Indigenous languages, traditional culture and the introduction of Christianity in Taiwan

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Overview

• How Christianity came to Taiwan
• How it affected aboriginal languages
  – Language rights
  – Language use in a religious context
• The future
• Case study: Bunun
Taipei 台北市

Nantou County 南投縣

Sinapalan / 信鄉 (Takbanuaz dialect)

Bahuan / 馬遠 (Takivatan dialect)

Hualien County 花蓮縣

Concentration of Bunun inhabitants

- incidental
- low
- moderate
- high
Missionaries in Taiwan

“… the day to day contact of the missionary or the local preacher or clergy with the men, women and children within a missionary territory is rarely recorded.’

(Richardson 1972: 125)
The first arrival of Christianity

• Dutch protestant missionaries:
  – 1624-1662

• Spanish Catholic mission:
  – 1626-1642

• 1662: Koxinga (鄭成功)
Jan van Baden

Surrender of Fort Zeelandia in Formosa, 1662
The second arrival of Christianity

- 2nd half 19th century till now
- Catholic Church
  - 1859: Two Spanish Dominicans arrive at Kaohsiung
- English Presbyterian Church
  - 1867: James Maxwell arrives in Kaohsiung
- Canadian Presbyterian Church
  - 1872: George L. Mackay arrives in Tamsui
- ...

The second arrival of Christianity

• 1895-1945: Japanese occupation
  – Initially high hopes
  – 1930s: Increasingly hostile towards Christianity and Western missionaries
Christianity in aboriginal Taiwan

- Systematic evangelization of the Aboriginal areas
  - only started after WWII
  - Presbyterians lead the way, Catholics followed
  - E.g. Ma-yuan (Bunun): First Presbyterian minister in 1949
Christianity in aboriginal Taiwan

“After over one hundred years of effort, only three percent of the immigrant Chinese community [...] has converted to Christianity. In contrast the indigenous people, who currently form only a very small percentage of the total population, are 85% baptised (Catholic and Protestant).”

Lardinois & al. (2004:114)
Christianity in aboriginal Taiwan

- Japanese occupation:
  - Small family groups ⇒ villages
  - Non-stratified society ⇒ centralized leadership (*tumuq*)

- Christianity
  - ✗ Headhunting
  - ✗ Ancestor worship
  - ✗ Drinking (Presbyterians)
  - ✓ Other expressions of traditional culture
Christianity and language rights

• Involvement in aboriginal rights movements from 1980s onwards
  – Mainly Presbyterian Church (see Stainton 2002)

• Religious and cultural education
  – E.g. Yushan Theological College had indigenous arts classes from 1948 (Kao 1965:464)
Christianity and language rights

• Policy of indigenization:
  – Local independence for religious communities
    • Presbyterians > Catholics
  – Integration of indigenous cultures
    • Presbyterians < Catholics
  – Use of indigenous languages
Domains of use

• Literary production: Bible translations, mass books, …
• Religious praxis: Liturgy, hymns, …
• Social activities: Communal meals, sports, excursions, …
Bible translations

• Primarily by Protestants, the majority Presbyterians
• Always involves translation teams:
  – Sinitic clergy
  – Foreign missionaries
  – Indigenous clergy or believers
  – Theologians
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Translator</th>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Bunun</td>
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<td>Matthew</td>
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<td>James</td>
<td>Zhuyin Fuhao</td>
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<td>Acts</td>
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<td>Truku</td>
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<td>Roman</td>
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<td>Timothy 1-2</td>
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<td>Romans</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>Ephesians, Romans</td>
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<td>Amos</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>Roman</td>
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<td>Amis</td>
<td><strong>Short Bible</strong></td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>Amos, Jonah, Micah</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>1993</td>
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<td>Jonah, Micah</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Roman</td>
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<td>Yami</td>
<td><strong>New Testament</strong></td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td><strong>The Bible</strong></td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Bunun</td>
<td>“Tama Dihanin tu Halinga”</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Rukai</td>
<td><strong>New Testament</strong></td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Roman</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Truku</td>
<td><strong>Truku Bible</strong></td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tsou</td>
<td><strong>Tsou New Testament</strong></td>
<td>Roman</td>
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</table>
Indigenizing Christian concepts

“… the reliance on indigenous categories to translate Christian concepts during the proselytizing process has significant bearings on how Christianity is adopted.”

Yang (2008:70)
Indigenizing Christian concepts

Mat 4:1:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit up into the wilderness, to be tempted by the Devil.

