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Driving Factors Behind Language Use Among Younger Generations in Taiwan: Is the Demise of Hokkien Inevitable?

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DRIVING FACTORS BEHIND LANGUAGE USE AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS IN TAIWAN: IS THE DEMISE OF HOKKIEN INEVITABLE?

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Abstract

Globalization and internationalization have undoubtedly led to a decrease in linguistic diversity worldwide. Yet even receiving active governmental support and boasting native speakers in the millions, Taiwanese Hokkien is on the decline. Though researchers have begun to hypothesize why a generational gap exists in local language use within Taiwan, there is little agreement about the possible drivers or causes of the decline. This thesis examines why the use of Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages has continued to decrease, despite governmental language initiatives and policies created to encourage the use of these languages. Using specific factors that have been identified by previous researchers, in particular *partisan politics, location, educational quality,* and *internet usage,* this study performed a series of regression analyses using a more current data set from the Asian Barometer. Findings revealed that while location, education, and internet usage influence language choice, political affiliation and support of a Taiwanese (i.e. non-Chinese) identity may no longer be driving factors behind Hokkien usage, especially among younger generations. This raises questions for the preservation and future vitality of Hokkien, and more broadly all local languages in Taiwan.

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Introduction

By the time the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang; KMT) arrived in Taiwan, government officials found a diverse linguistic environment, a stark contrast with their envisioned monolingual "New Chinese Society." This linguistic diversity in Taiwan was decidedly not welcomed by the KMT. From 1949 to the late 1970s, Mandarin was the only language deemed appropriate for the public sphere. Yet at the time, the only Mandarin speakers on the island were limited to the newly arrived Mainlanders fleeing a Communist victory across the strait, making up less than 13% of the population.[1] Due to this low number, the KMT government devised new policies to dissuade the use of non-Mandarin languages. One of the first strategies was to rename and codify Mandarin as *guoyu* or the national language.[2] Between 1949 and 1987, the KMT government enacted a range of language policies, including forbidding media broadcasting of non-Mandarin languages (primarily Hokkien) to mandating a strict Mandarin-only classroom language policy.[3] Despite these official policies, Taiwanese citizens continued to use local languages in daily life after 1949.[4]

On July 15, 1987, the government abruptly ended the 38 year-long KMT martial law. Following the end of this period and the steady democratization of Taiwan over the next decade, a new political scene welcomed open discourse about the place of Taiwanese in a new democratic society. The Taiwanese government began developing local language revitalization

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[1] Ko-hua Yap. "Waishengren De Renshu, Laiyuan Yu Fenbu" [The Population, Origin, and Distribution of *Waishengren*] National Taiwan Library.
[2] Gareth Price, *Language, Society, and the State: From Colonization to Globalization in Taiwan* (Boston: Walter de Gruyer, 2019), 133.
[3] Mei-ju Chen. *Taiwan Yuyan Jiaoyu Zhengce Zhi Huigu Yu Zhanwang* [Review and Prospects of Taiwanese Language Education Policy] (Kaohsiung City, Taiwan: Fuwen Book Publisher, 2009).
[4] Price, 143.

and education programs in the early 1990s, following a period of political push for "Taiwanization" and "Localization."[5] Classroom punishments for not speaking Mandarin began to disappear. In 1987 (the same year as the end of martial law), the government issued a decree, formally forbidding the use of "physical punishment, issuing fines, or… other such improper means to punish students for speaking dialects on school grounds." Gareth Price in *Language, Society, and the State: From Colonization to Globalization in Taiwan* notes that, although this edict was by no means comprehensive, it represented a larger shift in attitudes toward local languages.[6] Over the next decade the government devised new language policies, and in 2001 formally implemented language development curricula. The new legislation requires schools to offer curricula in Taiwanese Hokkien, Hakka, and several aboriginal languages (depending on the location of the school). In addition, primary students are required to take a minimum of one course every year in a local language.

Since the early 2000s, the government has also passed several legislative acts that have given official governmental status to Taiwanese, Hokkien, and aboriginal languages. The 2003 Language Equality Act officially designated Hokkien, Hakka, and aboriginal Languages as Official Government Languages. A series of resolutions passed after 2017 has also allowed government documents to be written in these languages.[7] Most recently, the Ministry of Culture hosted an inaugural National Language Development Conference at National Taiwan Normal

[5] Chang-Yen Tsai, "National Identity, Ethnic Identity, and Party Identity in Taiwan," *Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies* 1, no. 188 (2007), 25.
[6] Price, 152.
[7] Ministry of Culture Public Announcement, "The Draft of the National Languages." *Republic of China Ministry of Culture,* 2017.

University from June to October 2021, providing a forum for local language preservation committees to discuss trends in non-Mandarin language education.[8]

Even with these educational initiatives and governmental policies, the decline of local languages has continued. In every generation, fewer people use Hokkien and other non-Mandarin languages than in previous generations.[9] Despite progressive State initiatives, data indicate a counterintuitive decline in Taiwanese Hokkien, Hakka, and aboriginal language proficiency on the island. The Taiwan Population and Household Census has gathered data on nationwide self-reported language use; however, this data is a fairly recent addition. The 1956, 1966, 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses did not include any questions involving language use. Only the 2010 and 2020 survey asked respondents to report their use of non-Mandarin languages.[10] This inclusion of self-reporting language use provides a way to gauge the efficacy of local language development programs post-1987.

The 2010 National Census survey asked respondents to mark which languages they use at home, giving as options *Mandarin, Taiwanese Hokkien, Hakka,* and *aboriginal languages* (noted as "Indigenous Languages" in Table 15). Census data divided respondents into distinct generation groups (representing 10 year increments) and revealed a significant decline in local language use between generations who received education under the martial law period and generations who attended school during post-1987 language development programs.[11]

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[8] "Maixiang Guojia Yuyan Xin Shidai: Wenhuabu Qidong 2021 Guojia Yuyan Fazhan Huiyi Yaoqing Gongmin Canyu" [Toward a New Era of National Languages: Ministry of Culture Launches 2021 National Language Development Conference, Invites the Public to Participate] *R.O.C. Ministry of Culture*, 2021.

[9] *Note about terminology: Due to the existing multiple names for many local languages in Taiwan, this study will refer to Hakka as "Hakka," languages spoken by the aboriginal peoples as "Aboriginal Languages," and the Southern Min language spoken in Taiwan as "Taiwanese" or "Taiwanese Hokkien." All of these non-Mandarin languages will be referred to together as "local languages."*

[10] Yap, Ko-hua. "Taiwan Lici Yuyan Pucha Huigu." [A Review of Taiwan Language Census] *Journal of Taiwanese Languages and Literature* 13, no 2 (2018), 264

[11] "99 Nian Renkou Ji Zhuzhai Pucha: Zong Baogao Tongji Jieguo Tiyao Fenxi" (*R.O.C. Directorate of General Budget,* Accounting and Statistics, 2013), 27.

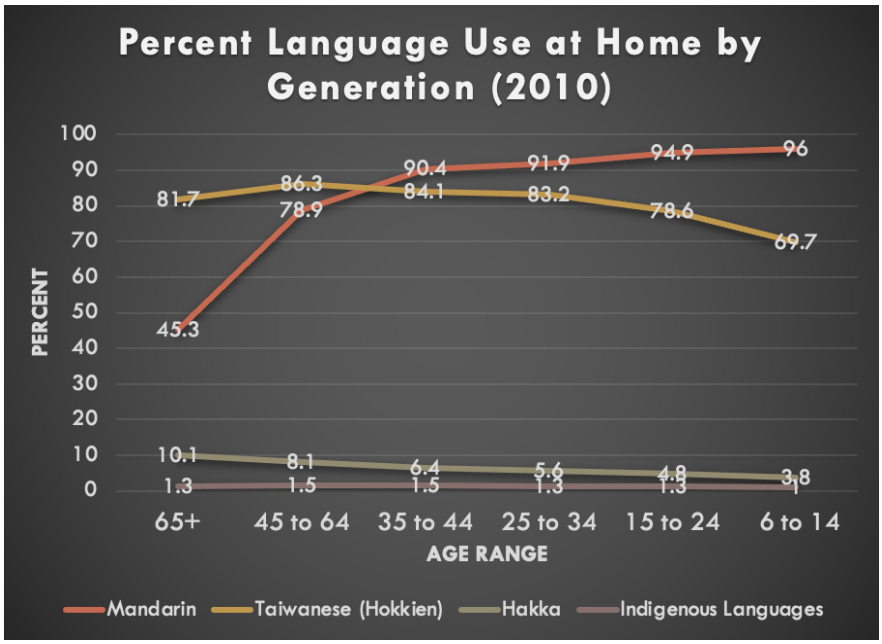

Figure A from "2010 Census"
Translated by researcher
(Total number of respondents: 23,123,866)

The 2010 census data indicates that, for individuals born between 1946 and 1985, there was only a decrease of 2.8% in Hokkien usage at home. However, for individuals born between 1986 and 2004 there was a dramatic drop of usage of over 13%. The census data reveals a relationship between age and decline in usage. The younger the individual, the less likely the person is to use a non-Mandarin language in the home. Recent data from the 2020 census indicates a more pronounced decrease in local language usage.

Compared to the 2010 census which asks respondents to select *which* language(s) they use at home, the 2020 questionnaire instead asks respondents to rank language use by frequency, asking *what is your primary language* and *if applicable, what is your secondary language*. "Primary language" is usually considered the language that someone speaks in most situations, including home, work, and school. Although the 2010 census data indicated that nearly 70 percent of respondents 6 to 14 years old used Hokkien in the home, the rewording of the 2020

census data paints an even more dramatic decline. For this age range, only 7.4 percent of respondents listed Hokkien as their primary language.[12]

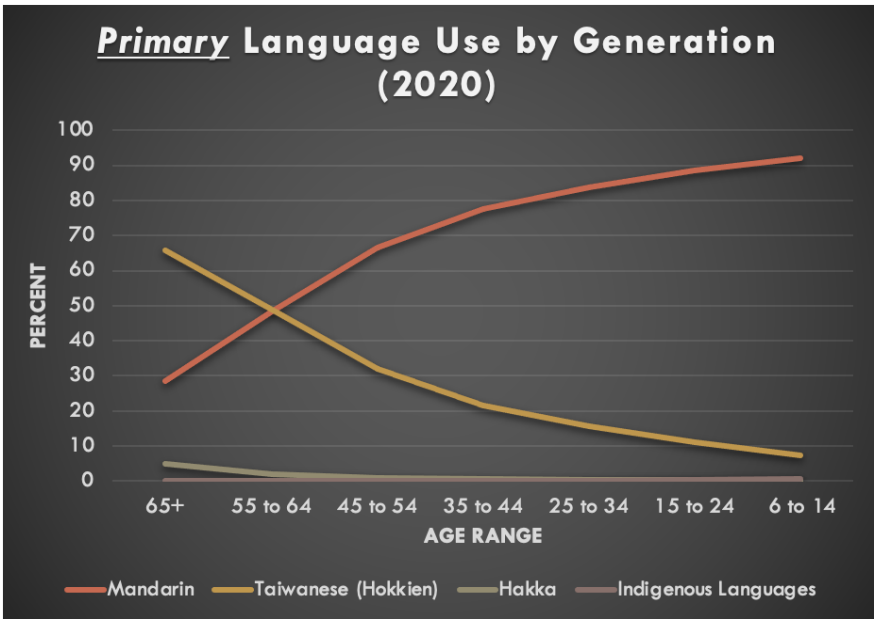

Figure B from "2020 Census"
Translated by researcher
(Total number of respondents: 21,786,000)

Many researchers have documented generational language loss using the three-generation model proposal by Joshua A. Fishman.[13] Fishman's model, however, describes language shift within *immigrant* communities. The generational gap in Taiwan (specifically Hokkien) is not the result of immigrant assimilation. Rather, the gap exists between generations who have and have not been the recipients of post-1987 local language revitalization programs.

This thesis examines why the use of Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages has continued to decrease, despite governmental language initiatives and policies created to

[12] "109 Nian Renkou Ji Zhuzhai Pucha Chubu Tongji Jieguo Tiyao Fenxi" (*R.O.C. Directorate of General Budget,* Accounting and Statistics, 2021).
[13] Joshua Fishman, et al. *Language Loyalty in the U.S.: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966).

encourage the use of these languages. Though researchers have begun to hypothesize why this generational gap exists in language use within Taiwan, there is little agreement about the possible causes. Some have suggested that the decline in language use is intimately connected to partisan politics, while others have proposed that neighborhood language preference may be a larger contributing factor, particularly as younger generations migrate to larger metropolitan areas in Taiwan. Still others have, ironically, attributed the loss to the way that the educational initiatives have been implemented in Taiwan. Although existing research offers insight into these factors, most of the quantitative research has been limited to small sample sizes. Using inferential statistics, this thesis analyzes a much larger data set from the Asian Barometer (wave 5) to verify there *are* correlations, and if there are, to what extent the factors identified in the literature influence the decline in language use of younger generations.[14]

Chapter One provides a historical background of the language policies in Taiwan both pre- and post-1987, focusing particularly on educational initiatives and governmental policies created to slow the decline of Taiwanese and other local languages. Chapter Two follows with a comprehensive review of the literature that explores the possible causes identified by researchers for the decrease in the use of Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages, despite these educational initiatives and governmental policies. Using the factors identified in Chapter Two, Chapter Three analyzes data from the Asian Barometer survey to determine if and to what extent significant correlations exist between these factors and local language use. The final chapter concludes by offering recommendations for future research and highlights the implications these

[14] *The Asian Barometer is a multinational survey cohosted by National Taiwan University and Academia Sinica, gauging views on governance and politics across 17 nations in Asia since 2002; I became familiar with this survey during my internship at the NTU headquarters in 2020. A model survey has a sample size of 1200 respondents.*

findings have for language decline and the potential future of language revitalization efforts on the island.

