CHAPTER 3

A Yami language teacher’s journey in Taiwan

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Yami is spoken by 3000 speakers on Orchid Island, off the coast of Taiwan. Only one of the six villages on the island has children who still speak Yami. The rest have gradually shifted to Chinese, the medium of education. Even though the Taiwan government supports indigenous language revitalization by rewarding students doing well on examinations in their heritage language, and Yami is taught in elementary and middle schools on the island, this has not helped increase Yami language use and inter-generational transmission. This chapter describes language use and language attitudes on Orchid Island over the past ten years, followed by a case study of a Yami teacher’s journey teaching Yami at various levels of schools.

1. Introduction

Yami (雅美) is an Austronesian language spoken on Orchid Island (Lan-yu 蘭嶼) (121.3°E, 22°N), a small offshore island located in the Pacific Ocean 60 kilometers southeast of Taiwan and at the northern tip of the Batanes Province of the Philippines (See Figure 1).1 The self-reference in the Yami language is tao “human being.” The Yami people refer to their language as ciriciring no tao “speech of human beings” and their island as either pongo no tao “island of human beings,” irala “facing the mountain,” or ma’ataw “floating in the sea.”2 In

1. This island had various names before, including Botel Tobago and 紅頭嶼 (Red Head Island). In 1947, the island was renamed Orchid Island (蘭嶼) by the Chinese for its production of orchid flowers. All official geographical names in Taiwan are written in Chinese characters.

2. Taiwan is called ilaod “toward the sea.” This relative spatial orientation encoding is also used in other Austronesian languages, such as Balinese, i.e. kaja “toward the mountain” vs. kelod “toward the sea” (Wassmann & Dasen 1998) and Hawaiian: makai “toward the sea,” vs. mauka “toward the mountains”; use in everyday life even among English-speakers in Hawai’i (anonymous review, p.c.).

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the past decade, there has been a split of opinions in naming and self-identity. One group of people insisted on changing their name from Yami to Tao, whereas the other group preferred to use the official name Yami, listed by the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) as one of the 16 recognized indigenous ethnic groups in Taiwan.3

![Orchid Island](http://google.earth.com)

**Figure 1.** Orchid Island, located in the Pacific Ocean 60 kilometers southeast of Taiwan (adapted from [http://google.earth.com](http://google.earth.com))

Politically, this island is under the administration of Taiwan, where the majority of the 23 million people are Chinese, speaking various Chinese dialects, predominantly Mandarin, Southern Min and Hakka. There are less than 2% indigenous peoples, constituting 16 government-acknowledged Austronesian ethnic groups, 15 of which are Formosan languages. The Yami language is a Batanic language, related to Ivatan, Itbayat, and Babuyan in Northern Philippines. Japanese was introduced to the island during the 50 years when Taiwan was colonized by Japan.

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3. On November 1–2, 2002 when I conducted a workshop on Yami morphosyntax on Orchid Island, the organizer, Mr. Qing-Wen Huang, said publicly that he hoped academics would begin using their self-reference Tao instead of Yami. On January 11, 2011 when I conducted another workshop on Yami morphosyntax as one component of a 36 hour training program at National Taiwan Normal University, the six teachers in training in my class insisted that they be called Yami instead of Tao.
beginning in 1895. After World War II, Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China, and hence Mandarin Chinese has been spoken on the island as the national language since 1945.

Traditionally, the Yami rely on fishing and subsistence agriculture (e.g. farming of taro, sweet potato, and millet) as their major food sources. A unique part of their material culture consists of colorful and finely crafted fishing boats and wooden sculptures. However, as the island has been influenced by the Taiwanese capitalist economy, young adults usually seek employment in Taiwan, spending several months a year in Taiwan to raise their income. As a result, almost half of the population on the island is either above 50 or below 20 years old. The traditional division of labor between men and women has also been influenced by the economic change, which has been reflected in linguistic variation and change (Rau, Chang & Dong 2009).

