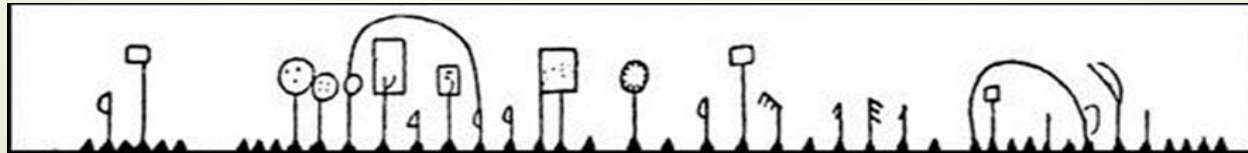


# The history of Taiwan indigenous language policy —Taking aboriginal language proficiency test as an example

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# Indigenous languages? dialects?

- ▶ How many indigenous languages and dialects?
- ▶ → See table of languages and dialects  
languages & ethnic groups: One language as on ethnic group?
- ▶ I started to consider this issue when language proficiency test started
- ▶ Governmental intervention may destroy the status of languages and interfere in the relationship between languages and ethnic groups



# The status quo of indigenous language policy

- History of indigenous language policy
- Important events of indigenous language policy
  
- Focus of present indigenous language policy
  - Administration and regulations
  - Language teaching and language proficiency: From childhood to adulthood
  - Language proficiency test

# Background of indigenous language proficiency test held by government

- In 2001, **Grade 1-9 Curriculum guidelines** were carried out by the Ministry of Education, whereby indigenous languages were included in the dialects courses in **elementary schools** → **required** course, indigenous language teaching was **formally included into the educational system** → requirement of indigenous language teachers? → **qualification of teachers** → verification



# Purposes of indigenous language proficiency test

- To **preserve and pass down** indigenous languages and to promote these languages
- To **train indigenous language teachers** and to level up teaching quality
- To **accommodate** the need of indigenous language teachers

# A. Beginning: First Indigenous language test, 2001

- ▶ Held by National Chengchi University
- ▶ **Hardest, innovation** in history
- ▶ Key starter of the revitalization of indigenous languages
- ▶ The **orthography systems** of each language reached a preliminary consensus
- ▶ Indigenous languages began **to be changed into written form comprehensively**
- ▶ Became the base for future indigenous language tests
- ▶ **Got rid of official division of ethnic groups**; according to languages, Indigenous people were divided into 12 languages and 38 dialects

# Preparation before tests

- **Editing exercises on indigenous languages.** This can be viewed as the vastest discussion and promotion of orthographic systems and language structures of Taiwan indigenous languages after the translation of Bible.
- **Study groups before the exams.** Being a part of the examination affairs, it is not only propaganda, but also an activity helping people to preview. It helped examinees to get an overview of the test, and enhanced their confidence in the process. Moreover, aborigines can have more chances to understand orthography systems.

## B. Continuity: Indigenous language tests from 2002 to 2013

- ▶ Led by ethnologists and committee members of indigenous language proficiency test in 2001 → led by **linguists and committee members** since 2002
- ▶ The importance of linguists' participation rose.
- ▶ Host: Except for 2004 where they were held by National Dong Hwa University, the tests were held by **National Taiwan Normal University**.
- ▶ The number of people registered the common indigenous language proficiency test has **declined gradually**.
- ▶ Tests for **students who need the certification to enter a better school** have been held since 2007. The registering number of this test is **much higher** than the number of indigenous language proficiency test.



# Statistics of indigenous language proficiency test from 2001-2011

Year	Register	Attended	Passed	Rate of eligibility
2001	2,956	2,521	2,157	85.5%
2002	2,593	2,214	1,816	82.0%
2003	1,617	1,251	991	79.2%
2004	911	706	526	74.5%
2007	2,440	1,770	923	52.0%
2008	2,061	1,353	741	55%
2009	1,531	1,132	588	51.9%
2010	1,655	1,125	535	47.5%
2011	1401	734	344	46.9%
Total	17,165	12,806	8,321	64.9%

# Annual statistics of the test of culture and language proficiency for indigenous students


Year	Register	Attended	Passed	Rate of eligibility
First, 2007	10,102	8,535	6,596	77.28%
Second, 2007	15,133	12,732	9,754	76.6%
First, 2008	10,087	8,220	6,103	74.2%
Second, 2008	6,950	5,380	3,278	61.8%
2009	12,569	10,451	7,542	72.2%
2010	13,570	11,209	7,937	70.8%
2011	14,138	11,479	8,005	69.7%
2012	13,441	11,185	8,374	74.9%
2013	12,342	10,152	5,708	56.2%
Total	108,332	77,793	63,297	71%

## C. Tests divided into different levels in 2014


level	Register	Expected attendance	Attended	Attendance rate	Passed	Rate of eligibility
Primary	11,363	11,065	8,606	77.78%	5,177	60.16%
Inter-mediate	7,493	7,269	5,381	74.03%	3,583	66.59%
Advanced	577	524	250	47.71%	5	2.00%
Superior	623	595	459	77.14%	11	2.40%
Total	20,056	19,453	14,696	75.55%	8,776	59.72%

# The effectiveness of the certification of indigenous language proficiency test

Level	Effectiveness
Primary	As <b>preferential certification</b> for indigenous students to enter high schools or vocational schools.
Inter-mediate	<b>As preferential certification</b> for indigenous students to enter vocational schools of higher level, college, or university.
Advanced	As certification for <b>indigenous language teachers, indigenous teachers, interpreters, broadcaster, and preschool teachers</b> to prove their language proficiency
Superior	As certification for people who want to give <b>courses of indigenous languages and cultures</b> at colleges and tribal schools, or indigenous language inheritors to prove their language proficiency




# Indigenous language proficiency test and related seminar

- ▶ Types of seminars
  - ▶ Indigenous language proficiency tests and indigenous language seminars
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# Questions given in the tests

- Drafters of the questions
  - Areas covered in the exams and question types
  - Classifying standards
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# Conclusion and suggestions

- 2001: Unitary indigenous language proficiency test
- 2007: Indigenous language proficiency tests, two levels
- 2013: Indigenous language proficiency tests, three levels (two different tests) > Indigenous language proficiency **classifying** test (combined)
- 2014: 12 indigenous languages and 38 dialects
- 2014: **16 indigenous languages and 42 dialects**

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- Identifying an ethnic group & indigenous language proficiency
  - Reviewing the table of languages and dialects used by indigenous language proficiency test →
  - **Highly political**, hard to get rid of political intervention! (take Seediq and Truku for example) **Professionalism and linguistic facts** are more important than political issues
  - Suggestion for identifying an ethnic group: **more linguists** should take part in the decision and their comments should be taken into consideration (so far, they are not!)
  - Suggestion for language proficiency test: **scholars and experts of aboriginal history and cultures** should be included when setting the questions
  - The **effectiveness of the certification** of the language proficiency test should be expanded through legislation or modifying law
  - Regulations about indigenous languages should be **carried out and promoted actively**





Uninang! ( Thank you! )

➤ Any question?

