LIFE COURSE THEORY AND DUAL INDEXICALITY IN TAIWANESE AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS

by

Daniel Fogal

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
Anthropology

Charlotte

2022

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Elise Berman

_____
Dr. Gregory Starrett

_____
Dr. Eric Hoenes

ABSTRACT

DANIEL FOGAL. Life Course Theory and Dual Indexicality in Taiwanese American Households
(Under the direction of DR. ELISE BERMAN)

There is evidence that young adult Taiwanese Americans experience a similar general life course event that, while the specifics may differ between individuals, generally happens around the same time and causes the shift from discomfort to comfort regarding speaking Mandarin and expressing a Taiwanese identity. This thesis aims to highlight some of this evidence and point out areas for further research opportunties to further tie life course events with shifts in how Taiwanese Americans think and go about expressing a Taiwanese identity as a Taiwanese American.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who agreed to be a participant and everyone who assisted in the analysis. Lastly I'd like to thank everyone on my committee for their understanding and support through the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Introduction

Minority groups in the United States face unique challenges that help to shape and mould not only the migrants but their children as well. This study is concerned with Taiwanese-American young adults that have grown up in migrant households, how they view and frame their upbringing in terms of narratives around language use in the household, and how they interact with their parents today as young adults who visit their parents regularly or still live with them. Based off the findings in this thesis, it appears that Taiwanese-American youth present life course narratives of moving from acceptance to rejection, and then again to the acceptance of expressing their identity as Taiwanese as they age.

The American-born Taiwanese young adults that I interviewed and observed expressed being caught between trying to be Taiwanese and American at the same time. This manifested in the interviews as narratives discussing how, at times, there was a sense of rejecting one identity or the other at select instances in time. This appears to usually be due to reasons such as being made fun of, feeling like they don't belong, or worrying that their peers may be confused about something that their parents have said. In both of these narratives and through the observations, I saw that there were times when it appeared like there was an attempt within the narrative to identify as American or Taiwanese in specific instances. In doing so, they may end up marking themselves as the opposite. It is important to note that during these instances, it is not clear whether the individuals are trying to solely identify as Taiwanese or solely as American. What can be assumed is that they are indexing one identity over another in that instance. This was observed through being told stories that the children interviewed told in tun, how they struggle

with detailing their emotions and thoughts on their childhood, and how their parents speak about being aware of their child's struggle with this topic.

The young adults present a life course narrative that they have been released from the double-bind of feeling like they cannot be fully Taiwanese yet they also cannot be fully American as they age. This is due to interacting with those that they are familiar with and those who have experienced the same bind as them. Some of the main events that they recount in their narratives include summer camps or growing up with other kids whose parents are from Taiwan. The parents generally send their kids to Taiwanese summer camps or "Chinese" Sunday School in Taiwanese churches in the United States. However, in the parental narratives, they unsuspectingly also played a role in the creation of the double-bind as they narrated wanting their children to feel as though they were Taiwanese. The parents also narrated stories of putting in an effort to ensuring that their children became accepted and fit into the American lifestyle. This is illustrated by the parents talking about how they made a point to celebrate certain holidays like Thanksgiving in a traditionally American style. Some of the younger generation noted this in their narratives as well.

The younger generation narrated breaking free of this double bind during their teenage years, citing a realization that their experiences were shared and have been shared with Taiwanese-American and other foreign-born Taiwanese individuals. This is freeing in that they no longer really see themselves as trying to identify as either Taiwanese or American. They come to accept that they are able to identify with either identity in some ways. I saw that the children illustrate their freedom from the double bind through a metapragmatic discourse with their parents, accommodating their parent's language preferences and tending to find humour in them. The Taiwanese-Americans who participated in this study narrated similar life course trajectories

which suggests that the participants see themselves, or at least provided narratives, that place them on a similar trajectory. This impact can be seen in how the participants position how they perceive their current day self as opposed to their past self. This was also validated through my observations of some of the participants in the present day when interacting with their parents in the household.

This paper will first discuss the previous research on multi-language households regarding ideology and identity, the double bind and duel indexicality, and life course theory before presenting a brief narrative of the history of Taiwan. After this, the study methods will be covered before the analysis is presented using the data gathered during this study followed by a brief conclusion.

Literature Review

A. Previous Research on Multilanguage Households Connecting Ideology and Identity

Language and identity are areas of study engaged in by linguistic anthropologists that allow them to gain insights into how language use indexes social identity. This study utilised the definition of social identity posited by Ochs in that it is "a cover term for a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life" (Ochs, 2008, p. 79). For ideology, my study used the definition established by Woolard and Schieffelin in that ideology is a set of beliefs held by an individual (1994).