The decline of local languages in Taiwan is symptomatic of the global trend of shrinking linguistic diversity. According to a 2018 UNESCO report on global language trends, over 43% of languages on earth are losing speakers; this ranges from languages that are vulnerable due to an aging population to languages that are nearly extinct, with only tens of speakers.[15] Fortunately, Hokkien (including the Taiwanese dialect) is not yet in significant danger, still boasting 50 million speakers globally; the language continues to be spoken in its namesake Chinese province of Fujian, as well as diaspora communities in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and the United States. However, this relative linguistic safety may only be short-lived. Taiwanese Hokkien speakers tend to be older, often living in more rural areas. In addition, written proficiency in Taiwanese is borderline non-existent, with very few able to read or write the available unstandardized scripts well.[16] Because of this, many have voiced concerns about a gradual decrease in proficiency in Taiwanese local languages, hinting at a more vulnerable future for non-Mandarin languages.[17]

Globalization and internationalization have undoubtedly led to a decrease in linguistic diversity across the world. Professor of Linguistics at the University of Buffalo Jeff Good concludes that "We seem to be in this massive global stage of endangerment because social structures have changed so rapidly."[18] Although Taiwanese is not yet an endangered language,

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[15] J. Zach Hollo, "As Taiwan's Identity Shifts, Can the Taiwanese Language Return to Prominence?" *Ketagalan Media,* August 27, 2019, https://ketagalanmedia.com/2019/08/27/as-taiwans-identity-shifts-can-the-taiwanese-language-return-to-prominence/.
[16] "1959.12.17 Zhanglaojiaohui Dui Jinzhi Shiyong Luomazi Shengjing Suoti Zhi Xingzheng Susong Zao Zhonghua Minguo Zhengquan Bohui" *Taiwan Memory*, National Central Library, 2018.
[17] Hollo.
[18] Hollo.

the recent decline in proficiency illustrates a frightening trend. Taiwan reflects this rapid change in social structure, transitioning from a one-party martial law state to a pluralistic democracy in one decade. Even receiving active governmental support and boasting native speakers in the millions, Taiwanese Hokkien is on the decline. The study of Taiwanese Hokkien and non-Mandarin language policy in Taiwan may contribute to both a general understanding of language decline and the efficacy of language revitalization efforts in nations with a similar history of forced monolingual homogeneity.

Chapter I: Language Policies

Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages have continued to decrease, despite government language initiatives and policies created to revitalize the use of these languages. The 2010 and 2020 Taiwan censuses both revealed a significant decline in local language use. The 2010 census data indicates that, for individuals born between 1946 and 1985, there was only a decrease of 2.8% in Hokkien usage at home. However, for individuals born between 1986 and 2004 there was a dramatic drop in usage of over 13%. The 2020 census reveals an even greater generational gap; 65.9 percent of 65+ respondents listed Hokkien as a primary language, compared to only 7.4 percent of respondents 6 to 14 years old. Counterintuitively, generations who received education under the martial law Mandarin-only period exhibit greater local language use than generations who attended school during post-1987 language development programs.

As Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley point out in *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*, government language policies shape patterns of language use. They maintain that state policies are one of *the* most influential forces in everyday language use, and that the influence of such policies "typically endures far after they are changed."[19] Grenoble and Whaley use the Xibe language to highlight this phenomenon. During the Cultural Revolution in China, the state prohibited the publishing of the Xibe language in Northwestern China. These bans were lifted in the late 1970s, and according to Grenoble and

[19] Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley, *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29.

Whaley, the near two-decades of language publishing policy led to a generational gap and the near extinction of the language.[20] Though Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages are not near extinction, the generational gap and language decline found in the census data suggest that the influence of restrictive language policies still remains in Taiwan.

To understand the current decline in usage of Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages in Taiwan, a more thorough understanding is needed regarding the history of language policies as a result of colonization. Due to Taiwan's geographic location and history under diverse colonial regimes, the "official language" of the island has never been static. Many of the regimes attempted to assert authority on the island by mandating language use. Dutch and Portuguese traders, Ming rebels, Qing settlers, Japanese colonizers, and the Republican Chinese government have all shaped the linguistic fabric of Taiwan to varying degrees. This chapter provides a historical background of language policy in Taiwan, from the late Qing period to post-1987 language revitalization programs. These language policies highlight the inherent power of state intervention in language use, whether supporting or undermining minority languages.

"Their Language is like Birdcall!": Taiwanese Hokkien Pre-1895

Taiwanese history pre-1895 saw staggered waves of immigrants from across diverse areas of Southern China to an already linguistically diverse island. By the 18th century, the new colonial Qing government eased immigration restrictions to the island, leading to waves of immigrants primarily from Guangdong and Fujian Provinces in Southern China. Long after immigrating to Taiwan, settlers continued to use their original languages and dialects, relying on language use to differentiate ethno-linguistic communities.[21]

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[20] Grenoble and Whaley, 29.

[21] Ui-jin Ang. *Taiwan Helaohua Shengdiao Yanjiu* [A Study on Taiwanese Hokkien Tones] (Independence Evening Post Publishing House, 1985).

In 1722, Huang Shujing, after being appointed to the Qing government's High Commissioner to Taiwan, lamented the stark linguistic diversity between mainland China and Taiwan, stating "In [Taiwan], their language is like birdcall – totally unintelligible! For example: for the surname Liu, they say 'Lau'; Chen becomes 'Tân'; Zhuang is 'Zeng', and Zhang is 'Tiuⁿ'. My deputy's surname Wu becomes 'Au'. My surname Huang does not even have a proper vowel: it is just 'Ng' here! It is difficult to make sense of this."[22]

Despite such linguistic confusion, the Qing government took a "hands off" approach to language use in both Taiwan and mainland China, allowing more local autonomy. By the late 19th century, these intra-ethnic divisions between Fujian immigrants began to disappear and a single, unified Hokkien dialect emerged on the island. The languages of this diverse array of speakers gradually homogenized into a more uniform dialect of Hokkien-- *Taiwanese* Hokkien. Ui-jin Ang in his 1985 book *A Study on Taiwanese Hokkien Tones* labels this emerging unique Taiwanese dialect of Hokkien as "漳泉濫 (Tsiang-Tsuân-lām)," literally: a prestige mixture of existing Zhangzhou and Quanzhou dialects.[23]

Kōminka: Taiwanese Language Policy under Japan

Taiwan's "natural" trajectory of language would change abruptly in 1895 following the end of the first Sino-Japanese War. The Qing government surrendered Taiwan to the burgeoning Japanese Empire. Language education and policy quickly became an important cornerstone in colonial administration of the island, as well as attempts to assimilate Taiwan into the Japanese Empire. Within the first year under Japanese rule, the Meiji government proposed the establishment of "National Language (Japanese) Training Centers" on the island, justifying the

[22] Shu-jing Huang, *Taihai Shicha Lu.* 1722. *quoted in* "Jiangjin 300 Nian Qian Qingguo Guanyuan Ting Taiyu Jitongyajiang De Youqu Jizai." [A Qing Official's Account of Gibberish Taiwanese Nearly 300 Years Ago] *Taiwan Memory*, National Central Library, 2016.
[23] Ang.

importance of language education in governance of "new territories." The proposal highlighted pre-existing linguistic diversity of the island, laminating that government translators previously familiar with Mandarin in mainland China were "hardly able to function" in these Hokkien-speaking and Hakka-speaking communities on the island.[24]

Following the success of the first National Language Teaching and Learning Center, the following year the Ministry of Education established fourteen more language schools across Taiwan[25]. Although Japanese language usage was encouraged especially in interactions with authorities, the colonial government did not actively discourage Hokkien usage in daily life. This relatively permissive approach to language usage was not to last. On the eve of the Second World War, Japanese colonial administration pushed the "Kominka" (literally *making the people subjects of the Emperor*) movement to further "Japanize" colonial holdings in Korea and Taiwan. This included mandating Japanese clothing and customs. Most importantly, the Kominka movement mandated strict Japanese language use. Researcher Chou Wan-yao explains that a primary goal of the Kominka Movement was not to simply establish greater "National Language" use in Taiwan, but rather to construct "a monolingual society where Japanese would be spoken by all."[26]

By the end of the Second World War, official Japanese estimates concluded that 80 percent of Taiwanese citizens spoke Japanese. Gary Davison in "A Short History of Taiwan: the Case of Independence" estimates that by the end of the Japanese Era, "71.3 percent [of

[24] Xi-qing Xu. "Yi Peiyang Tongyi Wei Mudi Er Sheli Zhi Guoyu Chuanxisuo." [Establishing a "National Language Training Center" for Translation Training] *Taiwan Historica*, n.d.
[25] Xu.
[26] Wan-yao Chou, "The National-Language Movement in Colonial Taiwan, 1937-45." *New History Journal*, (Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, 2012), http://saturn.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/~huangkc/nhist/6-2CY.html

Taiwanese children]... had at least an elementary school education."[27] However, given the Hokkien proficiency of older generations indicated in the 2020 census data, this high Japanese literacy rate is somewhat misleading because it does not acknowledge that Hokkien, Hakka, and other local languages continued to be the main form of communication in daily life during the Japanese era.

"I Will Only Speak the National Language, Not a Dialect": Language Policy under the KMT

Just as in 1895, Taiwan's trajectory changed dramatically in 1945. The end of the Second World War saw the end of the Japanese Era and the beginning of the Republican Era for Taiwan. Kuomintang (KMT) officials replaced the retreating Japanese administrators as the new authority on the island. The domain of the Republic of China expanded to include Taiwan. Taiwan faced new governance that brought new language policies. Seemingly overnight, 國語 (the National Language) no longer referred to Japanese, but rather to Mandarin, a language at the time nearly absent on the island. Under the new KMT rule, Chou Wan-yao argues, Japanese-educated Taiwanese became "functionally illiterate."[28]

This dramatic shift in governance, coupled with the arrival of refugees from mainland China, saw the rise of ethnic and linguistic tensions between pre-war (largely Hokkien and Hakka-speaking) Taiwanese and Mandarin-speaking mainland Chinese refugees. Further worsening the divide, the KMT pushed for "De-Japanization" (去日本化) of the local Taiwanese population, aimed at "enhancing national (Chinese) consciousness and eliminating thought

[27] Gary Marvin Davison, *A Short History of Taiwan: The Case for Independence* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 64.
[28] Chou.

patterns of enslavement."[29] This movement laid the groundwork for future restrictive language policy over the next few decades.

In 1951, the KMT government (exiled completely from Mainland China) enacted the first formal Mandarin-only language policy in the classroom; the Ministry of Education required all announcements at schools to be conducted in Mandarin. The KMT then instituted a ban on any romanization of local languages in 1955, including the use of Hokkien Peh-oe-ji, effectively limiting any orthography of non-Mandarin languages. As a result, the only written language was to be Mandarin.[30]

Further expanding the list of language restrictions, the Ministry of Education formally enacted the Mandarin Language Movement in 1956 explicitly banning the use of Hokkien or other local languages in any academic institution and establishing "severe fines" for any student caught speaking non-Mandarin languages on school grounds. Placards extolling these restrictions (*I will only speak the National Language, not a dialect*) became second nature in classrooms and government buildings. Over the next two decades, the KMT government continued to design and implement measures to encourage Mandarin and severely restrict local language use, including banning non-Mandarin language television and radio broadcasting in 1976 through the "Broadcast Television Law."[31]

The Strategic Importance of Establishing a *Guoyu*

[29] Xiao-yi Qin and Zhang Rui-cheng. *Guangfu Taiwan Zhi Chouhua Yu Shouxiang Jieshou* [Planning the Recovery of Taiwan and Accepting the Surrender] *The Committee for the Party History of the Central Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang*, 1990.
[30] "1959.12.17 Zhanglaojiaohui Dui Jinzhi Shiyong Luomazi Shengjing Suoti Zhi Xingzheng Susong Zao Zhonghua Minguo Zhengquan Bohui" *Taiwan Memory*, National Central Library, 2018.
[31] "Taiwan Yuyan Zhengce Da Shiji." [An Overview of the History of Language Policies in Taiwan] *National Museum of Taiwan Literature*, n.d.

The language policies of martial law-era Taiwan are not unique to the KMT context, but rather can be understood as an instrument of national cohesion designed to establish a Chinese identity. Pierre Bourdieu in *Language as a Symbolic Power* emphasizes that many nations "see the value of a language in state building; the underlying idea is that a single language has a unifying effect and has great symbolic value."[32] Just as Japan decades prior attempted to consolidate identity through a national unified language, so too did the KMT. Borrowing Michael Billig's terminology, creation of a national hegemony often involves a hegemony of language.[33] It is no accident that both the KMT government and the Japanese colonial government chose to use the same characters 國語 (National Language) to refer to each respective language (Japanese and Mandarin). Both regimes recognized the strategic importance of establishing their language as "the National Language."

