutual engagement through participation. “In this experience of mutuality, participation is a source of identity. By recognizing the mutuality of our participation, we become each other” (Wenger, 1998, p. 56). Thus, participation, broader than engagement, suggests both action and connection among community members. It (re)shapes not only the praxis but also one’s identity by creating a space for collective belonging.

In CofP, “mutuality” is used as an alternative concept to “agency.” Similarly, other socioculturally approaches to learning conceive agency as “socially distributed or shared) (Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993, p. 352) or as “a relational construct, a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large” (Lantolf & Throne, 2006, p. 239). Adopting a sociocultural approach to agency, the present study broadly defines agency as a relational construct, a network of relationships that is constantly negotiated among the members in the communities of practice.

Nevertheless, although Wenger’s social theory of learning reminds educators to acknowledge learners’ dynamic identification and negotiation of meanings in CofP, its analytical framework has been critiqued for overlooking the micro-aspects of discourse and power in social interactions (Barton & Tusting, 2005). Additionally, it does not necessarily address the specific context of language learning. I therefore review and draw on two other bodies of literature in the following to foreground the construct of “identity”

and “language ideologies” in the communities of practice of language learners and educators.

### **Language and Identity**

Building on feminist poststructuralist Weedon’s (1987) concept of subjectivity or social identity to understand the adult immigrants’ experiences in Canada, Norton (1995, 2000) conceptualizes identity as occupying multiple, contradictory, and changing subject positions to discourses in a variety of sites. Seeing language as a site of identity struggle and reconstruction, she argues that one’s motivation to language learning is “not a fixed personality trait but must be understood with reference to social relations of power that create the possibilities for language learners to speak” (1995, p. 26).

Compatible with Wenger’s CofP, Norton’s theory of social identity emphasizes the diverse subject positions or multiple identities that socioculturally mediate one’s motivation to learn. Nevertheless, agency from this theoretical lens is constructed on an individual basis and viewed as the human capacity to resist imposed subject positions and language ideologies, and/or to create new ways of being as well as new possibilities of future (Yashima, 2012).

Although the present study does not stop at understanding agency as personal identity negotiation and move to reconstruct a mutuality of identity in the communities of practice, the former and the latter do not necessarily differ from each other. In fact, I argue that Norton’s poststructuralist take on identity can enrich the analysis of CofP by problematizing the inherent power relations among the stakeholders, which is less discussed in traditional CofP research (Barton & Tusting, 2005). Furthermore, it highlights the role of language as resources to fulfill one’s identity needs.

## **Language Ideologies**

I also draw on the construct of language ideologies from linguistic anthropology to locate the site of ideological struggle in the communities of practice. Kroskrity (2000) conceptualizes language ideologies as “a cluster of concepts consisting of a number of converging dimensions” (p. 7). First, they are a form of discourse constructed in the interests of particular social groups. They are also best conceived as multiple because different socio-cultural groups (e.g. based on class, gender, generation, etc) may have divergent perspectives about the role of language in their lives. Lastly, they are displayed through diverse local speakers’ varying degrees of ideological awareness and mediate between people’s sociocultural experiences (social structure) and language use (forms of talk). The attention to the heterogeneous and incongruous nature of language ideologies suggests that it can cause symbolic dominance when the dominant group takes their own language ideologies for granted. In the present research context, it has guided the adult educators (including the researcher) to denaturalize the work of power in praxis and recognize the incongruity of language ideologies between the children and some adult educators.

Bringing together and building on the theories, I intend to locate the space of identity works and language ideological struggle in pedagogical praxis. Furthermore, there is a conscientious attempt from the researcher to learn from and establish mutuality with the children in order to make the communities of practice possible. The process of action and reflection itself is seen as an attempt of collective agency.



## **The Praxis**

In the following, I reflect on how children's theories of language and learning have unpacked and engaged adults' own in changing pedagogical contexts. I first drew on my ethnographic data (from observation field notes, survey, informal discussions with children and their parents, and bi-weekly home visits) to understand children's language ideologies. The reflective process further inspired the exploratory design of a five-week curriculum titled "Caring for the Elderly," in which Truku language learning was combined with children's visits to the elderly. I then revisited this process by transcribing the video recordings of the implementation and closely examining to the verbal turn-taking as well as the nonverbal aspects of the interaction. In analyzing "identity, I consistently pursued the social constructionist underpinnings of the study and examined how children positioned themselves and were positioned by the adults and their peers in interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The analytical process revealed how the dynamics of children's identity construction had challenged adult educators' language ideologies and reshaped the communities of practice.

It is important to note that, ideally, the research design should have resonated with Hymes' "ethnographic monitoring" in which ethnographical research and teaching practices inform each other in an iterative process (Hymes, 1980; Van der Aa & Blommaert, 2011). Nevertheless, in reality, the emotional labor and intellectual demands of functioning as both a practitioner and a researcher often left me with little time to generate rigorous analysis and facilitate collective reflection at the time of curriculum implementation. The theoretical discussion in the later part of the article serves more as personal hindsight for future reference.

## Children's Theory of Language

Although at school children have been told that “if you don't know to speak Truku, you are not Truku” (field notes, Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012), the ideological connection between language and ethnic identity (Field & Kroskrity, 2009) has not proven to be effective in creating an immediate context of learning to engage the children. Part of the reason is because the children in the village are predominantly Truku and they do not have frequent contact with other ethnic and racial groups until middle school. Adults' discourse regarding the language-and-ethnicity connection remains abstract from children's point of view. As a result, in the beginning two months of the language program, we as adult educators were constantly challenged by how to actively engage children until one day when three children's (Sukin, Tapang, Yuyuh) improvised performance shed light on our understanding of their theory of language:

*In late afternoon, two third-graders, Sukin (pseudonym) and her cousin Tapang (pseudonym) dropped by my place, still with their school bags. “Tapang and I came to see ‘Bubu’ (Truku meaning: mother).” They like to call their 86-year-old great grandmother “Bubu” as they have heard their own grandpa call Great Grandma “Bubu” for years. After greeting the great grandma in Chinese “Bubu we came to see you,” they started giggling amongst themselves in the hallway. I asked if they would like to speak in Truku to “Bubu.” They responded with interest and went back to Great Grandma's bedroom. Tapang started with a greeting in Truku “Embiyax su hug? (How are you?)” Great Grandma smiled and replied “Embiyax ku! (I am fine!)” Then the conversation started to fade into awkward silence and Tapang looked back at me with uncertainty. Soon Tapang's older sibling Yuyuh came and now there were three of them. Sukin*

initiated, “Why don’t we sing for Bubu?” Having learned many Truku traditional songs in the past two months, they devised among themselves what songs to sing as I observed from the background. Right before they presented the first song, Yuyuh rushed to me and asked, “Teacher, what should we say? I don’t know how to speak in Truku.” I told her they could start with the sentence “Mha nami mgrig (we’re going to dance).” She repeated the sentence several times with me before returning back to the group. I was quite surprised as she had not been such an active learner of Truku earlier in class. During their performance, Great Grandma laughed a lot, clapping her hands and moving her toes along with the melody. The children ended their performance with a bow, saying “Mhuway su balay” (thank you very much). Then they sat bouncing on the edge of her bed giggling. Yuyuh tenderly held and shook Great Grandma’s right hand and called “Bubu Bubu Bubu” rhythmically. Great Grandma asked where they were going next and asked if they could stay a bit longer. Repeatedly she asked in Truku, “Iyah tuhuy duri ha!” (Come back again, all right?) Before departure, Yuyuh turned to Great Grandma, whispered in her ear in Chinese “Bubu, I want to tell you a secret,” and unexpectedly gave her a kiss on the cheek. Great Grandma chuckled lightly. I praised the children and asked what brought them here today. Yuyuh said to me, “Because Bubu asked us to come visit her. We promised her. Let us take care of it. We are the police. We are the detectives!” I asked if they would like to form a team to visit the elderly. They cheerfully agreed and said they would start recruiting their friends at school the next day.

(expanded notes, Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012)

In this vignette, the three children Sukin, Tapang, and Yuyuh demonstrated the kind of motivation to learn and use Truku that was not shown in community class: They

actively asked questions about the Truku language and voluntarily organized their Truku song performance. They opportunistically used their body language (e.g. holding hands, kissing, sitting close by) to complement their limited Truku and bring communication alive. As children, they had not been unaware of Great Grandma's loneliness and deteriorating health. In adopting the subject position of being an affectionate, faithfully protective great grandchild in relation to their "bubu," children naturally found it worthy to speak in Truku. I argue that these children's motivation to learn Truku intersects with their Grandma's need and is closely connected to the ongoing production of their social identity as loving and caring grandchildren. Yuyuh's final account—"let us take care of it"—suggests her willingness to be responsible for Great Grandma's well-being. The metaphorical self-positioning of "being the police and detectives," which connotes a protective and competent persona in the local context, suggests that this subject position—as caring grandchildren—is relatively more empowering.

The next day, without being reminded or asked by any adults, the three children voluntarily invited three other playmates to join the team and in another afternoon they completed their visits to four elderly homes that they selected themselves. During these visits, Yuyuh, the oldest child of all, would initiate to discuss with the others what songs and dance they wanted to perform. The songs and dances had been taught to them in the community language program. Children preferred the songs which had a cheerful musical rhythm (e.g. "*Mqaras Ku Bi Yaku.*" *I Am Very Happy*; *Tndahu Hariruya.*" *Praise God*), and the songs which they had memorized and could sing fluently (e.g. "*Wow Pnkari Ta Truku Hug?*" *Wow Let's Speak in Truku*). These songs seemed interesting to them because they were fun ("很好玩"), expressed a positive ambience, and brought joy to the

audience. One child even asked me to review one Truku song with her because she “wanted to be able to sing it for her grandma and wished her good health” (personal communication, Sept. 6, 2012).

Holland et al. (2001) note that in locating spaces of agency, we should pay attention to improvisations that “piece together existing cultural resources opportunistically to address present conditions and problems” (p. 276-277). From a language ideological approach, I argue that to the children, the Truku language, instead of being an autonomous system of linguistic competence, is more of relationship-oriented knowledge that constructs their relational ways of being with their Truku-dominant grandparents. These Children’s linguistic improvisations also suggest that it is not so much *being Truku* (indigeniety) as *being loving grandchildren* that is made relevant in these moment-by-moment interactions.

Field and Kroskrity (2009) contend that “people are likely to adopt, maintain, or modify language ideologies that reflect their sociocultural perspective and rational views from that vantage point” (p. 20). Children’s relationship-oriented language ideology and natural bond with the elders here needs to be understood in the larger family and sociocultural context of the village where the majority of the children have the grandparents living together with their families or close by. One may argue that the grandparents offer opportunities to immerse the children in Truku; however, asking Truku-dominant grandparents to play an active role in socializing the children is too difficult a task. First, formal education has replaced traditional Truku child socialization practices (i.e. working with the adults outdoors) and occupies more than two-thirds of children’s waking time. Secondly, the grandparents are oftentimes physically weak and

not as mobile as the children. From my ethnographic observations, I have noticed that when cross-generational communication is not contextualized in their daily routines, communication oftentimes breaks down and results in children's "confusion" and "embarrassment" (personal communication, Sept. 14, 2013).

