

Two Aspects of Lexical Differences Between Amoy and Taiwanese*

1. Introduction

Before Taiwan was ceded to Japan in April 1895, there were geographical and sociopolitical differences already between the Han Taiwanese and the Han Chinese, called *Tông-soaⁿ-lâng* 〈唐山人〉.¹ Two sayings (or proverbs) illustrate their cultural differences:²

- (1) *Tông-soaⁿ-kheh, khò-thâu tian-tò leh.* 〈唐山客, 褲頭顛tò leh.〉
'The Chinese girdle their pants in the opposite order.'
- (2) *Tông-soaⁿ-kheh, tùi-pòⁿ s(o)eh.* 〈唐山客, 對半說。〉
'When the Chinese bargain, they cut the price down to a half.'

Linguistically, there were also differences between Taiwanese Hokkien (hereafter Taiwanese) and Amoy Hokkien (hereafter Amoy). In the annotations on a collection of poems published in 1852, the author Lâu Ka-bô <劉家謀> pointed out many words that were specifically Taiwanese (Ông I. 1993:82). Douglas (1873) recorded some "Formosan" words used exclusively in Taiwan. About 15 years after Taiwan's departure from China, Barclay responded to Douglas by compiling a 271-page Formosan *Supplement* (published in 1923) to Douglas' dictionary based on Taiwanese. A large proportion of the Formosan lexical items in the *Supplement* existed before the Japanese take-over of Taiwan.³

In spite of the noticeable linguistic differences, the exchange of lexical items between Taiwanese and the other Hokkien dialects continued intimately in the early years of Japanese jurisdiction, since regular trading and migration did not seem to stop. Barclay (*ibid.* ii) noted, "There are certain expressions used in Formosa derived from the Japanese.... Yet even many of them have spread to Amoy, partly through Chinese newspapers, whi[c]h depend a good deal upon Japanese translations of new ideas, or through intercourse with visitors from these places[.]" The spreading served to minimize the existing linguistic differences.

It was the 2nd Sino-Japanese War in the 1930's and the 1940's and the 38-year old marshal law imposed on Taiwan by the Nationalist Chinese that effectively checked the flow of the intercourse between Taiwan and Fukien. The suspension of contact was responsible for further divergence between Taiwanese and the other Hokkien dialects. This linguistic divergence was further widened by the "national language" policy of the Japanese and that of the Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan. The two "national languages" had such a significant impact on Taiwanese that Taiwanese eventually became a distinctive language from all other Hokkiens. Although Taiwanese still shares a very large proportion of basic vocabulary with the other Hokkiens,

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¹Politically, Taiwan was ruled from Peking and Nanking only from 1683 to 1895 and from 1945 to 1949. There were little cultural contacts between China and Taiwan from 1937 to 1945 and from 1949 to the late 1980's.

²The meaning of the first saying needs further clarification. The waist of traditional pants was not made to fit. To put on the pants, one has to fold the waist before tying it. One either folds in the left side of the waist first or the other way round. The present author does not have information about the Taiwanese order of folding the waist.

³The grandfather of the present author also mentioned that he could detect Fukien accent when he was a small child (before the turn of the century).

they differ much in common (or commonly used) vocabulary (Ông I. 1993:81). Ông T. (1994) compared Amoy and Taiwanese common words and found that there are over 10% of the common words that the two languages do not share. The difference in borrowed words is even greater.

The purpose of this paper is to pursue a more detailed and more specific comparison of Taiwanese and Chinese Hokkien. Amoy, the Fukien dialect most linguistically similar to Taiwanese, was chosen to make the comparison reveal more of the sociopolitical impact on linguistic divergence. Amoy, like Taiwanese, is a hybrid language. These two languages are similar to the extent that they are almost identical phonologically. Syntactically, there are some slight differences that will not be addressed in this paper. In spite of several other similarities, Amoy lexicon and Taiwanese lexicon are very different. Furthermore, Amoy has the richest records of all Chinese Hokkien dialects. As such, Amoy is suitable and valid for comparison with Taiwanese, suitable in the similarities and valid in having enough data.

There is a variety of lexical differences between Amoy and Taiwanese which will be surveyed in the following section (§2). However, this paper focuses on two areas: phonemic loans and borrowing via written characters. These two aspects are related in that they are both lexical borrowings. A speaker of a language may note the lexical differences between his language or dialect and another language or dialect when he encounters words of the latter that are unfamiliar to him. The present study is based primarily on this principle. Since the author does not have an Amoy-speaking collaborator, the comparison is primarily unidirectional from the Taiwanese point of view. There can be limitations with such approach, and the author hopes that future studies from the opposite direction would be taken up by some Amoy-speaking linguists.

2. A Survey of the Lexical Differences

The differences between Amoy and Taiwanese lexicons are both phonological and morphological. There are at least six kinds of such differences: (1) A pair of equivalent lexical items in the two languages may be historically related but are realized in different phonological forms in the two languages (§2.1). (2) A lexical item may be extant and/or frequently used in one language but lost or obsolete in another (§2.2). (3) Identical phonemic words may be a lexical word in one language but another lexical word in another, i.e. they may be interdialectal homophones (§2.3). (4) New expressions continue to be innovated individually in different regions (§2.4). (5) The major donors of loanwords are different. Taiwanese borrowed heavily from Japanese, but it appears that Amoy never did (§3). (6) Different degrees of proficiency in the mother tongue result in different degrees of the ability to borrow written Chinese lexical items (§4). These differences have to be understood on sociolinguistic backgrounds.

2.1 Etymologically Related Equivalent

Due to dialect mixture and imperfect visual and aural learning, phonological irregularities often occur. The different dialect mixtures in Amoy and Taiwanese are not discussed in this paper. The irregularities resulting from imperfect aural learning in one dialect are not normally expected to occur in the same forms in other dialects. That is, the same speech errors in one community are not normally "legalized" in another community. Whereas the same irregularities resulting from visual learning, i.e., from character reading, can occur in other dialects. Our examples of irregular character reading are those that occur either only in Amoy or only in Taiwanese, but not in both languages. The list is only for illustrations. There is no intention to find out who made what mistakes or innovations.