Language is used in different contexts to index specific identities (Ochs, 1993). This can be seen in the Nahuatl in Mexico who value speaking only in the Nahuatl language. They try to impart the language to their children so then they may, in their parent's narratives, also be Nahuatl (Hansen, 2016). Even though the Nahuatl parents do not exclusively speak to their children in Nahuatl, their ideological stance clearly indicates that they believe that language directly correlates to being able to index as Nahuatl. Furthermore, there is also research on what languages are being used in the home. Takei and Burdelski (2018) uncovered an ideology held by the parents of Maki. Maki's appears to believe that language indexes specific identities. This was uncovered by interviewing the parents of Maki and analysing their dinner recordings. In this case, the parents believed that if their children spoke English to them, then it meant that their child were indexing an American identity which the parents did not want. The parents encourage the Japanese language use only with Maki in the dinner recordings.

The notion that codeswitching affects identity has also been explored among the Rapa Nui (Makihara, 2013). Here we see that Rapa Nui parents echo the same sentiments seen in the narratives of the Nahuatl and Japanese parents in the previous articles. We can also see how the individuals who codeswitch between Rapa Nui and Spanish do so to express solidarity as Rapa Nui. They do this by using Rapa Nui even if they are not able to communicate solely in Rapa Nui. Makihara also argues that this illustrates how the Rapa Nui community is inclusive. It would appear that those who codeswitch are mostly the younger generation. These views were not directly tied to the older generation.

These findings point towards the idea that identity can be central in informing language use, which makes sense given the ties that language has to identity. These ties are prevalent in the parents interviewed by Takei and Burdelski since they believed that by getting their child to speak to them in Japanese, they would ensure that their child would index, in their mind, as Japanese. The same is true for the Nahuatl parents who, even though their practice differed from what they claimed to do, still held the ideological stance that they could instil a sense of being Nahuatl in their children by speaking to them in the Nahuatl language. Perhaps most interesting is that Makihara noticed that while both generations saw the importance of being able to index a Rapa Nui identity, the action that indexed a Rapa Nui identity appeared to be different. For the older generation, it was the action of speaking Rapa Nui. For the younger generation, being able to codeswitch some Rapa Nui into Spanish was the only action required. Both generations believed that being able to index a Rapa Nui identity was important, but the way to do so linguistically had shifted greatly.

These studies, particularly Makihara's, illustrate that many hold an ideological stance where language and identity are intrinsically interconnected. Understanding the professed language

ideology of migrants such as Maki's parents is important since understanding how these individuals perceive the language use around them, and what one language indexes versus another, is relevant to migrant families (Lin, 2013). By being placed in a linguistically diverse landscape and needing to become multilingual, migrant parents may have thought more about this topic than monolingual families (Smith-Christmas, 2014). This indicates that while migrant families like those in my study may also have this view, it is not unique to them. The families of marginalised communities such as the Rapa Nui and Nahuatl also share this experience and appear to develop parallel ideological stances on language and identity. The stances professed by and observed to be held by the parents can lead to unique developments amongst the younger generations in the same communities.

B. Bateson's Double-bind and Dual Indexicality

Bateson's double-bind is best explained as when two conflicting messages are being sent in the same action (Bateson et al., 1956). For a double bind to exist, there are five major criteria that must be met. First, there must be two or more persons involved in the action, such as a mother giving a command to her child. Second, the experience, such as the aforementioned command, must be repeated. Third, there also must be a primary negative injunction which would be the command itself. Fourth, in the same command, there is a secondary injunction conflicting with the first at an abstract level. The abstract conflicting injunction is a key part of the double bind and operates at the subconscious level. Fifth, the field where the action takes place, which for our example would be communicating within the household, cannot be escaped. Engaging in verbal communication with a parent, while not inescapable, is not a communicative act that is easily avoidable in certain households such as the ones I am studying. Furthermore, the action causing the double bind, such as a communicative event, does not need to be interpreted as conflicting by

any of the parties involved. The conflict can function at a subconscious level. While this theory was developed initially to develop a deeper understanding of schizophrenia and its development, it has been applied over the years to describe other phenomena such as feminism in academia (Jenkins, 2014), family relationships (Campbell and Handy, 2011), and politics (Harp, Loke, and Bachman, 2016).

