

A Perceptual Dialect Study of Taiwan Mandarin: Language Attitudes in the Era of Political Battle¹

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Due to the political separation of Taiwan and China and the contact with native Taiwanese speakers since 1949, the standard Mandarin in Taiwan has differed from the standard Mandarin in China. Although the government has enforced its “Mandarin Only Policy”, strictly treating Mandarin as the only office language in Taiwan, Taiwan Mandarin has even become more diverse among speakers because of different degrees of contacts with regional dialects and also the conflicts between different ethnic and political groups. Located against this background, this paper has two foresights. First, drawing on Silverstein’s (1996) concept of indexicality, I will discuss how different phonological variants in Taiwan Mandarin can possibly produce indexical relationships between linguistic variants and social or political identity. Second, I will examine the people of Taiwan’s perceptions of two varieties of Taiwan Mandarin: *Taipei qiang* ‘Taipei accent’ and *Taizhong qiang* ‘Taichung accent’. One hundred and fifty-eight students were recruited to listen to four speakers from Taipei and Taichung and rate the voice on twelve traits using a six-point scale rate. Listeners were also asked to answer the region where the speaker is from in a forced-choice question with five choices. The study finds that salient dialect-specific properties are important cues for listeners to identify a speaker’s regional categorization. Besides, the consequence of the contested political ideologies manipulated by two major political parties has resulted in new indexicality of the linguistic features. Different varieties of Taiwan Mandarin index not only the traditional status traits but also the political inclination and cosmopolitanness. Finally, the study demonstrates that perceptual dialectological method can be used to examine how language ideologies are realized in people’s meta-pragmatic comments and how different indexical values can be mingled together.

0. Introduction

After the Nationalist Party (*Kuomintang*, hereafter as KMT) retreated to Taiwan from China after the Communist Party’s victory in the civil war in 1949, the KMT government aggressively enforced its one national language policy, which promoted

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Mandarin as the single official language. Mandarin, also known as *guoyu*, literally ‘national language’, was used in public domains, school instruction, public meetings and official business, while other *bentu fangyen* or ‘local dialects’ such as Taiwanese (or *Taiyu* ‘Taiwan language’), Hakka and aboriginal languages were banned in public and people were punished for speaking those so-called local dialects.

Since the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan has undergone liberalization in many aspects. Democratization in politics especially has had a huge influence on the island’s language policy, language ideology and language use. Since the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was legally recognized in 1991, the party has focused on the promotion of the status of the local languages, development of Taiwanese nationalism, and elaboration of the identity of Taiwan. However, as Taiwan has gained democracy with its full-fledged two-party system (the KMT versus the DPP or in folk usage Pan-blue versus Pan-green), language use has become a tool for getting votes in elections (Tse 2000). During the past decade, especially after the DPP took over the presidency in 2000 for the first time, the conflicts between the two parties became more hostile and fierce. Liberalization did not unify Taiwan but actually divided the island. The people on the island were divided into two colors (blue and green) and two ethnic groups by the manipulation of those politicians, especially during the general election campaigns. One linguistic consequence of these political conflicts is that different language use has become an index to ethnic identity and political ideology. Moreover, the phonological variants in the same language have come to contain social meanings and serve as markers for social identity.

For a long time, sociolinguists have been interested in how linguistic differences are evaluated by people. In Labov’s (1966) pioneering New York City study, he asked New Yorkers to evaluate speakers’ job suitability and found there was high correlation between the presence of rhotic /r/ and high-ranking occupations. In a more recent work on the sociolinguistic variable (ING), Labov et al. (2006) found that listeners showed consistent results of their evaluation of the variables regardless of the regions where they reside and that listeners are more sensitive to the marked forms and their response would increase proportionally with the increment in the marked forms. In the past decade, there has been an increasing amount of research on how nonlinguists perceive linguistic variation or dialect boundaries. Dialect boundaries account for the geographical distinctions based on linguistic differences from one region to another (Milroy and Gordon 2003). For example, Preston (1998) examined the dialect boundaries in the United States by asking the respondents to draw map boundaries based on the regional speech areas and instructing the respondents to assign the voices to which they listened to the regions where they thought the voice belonged. This field of research is what Preston (1999) calls “perceptual dialectology”. One of the basic designs of perceptual dialectology is the surveying of language attitudes and evaluations of speakers on judgment scales of different traits by a group of listeners, with the goal of deepening the understanding of language variation and change by understanding how people perceive languages. As

Kristiansen (1998:168) says, “If, ontologically speaking, evaluation precedes variation, there will always be tensions and possible contrasts between what is going on at the level of social identity formation and what is going on at the level of language use “.