According to the Council of Indigenous Peoples, in the year 2008 the Yami numbered 3,510 (making up only about 1% of Taiwan's total indigenous population). A more recent demographic survey by the Taitung County Family Registrar in November 2010 indicates that Yami constitute 87% of the 4,279 residents (Male: 2234, Female: 2045) on Orchid Island. A comparison with data obtained over 15 years earlier shows that the percentage of non-Yami on the island has increased from 7% to 13%. The primary religion is Christianity, according to Ethnologue (Lewis 2009). The only widely used literacy material on the island, the Yami New Testament translation, was dedicated to the speech community in 1995 with the help of two Wycliffe Bible Translators.

At the time of Rau's (1995) sociolinguistic survey, children still used some Yami in daily interaction in only one village out of six on the island. Yami has been offered as an elective in elementary school since 1998, but Yami is still gradually being replaced by Mandarin Chinese. Chen (1998) compared the language proficiency, language use and language attitudes among three generations of Yami and found a language shift to Mandarin and a decline of Yami language ability as age decreases. Twelve years after Rau's team surveyed Yami language vitality, Lin (2007) re-examined language use and language ability among Yami teenagers and found that while Yami is still spoken in Iraralay (朗島), the other five villages show a continuing decline in the use of Yami by teenagers with their parents. On the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis & Simons 2009), Yami is rated as level 7 (shifting), equivalent to the UNESCO classification “definitely endangered.”

4. The correlation between Yami centralization of the (ay) and (aw) diphthongs and social factors (i.e. gender and identity) and linguistic factors is similar to Labov's groundbreaking work on linguistic change in progress on the island of Martha's Vineyard (1963, 1972).
2. History of Yami

The origin of “Yami” as a language name has at least two renditions. The first version is said to come from a misinterpretation of the Japanese anthropologist Torii Ryuzo’s fieldwork elicitation in 1897. When he asked the Yami people how they referred to themselves, they responded by saying, “Yamen?” “(Do you mean) us, not including you?” This first person, plural, exclusive, free pronoun *yamen* has since been misinterpreted as their self-reference. The second source is from a letter dated 1802 by the Spanish priest Fr. Francisco de Paula in the Batantic Islands. He referred to the northernmost island that people were moving to as Diami. However, we can see from the map of Orchid Island (Lan-yu) in relation to the Batanes Province in the Philippines, that there is another island which could be considered to be at the northern tip, which is also called Yami (see Figure 2). This leads us to question whether the reference to Diami was to Orchid Island or the island known as Yami.

![Map of Philippines showing Orchid Island (Lan-yu) in relation to Batanes Province](image)

*Figure 2. Orchid Island (Lan-yu) in relation to the Batanes in the Philippines*
The Yami people probably migrated from the Batanes to Orchid Island around 700 years ago (Li 2004: 27). They used to have frequent interactions with their ancestors in Itbayat, Ivatan, and Babuyan until around 200–300 years ago. Ivalino village (野銀) (see Figure 3) was said to be the last settlement on Orchid Island, established by *sira Voang* “Mr. Voang and his group” from the Batanes. The Yami people reconnected with the Batanes in 1978 as Fu-Shou Yan (顏福壽), a Yami man, accompanied Dezso Benedek, a Hungarian anthropologist, to conduct research in the Batanes (Benedek 1987) and married a Philippine Ivatan woman, Lida. This brought about a “root-seeking” trip by a group of 30 Yami people twenty years later to visit the Batanes on February 28, 1998.