The implementation of a National Language inherently devalues other local languages. This was especially true in Taiwan. Elizabeth Hubbs notes that language consolidation not only grants prestige to a "national language," but also naturally establishes a linguistic hierarchy.[34] A-Chin Hsiau in "Language Ideology in Taiwan: The KMT's Language Policy, the Tai-yu Language Movement, and Ethnic Politics" highlights this, stating that Hokkien was "devalued as a dialect. It [was] seen as a marker of backwardness, crudeness, illiteracy, low socio-economic status, rurality, and so forth. In contrast, Mandarin as the national language [became] a symbol of modernity, refinement, literacy, urbanity, high socio-economic status."[35]

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[32] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power,* trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 11.
[33] Michael Billig. *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 29.
[34] Elizabeth Hubbs. "Taiwan Language-in-Education Policy: Social, Cultural, and Practical Implications." *Arizona Working Papers in SLA & Teaching*, 20 (2013): 83.
[35] A-Chin Hsiau. "Language Ideology in Taiwan: The KMT's Language Policy, The Tai-yu Language Movement, and Ethnic Politics." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 18, no. 4 (1997): 308.

Pluralism and Taiwanization: Language Reform and Revitalization after 1987

After forty years, Mandarin-only language policies were challenged. Once again, as with 1895 and 1945, Taiwan faced a massive shift in governance seemingly overnight. On July 15, 1987, the KMT government abruptly ended the forty year-long martial law period amid a push for democratization. Civil and political freedoms allowed for frank discussions surrounding both the legacy of KMT martial law and questions of cultural identity on the island. Throughout the 1980s, "Taiwanization" (台灣本土化 *Taiwan Bentuhua*) emerged as a distinct cultural movement re-asserting Taiwanese local identity in response to the previous decades. J. Bruce Jacobs provides insight by closely examining how the word *bentuhua* is translated:

> *Bentuhua* is a focus on Taiwan as opposed to China (or the world).... Taiwanization of course translates the meaning rather than the literal text of *bentuhua*. We can gain a sense of the current use of *bentu* from a passage in President Chen Shui-bian's inauguration speech of May 20, 2000….the second part of the passage reads: "to enable Taiwan's own cultures to interact naturally with Chinese cultures and world cultures in order to create a new structure of a 'cultured Taiwan in a century of reform.'" *Bentu* culture in this sense clearly means Taiwan's cultures as opposed to Chinese cultures (Huaren wenhua) and world cultures (shijie wenhua).[36]

Culture and identity are frequently cited as reasons for language revitalization, particularly when a language is perceived as a unique "cultural treasure."[37] Therefore, it is no surprise that the question of local language use emerges within the Taiwanization movement – specifically, what should the role of local languages be in a new democratic Taiwan? The answer was a resounding commitment to the "validation of Taiwanese, Hakka, and indigenous languages in public spheres and education."[38] Politician Ju Gau-jeng exhibited such "Taiwanization"

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[36] J. Bruce Jacobs, "Taiwanization" in Taiwan's politics," in *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism in Contemporary Taiwan: Bentuhua*, ed. John Makeham and A-chin Hsiau (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 18-19.
[37] Grenoble and Whaley, 20.
[38] Hubbs, 85. See also Todd L. Sandel, "Linguistic Capital in Taiwan: The KMT's Mandarin Language Policy and Its Perceived Impact on Language Practices of Bilingual Mandarin and Tai-gi Speakers," *Language in Society* 32, no. 4 (2003): 523-551. Deborah Beaser, "The Outlook for Taiwanese Language Preservation," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 172 (2006): 1-40.

sentiments early in 1987 when he chose to use Hokkien in the Legislative Yuan. When initially chastised by other legislators for his use of Hokkien, he responded "you [KMT] thieves have been freeloading off of the Taiwanese people for decades, and yet you still don't understand *Taiyu*?"[39]

From Ju's perspective, the Hokkien language was a tool to realize Taiwanization and reject the forced homogeneity by the KMT legislators of previous decades. Ju's comments reflected general sentiment of those outside the KMT structure. In light of this, change was swift in 1987; just several months after the official end of the martial law period, the KMT government enacted the first piece of legislation attempting to reverse the loss of local languages: schools were now forbidden from "physical punishment, issuing fines, or… other such improper means to punish students for speaking dialects on school grounds."[40] In November of the same year, three government-owned television stations began broadcasting news in Hokkien.[41] Although these changes to policy were by no means comprehensive, they signaled a dramatic shift in the perception of local languages and their place in the young democracy.

In 1990, an elementary school in Yilan County introduced formal Hokkien-language classes. Reflecting on the inclusion of local-language classes in Yilan, then-County Magistrate You Si-kun expressed hopefulness at this effort of language revitalization after decades of restrictive policies, but also acknowledged the obstacles in implementing local language

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[39] "Zhu Gaozheng 'Minzhu Zhanjian' Huichu Guohui Di Yi Quan: Bu Di 'Lao Mou Shen Suan' Zeng Bei Zhege Liaodao." ["Battleship of Democracy" Ju Gau-jeng Throws First Punch in Legislative Yuan, Knocked Down by His Own Shrewdness] *CTWANT*, 2021.

[40] Gareth Price, *Language, Society, and the State: From Colonization to Globalization in Taiwan* (Berlin: De Gruyer Mouton, 2019), 152.

[41] Henning Klöter, "Language Policy in the KMT and DPP Eras." *China Perspectives [online]* 56 (2004): paragraph 13, https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.442

curricula following decades of Mandarin-only policies. You stated that "in that Mandarin-dominant environment [Yilan], promoting *Taiyu* had actually been quite difficult."[42] Given the declining number of Taiwanese speakers and lack of educational resources, incorporating formal Hokkien-language classes presented enormous challenges for the County.

Most communities involved in language revitalization focus at least some of their efforts on educational programs. However, as Grenoble and Whaley point out, there is a wide spectrum of educational programs possible, ranging from complete immersion in a language to very limited exposure.[43] They acknowledge that few governments have the resources necessary (or are willing) to offer full immersion programs in schools for local language instruction. As a result, local languages are frequently taught as secondary subjects and as "foreign" languages.[44] This approach is in stark contrast to the approach favored by UNESCO that encourages governments to focus on *adult* literacy programs. UNESCO's rationale is that language knowledge is tied to basic economic development; therefore, literacy education needs to be offered for adults within the community. Unfortunately, learning language can be difficult for adults, so many language revitalization programs opt instead to start language instruction at the primary level, focusing on the next generation.[45] This has been the approach taken in Taiwan.

Encouraged by the relative success of the Yilan county elementary school, the Ministry of Education issued a requirement that all elementary schools offer at least one hour of local language instruction per week. Local language courses, though, would only be offered as "electives." The Ministry of Education in 1993 justified this decision by rationalizing that,

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[42] "Shou Jie Jiang Weishui Taiyu Hanshi Nianchangsai Kaipao: Di Yi Ming Jiangjin 20 Wan Yua." [Inaugural Weishui Taiwanese Hokkien Poetry Reading Competition is Underway, First Place Award 20,000 NTD] *Liberty Times Net,* 2021.

[43] Grenoble and Whaley, 50.

[44] Grenoble and Whaley, 57.

[45] Grenoble and Whaley, 58.

despite the benefits of pluralism and multiculturalism, "overly focusing on mother-language education could lead to ethnic isolation, therefore an elective format is more suitable [for language education]."[46]

This elective format, however, was upgraded to a requirement less than a decade later. According to the *Taiwan Yearbook 2003*, "Starting in September 2001, primary school students throughout Taiwan have been required to take at least one local language course. For junior high school students, however, such language courses remain an elective. The government supports such courses with various levels of funding, which is used to compile teaching materials, publish teacher handbooks, hold teacher workshops, and produce audio and video cassettes."[47] From 2001 to 2004, the Ministry of Education even began the compilation of a standardized, online Hokkien-language dictionary.[48]

Steps toward local language development and revitalization were not limited to the classroom. Over the next several decades, various national policies recognized the value and importance of local languages. One of the first policies implemented was the Act of Broadcasting Language Equality Protection in Public Transport, passed in 2000. This act mandates multilingual language broadcasting on trains and buses--something nearly unimaginable just two decades prior. It was not until 2017, though, that the Legislative Yuan passed the Hakka Basic Act to ensure the "transmission and development of Hakka language and

[46] Mei-hui Wu. "Jieyan Hou Taiwan Yuyan Jiaoyu Zhengce Zhi Fazhan" [Development of Taiwanese Language Education Policy in the Post-Martial Law Era] *National Taiwan Normal University*, 2005, 47.
[47] Klöter.
[48] Hollo, J. Zach. "As Taiwan's Identity Shifts, Can the Taiwanese Language Return to Prominence?" *Ketagalan Media*, August 27, 2019, https://ketagalanmedia.com/2019/08/27/as-taiwans-identity-shifts-can-the-taiwanese-language-return-to-prominence/.

culture." The act formally established the Hakka Affairs Council, entrusted with "negotiating, discussing, coordinating, and promoting Hakka affairs nationwide."[49]

The government introduced similar legislation for Indigenous Languages in 2017 with the Indigenous Languages Development Act.[50] This act reaffirms that indigenous languages, not just Hakka, are national languages of Taiwan. The legislation also tasks central authorities with "devising new indigenous [language] terms, compiling dictionaries of indigenous languages, and establishing a corpus of indigenous languages."[51] Most importantly, this 2017 act requires that all government legislation and proceedings involving indigenous communities be published in indigenous languages as well.

One of the most significant acts was passed in 2019: the Development of National Languages Act. Not only does this piece of legislation acknowledge the "multicultural nature of the nation," it also stipulates that "National language[s] […] shall mean the natural languages and sign languages used by the different ethnic groups in Taiwan," and that any national language may be used in its entirety as a medium of instruction at all levels of education.[52] To assist local communities, the Ministry of Education also announced an increase in allotted curricula for local language instruction for six years of local language instruction at the primary level, two years at the junior high level, and one year at the secondary level by late 2022.

As part of this commitment to local language instruction in the public schools, the Ministry of Culture hosted the National Language Development Conference at National Taiwan Normal University from June to October 2021, providing a forum for local language preservation

[49] "Hakka Basic Act," *Republic of China Legislative Yuan*, 2018.
[50] "Indigenous Languages Development Act," *Republic of China Legislative Yuan*, 2017.
[51] "Indigenous Languages Development Act."
[52] "Development of National Languages Act," *Republic of China Legislative Yuan*, 2019.

committees to discuss trends in non-Mandarin language education.[53] At the conference, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture Lee Lien-chuan applauded the positive support from the Ministry of Education in the expansion of allotted local language curricula. Lee did, though, raise concerns about the feasibility of a 2022 implementation, stating that "this [goal] raises the issue of instructor training, as well as how the government and private sector will be able to strengthen development of educational materials [for local languages]."[54]

These milestones are by no means an exhaustive review of governmental measures to reverse language decline. Since the early 2000s, new legislation and programs for language preservation and development have been introduced nearly annually. Within three decades, language policy in Taiwan has made a 180-degree turn; the strict Mandarin-only policies of the mid-20th century have given way to legislation extolling the merits of a multilingual society with multiple National Languages. An infographic published by the Ministry of Education highlights this dramatic shift in policy, exclaiming that Hokkien, Hakka, indigenous languages, Taiwanese Sign Language, and Mandarin are all equal "National Languages."

[53] "Maixiang Guojia Yuyan Xin Shidai: Wenhuabu Qidong 2021 Guojia Yuyan Fazhan Huiyi Yaoqing Gongmin Canyu." [Toward a New Era of National Languages: Ministry of Culture Launches 2021 National Language Development Conference, Invites the Public to Participate] R.O.C. Ministry of Culture, 2021.
[54] "2021 Guojia Yuyan Fazhan Huiyi Di San Chang Fenchang Luntan Zhu Zigao." [Verbatim Draft of the Third Session of the National Language Development Conference 2021] *The National Languages Development Conference,* 2021, 2.

Figure C: Resolution for the Development of National Languages
Source: *R.O.C. Ministry of Culture and Executive Yuan* and *Bu Niao Kuan For Good LLT*

Dual-Use Language Policy

The case of local language decline in Taiwan may initially seem ironic: language policies designed and implemented to curb and limit local language use now are at the forefront of language revitalization efforts. Grenoble and Whaley examine this dual-use of language policy in relation to minority languages and ultimately conclude, "government policies affecting language use in public (or private) realms are one of the … most basic forces that hinder (or help) language revitalization."[55] Examples of repressive or restrictive language policies stretch far beyond just the KMT Mandarin-only policy in Taiwan. Grenoble and Whaley point to other restrictive language policies in a variety of nations, such as the policies regarding the Kurdish language. These language policies carry the "arguably explicit purpose of… extinction of [minority] languages."[56] Restrictive language policies are effective because they are institutionalized in judicial courts, government offices, and most importantly, schools. As

[55] Grenoble and Whaley, ix-x.
[56] Grenoble and Whaley, 26.

Grenoble and Whaley explain, "In regions where a nationally (or regionally) administered education system exists, the languages of education become a key determinant of language use in other domains. When mandatory schooling occurs exclusively in a national language, the use of local languages almost inevitably declines."[57]

Just as restrictive language policies pre-1987 are by no means unique to Taiwan, so too are Taiwan's post- 1987 pluralistic language policies reflective of a broader global trend. Some educational programs and requirements for equal language use have proven the efficacy of language revitalization. Grenoble and Whaley use French in Canada as a prime example of the effect that positive language policy can have on language use. The 1969 Official Languages Act not only recognizes two national languages in Canada, French and English, but also provides provisions ensuring the equal use of both languages in official settings.[58] Since 1969, Canada has developed into a truly bilingual nation.