(3) Different Reflexes of the Same Etyma⁴

Amoy Form	Taiwanese Form	English Gloss
bā-lī; māng-nī	bák-nī	jasmin
bô	bông	fog
hāu-hiáh	hāu-hia	ladle made of king crab shell
hiàn-sì	hiān-sì	disgracing
hiau-than	hiau-than	warp; warped
hō-tit-khó	hō-mih-khó	why bother
kha-thâu-hu	kha-thâu-u	knee
khám-khiat	kham-khiát	rugged
lō-lō	lô-lô	blur (eye sight)
sai-kha; su-khia	sai-khia	private savings of a family member
siau	siāu	to lash
tōa-khiân	tōa-khian	big (thing)
him-soân 〈欣羨〉	him-siân 〈欣羨〉	admire; envy
pek-hè kong-si 〈百貨公司〉	pah-hè kong-si 〈百貨公司〉	department store
Tōa-kah-chhióh 〈大甲蓆〉	Tāi-kah-chhióh 〈大甲蓆〉	straw mat from Tāi-kah, Taiwan
tōa-óh 〈大學〉	tāi-hák 〈大學〉	university

2.2 Obsolete Forms in Taiwanese

During the course of lexical change, some lexical items are lost and some are substituted. However, those items that are lost and those that are substituted are not the same in Taiwanese as in Amoy. Common words in Taiwanese may be “archaic” in Amoy, and vice versa. For instance, the words *kêng* 〈窮〉 and *sàn-chhiáh* both mean ‘poor; poverty’ and both occur in Amoy and Taiwanese. In Amoy *kêng* is a more common word, better known by the younger people, whereas *sàn-chhiáh* is primarily used by the older people and less known by the youth.⁵ On the other hand, *kêng* is already a dead word in Taiwanese and remains only in sayings, such as the one below.⁶

(4) *Bōe pù, chhut pù-jî; bōe kêng, chhut kêng-si.*

〈未富出富兒, 未窮出窮屍。〉

‘Before the family is rich, it already has a profligate child, and before it declines, one already can foresee the corpse of a bum-to-be.’

The following is a list of words which are common words in Amoy according to Zhou C. (1993). These words are obsolete in Taiwanese, though not necessarily dead. In older Taiwanese, some of the now obsolete forms are different from current Amoy.

(5) Words Common in Amoy but Obsolete in Taiwanese

⁴All the words listed in this paper are random examples. In other words, they are not purposely chosen, nor are they considered to be representative.

In (3), the Amoy form *hāu-hiáh* is a case of blending. It is based on *hia* and *siáh*, both meaning ‘ladle’ (cf. Amoy *pá-hia* ‘a ladle made of gourd’). Some Taiwanese speakers still say *tōa-óh* for ‘university’, but the number of such speakers is extremely small and the word is considered obsolete.

⁵Information from Jeff Crosland, the University of Washington, by personal contact, March 1995.

⁶This saying is in fact obsolete.

Amoy Form	Older Taiwanese	English Gloss
bâ-lî	ba-lî	cabin in a ship
chháu-chiān	chháu-chèng	straw mat
chhî	<i>do.</i>	damp
chóa-lî	chóa ⁿ -lî	strainer
hō-lân-se-chúi	<i>do.</i>	aerated soft drink
hoan-koah	<i>do.</i>	cassava
î-oat	î-oát	to alter (a plan)
iā-siau	<i>do.</i>	late night snack
ka-chui	<i>do.</i>	turtledove
ka-iáh	<i>do.</i>	very popular
ka-nâng	<i>do.</i>	wholesome
khun	<i>do.</i>	to shave
kơ-tâ	<i>do.</i>	dry
pờ-kui	<i>do.</i>	webbing loom
-sia ⁿ	<i>do.</i>	(a nominalizer affixed to some classifiers)
siáh-chiòh	<i>do.</i>	marble (material)
tōa-òh	<i>do.</i>	university

The substitution of indigenous lexical items by written Chinese in Amoy and by written Japanese and written Chinese in Taiwan is a dynamic process of linguistic change.⁷ However, since lexical substitutions do not often occur to the same lexical items in two languages, we expect different substitutions in Amoy and in Taiwanese. In Taiwanese, substitutions often occur to trisyllabic words. That is, colloquial trisyllabic words are substituted by literary disyllabic words (Tiuⁿ J. 1998). Indigenous words, phonemic loans, and transphonated literary words (mostly from Chinese) have also been competing for survival in Taiwanese (Tiuⁿ & Tiuⁿ 1995). However, it is not known whether the same kind of disyllabification also occurs in Amoy nor what the detail of lexical competition is in Amoy.

2.3 Homophones

The same phonemic words occasionally have different meanings in Amoy and Taiwanese. Interdialectally, they are ambiguous words out of context.

(6) Interdialectal Homophones⁸

Phonemic Word	Amoy Meaning	Taiwanese Meaning
cháu-lō	leeway	become a fugitive
chhàu-tōa ⁿ	lazy	talk nonsense
hoan-koah	cassava; century plant	a business man who dealt with aboriginal Taiwanese in the olden days
khan-ki ⁿ	sexual intercourse (said of beasts)	thicken soup by adding starch
khia	falsely incriminate	make trouble for
liám-bū	a kind of apple	bell fruit ("sponge apple")
ơ-pâi	blackboard	not officially qualified

⁷Both Jeff Crosland and David Branner, from the University of Washington, "complained" during personal contact, in March 1995, that the younger generation Amoites currently use less "genuine" Hokkien words.

⁸Of these phonemic words, *hoan-koah* also means 'cassava' in older Taiwanese (see (5) above).

sin-lô	wages	employee
tiān-thô	electric cell battery	calcium carbide
tô-chóa	carbon paper	blotting paper

2.4 Regional Innovations⁹

Our examples of Amoy and Taiwanese regional innovations are arranged in two lists. The first (7) includes words for things and concepts that are introduced to Amoy and Taiwanese communities after contact with the West. Regional words for new things and new concepts are extraordinarily rich in both Amoy and Taiwanese, but the same Western thing or concept is often expressed differently in each language. In (7), the Taiwanese equivalents to Amoy innovations include phonemic loans from Japanese and character reading of Chinese. The second list (8) presents other Amoy expressions, including many slangs, that do not occur in Taiwanese.

(7) Words for New Things & New Concepts

Amoy Form	English Gloss	Taiwanese Equivalent
chhàu-sap-bûn	medicated soap	iôh-chô
chhàu-thô	calcium carbide	tiān-thô
chhi-kiû	cactus	sian-jîn-chiáng; sa-bó-tián
chhia-kim	a brake	chhia-tông; bu-lê-kì
chhiú-kim	hand brake	chhiú-tông
chhùi-khîm	harmonica	kháu-khîm; ha-mó-ní-khah
hûn-sam/-sa ⁿ	shirt	(oái-)siá-chuh
kiô-chhia	stroller	e ⁿ -á-chhia; leng-bó-chhia
ko-pit	ball pen	goân-chú-pit
liân-hoe-thâu	shower head	siá-oah
o-he	cement	âng-mơ-thô
o-pâi; o-pán	blackboard	o-pang
o-tiám-á-iû	tar	t(i)ám-á-ka
pēng-/phiāng-kó	apple	lìn-gò; phōng-kó
siáh-chiòh	marble	tāi-lí-chiòh
siàu-hô	an account	kháu-chô
sió-pau-chhia	taxi	kê-thēng-chhia
sng-kūi	refrigerator	peng-siu ⁿ
thoa-táu	trailer	thoa-chhia
tiám-tih	intravenous drip	thiǎn-té-khìh; tiān-ti; tōa-tāng
tiān-chhe	hair dryer	chhoe-hong-ki
tô-ōa-teng; tô-ūi-teng	thumbtack	tô-teng
tô-chóa	carbon paper	o-chóa

⁹Of the examples below, *sidh-chiòh* was also used in older Taiwanese.