Figure 3. Villages on Orchid Island (http://taiwanarmap.moi.gov.tw/moicpe/GetImage.aspx?city=Taitung%20County&town=Lanyu%20Township&cg=new)

3. History of (non) use of Yami in education

Yami has never been developed or used as a medium of education. In 1923, the Japanese government established the first primary school on Orchid Island in Imow-rod (紅頭) and began education in Japanese during the Japanese colonialization (Lai 2011). The Japanese education was regarded as unsuccessful, as the teachers’ language was thought to be incomprehensible and the style of teaching undesirable (story told by si apen Kotan/Jinovoy 王仁德, Rau & Dong 2006: 160). Chinese education in the early period, 1950–1960, was also viewed negatively, as the teachers from various parts of Mainland China were reported to have heavy regional accents and often assigned the children to run errands for them during class time. Nonetheless, some of the students turned out to be proficient Chinese-Yami bilinguals/biliterates
and even authors of works about Yami culture today, mostly due to their training in a Bible College for indigenous peoples.\(^5\)

4. **Yami language use**

Testing in Yami is used today as a tool for younger speakers to enter better high schools/universities in Taiwan and for older speakers to find part-time teaching jobs to supplement their income. To understand the rationale behind this, we need to first look into the background of this practice.

As sociolinguistic surveys on Orchid Island (Rau 1995; Chen 1998; Lin 2007) indicate, Yami is facing a disruption of language transmission between generations. Yami children overall are no longer using Yami in family and community domains except in Iraralay village (朗島). This trend of language shift leading toward possible language death in less than one generation is unfortunately not unique to Yami but is spreading to all Austronesian languages in Taiwan. Many Taiwan indigenous people talk about their languages being in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit), in a joking yet helpless tone of voice.\(^5\)

In response to the endangerment of indigenous languages in Taiwan, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) in Taiwan have been taking drastic measures to address this problem. According to Huang (2007), two of the strategies used from 1995–2006 focused on teaching of indigenous languages in elementary schools and administration of proficiency tests in indigenous languages. Since 2007, Yami has become an integral part of high school and college entrance examinations.

The Taiwan school system is primarily competitive and test-oriented, following traditional Chinese educational philosophy. Junior high and high school students are tested to enter the next level of schooling, although beginning in 2014 high school entrance examinations will be rescinded as a result of the new 12-year compulsory education policy. Since 2001, all elementary school students in Taiwan have been required to take one of the ethnic languages (i.e. Chinese Southern Min dialect, Chinese Hakka dialect or an Austronesian language) as an elective class beginning in first grade. Students in junior high school are not required but encouraged to continue taking one of the ethnic languages as an elective class.

\(^5\) Pastor Sen-Yong Dong of Iratay (漁人) Christian Church is a prominent figure who has published several books related to Yami culture, including books about Yami festivals (Dong 1997), Yami history (Yu & Dong 1998), and Yami jokes (Dong & Zeng 2010).

\(^6\) ICU is a translation from a Chinese phrase 加護病房。
Traditionally, the Chinese education system would allow disadvantaged indigenous students to enter high schools or colleges with lower testing scores. Currently, instead of being granted special privilege based solely on their status as indigenous people, if indigenous youth pass the language proficiency test, they receive a 35% bonus on the standardized entrance examinations, allowing them to enter better high schools and universities in Taiwan. Although the teaching and learning of indigenous languages has been instrumental in promotion of heritage languages, the washback effect (the observation that testing method influences teaching method) means that Yami youths are studying the language to pass high stake examinations rather than to use it for any communicative purposes.

5. Language choice in the Yami community

The issues of language choice in the Yami community are not very different from other minority language communities facing language shift and even language death in competition with dominant languages in the rest of the world, as attested in many SIL sociolinguistic survey reports (Bergman 2013).

The Yami language used to be protected on an isolated, offshore island until the 1970s when electricity was brought onto the island. Gradually, Chinese television programs began to replace old folks’ after-dinner story telling time on the porch (personal communication, Mao-An Lin). Today computer games occupy most Yami children and teenagers’ leisure time, especially in the southwest area of the Island where the Internet infrastructure is well-established and most stable. Although Yami-Chinese bilingual language use has been viewed as most desirable and has been practiced in Christian churches on Orchid Island, only in Iraralay (朗島) can one find children and teenagers speaking Yami in the family and community domains.