This example highlights the inherent power of governmental intervention in language use, whether that means supporting or undermining minority languages. It is not an understatement to say that language policies shape patterns of language use. Taiwan's language policies are no exception. What remains a mystery is why restrictive language policies seem to have had more influence than more current permissive language policies in Taiwan. Even with educational initiatives and governmental policies that promote multilingualism, the decline of local languages has continued. Stephen Wurm asserts that although government recognition of local languages does not guarantee revitalization, the symbolic effect of official recognition can

[57] Grenoble and Whaley, 10.
[58] Grenoble and Whaley, 27.

be “very powerful” and can lead to a positive change in language vitality.[59] However, in Taiwan this has not been the case. Fewer people use Taiwanese Hokkien and other non-Mandarin languages than in previous generations. Despite progressive governmental initiatives, census data indicate a counterintuitive and dramatic decline in Taiwanese Hokkien, Hakka, and aboriginal language proficiency on the island. Chapter Two examines various hypotheses for why this decline continues.

[59] Stephen Wurm,“Methods of Language Maintenance and Revival, with Selected Cases of Language Endangerment in the World,” in *Studies in Endangered Languages*, ed. Kazuto Matsumura (Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo, 1998): 27.

Chapter II: Possible Causes for the Language Loss Phenomenon

The symbolic effect of official recognition can be "very powerful" and lead to a positive change in language vitality.[60] The recent infographic published by the Taiwan Ministry of Education boldly recognizes Hokkien, Hakka, indigenous languages, Taiwanese Sign Language, and Mandarin as the "National Languages" in Taiwan. As discussed in Chapter One, several legislative acts have affirmed this recognition since 2017, including the Hakka Basic Act, the Indigenous Languages Development Act, and the Development of National Languages Act. Nevertheless, usage of local languages continues to decrease. Official recognition has not led to the anticipated positive change in language vitality. Aisha Hassan's observes that "many governments are using legislation to combat this [language loss phenomenon], but laws alone may not be the most effective tool."[61]

Researchers have not been oblivious to local language loss in Taiwan. Several have begun to hypothesize why this generational gap exists within Taiwan despite local language revitalization and education programs. However, there is little agreement about possible causes. Some have suggested that the decline in language use is intimately connected to partisan politics, while others have proposed that location may be a larger contributing factor, particularly as younger generations migrate to larger metropolitan areas in Taiwan. Still others have attributed the loss to the way the various educational initiatives associated with local language

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[60] Stephen Wurm,"Methods of Language Maintenance and Revival, with Selected Cases of Language Endangerment in the World," in *Studies in Endangered Languages,* ed. Kazuto Matsumura (Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo, 1998): 27.

[61] Aisha Hassan, "Laws Helped Kill Indigenous Languages. Can They Also Save Them?" *Quartz*, September 29, 2018), https://qz.com/1406466/laws-helped-kill-indigenous-languages-can-they-also-save-them/

revitalization have been implemented in Taiwan. One final factor may be the role that internet usage has played in language maintenance of Taiwanese and other local languages. Although little research has yet to be conducted on internet usage and its relationship with the decline, the lack of commonly-used written scripts for these local languages could contribute to the languages rarely being used on the internet. Given that younger generations communicate to a much larger extent than older generations on the internet, the generational gap of Hokkien use may in part be attributed to the inability of speakers to use the language in online communication. This chapter explores these various hypotheses for the local language loss phenomenon in Taiwan.

Partisan Politics

Both Japanese and Kuomintang (KMT) language policies were direct attempts to not only dissuade local language use, but more importantly foster a new national identity. Gareth Price and Horng Luen Wang both contend that the KMT's attempts to repress local languages became a "highly symbolic rallying point" for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in the 1990s because democratization was linked to multilingualism.[62] Price points to a 1994 speech made by progressive KMT president Lee Teng-hui. In his speech, Lee recounted in vivid detail how students would be forced to kneel in the sun or wear a dunce board around their necks as punishment for speaking Taiwanese. Price ultimately concludes, "What is crucial here is that Lee, as a sitting KMT president, is making this link explicit in the context of democratization."[63]

[62] Gareth Price, *Language, Society, and the State: From Colonization to Globalization in Taiwan* (Berlin: De Gruyer Mouton, 2019), 150 and Horng Luen Wang, "National Culture and Its Discontents: The Politics of Heritage and Language in Taiwan, 1949-2003," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2004): 786-815.
[63] Price, 154.

This punishment for language use became no less than "a metaphor for the coercive and arbitrary state…[and] highly symbolic of the historical political humiliation of the Taiwanese people."[64]

Multilingualism was not just linked to democratization; multilingual equality and local language preservation also became cornerstones of *bentuhua* ("Taiwanization") (and consequently, the DPP).[65] The DPP has been a strong advocate for Taiwan's independence as culturally, economically, and politically separate from mainland China. Local language revitalization has been a key part of this platform. Lee Yi-shuan concludes in her dissertation on "Taiwan's Language and Curriculum Policy" that language policy became a partisan issue when Taiwan shifted from an island under martial law to a democracy.[66] In fact, local language use was a significant variable that influenced voting behavior in the 2000 election; DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian's multilingual resources clearly gave him the political advantage in both the 2000 and 2008 elections.[67] Speaking in Hakka during campaign speeches "was one way to directly communicate the DPP's platform and policies."[68] The DPP's attempts at local language revitalization were stifled, however, when the KMT party won the 2008 and 2012 elections. Price describes this time period as plagued with "battles over the linguistic landscape."[69] Jean-Francois Dupre concurs and adds that "the KMT's cultural policy after 2008 was characterized by attempts to re-sinicize Taiwan's cultural landscape and overturn some of the Taiwanization initiatives undertaken by the Lee and Chen administrations."[70]

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[64] Price, 154.
[65] Price,158, and Deborah Beaser, "The Outlook for Taiwanese Language Preservation," *Sino-Platonic Papers* (2006): 1-40.
[66] Yi-Hsuan Lee, *Taiwan's Language Curriculum and Policy: A Rhetorical Analysis of the DPP's Claims Making* (PhD dissertation, University of Northern Iowa, 2009), 22.
[67] Price, 156.
[68] Price, 157.
[69] Price, 184.
[70] Jean-Francois Dupre, *Culture Politics and Linguistic Recognition in Taiwan: Ethnicity, National Identity, and the Party System* (London: Routledge, 2017), 125.

Issues of local language use appear to still be linked to partisan politics. Many DPP supporters remain committed to multilingualism "as a surrogate for claims to full political independence"[71] and KMT supporters remain committed to monolingualism and re-sinicization. Based on his cursory analysis of election results, Price found, "Like any other population, the Taiwanese do not vote solely on language and identity issues, but they are salient lodestars for party-political direction and deliberation in the public sphere."[72]

This connection between political identity and language ideology is also reflected in Hokkien literature, as much of the literature is irrevocably intertwined with Taiwanization. Topics include issues such as the 228 incident and the KMT White Terror--all incidents that raise the "national identity question." Li Bi-chin, a Professor of Taiwanese Language and Literature, maintains that "as Taiwanese people lose the ability to access this body of literature, they lose perspectives that effectively advocate a certain political view."[73] Because much of this literature has not yet been translated, Hokkien proficiency is still crucial to be able to access these works.[74]

Similar to Price, Lee, and Li, Lai Wan-hua explores the relationship between partisan politics and language loss in her master's thesis *Language Loss Phenomenon in Taiwan: A Narrative Inquiry—Autobiography and Phenomenological Study.* Lai conducted a study of three Taiwanese families to better understand what she refers to as "the language loss phenomenon in Taiwan."[75] Specifically, Lai investigated Hokkien proficiency across several generations, finding

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[71] Price, 189.

[72] Price, 190.

[73] Qtd. in Zach J. Hollo, "As Taiwan's Identity Shifts, Can the Taiwanese Language Return to Prominence?" *Ketagalan Media*, August 27, 2019, https://ketagalanmedia.com/2019/08/27/as-taiwans-identity-shifts-can-the-taiwanese-language-return-to-prominence/.

[74] *It should be noted, however, that some Taiwanese literature was written in Japanese. Yet, Under the KMT rule, the ban on Japanese language likewise limited the development of Taiwanese literature. For more information on the historical development of Taiwanese Literature see the article by Chang Heng-hao.*

[75] Wan-Hua Lai, *"Language Loss Phenomenon in Taiwan: A Narrative Inquiry—Autobiography and Phenomenological Study"* (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2012), xi.

that younger generations experienced greater language loss than older generations. In her study, Lai arranged interviews with nine participants from three families and conducted semi-formal interviews across Taiwan, in Pingtung, Tainan, and Kaohsiung. Lai had participants share their individual perceptions of why they had experienced language loss. Although the interviewed participants only represented two generations (born *after 1945* and born *after 1965*), Lai included interview questions that asked participants to comment on language use and proficiency of both their children and their parents who were not interviewed.

Though Lai identified almost a dozen factors that contributed to language loss, she concluded that political power and colonial history on the island were the most important factors contributing to Hokkien mother tongue loss. Out of the nine individuals, every participant reported political power as having a "strong and direct" influence on their Hokkien proficiency loss.[76] The respondents born *after 1965* all recounted a hostile classroom environment in the 1960s and 1970s that both prohibited and punished Taiwanese Hokkien usage; one interviewee recalls that they "were taught that Taigi (Taiwanese Hokkien) was as a bad low-class language… I remember one would be fined for speaking Taigi."[77] Lai emphasizes that partisan politics have been successful not only in limiting "mother tongue" use, but also rendering Hokkien into the 21st century as a "socially devalued" language for the children of her interviewees.[78]

Others, however, have contested the idea that local language use is still a partisan issue, instead citing the decline as proof that Taiwanese political identity is no longer associated with language use. J. Zach Hollo in "As Taiwan's Identity Shifts, Can the Taiwanese Language Return to Prominence?" argues that younger generations no longer link language use with

[76] Lai, 151.
[77] Lai, 156.
[78] Lai, 166.

political affiliation, explaining that "many young people identify with a Taiwanese identity even though their Taiwanese language skills are deteriorating. And even though Mandarin is their first language, they are opposed to identifying as Chinese."[79] Voting patterns in the 2020 presidential election in Taiwan reflect this phenomenon. Recall that DPP is frequently taken to be affiliated with a strong Taiwanese identity and considered as an advocate of non-Mandarin languages. According to the Taiwanese National Policy Foundation, in 2020 DPP presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen received a 40% higher turnout from voters aged 20-39 than her KMT counterpart Han Kuo-yu.[80] As might be expected, DPP voter turnout skews young. This indicates that the same generations who use non-Mandarin languages less still espouse more pro-independence attitudes, not pro-Chinese attitudes. Therefore, even though Mandarin is their first (and only) language, younger generations may not tie political identity to language to the same degree as older generations. Deborah Beaser in *The Outlook for Taiwanese Language Preservation* speculates that unlike older generations who grew up under policies forbidding a Taiwanese identity, younger generations may have a more relaxed attitude towards expressing a Taiwanese identity that does not necessarily involve language use: "While they feel a cultural connection to the language, they seldom feel the necessity to seek to preserve and promulgate its usage." [81] Likewise, Lee, although advocating a link between partisan politics and language use, admits that younger generations may be "more practical and flexible" about language use in regards to identity.[82] If so, other factors beyond political affiliation may be responsible for the continued decline in language usage in younger generations.

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[79] Hollo.
[80] Leon Chen. "Guomindang de Qingnian Duanceng You Duo Yanzhong?" [How Serious is the KMT and Youth Disconnect] *National Policy Foundation*, 2020.
[81] Beaser, 11.
[82] Lee, 22.

Location

While Gareth Price, Wan-hua Lai, and others hypothesize partisan politics as a driving cause of language loss in Taiwan, other researchers have instead turned to location and rural-urban migration as the key driver in Hokkien proficiency decline. In his 2017 study "Family Language Choice in Taiwan," sociologist Yap Ko-Hua investigated Taiwanese language use at home through an analysis of the 2013 Taiwan Social Change Survey.[83] In light of documented language loss in the 20th and 21st centuries, Yap focused on home language use, reasoning that "the home is the last bastion for [local languages]."[84] He examined responses to several questions on the 2013 Taiwan Social Change Survey, including "*what language would you prefer your child to use at home?*"

After identifying respondents who had a preference for Hokkien, Hakka, or other indigenous languages, he ran a regression analysis comparing these preferences with respondents' answers on other questions. Yap found that locality and neighborhood language are key indicators for language preference at home. Language use, in other words, is largely influenced by physical address, the "neighborhood effect" (鄰近效應). Contrary to researchers, such as Price and Lai, who have hypothesized that language use is intimately connected to national identity (i.e. Taiwanese or Chinese), Yap's analysis revealed that partisan politics, especially DPP affiliation, has little bearing on home language use.[85] Yap concludes, therefore, that the decline in Hokkien usage is instead the product of urban migration, not national identity

[83] The Taiwan Social Change Survey is an Academia Sinica-based questionnaire survey gauging and analyzing political and social change in Taiwan. The 2013 Survey yielded 2,072 responses.
[84] Yap, Ko-hua. "Family Language Choice in Taiwan." *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology* 62 (2017): 64.
[85] Yap, 101.

or lack of perceived prestige (or a "socially devalued" language, as Lai found). Social class, contrary to Lai's research, "has no direct effect on family language use."[86] Instead, the language loss phenomenon reflects recent trends in metropolitan migration, with metropolitan areas such as Taipei and Hsinchu growing in population and other more rural counties decreasing in population.