To validate my observation of children's language practices and ideologies, I did a follow-up survey with the second-to-fifth graders (N=75) in the village elementary school. More than half of the children expressed that they were "often" or "sometimes" unable to comprehend when adults speak in Truku at home. When asked if they liked learning Truku, all the children answered "very much," and more than half of the children in Grade 3, 4, 5, and 6 linked their motivation to their aspiration to be able to communicate with the grandparents and/or other adult figures (e.g. "because I want to understand what Grandma said," "because I want to know how to respond when elders talk to me," "because I can talk to Grandma and Dad," "because I can communicate with Grandma and Grandpa," etc). With my increasing understanding of the home language dynamics and children's relational take on language, I shared my ethnographic findings with the other adult villagers in the curriculum meeting for community language class. The proposed idea of combining Truku language learning with visits to the elderly was well received. We started designing and implementing a five-week curriculum in which children would learn the social language needed on their planned visits to the elders.

### **"Caring for the Elderly" in Practice**

In the newly designed curriculum "Caring for the Elderly," each session of class time was divided into four parts: (1) Learning a new song or a prayer (whole class) (2) Rehearsal in small groups (3) Actual visit to an elder's home (still in small groups) (4)

Whole-class reflection on that day's visit. Even though the children's improvisation inspired us to highlight the connection between language and relationship-building, in retrospect, we as adult educators had remained enclosed in the metaphor of language acquisition or acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989) and considered generational ties as a way to motivate children rather than an end to itself. For example, when teaching children a new song, we started from assuming language learning as acquisition of in-context performance competence through repeated practice. We took children to visit the elderly partly because we considered language learning as (1) proficiency achieved through practices in meaningful contexts and (2) transmission from competent learners to novices.

The curriculum spanned 5 consecutive weekends (3 hours per week), involving 17 children and 11 elders (aged between 65 and 89) in total. Children were taught to initiate a semi-structured interaction with the elderly, accompanied by four adult teachers (Kimay, Ribih, Gingay, and the researcher) who served as facilitators and guides. The interaction began with a greeting in Truku, followed by each child's self-introduction and group performance of Truku songs, and concluded with a prayer of blessing for the elder's good health. We borrowed one of the children's creative expression—"We are the angels for Grandma" ("母語大使的使就是天使"), and discursively positioned all the children as "angels of light" ("光明的天使") for the elders we visited. Interaction between the children and the elder in Truku was semi-structured. The degree of interactivens and improvisation varied partly depending on the elder's response. For example, some elderly women we visited were extremely friendly, initiated holding children's hands, and responded positively to children's self-introduction by nodding,

smiling, calling the children by their names. As children were positioned by an elder as being very likeable, more children would willingly and joyfully linger around as well. Some children who looked shy in normal class started to speak loudly enough to be heard. In a few cases where some of the children were already acquainted with the elder we visited, they would comfortably sit down by the elder's side, initiate "non-scripted" interaction, and possibly ask questions in Chinese. For instance, in the following excerpt, a group of children and one adult facilitator Kimay surrounded Grandma Lituk. Giku, a fourth-grader, asked what Grandma meant by saying "Kmbiyax smluhay." Code-switching between Chinese and the Truku language occurred, the children negotiating meanings with and learning Truku from the adults. (Transcription conventions: *italics* signal speech in Truku and is spelled using the local writing system; pictorial characters 中文 indicate Chinese speech; (parentheses) contain descriptions of non-verbal activity and English translations.)

1 Grandma Lituk: *Kmbiyax smluhay*. ("Learn diligently!")

2 Child Giku: 他說什麼? (turning to the teacher Kimay, "What did she say?")

3 Teacher Kimay: *Kmbiyax smluhay*. ("Learn diligently!")

4 Child Rabay: (looking at the ceiling, trying to think)

5 Child Mijang: *Smluhay* ("learn")

6 Teacher Kimay: *Smluhay* 這個字是什麼("What does the word 'smluhay' mean?")

7 Child Mijang: 學 ("learn")

8 Child Giku: 要好好學習? ("Learn diligently?")



9 Teacher Kimay: 嘿!要好好學習 *Kari Lituk* (“Yes, learn diligently - that is Grandma’s message.)

In line 6, Kimay did not immediately take the role of the teacher or the knowledge-giver, but built on Mijang’s turn and brought the question back to the children. The question then led to an active co-construction of meaning from the group. Quite different from our earlier teacher-directed learning in class, in such pedagogical practices it is the children’s social identity as *angels for the grandma* that takes precedence, and one’s identity as a Truku learner emerges out of one’s genuine need for communication. This analysis can be supported by children’s collective reflections in which they tended to recall the experience using emotional expressions to foreground their connection with the elderly: “*When we danced and prayed, we could see the elder’s smiling face.*” “*I feel touched when seeing the elder’s face.*” “*It’s great we can sing for her.*” “*I could see the elder’s smiling face.*” Children’s accounts again suggest their implicit ideology of language as relationship, which offers children a more powerful subject position because they are able to make a positive impact on the elderly.

Additionally, in successful group-visit contexts, the metaphor of learning as participation (Sfard, 2005; Wenger, 1998) is reflected in children’s cooperative peer dynamics and mediates children’s opportunities to learn. Children who were still hesitant to speak up would listen to their peers many times until they were ready to initiate their own turn. Children who were not familiar with the lyrics would still dance along. Cooperative peer dynamics can potentially expand the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) for all the children as it allowed children of various competency levels to participate in the communicative event. In the later stage of the curriculum, we

noticed that some children gradually shared the role of a facilitator by reminding their peers to cooperate (“*Hurry up! We’re going to start!*” “*It’s your turn to introduce yourself!*” “*Come, Tapang, it’s your turn!*” “*Don’t climb to Grandma’s bed. Come down!*”) or carrying on the agenda (“*We haven’t prayed!*” “*Let’s sing the song again!*”). Subsequently, the accompanying teacher could really take a step back, taking on the role of a teacher only when needed or requested.

I argue that over time children and adult educators gradually reached mutual engagement in the community of practice and children started to develop “relations of mutual accountability” with adult educators (Wenger, 1998, p. 81). That is, over time, children and adults came to agree on “what is important and why it is important, what to do and not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore, what to talk about and what to leave unsaid...” (p. 81). Truku language education in the communities of the practice becomes a bi-directional, co-constructive process between adults and children.

### **Conflicts**

What about the not-so-successful visits? Rather than glossing over the process of the curriculum implementation, I highlight the challenges involved when teachers want to enhance “the range of identities available to the [their] students” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 429). In the following analysis, I pay attention to moments of resistance and frustration from children when communication broke down and conflicts of interests arose in group dynamics. Below is an instance in which we visited an 87-year-old elder, who used to be a teacher of the Truku language himself. Prior to the excerpt, the children greeted the elder, and the adult facilitator Ribih invited the children to start their self-introductions.

Four children actively raised their hands, including the first-grader Kumu who had progressed in speaking in the preceding weeks.

(Three children, Yabung, Yudaw, Kumu, and two adult teachers/facilitators, Amay and Ribih surrounded the elder.)

1 Child Yabung: *Yaku o Yabung ka hangan mu. Payi mu o Tumi. Pnaah ku alang Gowgan.* (“My name is Yabung. My grandmother is Tumi. I am from Qowgan Village.”)

2 Teacher Ribih: *O Tayal suyang!* (“Oh how great!”)

3 Elder: *Inu?* (“Where?”)

4 Child Yabung: *Gowgan.* (“Qowgan!”)

5 Elder: *Pnaah su alang Qowgan. Q q q q q Qowgan.* (“You are from Qowgan Village. Q q q q q Qowgan.”)

6 (Kumu looked at Yabung and turned to the other teacher Amay. Yudaw stared at the elder intently. Yabung hunched her back and withdrew 2 steps.)

7 Teacher Ribih: (laughing and turning to Yabung) *Iq, ksa.* (“say yes.”)

8 Child Yabung: (covering her mouth and smiling with embarrassment)

9 (Kumu withdrew two steps and left the scene.)

In line 3, instead of responding to the girl’s name identity and calling her “Yabung,” the elder asked Yabung again where she was from. In line 5, the elder corrected Yabung’s pronunciation of the village name, emphasizing it was a uvular plosive “q” rather than a velar plosive “g.” The elder’s ideology of linguistic purism or perfectionism inevitably positioned Yabung as an incompetent learner or speaker of the Truku language. In line 7 the teacher Ribih tried to mitigate the tension by helping Yabung to respond

appropriately. Yabung's body language (e.g. hunching her back, covering her mouth in embarrassment) signaled her withdrawal.

The video camera also captured the first-grader Kumu immediately sneaking out of the scene. Later on Kumu was called back to introduce herself and she never made it loud enough to be heard even though she was able to do so in some other elders' homes. In other similar contexts where children were restrictively positioned as learners whose pronunciation needed to be fixed, or when the communicative event was co-constructed more like a language proficiency test, some children resisted speaking up and some children just went through the agenda quickly without any improvisation. Children's changing language performance and motivation across contexts highlight the interrelationships of identity needs, language ideologies, and children's motivation to participate. Rather than assuming children can immediately take on the role of caring grandchildren, the analysis illuminates that children have been assigned dual subject positions by adults (e.g. as an angel for grandmother, as a learner) in the task and that their desired social identity may not be made relevant all the time. Kumu's resistance to speak, therefore, can be positively reinterpreted as her passive renegotiation of the meanings of the activity rather than as incompetent or merely shy.

### **Peer Dynamics**

The complex relationship between identity and learning is also played out in peer dynamics. Because quite a few elders in the village highly approved of the curriculum, they started sending their grandchildren to the program. The new students' legitimacy to participate was not taken for granted but needed to be negotiated (Wenger, 1998), as they were not necessarily welcomed by the existing members in the program.

At one time, I had hoped the more competent, experienced student members could mentor the newcomers and therefore assigned them to be leaders of different groups. There was an air of dissatisfaction among the old members because they did not want to be separated from their original clique. My decision was rationalized under the metaphor of language transmission, whereas the children's theory of learning was more about participation through affinity to their bounded community. Another instance of negotiation of meaning in communities of practice is that, in my retrospective examination of the video recording, I was surprised to notice constant, implicit exclusion of a new first-grade member, Ikay, from participation by some older members. For example, she was constantly excluded from the circle during the group performance. When she finally got the chance to cut in, the boy next to her refused to hold her hand. Such implicit bullying occurred a few times and resulted in Ikay's rage of anger, which subsequently disrupted the class order. Although none of the adult teachers was aware of the whole picture at that moment, thankfully it was the positive response from the 89-year-old elder we visited that opened the door for Ikay to participate. Through conducting this analysis, I have also come to realize that if we, as adults, continue to consider language learning as a politically neutral process of knowledge transmission, we could misinterpret Ikay's class performance as lack of attention or interest. Wenger's metaphor of learning as participation in communities of practice inspires an alternative reading of the class disturbance.

Reflecting on the curriculum design, I realized that our original idea of "engaging children's social identity as caring children for the elderly" overlooks the mediating role of peer dynamics in communities of practice. In these above-mentioned

incidents, I, as a language revitalization activist and an educator, unconsciously confined my perspective to the idea of language transmission and acquisition, using language proficiency as a defining criterion to restructure class dynamics. In contrast, for children, it's more about being around their good friends than about transmitting their knowledge to new members. Drawing on Wenger's communities of practice to make sense of the mismatches of language learning ideologies, I have come to better empathize with children's emotional and identity needs in learning, and appreciate their implicit ideology of language as relationship, which has been applied both to family relations and friendship. Their stories piece together a more complex picture of motivation and learning, which is more like a rubber sheet that is constantly being stretched and shaped by pulling from existing social relationships, situated identity construction, and opportunities to participate.

