

## **The Fuzhou Dialect as Spoken in Sibü, Sarawak and Míngqíng, Fujian: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Comparison\***

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This paper comprises three parts. Part one is a description of the linguistic situation of Mandarin (called Hua Yu in South-east Asia) and the Fuzhou dialect as spoken in Sibü, Sarawak. Part two focuses on the linguistic situation of the same two varieties as spoken in Míngqíng, Fujian, from where the ancestors of most Chinese residents in Sibü originally emigrated. Part three is a comparison of the linguistic and sociolinguistic situation in these two field sites.

### **Part 1: Sibü, Sarawak**

#### 1.1 Socio-historical background

The data on which the following report is based was collected during my visit to Sibü, Sarawak in Eastern Malaysia from January 31 to February 11, 1999. Sibü is a medium-sized city of about eighty thousand people, most of whom are ethnic Chinese. The ethnic Chinese can be further divided into three major groups, the Fuzhou, Minnan and Hakka, with the first group comprising more than 70% of the Chinese group.

This heavy concentration of the Fuzhou dialect speakers, unusual in an overseas Chinese community, was due to an unusual historical incident. In 1901, a contract or agreement was signed between the Sarawak Government and Messers Wong Nai Siong(黃乃裳) and Lek Chiong of Sin Hock Cheu Kang. Under the contract, a total of 997 farmers, including women and children, arrived at the port of Sibü by June 2, 1902. From the original 997, the population of the Fuzhou residents increased to no less than 15,000 in 1926, 41,946 in 1947, and 70,125 in 1960. (Kiu, 1997). And according to a newspaper report that I read during my visit, the most recent population figure has exceeded 100,000, making the Fuzhous, the single most populous ethnic Chinese group in Sarawak, surpassing the Hakka by a slight margin.

Wong Nai Siong, the group leader, was originally from Míngqíng County; Fujian Province and so were most of the early settlers. Mr. Wong was a baptized Methodist and so were most of his followers. This explains why the Methodist church is still the most popular denomination in the Fuzhou settlements and its influence is still keenly felt in the community.

Before World War II, all church meetings were in the Fuzhou dialect but as the Fuzhou dialect has been losing ground to other languages spoken in the community, such as Mandarin and English, more and more church meetings were held in Mandarin, but even today about one-third of the sessions(chiefly those for the elder people) are still in the Fuzhou dialect.

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In yet another area the church has played an important role in the maintenance of the dialect. There are quite a few private Chinese-medium schools in the area established and founded by either the Methodist or the Catholic Church. However in the educational arena, things have not always been going on well. In the colonial period before World War II, there was almost no restriction placed upon language used and taught in school. So most private schools in Sibu area used the Fuzhou dialect as a medium of instruction for a number of years in elementary education before it was shifted to English. The Fuzhou dialect was thus able to be maintained in this foreign soil. But ever since Malaysia was founded in 1957, there has been a growing pressure to use either English or Malay, the only two official languages in the country, as the medium of instruction (Ku 1998). This certainly has had an adverse effect on the dialect. To make the matter worse, following the example set by Singapore, where for the practical reason of facilitating interdialectal communication among ethnic Chinese, Mandarin, has been promoted since 1970, many of the Chinese-Median schools in the area have chosen to teach and use Mandarin as a medium of instruction. These have been two most important factors affecting the language maintenance and shift situation observed in the present study.

### 1.2 The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire used in the present study was based on the one used in Chan (1994), and Tsao (1997). It consists of three parts: Part one contains questions regarding speakers' language ability in the various languages spoken in the community. Part two questions are intended to elicit information about language use and finally Part three questions are included to find out speakers' attitude to various languages spoken in the community. The questionnaire was administered to 129 Fuzhou speakers in the community, comprising 69 males and 60 females. The age distribution of the subjects is as follows: low age group (below 30): 65, Middle age group (31-50): 34; and high age group (over 51): 30. As far as educational background is concerned, the low educational group has only 26 speakers, the high educational group contains 99 speakers and the remaining 4 left it unspecified. As our sample size is small and as quite a few of them have left part of the questionnaire unanswered. The following analysis of the questionnaire return is meant only as a guide.

#### 1.2.1 Language ability

**Table 1**

|         | MT   | M    | P     |
|---------|------|------|-------|
| Overall | 4.84 | 4.72 | 0.096 |

From Table one we see that overall speakers' ability in both Mandarin(M) and the mother tongue(MT) is quite good. We also see that even though their command of the Fuzhou dialect is better than that of Mandarin, the difference does not reach the significance level of 0.05.

**Table 2**

|        | MT    | M     | P     |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sex    |       |       |       |
| Male   | 4.86  | 4.71  | 0.186 |
| Female | 4.82  | 4.73  | 0.329 |
| P      | 0.737 | 0.927 |       |

Even though from Table two we can see that there is some usual gender difference in that male speakers are generally better in the vernacular while female speakers are better in the more

prestige language, yet the difference is slight in both cases, as they do not reach the 0.05 significance level. This may be due to the fact that the prestige factor does not figure prominently in the community.