In my research, I am applying the double-bind to how my participants provide narratives of how their interactions with their parents may be illustrative of this double bind and later, how the young adults overcame their double-bind. I am not arguing that the participants are conflicted in the present day or that they ever were actually conflicted. Instead, the double-bind indicates the possible ramifications of their perceived past and how is juxtaposed with the present day interactions that the young adults have with their parents. Applying Bateson's double bind to the narratives of the past allows for a deeper understanding of the construction of identity because by learning how individuals construct their history, I can gain an insight into what influences their interactions and choices in the present. Furthermore, this could help the participants, their families, and possibly migrant families at large come to an understanding regarding language use in the house while fostering a shared identity. Lastly, by applying the double bind in this study, the researcher seeks to facilitate the understanding of the factors that surround and influence language use in the household.

Another theory that interfaces well with Bateson's double bind is dual indexicality as discussed by Don Kulick and Schieffelin. By definition, dual indexicality is when some form of interaction occurs that is indexing two opposing positions (Kulick and Schieffelin, 2004). I am interested in the idea of dual indexicality because these two opposing positions function much like the third and fourth criteria of Bateson's Double Bind: an injunction that is carrying two conflicting

messages, one direct and one abstract. For dual indexicality, there can also be a more direct and more abstract index being carried in the same interaction. The difference lies in that Bateson is focused on commands or injunctions whereas dual indexicality is looked at as functioning in a broader range of communicative events (Kulick, 2003).

Double bind, dual indexicality, and identity all intertwine in my analysis since I posit that because of the narratives provided by the participants, along with my own observations of their family interactions, it appears that the narratives function as both an example of dual indexicality and how the participants are narrating that they may have been caught in a double bind. That is not to say that all double binds are dual indexical or vice-versa, but in my research, we can see an example of when this may be the case.

C. Life Course History

Life course theory can position the narratives of language and identity, double-binds, and dual indexicality into a timeframe. Since the participants in my study are narrating events in the past, it is important to chart each narrative across time, including their own and its critical, defining moments that set an individual down one fork or another. This is not to say an individual is forever removed from getting off said fork, but another moment needs to occur to move them off it. The theory, as posited by Glen Elder (1994), focuses on three aspects of the life course: 1) time - which is how people's experiences cause different shifts in their thoughts and beliefs over time and how this influences said individuals, 2) connectivity - which is about how interpersonal relationships greatly influence the decision-making throughout one's life, and 3) agency - which is integral to anthropological studies in that there is variance in how an individual experiences both time and connectivity. Of these three aspects, we see time playing a role between the generations in both my research and the research discussed in Section A of this literature review.

We also see connectivity as these studies and my own focus on the family unit and small, interconnected communities. These clearly play a role in influencing the decisions around language use and identity in certain instances. Lastly, we can see agency, particularly in the Makihara article where there is a shift in how the different generations index a Rapa Nui identity. This shows that individuals and groups can change the perceived requisites for indexing a specific identity.

Although life course theory tends to be rooted in these three aspects, agency has been focused on more in anthropological circles, mainly with Johnson-Hanks pushing the idea of connectivity and time further towards life courses that are more fluid (2002) as opposed to the critical, defining moments posited by Elder. While Johnson-Hanks does acknowledge that there are instances – termed vital conjunctures - that happen which are important in an individual's life, there are many of these junctures, ones that may not be obvious. They can take place over an extended period of time. While Johnson Hanks argues that these vital conjunctures happen based on real world events such as encounters and practices with people, it may also be reflection and internal thoughts that spur on these changes. This idea fits well with my study as many of the participants seemed unable to narrate specific instances when they felt that they were comfortable with how they identified. They could, however, point to time spans, such as summer camps or prolonged stays with family friends. This idea is also echoed in the Takei and Burdelski study where Maki shifted over time from speaking Japanese to her parents and then refusing to, and then resuming speaking Japanese over the course of her childhood with no clear indications as to why these events occurred. It is also important to note that these conjunctures can happen as a group or cohort and that they are not tied to a specific age or time. Lastly, if these conjunctures are experienced as a cohort, then each individual experience is not identical.

While the life course theory is older, it is still a helpful way to situate narratives across time, particularly when discussing large swathes of time such as childhood to early adulthood with the participants. However, it is important to note that just because some of the participants in my study narrated experiencing a life conjuncture during summer camps, it does not mean that everyone at the summer camp experienced a life conjuncture. What is clear is that when exploring ideas around language and identity and their implications through narratives, life course theory helps to situate the narratives not just in the lives of the participants but as a shared narrative around a similar type of experience that is also unique to each individual going through it.

