

Chapter 2

Policy Debates and Indigenous Education: The Trialectic of Language, Culture, and Identity

W. James Jacob, Jing Liu, and Che-Wei Lee

Abstract In this chapter, we explore several policy debate topics associated with indigenous education with a focus on the issues of indigenous languages, cultures, and identity. Highly political by nature, the terms *indigeneity* and *indigenous rights* are central to most policy debates with direct implications on social justice issues, human rights, and education in general. Besides examining global indigenous declarations that directly influence indigenous education, we also examine policy debate issues within five country contexts—in China, Mexico, Taiwan, Uganda, and the United States. We use the term *indigenous genocide* to account for any former, current, or future government policy that intentionally causes the assimilation of indigenous peoples into the dominant national culture. Examples are given in the five case countries of how indigenous genocide can lead to the genocide of indigenous peoples' languages, cultures, and/or identities. The chapter concludes by highlighting the central role indigenous education can play in being able to curb or reverse indigenous genocidal policies. Crucial to reversing anti-indigenous policies is the involvement and empowerment of indigenous peoples in every facet of the policy planning and implementation processes.

Keywords Indigenous education • Indigenous language • Indigenous culture • Indigenous identity • Indigenous genocide

W.J. Jacob (✉) • C.-W. Lee
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
e-mail: wjacob@pitt.edu

J. Liu
Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan

Introduction

Indigenous peoples represent a large proportion of the earth's population and a significant segment of our planet's cultural diversity.¹ Scholars argue that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 (King and Schielmann 2004) and 7,105 languages that are still spoken by indigenous peoples (Lewis et al. 2013). Most indigenous people suffer, to one degree or another, from poverty, discrimination, and sociocultural marginalization issues. Indigenous peoples make up about one third of the 900 million extremely poor rural people living on earth (United Nations 2008). In this chapter we explore several policy debate topics associated with indigenous education with a focus on issues of indigenous languages, cultures, and identity.

Many terms have been used to describe indigenous peoples, including *Native*, *Aboriginal*, *First Nation*, *indigenous*, and *local*. Generally speaking, there is no universal definition that identifies who is an indigenous person. This is especially true because no single definition can capture the diversity of cultures, languages, identities, histories, and other circumstances unique to all indigenous peoples. While some indigenous peoples make up the majority population of a country, the majority of indigenous peoples comprise only a minority population. The relationships between indigenous peoples and other groups vary from one country to another. One widely cited definition of indigenous peoples comes from the Convention of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1989 on "Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries." According to this definition, indigenous peoples are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems. To respect indigenous peoples around the world, we capitalize all ethnic, national groups, and associated adjectives grounded upon the standards of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press 2010), which not only specifies that "names of ethnic and national groups are capitalized" but also that "adjectives associated with these names [should] also [be] capitalized" (p. 401). We argue that writers of indigenous

¹The United Nations estimates that there are some 350 million Indigenous peoples or 5 % of the world's population; there are more than 5,000 different groups of Indigenous peoples who reside in more than 70 countries (see UNESCO 2006, p. 4; United Nations 2008, p. 3). However, we recognize that the total number of Indigenous peoples is a relative one, in that the number depends on how the term Indigenous is defined. If you take into account the Indigenous peoples who reside both within their native home lands as well as the many diaspora groups of Indigenous peoples who have migrated to other locations, surely this figure would be much higher.

studies should use indigenous names and titles because most indigenous peoples have identities that are local and tribal or sub-tribal, and from their point of view those names and titles are most accurate.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has many international development and technical assistance projects involving tremendous diversity of cultures, histories, and current circumstances. They define indigenous people based on two significant characteristics: (1) descent from population groups present in a given area, most often before modern states' establishment; and (2) maintenance of cultural and social identities, and social, economic, cultural, and political institutions that are different from mainstream or dominant societies and cultures. Moreover, ADB gives additional characteristics to indigenous peoples including (1) self-identification and identification by others as being part of a distinct indigenous cultural group, and the display of a desire to preserve that cultural identity; (2) a linguistic identity different from that of the dominant society; (3) social, cultural, economic, and political traditions and institutions distinct from the mainstream culture; (4) economic systems oriented more toward traditional systems of production than mainstream systems; and (5) unique ties and attachments to traditional habitats and ancestral territories, and natural resources in these habitats and territories.

The international community is showing an increasing concern for the protection of indigenous peoples. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations 1948) and *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (United Nations 1966) have particular significance for indigenous peoples. The former provides a common standard for the human rights of all peoples and all nations and proclaims the importance of traditional, political, and civil rights, as well as basic economic, social, and cultural rights. The latter spells out civil and political rights and guiding principles based on the *Universal Declaration*. In 1992, Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development recognized the importance of indigenous people for the sustainable development of human life (United Nations 1992). In the following year, the United Nations declared the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples and the decade beginning and immediately following December 1994 as the Indigenous Peoples Decade. In 2007, the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* was adopted to protect the basic human rights of indigenous people, to emphasize the importance of protecting indigenous peoples' identities, cultures, and languages, and to promote self-determination of indigenous peoples (United Nations 2007).

The term *indigeneity* is broadly defined as the language, culture, identity, knowledge, science, and technologies developed or possessed by the first inhabitants of a land or nation. Jeremy Waldron (2003, p. 55) contends that indigeneity has two possible definitions: (1) "indigenous peoples are the descendants of the first human inhabitants of a land"; and (2) where applicable, "indigenous peoples are the descendants of those who inhabited the land at the time of European colonisation." Regardless of its definition, indigeneity is a frequently debated and highly political concept—with direct implications to land rights, human rights, and education, which is the focus of this chapter—for dominant and subordinate indigenous peoples alike.