Many Yami adults (above 30 years old) and senior citizens, on the other hand, as other indigenous people in Taiwan, are seeking to become certified language teachers in response to the Taiwan government’s active promotion of indigenous language revitalization over the past two decades. The process of certification involves three steps. First, they acquire literacy skills in church programs, language nest programs, or community college courses to pass the Yami language proficiency exam. After passing the proficiency exam, they are eligible to take the 36 hour

7. Mao-An Lin was the former Director of Lan-en Cultural and Educational foundation, a Christian organization on Orchid Island.

8. The Māori success story and Hawaiian Pūnana Leo Preschools have been models in language revitalization among the indigenous communities.
teacher certification training program offered by the CIP. At the completion of the training, they can move on to take the language resource teacher examination held in each county. In that exam they would be asked to introduce themselves in their indigenous language and write out a few sentences translated from Chinese into the target language. After passing the exam, test takers with the highest scores get first choice in teaching assignments, choosing where and how many hours they would like to teach their indigenous languages as part-time teachers. Compared with the larger indigenous groups, such as Amis, Paiwan, Atayal, and Bunun, it is less competitive and easier for the Yami to locate an opportunity to teach.

6. Challenges in using Yami in education

The challenges in using Yami in education are three-fold. (1) The immediate benefits of teaching and learning indigenous languages may provide a strong dose of support to keep the “ICU patient” alive, but cannot restore health. (2) Teaching and learning an indigenous language in this context is instrumental, literacy-based, and test-oriented, but cannot help rebuild intergenerational transmission of the language in the family and community. (3) Indigenous language teachers are temporary contract workers with no job security or benefits; it is hard to maintain high quality education without long-term commitment and investment.

Although the Yami language has been offered weekly for over a decade as an elective course in elementary schools and the junior high school on Orchid Island, this teaching does not seem to have succeeded in reversing the language shift on Orchid Island. One of the Yami teachers, Ms. Xi-yue Zeng (曾喜悦), complained that her students (from villages other than Iraralay) could not utter even one complete sentence in Yami, but were only able to respond with single vocabulary items. It makes one wonder, if the students’ Yami proficiency is almost nonexistent on Orchid Island, what level of Yami proficiency students in urban elementary schools in Taiwan can achieve.

The educators in urban schools, nonetheless, seem to be more eager to adopt new language learning models. Following the models of English and Hakka academies of “magic” learning in Taipei, an academy of “magic” indigenous language learning in the Wulai Atayal language community was established in January 2010, initiated by a Paiwanic speaker, Mr. Hong-Ming Bo (波宏明), Director of Academic Affairs of an elementary school in New Taipei City.9 Eighty indigenous

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9. This idea is derived from the “magic” school in the Harry Potter movie. “Magic” learning in an intensive training camp is a metaphor for miraculous acquisition of a second language in a short period of time.
language learners were selected to participate in the first training camp, representing the Amis, Atayal, Bunun, and Paiwan ethnic groups. During the five-day camp, the indigenous students were required to speak only indigenous languages while playing games and performing skits. This type of language camp learning undoubtedly serves the short-term function of boosting the spirit, but other long-term follow-up programs are also necessary. One other strategy is recruiting and training indigenous students to enter speech and recitation contests; however, most of the speech scripts have been written by adults and memorized by the performing contestants.

These strategies may have generated short-term excitement in indigenous language learning, but have not seemed to translate into indigenous language revitalization in the speech communities. In other words, none of these efforts have been able to induce intergenerational language transmission, which is really the key to reversing language shift (Fishman 1991).