Taiwan

To understand the situation that modern day Taiwan finds itself in and how the Taiwanese people, such as the participants in this study, tend to view their nationality as of utmost importance, a brief history of Taiwan is needed. It is important to note that this section should not be read as a true, objective, history of Taiwan. Instead, it was formed from the narratives told to me and the discussions had with Taiwanese families at different points in time. It should be treated as a narrative and not an exact history.

Taiwan is a small island state located in the Pacific Ocean that has China to the West, Japan to the North, and the Philippines to the South. The island has been inhabited for around 6,000 years, but it is largely believed that those who initially journeyed to the island were largely left alone until the 16th century when Chinese and Japanese sailors started making port on the island. The next 300 years saw Taiwan fought over and recolonised by multiple nations, with the Japanese colonisation of the island prior to and during World War 2 seeing a drive to instil the Japanese language, customs, and knowledge in the colonised peoples.

During this time, mainland China was embroiled in a civil war with a ceasefire only occurring during World War 2. After World War 2 ended, the civil war reignited with the People's Republic of China (PROC) taking over what is modern day China and the Republic of China (ROC) retreating to Taiwan. Taiwan had been ceded to China in the aftermath of the Japanese surrender in World War 2. This retreat saw the island's population swell by 2 million as ROC loyalists flocked to the island in the 1950s.

From the 1960s until the late 1980s, the island was ruled by the ROC under martial law. This was a period of intense promotion regarding pro-ROC values, the abandonment of Japanese

language use, and a drive to instil a unified sense of identity in the population of the island as being part of the ROC, which meant Chinese but not mainland Chinese. Once martial law ended and a democratic process was established, Taiwan became a nation state in all but name. It is not recognised by the UN and it struggles to make headway with other nations or regional trade deals as these efforts are largely quashed by the PROC.

This brief overview of the history of Taiwan does not illuminate the intricacies of the times outlined above. However, it does show us that the inhabitants of the island have shifted over the course of a few hundred years. The island has seen two different powers, Imperial Japan and the ROC, take over and begin nationalisation programs within the past 100 years. The parents of the young adults in this study grew up under martial law and were taught the importance of their heritage and allegiance to Taiwan as someone who speaks Mandarin. This could be a major contributing factor explaining why the Taiwanese parents seek to pass their language and knowledge of Taiwan on to their children. This is not to say that only Taiwanese parents growing up during martial law engage in this or that this is unique to Taiwan at all, but by looking at the past, we may begin to understand why certain groups of individuals may have tendencies like this.

Methods

Previous research on this topic has been done in the form of participant observations (Shi X., 2010), the analysis of audio recordings of natural speech production (Morgenstern et al, 2013), and semi-structured interviews (Chen, 2011). While participant observation and utilising the audio recordings of naturally produced speech are useful methods of data collection with which to analyze and understand a group or topic that has been established, I believe that semi-structured interviews are a valuable tool when attempting to establish what the participants think about select issues. This encompasses the beliefs regarding language use in the household, which is what my study is seeking to do. This information was collected after the participant observations and the recordings of the natural language production were obtained. This meant that the interview would not be weighing on the minds of the participants during the observations.

A. Participant Observation and Audio Recordings of the Hua and Yang Families

My main method of data gathering was participant observation with the two families while collecting their natural language production during dinner time. These two methods were chosen because through participant observation, I was able to observe the present day interactions in the household. The dinner audio recordings enabled me to capture the data to be analysed at a later date while relying on my experiences during the participant observation. The former was recorded in addition to the fieldnotes written during my time with the families and a reflection after each observation. This allowed me to capture a more complete picture of my experience with the families. The dinner recordings were captured to allow for insights into how the younger generation conversed with their parents in the household to weigh against the narratives told during the interviews about the past and present.

Both families I observed will remain anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the family name and to the names of the individuals within the family. One of the families participating in this study were close friends with whom I have worked in previous research. The family of 4, the Hua family, lives in Charlotte. The parents are both from Taiwan, having moved to the US. in their mid-20s in the 1980s. They have a son and a daughter, both in their mid-20s, who were born and raised in the United States save for 1.5 years when the family briefly moved back to Taiwan in the mid-1990s. Beyond this, the children have resided in the United States while travelling to Taiwan every 1 to 2 years for the summer. The data collection was conducted over the course of a week for this family.

The second family, the Yang family, was comprised of a widowed mother and her two children, a daughter and a son, both in their early 20s. The mother moved to the US with her husband in the 1980s while they were in their mid-20s, just like the Hua parents. Both children have lived in the United States their entire lives while travelling back to Taiwan intermittently. The data collection lasted about a week with this family as well.

