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**How to Realize Multiculturalism Caring for Minority Language People  
-Life history of Taiwanese immigrant mothers in Japan-**

Megumi OKADA

Graduate Division of Foreign Studies, TESOL Program, Sophia University

E-mail: a06070om@yahoo.co.jp

**Introduction**

- Globalization → English has been spread all over the world.
- English : EIL (English as an International Language) (Brown, 2007), lingua franca (Harmer, 2007), killer language (Tsuda, 2003)



- Language Garden (García, 1992)
  - The TESOL credo
- ⇒ Focusing on minority language people to realize multiculturalism.

**HL education**

- One way of bilingual education
- Target: minority language people
- Aim: maintain their L2 (HL) to be additive bilinguals/ keep linguistic diversity
- HL can disappear within three generations (Sakamoto, 2006).
- Minority language people prefer to assimilate dominant language and culture (Onohara, 2004).
- “Language practices are socially and politically embedded” (Heller, 2007: p.1.).

**Research Questions:**

1. How do Taiwanese mothers deal with the dilemma between the importance of HL maintenance and the demand of assimilating to the mainstream society?
2. How have they and their children developed and negotiated their identities?
3. Which factors have influenced Taiwanese mothers' decision making?

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### **Participants**

- Kei (57): using Japanese to raise her children
- Hibari (62): using Taiwanese to raise her children
- Mutsuko (57): using Chinese to raise her children

### **Method**

- Life history research (interviews)
- Conducted twice/ around 2 hours
- Each participant's house
- Japanese was mainly administrated

### **Discussion**

- Even though immigrant children have Japanese nationality and their L1 is Japanese, they maintain their HL and cultural backgrounds.
- Some of them are suffering from identity crisis.
- Language choice has been influenced by social power imbalance among languages.

⇒ Minority languages tend to be underestimated in the society.

⇒ It can be a cause of their identity crisis.

- In order to increase immigrant children's self-esteem, teachers should treat their diversity as a resource in the classroom.
- Empowerment derives from the process of negotiating identities in the classroom (Cummins, 2001).

### **Conclusion**

- In the classroom teachers can break social power structure and make a comfortable atmosphere (Cummins, 1988, 2003).
- "English education" can function as a way of multicultural education (Baker, 2011).

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## How to Realize Multiculturalism Caring for Minority Language People -Life history of Taiwanese immigrant mothers in Japan-

Megumi OKADA  
Sophia University Graduate Division of Foreign Studies  
The 6th FL Teaching and Research Mini-Conference in Matsuyama  
Venue: Ehime University  
Date: September 25<sup>th</sup>  
[E-mail: a06070om@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:a06070om@yahoo.co.jp)

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## Outline

- Introduction
- Heritage Language (HL) education
- Method
- Three Taiwanese mother's life history
- Discussion
- Conclusion

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## Introduction(1)

- Globalization
- English: EIL (English as an International Language),  
lingua franca, killer language
- Language Garden (García, 1992)
- The TESOL credo



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## Introduction(2)

- Focusing on minority language people to realize multiculturalism
- Focusing on immigrants (Taiwanese mothers)
- HL maintenance at home

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## HL education(1)

- One way of bilingual education
- Target: minority language people
- Goal: maintain their L2 (HL) to be additive bilinguals/ keep linguistic diversity (Baker, 2011)

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## HL education(2)

- HL can disappear within three generations (Sakamoto, 2006)
- Minority language people prefer to assimilate to dominant language and culture. (Onohara, 2004)
- “Language practices are socially and politically embedded” (Heller, 2007: p.1.)

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## Research Questions

1. How do Taiwanese mothers deal with the dilemma between the importance of HL maintenance and the demand of assimilating to the mainstream society?
2. How have they and their children developed and negotiated their identities?
3. Which factors have influenced Taiwanese mothers' decision making?

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## Participants

- Three Taiwanese mothers
- Kei (57)
- Hibari (62)
- Mutsuko (57)
- Came to Japan after graduation from university
- Married to Taiwanese men
- Got Japanese nationality

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## Method

- Life history research(Interviews)
- Conducted twice
- Around 2 hours
- Each participant's house
- Japanese was mainly administrated

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## Kei's Background Information

- 57-years old
- 3 sons : Haruhiko(25), Ryo (23), and Shunsuke (15)
- Came to Japan to attain an M.A.
- Learnt Japanese for a year before she came to Japan
- Using Japanese to raise her children

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## Kei's Life History(1)

- Japanese: natural to use it.  
⇒ social factors influenced her decision making
- Wants to teach Chinese rather than Taiwanese to her grandchildren  
⇒ social power imbalance among languages

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## Kei's life history(2)

- Teaches Taiwanese culture (food, annual events)
- ⇒ Culture is easier to maintain rather than language.

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## Kei's Life History(3)

- Acquired hybrid and multiple identities (speaks Taiwanese with Japanese way of thinking)
- ⇒ language acquisition and practice have influenced her identity development.