Taiwan is an island with language conflicts and struggles because of its historical and political development. The KMT’s linguistic assimilation successfully promoted Mandarin as the “high” language and other local languages as low languages (Tse 2000). Even though the DPP has tried to promote the status of Taiwanese, Mandarin is still the most commonly used and the most highly evaluated language in Taiwan (Feifel 1994). It should be noted that due to the political separation of Taiwan and China and contact with native Taiwanese speakers since 1949, the standard Mandarin in Taiwan differs from the standard Mandarin in China and Taiwan Mandarin has become very diverse among speakers in different regions due to different degrees of contact with local languages. Located against this background, this paper has two foci. First, drawing on Silverstein’s (1996) concept of indexicality, I discuss how different phonological variants in Taiwan Mandarin can produce indexical relationships between linguistic variants and social or political identities. Second, I examine the people of Taiwan’s perceptions of two varieties of Taiwan Mandarin: *Taipei qiang* ‘Taipei accent’ and *Taizhong qiang* ‘Taichung accent’, in order to explore whether different linguistic variants do index certain social or political identities and how language ideology affects the perception of different regional dialects.

1. Overview of the People, Language and Politics in Taiwan

The population of Taiwan consists of four distinct ethnic groups, each with their own languages. The Southern Min people (70% of the total population), who migrated from the coastal Southern Fujian region in the southeast of mainland China several centuries ago, speak Southern Min dialect (i.e. Taiwanese); the Hakka (15% of the total population), who migrated from Guangdong province at about the same time as the Southern Min people, speak Hakka; the Taiwanese aborigines (2% of the population), the original inhabitants in Taiwan for several thousand years speak their own languages that belong not to the Chinese language family, but to the Austronesian language family; and the Mainlanders (12% of the total population), who fled to Taiwan from various provinces in China after the Communist Party’s victory in 1949 over the KMT, speak mostly Mandarin. Among the four groups, those who originated from China (Southern Min, Hakka, and Mainlander) are divided into two subgroups: native Taiwanese (*bensheng ren* or ‘home-province people’) and Mainlanders (*waisheng ren* or ‘external-province people’). The local people in Taiwan have not reached a consensus on the definition of *bensheng ren* ‘home-province people’. Some suggest that only the Southern Min people are ‘home-province-people’; some claim that ‘home-province-people’ includes every ethnic group in Taiwan but Mainlanders, and there are some who believe that all who were born in Taiwan are ‘home-province people’. What is clear is that the *waisheng ren*, ‘external province people’, ruled Taiwan for fifty years after 1945, following the fifty-year colonization of Taiwan by the Japanese government.

After the KMT took over Taiwan from Japan, the government started to “Sinicize” the local people by enforcing a strict Mandarin-only Policy. Japanese, and other local languages were banned and Mandarin was the only official language that people were allowed to speak in public. During the period, Mainlanders who retreated from China were the superior group and other local people were considered the dominated group. Therefore, this ethnic hierarchy also resulted in a linguistic hierarchy in Taiwan: standard Mandarin that was spoken by the Mainlanders was viewed as the dominant or prestigious language, and Taiwanese that was spoken by Southern Mins was considered the dominated or vulgar language (Hsiau 2000).

In 2000, Taiwan’s first postwar opposition party, the DPP, won the presidential election, ending the KMT’s 51-year rule in Taiwan. The victory of the DPP, according to the party, was very significant because it symbolized that Taiwanese people had defeated the Mainlanders’ domination and suppression. Challenging the KMT’s Chinese nationalism and reunification with Mainland China, the DPP promoted local Taiwanese nationalism, emphasized Taiwanese identity, and supported Taiwan independence. The DPP’s platform has created a significant increase in local support and has quickly made the DPP the ruling party ten years after its legal recognition. However, the DPP’s success still did not bring the people in Taiwan to a consensus on what Taiwanese national identity is; on the contrary, the bitter political battle between the DPP and the KMT has divided the island into two colors – blue and green, the colors of the KMT and the DPP, respectively. Pan-blue refers to those who support the blue party and pan-green represents supporters of the green party. Moreover, the green/blue contrast is also reflected in regional divisions. Northern Taiwan, where more Mainlanders reside, is traditionally considered the blue area, while Southern Taiwan, where more Southern Min live, is typically labeled as the green area.

2. New Indexicality and Language Ideology in the Era of Political Battle

Irvine (1989:255) defines language ideology as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests”. She particularly emphasizes “the political and other interests that structure interactions between cultural conception of language and the social world” (Milroy 2004: 166). Milroy (2004) further suggests that how ideologies work is deeply rooted in specific historical dimensions of political or social circumstances. In Silverstein’s (1992) view, language ideology needs to be understood as a system by which speakers make sense of the indexicality of the language. Indexicality, according to Silverstein (1996), is the link between a linguistic form and social meaning. He divides indexicality into different ranking orders. First-order indexicality invokes a relationship between linguistic forms and social groups which is taken for granted and given by culture. The values of the indexicals are presupposed in the local cultural context. Second-order indexicality refers to how speakers or listeners notice, rationalize or frame their understanding of first-

order indexicality and then establish a new or non-conventionalized social meaning onto the linguistic form in the local historical context.