B. Semi-structured Interviews with the Mother/Daughter Pairs

All first and last names are psuedonyms. Beyond the participant observations and dinner audio recordings, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with both the mothers and daughters of the Hua and Yang families, along with other mother/daughter pairs. I chose mother/daughter pairs as I have worked with the mother of the Hua family in the past. She offered to help me find “more mothers to interview.” Since I needed one of the children’s viewpoints, I chose the daughters. This is because with both the Hua and Yang families, I had noticed that the daughters were more aware of and responsive to their parent’s language policy in that they talk with their parents about language use in the household. This includes child rearing

strategies that entail attempting to ensure that the children learn Mandarin from a young age like they did. I heard this conversation happen with the daughters from both families, whereas the sons of both families seemed indifferent to such topics.

Because of this, I continued with this specific gender demographic. I interviewed each participant separately, first the mother and then the daughter, in their homes or on Skype for those I was unable to travel to or whose family members were currently not in the same location. While the participant's homes were chosen as the field location for a few reasons, this was also only a suggested meeting place as the interviewees were informed that any other location would suffice.

The social composition of the participants was a group of Taiwanese mothers and their daughters, with the mothers having emigrated from Taiwan to the US in the 1980s while they were in their 20s. All 8 participants had at least one daughter and one son who they raised in the United States but travelled with to and from Taiwan regularly to semi-regularly. All of the participants were of Chinese descent and identified as Taiwanese. They also had similar family profiles: a husband and wife, 1 - 2 children, and a middle-class economic standing.

The semi-structured interviews were where I asked the participants about their perceived identity, language choice and language ideology, and what they believe that these perceived choices reflect. For the Hua and Yang families, the interviews took place after the participant observation and dinner audio recording had ended. The interviews took the form of a semi-structured interview that lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour. While the participants were not elevated to the level of co-researcher, they were invited to participate as much as they wished in the analysis of their interviews, but none took me up on the offer.

The questions listed below served as a guideline to follow during all of the interviews. As semi-structured interviews were used, the questions were not asked verbatim. Furthermore, the participants were prompted to share any stories or times when they were aware of their language interfering with everyday life in the house. Lastly, it should be noted that I conducted the interviews in English, even though the respondents were not required to respond only in English. All interviews, both with the mothers and with the daughters, ended up being conducted without the need for a translator. They were conducted fully in English without any Mandarin being spoken.

Questions

1. What do you believe to be the most comfortable way for you to communicate in the house?

2. Do you think that your language use in the home setting has changed since you moved to the US. If so, how?

3. What language(s) did you use to communicate with your kids when they were younger? Now?

4. How has language use when talking with your children changed over time?

5. Tell me about a time when you felt like there was a disconnect between what you said and how that was interpreted by someone else at home.

- Parent says something, child misunderstands

6. Tell me about a time when you felt like there was a disconnect between what you thought someone meant and what they probably meant, now that you can look back on that instance.

-child says something, parent misunderstands

7. Could you highlight any connections that you think may exist between someone's culture and the language(s) that they speak?

8. Is there a place outside the home setting where you would use the same language choices that you use when at home?

-If so, when?

-If not, would you like a such a space to exist

-why or why not?

9. How do your habits regarding which language(s) you prefer to use change when using technology to speak with a family member?

-With text?

-With video/phone calls?

Notes were taken while the interview was conducted and immediately after the interview. The transcription of each interview was written up after all of the data had been collected.

Analysis

A. Narratives of language and identity through language use in the household

Throughout the interviews, both the mothers and daughters provided narratives about instances when the parents and their children were at odds regarding what language should be used in the household during specific events. During these narratives, the daughters tended to claim a sense of normalcy regarding Mandarin being used in the household but during the narratives, some would tell a story about how they viewed it as not normal in specific settings. One example is the interview with Elizabeth Yang, who was from one of the two main families involved in this study. She is the speaker in Excerpt 1.1.

Excerpt 1.1[1]

1 ELIZABETH; Speaking Mandarin in the house
2 Didn't make me feel weird
3 At all
4 It was just the norm in the household

Here we see the beginning in lines 1 through 4 of Elizabeth speaking about equating normalcy with Mandarin in the household. This sentiment was echoed in differing variations by the other participants. Mandarin was the de facto way to communicate in the household. During my participant observation, I also saw this in most interactions with their parents. The participants did not indicate there to be any difference between speaking a mixture of Mandarin and English unless asked to. While speaking a mixture of English and Mandarin, the Mandarin words and phrases made up the majority of the sentences when the young adults were speaking with their

[1] Transcription Key on page 31

parents. In this way, most of the daughters tend to present a similar view of the past as Elizabeth: they used to speak Mandarin and feel normal.