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## Kei's Life History(4)

- Her sons developed their identities depending on their age and situations
- Haruhiko (25:20): "Half Taiwanese, half Japanese"
- Shunsuke (15: 10): "Japanese"

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## Kei's life history (5)

- Ryo (23: 18)

K: 日本人その時、すごく悩んでたんですね。自分の思春期も重なって、で自分があの、台湾のパスポートとアメリカのパスポート持ってて、両方の言葉ともしゃべれない。持ってない日本の、日本語だけしゃべれる。なんかすごくこう、彼の中ではすごくこう、これが重荷らしくって。

At that time, he was an adolescent boy, and he was so annoyed by the fact that he could speak neither Taiwanese nor English even though he had Taiwanese and American passports, and he could speak Japanese although he did not have Japanese passport. It was a heavy burden for him.

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## Kei's life history (6)

- Ryo's case (born in the U.S., grew up in Japan): suffered from identity crisis.
- ⇒ Language and identity are interrelated with each other.

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## Hibari's Background Information

- 62-years old
- 2 daughters: Miki (32) and Yukiko (29)
- Came to Japan to follow her husband
- No experience of learning Japanese before she came to Japan
- Using Taiwanese to raise her children

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## Hibari's Life History(1)

- Taiwanese: heart-to-heart communication
- Being proud of themselves as Taiwanese and keep their ethnic/cultural/ linguistic identity
- Not only language but also culture (visiting Taiwan many times)

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## Hibari's life history (2)

H: 例えば日本語ペラペラとしても、自分は日本人ではない。自分は台湾人だってね、いつまでもこの意識、持たせなければならぬ。そういうこと考えたら、私は日本に来て、私は、やっぱり、母国語教えなければならぬ。

If they are fluent Japanese speakers, they are not Japanese. I need to make them have the idea that they are Taiwanese. Regarding that point, I still think that I have to teach my language to them even though we live in Japan.

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## Hibari's Life History(3)

- Developed hybrid and multiple identities (She applies Taiwanese communication styles to speak Japanese)

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## Hibari's Life History(4)

- Her daughters have become bicultural
- Be proud of themselves as Taiwanese  
⇒ Her attitudes and beliefs influenced her children's identity development.

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## Hibari's Life History(5)

H:たとえば、次女ですね。高校で勉強してた時ですね。「私は台湾人です」って話したでしょ。そしたら「うっそー。」って言われたみたいで。帰ったら「お母さん、誰も私が台湾人って信じてくれないから、うちに何か台湾のものある？」ってね。

For example, my second daughter, when she was a high school student, introduced herself as a Taiwanese. Then, her friends said "No kidding!" So, when she came back, she asked me, "Mom, nobody believes that I am Taiwanese, so do you have something from Taiwan?"

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## Mutsuko's Background Information

- 57-years old
- 3 children : Haruo (31), Seito (29) and Fumiyo(25)
- Came to Japan to attain an M.A.
- Learnt Japanese for four years at university
- Using Chinese to raise her children

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## Mutsuko's Life History(1)

- Chinese: used Chinese to communicate with her husband.
- ⇒ social factors influenced her decision making
- Chinese: the most powerful and useful language among her HL (Taiwanese, Hakka and Chinese)
- ⇒ The social power imbalance among languages influences Mutsuko's decision making

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## Mutsuko's Life History(2)

- Teaches Taiwanese culture (food)
- M: ふみよちゃんは結構、お母さんに焼きビーフンとか、教えてとか。あの、大根もち、おいしいから作ってとか。習いたいとか。大きくなってからね。
- Fumiyo said she wanted to learn how to cook rice noodles, and asked me to cook radish rice cakes and to teach how to cook it, when she became older.

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## Mutsuko's Life History(3)

- Developed broader identities (Asians), whereas her three children regarded themselves as Japanese.
- ⇒ Other social factors except for language such as occupation have influenced their identity formation and development.

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## Mutsuko's Life History(4)

- M: 私と主人はいつもアジア人、国際人っていう価値観。特に限定しない。日本人でもないし台湾人でもないし中国人でもない。
- I and my husband regard ourselves as Asians or international people. We do not specify. We are not Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese.

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## Mutsuko's Life History(5)

- M: アジア人ね、鮮明になりたいって思ったのはたぶん最近かな。事業をしてから。だんだん年もとってきて。
- Recently I have started to have the idea that I would like to be Asian, since I started to run my business, and have getting older.

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## Mutsuko's Life History(6)

- Taught Chinese, but did not make them go to Chinese ethnic school.
- ⇒ Chooses preferable identities depending on contexts.

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## Discussion(1)

- Even though immigrant children have Japanese nationality and their L1 is Japanese, diverse languages are spoken at home and they maintain their cultural backgrounds.
- Some of them suffer from identity crisis.

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## Discussion (2)

- Language choice has been influenced by social power imbalance among languages.
- ⇒ Minority languages tend to be underestimated in the society.
- ⇒ It can be a cause of their identity crisis.

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## Discussion (3)

- In order to increase immigrant children's self-esteem, teachers should treat their diversity as a resource in the classroom.
- Empowerment derives from the process of negotiating identities in the classroom (Cummins, 2001).

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## Conclusion

- In the classroom teachers can break social power structure and make a comfortable atmosphere (Cummins, 1988, 2003).
- "English education" can function as a way of multicultural education(language-awareness, anti-racism) (Baker, 2011).

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Thank you for your listening!

Please send your comments and questions:

- E-mail: [a06070om@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:a06070om@yahoo.co.jp)