The Application of Translingualism
to Language Revitalisation in Taiwan

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Abstract

Translingualism is a term from Steven G. Kellman (2000) and David Schwarzer et al. (2006), who see teaching an L2 as bridge building between languages that allow one to retain a unified mind and not be cloven into two for the sake of being multilingual. Thus, in contrast to multilingualism, translingualism stresses the process and not the goal. Classrooms where students come from two or more different language communities are established feature of schools in many countries. When multilingual word processing enables ethnolinguistic communities and students to express the funds of knowledge they possess, the school is truly preparing students to thrive in a global community characterized by rapid cultural and technological change. If translingualism is the process, then *Action research* (AR) is its method. This study explores the sociolinguistics of translingual forces: (1) how classroom experience or actual personal contact with elders in villages causes students of different cultural backgrounds to value other languages, and (2) how students' phonetic knowledge, literacy, as well as content knowledge in English may transfer to acquiring ethnic languages in a collaborative classroom. It mostly examines how the students in a community of Taiwan hailing from different cultural backgrounds and attending multilingual classrooms that promoted bi/multilingualism can come to value all languages spoken in a community.

Keywords: Translingualism, Multilingualism, Multilingual classrooms

1. Introduction

The government of the Republic of China in Taiwan has made some efforts in preserving and promoting the aboriginal languages from 1995 to 2006, including literacy development, compiling textbooks, training the ethnic language teachers, aboriginal language teaching in primary schools, and administration of ethnic language proficiency tests (Lillian Huang, 2002 &2007). Yet in spite of these kinds of well-intentioned measures and these efforts, the real situation these days has become even more acute and the number of the aboriginal ethnicities familiar with their own languages and cultures has not increased. Even worse, the government is still planning to launch a six-year "indigenous language revitalisation plan" (Note 1) aimed at conserving and revitalizing Aboriginal tongues in spite of the unsuccessful methods and failures of efforts from 1995 to 2006 (Lillian Huang, 2007). However, from the aboriginal viewpoints, it would be much better if teachers of all courses in all levels of Taiwan's schools could be prepared to teach in multiethnic classrooms and be able to help children not only to cope with life in a multicultural society but also to activate and cultivate their own ethnic languages and cultures. Greater awareness and respect for different cultures clearly are very essential in a multiracial society (Cheng, Robert L. 1996).

The aim of this paper is not only to share what I have done in a multilingual classroom, but also to point out that the first step revitalizing aboriginal languages in Taiwan is Orthographic Reform, for the students in Taiwan are already familiar with alphabetic writing from their prior study of English. They would, therefore, be well-positioned to transfer the regular *sound-letter association* they have learned in English classes to the representation of the sounds in the various indigenous languages of Taiwan. It could be an alternative way to revitalise endangered languages in Taiwan by not seeing English (or possibly other languages) as distant hermetically distinct intellectual edifices for intellectuals but by seeing it as a unifying system, a helping hand for wider ranges of society and intended for all ethnicities to profit

from (Beykont, 1994). In order to provide an overview of the policies which have recently been developed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP), Executive Yuan, I will focus on 1) general perspectives of the aboriginal languages and cultures of Taiwan, and 2) critical analysis of the policies and their impact on language revitalisation.

Language revitalisation requires the cooperative efforts of political, educational, economic, linguistic authorities, and the authorities concerned in our government for over the last decade has made great efforts in these areas (Tung, Masegseg C. 2008:6-7). Because views towards linguistic and cultural diversity have become a great deal more positive, Minnan/ Holowei as well as Hakka and all the indigenous languages have been taught in elementary schools since 1997. As mentioned above, from 1995 to 2006, the policies for literacy development, compiling and editing textbooks, training of ethnic language teachers, aboriginal language teaching in a primary schools, and administration of ethnic language proficiency tests were carried out by the MOE and the CIP, but their survival is still in jeopardy (Lillian Huang, 2002 &2007; Lin, Chen-Yuan 2008).

An optimal writing system is easily acquired by beginning readers and writers and by those from different educational backgrounds (Rogers, 1995: 31; Taylor & Olson, 1995: 7). It follows from what has been said that only when a set of letters is scientifically and socially acceptable can it be successful (Berry, 1972:737; Her, Der-Hwa 1994:142). The MOE and the CIP co-declared sets of writing systems for all the aboriginal languages at the end of 2005, but the authorities concerned did not figure out that the language becomes vastly easier to learn and literacy is improved when the writing system is consistent. There are thirteen official different writing systems for aboriginal languages, and the complexity of them has caused lots of problems for language learners and hampered the promotion and movement of it. Most crucially, it is hard to pronounce words from their spelling and to spell them from their sound.

Normally, a recognized teacher's degree or qualification requires three-year or five-year competency programmes and familiarization with Learning Theories, Teaching Methodology, Curriculum and Assessment, et cetera. How could a person, who just passed the Proficiency Tests of Aboriginal Languages, be qualified to serve as a substitute teacher and to help teach those diverse aboriginal languages in schools? Even though s/he also took part in the 36-hour or 72-hour training programme, it is not easy to reach recognised qualification to do so (Qiu, Wen-Long 2008). As Lillian Huang (2007:33) indicates,

> It is noticed that insufficiency of competent aboriginal language teachers has always been a big problem in Taiwan. At present, certified teachers, students' parents, priests, elders from the native tribes are some major sources of aboriginal language teachers. Yet not all the above-mentioned individuals are competent language teachers.

Although the MOE or the CIP have made great efforts to develop several training camps or training programmes, the result of them seemed rather unsatisfactory(Cheng, Yi-Chen 2008; You, Chun-Ze 2008; Wang, Ming-Huey 2008). Due to such kind of outcome without systematic and integrated orthography or a competent language teacher and proper teaching materials or textbooks, aboriginal language teaching in primary schools and administration of ethnic language proficiency tests would be unfair to the new generations, for the whole circumstances of the preserving and cultivating the aboriginal languages and cultures are not well-equipped yet (Cheng, Yi-Chen 2008; Lillian Huang, 2007:34-39; Qiu, Wen-Long 2008; You, Chun-Ze 2008; Wang, Ming-Huey 2008).