**Table 3**

|             | MT    | M      | P     |
|-------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Age         |       |        |       |
| L (15-30)   | 4.70  | 4.55   | 0.186 |
| M (31-50)   | 4.92  | 5.00   | 0.337 |
| H (over 50) | 5.00  | 4.70   | 0.081 |
| P           | 0.068 | *0.017 |       |

One thing that is easily seen is that speakers' ability in the Fuzhou dialect is correlated with a speaker's age to use his/her mother tongue, even though this decrease is not really pronounced as it does not reach the 0.05 level of significance.

Another outstanding phenomenon to be noted is that the age group with the best command of Mandarin is the middle age group. This group does better than the H age group, which in turn, outperforms the L age group. We can explain this distributional fact if we think of the way that Mandarin has been taught in the private school system in the area. In section 1, we said that the golden age of Mandarin education was after World War II and before Malaysia achieved independence in 1957. Since then, the Malaysian government has been gradually tightened its control over the language education until 1980s when it decided to give financial support to schools which used Malay as its medium of instruction. This period of time coincided with the school age of the middle age group. The H age group went to school at the time when the Fuzhou dialect, Mandarin and English coexisted in school while the L age group received their education when Mandarin was taught as a subject at best in the public school system where Malay was used as a medium of education. Thus, the differences in the amount of Mandarin education they received account for their differences in performance.

#### 1.2.2 Language use

**Table 4**

|             | MT     | O      | P      |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Age         |        |        |        |
| L (15-30)   | 2.4042 | 2.4126 | 0.937  |
| M (31-50)   | 2.4894 | 1.8717 | *0.017 |
| H (over 50) | 2.5684 | 2.3200 | 0.169  |
| P           | 0.132  | *0.008 |        |

Table 4 shows that again it is the middle age group who uses the Fuzhou dialect far more than they use other languages and they do not use other languages as much as the other two age groups. This can be explained by the fact that most of the people belonging to this age group received less education in other languages like English and Malay as we pointed out earlier.

**Table 5**

|           | MT     | O      | P      |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
| Education |        |        |        |
| L         | 2.8231 | 2.1295 | *0.010 |
| H         | 2.3810 | 2.3314 | 0.578  |
| P         | *0.011 | 0.240  |        |

Table 5 reveals that the less education one receives, the more mother tongue one uses. This seems to be reasonable given that one has to go to school to be taught to use other languages such as English and Malay and also given that the less educated will be employed in jobs which require the use of the vernacular in a place like Sibiu.

**Table 6**

|   | MT   | O    | P      |
|---|------|------|--------|
| 1 When you talk with your grandfather                                   | 2.41 | 1.82 | 0.136  |
| 2 When you talk with your grandmother                                   | 2.52 | 1.67 | *0.014 |
| 3 When you talk with your father  | 2.55 | 1.84 | *0.006 |
| 4 When you talk with your mother  | 2.56 | 1.88 | *0.005 |
| 5 When you talk with your sibling(s)                                    | 2.61 | 2.10 | *0.006 |
| 6 When you talk with your spouse  | 2.76 | 2.06 | *0.006 |
| 7 When you talk with your children                                      | 2.73 | 2.13 | *0.014 |
| 8 When you talk with your teachers                                      | 2.22 | 2.50 | 0.160  |
| 9 When you talk with your classmates                                    | 2.44 | 2.33 | 0.472  |
| 10 When you talk with your boss   | 2.22 | 2.17 | 0.848  |
| 11 When you talk with your colleagues                                   | 2.33 | 2.08 | 0.162  |
| 12 When you talk with your subordinates                                 | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.339  |
| 13 When you talk with your closefriends                                 | 2.46 | 2.26 | 0.232  |
| 14 When you talk with neighbors   | 2.42 | 2.03 | *0.037 |
| 15 When you talk with strangers   | 2.18 | 2.21 | 0.879  |
| 16 When you talk with a person who speaks different mother tongue       | 1.75 | 2.36 | *0.001 |
| 17 When you talk with several persons who speak different mother tongue | 1.81 | 2.38 | *0.016 |

Table 6 shows how often the mother tongue is employed in different domains as compared with other languages. There are three generalizations that can be drawn from this table: First, the Fuzhou dialect is more often used in the family domain as expected. Second in the work domain and friendship domain both MT and other languages are used with about the same frequency. And finally, when in a mixed group of people where some of them do not understand the Fuzhou dialect, then a language other than the MT is more likely to be used.

### 1.3 The Interview

During our stay in Sibiu, we were able to find three families with three speakers belonging to three age groups respectively. These people will be represented as A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>. They are shown in the following table with their respective age and sex indicated.