The last challenge to overcome is the lack of long-term committed teachers of indigenous languages in urban areas, which is related to the low pay; being a Yami language teacher does not pay enough to live. To make a living would require teaching 15–30 hours per week in different schools at NT$320 (~US$10) per hour, but it is difficult to obtain more than 6 hours of teaching per week in four different schools without conflicting schedules. Furthermore, a part-time teacher cannot depend on this income to pay monthly bills, as the paycheck will not be sent until the end of each semester. Consequently, many language teachers who have passed the first step of certification are not interested in pursuing further steps to become higher rank “resource language teachers.” Even those who have taught for a while frequently choose to go back to their previous jobs, often construction work, where they are paid NT$1,300 per hour as construction labourers. Therefore, teaching indigenous languages in elementary schools is becoming a pastime for retired teachers and pastors or indigenous people who already have full time jobs or are on sick leave, to supplement their income.

7. Case study of a Yami language teacher’s journey

The following case study is based on a Yami language teacher’s account of her recent experience in teaching Yami in elementary schools in Taoyuan County, Northern Taiwan. The information was gathered through observations made in a semester of natural interactions in an academic setting and field notes taken from informal interviews. I will describe the participant’s involvement in various Yami language teaching related activities, followed by an account of her contribution as a language consultant in a graduate linguistics course.
I was introduced to Esther by my Yami co-author of our major Yami monograph (Rau & Dong 2006). When I was looking for a consultant to assist in my field methods course for the Ph.D. program in linguistics at National Chung Cheng University in 2010 (see Figure 4), Esther kindly agreed to travel from Taoyuan to Chiayi on a biweekly basis. As she did not hold a full time position during that semester, but only taught six periods of Yami language classes in four elementary schools in Taoyuan, her schedule was flexible enough to allow her to travel to my university (three hours by bus one way) on a regular basis.

Figure 4. Esther and Victoria co-teach a field methods course in a Ph.D. Program

7.1 Teaching Yami in urban elementary schools

Esther was born and brought up in a Yami family in Iratay Village (漁人) on Orchid Island. She moved to Taiwan in her early adulthood and married a Chinese. She is bilingual and biliterate in Chinese and Yami with native proficiency. She was certified as a language resource teacher in 2007 after she had undergone three steps of examination and training. Before she began her career as a Yami language teacher, she was a full-time janitor in her daughter’s school. She began teaching Yami in four elementary schools in Fall 2010. Her students during that semester consisted of 1 to 3 students in each class, as shown in Table 1. Most of the students were of Yami descent or from mixed marriage with a Yami parent. Chinese students are also allowed to sign up to take an indigenous language as an elective course. They may switch to a different language or stay with the same language after one year of study. Some students originally signed up for other indigenous language classes but were reassigned to Yami due to teacher availability.

10. Esther requested to be referred to by her English name in this paper.
11. As most Yami adults, she learned Yami literacy by reading the Yami New Testament.
Table 1. Student information in Esther’s Yami language classes in Fall 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DY Elementary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 boy (F: Amis, M: Yami)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DY Elementary School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 girl (F: Yami, M: Hakka Chinese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DY Elementary School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 boys (F: Amis, M: Yami), (F: Yami, M: Yami)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZJ Elementary School</td>
<td>4–5</td>
<td>1 boy and 2 girls (Chinese)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM Elementary School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 girl (Chinese)†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HX Elementary School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 girl (F: Yami, M: Yami)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*F: father, M: mother
**These Chinese girls originally signed up for Paiwan, but were reassigned to Yami.
†This Chinese girl originally signed up for Amis, but was reassigned to Yami.

Esther conducted her 40 minute class period each week with Yami songs, matching games, vocabulary tests and crafts (e.g. making necklaces or strings with flying fish). Working with children was her strength, but keeping baseball players sitting through her class was a real challenge. She commented on her experience in working with the two sixth graders in DY Elementary School. They generally knew how to introduce themselves in Yami and enjoyed singing in Yami as they had been taught in previous years, starting in first grade. Although classroom management was sometimes problematic, Esther managed to recruit and convince a rambunctious student to participate in the national indigenous language recitation/speech contest, organized by the county government. She worked with this Yami boy on recitation outside of class. She would buy chicken nuggets for him while he worked on memorizing her Yami script, jotting down pronunciation notes in Chinese phonetic symbols. Besides coaching this boy in preparation for the speech contest, she also served as a judge in one of those national indigenous speech contests and found that Yami children and teenagers from Iraralay (明嶼) still ranked at the top in terms of Yami language ability.