2. Intrusion

Language is humankind's system of sound symbols, a bridge over which all social endeavours must pass. It is essential to the realisation of any group task. In its written form, it is also a tool for recording history. Non-literate societies, having no recourse to written language, make use of the so-called "world of symbols", based only on the spoken idiom in order to pass on traditional wisdom and teachings of their ancestors, along with the hard-earned experience of countless past generations. We, living in today's "information age", realize that it would be impossible for one individual to obtain the necessary experiences of life on one's own. In primitive societies, language is used to transmit life skills. The individual who follows the lessons of the past can avoid the mistakes of the past. Thus, language serves the progress of the human race. In Taiwan, "The Future of English", by language researcher David Graddol, however, has raised serious issues related to the expansion of English (Yang, 2005); hence, it would be worthy of helping students transfer the regular sound-letter association which they have learned in English classes to the representation of the sounds of the various indigenous languages of Taiwan in all courses, cross over to literacy on the bridge of English orthography. Aboriginal languages of Taiwan were in the past all orally transmitted, and they are now endangered. I therefore conclude that being lettered is a historical imperative for language revitalisation and it must be a concern of the first order in this endeavour. Only when an orthography is scientifically and socially acceptable can it be successful (Berry, 1972: 737; Her, Der-Hwa 1994: 142), and it might make sense to continue to present a six-year (2008-2013) language revitalisation program, proposed by the Council of Indigenous Peoples and approved by Executive Yuan (Lillian Huang, 2007).

2.1 The importance of English

Why have many governments of non-English speaking nations invested heavily in English language education? English is an international tool of communication, in the sense that one can have access to the world's latest information with this knowledge. That is to say, the dominance of English is so pervasive that proficiency in it is seen as a necessary instrumental step toward achieving successful national community as well as individual achievement. Failure to acquire a high degree of English proficiency may result in a lack of access to gateways and pathways that lead to economic and personal empowerment (Kumar, 2003; Yang, 2005). English competence can lead to improved educational and career opportunities. Thus, besides the governments of non-English speaking nations, individuals too have invested heavily in English language education in the hope that their national and socio-political standing will be raised.

The popularity and desirability of English language education has also become universal in Taiwan, and constituting and sustaining the desirability of English learning has become the critical point for a person who is striving for a bright future. The government has also embarked upon immediate steps toward enhancing the language skills in English or indigenous languages, and all students from the fifth grade of the elementary school have English courses for three periods a week and one period in indigenous languages. In fact, students have become aware of the atmosphere in real life: the range of English visibility is less than that of indigenous languages, and they need classrooms, which are exploring questions of diversity. That is why I believe that classrooms in Taiwan must offer a linguistically more *neutral context* for the potentially emotive subject of the languages of Taiwan, especially English classrooms.

2.2 Tensions of our profession

Members of the young aboriginal generation have been raised as Chinese citizens with little knowledge of their own parents' heritage. Apparently no one in Taiwan will be surprised at the fact that many aboriginal people have kept their heritage hidden from the public. The methods to activate languages and efforts of cultivating cultures from 1995 to 2006 failed to open the eyes of the new generation to the beauty of their culture and made those who were concerned for the revitalisation painfully aware that several languages might be in danger of disappearing soon and forever (Wang, Ming-Huey 2008:8-9). Furthermore, we have noticed that many students, under the government's policies mentioned above, regard learning their mother tongues and English as a painful, frustrating process because of rote repetition grammar patterns without any connection to a real-life conversation. As a result, most students are able to read and write some aboriginal languages and English, but few feel confident about the spoken forms of those languages. Only when the use of language is becoming less emotionally charged and more pragmatically oriented and everyone develops basic interpersonal communicative skills, inter-ethnic relations will be improved and ethnic reconciliation may well be in sight (Huang, T-C 2002; Wang, Ming-Huey 2008:8-9).

It is also believed that the English language and English language teaching have contributed to a certain kind of intrusion. This sort of intrusion, about which many leaders of other cultures have expressed great concern, occurs in every culture everywhere. The English language, along with a particular set of Western cultural values, is spread by the mass media, mass production, and mass education. These values appear to be very attractive to many from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Krysan, Maria & Amanda E. Lewis (Eds), 2004). Sometimes the *hidden linguistic and cultural messages* in our textbooks, our supplementary materials, and in our classroom management are so understated, implicit and comfortable that most of those born into the Western cultural values systems do not recognize them as being potentially discomforting, even offensive to some students from different cultural background.

Obviously, we can find two underlying tensions at all level of our profession: *English, a language of social empowerment, and English, a language of cultural imperialism.* The challenge for EFL teachers is to manage the tension between the empowering and imperialistic natures of English. An effective way to do this is to discuss aspects of this tension with our students. Moreover, the empowering aspects of the English language can "bleed" interest and impugn the perceived value of acquiring, using, and enriching minority languages. As a friend of mine once said, "the local language, *a local meal ticket*; the national language, *a national meal ticket*; but English, *an international meal ticket*." But as I will outline below that knowledge of English can also "feed" interest and support in minority languages.

2.3 A note of terminology

In Taiwan, the mother tongue of the younger generation might not be their ethnic languages, for the terminology relating to the use of languages in multilingual contexts is often confusing, reflecting both the complexity and diversity of different situations. In North America, for instance, the term *heritage languages* is used to describe both indigenous languages and immigrant languages. In the UK and Australia, the term *community languages* is used to describe more recently arrived immigrant languages, but not indigenous languages such as Australian Aboriginal languages or established languages such as Welsh and Gaelic (Edwards, 1998: 8). In the context of Taiwan, I have chosen to use the term *indigenous languages* to describe any language spoken by inhabitants in any community on the island other than the official language, Mandarin Chinese. Further, I use *aboriginal languages* to refer to the languages spoken by the

original inhabitants of Taiwan and to differentiate these speakers, wherever necessary, from speakers of languages from the Sinitic language family.