The circumstances, histories, and needs of indigenous peoples differ from country to country. In most countries, they are excluded from many aspects of mainstream society and do not realize equal opportunities in education, health care, and employment. For most countries with multiple ethnic groups, the delivery of public education to indigenous peoples is complex and problematic. As Linda King and Sabine Schielmann (2004) argued, education for indigenous people has a dialectical challenge. Indigenous education must support and promote the maintenance, use and survival of indigenous people's cultures, languages, knowledge, traditions and identity, but also provide and develop the knowledge and skills that enable indigenous peoples to participate fully and equally in the national and international communities. Duane Champagne and Ismael Abu-Saad (2006) claimed that the schools run by nation states are alien to indigenous students, who are not well prepared culturally and socially for most dominant public school settings. They are not taught their own traditions, knowledge, history, or contemporary issues. Rather, they are taught to accept and adopt the values and social order of the mainstream institutions. In fact, the formal education system is contributing significantly to the loss of indigenous identity, control, and self-determination. As Stephen May and Sheila Aikman (2003) argued, schooling has been explicitly and implicitly a site of rejection of indigenous knowledge² and language; it has been used as a means of assimilating and integrating indigenous peoples into a "national" society and identity at the cost of their indigenous identity and social practices.

An education policy that intentionally causes the assimilation of indigenous peoples into the dominant national culture is what we term an *indigenous genocide*—the genocide of indigenous peoples' languages, cultures, and identities. Other factors also contribute to this indigenous genocide, including globalization, economic policies and practices, policies related to human rights issues, the media and media culture, and *urbanicity*.³ An indigenous genocide can also occur from non-intentional factors that are influenced to one degree or another by established education policies. Examples of some non-intentional factors will be given later in this chapter. Unfortunately, these intentional and unintentional factors often create an irreversible vicious cycle toward indigenous genocide.

Achieving the acceptance and recognition of indigenous students in the formal education system is often a slow and difficult process. There are so many factors, including sometimes hidden factors, associated with this process. Policy making that

²Indigenous knowledge is comprised of oral histories, myths, legends, traditions, cultures, art, music, spoken language/s, written language/s (if applicable), medical practices, trade strategies, scientific inventions and knowledge (e.g., innovations and knowledge related to transportation, navigation, weapons of war, tools, building materials and techniques, etc.), social networks, and survival skills.

³By *urbanicity*, we refer to the difference that exists between rural and urban circumstances, and especially the migration of indigenous peoples from traditional rural homelands to urban centers where there are generally greater educational and economic opportunities.

includes input and decision making from key stakeholders at all levels, especially including participation from indigenous peoples themselves, is essential if the education policy is to succeed in reversing this indigenous genocide. The indigenous peoples for whom the education policy was created ideally should have a say in how the policy is written and implemented. Participation is crucial for several reasons but especially for ownership and buy-in purposes.

In addition, with the spread of globalization, indigenous peoples often come to the forefront of education policy debates. From within, indigenous peoples are often forced to live with top-down administered education policies that limit the preservation of indigenous languages, cultures, and identities. External forces sometimes also add to this indigenous genocide dilemma where indigenous peoples must learn how to keep a balance between their indigenous traditions and predominantly Western-oriented cultures, languages, and technologies.

Indigenous Education in Five Countries

Indigenous education policies differ depending on the country. The remaining focus of this chapter will explore case country examples of indigenous education policies in five countries: China, Mexico, Taiwan, Uganda, and the United States (see Table 2.1). Just over half of China’s 298 indigenous living languages are considered endangered. Of the 214 indigenous languages in the United States, all but 12 are endangered (see Fig. 2.1). The struggle for the improvement of indigenous education is played out differently based on the specific country context.

China

The People’s Republic of China is a nation with many government-(un)recognized indigenous peoples. The very term *indigenous peoples* is somewhat controversial in China, and we feel that a discussion of Chinese indigeneity is in line with

Table 2.1 Indigenous languages in five countries

Country	Living languages			
	Count	Percent	Indigenous	Immigrant
China	301	4.24	298	3
Mexico	288	4.05	282	6
Taiwan	27	0.38	22	5
Uganda	43	0.61	41	2
United States	420	5.91	214	206

Source: According to M. Paul Lewis, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fenning (2013), the percentages in column 3 are based on the total number of living languages spoken throughout the world



Fig. 2.1 Endangered indigenous languages in China, Mexico, Taiwan, Uganda, and the United States (Source: Artwork by the authors, data adapted from Lewis, Simons, and Fenning 2013)

the scope of this volume because it has significant political implications for the dominant Han Chinese as well as many of China's ethnic minority groups. Michael Hathaway (2010, p. 302) notes that “even if a Chinese term for indigenous people became acceptable to some, the very concept of indigenous would have to contend with ongoing legacies of ethnic and social hierarchies.”⁴ We are careful not to confuse indigenous peoples with the term *ethnic minority* or *nationality*; they are not necessarily the same in the China context. Several ethnic minority groups are not indigenous to China. Trade, migration, and war over several millennia have brought both a convergence and divergence of many different ethnic groups within this vast geographic region.

With more than 1.3 billion people, China is home to 56 officially-recognized ethnic groups. Ethnic minorities comprise 8.31 % of the total population (see Table 2.2).

Forty-five of the 55 recognized minority groups amount to less than 20 % of the ethnic minority population in the country. Five ethnic minority autonomous regions were established in the 1950s (Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang, and Xizang), along with multiple prefectures, counties, and towns. One of the most distinct features of minority cultures is the diversity of their languages. By 2008, 61

⁴Hathaway (2010, p. 302) also argues that most Chinese do not rally “under the identity of indigenous, but mainly Chinese public intellectuals who use this transnational concept in a diverse effort to reshape notions of ethnicity, citizenship, and rights.”