### **Discussion**

By focusing on an empirical, praxis-oriented case from one of the Truku villages in Taiwan, I present how children's multiple identity positions and language performances work to mutually develop one another with implications for praxis. Specifically, children's dominant social identities of being members of existing social networks (e.g. being a grandchild, being a friend) mediate their own and their peers' learning processes. The focus on the identity label "Indigenous" to build unity and support for Indigenous revitalization in the previous literature may overlook the need to explore how other identities are made relevant in children's learning trajectories. The complex language-identity-motivation nexus from children's situated performance and

participation further humbles me to recognize the limitation of our academic language ideologies of “acquisition” and “transmission.” Children’s motivation to learn Truku also needs to be understood as a process dynamically mediated by their existing and emerging social relationships with others.

How does this pedagogical experience contribute to our understanding of agency?

I argue that considering agency as resistance to dominant language ideologies through community-based language revitalization does not fully capture the dynamism of praxis. Our project team has experienced numerous challenges in reconstructing language practices from the bottom up where different stakeholders’ theories of language and learning diverge on both conscious and unconscious levels. Aligning with Wenger’s emphasis on the importance of “mutual engagement” and “negotiation of meanings” in the CofP, I argue that agency from minority language activists or educators’ perspectives can be understood as a conscientious attempt to relate oneself to students and their communities, to address their needs and interests, and to build mutuality of seeing, learning, and being. Additionally, instead of seeing mutual engagement as the precondition to “create relationships among people” in the CofP (Wenger, 1998, p. 76), these Truku children’s stories inspire us to value the relationships that preexist in the village. For future community-based language revitalization initiatives, the present study suggests the potential of a relationship-oriented framework— one that values and incorporates existing social relationships in praxis, and one that requires the dominant group (e.g. adults) to humbly recognize the work of power in social relations and develop a trustable, reflective, nondiscriminatory bond with the non-dominant group (e.g. children) before rushing to impose agendas. As community language revitalization can be a very

emotional struggle, especially when we deal with frustrations resulting from conflicting local perspectives, it is as caring grandchildren that children become our teachers. It is as good friends that children become good teammates. It is as understanding adults that we become learners and educators. It is from focusing on immediate identity needs that we understand the workings of language ideologies. It is the bond of love— the valuing of relationship and people over ideas— that makes genuine listening and dialogue possible.

Norton and Toohey (2011) note that, “an understanding of identity and SLA processes must be enriched by research conducted in postcolonial and indigenous sites” (p. 435). Situated in an Indigenous community in Taiwan, the present pedagogical experience illuminates an expansive understanding of Norton’s social identity theory of language as I rethink the appropriateness of the pervasiveness of the economic metaphors in our time, for example, “capital” and “investment” (Bourdieu, 1977; Norton Peirce, 1995). In contemporary society, when language is increasingly commodified (Heller, 2010), the capital of Indigenous language can hardly survive if we continue to theorize the value of language using the economic metaphor. The children’s genuine improvisation inspires us to highlight the *heart* to speak— viewing language as a way to reconnect, to rebuild and enrich relationships, to value family and lives regardless of their market capitals. When we start to put human relationships at the center of our endeavors, we are also learning to redefine success. We see success when a young Truku lady told us, “I was touched to see when children pray for my grandmother. I had assumed you guys only focused on the Truku language.” We see success when a female elder came to tell us, “My granddaughter initiated to pray for me in Truku a few days ago when seeing me ill in bed.” We see success when children would voluntarily perform traditional songs and



dances for the elderly in their neighborhood at sunset. Children's various forms of improvisations in the following months continue to offer us glimpses of hope on this journey, where we as adults are learning to celebrate the moments of love—a journey which is more than revitalization of the language, but the restoration of humanity as we rethink what gives life to languages.

### **Conclusion**

The present study brings together ethnographic work and an innovative pedagogical experience to reflect on the possibility of agency in community-based Indigenous education. I have necessarily strived for a middle ground along the dimension of theory, on the one hand, and praxis, on the other. The study makes a strong case for extending the relevance of linguistic anthropological research to practical activities and advances the theoretical tradition of second language studies by bringing in an indigenous, postcolonial context in Asia. It is my sincere hope that the present study encourages researchers to extend this type of work and continue to listen to the hearts of our children that shines glimpses of hope and light in our time.

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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

*“My name is Yudaw Pisaw and I am 87 years old. I am going to talk about the history of Truku language. Long time ago, older Truku has been speaking Truku. However, as the Japanese colonized Taiwan, Truku people were forbidden to speak Truku by the Japanese colonizers. Therefore, people needed to obey and learn to speak Japanese. Afterward, Chinese people replaced Japanese and colonized Taiwan again. Likewise, as what the Japanese had done to Truku people, the Chinese did not allow the Truku to speak their parental language; even children were beaten if speaking in Truku. This is just like two big adults hitting a small little child. Both the Japanese and the Chinese forbade people to speak Truku. Nowadays, it seems the Truku language has been buried in the tomb and this saddens my heart very much now.”<sup>3</sup>*

– From Yudaw Pisaw in our documentary “Pnkari ta Truku hug?”

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<sup>3</sup> Original text: *Yaku o Yudaw Pisaw ka hangan mu. 87 ka hangkawasan mu. Kari rngaw mu quri endan kari Truku. Suxal balay han o saw ka rudan o mngaw kari Truku han. Miyah ka Nihon kmrawa Taiwan do, kiya do wada mdaqal balay rmngaw kari Truku ka Nihon. Kiya do seediq Truku siida do wada empahang ni smluhay kari Nihon. Bukuy nahey duri, Cikoku duri. Paah 大陸 miyah kmrawa Taiwan duri o, ida muru endaan Nihon. Mdaqal bi duri ni ini tuwa mpprngaw kari Truku duri. Bitqa laqi paqun dha. Mtka saw nii ka endaan dha rudan ka smipaq laqi. Ini suwa pngaw kari Truku. Sayang ka kari Truku do mtka su ga rbngun pqrus. Kiya do ungat ka kari Truku. Kika naqih bi kuxul mu sayang.*

*“This generation- if we don’t work on it (language revitalization) this year, it’s possible that we will never be able to do it next time. There will be no more opportunities- no more opportunities. Perhaps it is a God-given opportunity this time. We are the blessed generation. We need to work on it very hard. But you have to- we have to work on it with strenuous efforts. No matter what- we need to persevere with tears. Is everyone with me?<sup>4</sup>”*

– From Mimi Rikit in our documentary “Pnkari ta Truku hug?”

The vision of revitalizing the language has been strenuously pursued with the participation and contribution of many villagers and children, without which the dissertation would not have been possible. It is ethically necessary that I reflect on the work with the fact that I am writing for future generations of Truku people. Therefore, in the conclusion chapter, I will highlight my Truku friends’ goals, aspirations, and contributions and situate their voices at the forefront of my reflection. In the following, I will first review the key points from the previous chapters, illustrating how they resonate with people’s voices and shed light on the original research questions. I will then move on to discuss the practical and theoretical implications for future Indigenous language education policies and research. Finally, I will provide suggestions for future research as I continue this collective struggle with my Truku friends.

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<sup>4</sup>Original text: 這一代... 今年不做, 可能下次永遠沒辦法做, 永遠沒有機會了, 沒有機會了, 可能這一次是我們上帝允許我們, 在這一代我們是很幸福, 我們要很努力去做, 可是你要- 我們要努力的做, 不管- 含著眼淚的做下去, 好不好?



## Review of Findings

In this dissertation, I have conceptualized research as transformative social practice (Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993) and made use of research as an opportunity to expand the reflective space of the Truku language revitalization efforts in Qowgan Village in eastern Taiwan. Aligning with the scholarship of language ideologies, language and identity, and critical Indigenous pedagogy, from the outset I developed three research questions to guide the praxis:

1. What is the nature of “dialogue,” or collaboration, in transformative social practice?
2. What, and how, can Truku epistemology or ways of knowing inform and guide the local efforts?
3. How can the local experiences re-theorize our understanding of identity in language revitalization praxis?

Nevertheless, in the actual research process, I have become so drawn to the process as an ethnographic activist that I spent more time responding to the immediate concern and needs raised by the participants than carrying out “my original plan.” In other words, fulfilling the collaborative spirit of the design, I have consciously prioritized the voices of the villagers and placed them at the center of the inquiry. The development of the project and three manuscripts (Chapter 2-4) with the villagers is, therefore, a relatively unexpected move. Surprisingly, as I let go of my original plan and dissertation questions and focus on the questions of the group, the manuscripts naturally came together, addressing the original research questions on a multifaceted, perhaps more in-depth, level.

## Chapter 2

*“I am different from other parents. One needs to learn every language and cannot just learn the mother tongue. Afterall, Truku people are the minority. It is not possible for us to become the dominant group.”*

– Cimon Watan, April 15, 2012

*“We act normally when it comes to the Truku language. This is the point. Act normally and speak the national language. But then- still- (we) feel disappointed inside.”*

– XiaoHwei Buya, November 11, 2012

*“Truku language is not very important to children in our time. Instead, we should try to go internationall.”*

– Teacher in the local elementary school, April 21, 2012

*“We can’t forget our mother tongue. We cannot forget our roots. We must pass down our language.”*

– Mijan Taru, October 12, 2012

*“Our national development never takes into consideration the value of Indigenous cultures. Our culture is always our own and cannot be associated with civilization. It cannot be seen as modern. Neither does it lead to the path of success. Although we promote our mother tongue, there are no follow-up incentives. Whether to value Truku becomes a difficult choice.”*

– Nobu Kumus, April 5, 2012

In Chapter 2, reflecting on the experience of collaborating with the Truku villagers, I highlight the challenge of collective efforts in an increasingly heterogeneous “community” in contemporary Taiwan. Villagers, with their diverse lived experiences and forms of adjustment to modern discourse, do not necessarily share the same concerns and aspirations for children’s Truku language learning. Some villagers’ ambivalent attitude towards Truku language maintenance, particularly among the younger generation of parents, resonates with Ahearn’s caution against the *romance of resistance*: “There is no such thing as pure resistance; motivations are always complex and contradictory” (Ahearn, 2001, p. 116). Likewise, in reality, the practice and processes of collaboration are far more complicated than just positioning villagers as “empowered” collaborators and me as a participant researcher.