Based on data from the Social Change Survey, Yap hypothesizes that parents prefer using Mandarin with children instead of a local language out of convenience. People are inclined to use Mandarin with their children if they live in a location with a higher prevalence of Mandarin, and vice-versa.[87] Yap notes the significance of this finding: "two people of the same ethnic group, gender, generation, education, class, and national identity may make different language choices once they are simply just living in different language environments."[88] Lai did find this same language variation based on city and region in her study; however, unlike Yap, she downplays the overall effect of location on language loss. Nevertheless, the role of location in determining local language use remains a pertinent question for a 21st century Taiwan that is more mobile and interconnected than decades before.

Educational Quality

Although the Taiwanese government has implemented language development education since the early 2000s, the current language development programs have had little change in two decades, as classes are few in number and generally not rigorous. The new educational requirements only provide one hour of instruction per week in the local language, compared to the rigorous, multiple hours per week of English language education. Moreover, local language

[86] Yap, 101.
[87] Yap, 60.
[88] Yap, 74.

classes are generally limited to primary school levels, with secondary students having no local language class requirements. These factors have limited the quality of local language education. Several researchers have pointed to these gaps in language development education as the driving force in the continued decline of local language use in Taiwan.

One of the more recent studies investigating Hokkien usage in younger generations explicitly identifies educational quality as a contributing factor in the decline of local language use. Tiu^{n} Hak-khiam et al**.** investigated Hokkien language maintenance and use among 3,175 primary and junior high school students across Taiwan. The researchers distributed a questionnaire to gauge language use in three main domains within these age groups: at home, outside the home, and in daily life (日常活動). The survey included questions to prompt respondents to self-report Hokkien language usage in a variety of settings, ranging from "never" to "primarily." Tiu^{n} et al.'s study found that, except for when talking with grandparents, the majority of respondents tended to list Hokkien usage as "seldom" or "never" in the majority of contexts. 68.16 percent of student respondents stated that they had never read material written in Hokkien, while 65.67 percent had similarly never used Hokkien when discussing homework. Only when talking with grandparents did a majority (66.15 percent) of respondents report that they "frequently used" Hokkien in conversation. Furthermore, 30.46 percent of respondents stated that they had "never" used Hokkien in conversation with siblings or friends. Notably, language loss was a cohesive phenomenon, true across all counties and cities, stemming from lack of structure and incentive in the classroom for local language maintenance. Because students are not equipped or exposed to content-specific vocabulary, Hokkien proficiency is limited to basic conversation. This affects language use outside the classroom as well. As students are ill-equipped to discuss homework and other topics in Hokkien, a subsequent

decrease in language usage is apparent even in topics and contexts unrelated to schoolwork. Most importantly, the researchers found that, in regards to primary and junior high school language maintenance, schools are equivocally "unable to provide an amicable environment for Taiwanese Hokkien."[89] This mirrors Lai's findings; although Lai focused on language policy in the classroom *during* the martial law period, both studies point to the classroom environment as having the greatest impact in determining language use.

Other researchers have likewise associated language loss with poor quality of education. In his article "The Problem with Mandarin in Taiwan," Joseph Reid casts doubt on the efficacy of current mother-tongue language education in Taiwan, calling attention to what he labels as complacency at an institutional level. Reid draws parallels between language loss in Scotland (Scots Gaelic) and Taiwan. Despite both languages receiving governmental recognition and support in each respective nation, Reid notes a continued and "irreversible" decline in Scots Gaelic due to government support for language education only at a "primary spoken level." Reid warns of a similar grim future for Taiwanese Hokkien.

Similar to Tiu^{n} Hak-khiam et al's study, Reid argues that while younger generations are exposed to Hokkien in the classroom, the context is generally limited to learning songs or very basic interactions; in other words, students are not equipped with language skills necessary for daily life, much less formal or technical situations. He points out that "no matter how much you encourage the usage of these languages, if you only teach them at a primarily spoken level and people still struggle to express themselves in more formal situations through either writing or speech, then these languages will still not garner the respect of more standardized, better taught

[89] Hak-khiam Tiu^{n} et al, "Assessing Taiwanese Language Maintenance from Primary and Junior High School Students' Taiwanese Language Use" *Journal of Taiwanese Vernacular* 10, no. 2 (2018): 24.

languages like Guoyu (Mandarin)."[90] In other words, if National Language Development instruction remains primarily oral and is relegated only to early primary education, these measures may be unable to reverse the decline in local languages.

The fact that language programs are relegated to the primary level may not be the only reason the educational system has yet to reverse the decline of local languages. Internationalization has prioritized English as the "primary" second language in Taiwan, resulting in local language instruction being relegated to only one or two hours a week. Researcher Elizabeth Hubbs in "Taiwan Language-in-Education Policy: Social, Cultural, and Practical Implications" contends English instruction and local language instruction are competitors in the classroom, and she concludes that "internationalization is preferred over Taiwanization [by the Ministry of Education]."[91]

Although researchers point to educational quality (or lack thereof) as driving the continued Hokkien language loss, the conclusion that gaps in the education system are solely responsible for language loss assumes that language learning is confined to a classroom. This is debatable. Tiu^{n} et al. acknowledge that just as schools fail to support Hokkien maintenance, so too do *communities* as a whole fail to provide a welcoming environment for local languages.[92] If gaps in the educational system are not solely responsible for a continued drop in local language usage, perhaps variables outside the classroom, such as internet usage, may shed more light on language loss in Taiwan.

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[90] Joseph Lewis Reid, "The Problem with Mandarin in Taiwan." *New Bloom*, August 2016, https://newbloommag.net/2016/08/13/mandarin-problem-taiwan/.
[91] Elizabeth Hubbs, "Taiwan Language-in-Education Policy: Social, Cultural, and Practical Implications." *Arizona Working Papers in SLA & Teaching* 20 (2013): 85.
[92] Tiu^{n} et al, 5.

Internet Usage

Researchers have pointed to a variety of factors that have potentially led to a continued decrease in local language usage: partisan politics, location, and educational system. All focus on the influence of more traditional institutions and variables in determining a linguistic environment. Although there is a dearth of research directly exploring the relationship between internet usage and a decline in local languages in Taiwan, it is difficult to deny the influence of social media and internet usage on linguistic environments. An important prerequisite for internet presence is access to a widespread and widely-used standardized orthography.

Recalling martial law era language policy from the 1950s, the KMT explicitly banned written forms of Hokkien and other local languages.[93] Even after the end of the martial law period, these writing systems remained near non-existent. J. Zach Hollo explains that because of this, language reformers in the 1990s were well aware of the need for standardized scripts for non-Mandarin languages. As of today, there are several orthographic systems for Hokkien, including the Peh-oe-ji system (using the Roman Alphabet) and Hoklo Characters (using Chinese characters to represent *estimated* pronunciations). However, neither of these systems are widely used; an estimated 90 percent of Taiwanese Hokkien speakers are functionally illiterate in the written language.[94] Even in Hokkien language classrooms, students are rarely introduced to any phoneticization of the language.

The issue of orthography and standardization has only become more severe. Younger generations rely on internet usage and communication via social media. In light of this, the lack of well known orthographies in local languages may dissuade or prevent younger generations

[93] "1959.12.17 Zhanglaojiaohui Dui Jinzhi Shiyong Luomazi Shengjing Suoti Zhi Xingzheng Susong Zao Zhonghua Minguo Zhengquan Bohui" *Taiwan Memory*, National Central Library, 2018.
[94] Wang Jun-zhong. "Woo Yi-yuan Taiyu Jiaoxue Cheng Da Chao Renqi." [Woo Yi-yuan's Taiwanese Instruction is Gaining Traction at National Cheng Kung University] *Liberty Times Net*. 2010.

from adopting practical use of non-Mandarin languages. Edmond Kachale astutely states that any language that lacks a significant presence on the internet is "heading for extinction."[95] Tiu[n] et al. concur that a language's presence in "new areas" such as the internet is a direct indicator of the strength of a language's vitality. In regard to local language revitalization efforts in Taiwan, Tiu[n] et al. conclude that, next to a hostile educational environment, "lacking sufficient presence in mass media is one of the primary causes of language loss."[96] In their questionnaire, Tiu[n] et al. asked students to record Hokkien usage in a variety of settings. For online usage, over 65 percent of students reported that they had never once used the language online, while 27 percent reported using Hokkien rarely on the internet.[97] This finding suggests that local language loss may potentially be tied to barriers in online communication. Beaser likewise expresses this concern, stating that, "if a language is not capable of having a presence on the Internet or lacks an inputting system, it will be devalued in the eyes of this technically savvy generation."[98]

Limited Scope, Little Consensus

From Price's assertion that language loss is tied to partisan politics to Tiu[n] et al's identification of gaps in the educational system, many researchers have recognized and begun to hypothesize potential causes for language loss in Taiwan; however, there is still little consensus on the exact drivers of this phenomenon. Some researchers have even arrived at opposite conclusions regarding the same indicator, such as partisan politics. This is not surprising, though, given that researchers have used a variety of methodologies to collect data: archival analysis, rhetorical analysis, interviews, surveys, and comparative analysis.

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[95] Qtd. in Katharine Shwab. "The Internet Isn't Available in Most Languages." *The Atlantic*, November 30, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/11/the-internet-isnt-available-in-most-languages/417393/
[96] Tiu, 19.
[97] Tiu, 18.
[98] Beaser, 15.

Much of the existing literature has also been limited in scope. For example, Lai Wan-hua's phenomenological study was restricted to nine individuals representing two generations. Though there was consistency among all nine respondents, the small sample size makes it difficult to extrapolate about larger trends. The survey research conducted by Tiu^{n} et al. included a much larger sample size with 3,175 primary and junior high school students. However, their conclusions linking language loss to an inhospitable classroom environment were based on primary and junior high school students' current perceptions of such things as availability of resources. As such, their research does not provide insight into the phenomenon of long-term language loss over several generations.

Perhaps the most significant drawback to the available research, though, has been the tendency to focus on a singular factor. For instance, Lai focuses on the influence of the KMT-era regime on language policy and the political implications of language use in Taiwan; Hubbs and Tiu^{n} et al. focus on gaps in post-1987 language reform. While these scholars do make note of other possible factors that affect language use (e.g. Lai acknowledges the possible influence of location and Tiu^{n} et al. acknowledge the possible influence of lack of presence on the internet), their existing research remains narrowly focused on what they perceive as the predominate indicator. With an issue as complex as language loss, it is unlikely that a single factor can be solely, or even predominately, responsible for the continued decline. Furthermore, it is difficult to understand how these factors influence the effect of one another on language loss.

Unlike research by the aforementioned scholars, Yap's study is significantly larger in scale. Though the 2013 Social Change Survey includes a slightly smaller number of respondents than the Tiu^{n} et al. survey, Yap used statistical regression to assess a wide collection of variables, from educational background and social class to, of course, location and the "neighborhood

effect." Using this methodology allowed him to determine the individual significance of several independent variables while accounting for variations in the dependent variable (language spoken in the home). However, due to its reliance on data almost one decade old, Yap's study does not provide a way to gauge the impact of the more recent and, arguably, most significant educational initiatives and governmental policies designed to promote multilingualism. Also, a more dramatic decline has occurred in language loss since the 2010 census, as discussed in Chapter One. The 2010 census data indicated a drop in Hokkien usage of 13% for individuals born between 1986 and 2004 (as compared to a 2.8% drop for individuals born between 1946 and 1985). In comparison, the 2020 census reveals that individuals born between 2006 and 2014 experienced an even more dramatic drop in usage. Only 7.4 percent of respondents in this age category listed Hokkien as their primary language.[99] Clearly, much has changed since the 2013 Social Climate Survey. Given that the youngest respondent would have been born in 1995 (as the age requirement to participate in the Social Climate Survey is 18), the survey does not include "Generation Alpha."[100] This term was coined by Mark McCrindle and Emily Wolfinger to describe individuals born in the 21st century who have grown up using electronic devices and the internet. Because internet usage has played such a central role in the childhood of those individuals labeled as Generation Alpha, it seems quite plausible that internet usage has also played a role in the language loss phenomenon. Noticeably absent in Yap's research is a consideration of the influence of this new domain on local language loss.

This study attempts to build on earlier research by taking an approach similar to Yap's–a statistical regression on a collection of variables. What makes this study unique is that the

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[99] "109 Nian Renkou Ji Zhuzhai Pucha Chubu Tongji Jieguo Tiyao Fenxi" (*R.O.C. Directorate of General Budget,* Accounting and Statistics, 2021).

[100] Mark McCrindle and Emily Wolfinger. *The ABC of XYZ: Understanding the Global Generations* (Randwick, Australia: University of New South Wales, 2009), 199-212.

collection includes the specific factors that have been identified by previous researchers as possible drivers of language loss in Taiwan (*partisan politics, location, educational quality*), and adds *internet usage*. This study also analyzes a more current data set from the Asian Barometer to verify there *are* correlations, and if there are, to what extent the variables influence the decline in language use of younger generations. Chapter Three discusses the recoding process that was used to align the Asian Barometer data set with census data, as well as how survey questions were selected as indicators of *partisan politics, location, educational quality,* and *internet usage*. Chapter Three concludes by sharing the findings of the regression analysis performed on these four variables.