Before Esther taught those language classes, she was handed the standard “yellow book” (a book with a yellow cover), the textbook for the elementary school indigenous language curriculum, compiled by the MOE. All students taking Yami, from first grade through junior high school, use the same book. This book is the standard text the students must master to pass the Yami proficiency exam and receive the 35% bonus to enter better high schools or universities. To assist indigenous students in passing the proficiency exam, the MOE has been offering intensive training classes (i.e. cram schools) in various counties, teaching the examinees
to practice the standard 100 sentences for the written and oral exams. Cram schools are also held on Orchid Island and in neighbouring Taitung County to increase the pass rate.

The exam questions are made, administered, and graded by certified Yami language teachers. The examiners are required to attend a training session to learn to evaluate test items so that they can choose 25 questions for each exam from the 100 standard test items. Esther previously had an opportunity to serve as an examiner. She reflected on what had happened in the oral exam. As most students had memorized the 100 sentences, when they were asked their names and how many people there were in their family, they would give exactly the same answer, “My name is si Masary. I have four family members.” When asked how old they were, they would also respond by giving the standard answer, “I am 15 years old.” When asked where they came from, they would say either Yayo (椰油) or Iratay (漁人). The students also learned to memorize 11 set answers to the tasks of “telling the story with picture frames.” Sometimes the students became extremely nervous when they were called to perform by speaking into the microphone about their favourite animal. Intimidated by the daunting task, they would respond by breathing hard, coughing, or cursing. One student simply responded by saying, “I like to eat chicken.”

To help students prepare for the proficiency exam, various county governments also sponsor language nest programs, another name for indigenous language classes assisted by families of indigenous language speakers. Esther had an opportunity to design and conduct a Yami language nest program, funded by the Taoyuan county government, when she first became a certified teacher. For the project she had to recruit a minimum of 6 indigenous people or 10 non-indigenous people to learn Yami in 150–200 hours. The classes met 3–6 hours per week, covering traditional folklore, oral history, craft, cooking, and field trips. Her students came with various purposes, some of whom were hoping to acquire sufficient literacy skills to read the Yami Bible, while others were aiming to pass the proficiency exam for high school or college entrance. Esther’s daughter was among the students in the program, preparing for her high school entrance exam. At the end of the course, the students were expected to perform a skit, while the teacher was required to submit a poster and a final report. This language nest

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12. The 100 sentences are a reflection of a pedagogical style based on standardized audiolinguall instruction and memorization of sentence patterns. The same 100 sentences are translated into all of the indigenous languages.
program ended on a positive note as Esther’s daughter succeeded in entering a public high school.\textsuperscript{13}

In addition to these exciting adventures that Esther, while still a janitor, had never imagined she would participate in, she was also called upon to dub an educational film into Yami, as part of a government campaign against chewing betel nuts. Due to a lack of experience, she spent 2 hours trying to squeeze a long sequence of Yami sentences into a 20 second Chinese film clip.

7.2 Teaching Yami as a language consultant in a graduate program

As mentioned previously, Esther was recruited to work with three linguistics Ph.D. students and me as a Yami language consultant in a field methods class. She demonstrated a high level of metalinguistic ability that is hard to find among ordinary native speakers of indigenous languages. Although she had not lived on Orchid Island since she was 20 years of age, she had been practicing the Yami language while taking care of her Yami mother and her visually-impaired sister. During elicitation sessions in our class meetings, she was able to provide Yami translations of Chinese sentences and correct our Yami transcriptions. As she could write in Yami orthography\textsuperscript{14} better than most of her peers, she was recruited by the CIP to teach Yami orthography at their annual teacher certification training program at National Taiwan Normal University for two years.