Translingualism, as used in the title, is a term from Steven G. Kellman (2000) and David Schwarzer et al. (2006), who see teaching an L2 as bridge building between languages that allow one to retain a unified mind and not be cloven into two for the sake of being multilingual. Thus, in contrast to multilingualism, translingualism stresses the process and not the goal.

3. Methodology

If translingualism is the process, then *Action research* (AR) is its method. Action research is very problem-focused and offers very useful framework for the exploration of language awareness (Cohen, Fink et al. 1984; Huang, T-C 2002). In other words, AR is a form of structured reflection that requires the systematic collection and analysis of data, relating to the improvement of aspects of professional practice. For teachers, it is a powerful strategy for professional development: it raises questions about classroom practice, carefully documents procedures and gathers data through observation, or interviews, and on students' performance, then encourages them to reflect on that data and practical experience to determine what to do next.

In short, AR is a process of analysis, getting facts, identifying problems, planning and taking action on problems, then repeating the cycle as new concepts and information result from the previous process. In the following Table 1, I exemplify the process of AR outlined by McNiff (1988: 50) with my expectations concerning the data collection for my own research project:

> Through the iterative process of action research, evidence supporting students' motivation in learning community languages and English came from close analysis of interactional patterns with peers and teachers in classes, informal settings, and from students' explanations of their classroom experiences in group work, questionnaires, and data derived from interviews with students themselves, the observer, parents, community figures, and educational leaders in addition to the close observation of the observer, as the course progressed.

Insert Table 1 Here

Insert Figure 1 Here

In order to make my understandings clearer, more reliable and easier to put into practice as the basis for planning future action, I start with anticipation, conceptualisation and particularisation of the problem and then move through several interventions and evaluations. Finally, before starting new action, I integrate the findings or the outcomes of the evaluation to modify my practice, plans and ideas as in Figure 1 above, which allows for the interpretation of events and situations from a number of different perspectives (Elliott, 1997: 24; Huang, T-C 2002). This process was invaluable in helping me to identify what to do next. It also helped me continue to elaborate and refine the data (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997: 164).

4. Language Awareness Activities/LAA

Greater awareness and respect for different cultures clearly are essential in a multicultural and multilingual society, for everyone has faced with learning to get along with people from various cultural backgrounds. The process of LAA (For the sake of simplicity, the symbol LAA is used in this study of mine to replace the term of Language Awareness Activities.) facilitates this awareness and respect in order to cultivate everyone to be more multiculturally aware. As a consequence, the diversity in the community of this multiracial society must become a means for bringing all the inhabitants together, not dividing one another (Gay, 1994:2). The most important task of LAA is that students need to be encouraged to become those who are not only able to think critically and creatively, but also engage difference, and discover that differences are the means of deep insight and new vision (McLaren, 1997: ix~xii).

In this section of the present study, I will focus on the basic tenets, purposes, strategies, classroom procedures, and design of the curriculum used in the study. To carry out my research in such a state of diversity so that it can meet the needs of students and tap intrinsic motivation, scaffolding, creating teaching and learning that is my theoretical rationale and fundament of teaching. These things are features of LAA.

4.1 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is an instructional technique whereby a teacher models the desired learning strategy or task, then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. According to theories developed by Lev Vygotsky, scaffolding essentially means doing some of the work for the students who are not quite ready to accomplish a task independently, like the supports that construction workers use on buildings (Hmelo, 1999). In other words, scaffolding is not only the temporary support, which enables a student to achieve an action, or goal that would not be possible without that support, but also the one which facilitates a student learning to achieve the action or goal without the support in the future.

Three critical types of support are combined to provide scaffolding: 1) *communicating process*: there are plenty of opportunities for authentic learning through conversations with one another, and conversation is a dialogic process by which they create and negotiate knowledge with one another. The whole process is demonstrated with verbal annotation to highlight main points; 2) *coaching*: the teacher is like a coach, continuing watching the players' performance, making comments and providing hints; 3) *eliciting articulation*: the teacher asks the students to articulate key concepts about their goal and action in order to encourage reflection. If the scaffolding is successful, students will learn to achieve the action or goal without the scaffolding, and it means that students who have more background knowledge or learn action/goal faster should have less scaffolding.

Students develop evolving knowledge bases through interactions with others (Vygotsdy, 1978; Smagorinski, 1995). Scaffolding characterizes the social interaction that takes place among students and teachers that precedes internalisation of the knowledge, and it is a major component of teaching activity of LAA (see Bruner, 1984; Edwards, 1995: 2).

Providing examples, materials, situations, comments, and demonstrations are all effective methods of scaffolding (Bunce, 1995: 7). A teacher in translingual classrooms is capable of using scaffolding to support students in learning to achieve a goal or process. Initially, (s)he controls and guides the students' activities, then share the responsibilities with the students taking the lead, providing assistance as needed as well, and gives the students the full range of responsibilities by removing all assistance at last. A translingual classroom for students, therefore, is the good institution where they can develop evolving knowledge bases through interactions with others (Smagorinski, 1995). Successful scaffolded instruction, therefore, requires establishing inter-subjectivity or shared understanding of the task. Teachers take responsibilities for leading the students toward their understanding and helping them to develop their own conception of the task. Creating a balance of support and challenge brings me to my next theory of LAA – creative teaching and learning.

4.2 Creative Teaching and Learning

Teachers in translingual classrooms are faced on a daily basis with managing the education of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds; therefore, they must base their practice on evidence and experience gathered from a variety of sources and develop new understandings to inform their teaching in the unique circumstances of translingual schools (Sears, 1998: 1).

Relevance has been as one of the key properties in multicultural circumstances, and how teachers' approaches are attuned to the students' cultural attitudes towards learning must be examined (Jeffrey, 2003). Being teachers in translingual classrooms, they must know the art of creative teaching, which takes into account situational factors and reflects not only the generally accepted values of the society in which students live, but also their own particular cultures. As Woods, Boyle and Hubbard (1999: 3) indicate,

> It is designed to yield 'personal knowledge' and 'child-meaningful learning' distinguished by curiosity, originality, initiative, co-operation, perseverance, open-mindedness, self-criticism, responsibility, self-confidence and independence.