Chapter III: Quantitative Analysis of Data

The previous chapter investigated possible factors that have contributed to the local language loss phenomenon in Taiwan. Four factors have surfaced in the literature as potential contributors: *partisan politics, location, educational quality,* and *internet usage*. Although researchers have used various research methodologies to collect data (archival analysis, rhetorical analysis, interviews, surveys, and comparative analysis), little consensus has been reached on the exact drivers of this phenomenon. In fact, some researchers have arrived at opposite conclusions regarding the same factor. This is understandable, though, because much of the existing literature has been limited in scope, both in terms of sample size and number of factors considered. With an issue as complex as language loss, it is unlikely that a single factor can be solely, or even predominantly, responsible for the continued decline. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of quantitative research into the relationship between a collection of variables and language use in Taiwan. With the exception of Yap Ko-Hua's work on locality and the "neighborhood effect," researchers have limited their studies to more qualitative findings and/or descriptive statistics, as Tiu^{n} Hak-khiam, Su Huang-Lan, Chang Yung-Ming, and Chen Su-chu did in their survey research of primary and junior high school students.

This study builds on earlier research by taking a quantitative approach, similar to Yap, using the four specific factors that have been identified by previous researchers as possible drivers of language loss in Taiwan. Using a more current data set from the Asian Barometer (wave 5), this study attempts to verify if statistically significant correlations exist between any and/or all of the variables and the decline in language use of younger generations.

Asian Barometer Survey

The Asian Barometer is an on-going multinational survey cohosted by National Taiwan University and Academia Sinica, gauging views on governance and politics across Asia since 2002. The surveys include a sample size of at least 1200 respondents per country. The Asian Barometer surveys are conducted in seventeen nations and regions on the continent, including Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, mainland China, Mongolia, South Korea, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Myanmar. The survey consists of in person and telephonic interviews with respondents. Respondents are asked approximately 170 questions gauging economic evaluation, political affiliation, psychological involvement, internet usage, regime preference, regime evaluation, and citizen empowerment. The survey questions vary in format, ranging from likert scale to yes/no questions. The Asian Barometer Survey also collects information about the socio-economic background, including country of origin, gender, birth year/actual age, marital status, education, religiosity, occupation, language, racial/ethnic background, and household income of each respondent.

Since its conception, the research center has conducted five Asian Barometer surveys (waves): Wave 1 in 2001, Wave 2 in 2006, Wave 3 in 2010, Wave 4 in 2014, and Wave 5 in 2019. Each subsequent wave included new and revised questions in an increasing number of countries. The Barometer offers researchers free access to the raw data collected. Because this project focuses on the causes for continued language loss among individuals in the education system *post*-1987, this study focuses solely on the 2019 Wave 5 data for Taiwan.

Birthyear

The data in the census aggregates age into categories/generations of 10-year increments, so the first step was to take the raw Wave 5 data from the Asian Barometer survey and recode

the age category into the same 10-year aggregated groups. This would facilitate the focus on generational differences. Age of respondents was indicated in the socio-economic background of the survey and was recorded by birth year. Before running descriptive statistics for this data set, any missing information was eliminated. Using the same 10-year increments as in the census, the birth year was recoded by assigning a unique number to each 10-year increment. 2006-2018 was coded as "1," 1996-2005 was coded as "2," 1986-1995 was coded as "3," 1976-1985 was coded as "4," 1966-1975 was coded as 5, 1956-1965 as 6, and 1955 and before as 7). *Table A* provides the descriptive statistics for this recoding of birth year:

Table A: Birth Year

Table A	Frequency	Percent
2006-2018 (Value 1)	0	0
1996-2005 (Value 2)	66	5.2%
1986-1995 (Value 3)	177	14.1%
1976-1985 (Value 4)	254	20.1%
1966-1975 (Value 5)	222	17.7%
1956-1965 (Value 6)	234	18.6%
1955 and before (Value 7)	289	23.0%
Total	1259	100%

There were no respondents born after 2006 (coded as category "1"). This was expected, though, because the threshold for participation in the Asian Barometer was age 18. At the time of the survey collection, respondents born after 2006 would have only been 13-years-old or younger, and thus ineligible to participate in the survey. As *Table A* indicates, the survey included respondents who were the recipients of both pre- and post-1987 language education. Respondents born between 1956 and 1985 (coded as generations "3," "4," "5," and "6") would have been recipients of the Mandarin-only language policy in the classroom, and the entirety of generation "2" would have been the recipients of recent language revitalization efforts in the

schools. The majority of generation "2" could also be classified what Mark McCrindle and Emily Wolfinger refer to as "Generation Alpha," individuals born in the 21st century who have grown up using electronic devices and the internet. Though only 5.2 percent of respondents fell into this category "2," their inclusion allows for generational comparisons regarding local language loss phenomenon.

Home Language

After recoding birth year as aggregated categories per the 2010 and 2020 censuses, the Asian Barometer survey was mined for what question(s) would most clearly mirror the dependent variable of local language usage. Following Yap's observation that "the home is the last bastion for [local languages]," Question 11 within the socio-economic section of the survey (SE 11) was the obvious choice to use for the dependent variable. Question SE11 reported respondents' language use at home, ranging from *"only a local language* (e.g. Hokkien, Hakka)" to "*only official language* (Mandarin)." Answers were coded from low to high, respectively, by the Asian Barometer (i.e., "*only a local language*"=1 to "*only official language*"=5). Before running descriptive statistics, missing data from SE11 were eliminated. Responses in *Table B* reveal a continuum of local language usage in the home.

Table B: What Language Do You Speak the Most in the Home?

Table B	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Only local language	106	8.5
Mostly local language	174	13.8
A mixture of local and official language	645	51.2
Mostly official language	208	16.5
Only official language	125	9.9
Declined to Answer	1	0.1
Total	1259	100

The 2010 census data reported that 70-96 percent of individuals use local languages in the home (percentage varying according to generation). Similarly, these descriptive statistics in *Table B* show that approximately 90 percent of individuals use local languages in the home, though to varying degrees. Almost 9 percent of respondents use local language exclusively in the home, 13.8 percent use mostly local language at home, whereas slightly over half use a mixture of local language and Mandarin in the home. This aligns with the results of the 2020 census data that indicate only 9-50 percent of respondents (percentage varying according to generation) consider a local language to be their primary language, the language that they use most often.

The next step after identifying the dependent variable (language spoken in the home) was to identify different survey questions that might serve as indicators of the factors mentioned in the review of the literature: *partisan politics*, *location*, *educational quality*, and *internet usage*. The questions were mined in the Asian Barometer Survey by examining those questions that appeared in related categories.

Partisan Politics

Researchers such as Gareth Price, Lee Yi-shuan, and Lai Wan-hua have maintained a relationship exists between political affiliation and language use in Taiwan. To test this hypothesis, this study examined questions from the survey within the categories of *Participation in Elections*, *Partisanship*, and *Political Participation*. Within the category of *Participation in Elections*, the majority of questions gauged the respondent's engagement in political campaigning. These questions did not seem particularly relevant to this research study. Question 34, however, asked respondents "Which parties or candidates did you vote for?" Though an individual's voting patterns may not be a definitive or consistent representation of political affiliation or ideology, it could be an indicator as to whether political affiliation is a significant

factor influencing what language is spoken in the home. Another potentially useful indicator was identified in the survey category of *Partisanship*. Question 56 asked respondents to indicate "*among the political parties listed here, which party if any do you feel closest to*?" Because this question was not dependent on voting for a particular political candidate, this question could potentially yield greater insight into political affiliation across time. Although the category of *Political Participation* would seem to suggest questions that would be particularly useful for analysis, all of these questions centered on gauging how often respondents contacted local officials, *not* partisan politics or political ideology. Because of this, none of these questions were selected for the series of regression analyses.

Before running descriptive statistics on question 34 and question 56, missing data were eliminated from the data set. Next, responses for questions 34 and 56 were assigned dummy variables. As questions 34 and 56 were originally designed as ordinal measures in the Asian Barometer Survey, in order to run regression analyses, this study recoded these responses into nominal variables, assigning dummy variables to party affiliation and voter choice. Because this research focuses on the effect of *partisan* politics on language use, only KMT, DPP, and PFP values were recoded into separate variables, with the responses "other" or "decline to answer" coded with the same value.

Descriptive statistics of question 34 in *Table C* reveal that 57 percent of respondents voted for either the KMT party or the DPP party. Only 5.5 percent of respondents voted for the PFP, and 37.5 percent of respondents did not vote, cannot remember how they voted, or declined to answer how they voted.[101]

[101] Similar to the chart for SE11, this chart reflects the order that the choices appeared in the survey and, more importantly, the numerical order in which the answers were coded by the Asian Barometer, beginning with 1 for KMT to "*decline to answer*" as 6. This holds true for all descriptive charts in this chapter.

Table C: Which Parties or Candidate Did You Vote For?

Table C	**Frequency**	**Percent**
KMT`s candidate(Eric Chu and Ju-hsuan Wang)	222	17.7
DPP`s candidate(Ing-wen Tsai and Chien-jen Chen)	495	39.3
People First Party`s candidate(James Soong and Hsin-ying Hsu)	69	5.5
Other / Decline to Answer / Cannot Remember	299	23.7
Total	1259	100

Table D shows the descriptive statistics for question 56. Because the number was so small for the People First Party (PFP), this was simply coded into a more general category that included all other parties.

Table D: To Which Party do you Feel the Closest?

Table D	**Frequency**	**Percent**
KMT	329	26.2
DPP	278	22.1
New Party, People First Party, Taiwan Solidarity Union, New Power Party, Other	151	12.0
Do not feel close to any party, Can't choose	463	36.8
Decline to answer	38	3
Total	1259	100

A surprising 36.8 percent of respondents reported that they "do not feel close to any party" or were unable to choose a party. Despite voting patterns, less than half of the respondents align themselves with the KMT or DDP. Based on these descriptive statistics, it appears less likely that issues of local language use are inexorably linked to partisan politics. This could not be definitively determined, though, until a series of regression analyses were run.

Location

In addition to the influence of partisan politics and voter choice, this study examines to what extent resident location continues to influence home language use. Previous research has established a strong link between resident location and language use in Taiwan; Yap Ko-hua's

regression analysis found a definitive connection between location and language use at home. Therefore, it was particularly important to identify questions within the Asian Barometer regarding this variable to assess if and to what extent location still influences language choice in Taiwan. The Asian Barometer Survey includes comprehensive information regarding the resident location of respondents as reported by the interviewer (survey question IR13). The Wave 5 survey recorded four possible "levels" within Taiwan: "Capital or Megacity (pop > 1m)," "regional center or other major cities (pop > 100,000)," "small city or town (pop < 100,000)," and "village or countryside." *Table E* reveals the location information of Wave 5 respondents.

Table E: Resident Location

Table E	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Capital or Megacity (1 million population plus)	315	25.1
Regional center or Other major cities (100,000 plus)	522	41.5
Small city or town (less than 100,000 people)	165	13.1
Village or countryside	257	20.4
Total	1259	100

Unsurprisingly, descriptive statistics from the Asian Barometer show that a majority of respondents live in urban environments; only 20.4 percent of interviewees live outside of a township or city while 25 percent of respondents live in urban areas with a population over one million. This reflects the well documented trend in urbanization and general migration to urban centers in Taiwan.[102] However, whether there is a connection between local language loss and location was impossible to determine. A series of regression analyses needed to be run between home language use and location.

[102] See, for example, Alden Speare Jr., "Urbanization and Migration." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 22, no. 2 (1974): 302-319.

Education

Researchers have characterized the educational system as an inhospitable place that actively prevents local language maintenance. As a result, this study hypothesizes that the longer time spent in the educational system, the more likely an individual is to solely use Mandarin. The Asian Barometer Survey asks in the socio-economic category how many years a respondent received formal education (question SE5a). The continuum of responses for this question ranged from 0 (no formal education) to 25 years (doctoral level). Because several of the responses had only one respondent (e.g. only one individual had 21 years of education), this study recoded years of formal education into several groupings. As expected, initial numbers indicated the largest frequency of responses at the end of primary, secondary, undergraduate, and post graduate schooling. Therefore, these served as the natural groupings for the recoding.

Table F	**Frequency**	**Percent**
No Formal Education	44	3.5
1-6 Years	130	10.4
7-9 Years	153	12.2
10-12 Years	343	27.2
13-16 Years	450	35.7
17-25 Years	135	10.7
Total	1255	100

As indicated in the descriptive statistics in *Table F*, the largest percentage of respondents had a college degree or some years of undergraduate schooling. Similarly, the second largest group of respondents reported 10-12 years of education: the equivalent of a high school diploma. Most importantly, the descriptive statistics indicate that all levels of education are represented in the data. Just as with location, the survey responses represent a diverse body of individuals, ranging from respondents with no formal education to those with doctoral-level education. This

diverse data set might provide a way to see if a correlation exists between time spent in the educational system and Mandarin usage.

Internet Usage

Although there has been little research on the subject of internet usage, this study also examined the potential relationship between internet usage and language use. Edmond Kalache, Tiu[n] et al., and Deborah Beaser all surmise the importance of a language's presence on the internet, but only Tiu[n] et al. acknowledge this variable within the context of Taiwan, and they acknowledge it only in passing. In their questionnaire, Tiu[n] et al. asked students to record Hokkien usage in a variety of settings. For online usage, they found that over 65 percent of students reported that they had never once used a local language online and 27 percent reported using Hokkien rarely on the internet.[103]

Beginning in Wave 4 (2004), the Asian Barometer Survey included questions on respondents' social media usage. Specifically, question 49 asks *"How often do you use the internet, either through computer, tablet, or smartphone?"* As question 49 is an ordinal scale recording internet usage frequency, data for this question did not need to be recoded with dummy variables.