Table 2.2 Ten most populous ethnic minority groups in China, 2010

Ethnic minority group name	Population	% of total population
Zhuang	16,926,381	1.26
Hui	10,586,087	0.79
Manchu	10,387,958	0.78
Uygur	10,069,346	0.75
Miao	9,426,007	0.70
Yi	8,714,393	0.65
Tujia	8,353,912	0.62
Tibetan	6,282,187	0.47
Mongolian	5,981,840	0.45
Dong	2,879,974	0.21
Total ethnic minority population	111,324,800	8.31
Total population of China	1,339,724,852	100.00

Source: Statistics from the population census in 2010, which was the sixth national population census following those conducted in 1953, 1964, 1982, 1990, and 2000 (National Bureau of Statistics 2012)

distinct languages had been identified. Many Chinese ethnic minorities are religious, with approximately half espousing a faith which is distinct from Han culture (Yi 2008).⁵

China has adopted a series of laws and regulations to help protect the equal rights, unique cultures, and languages of ethnic minority peoples. The following are statements of policy in China concerning ethnic minority peoples, cultures, and languages.

All the nationalities of China are equal [and] every ethnic minority is free to use and develop their language. (National People's Congress 1982)

Mandarin Chinese ought to be used for literacy. In ethnic autonomous areas, the local ethnic languages could be used as the language of instruction (State Council of the People's Republic of China 1988)

Every citizen of China, regardless of sex, ethnic group, economic status or religious belief, has the right and obligation to education, and enjoys equal educational opportunities to meet his or her essential needs. (National People's Congress 1995)

The standardized spoken and written Chinese language (Mandarin) based on the northern dialect and the Beijing pronouncing system, and the standardized simplified characters approved by the State Council and in common use in the whole country, shall be popularized and used as the basic language medium of curriculum and instruction in schools and other educational institutions of the country. But in schools in which students of minority ethnic groups constitute the majority, the spoken and written language of the majority ethnic group or of common use by the local ethnic groups may be used as language media of curriculum and instruction. (National People's Congress 1995)

⁵We recognize that several Chinese ethnic minority groups have much higher than 50 % of their population who believe in religion. For instance, Uyghurs in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region are predominantly Muslim and most Tibetans in the Tibet Autonomous Region observe Tibetan Buddhism.

Based on constitutional provisions protecting “the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities” and guaranteeing that “citizens of all nationalities have the right to use the spoken and written languages of their own nationalities,” education for ethnic minorities has been to a large extent systematized. With the implementation of preferential government policies,⁶ including financial, infrastructure, and human resource investment initiatives, there have been substantial national achievements in education for ethnic minorities since 1949 (Mackerras 2003; Yi 2008). Even with all of these pro-indigenous education policies on the books, we recognize the many challenges and problems that remain in practice among ethnic minorities in China.

Language is one of the most important indigenous education issues in China. Perhaps more than any other element, language is fundamental to the survival of the culture and value of ethnic groups. Although bilingual education for ethnic minorities received emphasis from the central government in its education language policy, the process of policy implementation has been criticized in many cases. Bilingual education in China is more of a transitional measure aimed at facilitating mastery of the dominant language, which is often viewed as more advanced and more useful. Where many ethnic minority students do not speak Chinese when they begin their formal schooling, they have the opportunity to attend the first years of their primary education with instruction in their native language. However, this transitional period to partial and eventually total Chinese instruction is relatively short; Chinese is taught afterwards until the completion of their primary education (and secondary education, if applicable). Bilingual education in this sense really means “transitional schooling in the native languages while students master the dominant language” (Dwyer 1998, p. 131). For example, in most ethnic minority regions, the instruction for primary school will be conducted in the native tongue only during the first 2 or 3 years. Mandarin typically becomes the mode of instruction beginning in Grade 3 except in the most rural regions of the country (e.g., schools in remote regions of Xinjiang and Xizang). There is also a lack of qualified primary and secondary education teachers in predominantly ethnic minority and rural regions of the country (Hannum 2002).

At the higher education level, instruction is in Mandarin except for courses in Mongolian or Tibetan language and/or literature. At Xinjiang University, courses were commonly taught in both Chinese and Uyghur until a government decree in 2002 declared that the majority of courses would be taught only in Chinese

⁶The preferential policies (*youhui zhengce*) range from material support to cultivation of minority personnel and include: financial investment; establishment of minority schools, colleges, and universities; compilation of textbooks in the minority writing systems; cultivation of minority teachers for bilingual education; establishment of governmental departments at national, provincial and local levels overseeing minority education; requirement that more developed provinces give aid to minority concentrated regions through material or personnel support, or through running minority schools or classes in their own territories; the preferential policy for minority students to have priority in getting admitted if the results of their college entrance examinations are the same as or relatively lower than, mainstream Han students (Yi 2008).

(Dillon 2002). Although Mandarin is the language of social and economic discourse throughout China, this dichotomy in the language of instruction certainly does not enhance the preservation of that aspect of most ethnic minority cultures. The shift from teaching classes in Tibetan to Mandarin generally occurs at Grade 3 (or Grade 6 in the most rural areas) and virtually all university instruction in Mandarin also erodes a major component of those ethnic minorities' cultures (Kwong and Xiao 1989; Kormondy 2002). The centralized and standardized curriculum is in many cases irrelevant to ethnic minority students, and especially so in more rural regions of the country (Johnson 2000). Language of instruction and the curricular fit with ethnic minority societies are primary reasons that lead to low examination scores and ethnic minority students dropping out of school altogether.