Consequently, creative teachers must be culturally attuned to their students and to other aspects of the situation. They have to be flexible about the best ways to apply their philosophies and methodologies to the varied and highly complex situations they happen to meet in their classroom.

Much learning is a gradual, slowly cumulative process, and students need to relate to what is taught, to recognise its relevance to their concerns, to have their imaginations stimulated, to feel motivated to learn (Woods & Jeffrey, 1996:7). General speaking, students require creative teaching, for creative learning is promoted by creative teaching. In order to maximise opportunities for encouraging students to develop creative and original ideas, students need to be very clear about the teacher's learning intentions. In other words, the learning objectives must be shared carefully with the whole class; that is, the students must be given some choice over which activities they pursue and when.

Insert Figure 2 Here

Only after a creating learning environment and atmosphere relevant to students' needs can students' creative learning be developed and evolved. Then students and teachers are in harmony with their surroundings, and become both contented and more motivated (Beetlestone, 1998:140). They do most of the work, use their brains to make the best of their prior knowledge, solve problems, and apply what they have acquired.

In a multiracial society, as a matter of fact, everyone, including students, is exposed to large amounts of different popular cultures as seen in Figure 2 above. Such diversity needs to be explored in the classroom. For students, there are many sources of creative imagery in encountering different languages and cultures, which enrich their experience and enable them to understand how notions of status arise, and such kinds of experiences are good opportunities for them to exercise both understanding and judgement, as Beetlestone (1998: 40) points out,

> Children now have great possibilities for extending their understanding about the way people feel by considering, for example, a range of ideas around 'my special place', because there is a diversity of experience to tap into.

The process of LAA lets students feel their particular skills and experiences being valued as a result of being aware of diversity of the living community with close observation. Furthermore, parents and community figures have felt involved and are willing to work cooperatively to support the young's learning CL (For the sake of simplicity, the symbol CL is used in the study to replace the term community languages). Creative teachers work as the catalyst to make the best use of community resources to build up the teaching environment and atmosphere for student creative learning. Creative teaching and learning of LAA makes students more alert and effective users of CL as listeners, viewers, readers, thinkers and writers (Huang, T-C 2002 & 2003).

4.3 Purposes

The ultimate aim of LAA is to give students access to an education in English without diminishing their respect for their own or others' cultures and languages and to become aware of the diversity of their living community. Diversity of race, language, culture, ethnicity, social class, and religion is a fundamental feature of interpersonal interactions and community structures. Therefore, young people today clearly need to be prepared for the realities of life in multicultural and multiracial societies.

Multicultural education is a vital tool in this process, and translingual classrooms are the practical institutions to implement multicultural education fully and the result of LAA could be greater tolerance among students, fewer negative attitudes, and fewer prejudices with the result being better social relations between students from different cultural backgrounds (Huang, T-C 2003). The main purposes of LAA are as follows:

1. Encourage teachers to implement the global education philosophy together with a multicultural and anti-racist perspective.
2. Share the teachers' experiences of promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the UK, North America, New Zealand, and Australia.
3. Organise and present a range of activities that support the learning of English and the use of CL.
4. Assess the outcome of promoting diversity in translingual classrooms in order to provide specific examples of concepts and attitudes.
5. Explore practical strategies for LAA.

4.4 Strategies

It is believed that an important measure of a civilised society has often been its capability and ability to pass on its language, culture, knowledge, and values to successive generations. The questions are: "what are the best ways to develop the capability and ability?" and "Are there any existing great strategies to be adopted easily?" In reality, there is a whole lot more to it than telling. As I mentioned above, how the Language Awareness Activities can be applied to revive the community languages in order to reduce the pace of language shift and to put the life of community languages of Taiwan in the homes, neighbourhoods, and communities is my great concern, and cultivating students like happy travellers is my only strategy(Huang, T-C 2003).

Life is like a journey, and travellers in a foreign country for survival and pleasure best learn how to express ideas and how to carry on a conversation by moving around in the culture, and knowing the names of people and places. They have to participate as fully as they can, making mistakes, saying things half right, blushing, then being encouraged by friendly native speakers to try again. On the process of communicating with native speakers, they pick up the details of grammar and usage of languages (Wachs, 1996).

LAA is a kind of instruction in which students use community languages besides English to learn more about themselves, their classmates, and people who live in their community. They must use their brains, studying ideas, solving problems, and applying what they have learned. They may tend to get so involved in a topic that they are apt to be out of their seats, move about, think aloud, forget where they are, and even do not notice when the school bell begins to ring. They are intended to deepen learning and retention. Being travellers means making learning active, as Silbetman (1996: ix) points out,

> Active learning is fast-paced, fun, supportive, and personally engaging. …when learning is active, students do most of the work.

4.5 Course procedure

The nature of LAA is an important element in the successful social integration of all students. A positive attitude towards different cultural influences together with the maintenance of the home language and culture is the best circumstance for everyone (Sears, 1998: 38). Set up different learning organisations to let the youth actively join in

'living the language' to strengthen their roots, gain life-long problem-solving and teamwork skills. As they become more deeply involved with their multicultural heritage of the community, they will better understand perspectives and ways of life of different groups, their reciprocal influences, and furthermore gain awareness of available community resources and how to use them. The main activities could be divided into three stages:

1. Teaching activities and group work – Encourage the participants to become familiar with all CL through comparative study. They need to understand the nature of cross-cultural differences and the needs to promote the use of other CL. The activities ought to focus on sharing the real events or living experiences of participants. For instance, participants share something that has happened to them or talk about something they have brought from home. Group work plays a vital role in developing speaking and listening skills (Edwards, 1995: 22).

2. Interviews and discussions – Visit several communities, stress the social nature of learning, and allow the youth to take a more active part in their learning. There are always plenty of different speaking models of the CL in a community area, and there are many opportunities for real communication in meaningful contexts if they are aware of these encounters. Paying visits to several communities will give the youth plenty of opportunities to interact with fluent speakers of different CL, and such kind of interaction between students and a more linguistically skilled person is a very powerful way to learn.

