

Taiwanese Loanwords in Mandarin Chinese: Language Interaction in Taiwan

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Abstract: In the lexicon of contemporary Mandarin, a strong tendency to borrow from Taiwanese can be observed. Using newspapers and youth language trends as a data source, this paper examines the written representation of Taiwanese loanwords in Mandarin and the interaction between Mandarin and Taiwanese. The written representation of Taiwanese loanwords in Mandarin falls into four categories. Transliteration is a phonetic transcription. Loan translation is based on semantic similarity. A mixed word creation is a combination of the above two, and a neologism may also be formed to represent a loanword. These four categories correspond to the traditional principles of character creation in Chinese. Finally, the paper concludes that Taiwanese has re-emerged to challenge the preeminent status of Mandarin in the last decade, encouraged by political reforms in Taiwan.

1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation and Objectives

When the Kuomintang (the Nationalist Party, hereafter KMT) settled in Taiwan, Mandarin joined the speech community of the Taiwanese and in time became the national language. During the last fifty years, Mandarin has inevitably borrowed from Taiwanese, the language spoken by most people in Taiwan. This borrowing has become increasingly frequent with a large quantity of Taiwanese loanwords occurring in the everyday dialogues of young people and in newspaper headlines. For example,

- (1) Xiaolin jintian yuzu de hen, ni bie qu re ta, yimian guren you tidao tieban.
小林今天鬱卒的很，你別去惹他，以免顧人怨又踢到鐵板
'Xiao-lin (personal name) is very gloomy today. You are advised not to bother him. Otherwise, you will be annoyed and rebuffed.'



(2) Ta haoxiang shishi zheyang, shibushi toukehuiqu a.

他好像時時這樣，是不是頭殼壞去啊！

‘He always seems to be like this. Is he out of his mind?’

A Mandarin speaker who has been away from Taiwan for a period of time might find a common dialogue like examples (1) and (2) difficult to understand, because the yuzu 鬱卒 ‘gloomy’,¹ gurenyuan 顧人怨 ‘annoyed’, tidaotieban 踢到鐵板 ‘rebuffed’, shishi 時時 ‘always’, and toukehuiqu 頭殼壞去 ‘screwy; out of one’s mind’ are not usual Mandarin words, they are either not recorded in Mandarin Chinese dictionaries or they are marked ‘Southern Min dialect’ in the dictionaries. However, these loanwords have become very popular. I have collected 585 such lexical items from newspapers and 357 from conversations between young people during the period from October 1992 to May 1994.

A discussion of lexical variation (Hsieh 1994) shows that Taiwanese loanwords have either expanded the vocabulary of Mandarin or adjusted the semantic field of Mandarin, depending on the way the loanword is represented. For example, the Taiwanese expression *so inn-a-thng* ‘to make dumpling soup, to offer someone a bribe and dissuade him from taking part in a ballot’ is borrowed in the process of transliteration as 搓圓仔湯 *cuoyuanzitang*. This process has expanded the vocabulary of Mandarin. The Taiwanese expression *so inn-a-thng* is borrowed through the process of loan translation and is represented as 搓湯圓 *cuotangyuan*. This has adjusted the semantic field of Mandarin, because the form 搓湯圓 *cuotangyuan* ‘to make dumpling soup’ had already existed in Mandarin before the loanword was introduced, the difference being that the meaning is reinterpreted and broadened.

This study is concerned with the written representation of Taiwanese loanwords in Mandarin. We propose that the phonetic and/or semantic similarities of the characters in both Mandarin and Taiwanese have caused such a lexical variation. Therefore the written representation of Taiwanese loanwords will be investigated. It is hoped that the analysis will shed light on the reasons why loanwords from Taiwanese have induced these lexical variations in Mandarin and also help us better understand the interaction between Taiwanese and Mandarin.

1.2 Definition of the Terms

The term ‘Mandarin’ in this study is confined to the official language used in Taiwan which is also called Guoyu (國語 the National Language), as opposed to

¹ Mandarin Pinyin will not be italicized (see 2.2 for details).



Putonghua (普通話 the Common Language) used in Mainland China (see Fig. 1). Although Mandarin is used as an official language in both these areas, after over fifty years of separation differences have emerged with respect to pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and written characters (Li 1983, Cheng 1989, Yao 1991, Tong 1991, You 1991, Lu and Lu 1992).

The term 'Taiwanese' in this study is confined to the Southern-Min dialects in Taiwan which are also collectively referred to as Minnanyu (閩南語), Hoklohua (河洛話) and Taiwanese Hokkian (台灣福建話) (Cheng and Cheng 1977, Hsu 1990). In the early 17th century, immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong provinces began to settle in Taiwan. Most of the pioneers merged with one of the aboriginal tribes, because of their small population. The languages of these two groups were probably assimilated during this period. Until the Qing dynasty a large number of Han people immigrated to Taiwan from Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and east of Guangdong, bringing their native languages with them. They gradually occupied a larger percentage of the population in Taiwan. Later, Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga) set up the political power of the Han people in Taiwan (Hsu 1988: 69-69). The languages they spoke were thus retained. Although Mandarin and Taiwanese are genetically related, both languages are not mutually intelligible.