(8) Other Local Amoy Innovations

Amoy Form	English Gloss
bī-bók	to narrow one's eye
bu	a pinch of
chàm-poeh-pah	have a love affair; to court
chhú-nî	wart
góa-kài ⁿ -nái	oh boy!
khiā-ló	thicken soup by adding starch
khiā-pái	stand and wait in line
koa	money
koe-bîn	have a nightmare
kû	gather dust etc. together
lí-lòh	show interest in
lí-pō-poeh	some ability
σ-kha	a cop
phi-phún	throw about earth or sand, as fowl does
phí-lî	stingy
pî	to seize
soa	to spill
ta-tiú	lively (said of a child)
that kan-lók	shift responsibility onto one another
thō	to drink
thoe	satirize
tōa-khut	overcoat

2.5 Phonemic Loans and Character Reading

Lexical differences in these two areas will be discussed in §3 and §4.

3. Phonemic Loans

In the past 100 odd years, Taiwan changed rulers twice. Both political events are crucial to the pattern and the substance of phonemic loans in Taiwanese. The year 1895 marks the start of the making of a lexical borrowing machine, and the year 1945 marks the beginning of the deterioration of the machine. During and before the Manchu period (ended in 1895), Taiwanese borrowing of foreign words differed little from Amoy. During the Japanese period (1895–1945), Taiwanese formed a set of linguistic rules to render Japanese words and borrowed an extraordinarily large number of them. Finally, during the Nationalist Chinese period (since 1945), Taiwanese has become handicapped, and code-mixing and code-switching have taken the place of phonemic borrowing. As for Amoy borrowing, it has maintained a pattern similar to that in the Manchu period (ended 1911 in China).

3.1 Pre-Japanese Period

Before 1895, Taiwanese was similar to Amoy with regard to lexical borrowing. First, Taiwanese contacts with other languages in China, Chinese or non-Chinese, were few and sporadic. Second, the waters connecting Formosa, Fukien, and Island Southeast Asia formed a communication network for the Hokkien linguistic community in the olden days. Many newly borrowed lexical items spread from one locality to another, and many of them were shared across the Taiwan Straits, such as those in the following list.

(9) Old Loanwords in Hokkien

Amoy Form	English Gloss	Taiwanese Form
bâ-lî	cabin in a ship	bā-lî
a-tát[-chí]	sago palm	do.
bí-á[-chiú]	beer	do.
[gō-]kha-k(h)ì	covered way in front of shops	[gō-]kha-khì
ka-lí	curry	do.
ka-póh[-mî]	silk cotton	ka-pók[-mî]
ko-pi	coffee	ka-pi
ku-lí	coolie	do.
li-á-kah	a pull cart	do.
lui	money	do.
sap-bûn	soap	do.

The majority of the shared loanwords were either borrowed from Malay or through Malay. Even the immediate donor of ‘soap’ in the list above is also likely Malay. It is possible that most of these pre-Japanese loanwords in Taiwanese are in effect secondary borrowings from other Hokkien dialects.

Some of the shared loanwords have minor formal differences between Taiwanese and other Hokkiens, however, and most of them are lost in Taiwanese now (cf. §2.2). Furthermore, many more borrowed lexical items have not spread. For instance, *tōng-kat* ‘the stick carried by a Western-style gentleman’, from Malay, occurs in Amoy but not in Taiwan. Other examples are listed in (11) below. In spite of the historical similarities in language contact, Taiwanese started to deviate from other Hokkiens since the first Han immigration to Formosa. Taiwanese speakers borrowed *pát-á/ná-pút-á* ‘guava’ and other local plant names from aboriginal Formosans; they borrowed *kah* ‘acre’ from the Dutch; and they borrowed *nah-liâng* ‘to relax in a cool place’ and other limited number of words from the interpreters for Chinese mandarins. Almost none of these words are shared by Amoy. The total number of pre-Japanese phonemic loans in Taiwan is small, but it is significant to demonstrate the regional peculiarity of Taiwanese vis-à-vis Amoy.

3.2 The Japanese Period

Taiwanese has been borrowing innumerable Japanese lexical items since it entered direct contact with Japanese. The successful enrichment of Taiwanese lexicon can be attributed to the establishment of a variety of Japanese spoken by the Taiwanese. In 1895, the Japanese government in Taiwan began its national language education. By 1937, there was a slow but steady implementation of the national language policy. The government never required that the Taiwanese talk like native Japanese. Taiwanese accent was noticed but well-accepted by native Japanese and not despised or ridiculed. “The Emperor’s Japanese”, on the other hand, was frowned upon, if not ridiculed, when spoken by a Taiwanese. This variety of the Japanese language, with many carried-over Taiwanese features, is called “Formosan Japanese”.

Formosan Japanese is the second language of most Japanese-educated Taiwanese. It was the “standard” Japanese in Taiwan, and it served as the main immediate donor of Japanese loanwords in Taiwanese. Almost all Western and Japanese lexical items were borrowed through Formosan Japanese (Tiuⁿ J. 1993).

With this phonemic loan “machine” in hand, Taiwanese can borrow any Japanese word with close phonological approximation and high regularity, according to Formosan Japanese pronunciation. Many Western words are also being processed without going through native Japanese. The machine is still in working condition more than 50 years after Taiwan ceased to be a Taiwanese-Japanese bilingual society. Japanese words and Western words continue to be

borrowed into Taiwanese in the same pattern (see (10) for examples).

The phonological regularity in rendering Japanese words and borrowing them into Taiwanese is almost unfailing. Except for distinguishing *o·bá-sáng* ‘aunt’ from *o·bà-sàng* ‘grandma’ and distinguishing *o·jí-sáng* ‘uncle’ from *o·jì-sàng* ‘grandpa’, the tone assignment to Japanese pitches is mechanical.¹⁰ The Japanese word initial consonants, vowels, non-initial nasal consonant, and gemination also receive highly regular treatment from Taiwanese (*ibid.*)

With all the favorable conditions mentioned above, that is, the pace of Japanese language education, the emergence and acceptance of Formosan Japanese, and the regularity and simplicity of rendition, Taiwanese was ready to borrow as many Japanese words as possible. During this period of time, Japan was developing science and technology. Taiwan, being a part of Japan, developed under the Japan umbrella, and Taiwanese borrowed numerous science and technology related lexical items as a result. In architectural terminology alone, there are more than 450 loanwords (about 4.3%, cf. Tiuⁿ & Tiuⁿ 1995). Loan words in other fields have yet to be studied; however, it is a fact that the jargons in every branch of traditional technology in Taiwan include loanwords from Japanese. In addition to the borrowed jargons, which are indispensable in most professions, many loanwords also have become indispensable in the Taiwanese language for dealing with daily life.

The following is a list of some of the most common examples of Japanese loanwords, borrowed both before and after 1945. Items listed below the double lines are basically post-War loans processed by the same Formosan Japanese “loan machine”. Some of the items could have been borrowed by individuals before 1945 but did not become popular till after the War. These loanwords reflect the introduction of Japanese and Western culture to the Taiwanese. None of them is expected to occur in Amoy.