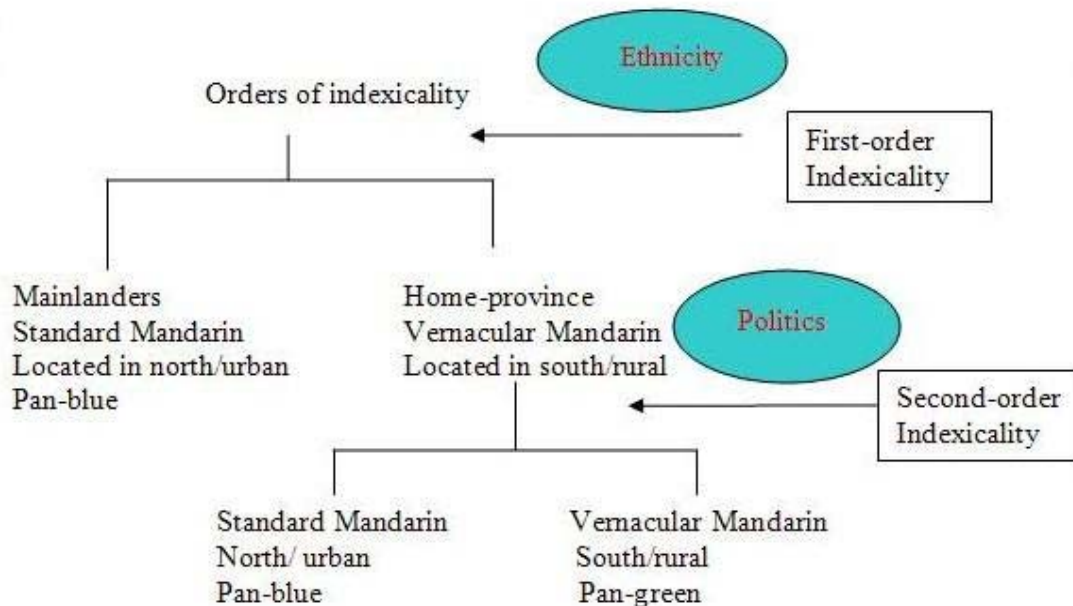


Figure 1. Orders of Indexicality in contemporary Taiwan

Ever since the KMT enforced its Mandarin-only policy, Mandarin was regarded as the only “linguistic capital” (Bourdieu 1991) in Taiwan. The KMT tried to create a unified linguistic market because this standard official language also symbolized the homogenization of the nation, and more importantly, KMT dominance. Nevertheless, even though Mandarin was the only official language and all people in Taiwan had to speak Mandarin, due to language contact with local languages, especially Taiwanese, the native language of the majority population, Taiwan Mandarin varies across different regions and different regional accents show salient features that differ from the so-called standard Mandarin that the KMT government sought to promote. As a result, speaking vernacular Mandarin has been presupposed to index home-province identity and speaking standard Mandarin to index Mainlander identity. This is what Silverstein (1996) calls a first-order indexicality. As mentioned previously, after Taiwan began to liberalize its political system two decades ago, the DPP grew so quickly that it became the ruling party in 2000. This drastic political change has indirectly changed how people perceive others’ language use. It is widely known that the KMT’s political ideology is in favor of reunification with China, while the DPP is in favor of Taiwan independence. The image of the KMT is as a mainlanders’ and Chinese nationalists’ party, whereas the image of the DPP is as the local Taiwanese party. Therefore, speaking vernacular Mandarin or standard Mandarin

has come to indirectly index political alignment. Speaking more standard Mandarin would presuppose indexing Mainlander identity and thus indirectly indexing the speaker's political ideology or orientation toward the KMT because that is the official language the KMT enforced. Speaking with vernacular features, on the other hand, would directly index the local Taiwanese identity and therefore indirectly index the political alignment with the DPP, because the DPP has been trying to promote the status of Taiwanese language and emphasize local Taiwanese identity. This is what Silverstein regards as a second-order indexicality. Figure 1 shows how the orders of indexicality in contemporary Taiwan.

In the following sections, adopting methods from perceptual dialectology, I will discuss how first-order and second-order indexicality and new language ideologies have emerged in this era of political battle by examining people's perceptions of different varieties of Taiwan Mandarin. First, I will discuss the rationale for choosing the two varieties: Taipei accent and Taichung accent, and also describe their linguistic differences. Then, I will discuss the methods of this perceptual dialect study and the results.