A *loanword* is a word imported from another language. One example of this is the English-produced equivalent of Chinese 'chaomian' ('fried noodles') in *chow mein*. Another example is the German-produced equivalent of English television in *Fernseher*. *Chow mein* is a loanword that underwent the process of transliteration, while *Fernseher* underwent the process of loan translation.

Though most of the Taiwanese loanwords in newspapers such as 鬱卒 *yuzu* 'gloomy', and 牽手 *qianshou* 'wife' are written in Chinese characters, and those spoken by young people are pronounced in Mandarin sounds, these Taiwanese terms in the data can basically be distinguished from the Mandarin lexicon because of their Taiwanese sources. Some Taiwanese loanwords can be recognized by their peculiar word formation, for example, 準準準 *zhun-zhun-zhun* 'precisely, spot-on' is a triduplication that has not existed in Mandarin but is a popular morphological formation in Taiwanese. The NP-V-qu formation, such as 頭殼壞去 *tou-ke-huai-qu* 'screwy', did not exist in Mandarin before the influence of Taiwanese. Some characters became popular; they were otherwise not used commonly, e.g., 迤迤 *chhit-tho* 'to loaf', and 呷 *xia* 'to eat'.



2. Methodology and Basic Concepts

This section introduces the data, the transcription of them and reviews some previous research works that are related to loanwords.

2.1 Source of the Data

The data is divided into two forms, spoken and written. The spoken form is collected from youthspeak, and the written form from newspapers. Some Taiwanese loanwords are seldom heard in a Mandarin dialogue, such as 呷 *xia* ‘eat’, but they are often read in newspapers. On the other hand, loanwords, like *chho chio* 做醮 ‘the anniversary of a temple’, are more frequently used as a spoken form.

In the development of a language, innovations are introduced into the spoken language first, and are used by anonymous groups of younger speakers (Ivir & Kalogjera 1991: 283). The reason is that younger speakers are socially more sensitive and open to innovations than their elders. On the other hand, a newspaper is a carefully planned and practical mass medium. It witnesses and records social change and language change. To attract the attention of readers and to promote circulation, newspaper editors become more reader-oriented. To this end, adopting an innovative lexicon such as Taiwanese loanwords is one of their strategies. A questionnaire was distributed and filled in by college students to enable us to collect more colloquial loanwords.

The written data in this study is gleaned from newspapers, either run by local people or by the government, printed between 1991 to 2005 and randomly selected. The data forms a database—CIM (Comet Information Manager) for the present analysis. All the data recorded is keyed into the computer with eight referential categories, viz. (a) source; spoken form or the headlines of a newspaper, date and page, (b) context, (c) the sound pronounced or the character written, (d) the original Taiwanese meaning, (e) the meaning after it has been borrowed, (f) type of representation, (g) part of speech and (h) type of lexical variation.

2.2 Transcription of the Data

For discussion and illustration, the Taiwanese expressions are transcribed according to the Church Romanization system and italicized, while the Mandarin elements are transcribed in Pinyin without italics. The Church Romanization (see Douglas 1873) are presented with some modifications including the marking of nasalization with double *n*, replacement of *ts-* by *ch-*, and rendition of open *o* as *oo*.

For the presentation of the data, the written form is shown as 代誌 *daizhi* ‘matter’, with the Chinese characters in lead, before the transcription and the



English meaning. Since the data collected from newspapers is in written form, we apply only one pronunciation of the Chinese character, ignoring the actual pronunciation. The spoken data is presented as yuzu 鬱卒 ‘gloomy’, with the transcription before the Chinese characters and the English meaning. Since the data collected from the conversations of the youth is spoken, we present the unknown orthographic representation in the form that most subjects (of questionnaires) write and recognize.

The written data is transcribed into the sound that the character represents. There are two possibilities: (1) the Mandarin sound, e.g., 死忠 *sizhong* ‘completely devoted’, (2) the Taiwanese sound, when the represented character is not available in Mandarin, e.g., 迨迨人 *chhit-tho-lang* ‘the loafer’. It should be noted that many of the Taiwanese expressions in the headlines can also be pronounced in Mandarin and, as a matter of fact, quite a few of them sound rather natural in Mandarin pronunciation. Shih (1993: 36) stated that “this is basically due to the Mandarin context of the newspapers and partly because some have been borrowed into the Mandarin lexicon.”

2.3 Basic Concepts and Literature Review

Borrowings and semantic changes have been observed for a long time. Sapir (1921) describes language from the point of view of explanation and general theory to call attention to the lexical borrowing and the linguistic influences attributable to cultural contact. He proposes that “the study of how a language reacts to the presence of foreign words—rejecting them, translating them, or freely accepting them—may throw much valuable light on its innate formal tendencies.” A language may borrow a foreign word “whole-sale”, i.e., it borrows the whole word including both its sound and form, or by loan translation, i.e. it borrows the word by translating its parts and forming a new word. The way in which a language borrows foreign words, tells us much about the speakers’ psychological attitude towards that language. For example, English tends to borrow a word whole (e.g., *compassion*, a word of Latin origin, is borrowed as *compassion*), while German prefers loan translation (e.g., the same Latin word is borrowed as *Mitleid* ‘compassion’, literally, *mit* ‘with’ + *Leid* ‘sorrow’) owing to the desire to preserve the purity of the language (Arlotto 1972: 189).