¹⁰For phonological rules, see Tiuⁿ J. & Tiuⁿ (1995:651–652).

(10) Common Japanese Loanwords in Taiwanese

Japanese Loans	English Gloss	Japanese Loans	English Gloss
a-lú-mih(-á)	aluminum	mò-tà	motor
â(t)-sá-lih	without reserve	ne-khú-tái	necktie
ăn-thé-nah	antenna	ơ-tớ-bái	motorcycle
àu-chù	out; disqualified	oãi-siá-chuh	(white) shirt
bá-suh	bus	pha-siàn-tò	percent
bá-tah	butter	phài-phù	pipe
bai-ió-lín	violin	pháng	bread
bì-lù	beer	phi-á-nơh	piano
bi-tá-bín	vitamin	phiàn-chì	pliers
bu-lò-chì	brooch	phĩn-phóng	ping-pong
gá-suh	gas	phòng-phù(-á)	water pump
giần-káng	entrance-hall	să-bì-sù	special offer
gu-lí-sé-lín	glycerine	sák-ká-lín	saccharin
há-muh	ham	sàng-sò	oxygen
hăn-lớ-juh	steering wheel	se-bí-lơh	a lounge-suit
hi-nớ-khìh	Japanese cypress	sê-tà	sweater
hơ-mú-láng	home run	siò-tò	short circuit
jiá(k)-khuh	zipper	su-lít-pah	slippers
khă-tián	curtain	tha-thá-mih	tatami
la-jí-ơh	radio	thài-lù	tile
la-khiát-tơh	racket	thàng-sù	wardrobe
lát-pah	horn (in a car)	the-ní-suh	tennis
lĩn-jín	carrot	thiăn-pú-lah	Japanese fry
lơ-lài-bà	screwdriver	thiàn-tò	tent
ma-lá-sóng	marathon	thơ-lák-khuh	truck
mê-tà	meter (a machine)	thơ-làng-khù	suitcase
mi-sơh	salty bean paste	thơ-má-tơh	tomato
a-khú-lih	acrylic products	ma-sâ-jì	massage
bài-à	buyer	me-lóng	melon
bài-tò	byte (in computer)	năi-lóng	nylon
bák-khuh	to back a car	ne-óng	neon
bu-lé-khìh	the brake	ỡ-ián	boost the morale
bu-lò-kà	broker	pha-sú-phờ-tò	passport
chhiàng-sù	chance	sák-khuh	condom
gơ-lú-huh	golf	siát-tơh	to perm the hair
khờ-tà	quota	su-tián(-lè-sù)	stainless steel
khóp-pih	copy	thóp-puh	top
lớ-gơh	logo	ùn-chiàng	bus/taxi driver

On the other hand, not only that many old loanwords in Amoy did not spread to Taiwanese, all modern loanwords in Amoy are foreign to Taiwanese. The following list of loanwords do not occur in modern Taiwanese, nor did they occur in older Taiwanese. Occasionally, there are Taiwanese equivalents of loanwords. These equivalents, including older loans, are entered in the list when available. Some of the Amoy forms in the list seem to have been borrowed directly from English.

(11) Loanwords in Amoy

Loanwords in Amoy	English Gloss	Loanwords in Taiwanese
am-mâ-kah	century plant	
bân-tó-lín	mandolin	
báu[-á]	valve	ba-lú-buh
chi-ku-lát	chocolate	chō-khó-lè-tò
chiau-phiô	Western hat	
chu-lút	cigar	ha-má-khih; sék-gâ
gím	a game; a set of game	
kau-ín	marry	
kau-oân	friend	
liám	jam	jiá-muh
pa-sat	market	
sa-lí	aluminum casting mode	
siā-ko[-bí]	sago	se-kok[-bí]
su-kah	to like	
súi-thò	sweat shirt	
tōng-kat	a stick	
úi-sò	a whistle; an umpire	

3.3 The Chinese Period

After the Japanese handed over the Taiwanese to the Chinese in 1945, major changes concerning loanwords occurred. First, increasing numbers of the Taiwanese were becoming unfamiliar with Formosan Japanese, and Western words were, therefore, borrowed directly from English, such as *khó-ín* 'call-in' and *mà-khè* 'logo (< mark)', directly from native Japanese, such as *ò-bùn* 'oven', or via Chinglish, such as *mo-tián* 'modem' and *ko-lú-huh* 'golf'. The Formosan Japanese lexical borrowing machine was less frequently used than before. Second, with the disappearance of Taiwanese-Japanese bilingualism, existing Japanese words mixed in Taiwanese became a part of Taiwanese lexicon as genuine loanwords. Third, the Chinese language policy made it increasingly difficult for Taiwanese to assimilate Chinese lexical items, because as the Taiwanese were becoming less proficient in their mother tongue, code-mixing and code-switching became common styles of speech.

With regard to the second point, it must be understood that before Japanese ceased to be the national language in Taiwan, the rules to assimilate Japanese words were violated by those less proficient in Japanese. During the Japanese period, there were a Taiwanese-Japanese bilingual stratum of the society and a monolingual Taiwanese stratum. In the latter, Japanese words were borrowed in their "corrupted" forms, that is, they were borrowed without necessarily following the rendition rules. These Japanese words used by monolinguals were loanwords, i.e., they were not Japanese elements in code-switching, for these people knew only one code.

In the bilingual stratum, however, it is difficult to pinpoint genuine loanwords. Since the bilinguals tend to mix and switch between codes, it is difficult to say exactly which words in Formosan Japanese forms were already borrowed into Taiwanese and which words were the manifestations of code-switching. It was only after the Japanese language ceased to be a social medium in Taiwan that all the Japanese words remaining in Taiwanese were counted as loanwords.

The same principle applies to Chinese words in Taiwanese. In present day Taiwan, there are far more Taiwanese-Chinese bilinguals than monolingual Taiwanese speakers. Code-switching

is a common phenomenon. Except for a small number of Chinese lexical items occurring in Taiwanese discourse and conversation that will be retained for a long period of time in Taiwanese and thus considered loanwords, all the others that occur in Taiwanese discourse and conversation are ambiguous (or unstable) as to whether they are loanwords or they are just Chinese mixed in Taiwanese. Until Taiwanese regains independence and functions as a language that can be used in all registers and as a language of popular literacy, it is impossible to effectively identify Chinese loanwords.

Currently, because of the smaller monolingual Taiwanese population in the Chinese period than during the Japanese period, definite Chinese loanwords are limited. The following are some of the few examples.