(Talking to Bowtung) “*After she (i.e. Man-Chiu) learns our language and cultures, she can earn her degree and teach in university.*” – Truku (anonymous), March 11, 2012

“*Some villagers think that you are taking advantage of me. But I know I can trust you. Yet, I do not want to do this with you if your commitment is short-term. Will you be gone the next day?*” – Bowtung Yudaw, May 10, 2012

“*A lot of researchers have come to our village, take the language (“mangal kari”), do the research, and complete their PhD degree. I appreciate that you live with us and learn our ways by heart.*” – Hani Yudaw, June 29, 2012

As I describe the challenge of acting collectively, I also highlight the essential, critical factor in bringing people together: relationship-building. Some Truku villagers have experienced or witnessed how a few former researchers benefit from their own research, yet nothing comes back to the community (Ouimette, 2014). Also, some villagers have developed an intuitive distrust in the racially dominant group (i.e. Han Chinese) because their ancestors have been taken advantage of economically and politically. Against this historical backdrop, the adult villagers were rather unlikely to work with me until I took the time to nurture a trustful, kinship-like relationship. My Truku mentor Bowtung *payi*'s concern about the length of my commitment further suggests that the relationship comes with ethical responsibility in the Truku context. The attention to relationship and commitment here resonates well with Brayboy et al.'s (2012) emphasis on "accountability" in Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies (CIRM). Researchers should be held accountable to the community, asking whether we have fulfilled the relationships with the world around us, and our obligations in the relationships (also see Brayboy & McCarty, 2010).

Complicating the nature of a collaborative epistemological stance, methodologically, Chapter 2 responds to the possibility of dialogue (research question 1) by suggesting the imperative to learn about and acknowledge local politics and human relationships in praxis. Additionally, it argues that what makes dialogue possible is not only our willingness to understand each other's views of the world, but also our commitment to taking responsibility to enter each other's world. Concerning the question of Indigenous epistemology (research question 2), the villagers' cultural logic of relationship and long-term commitment resonate with the notion of

*Whakawhanaungatanga*, a Kaupapa Maori research approach from New Zealand (Bishop, 2005, Hill & May, 2013). In Maori words, “*Whakawhanaungatanga* is the process of establishing *whanau* (extended family) relationships” (p. 118). Applied to research, it suggests that establishing a research group is like forming an extended family, closely linked to “a series of rights, responsibilities, commitments, obligations, and supports that are fundamental to the collectivity” (p. 199). In a similar vein, Bowtung *payi* consistently advises that we go beyond a work relationship and spend time together as if a family instead (“要培養感情”). In the process of entering each other’s life, the concerns, interests, and agendas of the villagers (e.g. Bowtung) gradually become mine, and vice versa; incorporating Truku epistemology (research question 2) into the project becomes a natural outcome.

In response to the question about identity (research question 3), a relational epistemology further suggests a fundamental difference in the way we understand a researcher’s identity. As Bishop disrupts the traditional separation of the knower and the known and advocates for “a participatory mode of consciousness” among the stakeholders (p. 118), I add that it is by becoming true friends and family that we become ethically engaged researchers in critical scholarship. That is, I am able to ask culturally meaningful questions and humanize the research profession (Paris & Winn, 2012) only when I live responsibly *with* the people in *our* world.

### **Chapter 3**

*“We changed the orthography from the Chinese phonetic symbols to the Romanized ones because young peoplen disliked the Chinse phonetic symbols. It looked childish to*

*them. But for the elders, they struggled to adapt themselves to the new system. They were opposed to it.”*

– Yudaw Pisaw, June 16, 2012

*“In the past our parents didn’t teach children Truku by writing. They spoke it to us.”*

– Awang Rihang, September 14, 2012

*“My grandma doesn’t know /a/ /b/ /c/ in Truku. She asked me to teach her the Truku alphabet. I told her “a” is “/a/.”*

– Ciwang Ajie, January 18, 2014

In Chapter 3, I continue to go beyond the taken-for-granted notions of bounded, monolithic community structures. Together with Bowtung *payi*, I employ the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) to investigate other critical mediating practices between individuals and larger communal structures that constrain opportunities for collective efforts. With its attention to the role of artifacts in an activity system, CHAT helps us problematize the use of orthographic conventions (i.e. the Romanized alphabet) in language revitalization. For some elders who are fluent speakers of the Truku language, the normalized practices of the new Truku reading/ writing system may be unfamiliar to them. In some households, children are the ones who teach their caretakers how to “read” in Truku as school-based Truku language instruction at school (1 hr/ wk) is mainly about reading aloud in Truku. Privileging the use of Truku orthography in language teaching may unwittingly deprive some adults and elders’ opportunities to participate in language revitalization.

*“Can we teach more conversational Truku? I feel the words we taught children, like ‘boar’ [bowyak] or ‘flying squirrel’ [rapit], are rarely used in daily life.”*

– Tumun Kingjiang, August 18, 2012

*“When it comes to hunting, no one is doing hunting now. What we want is modern life. Words related to hunting are rarely used. What we need to pass on are words like ‘refrigerator’ ‘train’, ‘telephone,’ etc. We should emphasize everyday conversations, instead of taking children on a field trip and visiting our ancestors’ homeland.”*

– Truku elder (anonymous), April 26, 2012

*“True education involves doing and working, for example, how to grow sweet potatoes, millets, taro, and other vegetables. Truku education from the elders is a way of life.”*

– Bowtung Yudaw, July 20, 2013

However, as the project team combined more traditional cultural practices with language revitalization, it expanded more traditional villagers’ opportunities to participate yet resulted in disagreement among some at the same time. What it means to “contextualize” language learning diverge can be vastly different when villagers across generations and households do not necessarily share similar contexts of learning and living. Multiple contexts of conquest and adjustments have resulted in multiple cultural journeys. Here CHAT helps community researchers and practitioners reconceptualise the frustrations that accompany the language revitalization efforts as “historically accumulated contradictions” across activity systems.

In fact, CHAT was completely new to me until I actively sought for a systematic and praxis-oriented framework to understand the language revitalization process in early 2013, one year after the project started. CHAT carries the discussion on “dialogue” or “ideological clarification” (research question 1) to the level of *embodied ideological differences* that are often unconscious and invisible to the privileged class. In other words, going beyond the tenet of dialogue, we critically investigate: *Through what means in the material world is dialogue made possible?* The discussion further leads to a respectful understanding of the space of Truku epistemology (research question 2) in praxis. For example, instead of taking Truku orthography for granted, I have grown to better identify, articulate, and appreciate orally dominant Truku speakers’ ecological view of language learning and use (van Lier, 2002).

#### Chapter 4

*“In church, if the pastor preaches in Truku, the young cannot understand it; in Mandarin Chinese, the old cannot understand it either. If both languages are used, it takes more time, yet we cannot separate the congregation either. So far we haven’t come up with a better solution.”*

– Hani, Kumus, April 14, 2012

*“I like Truku language class because I want to learn it well enough to be able to carry a conversation with my grandpa and grandma.”*

– Truku child (anonymous), December 12, 2012



*“I like to learn Truku because in this way I can know how to talk to my family in*

*Truku.”*

– Truku child (anonymous), December 12, 2012

*“For sure I hope they (the grandchildren) know how to communicate with me in Truku. But there is no way- no way - for them to communicate with me in Truku. What should I do?... They get A+ in the Truku language subject at school. Yet at home, they cannot talk with me in Truku. They can only say “I am home” or “I am going to school” in Truku. Truku is very difficult for them to learn.<sup>5</sup>”*

-- Yuki Yudaw, May 20, 2012

Finally, shifting the focus from adult villagers to Truku children, Chapter 4 examines the ways children’s language experiences are constructed in accordance with their home dynamics. As cross-generational parenting is the norm in the village, my ethnographic investigation further illuminates how the Truku language can be either a challenge or opportunity to grandparent-grandchild communication. Furthermore, learning from children’s language ideology of language as relationship, I therefore co-designed the “Care for the Elderly” curriculum with the villagers, combining children’s language learning with elderly home care. The following are voices from some of the children:

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<sup>5</sup>Original text: 當然 希望是他們會母語啊 溝通 好好溝通母語 但是沒有辦法 沒有辦法跟我溝通母語 這怎麼辦呢? 母語一百分 gaku, dhuq sapah o, ini tuwa mprngaw. Wana xnu, “payi, miyah ku da.” Wana haya ka klaun. Mqriqu bi mnsa smluhay 母語.

*“Attending the Truku project is very good because I am starting to understand my grandma’s words better. When I was in kindergarten, I didn’t understand what she said to me. After joining the project, I came to understand it better. I want to say to my grandma, ‘Grandma, I finally understand what you said.’”*

– Ipay Unung, July 17, 2012

*“When we danced and prayed in Truku, we could see the elder’s smiling faces.”*

– Truku child (anonymous), September 15, 2012

*“I feel touched when seeing the grandma smile.”*

– Truku child (anonymous), September 15, 2012

The success of the curriculum suggests that children do not passively receive linguistic knowledge from adults but actively co-construct their language learning opportunities, with their social network significantly mediating the process. The pedagogical praxis illuminates that it is by identifying and empathizing with students’ immediate identity needs (e.g. being a loving/ loved grandchild, being accepted by the peers) in context that we truly understand the dynamics of language ideological works in life. Thus, adults, including teachers and activists, need to reflect upon our own language ideologies, better understand children’s identity construction processes, and incorporate them as resources into educational praxis. The implications of the chapter are significant in the field of language education as children’s perspectives and role have been undermined in previous studies.

This chapter demonstrates how dialogue (research question 1) is made possible through an ethnographic approach similar to Hymes' ethnographic monitoring (Hymes, 1980). As I employ ethnographic methods to understand the family dynamics and interaction across households, the norm of cross-generational parenting and the natural bond between grandparents and children are further re-conceptualized as a form of Truku epistemology (research question 2) and cultural resources for advocacy work. Compared to Chapter 2 and 3, Chapter 4 makes the most significant and direct contribution to the understanding of the relationship of Indigenous language ideologies, identity, and learning (research question 3). My observations of children's improvisation and participation suggest that it is not so much *being Truku* (indigeniety) as *being grandchildren and friends* that is made relevant in moment-by-moment interactions.

As the complexity of community-based language revitalization can never be contained within a single theoretical framework or analysis, it is necessary to conceive of the process broadly and inclusively. Bringing together Chapter 2, 3, and 4, I argue the chapters have complemented each other and pieced together a multi-faceted puzzle of "dialogue" (research question 1) among multiple stakeholders, for example, between an outside researcher and the community members (Chapter 2), among the community members themselves (Chapter 3), and among some adults and children (Chapter 4). Meanwhile, underpinning the foundation of the inquiry is a genuine respect for Truku epistemology (research question 2) and interest in the potential of human agency to effect social transformation (research question 3). It is important to note that I have chosen to privilege of the voices of the less heard, specifically the more traditional elders and the elementary school children, because they have been my greatest teachers, showing me

glimpses of truth (“love”) on the journey of reconstruction. Next, I discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

## **Implications**

### **Theoretical Implications**

The experience of collaborating with the Truku elders and children has opened up new ways of seeing, learning, knowing, and doing. Although each Indigenous community has its own history of experiences and sociocultural dynamics, the findings from this case study may not be directly applicable to many other Indigenous communities in Taiwan and beyond, it does offer important theoretical implications that are worth exploring for future research in language policy and planning (LPP), second language acquisition (SLA), and critical qualitative research.