Bloomfield (1933) categorized borrowing processes from one speech community to another as *cultural borrowing*, *intimate borrowing*, and *dialect borrowing*. Cultural borrowing is the adoption from a different language of lexicon referring to notions and things newly introduced to one cultural group from another. Loanwords are important indicators of cultural contact. Cultural borrowing is mostly limited to cultural novelties and is generally in a one-way direction



introduced from the language of the dominant group to the language of the subordinate group. We have found that this can be demonstrated by the lexical borrowing from Mandarin to Taiwanese, such as Mandarin 錄影機 *luyingji* ‘video recorder’ and 原子筆 *yuanzhibi* ‘ball-point pen’ which are borrowed into Taiwanese as *lok-iann-ki* and *goan-chu-pit* respectively; these are lexical items related to new cultural novelties.

Unlike cultural borrowing, intimate borrowing is the transfer of lexicon between two languages spoken in a geographically and politically heterogeneous community. Cultural borrowing is not limited to cultural novelties, and is commonly one-sided, proceeding from the language of the dominant group to the language of the group that has come under domination. It is generally the case that at least one of the two groups of speakers in contact tends to become bilingual, and the probability is high that a language shift will ultimately take place.

Lastly, dialect borrowing always occurs between languages that are genetically related. These closely related languages might influence one another more readily and significantly than do foreign languages, since the similarities between their grammatical and lexical systems permit differences to be more easily interpreted. An example of this kind can be illustrated by the borrowing between Taiwanese and Mandarin. The following sections will give a further overview of the study of these issues, including the review of articles concerning Chinese borrowing. Cheng (1987) examined the process of language change by comparing Taiwanese words with their Mandarin equivalents. Although his study focused primarily on the phonological aspect, the lexical aspect was also surveyed. For instance, he concludes that “borrowing of compounded words has taken place much more than that of affixed words—which are overwhelmingly internally developed” (Cheng 1987: 125).

Shih (1993: 36-44) highlighted the interaction between Mandarin and Taiwanese. She investigated the mixing of Taiwanese in Mandarin-framed newspaper headlines. Not only did she discuss this phenomenon from a sociolinguistic viewpoint, such as the implication of code-mixing in newspapers and the communicative functions, but she also gave an overall review of the written representations of Taiwanese and then discussed these Taiwanese representations mixed in newspaper headlines.

2.4.1 Language Contact

Language contact refers to the prolonged association between the speakers of different languages (Crystal 1992). Long association is the external motivation for language change. Nowadays, convenient transportation and frequent interaction between countries in which different languages are used make language contact



persistent and inevitable. Thus, every language is capable of borrowing words or expressions from other languages. Languages mix either few or many words of foreign origin into their system. Frequent language contact results in there being no 'pure language' in the world, the so-called 'global village'.

The social background of language contact is highly heterogeneous. Heterogeneity refers to the distribution of people among different groups (Blau 1977: 77). The larger the number of groups and the smaller the proportion of the population that belongs to one or a few groups, the greater is the heterogeneity in terms of a given nominal parameter. For example, a community's industrial heterogeneity depends on the number of different industries located there and the distribution of the labor force among them; its occupational heterogeneity is greater if people work in a large variety of occupations than if most of them are concentrated in a few; its political heterogeneity is greater if there are numerous parties and voters do not largely support one or two of them.

In a community of low heterogeneity, the absence of language contact prevents language change. On the contrary, in a speech community like Taiwan, the dialect heterogeneity is greater since many people have different language backgrounds. Their first language might be Sichuan dialect, Shandong dialect, Mandarin, southern Min dialect, etc. For effective communication, they either modify their own language or mimic the language of others during language contact.

The most intensive kind of contact is likely to exist in a fully diglossic community. We believe that Taiwan is an example of this. In Taiwan not only lexical items, but even phonological and grammatical rules may be shared by the languages in question, as Bynon (1986: 216) put forward for other languages.

2.4.2 Language Interaction

Languages interact while they are in contact. It happens when coexisting languages make adjustments by imitating or borrowing one another's lexicon or linguistic patterns. Language interaction can be either salient or inconspicuous, depending on the internal and external motivations existing in the speech community. Coexistence coupled with political pressures is the external factors that inevitably cause language interaction. For example, during the years of Japanese occupation, Taiwanese was influenced by the Japanese language. However, without the presence of an internal factor, these factors would result merely in one-way interaction and the effect would be inconspicuous. The internal motivation, such as the genetic relationship between the coexisting languages, has a tremendous effect on language interaction. This is exemplified in the interaction between Taiwanese and Mandarin, where both languages have been greatly affected due to the presence of both external factors and internal genetic relations.



3. Political Reform in Taiwan

When the KMT government came to Taiwan in 1949, it started to promote a national language to foster a sense of nationhood, thus uniting the multicultural and multilingual residents of Taiwan.² Subsequently, Mandarin became the dominant language in education and all public domains. Taiwanese, in contrast, was so suppressed that linguists predicted that it would be a dead language within a few generations.