(12) Chinese Loanwords in Taiwanese

Chinese Loanwords	English Gloss
chō-siō	appear in a show; put on a show
lāu-su	teacher
soán-là-thang	sour-'n-hot soup
tā-chiá-lé	a kind of bidding gamble
tà-ké-tá	walky-talky; cellular phone
tàn-pîn	fried-egg pancake
tiān-ti	intravenous drip

The most important factor that keeps the number of Chinese loanwords low in Taiwanese is the Nationalists' Chinese language policy. This policy has two goals. One is to substitute Chinese for indigenous Taiwan languages, with the intention to eliminate "dialects" (including Polynesian languages). The second goal is to decreolize Taiwan Chinese. The first task, after 52 years of aggressive linguistic genocide, has nearly been accomplished. The Taiwanese-speaking population has been reduced, and most of the survivors have impaired language competence. They have to depend on mixing Chinese in order to complete a Taiwanese discourse or conversation. Constant code-mixing could cause some Chinese lexical items to precipitate and assimilate. However, the sediment process has not been successful, for the language liquid is being constantly stirred by the second goal. Through school education and the mass media, the whole population in Taiwan is inculcated with the idea that Taiwan Chinese accent is undesirable and shameful. Peking accent minus the retroflexed suffix *-r*, or, more precisely, the accent of the ruling class, is considered the highest achievement of Chinese speakers and learners. The more Taiwan Chinese accent is corrected to approximate the aristocratic Chinese accent, the less similarity there is between the phonology of the embedded Chinese and that of the embedding Taiwanese. As a result, the high degree of decreolization keeps Taiwanese from assimilating Chinese lexical items that are mixed in Taiwanese in code-switching. Compared to the popular acceptance of Formosan Japanese accent, the admiration of Peking accent and the rejection of Taiwan Chinese accent make it very clear that "Taiwanese is Taiwanese, and Chinese is Chinese", as far as lexical items are concerned.

Amoy, on the contrary, has been enjoying freedom from harassment. Although China began to cast its national language spell in government offices in May 1995, the new policy will not create any immediate impact. Amoy speakers today are as competent in their language as their ancestors. They do not have to mix or switch codes to convey their messages. They borrow Chinese words predominantly through written media, as their ancestors did. Although Taiwanese ancestors did the same, Taiwanese speakers today, including highly educated intellectuals, are unwieldy to do so. This notion of borrowing via written media is the topic that follows in §4.

4. Character Reading

Languages using logographic writing, including Sinitic, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, have a more or less fixed convention of reading words written in characters. Innovated words in one language are often borrowed into other languages by transphonating words according to the respective convention of the borrowing languages. For instance, Chinese 幾何 ‘geometry’ and 三角 ‘trigonometry’ were transphonated as *kika[gaku]* and *sankaku[hō]* respectively according to the Japanese convention of reading the characters. For another instance, Japanese 物理 ‘physics’ and 化學 ‘chemistry’ were transphonated as *wùlǐ* and *huàxué* respectively according to the Chinese convention of reading the characters.

Before the promotion of the “national language” education by the Japanese and then by the Chinese in Taiwan, literacy education was carried out in local Taiwan languages and dialects. The educated learned the skill to read *kanji* in their own respective language. On encountering a new word written in *kanji*, they immediately transphonate the word into their own language. For instance, the Taiwanese who were literate in their mother tongue rendered written Japanese 切手 ‘a postage stamp’ as *chhiat-chhiú* and 都合 ‘circumstances’ as *to·háp*. They also rendered modern Chinese 作秀 ‘to appear in a show; to put on a show’ as *chok-siú*.

Since 1895, the two “national languages” imposed by the Japanese and the Chinese have weakened the Taiwanese ability to transphonate written words. The cultural castration makes Taiwanese surprisingly different from Amoy with respect to lexical borrowing from Chinese. The Taiwanese now do not observe the old transphonation convention as meticulously, often making mistakes when transphonating. Besides, they often become dumbfounded when faced with written Chinese words.

4.1 Literary Reading and Colloquial Reading

The Hokkien convention of reading foreign or literary words written in *kanji* is to use the “literary reading” (讀冊音) as the norm. Written Chinese words normally have to be transphonated according to the literary reading. Therefore, 幾何 was borrowed into Taiwanese as *kí-hô* rather than **kúí-hô*, and 化學 was borrowed as *hò-a-hák* rather than **hò-a-ôh*. Although the “colloquial reading” (白話音) is occasionally used, such as 三角, which was borrowed as *saⁿ-kak* rather than **sam-kak*, it is not the norm.

This convention of using the literary reading as the norm is still observed in Amoy. Because of the four-generation long discontinuation of mother tongue literacy education, the Taiwanese adhere to the conventional rule of using the literary reading less than the Amoyites do. The following items are examples of written words that were transphonated according to the literary reading in Amoy, according to Xiamen (1982), but they were or are likely to be transphonated according to the colloquial reading in Taiwanese.

(13) Amoy Literary Reading & Taiwanese Colloquial Reading

Written Form	Amoy Reading	Taiwanese Reading
斑竹	pan-tiok	pan-tek
百貨	pek-hè	pah-hòe/-hè
百科全書	pek-kho-choân-su	pah-kho-choân-su
百葉窗	pek-iáp-chhong	phah-iáp-thang
百般	pek-pan	pah-poa ⁿ
百部	pek-pō	pah-pō
白色	pek-sek	péh-sek
別名	piát-bêng	pát-miá ⁿ
半百	po àn-pek	pò a ⁿ -pah

The Taiwanese are not meticulous about the reading convention because they do not have the ability. Caught in the fury of the linguistic genocide (mentioned in §3.3), almost all the Taiwanese have become “mother tongue illiterates”. They can read only common characters for common words in Taiwanese and do not know the literary reading of many characters. As the Taiwanese are forgetting more of the literary reading of characters, newly transphonated and retransphonated Chinese words tend to appear more in colloquial forms. Many words that were pronounced according to the literary reading by their forefathers are now pronounced according to the colloquial reading.

(14) Taiwanese New Colloquial Reading¹¹

Written Form	Old Reading	New Reading
正統	<i>chèng-thóng</i>	<i>chiáⁿ-thóng</i>
赤道	<i>chhek-tō</i>	<i>chhiah-tō</i>
血統	<i>hiat-thóng</i>	<i>hoeh-thóng</i>
預算	<i>ī-ū-soàn</i>	<i>ī-ū-sng</i>
公正	<i>kong-chèng</i>	<i>kong-chiáⁿ</i>
力量	<i>lèk-liāng/-liōng</i>	<i>lât-liōng</i>
領土	<i>léng-thó</i>	<i>niá-thó</i>
聲明	<i>seng-bêng</i>	<i>siaⁿ-bêng</i>
聲援	<i>seng-oân</i>	<i>siaⁿ-oân</i>
[國家]定位	<i>tēng-ūi</i>	<i>tiāⁿ-ūi</i>

4.2 The Illiterate Taiwanese Intellectuals

The discontinuation of indigenous language education has created an entire population of “educated illiterates”¹² with regard to their mother tongue. Very few of them can read Taiwanese, and probably more than 999,995 out of a million of them cannot write in Taiwanese. Such mother tongue illiteracy in Taiwan is not related to the lack of formal education. Highly educated Taiwanese speakers are highly literate in Chinese, even in English and other languages, but they can be more illiterate than their less educated compatriots if they pay less attention to Taiwanese reading and writing. As a matter of fact, highly educated Taiwanese speakers are highly illiterate in Taiwanese. With the reinstallation of some Taiwanese language radio stations six years ago, many Taiwanese-speaking scholars and other intellectuals began to reveal their weakness as mother tongue illiterates. Except for a few language specialists, most Taiwanese on the air misread *kanji*.