Table G: How Often do you Use the Internet?

Table G	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Connected all the time	495	39.4
Several hours a day	351	28.0
Half to one hour a day	120	9.6
Less than half hour a day	36	2.9
At least once a week	10	0.8
A few times a year	1	0.1

[103] Hak-khiam Tiu[n] et al, "Assessing Taiwanese Language Maintenance from Primary and Junior High School Students' Taiwanese Language Use" *Journal of Taiwanese Vernacular* 10, no. 2 (2018): 18.

Hardly ever	52	4.1
Never	190	15.1
Total	1254	100

After eliminating missing responses, descriptive statistics (see *Table G*) reveal that 39.4 percent of respondents describe their internet usage as "connected all the time," and 28.0 percent describe their internet usage as "several hours a day." Conversely, 15.1 percent of interviewees indicate that they do not use the internet.

Regression Analysis Using SPSS

After identifying which questions on the Asian Barometer could be indicators of the possible factors and after generating descriptive statistics for these indicators, the goal was to create a model that could explain the relationship between the possible factors and the decline in local language use. In other words, the model was designed to answer the initial research question: *Why has the use of Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages continued to decrease, despite governmental language initiatives and policies created to encourage the use of these languages?* This study used SPSS to run a series of regression analyses to determine the relationships, if any, between the dependent variable and the four independent variables (*partisan politics, location, educational quality, internet usage*).

Based on a review of existing literature, a correlation was anticipated between all four variables and local language use. Despite the contradictory findings of previous studies regarding political affiliation and local language usage, it was anticipated that KMT affiliation would exhibit greater Mandarin usage, while DPP affiliation would skew toward Hokkien usage. In addition, urban residence was expected to lead to greater Mandarin monolingualism. Given that language revitalization efforts in Taiwan have focused at the primary level, it was expected that individuals (regardless of generation) who have spent more time in the educational system would

be more likely to exhibit signs of Mandarin monolingualism. Finally, a correlation between increased internet usage and local language loss was anticipated.

For all seven regression models, the dependent variable was home language use (SE11). Regression A (including only SE11 and birth year) confirmed that generation and language use in Taiwan share a statistically significant relationship, mirroring data from the 2010 and 2020 censuses; in short, the younger an individual is, the more likely they are to exhibit signs of Mandarin monolingualism. Once this was verified, Regression B then analyzed partisan politics alongside birth year. Because dummy variables were used for each of the predominate parties, each of these were entered as a separate variable in the regression models. Regression C replaced voter choice with party affiliation; again, because dummy variables were used for predominate parties, each value was entered as a separate independent variable. Regression D combined both voter choice *and* party affiliation (excluding PFP voter choice after determining it was insignificant), while adding an additional independent variable: location (IR13). Regression E retained birth year, partisan politics (excluding DPP affiliation and DPP voter choice after determining they were insignificant), and location, while adding level of education as another independent variable. Next, Regression F included all of the variables in Regression E, while adding internet usage frequency (Q 40). Finally, because over half of the respondents indicated that they did not feel close to or voted for any particular party, it was important to see how the model would work without partisan politics.

Table H: Regression Analysis

***Regression*:**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**
Home Language (SE11) (Constant)	4.32*** (0.091)	4.371*** (0.09)	4.296*** (0.089)	4.782*** (0.101)	3.462*** (0.165)	3.627*** (0.166)	3.544*** (0.170)
Birth Year	-0.252*** (0.017)	-0.272*** (0.017)	-0.266*** (0.017)	-0.264*** (0.017)	-0.175*** (0.019)	-0.137*** (0.020)	-0.103*** (0.020)
Voted KMT (Q 34)		0.5*** (0.077)		0.245** (0.080)	0.211** (0.076)	0.216** (0.075)	
Voted DPP (Q 34)		-0.139* (0.060)		-0.094 (0.062)			
Voted PFP (Q 34)		0.283* (0.119)					
Closest to KMT (Q 56)			0.493*** (0.062)	0.345*** (0.069)	0.399*** (0.065)	0.393*** (0.064)	
Closest to DPP (Q56)			-0.172** (0.066)	-0.118 (0.070)			
Resident Location (IR13)				-0.206*** (0.024)	-0.156*** (0.024)	-0.149*** (0.023)	-0.150*** (0.024)
Level of Education (SE5a)					0.218*** (0.023)	0.158*** (0.025)	0.179*** (0.026)
Internet Usage Freq. (Q 49)						-0.059*** (0.011)	-0.061*** (0.012)
R Squared	0.145	0.197	0.205	0.259	0.303	0.317	0.268
Adjusted R Squared	0.145	0.194	0.203	0.256	0.300	0.313	0.265
Number of Observations	1241	1241	1241	1241	1237	1232	1232

Standard errors are reported in parenthesis.
*, **, ***, indicates significance at the 90%, 95%, and 99% level, respectively.

These series of regression analyses generated a sound model for answering the question *what variables have contributed to a continued decline in Hokkien Proficiency in Taiwan*. Both Regression F and Regression G represent the model. As expected, the model confirmed the same generational gap in local language use that was revealed in the census data. Due to the way that the SE11 data was coded by the Asian Barometer (with "*only a local language*" coded as the lowest number), *Birthyear* exhibited a statistically significant inverse relationship with local language use, hence the negative values in *Table H*. The older a respondent is, the more likely they are to use non-Mandarin languages. Likewise, the younger a respondent is, the less likely they are to use non-Mandarin languages. The regression analyses also revealed that there are several significant relationships between language usage and the variables that have been identified in this study: partisan politics, location, level of education, and internet usage. Answers to question 34 (*which political party did you vote for*) and question 56 (*which party, if any, do you feel closest to*) shared a statistically significant relationship with home language use *only* when KMT affiliation/voter choice was included in the model. In other words, DPP (and PFP) affiliation/voter choice failed to be a predictor of language use in the home. Regardless of political affiliation, resident location (IR13) was strongly correlated with home language use. The way that location was coded by the Asian Barometer (with "*capital or megacity (1 million population plus)*" as the lowest number on the continuum) also produced an inverse relationship with local language use. The bigger the city, the less likely the person is to speak only the local language in the home. Respondents in cities were significantly more likely to be monolingual in Mandarin. Likewise, education proved to be able to predict local language usage among respondents. More years of formal education was tied to a greater chance of Mandarin

monolingualism. Finally, internet usage also was statistically significant; individuals who spent less time on the internet were more likely to use Hokkien in the home.

The R Squared in this series of regression analyses provides an estimate of the strength of the relationship between this model and home language use. Obviously, adding more variables improved the R Squared. The adjusted R Squared illustrates that each new variable improved the model more than what would be expected by chance. As expected, regression F yielded the highest adjusted R Squared; however, this model is contingent upon an individual being affiliated or voting for the KMT party. This series of regression analyses revealed that language use is not driven by vote choice or party identification, especially given that half of the respondents report that they have no party affiliation.

Discussion of Results

This study was spurred by the initial research question: *Why has the use of Taiwanese Hokkien and other local languages continued to decrease, despite governmental language initiatives and policies created to encourage the use of these languages?* As explored in Chapter I, since the 1990s, the Taiwanese government has implemented broad-reaching language policies, including the Act of Broadcasting Language Equality Protection in Public Transport (大眾運輸工具播音語言平等保障法) in 1989, the Indigenous Languages Development Act (原住民族語言發展法) in 2017, the Hakka Basic Act (客家基本法) in 2018, and most recently, the Development of National Languages Act (國家語言發展法) in 2019. Not only have these pieces of legislation officially acknowledged the multicultural nature of Taiwan, some have also mandated changes to the educational system. Primary school students throughout Taiwan are required to take at least one local language course, and junior high school students have the option of enrolling in local language courses as electives. The government even supports local

language courses with funding for teaching materials, teacher handbooks, teacher workshops, and audio and video cassettes. If these local language revitalization efforts were working, the decline should be beginning to level off, but the opposite is true; the decline has become more pronounced since the 2010 census, and researchers are searching for answers.

Through this series of regression analyses, data collected by the Asian Barometer provided new insight into several of the factors to which researchers have previously attributed local language loss. Gareth Price, Lee Yi-shuan, Wan-hua Lai all pointed to political affiliation as the root determining factor in local language use and subsequent loss. Throughout existing literature, language loss has continuously been attributed to the tumultuous political landscape of Taiwan. However, this regression analysis model has failed to find a statistically significant relationship between local language use and partisan politics, as indicated through voting patterns and/or political affiliation, unless the party affiliation was KMT. This is understandable given the fluctuation in support for the DPP party over recent years; for example, public approval for Tsai Ing-wen has fluctuated significantly, with its highest at 69.9% in 2016 and its lowest at 24.3% in 2018.[104]

Perhaps the reason partisan politics has been often cited as a significant factor contributing to language loss, despite the lack of quantitative data, may be in part due to the emotional reaction it ignites. For example, Wan-hua Lai's study focuses on qualitative interviews, asking questions about personal experiences. Understandably, the generations she interviewed are inclined to attribute individual language loss to external factors outside their control rather than community or generational behavior. Though language policies may initiate language loss, this study failed to identify a relationship between language use and partisan

[104] You, Michael, "2019 Nian 5 Yue Quanguoxing Minyi Diaocha Zhaiyao Baogao." (Results of the May 2019 Public Opinion Poll) *Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation*, May 2019.

politics. Another reason that political affiliation is often cited may be the possibility of reverse causality; in other words, language use may not be driven by voting patterns and party affiliation, but rather voter choice and party affiliation might be explained by language use. Because this study assumed language use as the dependent variable, this causality was not examined.

Compared to political affiliation, resident location proved to be indeed able to predict Hokkien proficiency. This study confirmed the findings of Yap Ko-hua's study; out of the four variables, respondent location (rural - urban) had the greatest influence on home language usage. The regression analysis likewise confirmed that education (specifically years spent in the education system) was associated with language choice; the longer someone was in school, the more likely they would only speak Mandarin. This reflects researchers Hubbs, Tiu^{n} Hak-khiam et al, and Joseph Reid's conclusion that despite revitalization efforts encouraging local language use in the classroom, the continued decline is due to the quality of local-language education.

No researcher has yet studied the relationship between internet usage and language loss in Taiwan. This study found that it is statistically significant. Internet usage does share a significant relationship with Mandarin monolingualism. According to the Social Research Institute of Ispsos MORI, younger generations use the internet at a greater frequency than older generations.[105] This may explain why greater internet usage was inversely correlated with Hokkien proficiency and birthyear.

This series of regression analyses confirms that language loss cannot simply be explained by solely one factor. Using the variables identified in the existing literature, this study found that language loss is a function of location, time spent in the education system, and internet usage. Surprisingly, partisan politics are *not* a general predictor of home language use, unlike previous

[105] Hannah Shrimpton, "Generations and Technology Usage." *Ipsos MORI.* http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/Internet-and-Technology-Use.html

hypotheses. Instead, only KMT voting and affiliation are tied to language use. Since language revitalization has historically been framed as a hallmark of DPP ideology, it was unexpected to find that DPP affiliation is not tied to local language proficiency. As a party with a younger voting base, this may reflect the trend that younger generations no longer view language use as indicative of political ideology.

Although this model yields 28 - 31 percent predictability (a substantial level of predictability given that all the variables are functions of human behavior), there are still more factors to investigate regarding Hokkien language loss. With the findings of this study in mind, Chapter IV concludes by offering future research directions, as well as discussing broader implications for 21st century language revitalization in Taiwan and beyond, particularly given that organizations like UNESCO are encouraging revitalization initiatives similar to those being implemented in Taiwan.

Chapter IV: Looking to the Future: (Is the Demise of Hokkien Inevitable?)

Taiwan's history as an island shaped by waves of immigrants under different regimes has imparted a legacy of multilingualism into the 21st century. However, a variety of regimes have viewed this multilingualism as a hindrance to the formation of a broader national identity. Just as Japan decades prior attempted to consolidate identity through a national unified language, so too did the KMT. From 1945 to 1987, KMT-era Taiwan under martial law saw the development and implementation of increasingly strict Mandarin-only policies designed to limit local language usage. After four decades of repressive language policy, a newly democratized Taiwan turned to implementing new progressive language policies as representative of a shift to pluralism in Taiwanese society. DPP-led governments began the development of language revitalization and education programs attempting to reverse the local language loss phenomenon among younger generations. From 1990 to the present, these measures have ranged from developing a Hokkien language dictionary to mandating local language curriculum. Despite encouraging linguistic pluralism, use of local languages in Taiwan has continued to decline for three decades.

Although many similarities can be drawn between local language loss phenomena in Taiwan and other countries, the differences in social, political, and economic factors make comparison to other language revitalization programs difficult. As Deborah Beaser explains in "The Outlook for Taiwanese Language Preservation," "There are simply too many differences in the political, social, and economic situations facing, say, a community in northern China versus one in southern Africa to make blanket statements about how revitalization should be carried

out."[106] Nevertheless, in the 1990s the Taiwanese government implemented language revitalization strategies that had been used in other countries, principally educational initiatives and legislative acts. Unfortunately, each consecutive census reveals that these diverse revitalization efforts have failed to halt the decline, much less increase non-Mandarin language usage.