**Language policy and planning.** Although the theory of language ideologies from linguistic anthropology (Kroskrity, 2000; Kroskrity & Field, 2009) can help us recognize the impacts of ideological conflicts in Indigenous language planning, it does not necessarily provide concrete tools for practitioners to resolve the ideological tensions, which are often invisible to the privileged and undiscussible to the marginalized. In the present study, I draw on sociocultural approaches to (language) learning – for example, cultural-historical activity theory (Engeström, 1999, 2001; Lantolf & Throne, 2006) and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) – to complement the theory of language ideologies. As these Vygotsky-inspired sociocultural approaches bring *artifact mediation* and *interpersonal mediation* into focus, it shows that language revitalization as a process is constituted within the matrix of social relations. The present study contributes to the

scholarship of language policy and planning by foregrounding the critical role of meditational means in the material world, offering a more holistic and developmental understanding of the process of LPP. Additionally, drawn from Indigenous epistemology, the recognition of human relationships in praxis critically features the affective dimension of LPP, which is less discussed in past literature.

**Heritage language, affect, and learning.** Lave (2012) notes that we should resist theoretical and empirical practices that “treat learning as if it were a concept of individual, internal mental exercise” (p. 161). The present study highlights the affective dimension of language learning and revitalization. In Chapter 4, children’s strong intention to relate themselves to others outweighs the idea of language “proficiency” and “acquisition.” In other words, I argue that language-learning practices are “socially mediated” and that emotional motivation as the source of “capacity” comes from human relationships. This observation resonates with the recently growing interest in emotion, intersubjectivity, empathy, and hospitality in applied linguistics (e.g. McNamara, 2012; Phipps, 2012; Swain, 2011). For instance, Swain (2011) notes that the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has focused to a considerable extent on cognitive processes for decades, yet cognition and emotion are “intricately interconnected” and that either one of them cannot fully explain the process of language learning (P. 195). Similarly, Phipps (2012) suggests that “there is an important need to listen to sensibilities, private emotions, passions, intuitions, fears, grief, or betrayals” (p. 597) in applied linguistics. I argue that the role of affect and human connectedness especially deserves our attention in the field of heritage language education (e.g. Messing, 2009, 2013) because one’s community language is more likely to be one connected to home and heart. Students’

affective dimension of learning, if well understood by educators and activists, can be used as great resources for learning, teaching, and advocacy.

**Indigenous language, identity, and learning.** In the scholarship of Indigenous language revitalization and education, identity works are usually characterized by broad ethnic categories. In Chapter 4, I not only draw on broad ethnic categories (“Truku”), but also examine how other identity categories (e.g. being a grandchild, a friend, and a student) are made relevant and intersect with each other in moment-by-moment interaction. In a way, I have aligned with Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) discursive approach to identity from sociocultural linguistics. In their proposed framework, they conceptualize identity as intersubjectively produced and “internationally emergent” (p. 587). In locating identity works, analysts therefore investigate the construction of ethnographic and interactional positionings in daily activities. I argue that such a sociocultural linguistic approach to identity can prevent critical researchers from oversimplifying students’ dynamic subject positions across contexts. When we start to pay attention to the individuals’ shifting subject positions, we are better able to dialogue and reach mutuality with them as well. The present study therefore argues for incorporating a discursive approach to identity so as to complement and contextualize our understanding of identity works in Indigenous language learning.

**Researcher’s identity-making, knowledgeability, and humanizing praxis.** Paris (2011) argues for the methodological stance of humanizing research, which “requires that our inquiries involve dialogic consciousness-raising and the building of relationships of dignity and care for both researchers and participatns” (p. 137). Indeed, if it were not for my changing position from an outside researcher to a caring friend, and

my genuine care for the children, I would not have been able to obtain the trust of the villagers and learn from their perspectives. It is also in the up-and-down moments working with the elders and children that I become critically aware of the limitation of theorizing language, praxis and its related activities (e.g. language learning, language teaching, language revitalization) from the location/perspectives of the academic professionals. The praxis experience resonates with Paris's humanizing research stance and further highlights the relation between knowledgeability and researcher's identity-making. Last but not least, my Truku mentor's (Bowtung) expectation of my long-term commitment further reminds critical ethnographic scholars of the responsibility that comes with a well-built relationship (also see Mangual Figueroa, 2012). The responsibility, which may be defined differently from both sides, needs to be carefully considered and mutually communicated. This aspect of dialogue remains underdiscussed and theorized in participatory action research.

### **Practical Implications**

As a conscious attempt to reconstruct alternative language practices through collaborative efforts, the present study provides two major insights for activists, policy-makers, and other practitioners in Indigenous language education. The first returns to the ontological question: What is community-based language revitalization in contemporary times? How is it possible? The second insight shifts the role of "community" to public education, highlighting the inescapable moral obligation of the colonial government.

**Community-based LPP.** Originally Apay and I believed that valuing the Truku language is a process of restoring people's dignity in being Truku; that is, an affirmation of one's ethnic identity that has been oppressed for decades. In addition, to avoid

commodifying the language in the advocacy process, we had downplayed the role of economic incentives when one participated in the project, taking for granted the idea of collaboration. However, the idea of community collaboration has never been easy. Despite the importance of community participation and leadership, assuming community and family members would naturally come together for the purpose of language revitalization can be an academic privilege that many Indigenous people may not enjoy as their economic life is subjected to force of the capitalistic market.

*“In all honesty, for we people born in the 1970s, Truku language revitalization is for people who “have nothing else to do after meal time” (i.e. Chinese idiom meaning someone who can afford to have plenty of leisure time). The Truku language has few economic benefits. Activities about language revitalization are mainly for white-collar people, pastors, and church-goers. Now we (non-white collar Truku) are more concerned about job opportunities. Yes, you can teach my children Truku and my children can come back home to teach me, but I don’t have the leisure time to participate in the project. Nowadays, it should be the other way around- from children to parents.”*

– Truku parent (anonymous), December 17, 2012

I have also heard a young Truku male teacher saying, “If you give me money, I will speak in Truku” (field notes, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012). Similarly, one Truku father once shared with me, “Can my children make a living outside the community if they speak in Truku?” (field notes, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012). At first it may seem that some Truku parents take a very “pragmatic” (現實) approach to their ethnic language. However, after a year of living with the people and listening to their daily stories, I have come to understand that



being pragmatic is the way to live and survive when the Truku people have long been confronted with the drastic change of socioeconomic situations. Under the regime of the colonial government and the wave of globalization, the oppressions faced by traditional Truku people are many, language being only one of them. In retrospect, asking Truku parents to believe in the benefits of Truku language transmission without taking into account the maladjustments, acculturated disadvantages and the immediate needs of the other intersecting subject positions the families occupy (e.g. being disoriented and thus alcoholic, being labeled as working-class, being compelled to leave the hometown for work) may be an uncompassionate endeavor.

Furthermore, as the quotes from the earlier section have demonstrated, the hybridity (and sometimes contradictions) inherent in villagers' cultural practices challenge the concept of "community" in the so-called community-based LPP. In this empirical case, the "community," consisting of relocated villagers from different villages from the past, seems to be more of a colonial administrative unit than a collective social group. The contemporary capitalistic economy further widens the social stratification and hinders the likelihood of collective consciousness of cultural revitalization among the villagers. For instance, ideological tensions concerning learning, teaching and researching inevitably exist among practitioners with different professions and socioeconomic statuses, especially between the working class vs. the (upper) middle class. It also exists between researchers from different disciplines (e.g., formal linguistics vs. anthropology and education). Therefore, it becomes extremely critical that all the stakeholders become aware of our differences in ways of doing and thinking, respectfully articulate them, and collectively address them before rushing to the next step. Moreover, to resolve

interpersonal conflicts, it is indispensable to have a trusted, people-friendly, and involved community leader to help negotiate the differences and sustain the group dynamics.

My critical realization of the disintegration of community lives after decades of colonial rule resonates well with that of the critical sociologist Hsiao-Chuan Hsia (夏曉鵬), who has devoted years to social movement and advocacy for the marginalized groups in society. In her study on alcoholism in Indigenous societies, she highlighted:

Only when we place Indigenous people's situations in the influences of capitalism can we trace the roots of the problem and find a way out. If capitalism has led to the disintegration of Indigenous communities and lives, resulting in other issues such as alcoholism, then Indigenous social movement cannot solely emphasize "cultural revitalization" and overlook the economic marginalization of the Indigenous people in the capitalistic system. (Hsia, 2010, p. 55)

Therefore, as critical scholars, if we strive to serve the people (not the language itself) through our transformative research praxis, it is imperative for us to place people at the center of our inquiry. That is, there is a need for us to understand the meaning of the language revitalization in relation to people's lives. For example, in advocacy work, instead of simply asking parents to speak Truku to the children, it is even more important for us to explore how speaking Truku can fulfill people's identity needs with the particular subject position(s) they occupy. If health insurance fees stand as one of their greatest concerns, rewarding the Truku-speaking family with discounted health insurance might offer a strong incentive for parents. Another example is that if parents are provided with the a good language game to engage children, their language learning activity might

add joy to family life and enhance family relationships, which can be another strong incentive. Moreover, because each family and community may have its unique dynamics and cultural capacities, it is necessary to provide a variety of incentive options for people to identify with and choose from. Possibilities like this will inevitably require applied linguists to get out of our comfort zone and collaborate with scholars from other disciplines such as human development and family studies, community development, social work, applied anthropology, early childhood education, etc.

**Whose responsibility?** The challenge of community-based language revitalization lies not only in the heterogenous nature of the community, but also in the government's structural control that continues to perpetuate people's way of life.

*“The lands where our ancestors lived are gone. We long to return back to the land and practice hunting. Our children no longer go to the mountains, either. Our young men and women go to the plains for work. Our lifestyle has completely changed. Now we want to teach children the Truku language. It is very very difficult. What should we do now?”<sup>6</sup>*

– Bowtung Yudaw, May 13, 2012

The difficulty of educating Truku children in the Truku way began in the separation in industrial societies of the work place from home. As the people have been dislocated from the mountain lands and relocated in the plains, they hardly have the

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<sup>6</sup> Pusu kneudus dxgal rudan nami ga, wada ungant da. Ni kmusa nami bi mdamat alang nami. Ni laqi nami uri o ini usa daya uri da. Ni lisaw nami uwa nami ga wada qmpah bnux ngangut kana uri. Ni saw yami rudan seediq ka sayang do ini nami dhuq musa daya uri da. Ni quri saw djiyun nami ni uqun nami ga, wada kmpriyux kana da. Ni cisaun nami kari Truku ka laqi nami ga, msqriqu bi msqriqu balay. Manu saw nii ka sayang da hug?

physical space to continue traditional cultural practices, where Truku language was freely spoken and heard. As the government continues to impose the so-called “conservation laws” (e.g. banning hunting and mountaing farming) on Indigenous economic practices, the very much-needed connection between language and context is constantly being disrupted. Moreover, with many parents working outside the village, Chinese-centered public education has taken over the role of parenting and transformed traditional child socialization processes.