In 1990, the first Taiwan-born president, Lee Teng-hui, started his presidency. He spoke Taiwanese words in his Mandarin speeches. His use of Taiwanese in public speeches had important implications, as it marked an overt re-evaluation of Taiwanese by the highest representative of the state. In 2000, Chen Shui-bian was elected president of Taiwan. He was the first president from the Minjindang (Democratic Progressive Party, DPP) after the KMT had held the reins of government since 1949. Chen often delivers his national speech in Taiwanese, and in many public places, government officials are also required to speak Taiwanese.

With political reforms toward a democratic country, along with the awakening of ethnic consciousness, language policy has been re-evaluated to echo the reformation. Unexpectedly, mother tongues are rewarded in various ways. The ability to speak Taiwanese or Hakka, has been regarded as a vote winner during national and local elections. Also, the influential mass media reflect this phenomenon by increasing their use of Taiwanese.

Meanwhile, as Taiwanese becomes more attractive, Taiwanese speakers have more opportunities and motivation to speak Taiwanese. They like to either mix Taiwanese in a Mandarin conversation or borrow Taiwanese directly into Mandarin to create a communicative effect. For instance, people deliberately adopt Taiwanese terms to display or claim their identity to the group. The language use facilitates their communication. Non-Taiwanese speakers have begun to learn Taiwanese, some like to use Taiwanese loanwords to give an impression of intimacy. With the emphasis of mother-tongue language teaching in elementary schools, every student has to choose one mother tongue to learn.

As a result, the dominant Mandarin has been wavering. However, it has managed to retain its status by borrowing Taiwanese lexical items to enrich its own lexicon and to adjust to other linguistic levels. Taiwanese loanwords have become more popular, a phenomenon which is best mirrored in newspapers and the trendy speech of young people.

² Mandarin was upheld in Taiwan since Taiwan was restored from Japan in 1945.



4. Written Representation of Taiwanese Loanwords

This section discusses the Taiwanese loanwords themselves. The written representation of these words in Mandarin can be classified into four groups, namely, transliteration, loan translation, mixed word creation and neologism.

4.1 Transliteration

Transliteration is the adoption of the existing Chinese characters to represent Taiwanese elements because the phonetic value is similar to that of the Taiwanese morpheme in question. Words derived from this process are referred to as loan-words by Bynon (1986: 217). For example, the Chinese character 水 *shui* 'water' in (3) is used to represent the Taiwanese expression *sui* 'beautiful' because 水 is pronounced as *sui* in Taiwanese,³ the same as the Taiwanese expression *sui* 'beautiful'. Likewise, 代誌 *daizhi* in (4) is selected to represent the Taiwanese expression *tai-chi* 'the matter, the event' simply because they are homophonic in Taiwanese. Chinese characters are used here as a means to represent Taiwanese sounds.⁴

(3) Meimei hen shui o

妹妹很水喔

'Beautiful girls!'

(ZY, 09/05/2005; 7)

(4) Hui fasheng da daizhi

會發生大代誌

'Big events will happen'

(ZG, 06/10/2005; C2)

(5) Zhacai hua hulan yiyuan ye bei kuang

詐財畫虎爛 議員也被誑

'Deceiving money and playing tricks. Even councilors are deceived'

(ZG, 01/10/2005; A18)

Transliteration is a direct and convenient process of borrowing. If the speakers know the sound of the words they intend to borrow, they can directly transliterate the sound by using a character of similar pronunciation. However, it should be noted that the use of Chinese characters as a means of transliteration is different

³ The literal reading of 水 is *sui*, and the colloquial reading is *chui*.

⁴ This is *jiajie* 假借, phonetic borrowing, in *liushu* 六書 (The Six Writing Principles).



from the use of an alphabetic writing system,⁵ because an alphabetic writing system is a device used to represent sounds, whereas Chinese characters are not. A character of course carries a sequence of sounds, yet each Chinese character itself also carries various meanings. Therefore, when a character is used mainly as a means to denote sounds, its meaning is still with the character. Sometimes this may cause misunderstanding if the character is not appropriately chosen.

After examining our data, we see that writers apparently adopt the Chinese characters which are frequently used, have neutral meaning, or carry the meaning “near” to the Taiwanese items in question. Some writers even make use of the meaning-carried speciality of Chinese characters to hint at or to embellish the original Taiwanese meaning through transliteration. Let us now turn our attention to some examples.

First, by transliteration, we can sanitize and enhance some expressions that denote a negative meaning. For instance, Taiwanese *ho-lan* was originally taboo in Taiwanese which means ‘tiger’s testis’ to connote ‘trick, lie’. After being imported into Mandarin, it is now written as 唬爛 *hulan* or 虎爛 *hulan* (as in example 5), but not 虎屙 *hulan*. We have expunged the taboo by selecting Chinese characters of similar sound.