This bilingual education policy also affects ethnic consciousness. Gerard A. Postiglione (1999) notes how even with bilingual education efforts in formal school, the diversity that exists among China's ethnic minority population does not appear to be fully reflected in the content of schooling. Balancing Chinese national unity, education policy, and the maintenance of ethnic identities has become an enormous challenge for the Chinese government.

The second issue is the curriculum and textbooks for ethnic minorities. Although many textbooks have been translated into both minority and Chinese languages, the simple translation from Chinese to minority languages and the standard national curricula sometimes make these textbooks irrelevant to local histories, cultures, and religions of China's ethnic minority peoples. Mackerras (1999, 2003) concluded that the design of the textbooks for ethnic minority students is in direct alignment with Chinese education policies and positions on ethnic minority relations; textbooks also follow the secular state education system. Religion is not promoted or emphasized in Chinese children's textbooks. As to the curriculum, even though the Constitution guarantees citizens' freedom of religious belief—which in education appears in some religion-related practices such as diet, dress, funding of religious schools, or even inviting a few clergy to act as language teachers—religions, ethnic minority cultures, and histories of ethnic minority peoples are granted minimal space in primary and secondary education curricula and instruction. In some cases they are entirely omitted from the curriculum (Gladney 1999; Postiglione 1999; Yi 2008). Histories of ethnic minority peoples are rarely included except when they support social evolution and national unity topics. The formal curriculum is often critical of ethnic minority cultures, which are depicted as fragmented and tokenized. Common stereotypes promulgated through the formal curriculum and the government-controlled media include themes such as ethnic minorities are peoples who dress in colorful clothing, perform beautiful dances and songs, and live with uninterrupted harmony in society. Furthermore, some scholars also argue that traditional education in ethnic minority groups has also been destroyed (Postiglione 1999; Johnson 2000). The traditional monastic education and medical education in Xizang are not included in the current curriculum.

At the higher education level in recent years, English has become an increasingly popular third language option for many ethnic minority students. In fact, in many higher education institutions, ethnic minority students are more interested

in learning Chinese and English than they are their native language. English is often viewed as an international language of business and important to finding employment or continuing with graduate studies.

Although tremendous improvements regarding ethnic minority education have been made in recent years, there is still room for improvement. In terms of higher education for ethnic minority students, the government needs to consider a series of social justice issues. Among these are a lack of Chinese language fluency when entering higher education, socioeconomic struggles of many ethnic minority students, geographical disparities and inequalities, and gender disparities (Postiglione 1999; Jacob 2006). Besides the issues mentioned above, ethnic minority peoples in China face growing problems of insufficient qualified teachers, geographic and socioeconomic disparities, and inequality in gender enrollments (Hannum 2002).

Mexico

Many scholars claim that Mexico has the largest indigenous population in Latin America (Bando et al. 2004; Hernandez-Zavala et al. 2006). However, recent censuses show that the indigenous population is declining. Moreover, the indigenous language speaking population decreased from 14 % of the total population in 1930 to 7 % in 2000 (Flores-Crespo 2007). At the same time, monolingualism in an indigenous language has undergone a similar significant decline. In contrast, two-thirds of all indigenous language speakers are bilingual (Francis and Reyhner 2002).

According to Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution, the law protects and promotes the development of indigenous people's languages, cultures, practices, customs, resources, and specific forms of social organization. Although bilingual education for indigenous peoples was introduced to Mexico in the 1930s, Susan J. Rippberger (1993) argues that this policy only aims to "Mexicanize" the indigenous people. This Mexicanization process also can be considered a direct result of the implementation of the government's policy to unify the country through the integration of the indigenous peoples into the nation's mainstream society. Leanne Reinke (2004) pointed out that in Mexico there has been a politically enforced project to ensure the predominance of the Spanish language above all other languages and a formalized uniform education program has been in operation. This project paves a path toward eventual inequality of education for indigenous peoples. Reinke argues that ultimately this project resulted in an education achievement gap between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples.

On average, Mexican adults in indigenous autonomous municipalities have completed 3 years of schooling while adults in nonindigenous municipalities have completed on average 8 years of schooling. Furthermore, indigenous students tend to score lower on reading (in Spanish) and mathematics examinations than nonindigenous students (Reinke 2004; Hall and Patrinos 2005; Hernandez-Zavala et al. 2006). This inequality is only exacerbated for indigenous people at the secondary and higher education levels. In many cases, indigenous peoples are excluded

altogether from higher education in Mexico (Flores-Crespo 2007). Qualified indigenous students often choose to attend colleges and other institutions as higher education options, while nonindigenous peoples commonly choose university options.

Nancy Modiano's (1972) research provides insights into the effectiveness of bilingual education in Mexico several decades ago. Her findings showed that education programs that included first language instruction were far more effective in developing second language literacy skills than all-Spanish monolingual instruction. However, more research studies highlight the disconnection between the original concept of bilingual education in Mexico and subsequent education policies and implementation of those policies (Rippberger 1993; Francis and Reyhner 2002; King and Schielmann 2004). Rippberger (1993) argued that Mexican bilingual education is organized around the culture and time frame of urban non-Indians. Mexican Indian religious holidays and planting and harvesting seasons are not always taken into consideration by Mexican policymakers and educators. Francis and Andrade (2000) note that there was a gap between bilingual education and biliteracy. Their research argued that the monopolization of written discourse by the Spanish language is the main obstacle for biliteracy and indigenous language development. Becoming biliterate is essential for indigenous students so they can stay in and graduate from schooling at all levels, and especially at the primary education level.