Toward the end of our field methods course, Esther was asked to record a Yami version of the frog story (Slobin 2004), a tool used frequently in a cognitive-functional approach to language typology. Esther’s production of the frog story ultimately served as the database for our analysis of Yami motion events (Rau, Wang & Chang 2012). I emailed her a pdf file of the pictures. She wrote a draft, checked with her relatives, typed the whole story next to each picture frame, and emailed me back an attachment. Although she tended to write a few Chinese characters incorrectly, a reflection of her incomplete learning in Chinese, she was able to type in both Yami and Chinese fluently. Figure 5 is the first picture frame of the frog story that Esther contributed to our class. She was also asked to retell the story during the class in a style that would attract everyone’s attention.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[13.] Public high schools are considered more prestigious than private ones in Taiwan.
\item[14.] Yami orthography is written in a roman alphabet, as are all the other indigenous languages in Taiwan.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
8. Assessment of community reaction to the use of the language

The Taiwan government is advocating indigenous language revitalization by adopting strategies that have been proven useful in dominant language acquisition in a Chinese cultural setting. Adding 35% bonus points to indigenous students who test high on their heritage language has been instrumental in promoting interest in heritage language acquisition. The same phenomenon of test-oriented heritage language teaching and learning is manifested both on Orchid Island and in urban schools in Taiwan, to which Yami people have migrated seeking better lives. The community reaction to this strong dosage of medication is dichotomous. An Amis professor, Akio (黃東秋), is a vehement opponent of this language policy and considers the indigenous language proficiency test incompatible with indigenous culture, whereas the majority of the indigenous communities regard the language proficiency test a “necessary evil.” Some embrace it whole-heartedly because it
helps their children enter public high schools and national universities, while others have their reservations and worry about their children's ability to compete with other highly motivated Chinese freshmen.

The Chinese government has certainly used every possible way that has been proven to work for English and Chinese acquisition to conserve Austronesian languages, but whether the strategies will work to reverse language shift in the indigenous communities is yet to be seen. The reality is that the number of Yami people participating in the three stages of Yami language teacher certification is decreasing as most of the proficient speakers have already been certified. Esther commented that some indigenous people suspected that perhaps there would be no need for certification in 30 years, as the indigenous languages in Taiwan will all be extinct.

The end of our story has a sad twist. You might wonder what happened to Esther, the teacher who over a period of three years had gone through three stages of certification, taught Yami classes in elementary schools, served as a Yami examiner, lectured on Yami orthography in the Yami teacher certification program, designed and taught a Yami language nest program, and co-taught a graduate level field methods class. She found a full-time position in January 2011 as a gardener and quit all her part-time work as a Yami language teacher. Regardless of how much potential she had as a language teacher/consultant/examiner, as a single parent she needed a stable job to support her family.

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**Abstract in Chinese**

一位達悟語教師之族語教學歷程

何德華

達悟族居住於台灣東南外海的蘭嶼島，人口約3000人，達悟語屬於菲律賓的巴丹語群。島上六個部落只剩下屏嶼村仍有小孩子能說達悟語，其他各村的兒童語言均已被學校教育的中文所取代了。雖然蘭嶼中小學每週均安排了一小時的族語課程，仍無法挽回達悟語缺乏語言使用和傳承的傾勢。由於台灣政府以獎勵措施讓通過族語考試的學生以加分方式進入高中和大學，透過「考試領導教學」的模式，族語教學的目的成為幫助學生通過考試達階的工具。這種風氣不僅在蘭嶼島上如此，在其他達悟族人移居的台灣大城市的中的原住民族語教學亦是如此。本文在描述了蘭嶼島過去十多年來達悟族人的語言使用現況和語言態度之後，進入主要故事內容：敘說一位達悟語教師如何在台灣各級學校從小學到研究所教授族語的歷程。