Second, we find headlines which are designed as *double-entendres* by applying transliteration of Taiwanese expressions. For example,

(6) Katong zaoxing jin keai

卡通 造型 金 可愛
chin

‘cartoon’ ‘molded’ ‘gold’ ‘lovely’

‘The cartoon model is golden and lovely.’

(JJ, 01/17/1994; 5)

(7) Sharen gen wo bi

bi

啥人 跟 我 筆

‘Who’ ‘with me compare’

‘Who can compare with me?’

(ZG, 01/19/1994; 35)

⁵ To transcribe the sound ‘xi’, we use the alphabets /si/ or /xi/. However, if we use Chinese characters, we have more than enough choices like 西, 希, 吸, 兮, 悉, 嬉, 奚, 攜, 曦, 晰, 溪, 熙, 熹, 犀, 犧, 皙, 稀, 羲, 膝, 蜥, 谿, 蹊, 醯 and 龔 (all with the first tone only), etc.



The 金 jin in (6) is a phonetic transcription of Taiwanese *chin* ‘very’ which is often represented as 真 zhen ‘very’, but seldom as 金 jin ‘the gold’, except for a specific purpose such as here to portray a golden cartoon model. The 筆 bi ‘the pen’ in (7) has phonetic similarity with Taiwanese *pi* ‘to compare’ which is always represented by the Mandarin counterpart 比 bi ‘to compare’. This headline is used as the title of a calligraphy competition.

Transliteration has become an extremely productive means of borrowing Taiwanese expressions. However, since there are a great number of characters which share the same sound sequence, without a standard policy, different people or even the same person would select different characters to represent the same morpheme. For example, Taiwanese *beh* ‘would not’ is written variously as 麥, 嘍, 未, 卜, 昧, 欲, and 嘞, etc. Chaos currently exists, especially under the following circumstances: (a) when a Taiwanese expression has no cognate equivalent in Mandarin, such as the Taiwanese expression *ho-ka-chai* ‘fortunately’ which is written variously as 好家在, 好佳哉, 好佳在 or 好嘉在, and Taiwanese *cho-hue* ‘to be together’ which is written as 做夥, 作伙, 作夥 or 做伙, and (b) when a function word is involved, such as the above-mentioned 麥, 嘍, 未, 卜, 昧, 欲 and 嬲 ‘would not’, the *siong-kai* ‘very’ in *siong-kai-ho* ‘best’ is written variously as 上蓋, 尙蓋 and 上介 by transliteration.

Moreover, the Chinese characters selected seldom correspond exactly to the sound in both Mandarin and Taiwanese.⁶ Therefore, the writers’ consideration is made reluctantly upon similar sounds. In this case, those sounds would be merely similar to some degree but not identical. A common modification is made through the consonantal similarity, such as Taiwanese *lo-mua* ‘the gangster’ which is represented by 鱸鰻 lu-man, and *bau-si* ‘to get profits undeservedly or accidentally’ written as 抱喜 bao-xi. Another alteration is made through the similarity of vowels, e.g., the Taiwanese expression *bu-sa-sa* is represented by ‘misty, fog bound’ 霧煞煞 wushasha, and *iau-chiau* by 妖嬌 yaojiao. Though in some cases, the sounds in both languages are coincidentally similar with respect to both consonants and vowels, yet the tone is different, e.g., Taiwanese *kha2* ‘comparatively’⁷ by 卡 ka3 as in 卡好 kahao ‘better’ or 卡清楚 kaqingchu ‘comparatively clear’. In this way, sound change arises gradually.

⁶ Cognate words will always have sound correspondence in both Mandarin and Taiwanese. This is not the focus of the present study and will not be further discussed.

⁷ The ‘*kha*’ in expressions like *kha1 he2* ‘better’ or *kha1 chhiong3 chho2* ‘comparatively clear’ is pronounced as the first tone (high level) owing to tone sandhi.



4.2 Loan Translation

Another way to represent Taiwanese expressions is loan translation. This is done by using Chinese characters which have the same meaning as the Taiwanese expression. For example, the Taiwanese item *sui* ‘beautiful’ is sometimes written through translation as 美 *mei* ‘beautiful’ in a Mandarin text (cf. *sui* ‘beautiful’ is written as 水 *shui* by transliteration as mentioned in 4.1), and 黑 *hei* ‘black’ in 黑白講 *hei-pai-jiang* ‘to talk carelessly’ is also translated, as in (8). The parts of the Taiwanese expression are translated separately and a new word is formed. In this way, many Taiwanese expressions are imported into Mandarin and form a class of new compounds, also known as semicompounds, which consist of words joined directly in juxtaposition.

Loan translation of Taiwanese words in newspapers can be distinguished into two types. In the first type, the selection of a Mandarin counterpart of the Taiwanese expression is made without considering the sound correspondence at all. This can be illustrated by the above-mentioned semantic translation of Taiwanese *sui* ‘beautiful’ as 美 *mei* ‘beautiful’ instead of 水 *shui* ‘water’; the translation of Taiwanese *bue-lian-teng* ‘not fluently’ as 不流利 *buliuli* instead of 麥輪轉 *mailunzhuan*; and the Taiwanese *cha-boo* ‘woman’ is written as 女人 *nuren* as opposed to 查某 *chamou*, as in example (8). In addition, *inn-a* ‘stuffed dumplings made of glutinous rice flour served in soup’ is written as 湯圓 *tangyuan* instead of 圓子 *yuanzi* as in the Taiwanese expression *so inn-a-thng* ‘to make dumpling soup; to offer someone profit privately and dissuade him from competition’ (cf. example 10 and 11). In this way, after translation, the Taiwanese expression no longer looks like Taiwanese if the context is Mandarin. This kind of translation is not a means of borrowing, but is a method of representing Taiwanese expressions.