This failure is tied to the fact that Taiwan's linguistic diversity and language loss are inherently unique to the history and context surrounding the island. Within the last century, Taiwan has transitioned from a Japanese colony with albeit lenient language policy, to an island under martial law with strict Mandarin-only legislation, to a young democracy not only trying to reverse these policies, but also actively promoting linguistic diversity. Professor of Linguistics at the University of Buffalo Jeff Good concludes that "We seem to be in this massive global stage of endangerment because social structures have changed so rapidly."[107] Compared to other nations in the region, Taiwan reflects the speed at which not only regimes but societies and linguistic communities can change. Globalization and internationalization have undoubtedly led to a decrease in linguistic diversity not only in Taiwan, but across the world. Revitalization efforts reflect an ironic component of this global shift: as more nations see a rising monolingual population, the greater the push is for multilingualism by such organizations as UNESCO.

This leaves the question: why has language revitalization failed to be effective specifically in the context of Taiwan? Though researchers have begun to hypothesize why this generational gap exists in language use within Taiwan, there is little agreement about the possible causes. Chapter Two detailed the diverse explanations, ranging from individual political

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[106] Deborah Beaser, "The Outlook for Taiwanese Language Preservation." *Sino-Platonic Papers* 172 (2006): ix.
[107] J. Zach Hollo. "As Taiwan's Identity Shifts, Can the Taiwanese Language Return to Prominence?" *Ketagalan Media*, August 27, 2019, https://ketagalanmedia.com/2019/08/27/as-taiwans-identity-shifts-can-the-taiwanese-language-return-to-prominence/.

affiliation to gaps in the educational system as root causes of a growing generational gap in language use. This study used the Asian Barometer in Chapter Three to assess if and to what extent these variables have had on language use by generation. Through a regression analysis model, this study found that location, educational quality, and internet usage contribute to the generational gap in local language loss. Partisan politics, on the other hand, did not correlate with language loss, except in the case of KMT affiliation. The regression analysis model succeeded in explaining a portion of the local language loss phenomenon.

Fortunately, Hokkien is not yet classified as an endangered language, still boasting 50 million speakers globally; however, this relative linguistic safety for Hokkien may only be short-lived. Taiwanese Hokkien speakers tend to be older, often living in more rural areas. In addition, as almost 90 percent of speakers are functionally illiterate in the language, a gradual decrease in oral proficiency in Taiwanese local languages suggests a more vulnerable future for non-Mandarin languages.[108]

As the trend of globalization and subsequent decrease in linguistic diversity continues, interest among linguists in language endangerment and revitalization has developed over the last few decades. In particular, the UNESCO Ad Hoc Group on Endangered Languages identified nine factors that can help to assess a language's vitality:

1) Intergenerational Transmission
2) Absolute Number of Speakers
3) Proportion of Speakers with Total Population
4) Trends in Existing Language Domains
5) Response to New Domains and Media

[108] Hollo.

6) Materials for Language Education and Literacy
7) Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies
8) Community Members' Attitudes toward Own Language
9) Amount and Quality of Documentation[109]

UNECSO uses a 0 (non-existent vitality) to 5 (strong vitality) scale for each factor to determine a language's future. Although UNESCO does not consider Hokkien to be an "endangered" language, these factors provide a way to gauge the future of this language. While factors 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 all would suggest strong vitality for the Hokkien language (with Hokkien likely scoring a 5 on the scale for these particular factors), several of the listed factors raise concern over the long-term vitality of this language, particularly in Taiwan.

UNESCO unsurprisingly labels intergenerational transmission as the first and perhaps most important measure for language revitalization. Census data confirms that a lack of consistent generational transmission remains a key driving force behind general Hokkien language loss in Taiwan. Because language use is restricted to older generations with intergenerational communication primarily using Mandarin, Hokkien usage will inevitably continue to decline by each generation. So although the absolute number of Hokkien speakers and the proportion of speakers to total population are robust, the rapid decrease in intergenerational transmission, particularly between the 2010 census and the 2020 census data suggests that Hokkien would merit a score of 4 ("Most but not all children of families of a particular community speak their language as their first language, but it may be restricted to

[109] UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, "Language Vitality and Endangerment" (document, International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages, Paris, France, March 12, 2003), 7-18.
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/Language_vitality_and_endangerment_EN.pdf

specific social domains such as at home where children interact with their parents and grandparents"), or what UNESCO labels as "Unsafe" in terms of language vitality.[110]

Factor 5 suggests another area of concern: the lack of Hokkien language on the internet. This UNESCO factor uses language presence in "new domains" as a way to gauge language vitality. New domains are defined in terms of context, so these domains could include everything from broadcast media to the internet. Because Taiwan is ranked as one of the leading producers in communication technology products, the internet is easily considered the newest domain. As a result, Hokkien's lack of presence on the internet suggests a questionable vitality for Hokkien, especially among younger generations who gravitate to this particular domain. Indeed, this study found internet usage *is* a determining factor in generational language loss in Taiwan. This lack of presence on the internet, as discussed earlier, stems in part from the lack of a standardized, widely accepted script. Even government Hokkien tests are forced to use a mixture of characters and roman letters to phoneticize the language. Could the creation of a standardized orthography possibly contribute to language revitalization efforts? Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsey J. Whatley are doubtful. They point out that if a local language does have an albeit small presence online, the internet is dominated by only "a handful of languages" so its users will still be more accustomed to using other larger languages on the internet.[111] Hokkien-language internet, therefore, will inevitably share a similar fate to Hokkien-language literature: confined to a small minority with an interest in Hokkien preservation.

UNESCO's Factor 6 points to materials for language education and literacy as a cornerstone for ensuring a positive future for a language. At most, Hokkien could rate a 2 out of

[110] UNESCO, 7.

[111] Leonore A. Grenoble, and Lindsay J. Whaley, *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.

5 in this category: "Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community…. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum."[112] Although Hokkien does have several (albeit unstandardized) writing systems, children are rarely if ever exposed to Hokkien writing in the classroom. Too, this exposure is only occurring at the elementary level in a "foreign language" course. Ideally, if written materials were readily available, instruction was happening in all levels of education, and subject matter was taught in the local language,[113] the expectation would be that Hokkien usage would increase as an individual's educational level increases. The current quality of local language education, though, has resulted in the exact opposite. This study found that as an individual's time spent in formal education increases, use of Hokkien actually decreases.

Finally, although this study used a data set that did not include any information regarding community members' attitudes toward language use, Factor 8 deserves more research. UNESCO rates this factor on a scale of 0 ("No one cares if the language is lost") to 5 ("all members value their language and wish to see it promoted").[114] However, it is difficult to give a definitive number between 0 and 5 to Taiwanese Hokkien; the issue is not as simple as whether the general public is either indifferent to or actively promotes language revitalization programs. While societal attitudes toward Hokkien may be outwardly positive, deep seated biases regarding Hokkien's role in education may still undermine language revitalization. In other words, while few may argue against language revitalization, many may still hold that Hokkien and other local languages have no place in higher levels of education or other domains. This may especially be true for older generations who received education during the KMT era that devalued the status

[112] UNESCO, 12.
[113] Grenoble and Whaley, 10.
[114] Grenoble and Whaley, 15.

of local languages. For these generations, Hokkien language use represented an active and defiant push for Taiwanese identity. However, after three decades, language attitudes between generations may be as different as language usage itself. Beaser explains that unlike generations who grew up under Mandarin-only policies, younger generations "while [feeling] a cultural connection to the language…seldom feel the necessity to seek to preserve and promulgate its usage."[115] If this is the case, younger generations may value Hokkien and support language revitalization efforts in general, but they may not feel the need to personally use Hokkien in their day-to-day lives.

This study found that while location, education, and internet usage influence language choice, political affiliation and support of a Taiwanese identity may no longer be driving factors behind Hokkien usage, especially among younger generations. This raises questions for the preservation and future vitality of Hokkien, and more broadly all local languages on the island. Some researchers, such as Beaser, have painted a grim future for Hokkien. Beaser contends that the survival of Hokkien to the present has been in large part due to its political implications, garnering support from the generation who went through periods of language suppression.[116] Therefore, without being tied to Taiwanese identity, Hokkien has started a decline to "inevitable extinction."[117] Beaser predicts that "over the next 50 years Taiwanese, as a language, will become increasingly marginalized, and that the recent increase in desire to promote Taiwanese is purely the short-term reaction of the generation of Taiwanese who went through periods of linguistic and cultural suppression."[118]

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[115] Beaser, 11.
[116] Beaser, 1.
[117] Beaser, 17.
[118] Beaser, 1.

While this study examined possible reasons for the continued decline in Hokkien language use in Taiwan and has concluded that current and past educational initiatives are unable to reverse this trend in language loss, the future of Hokkien may not be as grim as Beaser predicts. This study and previous studies are not able to provide insight into the potentially delayed impact of these language revitalization policies. Just as restrictive martial law era language policies have continued to shape the linguistic landscape of generations decades after implementation, so too may language revitalization programs prove to be more effective in the long run. Curiously, the generation most impacted by the Mandarin-only policies of the 1960s and 1970s were not the students of that time, but rather the subsequent generations who thus experienced language loss. This begs the question: might language revitalization prove to be effective for future generations not included in this study? As census data reveals, by 2022, only one generation of adults has graduated from schools since language revitalization programs were implemented; even so, this generation was only able to experience the early stages of language development programs. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education have put forth significantly more ambitious plans for language development, including an increase in allotted curricula for local language instruction for six years of local language instruction at the primary level, two years at the junior high level, and one year at the secondary level by late 2022.[119] The Ministry of Education also passed one of the most progressive pieces of legislation in 2019 that stipulates any national language may be used in its entirety as a medium of instruction at all levels of education.[120] As a result, Hokkien will no longer be relegated to "foreign language"

[119] "Maixiang Guojia Yuyan Xin Shidai: Wenhuabu Qidong 2021 Guojia Yuyan Fazhan Huiyi Yaoqing Gongmin Canyu." [Toward a New Era of National Languages: Ministry of Culture Launches 2021 National Language Development Conference, Invites the Public to Participate] R.O.C. Ministry of Culture, 2021.
[120] "Development of National Languages Act," *Republic of China Legislative Yuan*, 2019.

classes in elementary school. How these educational initiatives will affect future language revitalization efforts remains unknown.

Globalization has, no doubt, led to a decrease in linguistic diversity across the world, but as more nations see a rising monolingual population, organizations such as UNESCO are encouraging initiatives like those being implemented in Taiwan. In *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved?*, Joshua A. Fishman points out, though, that language revitalization efforts over the past decade in Quebec, South America, Africa, Spain, Australia, Japan, Ireland, and the United States have resulted in little improvement, if any, in the vitality of endangered languages. He poses the provocative question: "Is this a harbinger of the growing and long-heralded triumph of globalisation [sic] over ethnonationalism?"[121]

The findings of this study suggest that the phenomenon of language loss in Taiwan is not simply the triumph of 21st century globalization. This study confirmed Yap Ko-hua's findings that location is a determining factor in generational language loss in Taiwan. People are inclined to use Mandarin with their children if they live in a location with a higher prevalence of Mandarin, such as an urban area.[122] Thus, the massive urban migration within Taiwan, from 24.1% in 1950 to over 74.1% in 1990,[123] has led to an increase in Mandarin usage and a subsequent decrease in local language use. This massive urban migration in Taiwan, according to Lo Fu-chen and Yeung Yue-man, was a direct response to the island's rapid economic development and *globalization*. However, this globalization may not have diminished ethnonationalism in Taiwan.

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[121] Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective* (Clevedon : Multilingual Matters, 2001), 480.
[122] Yap, Ko-hua. "Family Language Choice in Taiwan." *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology* 62 (2017): 60.
[123] Fu-chen Lo, and Yue-man Yeung, *Emerging World Cities in Pacific Asia*. (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1995). https://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu11ee/uu11ee00.htm#Contents

Fishman acknowledges that globalization and its need for urban hyper-connectedness is unambiguously a driving force behind language loss; he also believes that the same globalization can spur regional identity and greater emphasis on language preservation. His analysis of multiple cases of language revitalization efforts revealed that the populations most impacted by the pace of globalization are the ones most hungry for maintaining ethnocultural roots.[124] Though Taiwan was not one of his case studies, the Taiwanese have arguably been one of the populations most impacted by the rapid pace of globalization. Fishman attributes this hunger to humans' need to compartmentalize, that is, to recognize that humanity is more than the economic system of which we are a part:

> Modern humanity desperately needs to restrict or compartmentalise-off certain of its most human processes from contamination by globalisation… friendship, childhood socialisation and enculturation, neighbourliness or community- mindedness and community participation in religious, educational, entertainment and hobbying activities. Their weakness is their strength, their unimportance from a purely dollars and cents perspective is their importance for our sanity and privacy in the midst of myriad urban, modern, global intrusions into our lives.[125]

Admittedly, these factors are much harder to measure, yet appear to be no less important to investigate. Unlike this study that performed a regression analysis on measurable variables (partisan politics, location, education, and internet usage), these potential factors will require more innovative research methodologies. The variables measured in this study do account for local language loss in Taiwan, but only a portion of the loss. How does a researcher measure a human's ability to compartmentalize and shield oneself against globalization? This is the question that future researchers will need to explore.

[124] Fishman, 459.
[125] Fishman, 459.

Fishman is undoubtedly correct, “more languages are threatened than we think, and they are not necessarily only the smaller, more disadvantaged ones either.”[126] Hokkien is one of these languages. Although there are over 13 million speakers in Taiwan, Hokkien has not been exempt from the language loss phenomenon.

[126] Fishman, 481.

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