The Taiwanese are not only unable to use their mother tongue to pronounce characters not commonly used in their language, they are also unable to access Taiwanese dictionaries and use them, or they are able to access dictionaries but unable to use them. When faced with Chinese written in unfamiliar characters or familiar characters out of their familiar contexts, the majority of the Taiwanese read the characters by analogy, which caused most of the errors. Besides analogy, the Taiwanese made other errors, such as failing to change tones, applying wrong rules to change tones, and substituting slurred Chinese pronunciation of the characters for Taiwanese pronunciation.¹³

¹¹ All the examples of unconventional reading in (14) and all the examples of wrong reading in (15), (16), (17), and (18), and all except one item in (19), are recorded from radio and TV broadcasts from October 1994 to May 1999.

¹² The term was first used in Singapore in the 1970’s referring to those who went through “English stream” education but could not read or write English.

¹³ Slurring character reading is also employed by Chinese-speakers in pronouncing foreign proper names. For instance, many people pronounce *Washington* in English as *Hwashengton* or *Hwashington* because the name is transliterated (probably by the Cantonese) as 華盛頓, where 華 has an initial *h-* in Mandarin Chinese.

There are three types of analogy in Taiwanese character reading. The most common type is homophonic analogy, where the speaker pronounces a character according to the reading of another character, homophonous in Chinese, or thought to be homophonous. Unfortunately, these characters do not often turn out to be homophonous in Taiwanese. The following list of words shows only some of the errors.

(15) Homophonic Analogy¹⁴

Written Form	Correct Reading	Wrong Reading	Homophone(s)
面對	<i>biān-tùi</i>	<i>bīn-tūi</i>	隊
舞蹈團	<i>bú-tō-thoân</i>	<i>bú-tó-thoân</i>	倒, etc.
爭執	<i>cheng-chip</i>	<i>cheng-chit</i>	職, etc.
清廉	<i>chheng-liâm</i>	<i>chheng-liân</i>	連, etc.
差異	<i>chha-ī/-īⁿ</i>	<i>chha-ek</i>	益, etc.
簽署	<i>chhiam-sú</i>	<i>chhiam-siok</i>	屬
侵害	<i>chhim-hāi</i>	<i>khim-hāi</i>	欽
趨勢	<i>chhu-sè</i>	<i>khū-sè</i>	區, etc.
指導員	<i>chí-tō-oân</i>	<i>chí-tó-goân</i>	倒, etc.
詹振	<i>Chiam-Chín</i>	<i>Chiam-Chìn</i>	進 tone
針對	<i>chiam-tùi</i>	<i>chin-tùi</i>	真, etc.
捷運	<i>chiát-ūn</i>	<i>kiat-ūn</i>	結, etc.
宗教	<i>chong-kàu</i>	<i>chiong-kàu</i>	終, etc.
疾病	<i>chit-pēⁿ</i>	<i>kip-pēⁿ</i>	急, etc.
疾病	<i>chit-pēⁿ</i>	<i>kip-pēⁿ</i>	及
最惠國	<i>chòe-hui-kok</i>	<i>chòe-hōe-kok</i>	會, etc.
資訊	<i>chu-sìn</i>	<i>chu-hùn</i>	訓
義無反顧	<i>gī, bú hoán-kò</i>	<i>ì-bú hoán-kò</i>	意
嚴家淦	<i>Giâm-Ka-kâm</i>	<i>Giâm-Ka-kàn</i>	幹
偽造	<i>gūi-chō</i>	<i>ūi-chō</i>	為, etc.
核定	<i>hék-tēng</i>	<i>háp-tēng</i>	合
賄選	<i>hóe-soán</i>	<i>hōe-soán</i>	會, etc.
賄選	<i>hóe-soán</i>	<i>hūi-soán</i>	惠, etc.
福利	<i>hok-lī</i>	<i>hók-lék</i>	服歷, etc.
郝柏村	<i>Hok-Pek-chhoan</i>	<i>Hó-Pek-chhoan</i>	好
郝柏村	<i>Hok-Pek-chhoan</i>	<i>Hō-Pek-chhoan</i>	賀
輻射	<i>hok-siā</i>	<i>hū-siā</i>	符, etc.
幅度	<i>hok-tō</i>	<i>hū-tō</i>	符, etc.
防禦	<i>hông-gū/-gī</i>	<i>hông-ū/-ī</i>	預
忽視	<i>hut-sī</i>	<i>ho-sī</i>	呼
異議	<i>ī/-īⁿ-gī</i>	<i>ì-gī</i>	意
愉快	<i>jū-khoài</i>	<i>ū-khoài</i>	餘, etc.
甲狀腺	<i>kah-chōng-sòaⁿ</i>	<i>kah-chòng-sòaⁿ</i>	壯
間接	<i>kàn-chiap</i>	<i>kiàm-chiap</i>	劍
境外[轉運中心]	<i>kéng-gōa</i>	<i>kèng-gōa</i>	竟, etc.
站在[...立場]	<i>khīā* chāi</i>	<i>chiàm chāi</i>	佔
堅守	<i>kian-siú</i>	<i>kiam-siú</i>	兼
傑出	<i>kiát-chhut</i>	<i>koát-chhut</i>	決 syllabic

¹⁴An asterisk indicates that even the correct reading is not acceptable (cf. §4.3). Native equivalent is entered here.