3. Comparison of Taipei Accent versus Taichung Accent

Taipei accent and Taichung accent are chosen because of the special status of both regions. Taipei is Taiwan's center of politics, commerce, mass media, and thus, in terms of language use, the official language Mandarin is preferred by most speakers. Moreover, Taipei has a much higher concentration of Mainlanders, whose Mandarin is considered to be more similar to the standard Mandarin in Beijing and is less influenced by the local dialect Taiwanese. Therefore, Taipei accent is generally perceived as the standard Mandarin in Taiwan. On the other hand, Taichung, located in central Taiwan, the third largest city next to Taipei and Kaohsiung, is chosen because it serves as the north-to-south corridor and is also the first major Southern Min (i.e. Taiwanese)/Mandarin region south of Taipei (Hsu 2004). Moreover, researchers have found that people in central Taiwan display some salient phonological variants that are different from people in non-central Taiwan. For example, Fu (1999) finds that people with a Taichung accent use a certain rising tone of T3² (pitch value 324) which is different from the usual realization of low-falling T3 (pitch value 31) by other non-Taichung people. Wu (2003) examines speakers in central Taiwan and suggests that there is a tendency of T4 rising at the intonation-unit-final position. Another noticeable feature that distinguishes Taichung accent from Taipei accent is the substitution of lateral [l] for alveolar approximant rhotic

² Fon and Chiang (1999) analyzed the tonal value and proposed that tone contour in standard Taiwan Mandarin should be T1:44 (high-level); T2:323(dipping); T3: 31(low-falling); T4:42 (high-falling).

[ɾ]³. For example, the pronunciation of ‘person’ by Taichung speaker might be ‘len2’ [lɿn] instead of ‘ren2’ [ɾɿn]. It is already known that the retroflex sounds in standard Taiwan Mandarin are softened considerably compared with the standard Mandarin in Beijing due to the influence of Taiwanese (Kubler 1985). Even though the substitution of [l] for [ɾ] is not a unique feature in Taichung accent, it exists frequently in bilingual speakers of Mandarin and Taiwanese; Taipei speakers have been found to pronounce a more noticeable retroflex [ɾ]. Therefore, I also treat these variants as regional.

4. Methods

4.1. Stimulus Materials

Four Taipei Mandarin speakers and four Taichung Mandarin speakers were recruited through “a friend of a friend”(Milroy 1980). They are all natives of their respective regions and all have graduate college education. Their age ranged from twenty-five to thirty. The speech data were collected by means of reading passage and story elicitation. The reading passage was a transcription of a two- minute authentic speech sample, and the speakers were asked to read it as naturally as possible. In the story elicitation, speakers watched “The Pear Stories” film designed by Chafe (1980) and were asked to summarize what saw. After listening to the speech data and inspecting the spectrograms and pitch range, I excluded the data from the reading passage for their lack of authenticity as natural speech. From the eight speakers, I further selected two speakers, a male and a female, from each region because their speech data revealed clearer and more representative tokens of the regional features. Finally I selected a 30-second stimulus from each speaker that has the least nuisance such as hesitation markers, long pause, or inconsistent speech rate etc. that might affect listeners’ judgment.

4.2 Listeners

One hundred and fifty-eight undergraduate and graduate students were recruited from two national universities in Taipei. Their age range is from twenty to thirty. The 158 listeners, consisting of 75 males and 83 females, are all native Taiwan-born and consider Mandarin as their first language. Among the 158 listeners, 38.6% (n=61) are local Taipei citizens, followed by Taichung citizens (21.5%, n=34). About 40% of the listeners grew up in other cities/counties in northern, southern or eastern Taiwan.

³ It has been suggested that the standard Taiwan Mandarin lose some quality of retroflexion. Therefore, I adopt the alveolar approximant rhotic [ɾ] instead of the retroflex fricative [ʐ] used in Beijing Mandarin to better describe the retroflex r- in Taiwan Mandarin.

4.3 Procedure

Listeners were asked to listen to four speech samples from the four speakers and complete a questionnaire. The five-page questionnaire included questions for each speech sample and one for demographic information.

First, listeners rated the voice on twelve traits using a six-point scale. Then the listeners were asked to speculate about the region where the speaker is from in a forced-choice question with five choices: Taipei, Taichung, Hsinchu, Chiayi and Kaohsiung, cities located from northern Taiwan to southern Taiwan. If applicable, listeners were asked to explain their choice. The purpose of this question was to see if listeners' categorization judgments of where the speakers are from would affect their linguistic attitudes. Next, listeners were asked to check any and all items that applied to the speaker's ethnicity and also to specify the reasons for their choice if applicable. Then they were asked to speculate about the home region (from north, central or south of Taiwan) and community type (from city or country) of the speaker. Lastly, listeners were asked to provide any other comments they had about the speaker. After all the listeners finished the language attitude survey, they were asked to fill out brief background information.

5. Results

5.1. Listeners' Perceptions of Speakers' Background

Although listeners from the same region were generally more successful at recognizing speakers from their own regions, the result does not yield a significant difference in listeners' recognition of speakers by listeners' regions ($p > .05$). In terms of recognizing the Taichung male speaker, listeners from Taipei even show slightly higher accuracy rate than listeners from Taichung (31% correct versus 26% correct). Therefore, listeners' hometown or region may not be the main factor that influences their judgments, and thus their perceptions of the speakers based on their regions will not be discussed.