Flore-Crespo's (2007) research illustrated that the inequality and low quality of education for indigenous peoples are related to ethnic original identity. The complicated methods of counting indigenous peoples often affect indigenous people's ethnic identity. In Mexico, self-perception, spoken language, and family background are the main criteria for determining one's indigenous status and in the government labeling people as indigenous in formal counting procedures. Social structures and societal norms that often position indigenous peoples in Mexico as inferior or subordinate, in addition to long-entrenched education policies, lead to many indigenous peoples rejecting their indigenous identities and refusing to speak or study their indigenous languages. Without a solid ethnic footing, other indigenous characteristics soon fade, leading to the loss of one's culture and language.

Taiwan

Taiwan, formerly known as Formosa⁷ and officially as the Republic of China (ROC),⁸ has a separate political and education system from Mainland China. It

⁷Most anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists, and archaeologists accept the name "Formosa," which means "beautiful," and originates from Portuguese sailors' initial description of the main island of Taiwan in 1544 (Blussé et al. 1999; Blussé and Everts 2009).

⁸Taiwan Aborigines are Chinese only in the sense that Chinese citizenship was imposed on them by Chang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) Republic of China (ROC) after World War II. The ROC was founded

is home to 16 officially recognized tribes—Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kanakanavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saaroa, Saisiat, Sakizaya, Seediq, Tao (or Yami), Thao, Truku, and Tsou—commonly known as Taiwan Aborigines or the indigenous peoples of Taiwan (*yuánzhùmínzú*, 原住民族)⁹ (Ministry of Justice 2008; Council of Indigenous Peoples Executive Yuan [CIPEY] 2012). In July 2012, the Austronesians of Formosa had a population of 524,059, consisting of nearly 2.25 % of the total population of 23,268,372 (Department of Household Registration Affairs [DHRA], Ministry of the Interior 2012). In recent years, the Taiwan Aboriginal population grew 6.4 % faster than the national average (Department of Household Registration Affairs 2012). While most Aborigines still reside in predominantly mountainous and plains regions in the central, southern, and eastern parts of the country, there is an increasing trend toward urbanization. In order to secure better employment and education opportunities, a growing number of Taiwan Aborigines migrate to the urban centers mostly located in the western and northern areas of the country. Today, roughly 44 % of all Taiwan Aborigines reside in cities (DHRA 2012). Each Aboriginal tribe has its distinct language; all are classified as being within the Austronesian language family.¹⁰ Linguistic and archaeological evidence suggest Austronesian inhabitation of Formosa for approximately 6,000 years or perhaps more (Bellwood et al. 1995; Bellwood 2009; Bellwood et al. 2011; Li 1997, 2009). Formosa is recognized by some scholars as the ancestral homeland of the Austronesian peoples, who today number some 270 million speakers of related languages, and include many of the indigenous peoples of the Malay Archipelago, many of the Pacific Islands including New Zealand, and Madagascar (Jacob and Chen 2012).

in 1912 by Sun Yat-sen, his associates, and supportive civilians. At the end of World War II in 1945, Japan yielded Taiwan and associated islands to ROC troops. In the last 3 years of the Chinese civil war, the Communist forces defeated ROC troops on the mainland and established the People's Republic of China in 1949. The ROC thus was forced to relocate its government to Taiwan.

⁹The Campaign for Rectifying the Name of Taiwan Indigenous Peoples started with the establishment of the Alliance of Taiwanese Aborigines (ATA) in 1984 (Parod 2008). The contemporary Austronesians of Formosa successfully rectified their collective name from the derogatory mountain comrades (*shanbao*, 山胞) to the positive Aborigines or indigenous peoples, and the civic, political, economic, and social rights of indigenous people (*yuánzhùmín*, 原住民) were incorporated into the additional articles of the ROC Constitution in 1994. In 1997, the central government amended the Constitution again to formally recognize indigenous peoples, with the final “-s” in English, effectively safeguarding their collective rights. Compared with some scholars' perspectives, we recognize that most literature on Austronesian studies about Taiwan indicates that anthropologists, linguists, archaeologists, and ethnologists prefer to refer to the indigenous peoples of Taiwan as *Austronesians of Formosa* compared to Taiwan Aborigines or the indigenous peoples of Taiwan (Blundell 2009). Despite this formal name, we choose to use the more widely-used term Taiwan Aborigines in reference to the indigenous peoples of Taiwan.

¹⁰The Austronesian language family, also known as the Malayo-Polynesian languages, has over 700 distinct languages and is spoken from Madagascar to Easter Island, and Hawaii to New Zealand. Today some 270 million people speak at least one Austronesian language (Bellwood 2009, pp. 336–364).

Since the Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨)¹¹ arrived in Taiwan in 1946, the Ministry of Education has taken substantial interest in Aboriginal education. The vitality of Aboriginal languages, the status of cultural preservation, and the dynamics of identity politics profoundly affect the formation and reformation of Aboriginal education policies. Aboriginal education policies have changed over the past 60 years, from more aggressive assimilation policies similar to others already discussed in this paper, to what the government calls the “Identity Building Stage” (Ministry of Education, ROC [TMOE] 2010a). In 1996, the Council of Aboriginal Affairs¹² was established in Taiwan and in 1998 the *Education Act for Indigenous Peoples* was passed as the fundamental law to promote nationwide Aboriginal education (TMOE 2010b).