揭發	<i>kiát-/kiat-hoat</i>	<i>chiap-hoat</i>	接
金融	<i>kim-(h)ióng</i>	<i>kim-jióng</i>	緘, etc.
各國	<i>kok-kok</i>	<i>kò-kok</i>	個
領導	<i>léng-tō</i>	<i>léng-tó</i>	倒, etc.
呂秀蓮	<i>Lī-/Lū-Siù-liân</i>	<i>Lú-Siù-liân</i>	旅
連戰	<i>Liân-Chiàn</i>	<i>Liân-Chàn</i>	贊, etc.
林濟川	<i>Lîm-Chè-chhoan</i>	<i>Lîm-Kè-chhoan</i>	繼, etc.
鄰近	<i>lîn-kîñ</i>	<i>lîn-chìn</i>	進, etc.
內容	<i>lōe-ióng</i>	<i>lāi-jióng</i>	緘, etc.
矛盾	<i>mâu-tún</i>	<i>mô-tún</i>	毛
緩衝	<i>oān-chhiong</i>	<i>hoán-chhiong</i>	歡 onset, 反 tone, etc.
包括	<i>pau-koat</i>	<i>pau-khoah</i>	闊
弊端	<i>pè-toan</i>	<i>phiah-toan</i>	壁
判斷	<i>phòⁿ-toàn</i>	<i>phòⁿ-tōⁿ</i>	段
避免	<i>pī-bián</i>	<i>phiah-bián</i>	壁 rime, 僻
表達	<i>piáu-tát</i>	<i>piáu-tap</i>	答
保衛	<i>pó-ōe</i>	<i>pó-ūi</i>	為
不擇[手段]	<i>put ték</i>	<i>put chek</i>	責, etc.
聲援	<i>seng-oān</i>	<i>siaⁿ-oān</i>	員 tone
宣導	<i>soan-tō</i>	<i>soan-tó</i>	倒, etc.
[三足]鼎立	<i>téng-líp</i>	<i>téng-lē</i>	例, etc.
澄社	<i>Têng-siā</i>	<i>Thiāⁿ-siā</i>	程 (family name)
陣營	<i>tīn-iāⁿ</i>	<i>tīn-iāⁿ</i>	鎮
兌現	<i>tōe-hiān</i>	<i>tùi-hiān</i>	對
獨裁	<i>tók-chhái</i>	<i>tók-chái</i>	財, etc.
黨籍	<i>tóng-chék/-chíp</i>	<i>tóng-kip</i>	級, etc.
著作	<i>tù-chok</i>	<i>chù-chok</i>	注, etc.
突破	<i>tút-phò/-phò^a</i>	<i>thók-phò^a</i>	獨 rime, etc.
圍堵	<i>úi-tó[·]</i>	<i>úi-tok</i>	獨 syllabic, etc.

The other types of analogy are more rare. One type is based on a different reading of the same character in another context. We can call this kind of analogy “doublet analogy”. E.g.

(16) Doublet Analogy

Written Form	Correct Reading	Wrong Reading	Homophone
參與	<i>chham-ū/ī</i>	<i>chham-ú</i>	與 (conjunction)
蔣介石	<i>Chiúⁿ-Kài-sék</i>	<i>Chiúⁿ-Kài-chiòh</i>	石[頭]
核四廠	<i>Hék-sì-chhiúⁿ</i>	<i>Hút-sì-chhiúⁿ</i>	[龍眼]核
洪福案	<i>Hông-hok-àn</i>	<i>Âng-hok-àn</i>	洪 (family name)
城隍廟	<i>Sêng-hông-biō</i>	<i>Siāⁿ-hông-biō</i>	城[門]
鄧小平	<i>Têng-Siáu-pêng</i>	<i>Têng-Siô-phêng</i>	小[姐]

The cases of 蔣介石, 核四廠, 城隍廟 and 鄧小平 are examples of substituting colloquial reading for literary reading (cf. (13) and (14) above).

The third kind of analogy is based on the shape of the constituent of another character.

(17) Shape Analogy

Written Form	Correct Reading	Wrong Reading	Analogy
完全	<i>oân-choân</i>	<i>goân-choân</i>	元
華路襪襪	<i>pit-lō·lâm-lúí</i>	<i>pit-lō·lâm-liô</i>	樓 (literary)
召集	<i>tiâu-chíp</i>	<i>chíau-chíp</i>	昭

All fully stressed Taiwanese syllables occurring before another syllable in the same lexical item have to change their tone, but this rule sometimes does not apply when the speaker is not familiar with the characters. E.g.

(18) Tonal “Stiff Birth”

Written Form	Correct Reading	Wrong Reading
兆赫	<i>tiâu-hek</i>	<i>tiau-hek</i>

For details of the failure to change tones, cf. IŪⁿ (1997).

Slurring Chinese pronunciations of characters occasionally serve as a recourse for the speaker to fulfill the job of pronouncing words in thought-to-be genuine Taiwanese. This is not code-mixing, however, because the linguistic form outputs are simply “infected” lexical babies in Taiwanese. Besides the examples in (19), some of the items in (15) could be the results of slurring as well.

(19) Infected Character Reading in Taiwanese¹⁵

Written Form	Correct Reading	Wrong Reading	Chinese Reading
歐洲	<i>Au-chiu</i>	<i>O·-chiu</i>	ou
民眾	<i>bîn-chiòng</i>	<i>bîn-chòng</i>	zhòng
[安然]無恙	<i>bû-iāng</i>	<i>bô-iāng</i>	yàng
某一種	<i>bó·chít-chióng</i>	<i>mó·chít-chióng</i>	mǒu
文摘	<i>bûn-tiah</i>	<i>bûn-chai</i>	zhai
操縱	<i>chhau-chhiòng</i>	<i>chhau-chóng</i>	zòng
掌聲	<i>chiáng-siaⁿ</i>	<i>cháng-siaⁿ</i>	zhǎng
狀況	<i>chōng-hóng</i>	<i>chōng-khóng</i>	kuàng
危險	<i>gûi-hiám</i>	<i>ûi-hiám</i>	wéi
荒謬	<i>hong-biū</i>	<i>hong-miú</i>	miù
幾乎	<i>*ki-ho·</i>	<i>ki-hu</i>	hu
辜振甫	<i>Ko-Chín-hú</i>	<i>Ku-Chín-hú</i>	gu
包括	<i>pau-koat</i>	<i>pau-koah</i>	gua
弊案	<i>pè-àn</i>	<i>pì-àn</i>	bì
產生	<i>sán-seng</i>	<i>chhán-seng</i>	chǎn
西班牙	<i>Se-pan-gá</i>	<i>Se-pan-iá</i>	yá
甚至	<i>sím-chì</i>	<i>sīn-chì·</i>	shènzhì
新陳代謝科	<i>sin-tîn-tâi-siā-kho</i>	<i>sin-tîn-tâi-sià-kho</i>	xiè
宋楚瑜	<i>Sòng-Chhó·jû</i>	<i>Sòng-Chhú·jû</i>	chǔ
喪葬費	<i>song-chòng-hùi</i>	<i>sang-chàng-hùi</i>	sàngzàng
電話	<i>tiān-ōe</i>	<i>tiān-hōe</i>	huà

¹⁵The wrong reading of 文摘 is taken from a public speech given by a prominent linguist in 1992. The correct reading of 幾乎 is not acceptable in Taiwanese (cf. §4.3).

4.3 The Unspeakable Chinese

The Cantonese are able to read any Chinese literary work, including those written in modern colloquial Mandarin, according to the Cantonese pronunciation of *kanji*. The Amoitese are not as capable in absorbing foreign elements in the same manner as the Cantonese are. However, comparing with the Taiwanese, they are superior to the Taiwanese in borrowing Chinese lexical items via written media. The Taiwanese find it difficult to transphonate written Chinese lexical items on many occasions.