Regions Speakers	Taipei	Hsinchu	Taichung	Chiayi	Kaohsiung	Total
Taipei female	116	23	8	6	5	158
Taipei male	120	14	6	5	13	158
Taichung female	8	21	87	28	14	158
Taichung male	0	7	40	53	58	158

Table 1. Listener's perceptions of the regions where the four speakers belong

Table 1 shows that listeners generally are more successful in recognizing the two Taipei speakers and the female Taichung speaker than the male Taichung speaker. Moreover, it appears that listeners tend to perceive the male Taichung speaker as one from southern Taiwan ($n=111$). One possible reason may be due to the speaker's frequent tokens of the

substitution of vowels [uo] and [ou] for [ɔ], which are salient features of Mandarin influenced by Taiwanese (Kubler 1985). For example, *ran2hou4* ‘then’ in standard Mandarin is pronounced as *lan2ho4*; *shui3guo3* ‘fruit’ is realized as *shui3go3* in Taiwanese Mandarin. As mentioned earlier, speaking more vernacular Mandarin directly indexes the “southerner”, therefore, it should not be surprising that the majority of listeners recognize the male Taichung speaker as a southerner even though his speech data are rich in phonological features of Taichung accent. On the other hand, although the female Taichung speaker also shows tokens of the substitution of [ou] to [ɔ], such as her pronunciation of *shi2hou4* ‘the moment’ as *shi2ho4*, her frequent tokens of rising T4 in the final position of sentences might have led the listeners to recognize her regional accent because terminal rising tone has been discussed mostly commonly as the “special Taichung accent” by non-linguists in Taiwan. One listener comments on the female Taichung speaker, “tade taizhongqiang haominxian, yiuqishitashuo ‘shang’ deshhou” [her Taichung accent is so obvious, especially when she pronounced *shang4*]. Taking together listeners’ perceptions of both Taichung speakers, the results seem to support previous research that salient dialect-specific properties are important cues for linguistically naïve listeners to pinpoint a speaker’s regional identification (Clopper and Pisoni 2004).

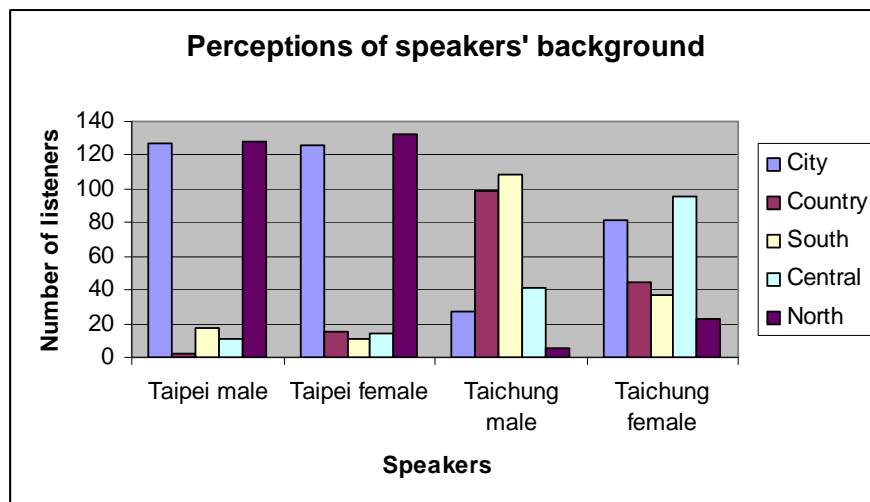


Figure 2. Perceptions of speakers' background

The majority of the listeners did not have trouble recognizing either Taipei speaker. One listener commented on Taipei accent, “taibeiqiang jiushi meiyou tese” [Taipei accent has no characteristics]. If a person speaks standard Mandarin, that is, the Mandarin that the KMT government brought to Taiwan and is taught in school, they will likely be identified as people from Taipei. Moreover, once listeners recognize that a speaker has a Taipei accent, they also tend to judge the speaker as from the city; on the contrary, if they

identify a speaker as having a southern accent, they naturally judge the person as from the country. From Figure 2 it is clear that both Taipei speakers are judged as from the city by more than 120 listeners, and the female Taichung speaker is judged as from the city by approximately 80 listeners. This may be because Taichung is known as the third biggest city in Taiwan. As for the male Taichung speaker, he is judged both as from the country and from the south because of his accent. One listener made an interesting comment on the male Taichung speaker, “wuojuede taxiang meizuoguo feijide xiangxiaren” [I think he sounds like a countryman who’s never taken a plane]. This suggests that speaking standard Mandarin also indexes urbanity.

Compared with the perceptions of speakers’ regional affiliations and urbanity, listeners show more discrepancy in their identification of speakers’ ethnicity. This demonstrates the complexity of the ethnic situation in Taiwan. Different people have different ideologies about ethnic identity, and many people have double or multiple orientations toward ethnicity. For example, some claim that Taiwanese are Chinese (this is very rare now compared with how it used to be), some suggest that Southern Min are Taiwanese or home-province people are Taiwanese, some believe that Mainlanders are Chinese, and there are many other different double-identities claimed by different people. Table 2 shows the complexities of ethnic identity in Taiwan. Among the four speakers, the Taichung male speaker is identified as Taiwanese and a home-province person by most listeners, followed by the Taichung female, the Taipei female, and last the Taipei male. In addition, 43 % of the listeners consider both Taichung speakers as Southern Min, while fewer than 13 % of the listeners categorize both Taipei speakers as Southern Min.