Some of the daughters would then go on to tell stories of times where they felt negatively about the use of Mandarin in the household. One of these instances was with Elizabeth, where she talks about a time when a friend came over who did not speak Mandarin.

Excerpt 1.2

6 ELIZABETH; ….
7 Sometimes when my friends were over who didn't speak Chinese though
8 My mom would
9 Speak Chinese
10 By accident
11 And I would
12 ….
13 When I was younger would be embarrassed and I would correct her
14 And would be like
15 'You said that in Chinese'

Here we see possible hedging, with the Elizabeth pausing and speaking stiltedly. What is more interesting than the hedging is that she excuses her mother's behaviour even though she is embarrassed by it. Daughter 1 seems to be shifting here from Mandarin being "normal" to English being normal. It appears that Elizabeth is trying to accommodate for her friend in the narrative. When her mother does not recognise this new normal, she corrects her due to embarrassment. Even when this story is being told, the hedging and stilted speech can be seen as

embarrassed. During the interview, Elizabeth can be seen thinking through the event and her body posture changed from calm and assertive to a more reticent demeanour.

Excerpt 1.3

1 ELIZABETH; Sometimes I Would just translate for her

2 DANIEL; ohhh

3 ELIZABETH; Just automatically

4 Just *snaps finger*

5 Without even saying anything I Would just say “oh she meant this”

This same type of account was echoed by the other participants but with varied responses. Some, such as Hannah Hua from the other main family participating in this study, stated that she would at times just automatically translate for her mother. We see in Excerpt 1.3 lines 3 and 4 how she viewed her response as automatic. In line 5, we see the echoing of a switch from Mandarin being the norm to English with the words “she meant”, indicating that the mother was not complying with what was expected when a friend was over.

Excerpt 1.4

1 HANNAH; …

2 I didn’t really pay attention

Excerpt 1.5

1 HANNAH; It was only if I knew she accidently spoke Chinese

2 In front of someone who doesn’t speak Chinese

3 Sometimes I would just auto-say

5 What

6 She said

This was also seen in another interviewee, Nora. She echoed the idea that the mother "accidentally" spoke in Mandarin, as if the mother missed a cue to shift from Mandarin to English. Others interviewed, such as Grace, pushed the topic to the side, stating that she would not pay attention. This could be seen as another form of discomfort, either in the past or in the present when talking about past experiences that she viewed as uncomfortable.

Excerpts 1.3 - 1.5 illustrate how most daughters provided narratives showing how they viewed their mother's speaking Mandarin in front of their non-Mandarin speaking friends as a mistake on their mother's part. Additionally, they also highlight the potential discomfort that the daughters tended to share concerning language use in the household. The assumption that they made that their mothers did not was that English should take precedence over Mandarin in the presence of non-Mandarin speaking non-Taiwanese friends. This is even though they were in a household where Mandarin was the purported norm. The daughters in Excerpts 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 in a way were distancing themselves from being identified as a Mandarin speaker, such as their mothers. Instead, they were translating their words to English even if the words were not meant for their friend. Translating from Mandarin to English can still mark a daughter as a Mandarin speaker. Therefore, the act of translation can be seen as a double bind. While the younger generation try to express their non-Taiwanese identity by correcting their mothers in front of their non-Mandarin speaking friends, they are still highlighting that they are Taiwanese.

This narrative was in stark contrast to my observations as someone who speaks little Mandarin. I witnessed Mandarin, albeit mixed with English, as the standard method of communication. In my past experiences working with the 2 families that I observed, I would usually keep quiet at the

dinner table or during gatherings due to the amount of Mandarin being spoken. I would pick up on sentences here and there, but my time as both a family friend and participant observer with these families illustrates how, while the Elizabeth, Hannah and the others may be providing past narratives of discomfort when speaking Mandarin in front of non-Mandarin speaking friends while in the household, this does not appear to be the case in their early adulthood.

B. The Double-bind and Breaking Free of it as a Life Course Narrative

The contrast can be seen at two points in the personal timeline constructed by the majority of the younger generation. There was a point earlier on in their life where the daughters viewed their relationship with speaking Mandarin as uncomfortable unless they spoke it only with other Mandarin speakers. Then there is the present day where the daughters appear to be comfortable speaking Mandarin regardless of who is around. What happened between these two points in time that caused this shift? Before getting there, it is important to look at the constructed past of the younger participants to better understand how they viewed their relationship with Mandarin. We see in the example below that Elizabeth provides a narrative of how, even as she got older and spoke more English, her mother would continue speaking in Mandarin. Here it can be understood that she was choosing not to express her Taiwanese heritage by speaking in Mandarin even though her mother was.