*“Now I go to elementary school. My grandma also has her own job (outside the village). I rarely hear her speak in Truku to me. Every time I go to school, I do not hear people speak in Truku either. Only on Friday can we learn Truku. This seems strange to me. It’s strange! Also, when I am at home, Grandma is always busy and doesn’t have much time to talk with Grandpa. Only when they talk to each other can I hear Truku. Yet, even when they talk to each other in the living room, I normally study in my room and hardly have time to listen to their conversations<sup>7</sup>.”*

– Iwal XiaoMing, October 1, 2012

Iwal is not alone. In the village, on average, children above Grade 1 spend around 10 hours per day in school and the free after-school program sponsored by the government. At public elementary school, the amount of Truku instruction time is as few as 45 minutes per week. Even during children’s limited time spent at home, the younger

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<sup>7</sup>現在讀國小了嘛, 然後阿嬤現在都有工作啊, 很少聽到阿嬤講母語, 然後每次到學校都沒有聽到有人講母語, 然後就是聽到星期五才學母語, 這樣有點奇怪, 有點奇怪啦!! 然後每次到家裡的時候, 阿嬤都會很忙沒時間聽到阿嬤跟阿公談話, 他們談話的時候才會聽到母語, 我都到房間那邊寫功課或讀書, 然後都沒有時間聽, 都沒有時間在客廳那邊- 那個聽他們在講什麼

generations of caretakers do not necessarily have the Truku language proficiency to speak in Truku to children. “Children should still learn Truku because it’s how one identifies oneself. But I am not very good in Truku. Sometimes my daughter learn Truku at school and teach me instead (laughing),” Yuan-Yuan, a mother in her 30s shared (personal communication, December 16, 2012). And her experience resonates with that of most young parents. Instead of re-learning the Truku language themselves, young parents seem more acceptable of the idea that their children can learn Truku at school and teach the parents at home instead. Taking a more revolutionary stance, some Truku elders aspire for the establishment of “*our own Truku school.*”

*“I suppose the success of language revitalization in Hawaii might start from kindergarten. But here in Taiwan, Chinese is dominant in kindergarten and elementary school. This is hard. But (just like farming), the key is how to sow the right way. How to BEGIN WITH this endeavor wisely is the key. If we want to be like Hawaii, the foundation must start from kindergarten<sup>8</sup>.”*

– Mimi Rikit, April 7, 2012

*“As we elders (Bowtung, Awang, Miing) teach the children now, you (Apay, Man-Chiu) can report it to the government above us. I hope a Truku school can be*

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<sup>8</sup>剛剛講的 dmudul laqi, huya tgmisa prajing. 可能是夏威夷那邊可能是幼稚園開始, 母語教學, 可能是這樣, 我們這邊沒有, 幼稚園 cikoku kana, 國小也是 cikoku kana. 這個事情很難做, 但是一定要撒種撒得對, 基本辦法, pusu nami sayang, huya sa mhuma prajing. Mha 跟夏威夷一樣, 一定基本的 paah 幼稚園開始.

*established in Qowgan. If there is a Truku school, we elders will be overjoyed. The generation we have taught can teach the next generation; the next generation, the next next generation. And we elders can be the advisers around them. It will be a dream coming true <sup>9</sup>.”*

– Bowtung Yudaw, February 9, 2014

In the earlier community meetings, the villager named Mimi Rikit had repeatedly emphasized the potential transformative power of Truku-only kindergarten. Likewise, the current project leader, Bowtung Yudaw, has longed for the establishment of “our own Truku language school,” a vision that sustains her commitment up till now. The villagers’ aspirations resonate with Romero-Little’s (2010) vision of education for Indigenous children:

“Indigenous families and communities recognize that the continued survival of their native languages and ways of life depend on finding ways to circumvent the loss of language and culture that result from educational program that do not respect or value the resources children bring from home” (p. 22).

One may ask: Why can’t parents just speak their Indigenous language(s) to the children? Must there be a school or an official educational program to bring the language back children? The answer is likely yes. As McCarty (2008) notes, “there are few instances of successful language revitalization in which schools have not played a crucial role” (p. 161). Taking into account villagers’ aspirations and lessons from other Indigenous

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<sup>9</sup> Saw sayang ka dmudul laqi ga, Miing, Awang nasi ta seyku ka tgsaan ka laqi nii ga, quri su Apay Amay do, qmita ka hiya (Apay) do, tuwa mha rmngaw thowlang baraw ni qmita ka thowlang baraw do, tai su bniqu kingal gaku ka alang Truku Qowgan nii. Saw kiya do, niqan ka gaku ta ga, ita rudan uri do mha ta mgaras balay uri da. Kiya ka tgsaan ka brah laqi da, tnhici miyah ka laqi do ka, dhiya mha tgmisa kida. Ita rudan do, qmita ta lisaw ni uwa do, yami rudan o balay wax mgaras nami bi yami rudan uri da. 實現了. Nasi ini kla do, ita yami rudan ka emptgsa duri bitaq mkla. Saw nii ka lnlungan yami rudan.

contexts, I argue for the urgent and ethical imperative to return educational sovereignty back to the Truku people and establish a Truku-based school. Even if it can take some time for people to achieve so, the government should at least start to reform the current school curriculum by incorporating more Indigenous language and cultural lessons into it. In brief, structural oppression and constraints need to be counteracted by structural transformations as well. The rethinking of the relationship between top-down and bottom-up LPP approaches, specifically the essential role of larger institutional/structural support, corresponds to the critique of the Indigenous scholar Chun-Fa Tung (童春發) in a recent local conference in 2013:

We (Indigenous people) are lost due to the previous policies. Now we still need policies to reconstruct vital spaces for Indigenous people and our languages. Based on my years of experiences in Indigenous social movement, if we only have grassroots efforts, and don't have policy support, it remains difficult to succeed. Meanwhile, policies need to be informed by people's voices. (我們是在過去政策上失落, 如何用政策活化, 應該要用民意的基礎, 政策性的建構活純的空間, 按照我多年民間運動經驗, 沒有政策, 只有民間, 很難) (September 14, 2013).

In the meantime, despite the moral responsibility placed on the government, it is important to note that simply pouring in material resources does not ensure fruitful collaboration. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Penfield and Tucker (2011) remind us that many of the standard pedagogical practices to language may not be compatible for use in

various endangered language communities. In community praxis, I have come to recognize the incompatibility of school-based learning and traditional Truku epistemology. In order not to alienate non-school educated villagers from participation, it becomes imperative to consider how traditional ways of knowing and teaching can be given equal status and incorporated into the process of developing a Truku-based school.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

In this section, I present suggestions for future research and advocacy agendas.

Specific questions to be asked include:

1. How are the meanings of Truku language revitalization constructed differently in different family dynamics? How can community initiatives take into consideration the effects of changing family dynamics (e.g. single parenthood, cross-generational parenting)?
2. How can recent technology innovations, such as iPad, be incorporated into language revitalization efforts as alternative/complementary artifacts to the Roman system?
3. What constitutes a community in contemporary Indigenous societies? How are adult villagers mobilized differently in different Truku family contexts, or even different Truku villages?
4. How can we network with the local elementary school and transform the school environments to ones that incorporate Indigenous epistemology and values? How can traditional elders and mainstream teachers work together to redesign school curriculum and practices?



5. How can we as a team continue to work on the project towards the vision of establishing “our own Truku language school”?

### **Conclusion**

*Sndamat namu balay, payi, baki, kana ita mnswayi,*

(I will miss all of you, Grandpa, Grandma, and brothers and sisters,)

*Wada namu bi kmlawa knan kana hug.*

(You have all taken good care of me.)

Ana bitaq knuwan ni hug

(Until the end of the world)

Aji mu snghiyun,

(I will never forget)

Niqan mu alang Qowgan wey~

(There is a village of mine called Qowgan.)

Tama, bubu, qbsuran, swayi,

(Father, Mother, Sister, and Brother,)

Strung ta rima idas duri wey~

(I'll see you again in five months.)

Asaw Utux Baraw,

(Depending on God,)

Pstungus saw nii ka uda mu...

(That's my way of life.)

– Man-Chiu's farewell song for the villagers in church, December 25, 2012

By the time of the completion of the dissertation, I have returned to the village for almost a year after a temporary leave of absence (January 2013-June 2013). This language revitalization project, including the dissertation itself, would not have been possible without the efforts and care of many. They are—Bowtung Yudaw, Apay Yuki, Awang Rihang, Buya Peydang, Ciming Miki, Ciwas Uming, DaMing Buya, Gimi Yudaw, Hani Kumus, Isaku Nobu, Kimay Wajeh, Kumaw Buya, Leygon Yudaw, MeiLi Yosi, Mimi Rikit, Nobu Kumus, Suping Wang, Sumi Lowking, Pusi Nowmaw, Tien-Mu Chen, Tumun Kingjiang, Wilan Bujiang, and Yudaw Pisaw. Therefore, I would like to conclude by honoring each of your contributions.

Thank you, Apay, for your genuine friendship and consistent commitment, which sustains mine as well. Thank you, Awang payi, for teaching children how to do farm work, cook traditional Truku dishes, and go mountain climbing. I can never thank you enough, Buya baki, for building a *biyi* (“bamboo house”) for children, where our regular Truku language class is held. I also notice that you’ve voluntarily maintained the garden for the children during weekdays. Thank you, Ciming, for all the wonderful Truku videos you’ve made for children on our Facebook page “Pnkari ta Truku hug.” Thank you, Ciwas, for providing lots of insights on our curriculum design and staying committed to the project. Thank you, DaMing, for advertising the project to your friends and introducing MeiLi to join the team. Thank you, Gimi, for allowing me to volunteer in your after-school program so that I could have easier access to the children and their families. Thank you, baki Yudaw and Hani, for serving as a wise adviser in the project. Many of your insights, such as the family-based model and the migration history of the Truku people, continue to inspire and guide the work. Thank you, Isaku, Suping, and

MeiLi for participating in this project as a Truku language teacher during the summer break. Thank you, Kimay, for consistently joining the meetings and encouraging the team to persevere and lean on God. Many thanks to Kumaw, Wilang, and ZhiKwang, who helped Buya build the *biyi* for children. Thank you, Leygon bubu, for helping prepare food and recruit the children for our community language program on weekends. Thank you, Mimi, for serving as a wise adviser for the team and composing the theme song “Pnkari ta Truku hug” for children. They love it! Thank you, Uncle Nobu, for serving as a co-leader in the beginning stage of the project. Your critical insights and passion certainly have shedded light on the project. Thank you, Principal Yang, for helping with the draft of the project proposal. The funding of the project wouldn’t have been possible without your insights and experiences. I don’t know how to thank you— A-mu, for digitally documenting the project and sharing many of your observations and insights. Many of your questions helped me to reflect on the process on a deeper level. Thank you, Tumun, for helping organize the activities for children and networking with the local elementary school. Your presence always brings children joy and comfort. Thank you, Auntie Sumi, for accompanying me to do homevisits so as to better understand the villagers’ aspirations and concerns. I am indebted to you, Bowtung payi, for socializing me into the Truku ways of living and helping me find a sense of belonging on this land whicha I call home now. Words cannot expression how much I admire your passion, perseverance and dedication to passing down your knowledge and wisdom to the Truku children.

As the dissertation comes to an end, our language revitalization project continues to move forward for the Truku children. The journey may be long and arduous,

but we together will make the way as we walk. Finally, I would like to conclude with Bowtung *payi*'s perspective on what counts as a dissertation:

Bowtung: *Wherever you go in the future, you have to bring your dissertation with you.*

Amay (Man-Chiu): *What do you mean?*

Bowtung: *Because this is what you've intended to accomplish. You've made efforts, spent time working on it, and shedded tears for it. Someday you'll be able to use this dissertation—perhaps it will be your profession for the future and bring you peace and joy of life.*

Amay: *So do you mean a dissertation is like a calling?*

Bowtung: *That's right, because you didn't work on it for just one day or two. You cannot just let it go. If you give up now, I should not have collaborated with you. From the beginning I asked you, "Did you come to take our words (language) for your own study? You told me, "Of course not." You need to continue working on your dissertation. Take the heart and never give up. You need to continue learning about the heart and thoughts of the Truku people, building on the foundation you've accomplished. I can accompany you to continue your dialogue with other Truku people in other Truku villages—not just Qowgan.*

(fieldnotes, February 30, 2014)

To Bowtung *payi*, this dissertation will not end with my graduation. From her words of encouragement, I seem to grasp a different definition of dissertation. A dissertation is not just a research project. Neither is it merely a community project. Instead, it should be a

long-term commitment to reciprocating the contributions of the Indigenous people and fulfilling their hope for the next generation.

