

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Final conclusion

This thesis mainly explores three topics: (1) Why did the Taigi literature debates and related developments happen? (2) What issues did the Taigi literature debates discuss and what related developments occurred? (3) How did the Taigi literature debates influence future developments in Taiwan? Regarding the first topic, I explain the reasons why the Taigi literature debates occurred from the rising of the Taigi literature movement. For the second topic, I elaborate the content of the Taigi literature debates and extend this to related developments. As to the third topic, I elaborate the significance of Taigi literature debates for establishing a multi-ethnic and multi-language society. I think there are three unique features in exploring the above three research questions.

6.1.1 Deepening and broadening the subject of Taigi literature debates

This thesis concentrates on the topic of the Taigi literature debates between 1987 and 1996. Some research about this topic can be found in previous literature, which focused on the content of the Taigi literature debates. Although they mentioned the related topics, they did so only briefly. On the other hand, the related developments of the Taigi literature debates were also handled as a separate topic and didn't cover the topic of the Taigi literature debates. However, in this thesis I have combined both the content of the Taigi literature debates as well as the related developments. I connect these topics and have made a broader research contribution.

The deepening of the subject of the debates includes the historical origins in the

Japanese colonial period, the development of Taigi writing in the post war era and the expansion and limitation of a Taigi literature space. It also extends the topic to the meanings of the future development of a multi-language and culture society in Taiwan. This includes the language and culture awakening movements and the dilemmas faced by for indigenous people and Hakka ethnic groups. The reason I have connected all of the above topics is due to the formation of my research questions related to the historical origins in the Japanese colonial period and the background of the contemporary Taigi literature movement which can be traced back to the Taigi poems of Lin Zong-Yuan and others in the post war era. The Taigi literature debates also mentioned the language selection debates about Taiwan literature. Therefore this thesis extends the topic to the influence of the development of a multi-language and culture society.

In the issue regarding the broadening of the debates, not only the content of the Taigi literature debates is explored, but also related developments of the Taigi literature debates. Because there has been no connection between the topics of the Taigi literature debates and its related developments in the previous literature, I have connected these two topics. The related developments include such issues as the problem of Taigi script standardization, vernacular education and language policy, which took place in the corresponding period or later. In addition to this connection, I use the theories of diglossia and digraphia to elaborate my research. I also introduce the language development experience of other colonized countries as a comparison with Taiwan.

6.1.2 Applying the theories of diglossia and digraphia to the Taiwanese language movement

This thesis adopted the theories of diglossia and digraphia to explore the Taigi literature debates and their related developments. Up to now, there has been no such kind of exploration in Taiwan. From the Taiwanese Homeland Language and Literature Movement in the 1930s, I have observed that those intellectual elites in the Japanese colonial period had already sought the high language and script status for Taigi. Similar debates also occurred in the post war era. In spite of the rising number of Taigi poems created in the 1970s, or the trend of Mandarin writers who switched to writing in Taigi during the 1980s as well as the Taigi literature debates between 1987 and 1996, all were seeking the high language and script status for Taigi. Among them, the appeal of Taigi to define Taiwanese literature during the debates was used to seek the status of literary language for Taigi. This appeal was similar to the Taiwanese Homeland language and literature movement in the Japanese colonial period.

As to the related developments of the Taigi literature debates, I also applied the theory of diglossia and digraphia to explore this whole process. Many scholars and writers offered proposals for Taigi script standardization. The government started to implement vernacular education in the early period of its rule. Some scholars requested an independent language policy. All these related developments were striving for the high language and script status for Taigi. On the other hand, my research also applies the theories of diglossia and digraphia to elaborate the significance of the Taigi literature debates for establishing a multi-ethnic and multi-language society. Although seeking literary language status by the Taigi literature camp has expanded some space for its development, it still has a lot of difficult problems ahead. Hakkanese and indigene languages, in seeking to elevate their language status, have encountered dilemmas in striving for the status of high language and script. There are many dilemmas for minorities to overcome in the

literature territory. Under the influence of English globalization, Taiwanese native languages really face strong pressure from English. How to obtain balanced development between localization and globalization has become a big question for the Taigi literature camp. It is very suitable for me to apply the theory of diglossia and digraphia to elaborate the above topics.

6.1.3 Linking the language development between Taiwan and other countries

It is also one of the features of this thesis to link the language development between Taiwan and other countries. I compare the Taigi literature movement with the language development of other colonized countries. How did they develop their language and have it become high language? It is worthy to learn about these cases for the development of Taiwan language in the future.

Through the experiences of Haitian Creole, Swahili in Tanzania, and Hindi in India, I observed their language development. These three countries were colonized by British and French and were much influenced by their colonizers in the aspects of politics, economics and culture. The native languages of these countries couldn't compete with the languages of English and French. For instance, there are a lot of languages in Tanzania and India. The Swahili-speaking population of Tanzania only occupied one tenth of Tanzania's population. Besides, although Hindi had a greater speaking population, there were many dialects and languages in India. How could they achieve the status of high language for these languages in these difficult positions? These observations can be a model of reference for the development of Taiwan language.