3. Practice the CL at home and in their own community – The surroundings in which the youth grow up have a great effect on the development of language acquisition, and schools, homes and the whole community have to cooperate to create atmosphere and provide opportunities for practicing speaking different CL. The needs of translingual learners are best met in their everyday real communication. In such kind of meaningful context, the multilingual learners make sense what is being said and have a clear idea of how languages work. They are also able to make good use of skills, such as pattern recognition, generalisation and inference to work out the units of the languages and how these are built into larger structures (Edwards, 1995: 14).

Throughout the whole process of LAA, students will perform classroom activities and out-of-classroom classrooms, students and instructors will do something with CL before the course, in the course, out of the course, and after the course. Table 2 is the catalogues of the activities.

Insert Table 2 Here

The following are the advantages of performing such kinds of activities:

1. All participants cultivate their basic interpersonal communicative skills and principles, and learn how to live in harmony with their living environment.

2. Find out the constraints in promoting diversity in translingual classrooms and know "How do students adapt to the diverse cultures and languages of their experiences?" and "How can student interest in linguistic diversity be promoted?"

3. Develop ways for schools to respond to linguistic diversity and stimulate the willingness and interest of the youth in learning CL.

4. Give all participants the chance to explore concepts and to try out theories of the language acquisition of the CL.

5. Help the instructors perform their job of providing 'scaffolding' for their students' learning.

6. Empower all participants to be enlightened individuals, who know the value of liberty, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility.

4.6 Teaching and learning procedure

Insert Figure 3 Here

The procedures of the teaching focused on good commands on the three phases: namely 3P – presentation, practice and production. These have made the situation of endangered languages full of 3V characteristics: vim, vigour and vitality owing to the broadening of their profile, convenient transferability, and enhancing the status of the minority students. As teachers, we need a clear picture of the learning and teaching principles which are significant in helping students to become meta-learners and thinkers, which build commitment to and responsibility for their own learning, and which help students to work with others in mutually cooperative ways (Dalton & Boyd, 1996: 8). The following two basic procedures of the instruction model should be adopted in the procedure of teaching and learning as the above Figure 3:

From the chart of the procedure of teaching and learning, it provides full-class learning, class discussion, question prompting, collaborative learning peer teaching, independent learning, affective learning, and skill development, all of

which gently push student to think, feel, and apply themselves (Silberman, 1996: xii). Students reflect on what they have learned and consider how to apply it in the future, and it means that students must hear, see, discuss, do and teach one another.

5. Findings of the Study

Learning community languages (CL) and improving English proficiency are complementary. Learning and speaking CL complements practising spoken English, for students have a lot of chances for practicing speaking CL in their daily life as long as they are aware of what they are encountering any situation. Good teaching and multicultural teaching are indistinguishable. Only when multiculturalism is placed in an educational context can it be evaluated for its impact and success in achieving the often-stated and common goals for students. In this paper, I define LAA as 'the process of understanding and appreciating differences of languages and cultures in Taiwan area (Starkey, 2005).

Issues concerning linguistic diversity have not yet received the attention of researchers in Taiwan. Given the dearth of information on the potential impact of recent changes in educational policy, we are concerned primarily with describing the situation and assessing the impact of curricular reform on a generation, rather than the testing of a theory. I will concentrate now upon: (1) Use of students' prior knowledge, and (2) Students' empowerment.

5.1 Use of students' prior knowledge

Activating relevant prior knowledge means calling to mind what is already known about a topic. Students' prior knowledge enables them to predict the contents of the text and confirm predictions. During my teaching, I discovered that students' existing knowledge could be used to activate their learning and serve as a valuable bridge to the acquisition of CL (Edwards, 1998: 5). For instance, as I had already noted during the first period, the student's prior knowledge of the phonemic representation of a letter name could be called to mind, and students were able to recall which vowel and consonant sounds and symbols they had already learned. This knowledge not only helps them to read and pronounce new vocabulary from a dictionary or textbook, but also suggests how those sounds can be transferred for use in the community languages.

There were many other examples of the ways in which students were able to draw on prior knowledge during the course of fieldwork. In the fourth time of the lesson, for instance, an Amis student described how he set about teaching his group:

> As Mr. Huang mentioned, no two language sounds are ever identical, and therefore I tried to find similar sounds in English and record the sounds in my language, e.g. clinic in English, lalinik in Amis, meaning "inside"; admission in English, misimsim in Amis, meaning "thinking". It is interesting, isn't it?

In a word, providing students with the motivation to learn is one of the best steps teachers can take to facilitate the learning success through the themes of group work, partnership with others and active participation to make good use of their prior knowledge, as Bruner (1960: 31) conveys that "The best way to create interest in a subject is to render it worth knowing, which means to make the knowledge gained usable in one's thinking beyond the situation in which learning has occurred." Only if the younger generation increasingly finds its original language becomes more and more relevant to everyday life and has the same value and status as the dominant language would their extrinsic motivation be stimulated (Crystal, 1999); students who are motivated intrinsically are easy to spot because they sense the need for achievement, and gain self-confidence and ability to take control of their own learning.

5.1.1 Group work

Group work is a means of ensuring that the process of teaching in language awareness activities is student-centred, lively, efficient and effective. Language learning involves the interaction of the learners themselves, parents, family members, friends, peers, teachers, relatives, community figures and others who play a part in their daily routines. This interaction gives students the motivation to communicate: the use of the languages around them is seen as an important social skill; success in conveying what they think evokes a response which encourages them to seek other opportunities for communication. In spite of the initial reservations, students showed a growing appreciation of the potential of group work. As one student explained:

> Asin, Wakong, and I speak the Hoklo language well because it is part of our daily lives. Since we were young, we have heard our family and friends in the community using it. We are not worried about making mistakes, for there are always good models to follow and people to give us feedback on what we say. In our group, there are students from other communities, like Foting, who is Amis, and Toya, who is Truku. Even though they were very shy, we learned some words in their language in our lesson, just like a family.