Let's persevere faithfully and joyfully in the work we have begun! *Supu ta kmbrax ni dmudul laqi Truku...*

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APPENDIX A  
GENOGRAPHIC LEGACY FUND GRANT APPLICATION

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Please keep responses to 500-600 words)

### 1. Brief description of main goal :

The history of the Austronesian Indigenous peoples in Taiwan can be traced back to 4,000 B.C. (Shepherd, 1993), composed of more than ten culturally and linguistically

diverse groups. Although the

origin of the Indigenous

peoples in Taiwan remains

controversial, most

Austronesian linguists and

archaeologists would agree

that the original “homeland”

of Austronesian language

must be sought in Taiwan

(Blust, 1980, 1995); the

preservation and

development of their cultures

and languages therefore take

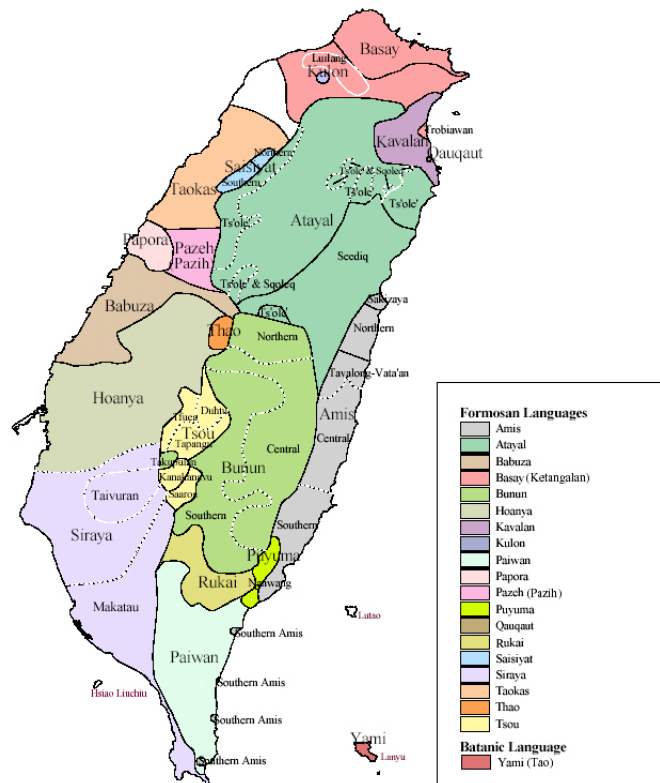
a significant position in human history. Nevertheless, impacted by colonial power (e.g.

Japanese, different groups of Chinese immigrants at different time periods) in the past

400 years, these native Taiwanese have been forcibly assimilated into the mainstream

society (Ching, 2001; Friedman, 2010); their traditional territory, social structures,

cultures, languages, and oral history are disappearing.



Formosan Languages and Yami

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Adapted from Touchida (1983)



In this project, we focus on the Seediq people (specifically Truku) in Qowgan Village in Hualien County, Taiwan. The Seediq originated from the high mountains in central Taiwan, consisting of three different subgroups and dialects: Tkdaya, Toda, and Truku. The Truku are the ones who climbed over the Central Mountain and migrated to Hualien County, the eastern part of Taiwan. In Tang's latest research (2010, 2011) on Truku language shift, she surveys the community members' reported language use and it reflects critical language shift starting from the adult parent generation. Sun (2010a), the director of the Council of Indigenous Peoples, points out that the loss and invisibility of one's culture and language have been the deepest mental struggle for these native Taiwanese, many of whom become lost in the torrent of modernity (p. 67). Generational differences in languages further disrupt family relationship and the traditional language socialization process (p. 81).

Therefore, the project aims to create opportunities for the Seediq (Truku) people to take the autonomy in strengthening inter-generational ties and expanding Indigenous people's historical, cultural, linguistic spaces. Through everyone's consistent efforts, including year-long workshops, summer camps, and periodic visits to other Seediq communities (e.g. Tkdaya and Toda), the old and young Seediq will collaborate to pass down and activate the cultural and linguistic resources of the tribe, with the ultimate goal of affirming Seediq identity and rebuilding cross-generational relationship. In the following we will present the mission statement of the project and our concrete actions:

- (1) To strengthen the tie between family members and train young member to be a strong advocate and teacher of the Truku language in the future:

- (1.1) To hold the Truku Master-Apprentice program in which native speakers and young adults work in pairs intensively so that the younger members can develop conversational proficiency in the language (Hinton, 2008). Each pair has to spend at least 20 hours together every week and speak Truku only.
- (1.2) To hold weekly Language and Tribal Stories Documentation Workshops: On weekends, the participants (preferably with medium proficiency in Truku) will learn how to collect and digitally document the oral language, stories, songs, idioms of the tribe. Through the Internet and periodic presentations, the participants will be able to share with the tribe and the larger audience their findings. It is hoped that through participating in either/ both workshops, the participants will interact with the elders a lot more, grow renewed appreciation for the experiential knowledge of the old, and willingly share the responsibility in language revitalization.
- (1.3) To incorporate community theater (i.e. theater for social change) (Rohd, 1998; Boal, 2002) into the curriculum in the above-mentioned workshops. We understand sustainable culture and community revitalization requires genuine attitudinal change of all, not of a few local elites. Theater pedagogies can actively raise participants' awareness of cultural loss and help people to take ownership in the process because it allows people to challenge the dominant ideology at their own pace, in their own words.

- (2) To complement the two major workshops with traditional activities, including (1) monthly get-together parties at night, (2) youth mountain camps in summer, and (3) visits to other Seediq communities (e.g. Tkdaya, Toda). Understanding it is the best to learn Seediq history and culture by “experiencing” instead of “reading,” we believe activities like these can create shared cultural experiences between generations and communities.
- (3) To produce a documentary of this community-joined efforts and an archive of the findings in the workshops. These will be great resources for school curriculum, and public advocacy & education.
- (4) To ultimately affirm Indigenous youths’ understanding of their cultural roots and identity, and develop advocates and talents for future Indigenous-related educational programs.

**PROJECT DETAILS** (Please keep responses to 500-600 words)

**18 A. Describe your proposed project in suitable detail in the space provided below.**

**Please address how your project will raise global awareness about the cultural loss faced by Indigenous and traditional communities. Also, please address challenges that you will face in undertaking this project.**

We understand that many of the Indigenous tribes around the world are confronted with the challenges of language and culture loss. As language is critically embedded in social relationships and community activities, a people-centered language revitalization plan that promotes bottom-up engagement and relationship rebuilding seems culturally appropriate and more sustainable from a long-term perspective. Also, by focusing on the Indigenous people in Taiwan, the homeland of Austronesian language family, this case

project will make significant contributions to global Indigenous movement by empowering the Austronesian people in Taiwan to define, create our own promising practices, and expand and cultural territory. In the following, we will explain in details how our workshops, camping activities, and community visits will be organized, and finally explain why this hybrid project is innovative and culturally appropriate.

- (1) Truku Master-Apprentice Program: The program, first created in California, features a one-on-one learning relationship between a “master” (elder, speaker) and an “apprentice” (language learner), who work together intensively for 20 hours every week, speaking only the Indigenous language. The program is based on the concept that people learn a language best by being immersed in it for significant amounts of time, without translation to Mandarin Chinese. In this program, translated as “Big Hands Holding Small Hands” in local slang, similarly, the master and apprentice go about their daily lives in Truku and doing everyday or special activities together. We will offer weekly meetings inviting the participants to share their progress and challenges. We will also provide some active language teaching and learning strategies. Participants will be encouraged to make their own video clip of their daily interactions and activities and share it with the others during the meeting.
- (2) Language and Tribal Stories Documentation Workshops: As Apay has been the participant as well as co-director of the Language Documentation Training Center at the University of Hawai’i, she has witnessed the attitudinal transformation Language Documentation can bring to people. In the process, each participant (i.e. mentee) is paired up with a linguist student (i.e. mentor) and they together will

explore the syntax, typology, and pragmatics of the language. The process of language documentation is an active language learning journey itself. In implementation, we will try to collaborate with the student linguists from National Dong Hwa University and National Taiwan University. The Truku participants in the tribe should have at least medium proficiency in the language.

- (3) Community Theater: We believe the first step in working with the Indigenous people, especially the youths, is to create a dialogue while people feel safe and belonging to a community. Here we will incorporate improvisational theater techniques in our workshops and encourage people of different generations to share their experiences of linguistic oppression in mainstream society. If people are interested, we will work together and perform in our monthly get-together parties.
- (4) Monthly Get-Together Party: Sharing food together at night after hunting was one of the traditional activities in the community. It has been the long-lost favorite of the community. We plan to hold a similar get-together party every month so that the workshop participants and other villagers can spend some fun time with each other and use Truku naturally.
- (5) Youth mountain camps: Traditional Seediq people relied on the natural resources from the mountains and lived self-sufficient lives. Our ancestor accumulated precious knowledge about the plant, animals, weather, land, etc that have yet passed to the younger generation. In this youth mountain camp, we will recruit 12 healthy Seediq boys led by 6 professional guides. 18 people will be further divided into three groups, with 1 guide ensuring the safety of two young

participants. The activities in the mountains include: rock climbing, trees climbing, river crossing, identifying traditional territory, historic sites, using Truku language, etc.

- (6) Visits to other Seediq communities (e.g. Tkdaya, Toda): As Truku people are the Seediq people migrating from central Taiwan to the eastern part of the island, there has been a lack of connection between the Truku people and the other Seediq communities. Through the trip, the young Seediq(Truku) from Qowgan village will be able to understand the migratory history of their ancestors and enhance their Seediq identity. It will build solidarity between different groups of minorities and pave the way for collaboration between Seediq communities in the future. This significant “tracing-the-root” journey will be videotaped and become part of our Seediq history. We plan to recruit 22 people in total.

We must acknowledge that after hundreds of years of colonial rule, various forms of assimilation policies and systemic oppression have subjugated or confused the minds of the many Indigenous people in Taiwan. The process of cultural reclamation will be a slowly healing and self-redefining journey. The above-mentioned paragraphs show that this project is far from a traditional linguist-led language preservation plan; instead, it has combined various active learning techniques (e.g. experiential learning, cooperative learning, theater for social change, culturally responsive teaching and learning) and create ample opportunities for community dialogues, identity affirmation, and transformative practices, all of which in a recursive process. We also believe our focus on intergenerational ties can involve villagers in the mission on an affective level; therefore,

people are more likely to willingly commit time and energy to it as a way of being and living in the future.