Taiwan was always dominated by foreign regimes. Its native languages were diverse and were suppressed by dominators similarly to these countries. Although there were two Taigi literature movements, Taiwanese native languages were never elevated to national languages like in these countries. Why did the Taiwanese language movement fall behind these countries? What is the major reason? Through the historical experience of these colonized countries, the Taiwanese language movement may find the way to break through.

6.2 The inspection and future study

6.2.1 The implication of Postcolonialism and Desinicization movement.

Owing to my research interest, I only applied the theory of diglossia and digraphia because it was very useful for me to explore the problem and elaborate the implicit meaning inside the Taigi literature debates and their related developments. Although the application of the theory of diglossia and digraphia was suitable for this thesis, other theories could also be used to explore the Taigi literature debates. I think that some post-modernist discourse could offer different perspectives. Theories like Postcolonialism¹ and Desinicization movements probably could also bring some implications to research of this kind of topic.

Postcolonialism is the perspective of refusing the domination of colonialism, and resisting the colonist center and using introspection to reconstruct the subjectivity of one's own history, language and culture. The discourse of postcolonialism is through 'Using one's own language' to declare independent awakening and ability, to seek one's own affirmation in order to combat cultural demarginalization or political decolonization. (Chen 2004) The viewpoint of discourse in cultural demarginalization or political decolonization would be suitable to be applied to the exploration of Taigi

literature debates and its related developments. Another scholar Lai (2003) directly pointed out that the appeal of the Taigi literature movement was the spirit of postcolonialism. She said, “It should be the major reason for the two local literature movements if viewed from the theory of postcolonialism, to refuse the colonialism domination and to resist the viewpoint of the history, language and culture around the colonists and to use introspection to reconstruct the subjectivity of one’s own history, language and culture.” (Lai 2003: 120) If the perspective of postcolonialism discourse could be applied to the topic of the Taigi literature debates and related developments, this would be a good way to carry out research too. However, the level of inquiry into postcolonialism is very extensive, therefore because of space restrictions, this paper is unable to further discuss this issue and it must be left to future study.

The Desinicization movement is an appeal of subjectivity in East Asia countries. The countries of this area, which had used or are still using the writing system of Han characters, went through script reform which abolished Han characters or restricted the degree of its usage, to achieve subjectivity on politics and culture. (Chiung 2005) For long time, East Asian countries like Japan, Korea and Vietnam used classical Han characters as the official script. Their own local writing system was treated as informal script, for instance Japanese ‘Kana’, Korean ‘Hangul’ and Vietnamese ‘Chu Nom’. After the middle of the nineteenth century, the rise of subjectivity consciousness of these countries, led to the creation of scripts with partial use of Han characters to form new scripts like Japanese and Korean scripts. Vietnam even abolished Han characters and adopted the Roman script. Currently, Taiwan literature is not written in native language but in Mandarin. The literary language of Taiwan literature was seen as suspect by the native camp. Does it mean that literature written in native language is just regarded as Taiwanese literature? Does it mean that

literature written in non-Han characters is just regarded as de-sinicized literature? The attitude of those countries like Japan, Korea and Vietnam in processing the Han characters has very great reference value for the Taigi literature movement. Therefore, if the perspective of the discourse of Desinicization movement could apply to the topic of the Taigi literature debates and related developments, this would be a good way to research too.

6.2.2 The Problem of vernacular shift

Exploration of the language policy of Taiwan is one of the related developments of Taigi literature. Regarding the debates, I mentioned that Mandarin had become the mother tongue of most children in Taiwan. I didn't go forward to explore this topic thoroughly. However, this issue is worthy of more exploration since it has such an effect on a shift from the vernacular. Actually, the children's parents have the phenomena of vernacular alienation. Some can speak ethnic vernacular, but many parents can't speak ethnic vernacular anymore. The vernacular shift has appeared in the young generation in Taiwan. Despite the fact that the majority uses predominant Mandarin, Holo ethnic groups could still enjoy the electronics media because of market demand. Hakka and aboriginal TV station seems to propagandize their languages and culture. It seems that foreign movies on TV are popular with most of the young generation. It is hard for the young generation to learn vernacular language from TV programs because the language identification has changed.

TV stations are just decorative articles of a multi-cultural society, to give a public appearance. They don't have substantial meaning for native language and culture, unless vernacular education is carried out in real life. In my view, the vernacular shift is the result of the implementation of the Mandarin-only policy. Mandarin is still the

teaching language used in the schools. Vernacular education is only a decorative measure. Taiwanese have not been vigilant towards the crisis of native language and culture. New generations speak Mandarin and identify with Chinese culture. They seldom identify the multi-culture of Taiwan. Does the vernacular shift cause the divergent identification? I must ask the following questions: Does this divergent identification affect politics and economics? Or it has occurred already in the society in Taiwan? Will the anti-Taiwan nationalism caused by the vernacular shift erode the value of Taiwan identification formed by localization? The problem of vernacular shift extended from the language policy is also a topic worthy of discussion.

Endnotes:

¹ Most discourses of postcolonialism are introduced by the literature commentators of American or English literature departments in the colleges. The writers of this field are Liao Bing-Hui, Ciu Gui-Fen, Liao Jhao-Yang and so on. The writers of comments related to Taigi writing are Lai Fang-Ling, Chen Mei-Fei and so on.