	Taipei female	Taipei male	Taichung female	Taichung male
Chinese	2	5	2	1
Taiwanese	127	105	140	151
Home-province	50	42	67	80
Mainlander	38	65	3	1
Southern Min	20	13	68	68
Hakka	5	3	53	0
Aborigine	0	0	0	6
Total	158	158	158	158

* Listeners can check all that apply to the speakers

Table 2. Perceptions of speakers’ ethnicity

On the other hand, the Taipei male is identified as a Mainlander by 41% of the listeners and the Taipei female is considered as a Mainlander by 24% of the listeners, whereas the Taichung speakers are rarely regarded as Mainlanders. Taken together, these findings show the linguistic ideology people in Taiwan have toward different accents. Speaking standard Mandarin has become a marker for Mainlander identity. In contrast, the more Taiwanese Mandarin features the speaker has in their speech, the more people would

identify them as belonging to home-province or Southern Min groups. If a person speaks with a heavily accented Mandarin, they may even be regarded as aborigines, the people that have been stereotyped as an undeveloped, rural, minority group. Another interesting finding is that the Taichung male is even identified as aborigine by six listeners. This suggests that listeners may perceive his Mandarin as more vernacular than the Taichung female's Mandarin. However, it should be noted that it is also possible that listeners may be evaluating based on the gender of the speakers, rather than on their language (Cheshire 1998), since it has been suggested that there is a tendency to judge male speakers with regional accents as more non-Standard than their female counterparts. This might explain the divergence of regionality in the listener judgments of the Taichung male in contrast to the Taichung female speaker.

5.2. Listeners' Language Ideology and Their Perceptions of the Speakers

Multivariate regression was chosen for analysis because it allows the researcher to generalize results beyond the small sample size and also provides a rich description of whether there are interactions between speakers' gender, region of origin, listeners' perceptual categorization of the speakers, and their ratings of each speaker. In addition, multivariate analysis allows examination of whether and to what extent different factors have an impact on listeners' judgments of the speakers on twelve traits all at once. The results show that the gender factor is only statistically significant in judging speakers' easygoingness ($p < .05$). This might be due to listeners' perceptions that females are generally more easygoing than males. On the other hand, speakers' regional factor is statistically significant in judging education, income, standard accent, political orientation ($p < .001$), intelligence, and Taiwanese and English language ability ($p < .05$). Listeners' perceptual categorization of the speakers also significantly influences their judgments in rating education, income, accent, political orientation, class ($p < .001$), Taiwanese and English language ability, and also intelligence ($p < .01$). The results suggest that where the listeners identify the speakers are from seems to be the most important factor influencing their ratings. Table 3 shows the mean scores of eight traits for four speakers. It is clear that the Taichung male speaker receives the lowest mean score for standard accent because he is identified most as a southerner, while the Taipei male obtains the highest score for speaking standard Mandarin since he is recognized most as a Mainlander.

Mean								
speaker	education	income	accent	pan_blue	taiwanese	highclass	English	Intelligent
Taipei_female	4.51	3.99	4.52	4.22	3.15	4.44	3.98	4.22
Taipei_male	4.89	4.77	4.85	4.65	3.22	4.64	4.63	4.69
Taichung_female	3.75	3.47	3.30	3.16	4.21	3.92	3.29	3.68
Taichung_male	3.35	3.13	2.72	2.68	4.98	3.58	2.80	3.41

Table 3. Mean ratings of the eight traits judged by listeners

Next, product-moment correlations were performed to see if there are correlations between standardness and other judgment scales. As shown in Table 4, there are highly significant positive correlations between standardness and education, income, political orientation, class, English language ability, and intelligence. There is a high significant negative correlation between standardness and Taiwanese language ability, and there are low correlations between standardness and easygoingness, selfishness, friendliness, and sincerity. The results show that the general language ideology of people in Taiwan is as follows: if a person is judged as speaking Mandarin with a more standard accent, he or she would more likely be considered as highly-educated, high-class, smart, having high-income, belonging to pan-blue, able to speak English and not able to speak Taiwanese. On the contrary, if a person is rated as a Mandarin speaker with a heavier vernacular accent, he or she would be more possibly be viewed as low-educated, low-class, not smart, having low-income, belonging to pan-green, not able to speak English but able to speak Taiwanese. One thing worth noting is that the correlation between accent and political orientation receives the highest coefficient ($r=.737$) among all the traits. This implies that the people in Taiwan are aware of the linguistic differentiation manipulated and emphasized by the politicians. Also the result reflects a linguistic ideology rooted in alignment with different political parties.