Excerpt 2.1

1 KELSIE; Yes I felt strongly
2 About teaching kids Mandarin
3 But I didn’t tell them
4 “you have to speak this way”
5 I learned from my older friends
6 Their kids didn’t learn mandarin well

7 When they were young –

8 They didn't force them.

This narration is shared by the mothers as seen in Excerpt 2.1 where Kelsie, the mother of Elizabeth, claims that while she did not outright tell her children to speak to her in Mandarin, she was highly motivated to get her kids to speak Mandarin.

Excerpt 2.2

1 ELIZABETH; When I got older I would say

2 It was more English coming out of my mouth

3 Than Chinese

4 But my parents

5 Especially my mom

6 Was often still respond to me

7 In Chinese

Excerpts 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate how the mothers purport to be speaking with their children in ways to promote Mandarin learning. The narrative of Elizabeth provides a rejection of this promotion, even if the rejection is not intentional.

Excerpt 2.3

15 ELIZABETH; ...when I was younger I use to buy

16 Uh

17 Clothes

18 In Taiwan

19 DANIEL; mhmm

20 ELIZABETH; But I would never wear those same clothes when I came back

21 To the states

22 And then I stopped buying Taiwan clothes altogether
23 But as I got older I learned to be more comfortable
24 With it
25 And I Didn't feel the need to hide

This can also be seen in Elizabeth's narrative in Excerpt 2.3 not just about language but also material items. We can see how, while visiting Taiwan, she was fine buying and wearing Taiwanese clothes in Taiwan. Upon returning to the States, she no longer wanted to wear them. She then attributed not wanting to wear Taiwanese clothes again due to feeling uncomfortable. She mentions how, when she got older, she became more comfortable as noted in line 23. In line 25, she even indicates how she felt when she was younger, in that she needed to "hide" being seen as Taiwanese. This narrative is in line with her linguistic choices that she narrated in section 1, and it also points towards a suggestion that Elizabeth does not feel this way anymore. She mentions that when she got older, she no longer felt this way about clothes.

This is also evident in my interactions with Elizabeth's family. She proudly spoke about a recent trip to Taiwan and showed off the business clothes that she purchased there, talking about how they fit better and were more stylish than what she could find in America. The juxtaposition of the past narrative and the observed family interactions in the present day mirror the linguistic juxtaposition highlighted in Section 1.

Excerpt 2.1

1 KELSIE; Yes I felt strongly
2 About teaching kids Mandarin
3 But I didn't tell them
4 "You have to speak this way"
5 I learned from my older friends

6 Their kids didn't learn mandarin well

7 When they were young –

8 They didn't force them.

It is important to qualify that in Excerpt 2.1 when Elizabeth says "older," we can assume that this means early middle school. In late middle school and early high school, Elizabeth provides her narrative about how she believes that while she may have rejected the notion of being Taiwanese early on in life, this has shifted towards acceptance and at times, embracing what she thought marked someone as Taiwanese, as seen in Excerpt 2.4.

Excerpt 2.4

37 ELIZABETH; And then in high school

38 When I became more comfortable

39 I *wanted* to wear those clothes

40 From Taiwan

41 Because they were different

42 And special

43 And I liked that

We see in line 38 specifically the emphasis placed on the desire to wear clothes from Taiwan. This is a stark contrast to the point in time narrated in 2.3. The feeling of being special, and different, was something valuable to Elizabeth. This either outweighed her discomfort with being marked as Taiwanese or the clothes marking her as Taiwanese are part of what is different and special. The latter appears to be the case as the other daughters ended up speaking about how they felt a positive relationship with Taiwanese fashion and speaking Mandarin, as seen in Excerpts 2.5 and 2.6.

Excerpt 2.5

7 ELIZABETH; …and Taiwan…

8 Has good food…

9 And…

10 Good fashion…

Excerpt 2.6

1 I liked…

2 Being able to talk in public about people

3 And people not understand me

These shared narratives are important due to the idea that the stories being told, true or not, make up a life course narrative. This is particularly true for Elizabeth, whose narrative can be viewed in 3 phases: normalcy during early childhood building to discomfort during early adolescence, followed by comfort in late adolescence/early adulthood. This narrative is also echoed in the narratives of the other daughters. The reasons why this acceptance occurs varies. Regardless of the variety of ways in which this acceptance occurs, what is important is that the acceptance tends to occur around the same time for each daughter. With this acceptance comes a dispelling of the double-bind of trying to be Taiwanese their parents while also not wanting to be marked as Taiwanese as a whole.