There are three kinds of the Chinese lexical items that Taiwanese normally does not accept into its lexicon. The first kind are nonliterary words, especially colloquial Peking words, such as 腌臢 'dirty', 挨個儿 'one by one', 扒拉 'push lightly', 扮鬼臉 'make faces', and 腦袋 'head'. Most of the Chinese words in this group are not transphonated into Amoy either. The second kind are modern literary words, such as 矮小 'short/low and small', 愛撫 'show tender care for', 骯髒 'dirty', 白晝 'daytime', and 樣張 'specimen page'. Most of these words are compounds, many of whose constituents have equivalents that are common in Hokkien, such as 矮 'short (height)', 小 'small', 愛 'love', 白 'white', 晝 (*tàu*) 'noon', 樣 'model', and 張 '(a family name)'. However, the combinations of these common constituents sound strange to the Taiwanese and, therefore, are rejected by the language. The third kind are unfamiliar classical words and phrases, such as 欸乃 'sound of rowing a boat', 愛屋及烏 'love me, love my dog', 狴犴 'prison', 貶黜 'demote', and 倉廩 'granary'. The transphonations of all the words in the three categories above sound like incantations.

In the days when Taiwanese was still the medium of school instruction, and classical Chinese was the teaching material for literacy, educated people did not have difficulty reading the sort of classical expressions illustrated above. The literati even passed many of the transphonated classical lexical items to the general public. These literati could also transphonate and transmit words of the other two categories. Unfortunately, since the local people in Taiwan have been deprived of the right to be educated in their respective mother tongue, their ability to transphonate has been severely reduced. Even the once familiar classical Chinese has become a foreign language. Of the 3,576 Chinese entries that are transphonated into Amoy in the first 120 pages of Xiamen (1982) (1055 pages of entries in total), there are 1,885 entries (52.71%) that the present author finds unacceptable and presumes that almost all modern Taiwanese speakers would find it difficult to borrow as such. The figure indicates that currently Amoy borrows much more freely written Chinese words and has a much larger inventory of them in its lexicon than Taiwanese does.

Because of the need to borrow from written Chinese, many of the unspeakable Chinese lexical items found their way into Hokkien via partial transphonation and partial translation or via complete loantranslation. This way of borrowing has been practiced by all Sinitic languages. However, Amoy is using it more with ease than Taiwanese. The following are some examples from modern Amoy that do not occur in Taiwanese.

(20) Transphonation-cum-Translation in Amoy

Written Chinese	Amoy Rendition	English Gloss
刺眼	chhì-bák 〈刺目〉	offending to the eye
斜坡	chhu-pho 〈趨坡〉	slope
呆板	gâi-pán 〈駭板〉	rigid
擺闊(氣)	kek-khoah(-khì) 〈激闊(氣)〉	parade one's wealth
擺擂台	pâi lûi-tâi 〈排擂台〉	to challenge
擺門面	pâi mûng-bîn 〈排門面〉	keep up appearances
擺設	pâi-siat 〈排設〉	furnish and decorate (a room)
配角	phòe-kioh 〈配腳〉	supporting actor/actress
傍邊儿	p̄ng-kí ⁿ 〈傍墘〉	near by
半吊子	pò ⁿ -tiâu 〈半吊〉	dabbler
撐門面	thì ⁿ mûng-bîn 〈撐門面〉	keep up appearances

5. Conclusion

Taiwan and China have taken different courses of history in the past century which has widened the gap that already existed between the two shores of the Straits. The separation, both geographical and sociopolitical, contributes to the increasingly wide linguistic variation that distinguishes Taiwanese from Amoy. The dissimilarity between the two Hokkien dialects suggests that they can be considered as two languages as far as lexicon is concerned. The phonological and syntactical differences between the two languages are not as significant. The difference in basic vocabulary is also minor. However, in common vocabulary, and especially in phonemic loans and Chinese lexical items borrowed via written forms, there is a wide range of differences. The difference in common vocabulary is over 10%; that in transphonating Chinese is about 50%; and that in phonemic loans is nearly 100%. The high percentages of differences in the latter two groups of vocabulary are closely related to the different political backgrounds of the two places, as discussed above.

In the first 50 years, Taiwan was ruled by an energetic and advancing Japan and, thus, had the advantage of exposure to science, technology, and modern culture and civilization. Sociolinguistically, the Formosan variety of Japanese was accepted and respected. With this Formosan Japanese as a medium, the Taiwanese siphoned expressions related to science, technology, and modern culture and civilization according to their original Japanese pronunciations. Meanwhile, Amoy stayed in old China and did not have contact with Japan until the 2nd Sino-Japanese War, where the hostility brought little benefit to the Amoy lexicon. Meanwhile, Amoy in the old China continued to have contact with Southeast Asia and borrowed lexical items from the Polynesians there. Taiwanese shared these loanwords with Amoy until the War, but the number of words they shared is extremely small, and many of them were later lost in Taiwanese. Amoy seemed to have borrowed directly from English as well. Although Taiwanese also borrowed directly from English, English loanwords in Amoy are typically absent in Taiwanese, and vice versa.¹⁶ As a result, Taiwanese and Amoy have few common phonemic loanwords.

In the last 54 years, Taiwan has been ruled by another energetic government, which single-mindedly aims to substitute Northern Chinese language and culture for local Taiwan languages and cultures. The most effective approach to achieve the language goal is to praise Peking Mandarin, to belittle local languages, and to forbid their use whenever possible. Hostility against Taiwanese Hokkien, the language of the ethnic group that constitutes about

¹⁶So far the only shared loanword from English known to the author is *àu-sái* 'outside'.

75% of Taiwan's population, has been aroused to some extent. Even creolized Chinese has been disparaged. The policy and its implementation brought about two effects on Taiwanese. First, the natives lost command of their language and have to rely on mixing Chinese in their discourse and conversation. Second, creolized Chinese shares a great deal of phonological features with indigenous languages and could have served as a medium for phonemic borrowing, similar to what Formosan Japanese did in the past; nevertheless, the government's effort to decreolize Taiwan Chinese by promoting the aristocratic Chinese widened the phonological differences between Chinese and Taiwanese instead, which made it difficult for embedded Chinese words in code-mixing to sound like Taiwanese and thus difficult for them to be assimilated. Consequently, Chinese loanwords in Taiwanese are rare. The Chinese-sounding words found in Taiwanese discourse and conversation are considered the Chinese elements in code-mixing and code-switching. Furthermore, the course of Chinese education in Taiwan, together with the later stage of Japanese education, made the Taiwanese illiterate in their own language. As such, the Taiwanese have become handicapped in borrowing written Chinese words by transphonation.

Amoy speakers, on the other hand, have enjoyed the *laissez faire* policy on language 104 years longer than the Taiwanese had. Their ability to command their mother tongue has never been diminished. They do not borrow phonemically from other Sinitic languages in general. When they have to borrow, they borrow by way of transphonating written Chinese. Most Chinese lexical items can be borrowed this way. The handicapped Taiwanese, on the contrary, find that reading *kanji* in Taiwanese is not an easy task. As such, they borrowed written Chinese words much less than the Amoyites did. When they ventured to borrow, they often made mistakes. Both the small inventory of the written words borrowed and the mistakes made in Taiwanese contribute to its lexical differences from Amoy.

There are other aspects of lexical differences between Amoy and Taiwanese, as surveyed in §2. However, phonemic loans and character reading are the most conspicuous ones. Compared in these aspects alone, Amoy and Taiwanese appear to be two different languages.