Traits	Correlations
High-Educated ↔ low educated	.719**
High-income ↔ low income	.681**
Pan-blue ↔ pan-green	.737**
Speaking Taiwanese ↔ not speaking Taiwanese	-.549**
High- class ↔ low-class	.637**
Speaking English ↔ not speaking English	.690**
Easygoing ↔ not easygoing	-.150**
Selfish ↔ not selfish	.270**
Friendly ↔ not friendly	-.086*
Sincere ↔ not sincere	-.082*
Intelligent ↔ not intelligent	.588**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4. Correlations between standard accent and eleven traits by listeners

Moreover, previous studies have suggested that people tend to rate speakers with a standard accent more positively in terms of status traits such as education, income, class and intelligence and speakers with a regional accent more positively in sociability traits such as easygoingness, unselfishness, friendliness and sincerity (Ryan and Giles 1982). However, the current study does not support this. Although the Taichung male speaker

receives slightly higher scores in those sociability traits than the Taipei male speaker, there are minimal correlations between accent and the four sociability traits (easygoingness, unselfishness, friendliness and sincerity), which suggests that a person's accent might not be an important factor in evaluating him or her easygoing, friendly, sincere or selfish. One possible explanation is that listeners generally have assumptions about which group typically uses certain linguistic features and they associate the linguistic forms with the objective social attributes (i.e. status traits) of that group. As for the sociability traits, listeners may rate the speaker differently depending on some subjective factors such as whether they like the voice, whether they are from the same region as the speaker, whether they think they have the same political ideology as the speaker, etc. Therefore, it is not surprising that speakers generally agree on their judgments on the speakers in terms of the status traits but there are more individual differences in terms of judging the sociability traits.

6. Discussion

Language attitude is not just established independently of people's perceptions toward different categories or behaviors, but rather, it also includes participants' understanding of the social meanings of the linguistic features along with local history and social settings (Irvine, 2000). Irvine further suggests that sociolinguistic differentiation exists especially when social opposition is salient. The situation in Taiwan provides a good example for the emergence of linguistic differentiation due to social opposition.

The metapragmatic awareness of the listeners in the current study reflects the language ideologies and linguistic differentiation that are constructed in Taiwan. When a person speaks with an accent, the indexical meanings directly associated with this accent are the region of the speaker and their ethnicity. A person is probably a Mainlander from Taipei metropolitan area if he or she speaks with a standard accent. A person is likely to be from Southern Min group in central Taiwan if the speech reveals some linguistic features of Taichung accent. A person may be identified as Southern Min from a southern rural area because of their Taiwanese-influenced Mandarin. Then other indexical values associated with certain regions and linguistic varieties emerge along with the direct indexicality. For example, the listeners rate the speakers they recognize as from Taipei higher in traits associated with Mainlanders and Taipei metropolitans such as pan-blue, high education, high income, high class, and able to speak English. On the contrary, they recognize the Taichung male speaker as from the south, and thus rate him higher in traits associated with Southern Min and southern rural areas such as pan-green, low education, low income, low class, and able to speak Taiwanese.

Another interesting finding is how the listeners notice small linguistic differences and explicitly assign identities and meanings to different linguistic resources they encounter according to their presupposed ideologies. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005:594) summarize how identity relations emerge:

Identity relations emerge in interaction through several indexical processes, including (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups.

The following excerpts are examples of comments the listeners wrote about the four speakers. The examples demonstrate how indexical processes occur through metapragmatic comments:

- (1) (commenting on the Taichung female) yinwei jianhua weiyin you nanburen jianhua de ganjue, xiangshi “ranhou” [because her final tone sounds like a southerner, such as “then”].
- (2) (commenting on the Taichung male) xiangxia, taiwanguoyu koyin [rural, Taiwanese Mandarin accent]
- (3) (commenting on the Taichung female) ta yongle henduo yuzhuci “ranhou” , erqie buhui juanshe [she uses a lot of discourse marker “then” and she can't pronounce retroflex].
- (4) (commenting on the Taipei female) keneng yinwei wojuede ta buhui shuotaiyu, yingai jiaoyu bucuo [maybe it's because I think she can't speak Taiwanese, she should be high-educated].
- (5) (commenting on the Taipei male) zizheng qianyuan [each character has the right tone, the intonation flows smoothly]
- (6) (commenting on the Taipei female) fayin hen biao zhun, qiandiao henxiang taibeiren [the pronunciation is very correct, the accent seems to be a Taipei accent]
- (7) (commenting on the Taipei female) gai juanshe de yin douyou zuodao [she pronounces all the sounds that should be retroflexed]
- (8) (commenting on the Taipei male) shuohua zhuangqiang zuoshi de [his speech is full of prunes and prism]
- (9) (commenting on the Taipei male) ganjue heguo yianmoshui de youqienren, zhuang ABC [I feel like he's a rich person who's studied abroad, pose as an ABC].
- (10) (commenting on the Taichung male) ganjue hen local, henlaoshi, meizixin, ren [r]→[l] (sounds very local, very simple-minded, not confident, person [r]→[l])