(8) Choulou feng chamou

醜陋瘋查某

‘a gully crazy woman’

(ZG, 08/10/2005; A18)

(9) Xi dou shi heibaijiang

戲都是黑白講

‘(words in) dramas always talk carelessly’

(ZG, 07/10/2005; D2)

(10) Yanjiusuo baoming re ye chuan cuoyuanzitang

研究所報名熱也傳搓圓仔湯

‘The signing up of graduate school is so popular that there is a rumor of bribe taking.’

(ZG, 03/23/2002; 6)

(11) Anding Nonghui cuotangyuan siren bei yuetan

安定農會搓湯圓四人被約談

‘Four suspects in An-Ding Farmers’ Association were interrogated by the police about their bribe taking.’

(LH, 03/10/2001; 18)

Nevertheless, if the context is Taiwanese or the expression is not available in Mandarin, certain terms are categorized as borrowings, such as 黑白講 *hei-bai-jiang* ‘to talk carelessly’ and 招人怨 *zhao-ren-yuan* ‘annoying’. Although the Taiwanese element *o* ‘black’ is preferred to be semantically translated as 黑 *hei* ‘black’ instead of being phonetically transcribed as 烏 *wu* ‘black’, and *ko* is semantically translated as 招 *zhao* but not phonetically transcribed as 顧 *gu*, these expressions are still considered to be loanwords from Taiwanese. The reason for this is that the structure of terms such as 黑白講 *heibaijiang* ‘to talk carelessly’ and 招人怨 *zhaorenyuan* ‘annoying’ do not belong to the word-formation of Mandarin. The compound 黑白 *heibai* can be an adjective (meaning black and white, or wrong and right) or a noun (meaning iniquity and righteousness) in Mandarin, as in 黑白電視機 *heibai dianshiji* ‘a monochrome television’ and 黑白道 *heibai dao* ‘The Mafia and the righteous party’, respectively, but not as an adverb as in (9) 黑白講 *heibaijiang* ‘to talk carelessly’.

The second type of loan translation refers to the situation where a word is not borrowed as a whole. On the contrary, parts of the word are translated separately, morpheme by morpheme, and a new word is formed. Let us name this process ‘partial semantic translation’. For example, Taiwanese *bue-lian-teng* ‘not fluently’ is translated as 未-輪-轉 *wei-lun-zhuan*. Here 未 *wei* ‘not’ is semantically translated to represent *bue*, 輪 *lun* ‘wheel’ represents *lian*, and 轉 *zhuan* ‘a turn, to convey’ represents *teng*. This Taiwanese expression is translated morpheme by morpheme and forms new words in Mandarin. Another example is *so inn-a-thng* ‘to offer someone a bribe and dissuade him from taking part in a ballot’ which is translated as 搓-圓-仔-湯 *cuo-yuan-zi-tang*, as in (10); 搓 *co* is semantically translated to represent the Taiwanese *so* ‘twist’, 圓 *yuan* to represent *inn* ‘round’, 仔 *zi* to represent *a* ‘a particle’ and 湯 *tang* to represent *thng* ‘soup’ (cf. (11) 搓湯圓 *cuo-tang-yuan*). In this way, the parts of the word are translated



semantically, but their phonetic similarities are also taken into consideration. It can be seen as a kind of mixed word creation.

4.3 Mixed Word Creation

Mixed word creation is the use of a character due to the similarity of its sound and meaning in Taiwanese, i.e., both phonetic and semantic similarities are taken into consideration in representing Taiwanese loanwords. The above partial semantic translation is one example of this.

Because Taiwanese retains archaic Chinese sounds, a special approach to represent Taiwanese loanwords can be applied. In this case, Taiwanese expressions are written with these characters that appear only in specific writing styles, such as in official documents and obituaries. A lot of Taiwanese expressions found in books written by linguists exemplify this case, such as, 裘 *hiu* ‘the coat, the jacket’, 企 *khia* ‘to stand’, 驛 *ia* ‘the train station’, 身軀 *sing-khu* ‘the body’, 舉枷 *gia-ke* ‘to make an unnecessary move’, 泅水 *siu-chui* ‘to swim’, 糶 *thio* ‘to sell rice’, 糶 *tia* ‘to buy rice’.⁸ These old forms of Chinese characters are rarely used in modern colloquial Mandarin. They are now used in this approach to represent Taiwanese expressions because the genetic relationship between Taiwanese and Mandarin is taken into consideration. No foreign words can be represented or borrowed in this way. In the collected newspaper headlines, the following examples (12)-(18) of mixed word creation were identified.⁹

- (12) Baoangong qing chengjiao mingnian ban chuantong xiju huodong jinnian kan
保安宮慶成醮明年辦傳統戲劇活動今年看
‘Bou-Ann Temple celebrates its anniversary in which we can see a traditional opera that was scheduled to hold next year and we can already enjoy it this year.’
(MS, 04/13/2002; A1)

- (13) Wo haojiagai you zhezhang diyiming de chengjidan
我好佳哉有這張第一名的成績單
‘Fortunately, I have this report card which proves that I was the champion.’
(TW, 03/01/1994; 2)

⁸ This type of character is also referred to as *ben-zi* 本字 ‘the original character’ or *zheng-zu* 正字 ‘the orthodox character’ of Taiwanese by some linguists, such as Wang (1993).