The Ministry of Education is actively pursuing ways by which the government can support Aboriginal education. Some of these include preferential treatment and efforts to help preserve indigenous cultures and heritage. Initial preferential score policies¹³ for Aboriginal students entering secondary schools and higher education institutions received somewhat of a backlash from dominant ethnic Han students and their parents, who viewed the policy as unfair and unequal treatment (Wang 2007). Prior to 2002, indigenous students qualified based on their blood lineage. After 2002, the government introduced a new policy requiring Aboriginal students to pass a Culture and Language Proficiency Test in order to qualify for the preferential score. Chung-Cheng Pu (2002, p. 65) mentioned that the Culture and Language Proficiency Test is the “cultural evidence” necessary for Aboriginal students to qualify for the preferential score, and only such evidence can simultaneously encourage Aborigines to learn their own languages and cultures. The former Chairman of the Council of Aboriginal Affairs, Juhani Isca Kraft, also argued that Aboriginal students who have passed the Culture and Language Proficiency Test can enjoy the preferential entrance treatment, the purpose of which is to encourage the younger generation of Aboriginal students and their parents to place a greater value on learning their indigenous languages (Shih 2005).

Students who attend Aboriginal schools have more opportunities to learn in their native language from Grades 1–12 than those who do not study in Aboriginal schools. The only exception is if the principal of a non-Aboriginal school is willing to financially support Aboriginal students with a budget for hiring native speaking teachers, buying tribal language materials, and providing evaluations in

¹¹The Kuomintang of China (KMT) from 1912 onwards, translated as the Chinese Nationalist Party, was one of the dominant parties of the early Republic of China, and remains one of the main political parties in modern Taiwan. Its guiding ideology advocated by Sun Yat-sen is the Three Principles of the People. It is currently the ruling party in Taiwan, and holds most seats in the Legislative Yuan (Cabinet).

¹²The Council of Aboriginal Affairs was renamed Council of Indigenous Peoples on 4 January 2002.

¹³Preferential policies are comparable in some ways to affirmative action admissions policies in some US higher education institutions.

the native language. In some primary schools, the principal provides funding for these indigenous education services. Higher education entrance examinations are offered to Aboriginal students in their native language with preferential score allotments for Aboriginal ethnic status.

Education provides both opportunities and threats to the survival of Taiwan Aboriginal languages, cultures, and identities. Significant societal pressures cause many Aborigines to leave their ancestral homelands for more opportunities in urban centers. Those who succeed in the formal education system often attend higher education institutions and pursue lives within the advanced Taiwan economy. Most jobs are not in traditional Aboriginal tribal homelands, however. To succeed in secondary and higher education, Aborigines must first gain mastery of the Chinese language. In many cases, this Chinese language emphasis causes Aborigines to not necessarily recognize the value of gaining or maintaining fluency in their own tribal languages.

Education policies both support and discourage Aboriginal participation in higher education. For instance, Aborigines can be given an extra score on their college entrance examination results if they choose to declare their indigenous status. However, many with mixed Han or majority Han blood choose not to be considered an “Aborigine” and instead identify themselves as part of the Han majority. This identity shift is rarely reversed and leads to a slow assimilation of toward the dominant group.

Many Aboriginal parents do not speak their tribal language in their homes. There are several reasons for this, including the possibility that they are not fluent themselves or in many cases they want to emphasize the importance of speaking Chinese so that their children can do well in school and eventually in society (Cheng and Jacob 2008). Indigenous genocide is a current phenomenon of Taiwan as it is in each of the other case country examples in this paper.

Most higher education opportunities for Aboriginal students are in vocational and technical areas of employment, including nursing, teaching, and the arts. There are a few graduate programs in indigenous studies at Taiwan higher education institutions but those who graduate from these programs rarely continue in a job related to their degree. Rather, they pursue jobs in mainstream society or return and seek employment in their tribal village. Most Aboriginal students who pursue a higher education degree in the major universities struggle because of the language barrier and because they are residing in a place far from home and their social support network of friends and family. These factors often lead to discouragement and in some cases Aboriginal higher education students simply drop out prior to graduation.

Uganda

Land-locked and located along the equator in East Africa, Uganda is bordered by Kenya, Southern Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania. With a population of approximately 31 million, Uganda is comprised of 61 different

ethnic groups. The total population of the ethnic minority groups is 160,799 or 0.7 % of the total population, with Asians making up the largest nonindigenous group (Republic of Uganda 2008). With over 50 languages recognized in the national constitution, Uganda is rich in diversity, where many different communities have respected norms, cultures, beliefs, and practices. There are two major language divisions: the Northern and Eastern Regions are dominated by speakers of Sudanic and Nilotic languages, and the Western and Central Regions are predominantly speakers of Bantu languages (UNESCO 2008).

Indigenous education in Uganda differs from each of the other four countries in this paper. The indigenous peoples constitute the overwhelming majority, though no single ethnic group can claim even 20 % of the total population. The Baganda (18 % of the total population), Banyankole (10 %), and Bahima (10 %) are the three largest indigenous ethnic groups in Uganda. In this East African context, indigenous education is geared toward the majority of the population. But problems exist in Ugandan education despite their overwhelming indigenous majority. With so many disparate groups, the government deals with a vast network of public and private schools at all levels. Many schools are owned and operated by religious sponsoring organizations. There are also for-profit, non-profit, and government-sponsored schools (Jacob et al. 2008). All follow a centralized curriculum, but accountability to the government and quality of instruction varies at all levels. Poverty is a key barrier that hinders the progress of indigenous education in Uganda today. The worldwide AIDS epidemic, which for many years had its initial epicenter in East and Central Africa, has devastated families and communities throughout the country. The AIDS epidemic threatened many social sectors including the government's single largest body of employees—teachers, administrators, and other education staff members in the education sector. Fortunately, the HIV adult prevalence rate has declined since the early 1990s, with an adult prevalence rate of 5 % in 2000, and an increase to 6.7 % in 2011, and 7.4 % in 2012 (Morisky et al. 2006; Uganda AIDS Commission 2012; UNAIDS 2014). HIV education has played an instrumental role in helping to initially curb the epidemic nationwide, but the resurgence in the prevalence rate highlights the fact that the epidemic has generalized and needs recurrent emphasis from stakeholders and development partners at all levels (Jacob et al. 2006).