We can see from the excerpts that listeners use different indexical processes to associate the speakers with certain identities. For instance, in excerpt (1) the listener overtly labels the speaker as a southerner because of her linguistic features in final tone; similarly, in

excerpt (6) the speaker is overtly categorized as from Taipei because of her correct pronunciation. As in excerpts (3), (5), (7) and (10), although the listeners do not directly put a label on the speakers, they notice the linguistic features that are usually associated with specific groups and thus rate the speakers based on these ideologies. For example, being able to pronounce retroflex sounds and correct tones indexes Mainlanders or Taipei citizen, while the use of too many discourse markers or the loss of retroflexion seems to index southerners. Besides, listeners also evaluate the speakers based on their own presupposed ideologies. Excerpt (2), (4), (8), (9) demonstrate this. In (2), the listener relates Taiwanese Mandarin to rural people; in (4) the listener assumes that the speaker can not speak Taiwanese and therefore belong to the high-educated level because speaking Taiwanese again, indexes rural uneducated people. As for (8), the listener reflects how many non-Taipei people resist the “big Taipei-ism” (Su 2005: 89), which refers to viewing Taipei as the unique center of power, economics, language, education, globalization, and so forth. As a result of this resistance, they also reject the Taipei accent, which has been viewed commonly as standard Taiwan Mandarin. Similarly, the listener in (9) also implies his or her presupposed ideology about the Taipei accent. English proficiency, as well as the previously mentioned broken Taiwanese speaking ability, are two distinctive characteristics with which many young people in Taipei associate themselves. However, the listener describes the speaker as “pose as an ABC”, which again reflects that non-Taipei people reject the superiority and cosmopolitanism with which the Taipei people identify themselves. “Fake ABC” is a term used by young people in Taiwan to describe those, particularly the northerners, who try to imitate the ABC accent or code-switch to English to show their superiority.

The above-mentioned examples demonstrate that once listeners recognize cues for dialect-specific features, they would impose their presupposed ideologies on the speakers and assign social meanings to those linguistic features. These social meanings do not come out of the blue, but rather, they emerge ideologically through listeners’ understandings of salient social groups, local history, and relevant activities and practices.

7. Conclusion

“To understand why and how a given market, or society, evaluates the language used in a public speech requires one to look at the whole history of language practices in that market” (Sandel 2003:525). How linguistic differentiation was established and how the indexical values of linguistic features were assigned in Taiwan should be understood in Taiwan’s historically political context. As Grillo indicates, “any study of linguistic dominance, linguistic hierarchy and linguistic inequality is inevitably a political study” (Grillo 1989, cited in Hsiao 2000:127). From 1949 until 1987, the KMT was the sole dominant party, and the government strictly enforced their language ideology of Mandarin as the only linguistic capital on the island. Language practices mainly indexed ethnicity. During the last two decades, the dramatic changes in Taiwan’s political situation with the growth and development of the DPP have resulted in the emergence of a new language

ideology and new indexicality. In this study, I have illustrated the consequence of the contested political ideologies manipulated by two parties: 1) different varieties of Taiwan Mandarin are linked to different social meanings and 2) people are assigned with identities and values based on the presupposed ideologies. This study has also demonstrated that the perceptual dialectological method can be used to examine how language ideologies are realized in people's metapragmatic comments and how different indexical values can be mingled together. For example, speaking regional Mandarin can index ethnicity, education, political inclination, Taiwanese or English proficiency, etc.

However, one major critique of employing survey methods to investigate language attitude and ideologies is that surveys do not adequately demonstrate people's durable socio-psychological states (Coupland and Jaworski 1998). Indexical values and language ideologies of certain linguistic features are not all established at once and it is difficult to measure or detect an on-going change in the indexicality or ideologies of linguistic features in the survey-type method because of its pre-designed value judgment forms. Therefore, in addition to the survey results reported here, a full understanding of attitudes toward Taiwan Mandarin requires ethnographic and discourse analytic approaches to examine speakers' assumptions about language, their articulation of their language ideologies and their interpretations of their and other people's language practice.

I conclude this study by revealing the ethnic and political backgrounds of the four speakers. The Taichung female speaker, born in a Southern Min family, speaks Taiwanese to her family and only speaks Mandarin for business. She hates the political conflicts in Taiwan and does not support either the blue or the green party. The Taichung male speaker, whose father is a Southern Min and whose mother is a Mainlander, speaks Mandarin to people from the north and Taiwanese to people from the south. His whole family belongs to pan-blue. The Taipei female speaker, born in a Hakka family, is a newly-wed with a Southern Min husband, and speaks Mandarin mostly. Last, the Taipei male speaker, born in a Southern Min family, speaks Mandarin mostly but would speak Taiwanese to his male friends. He identifies himself with pan-green and supports Taiwan independence.

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