C. Observations of the Participants Being Freed from the Double-bind

The narrative of dispelling of the double bind matches with my observation of the dinner interactions. We can see in these interactions that while Mandarin and English are mixed, Hannah tends to switch to Mandarin for her mother. When she does, she does not switch back immediately.

Excerpt 3.1

1 BROTHER; Are you doing anything this Saturday, mom?

2 LIN; Yeah

3 HANNAH; Na zhang?

<what?>

5 LIN; Guo yo zhang yo wedding

<going to a wedding>

6 BROTHER; oh!

7 HANNAH; oh!

8 LIN; ….

9 LIN; Yeah

10 LIN; Ze ye wo yi ge ren

<I was the only one>

When Hannah's brother asked their mother Lin what she was doing that weekend, Hannah immediately switched to Mandarin, and then continue the conversation in Mandarin. In line 2, Lin gives the response that does not match the question being asked by the brother in line 1, therefore Hannah clarifies in Mandarin instead of clarifying what her brother said in English. This is of particular interest because it shows that even though I, someone who does not speak Mandarin, was present, Hannah did not try to engage with her mother in English. Instead, she switched to Mandarin, allowing her mother to respond in Mandarin, guiding the conversation further. During this time, no real translation was offered to me. This is due to the fact I asked them to just have their meal regularly and for the recordings, to pretend that I am not around to talk to. However, even when not prompted to, such as after the recordings or during my participant observation, little translation was ever offered to me by anyone. My past experience with this family mirrors that as well. The household language does not shift due to the presence

of someone who cannot speak it. This is very different from the narratives provided in the interviews with the younger generation.

This same type of interaction was observed in a separate dinner where Elizabeth was grabbing bowls for soup, as seen in Excerpt 3.2.

Excerpt 3.2

1 ELIZABETH; Who else wants a bowl?
2 KELSIE; Wo
<me>
3 BROTHER; What about me?
4 ELIZABETH; ni you ni wei he tang…
<you want your soup?>
5 BROTHER; I just need one bowl
6 ELIZABETH; -Tang wen?
<soup?>
7 …
8 ELIZABETH; I am very into -
9 ELIZABETH; What are you guys doing for the fashion party?

Here we see that Elizabeth's switch to Mandarin was maintained once the mother started the switch in line 2, indicating that she wanted a bowl of soup in Mandarin, even though the brother spoke in English in line 3. Instead of switching to English to speak with her brother, Elizabeth addressed him in Mandarin. It was only after the interaction was complete and the conversation was finished that Elizabeth switched back to Mandarin to speak to her brother. Silence occurred for about 7 - 8 seconds while everyone was enjoying their first bites of dinner.

The fact that Elizabeth maintained her Mandarin usage even when addressed by her brother in English shows their comfort when speaking mandarin in the household. This family also mirrored the other family that I observed in that they rarely offered a translation for me regardless of whether I was officially observing them or just spending time with the family outside of my research.

Conclusion

From these examples, when tied with the narratives of the past given in the interviews, we see that the daughters are now more comfortable with their Taiwanese identity both in language use and in material use, at least more than they were in their narratives about the past. This points to the general trajectory of discomfort early on in childhood changing to comfort sometime in late adolescence or early adulthood. This speaks to a general life course event that, while the specifics may differ between individuals, generally happens around the same time and causes the shift from discomfort to comfort regarding speaking Mandarin and expressing a Taiwanese identity.

From the data and analysis presented we see narratives take form that opens up areas for further inquiry. Foremost is there is little research looking into why exactly these narratives may take the form they do. Further research could also explore how these narratives may interact with cohorts or at specific ages. Lastly, more thorough, long term studies conducted by those in the community in quesiton, such as Taiwanese Americans, would provide additional insight into narratives such as ones presented in this thesis.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION KEY

Transcription Key

	Meaning	Symbol	Comments
Participant			
	Speaker	DANIEL;	Name of speaker
Pause			
	Pause, untimed	…	N/A
Language			
	Mandarin	*italics*	Mandarin in italics text
	Translation	{ }	English Translation of Mandarin in Braces
	English	Regular	English in regular text
Closure/intonation			
	Cut-off word	examp-	word ended before fully enunciated
	Emphasis	*word*	Asteriks indicate stress on word
Time			
	Line number	1	numerical symbol for each line per example

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