Although Uganda is a multilingual society, none of its indigenous languages are recognized as a national language. In contrast, English remains the only official language, a clear reminder of its colonial past. This official language policy has direct implications for indigenous education in Uganda. One of the most important language policies that recognizes and provides multilingual literacy is contained in the Government of Uganda's (1992) *White Paper on Education*. UNESCO's (2008) report identified the child's mother tongue was the primary language of instruction in most schools for initial literacy and instruction during the first 3 years of primary education. The fourth year is generally characterized by a transition to English. This language-in-education policy allows both dominant and minority languages to be used for instruction in the early schooling years.

However, Juliet Tembe and Bonny Norton (2008) argued that the *White Paper* had noticeably different policies in rural and urban areas. As the majority of

Ugandans (over 80 %) live in rural settings, there is a context in which people who speak the same language live in close proximity. However, increasing rural-to-urban migration results in a multilingual society. Against this background, the *White Paper* stipulates that in rural areas the “relevant local languages” would be the medium of instruction in Primary 1–4 (Grades 1–4) and that English would be taught as a subject until Primary 5, when it becomes the medium of instruction. In urban areas, English would be the medium of instruction from Primary 1 onward, with the “local language” taught as a subject. Kiswahili, “as the language possessing greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and for assisting rapid social development” (United Nations 1992, p. 19), would be taught as a compulsory subject in both rural and urban schools from Primary 4 to Primary 7.

Over time this policy created a common dilemma faced by schools in both rural and urban areas. As mentioned above, people in both rural and urban locations generally expressed a positive attitude toward a policy promoting local language use in education to help maintain indigenous culture and identity. However, since there are various languages spoken in differing regions, it is difficult for many schools to select a relevant local language for their students (Majola 2006; Tembe and Norton 2008). The costs of producing textbooks in each indigenous language are impractical for an already over-stretched Ministry of Education and Sports. Whereas some scholars provide valid criticisms because African governments fail to provide a greater number of native language instruction to students attending primary school (Brock-Utne 2000), it is difficult for many governments like the Uganda case to provide textbooks in even the official national language. Indigenous language instruction is discontinued at the secondary education level. Many Ugandans attend boarding schools at this level, making it especially challenging to continue mother-tongue instruction when so many students come together to attend one school from all regions of the country.

Besides the lack of funding for developing relevant local language teaching/learning materials and training qualified teachers, there is another interesting point related to the general desire of parents and the local community for their children to learn the nonindigenous English language. English is considered a tool that enables children to interact at an international level and obtain a high-salary job. Tembe and Norton (2008) recognized this linguistic dilemma in Ugandan education. Whereas a primary goal for the government and many Ugandans is to maintain the culture, language, and identity of people from Uganda’s many different ethnic groups, society is sometimes pushing against this goal. More could be done to convince parents that indigenous language instruction in schools will not compromise their desire for their children’s access to the global village.

United States

Similar to the Taiwan case, American Indians and Alaska Natives comprise less than 2 % of the total US population and share other characteristics similar to

Taiwan Aborigines (Cheng and Jacob 2007). In 2000, there were approximately 4.1 million American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States (Ogunwale 2002). This number was 2.0 million in the 1990 U.S. Census. As C. Matthew Snipp (1992) pointed out in his research, the Native American population has rebounded throughout the twentieth century, and particularly since 1950, there has been extraordinary growth.

Assimilation of American Indians¹⁴ into mainstream society in the past two centuries—or the intentional “Americanization” of Native Americans—often led to negative experiences as the Native American Policy Review Commission concluded. This organization observed that both Native American men and women suffered from inadequate and sometimes inappropriate education. This remained unchanged until the 1960s. It was during this civil rights era that two reports were produced by the Commission: *National Study of American Indian Education: The Education of Indian Children and Youth* and *Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge*. The former pointed out that the primary importance of Native American education was to re-evaluate goals in terms defined by indigenous peoples themselves. The latter found that both public schools and the federal American Indian education system had continued the impossible policy of turning Native American children into Whites (Woodcock and Alwiye 2001). These landmark publications awakened the government to reconsider its education policy for Native Americans. In 1975, the *Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act* greatly facilitated participation, self-governance, and the operation of education programs by Native Americans. And the *Educational Amendments Act* of 1978 resulted in decision-making powers being granted to indigenous school boards, enabling the local hiring of teachers and staff, and direct funding to Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian-controlled contract schools.