Another strength of the project is: It will be a collaborative project between the community members, 2 local NGOs (i.e. Indigenous and Multicultural Association, Hualien; Seediq History and Culture Transmission Association), a few experienced community elders and two young local researchers who are pursuing PhD degree for this calling. Understanding bottom-up, community-based efforts are the key to sustainable development, we place people and their needs at the center of the endeavors. We believe this project will encourage Indigenous people to write their own history and redefine the future of their culture, expanding spaces for promising practices. It will set up an encouraging example of community-based language preservation initiatives for other Indigenous groups not only in Taiwan but also around the world as the cases in Hawai'i and New Zealand have inspired us in the 1980s. It will offer new insights and inspirations about how Indigenous people think globally and act locally at the age of globalization.

The greatest difficulty we may be confronted with is that parents may be busy making a living every day. Some children are raised by their aging grandparent(s). To successfully recruit people and encourage them to PERSIST in the participation requires an understanding of the family structure, dynamics, and needs. Therefore, at the beginning, we will work with the preexistent social network, for example, fellowship groups in church, other work teams, and spread the information through words of mouth. Also, we will present a reward and certificate for those keeping satisfactory record in attendance and progress. Most importantly, we will pay frequent visits and make phone

calls to gain understanding of their perspective, conduct formative assessment, provide effective support, and revise our workshop curriculum along the way.

**18 B. Provide details regarding local community involvement in the planning, governance, and implementation of your project.**

To reach the goals mentioned above, the local community is the actual body involving the planning, governance, and implementation of this project. First, this project should begin with a collective planning. The five influential types of individuals—youth, families, educators, researchers, and elders— are encouraged to be as cultural and political actors in this language and cultural endangerment setting. We include young people because they are able to thoughtfully and critically express the underlying causes of language endangerment. In addition, the pulse of a language clearly lies in the youngest generation. We also think family is crucial since they tend to bring up their children in Mandarin Chinese and feel that Truku language possesses rather low socioeconomic and political status. Therefore, awareness of an interest in the significance of speaking Truku needs to be raised and taught to family members before they are involved in promoting Truku language revitalization efforts. While doing language planning collectively, they become more proactive in native tongue reclamation. All decisions and rules, including the formulations of goals, means, and board structure, need to be agreed upon by all or by at least two thirds of actors or language planners throughout the process.

Second, the project is expected to be implemented in a non-formal system since we believe the community-based, non-government organizations and decentralized programs should be an effective and more accepted approach to the whole community. Hence,



collaborating with the preexistent NGO (i.e. Indigenous and Multicultural Association, Hualien) is judged to be the most effective way to execute the plans. The governance within the NGO will be designed to ensure the implementation of conscious raising, intergenerational language learning, and community-based initiatives as shown in the following figure.

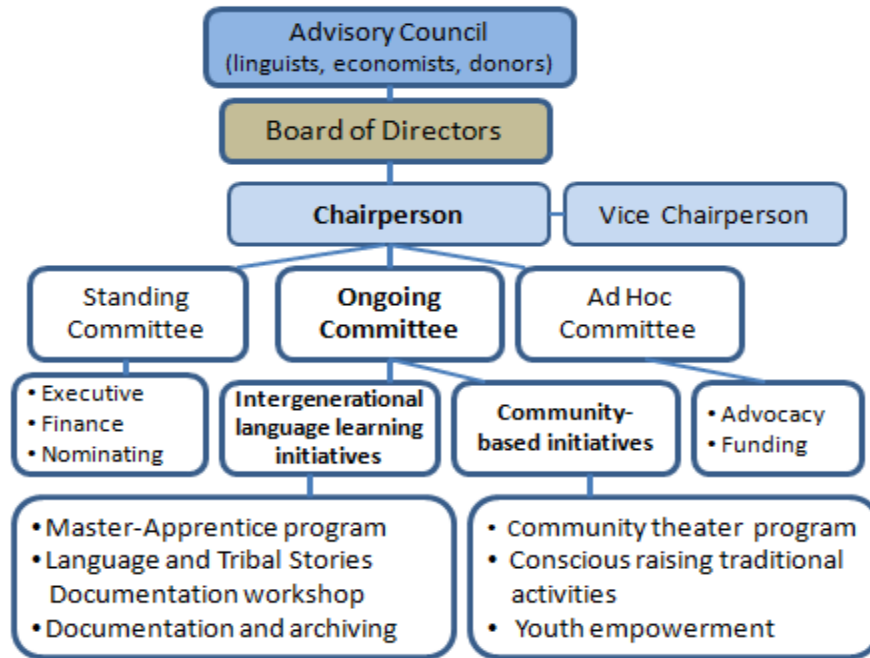


FIGURE 1. BOARD STRUCTURE

Third, this project will be implemented by the seven divisions mentioned above: (i) Board of Directors ensure that the organization is operating to fulfill the goals, to propose a strategic plan, and to maintain the organizational assets; (ii) Advisory Council provide fresh perspectives in various aspects and offer advantages to the board; (iii) Chairperson/Vice Chairperson chairs the Executive Committee, network and negotiate with related national/international organizations, and supervise the overall goals; (iv) Standing Committee supervises three committees—Standing, Ongoing, and Ad Hoc

Committees; (v) Ongoing Committee acts as the actual body that will implement the actions that fulfill the goals of the organization; and (vi) Ad Hoc Committee perform the tasks that need to be completed in a specific time; its main roles are to raise the funding, advocate the significance of succeeding the linguistic and cultural inheritances, o advertise events, and (vii) to hold regular designated activities.

**18 C. Please provide details regarding the ethical evaluation you plan to conduct before undertaking this project. Be sure to address the following community and its goals. Does the project concept come directly from or address an explicit need expressed by community members? Will the community, without requiring compensation, be actively involved in implementing this project?**

Before this project comes to its being, Apay Ai-yu Tang (Truku) and Man-chiu Lin (Chinese descendant in Taiwan) have been very good friends since 2008. While Apay grew up in Qowgan Village and has been concerned about the great language shift and loss in the community, Manchiu has visited the village and volunteered in Indigenous & Multicultural Association in Hualien (IMAH) in the past two summers. Over time, Apay and Manchiu grow committed to doing community-based language revitalization projects together after their graduation. When Apay received information about the Genographic Legacy Fund Grant and shared it with Manchiu, they both realized this will be a great opportunity to start the vision. After they drafted their ideas, in May 2011, Manchiu flew back to Taiwan on behalf of Apay (who is writing her dissertation) and presented the opportunity to Director Tien in IMAH. Tien, Apay's aunt, is a retired elementary school teacher who founded and supports IMAH with her own pension. She has a big heart for the community and has carried out numerous community-based projects in Qowgan

Village, Truku language education being one of them. Tien was delighted to hear Apay and Manchiu's commitment because she shares the same vision yet her physical strength is not as great as before. Tien immediately called Pusi Nowmaw, an experienced community leader and senior staff in Seediq History and Culture Transmission Association (SHCT). In the group discussion, Mr. Nowmaw was even more excited about opportunity. He said, "This is something we should have done decades ago. Seediq language and culture revitalization is just starting and I am glad that you young people are sharing the responsibility." Mr. Nowmaw also contacted SHCT, brought in more ideas, and together we expanded the scale of the project.

In the following weeks, we visited some other leaders and parents in the community, presented the ideas about workshops and summer activities, and asked if this would be something we can try to do together in 2012. All the feedback has been very encouraging and positive. Through communications at multiple levels, the work team finished drafting the plan in Mandarin Chinese and translated it into English. As it shows, we have strived to make the project a collaborative process involving as many community members as possible. The collaboration and communication process is still moving forward and will continue throughout the summer.

The goal of the project is to strengthen Truku language transmission across generations and help the younger generation grow knowledgeable and confident in our own cultural background. The Language and Tribal Stories Documentation Workshop is appropriate because instead of imposing the revitalization agenda on the participants and turning them into passive learners, it creates active learning opportunities for one to make genuine inquiry into the cultural resources of the tribe. The Truku Master-Apprentice

program is promising because it can strengthen the relationship between the older and younger generation and naturally enhance the language proficiency of the young. Besides workshops, we also plan to hold mountain camps and field trips to other Seediq communities in summer thanks to the requests from some community members. People in their 50s told us that there has been a lack of real-life opportunities for the youth to live the language and culture; the children therefore seem more into pop culture. It is hopeful that by creating authentic cultural experiences and stronger bond with other Seediq communities (e.g. Tkdaya and Toda), the younger Seediq generation will see the bigger picture, develop stronger ties with their parents and grandparents, and build solidarity with other Seediq people in central Taiwan.

We nurture the vision with great faith and love for each other. We believe the community will be actively involved in implementing this project even when the budget is tight.

**18 D. How will the benefits and impact of this project be sustainable after GLF funds have been expended? What plans are in place for sharing the benefits of the project with the community in an accessible manner (distribution, archives, etc)**

As the project aims to promote greater community engagement through year-long weekly workshops, we believe, along the way, more families in the village will be equipped with the knowledge, develop the critical awareness, and grow committed to the project even after GLF funds have been expended. The workshop will also plant the seed of language revitalization in the hearts of the younger generation and train them to be advocates and teachers of the Truku language. Besides activating the human resources and network among the villagers, the project will produce a language and culture archive

(e.g. about Truku language, oral history, songs, community stories, etc) available for online access. These resources will be of great use for future language & culture curriculum development.

To increase the influence of the project and raise the consciousness of the public inside and outside the village, first of all, we will have presentations four times a year in the village and invite more people to come and provide their insights. Secondly, outside the village, we will share the project with the people in other Seediq (e.g. Tkdaya and Toda) and Indigenous communities (e.g. Atayal, Amis, etc.) and seek for opportunities in networking. Thirdly, the participants will also speak about their experiences in different public spheres, including university, school, TV station, church, blogs, etc, and encourage more people to support this vision and its related programs. Fourthly, we will digitally document all the activities in the project and update them on our website so that we can share and review our experiences on a more concrete level. It is hoped that this project will initiate the process of community dialogue, healing, rebuilding, and prosperity. Fifthly, the two local researchers, Apay and Man-chiu, will write about this experience in English and share it with the scholars and practitioners in the field of Indigenous language and culture education. Last but not least, we will continue writing grant proposals and ask for personal donations so as to continue our future community-based projects.

**18 E. What are the measurable outcomes of your project? How will you measure the impact of your project?**

The direct measurable outcomes of the project are (1) increased oral fluency in Truku among the younger generation; (2) increased use of the Truku language at home

and in the community; (3) increased understanding and appreciation of Seediq culture and history among the younger generation; (4) increased pride and confidence of being a Seediq (Truku) among the villagers; (5) the production of an online archive displaying the cultural information collected by the participants in the workshop; (6) increased understanding of the native Taiwanese in the global society.

We will measure the impact of our project by both formative and summative assessments. In terms of formative assessment, in the process, we will do monthly home visits and surveys to ask for the participants' feedback, and use the information to modify our next step(s). Manchiu, an ethnographer, will qualitatively document people's involvement throughout the months and explore how this local initiative impacts home dynamics and intergenerational ties. In the meantime, Apay will quantitatively measure the youths' language proficiency and attitudes before, during, after the implementation of the project. In a word, as we carry out the plan, we will use both qualitative (i.e. ethnography, narratives) and quantitative (i.e. surveys) methods to measure the impact of the project.