⁹ Mixed word creation is like *zhuanzhu* 轉注 in *liuzhu* 六書. Cheng (1989:306) named it as *zhuanyung-han-zi* 轉用漢字 ‘figurative character’ or doublet.



- (14) Jicheng siji yuan qian daizhuan
計程司機怨錢歹賺
'Taxi drivers complained that it was too difficult to make money.'
(ZG, 08/28/2002; 7)
- (15) Guoji dianhua? Mian jing!
國際電話? 免驚!
'Overseas phone call? Don't be afraid!'
(ZG, 04/02/2002; 38)
- (16) Qiangwei xinglu
薔薇行路
'The rose walks (The title of a prose).'
(ZG, 01/25/1994; 35)
- (17) Benghan guai ziji
甬戇! 怪自己
'Don't be dumb! You have to blame yourself.'
(JJ, 01/28/1994; 11)
- (18) Shiyongzhe fufei zunjie shehui chengben
使用者付費樽節社會成本
'To save the cost of the society, people who use any service must pay.'
(ZG, 07/17/2002; 6)

4.4 Neologism

In our data, there are loanwords represented by characters which are not found in Mandarin, that is, they are neologisms specially invented to represent those words. For example, the character 呷 *xia* in (19) was invented for representing the Taiwanese loanword *chiah* 'to eat'. As mentioned earlier, neologisms are formed in more or less the same way as the basic principles for forming new characters as presented in the *liushu* 六書 (six writing principles) of the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters). The 呷 *xia* is an example of phonetic compounding or *xing-sheng* 形聲.¹⁰ The word-formation of these compounds is of "radical + phonetic" structure, i.e., the character 呷 consists of the 口 *kou* 'mouth' radical to represent the meaning and the 甲 *jia* to denote the sound.

¹⁰ What is used by Taiwan language users and newspaper editors is often different from what is written in dictionaries. The Taiwanese loanword *chiah* 'to eat' is an example. Language users and newspaper editors use 呷 *xia* while some Taiwanese dictionaries have 食 *shi* for the same meaning. We could say that those in dictionaries are for writing Taiwanese, but not for Taiwanese loanwords.



- (19) Zhongyi zhongyao xiatian xialiang shizhen yang yang
 中醫中藥夏天呷涼 濕疹癢癢
 ‘Chinese herbal medicine cools you down in summer and eczema will not trouble you with the help of Chinese herbal medicine.’
 (ZG, 08/22/2002; 34)
- (20) Taiwan chhit-tho-lang, zhuankou junhuo shang.
 台灣迺迺人轉口軍火商
 ‘The Taiwanese gangster became an ammunition exporter.’
 (ZG, 02/10/1991, 7)

Some invented characters for representing Taiwanese elements are not created in either of these ways, but have existed so long that it is hard to trace how they came into existence, as exemplified by the term 迺迺 *chhit-tho* ‘play; have fun’ as in (20) 迺迺人 *chhit-tho-lang* ‘loafer’.

The basic principles discussed above for forming new characters or selecting existing characters for Taiwanese loanwords are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Written Representation of Taiwanese Loanwords

1. Transliteration (jiajie 假借)

An existing character is used to represent Taiwanese elements because its Taiwanese sound is similar to the Taiwanese morpheme in question, e.g., 水 *shui* ‘beautiful’ and 代誌 *daizhi* ‘matter’.

2. Loan translation

An existing character is used to represent Taiwanese for its similarity in meaning.

▪ (a) Counterparts

A Mandarin counterpart is used to represent Taiwanese. This is not borrowing if the context is Mandarin, e.g., 流利 *liuli* ‘fluently’ and 搓湯圓 *cuotangyuan* ‘to make dumpling soup; to offer someone profit privately and dissuade him from taking part in competition’.

▪ (b) Partial Semantic Translation

A Taiwanese expression is borrowed by translating morpheme by morpheme, e.g., 輪轉 *lunzhuan* ‘fluently’ and 搓圓子湯 *cuoyuanzitang* ‘to make dumpling soup; to offer someone profit privately and dissuade



him from taking part in competition’.