Nevertheless, Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder (2004) pointed out that the *Self-Determination Act* did not change the situation of education for indigenous students. The average Native American student’s achievement was far below that of most non-indigenous students. And generally they did not receive a high-quality education. More seriously, the Indian language teaching in schools was limited to less than an hour a day, and usually did not go beyond the level of teaching basic vocabulary, counting, greetings, and so forth (Francis and Reyhner 2002). Even though in 1990 the *Native American Language Act* demonstrated the federal government’s

¹⁴The terms *Native American* and *American Indian* are often used interchangeably and both are considered politically correct. While neither term has been universally adopted, the former emerged more recently in the 1960s and 1970s. The *Chicago Manual of Style* provides this guidance note to authors: “Many American Indians prefer *American Indians* to the more current term *Native Americans*, and in certain historical works *Indians* may be more appropriate” (University of Chicago Press 2003, p. 325). This statement is in concordance with findings from a 1995 Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, where roughly half of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Aleut respondents preferred the term *American Indian*; another 37.35 % preferred the term *Native American* (Tucker and Kojetin 1996, p. 5). Whenever possible, we strive to refer to American Indians by their tribal names (e.g., Seneca, Shoshone, Ute, etc.).

willingness to help preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedoms of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop indigenous languages, it did not provide funding to teach indigenous languages. The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force found that one of the reasons for Indian Nations' risk was that schools had discouraged the use of indigenous languages. The inevitable, even if unintentional consequence of this lack of linguistic support is the eventual demise of hundreds of indigenous languages in the United States. As a result of early assimilation education policies, the language, culture, and identity base of many Native Americans are rapidly eroding.

A bilingual education program that started in 1968 no longer exists in the United States. In 1984, the amendment of the *Native American Language Act* developed into three methods, including maintenance, transitional, and immersion bilingual education programs. As Reyhner and Eder (2004) introduced, maintenance bilingual programs developed children's native as well as English-language speaking abilities. Transitional bilingual programs are designed to teach English to minority language students and to improve their English speaking. The first two programs referred to the long-term role of the first language in education, while immersion referred to the way in which the second language was taught. Then instruction in English is quickly phased in to so as to transition to a stage where all instruction is in English by Grade 4.

Title VII of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 outlines the government's current education policy on Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education. It also affirms the government's commitment to provide quality education to students, professional development for existing teachers and administrators, and "also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children." The *NCLB Act* emphasizes the need to focus on reading while at the same time preserving local cultures: "they are not mutually exclusive," President George W. Bush (2004, p. 712) said, "they go hand in hand."

Despite the optimistic indigenous education policy in the United States as outlined in the *NCLB Act*, the policy has also received considerable criticisms for requiring educational accountability and improvement for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and other students (Dillon 2008; Zehr 2008). Much of the NCLB research has rightly focused on Title I and the testing requirements, which have encouraged educators to focus predominantly on English, reading, mathematics, and science subjects.

Many original aspects of Native American cultures, languages, and traditions "have been lost as a result of the oppression accompanied with colonization, modernization, and globalization" (Jacob and Bradshaw 2009, p. 105). Many Native American languages are no longer spoken and traditional knowledge is also meeting a similar fate. Among the majority of the 564 federally-recognized tribes there are only a few living elders who can still speak their native languages fluently. They belong to smaller tribes; their children either did not have a sufficient chance to interact with other tribal elders or they no longer wanted to continue the tradition of their parents (including learning their parents' native tongue). And these last remaining native speakers are usually seniors; when they die, their native language—and

all aspects of living culture, traditions, and in many cases indigenous knowledge—will die with them. In several tribes, the linguistic genocide is already complete with no remaining native speakers of their respective native languages living.

Conclusion

According to UNESCO's Dakar Framework regarding Education for All, there are still millions of people who are denied their right to education. Indigenous peoples are among the most affected and disadvantaged of all peoples on the earth. They have often been characterized by a lack of access to an education that respects their diverse cultures and languages (King and Schielmann 2004; UNESCO 2000). As we discussed above, there is a positive trend in what legislative developments around the world have achieved in recent decades. And there is an increasing recognition of indigenous people's educational and linguistic rights. However, governments are also facing difficulties regarding the translation of those regulations or policies into actions.

There is a worldwide trend of the promotion of bilingual or multilingual education for indigenous people. However, as discussed above, there is also a trend that the promotion of the majority languages is viewed by most government policy makers as a priority over multilingual or bilingual education. Unfortunately, this narrow political vision often leads to an intended, and in some cases unintended, indigenous genocide of local languages, cultures, and identities. Native language acquisition contributes to the preservation of specific cultures, histories, and identities. Hence, it is essential for government leaders to promote indigenous languages as a priority in the education of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, with the increasing global pressure to learn the English language, indigenous peoples will need to determine how best to preserve their own indigenous languages. The increasing demand for English learning from indigenous peoples requires a greater cooperation between government policy makers and educators and indigenous leaders, community members, students, and parents of students.

The indigenous education curriculum serves as the basic guideline for preservation of indigenous languages, cultures, and identities through the formal education system. In most cases, indigenous peoples are not fully involved or they are even excluded from the curriculum development decision-making process. In many countries, national curricula have little relevance to indigenous peoples. Therefore, it is essential to know how to design a relevant indigenous education curriculum and ensure that indigenous peoples participate in the curriculum development phase for ownership, buy-in, and self-determination. Simultaneously, it is necessary to utilize local human resources to participate in the process of teaching and learning.

Indigenous education is at the heart of many policy debate issues in so very many countries. Chief among these debates are existing and past indigenous education policies related to the preservation of indigenous languages, cultures, and identities. Indigenous education also faces other difficult issues, such as a lack of sufficient

funding, lack of qualified teachers and learning materials, lack of human resources, lack of a relevant environment for using indigenous knowledge, limited access to higher education for indigenous peoples, conflicts between indigenous religions and politics, and the dilemma between modernization and globalization pressures and traditional preservation. At the beginning of the twenty-first century and with a topic as important as indigenous education, it is crucial for both government and indigenous communities to collaborate together in order to provide innovative and relevant approaches which can help protect and promote indigenous languages, cultures, and identities. Since education is a universal human right, indigenous education should also be a human right and be designed with, by, and for indigenous peoples.

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