The aim of the language awareness activities was to create an environment as close as possible to that of the real life experience of many members of the class. While performing group work, students themselves become meta-learners

and thinkers, building responsibility for commitment to their own learning, and helping them to work with others in mutually cooperative ways. Young children learn their first language in a family context, interacting with others in playing or daily routines long before they are able to utter their first recognizable words. Their interaction with the social world around them encourages them to use language for communication as they gradually increase their competence as speakers (Akhtar & Dunham, 1991; Nunan,1999).

5.1.2 Partnership with others

Another objective for the language awareness activities was to raise students' awareness of the potential of partnership – between students and parents, family members, community figures – for language learning. As we know, when families, communities and schools form partnerships, there are many benefits for student learning, families become closer, community resources thrive, and schools work better. All benefit greatly by firm partnership (Coelho, 1998).

At the beginning, I encountered some opposition to the learning of community languages. As time went on, however, there was growing evidence that students were beginning to develop more positive attitudes towards community languages (Starkey, 2005). The following examples over the course of the ten weeks indicate student comments and reflections on this theme. A student spontaneously commented in the second lesson that he had been aware of much greater use of community languages in the week which had passed since the first lesson. In the third period, a student commented while working in the group:

> We have opportunities and the right atmosphere to try speaking other languages. The diversity of languages all around us is making us want to learn community languages. We don't feel bored or fall asleep in class because other members of the group are always coming up with unexpected demands and challenges.

In the sixth time of the lesson, a student made the following comment, again while working in his group:

> It has been quite a shock and a real eye-opener learning about the different groups living in our community and we have gradually been discovering them all. We have always taken this for granted. Now we realise that the elders are really intelligent – they can speak the ethnic languages, plus Japanese and a little Mandarin. In fact, some members of our own class are a real resource and can speak community languages fluently. In our group, we can learn Hoklo, Hakka, Truku, and a little Amis language because Tipoy speaks just a little in his language.

5.1.3 Active participation

In order to take advantages of the linguistic resources all around them, students need to be active participants in the learning process. Students' families, and the communities to which they belong all play an invaluable role in this process (David et al, 2000: 55; Coelho, 1998:166). One of my aims of the language awareness activities, was thus to alert students to ways in which they could take responsibility for creating opportunities to use community languages wherever they might find themselves (King, 2001: 26).

In spite of some obvious initial resistance, students generally demonstrated a willingness to take advantage of opportunities offered by the language awareness activities. A Hakka student commented during group work in the fifth lesson that he regularly found himself in situations where other languages were spoken. Although he was currently fluent only in Hoklo and Hakka, he was able to communicate on a very basic level in Amis. He also remarked that this facility had not been developed in any conscious way but had been motivated quite simply by the desire to get on with people (Edwards, 2000). Other students in the same group provided support for this argument:

> In fact, there are lots of chances to practice speaking community languages in every day life but it's up to me to be aware of what they are. I regularly come across elderly people with a good command of their own community languages. They tend to code-switch when they talk to different groups in my community, which I find quite surprising.

The findings of my three-year project granted by the CIP from 2004 to 2006 also strongly suggest that students' learning is enhanced, 1) when they create their own authentic purposes for learning and generating their own content; 2) when they are encouraged to identify their own preferred alternative learning styles, and to experiment with these; 3) when they are given space to make choices and select alternative learning pathways; 4) when they are encouraged to become teachers and researchers; and 5) when what they learn is created through the interaction of the content of the classroom, as well as in the world beyond classroom.

5.2 Students' empowerment

The process of language awareness activities provided much useful information and practice about phonemic awareness, students have empowered themselves as to how spoken languages can be explored by hearing words, syllables, rhymes, and alliteration, and how sounds can be blended to build words in community languages. The following statements derived from different periods can be analysed to prove students' empowerment (David Schwarzer et al.2006).

5.2.1 Recording the spoken languages

Several sounds are found in the indigenous languages of Taiwan that do not occur in English, including the alveolar/ palatal affricates, voiceless lateral fricatives, the voiced uvular stop, the voiceless velar fricative and the glottal stop which I represented as Cc /ʦ/, Dd /ɬ/, Qq /q/, Xx /x/,''/ʔ/ respectively. In each case, I used graphs which exist in English. However, the sounds they normally represent in English do always not occur in the languages in question. Several participants, including the observers from the National Dong Hwa University, and parents, anticipated that this approach would prove confusing for the students. On the contrary, in practice, there was very little evidence of confusion on their part.

Therefore, students need to be empowered to develop competence in recording the sounds they hear, then transfer things learned in English to strengthen their listening and speaking abilities in community languages where applicable. During discussions after fieldwork, the following statements were typical:

> Mr. Huang made good use of the diversity of experiences of our classmates, and encouraged us to express our ideas, opinions, desires, emotions and feelings in an anxiety-free environment. He helped us to connect new knowledge to our experience – a good mediator. For instance, we found that pronunciation in a new one language is not easy – the sound Dd / ɬ / in the Truku: xoding (dog) and adada (sickness) in Amis, and he wanted us to mimic the sound /dθ/of the word 'width', and let us pronounce adada (sick) in Amis, idok (grapefruit) in Bunun, and qodit (mouse) in Truku. Such kind of connection in addition to more practicing pronouncing them helped us to overcome our difficulties.

> We finally figured out that there is a perfect match in letters and sounds, and felt that there wouldn't be great difficulty in pronouncing most of the following sounds: Bb /b/, Ff /f/, Gg /g/, Hh /h/, Jj /dʒ/, Kk /k/, Ll /l/, Mm /m/, Nn /n/, NG/ng /ŋ/, Pp /p/, Rr /r/, Ss /s/, Tt /t/, Ww /w/, Xx /ks/, Yy /j/ and Zz /z/ except Cc /ʦ/.