3. Mixed Word Creation (zhuanzhu 轉注)

- (a) Partial Semantic Translation
- (b) Old Forms of Chinese Characters
Taiwanese expressions are transcribed into the old forms of Chinese characters, e.g., (做) 醮 jiao ‘the anniversary of a temple’ and (作) 穡(人) se ‘harvested crops’

4. Neologism

- (a) phonetic compounding (xingsheng 形聲)
A character is compounded of “radical + phonetic” structure, e.g., 呷
- (b) Meaning Aggregation (huiyi 會意)
A character whose meaning is derived by combining the meanings of its constituent parts, e.g., 媿
- (c) Ideography (zhishi 指事)
A character is indicative of the ideas represented.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Written Representation of Taiwanese Loanwords

Four types of written representation of Taiwanese loanwords in Mandarin are examined. Transliteration is a phonetic transcription. Loan translation is based on semantic similarity; either a Mandarin counterpart is adopted or a morpheme-by-morpheme translation is applied. A mixed word creation is a combination of the above two means, and, finally, a new character may also be formed to represent a loanword. These four categories conform to the traditional principles of character creation in Chinese—*liushu* 六書 (six writing principles). Only the *xiangxing* 象形 (pictography) is missing from these six principles, and *jiajie* 假借 (transliteration) is applied commonly. A completely new character can be formed by *xingsheng* 形聲 (phonetic compounding), *huiyi* 會意 (meaning aggregation) or *zhishi* 指事 (ideography).

5.2 The Interaction between Taiwanese and Mandarin

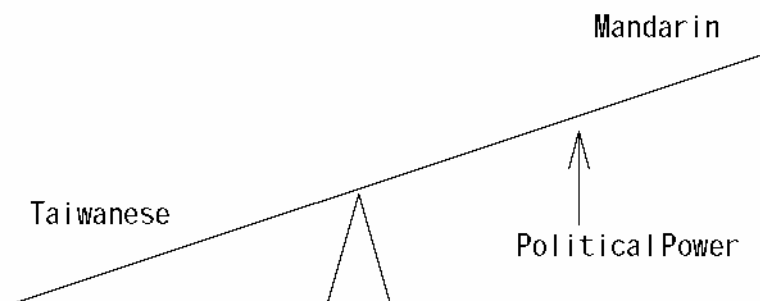
For over fifty years, Mandarin has played a significant role in unifying people politically. It is taught in schools, spoken in public, and used in official institutions.



Mandarin is a dominant language in Taiwan and has affected other dialects immensely. In a speech community of Taiwanese, a lot of young people are not able to speak their mother tongue—Taiwanese—fluently. They frequently switch to Mandarin for some lexical items when they speak Taiwanese. Some of them are even unable to speak Taiwanese. The influence of Mandarin on Taiwanese is tremendous. On the other hand, a large percentage of the Taiwanese population has mixed with the mainlanders, Mandarin has also been influenced by Taiwanese, especially in respect to the lexical items discussed in the above sections. In other words, there is a reciprocal language interaction between Mandarin and Taiwanese. Intermarriage is a significant index to determine ethnic relations. A higher rate of intermarriage indicates closer relations, such as cultural integration, social merger and attitude assimilation, between two ethnic groups (Huang 1993:26). The high incidence of intermarriage promoted the interaction between Mandarin and Taiwanese. According to Huang (1993: 241), the rate of intermarriage between Mainlanders and Taiwanese is 74% in Taipei, i.e., seven out of ten couples are intermarried.¹¹

Figures 1 and 2 show the social status of Taiwanese and Mandarin before and after 1990, when the DPP gradually increased its political power in Taiwan:

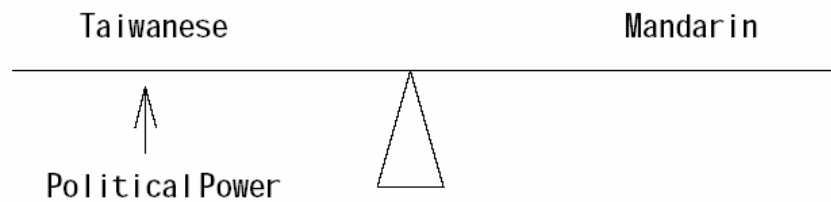
Fig. 1. The Social Status of Mandarin and Taiwanese before 1990



¹¹ The rate of intermarriage in Taipei in 1990 was 74 percent (68 percent of the Mainlanders were married to Taiwanese, and six percent of the Taiwanese were married to Mainlanders).



Fig. 2. *The Social Status of Mandarin and Taiwanese after 1990 until now*



After KMT came into power and before Lee Teng-hui started presidency in 1990, the Taiwanese language was suppressed and discouraged by the government. Yet it managed to survive by borrowing from the Mandarin lexicon. In the last decade, though Mandarin still has its political status, encouraged by the political transformation, Taiwanese has re-emerged, won its high social status and challenged the prestigious status of Mandarin.

Abbreviations

LH	=	Lian He Bao	聯合報	United Daily News
ZG	=	Zhung Guo Shih Bao	中國時報	China Times
ZY	=	Zi You Shih Bao	自由時報	The Liberty Times
MS	=	Min Sheng Bao	民生報	Min Sheng Daily
TW	=	Tai Wan Ri Bao	台灣日報	Taiwan Daily News
JJ	=	Jin Ji Ri Bao	經濟日報	Economic Daily News



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