Aipinchin, Jesu hai adasun mas Sele kusia ispus, tanamun mas hanitu mapinsanamaz.
Indigenizing Christian concepts

- *Iesu* ‘Jesus’
  - prob. from Jap. イエス *Iesu* or Chin. 耶穌 *Yē sū*
  - Phonological loan; introduces a loan phoneme /e/

- *Sele* ‘Holy Spirit’
  - prob. from Jap. 聖霊 *Seirei*
  - Phonological loan; integration in native phonology + use of loan phoneme /e/
Indigenizing Christian concepts

• hanitu ‘Devil’
  – from Bun. hanitu ‘spirit, ghost’
  – Adaptation of traditional religious concept
Dialect bias

• Strongly based on Isbukun

• Effects on other dialects:
  – structural development: new vocabulary is introduced through Isbukun
  – social prestige
* Proto-Bunun

- Northern Bunun
  - Takituduh
  - Takibaka

- Central Bunun
  - Takbanuaz
  - Takivatan

- Southern Bunun — Isbukun

TAQ: 18th century
Dialect bias

And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

(Mar 6:46)

Biblical Bunun:
Masa mudanin naia hai kudadaza saia sia ludun masumsum.
Dialect bias

Discrepancy with Takivatan Bunun

Masa mudanin naia hai kudadaza saia sia ludun masumsum.  
(Mar 6:46)

Takivatan Bunun:

Musan munbaʔav, ai, sadu sia mabunbun masihal.  
‘I went into the mountains and, I saw that there were very nice bananas there.’
Dialect bias

• Result: a dialectal dichotomy
  – Bible: Isbukun-based
  – Liturgy, other activities: local dialect

• Additional factor: dialect mixing due to movement to the cities
An example

- Sinapalan village, 24 July 2011
- Takbanuaz dialect

Sermon
(Native dialect)

Reading NT
(Isbukun Bible)
Conclusion

• Future development:
  – Dialect leveling?
  – Dialect discrimination?
  – Creating of a Bunun language standard?

• Question for language preservation:
  – Will this process exterminate dialects?
  – Will it help the Bunun language survive?
Bibliography


Bibliography


Uninang
miquumisang!
Extra info
Influence on the lexicon

• Borrowing:
  – Biblical names
  – From Mandarin, English, Japanese or Latin
  – Partial integration in native phonology
    • Exceptions: /e/ and word-initial /j/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matai</td>
<td>馬太 mǎ tài</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Matthæus</td>
<td>Matai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maluku</td>
<td>馬可 mǎ kě</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Mako</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luka</td>
<td>路加 lù jiā</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>Ruka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iuhani</td>
<td>約翰 yué hàn</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Joannes (Iohanni)</td>
<td>Yohane</td>
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<td>Luma</td>
<td>羅馬 luó mǎ</td>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>ad Romanos</td>
<td>Roma</td>
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<td>Kalatia</td>
<td>加拉太 jiā lā tài</td>
<td>Galatians</td>
<td>ad Galatas</td>
<td>Garatea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ipisu</td>
<td>以佛所 yǐ fó suǒ</td>
<td>Ephesians</td>
<td>ad Ephesios</td>
<td>Epeso</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebulai</td>
<td>希伯來 xī bó lái</td>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>ad Hebræos</td>
<td>Heburu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iakubu</td>
<td>雅各 yǎ gè</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Jacobi</td>
<td>Yakobu</td>
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</table>
Influence on the lexicon

- Adaptation of traditional vocabulary
  - semantic extension of existing religious concepts to a Christian context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible</th>
<th>Takivatan</th>
<th>Christian meaning</th>
<th>Traditional meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dihanin</td>
<td>diqanin</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
<td>sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanitu</td>
<td>qanitu</td>
<td>devil, demon</td>
<td>ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sasbinað</td>
<td>sasbinʔað</td>
<td>Lord (God / Jesus)</td>
<td>person of authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Influence on the lexicon

• Meaning extension
  – General meaning > religious domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takivatan</th>
<th>Generic meanings</th>
<th>Religious meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>isʔaŋ</td>
<td>*breath &gt; feeling &gt; belief</td>
<td>&gt; Christian faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liskaʔuni</td>
<td>worship</td>
<td>&gt; Christian worship, belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaʔuni</td>
<td>create, make, construct</td>
<td>&gt; creation, Genesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamasað</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td>&gt; spirit of God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Influence on the lexicon

• Word creation
  – Creation of neologisms through the use of native morphosyntactic processes

  *is-ka-kaupa*  
  TRANSFER-CV-all  
  ‘universe, creation’

  *tama dihanin*  
  compounding  
  father heaven  
  ‘God’