5.2.2 Word building in community languages

My common teaching practice as we happen to teach practical new words is breaking and making them in order to find spelling patterns in English and making use of them in editing words in community languages (Hill, 1999: 45). Therefore, in addition to the empowerment in word building in community languages, they also became skilled in segmenting an English word in order to find the practical spelling patterns for editing words in community languages. During group work in the sixth lesson, one student made the following comment:

> Lately among the classmates there were more and more activities analysing words in English or community languages into a series of phonemes. We tried to pick up some spelling patterns from English words. For instance, we could pick up the spelling pattern 'ni' in the word "definition" and 'me' in "experiment" to spell the "nimel" in Amis language, meaning an earthquake.

Considerable effort was made, especially in the early weeks, to draw on students' existing knowledge of sound-letter correspondences in English, to develop phonemic awareness, which would be necessary if they were successfully to transcribe and read in indigenous languages using a Romanised writing system. This was achieved through exercises in segmenting words into phonemes and practicing different vowels and consonant combinations, as well as through singing alphabet songs. Students responded confidently and enthusiastically to these activities. There were also some unexpected benefits, for students learning English. For example, some commented on the relatively poor sound-letter correspondences in English, and concluded that they would need to pay more attention to new words, looking them up in a dictionary, to check their pronunciation (Huang, T-C., 2005). The following statement of one group is evidence of how they were able to solve their problem:

> We concluded that the reason English pronunciation is so difficult, is that an English word tells us nothing about how it is pronounced. There is the lack of connection between spelling and pronunciation. Therefore, a fundamental requirement is to look up the word in a dictionary, and check out its pronunciation while reading any new vocabulary in the textbook.

Students, then, showed an increasing awareness of ways in which they could access family and community support for their own language learning.

> Most letters are based on existing sound-letter relationships in English which means that students can also use translingual transfer of their knowledge of English to the representation of indigenous languages. For example, [hi] in hill can be used to form words in community languages: "hining (peek); tahidang (call); tihi (partner)" ; the spelling patterns 'mo' in limo'ot and 'ro' in rotarot were derived from two English words: re<u>mo</u>te and p<u>ro</u>gram; "huahi" in the Hoklo language is from two English words: <u>Hua</u>lien and <u>hi</u>ll.

Language awareness activities have formed a mode of interactive linguistic learning environment, where students with different languages or from other ethnic groups can be confident, appropriate self-respect actively to establish effective relationships between themselves, parents, and community figures; they take part in those activities, talk about where they live, their environment, their families, what happened to them past and present, by selecting a variety options on their own. In a word, one who does not grow up in a target language may never learn to speak with a native speaker's ability, but to be able to communicate in it is a reachable goal to reach and through it one can be enriched and enjoy the diversity of languages and cultures in one's own living community.

The findings of the present study suggest that 1) students' phonetic knowledge, literacy abilities as well as content knowledge acquired in English may transfer to the learning community languages; 2) the ability to write down what students heard using conventional symbols, English-styled script, added vast new power to them. Although their records might not be completely accurate, they can have a mnemonic function as well as an interactional function. Let's examine the creative and collective masterpieces of my students, the use of their English experience in the recording their own languages in a cooperative translingual setting:

Insert Figure 4 Here

Insert Figure 5 Here

6. Conclusion

Ultimately, people believe that it is only language visible, language that is seen with the eyes and marked with the hands, just as the spoken language is heard with the ears and spoken with the mouth. Language, furthermore, had long been recognized as an important aspect of cultural and personal identity, but the government once took a stand prohibiting schools from maintaining and preserving the languages of ethnic groups. The "Chinese only policy" caused Han people to see aboriginal peoples as inferior, and, in turn, aboriginal children tended to devalue their own culture and ethnic experience. The language awareness activities now are having the effect of raising the status of minority language and speakers in the eyes of both minority and majority students. The opportunity to demonstrate their skills provided aboriginal students with the experience of success.

Language is patterned behaviour, the means through which most cultures are learned and communicated. The language of each ethnicity operates according the sets of their cultural rules, and the people follow these rules in their speech. However, they may be unable to state the rules which govern the way they speak. Each speaker of a certain language uses his own native tongue automatically and is usually not aware of it. In consequence of the reality I mentioned above, the government should broaden its support for ethnic minority languages. We aboriginal dwellers of Taiwan have to call for nursery schools of our own, dolls and toys of our own, and story and history books about our own men and women of high achievement.

In a word, I have to say that aboriginal students still end up with a poor self-image as a result of the widespread ignorance among the majority. We must help aboriginal students to have "respect for their self-image, that is to say, respect for other people." Have them respect their own culture and be entitled to be respected by the rest of us. As far as I am concerned, I would like to put forward the following for consideration:

1. foster pride in aboriginal history, culture, and accomplishments, encourage acquaintance with the language of the ethnic group, and help in reading, arithmetic and other regular school subjects,

2. publish stories, legends, folk songs, etc. from which aboriginal children can learn who and what they are, and who and what they will be; teach about the contributions of aboriginals to the history of Taiwan,

3. provide a meaningful social context for reading, and

4. urge the government to help minority groups in their efforts to operate supplementary schools which would help to preserve ethnic identity.

In so doing, cultures will become respected, tribal differences will be acknowledged, and group and individual identities will be secured. Finally, I have to say that a school is to be one of the essential agents of dynamic minority cultural and linguistic maintenance because it can help stem language shift. We should support students to adopt multiple appropriate roles in each cultural context, while maintaining personal and primary identity in the native culture, for a multicultural society leads to many cultures in one country, and let people feel that as a `child in two cultures' you actually want more than you can have; you want to belong to two totally different cultures.

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Notes

Note 1. which includes measures to regenerate indigenous languages, enact relevant statutes, set up a promotional agency to compile dictionaries and language teaching materials, train teachers, create language immersion programs, use high-technology teaching tools, establish a certification system for language proficiency and encourage the learning of traditional and contemporary folk songs, aiming at conserving and revitalizing Aboriginal tongues.

Table 1. The projected AR cycle for an aspect of my own research

Process	Examples
Identify the question	Cultivate the participation of different groups in learning community languages through English.
Plan the activity	Bring in everyday greetings of different groups (Listening and speaking practice).
Observe and note the impact on students' learning	Mark carefully what happens during the process (students' reaction and activities and instructor's teaching strategies). Who are the actors? What are their roles? Who does what? How do they interact with?
Reflect	Interviews, discussion, documentary evidence to collect the thoughts of all participants.
Review with all participants	Discuss activities and any opportunities from the work and daily experiences
Refine or redefine question	Incorporate more opportunities for students to develop skills so that they can participate more effectively.

Table 2. The catalogues of the activities

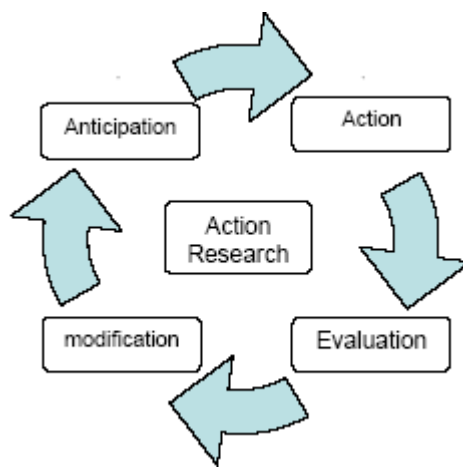| Classroom Activities	Out-of-classroom Activities
1. Presentation of the topic for the lesson and discussion about class expectations. 2. Team-building workshop with guest speakers (colleagues, parents, community figures). 3. Collaborative group work for solving any problems that have been identified. 4. Share, talk about and figure out what difficulties one may encounter when practicing CL out of the school. 5. Basic skills review.	1. Collect the published different ethnic teaching materials. 2. Words, phrases, expressions for the basic interpersonal greetings must be consulted before the course. 3. Make a list about what they want to consult the guest speakers. 4. Find out what cultural heritages they have in the community. 5. Interview different parents, elders and community figures. (Do parents and inhabitants of the community view the acquisition of CL as an advantage for everyone? Do they have a high esteem for their own culture and languages?) 6. Practice presentation in the course and practice speaking different CL in selected contexts.

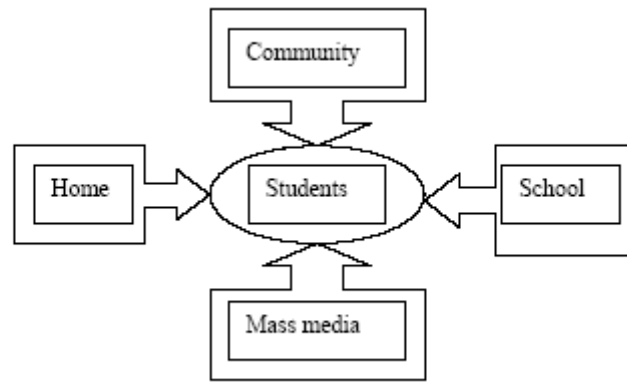Figure 1. Cycles of Action Research

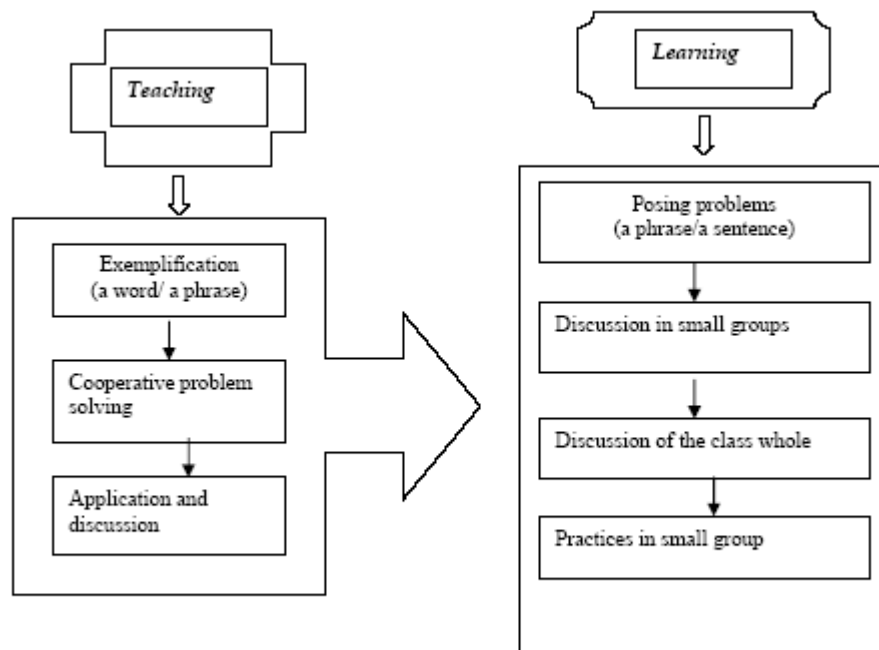Figure 2. Agents of students' socialisation

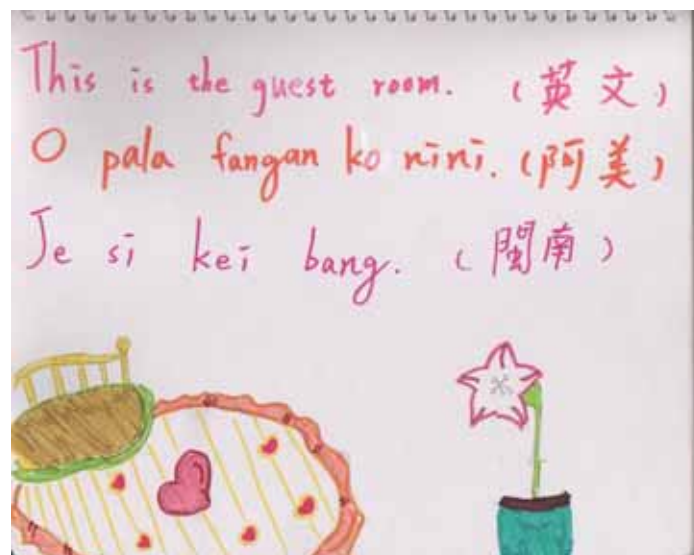Figure 3. Two basic procedures of the instruction model

Figure 4.

Figure 5.