**Table 7**

|     | A <sub>1</sub> | A <sub>2</sub> | A <sub>3</sub> | B <sub>1</sub> | B <sub>2</sub> | B <sub>3</sub> | C <sub>1</sub> | C <sub>2</sub> | C <sub>3</sub> |
|-----|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sex | M              | F              | F              | M              | M              | M              | M              | F              | M              |
| Age | 13             | 42             | 75             | 15             | 45             | 75             | 29             | 38             | 58             |

The questionnaire used in the interview contains three sections. The first section contains 332 items of basic vocabulary. The second section contains sentences involving some commonly used

grammatical constructions. In the last section we use three sequences of pictures and ask them to tell the stories according to the picture sequences.

### 1.3.1 Vocabulary

In what follows, I will simply outline some general observations about the data collected in Sibü :

1. The older generation speakers did much better than the middle generation speakers who in turn outperformed the younger generation speakers.

2. B<sub>1</sub> was the speaker who did poorly in the interview. This is understandable because he has been attending a Malay-medium public school. B<sub>2</sub> was the speaker who did more poorly than two other speakers of his generation because he attended an English-medium school and was sent to England for his college and graduate education.

3. The young age group was greatly influenced by Mandarin as they used quite a few Mandarin words and pronunciations to replace the original Fuzhou words , e.g. yn<sup>24</sup> is used to replace hun<sup>24</sup> (cloud), kiu<sup>33</sup> kiu<sup>21</sup> for a<sup>5</sup> kiu<sup>24</sup>(maternal uncle)

4. Those features that are unique to the Fuzhou dialect are the first things to go in case of lexical replacement. For example, in Fuzhou a daughter is called ‘tsy<sup>33</sup> nøŋ<sup>55</sup> iaŋ<sup>33</sup>’, which is either forgotten or replaced by nian<sup>21</sup> no<sup>24</sup> ‘女兒’by the two youngest speakers. Likewise, ian<sup>33</sup> the diminutive marker is often forgotten.

5. Along the same line, where the Fuzhou word order is different from that of Mandarin, it is replaced by the Mandarin word order. For example, in the Fuzhou dialect a male pig is called ty<sup>33</sup>koŋ<sup>55</sup> (pig male), but is replaced koŋ<sup>21</sup>ty<sup>24</sup> (male pig) in the speech of most younger speakers.

### 1.3.2 Sentences

There are altogether fifteen sentences involving various grammatical constructions in this section. The following are some interesting observations that we found among the data.

1. Just like the case of word list, the two teen speakers A<sub>1</sub> & B<sub>1</sub> had the worst performance both missing three and a half sentences. In addition, B<sub>1</sub> was found to be most influenced by Mandarin, exhibiting word order like:

ny kau tɔŋ k<sup>h</sup>uo?

You to where go

instead of the normal Fuzhou word order of:

ny k<sup>h</sup>uo tɔŋ?

You go where

In another instance, both youngsters were found to use k<sup>h</sup>o as a classifier for trees instead of the usual to or lo, indicating again the influence of Mandarin whose classifier for tree is k<sup>h</sup>e .

2. We found quite a wide range of syntactic variations. Take the case of gei (give) as a verb for instance. There are as many as eight different ways of saying it, being loŋ, tɔŋ, toŋ, k<sup>h</sup>ai, k<sup>h</sup>iŋ, puŋ, k<sup>h</sup>aŋ, kiŋ. We have no very good explanation for this for the time being. Perhaps the picture will become clear after a careful comparison with the data from Minqing.

3. In some cases, some optional elements found in the speech of the older people were lost in that of the younger people showing the phenomenon of simplification in the speech of the M and L age groups.

4. In the case of ba in a ba sentence, there are six different ways of saying it, being kioŋ, k<sup>h</sup>e,

kœ, pœŋ, tiŋ, and tyŋ. We are again short of an explanation for this phenomenon for the time being.

## Part 2 : Minqing, Fujian

### 2.1 Socio-historical background

The data on which the following analysis is made was collected during my visit from August 30 to September 6, 2000 to Minqing, Fujian, a suburban county in what is now the Greater Fuzhou, about an hour drive from the city center. The county is furthermore connected with Fuzhou by the Min River, which used to be the trunk line of transportation between the two places.

The Minqing city looks relatively modern to us with two or three modern hotels located in the city. The one we stayed is located right in the center of the city and is run by a consortium with its base in Sibiu, Sarawak. The city also features a Wong Nai Siong (黃乃裳) Memorial Museum, showing a close affinity between Minqing and Sibiu.

### 2.2 The Questionnaire

The same questionnaire as used in Sibiu, Sarawak was used here to facilitate Comparison. The composition percentages of the various variables follows:

Sex : M 63.5 % ; F 36.5 %

Age : L ( below 30 ) 54.5 % ; M ( 31-50 ) 24.0 % ; H ( over 50 ) 21.5%

Education : L ( junior middle school or below ) 58.4% ;

H ( senior middle school and above ) 41.6%

#### 2.2.1 Language ability

**Table 8** Language ability of the Minqing people

|         | M.T. | M    | P      |
|---------|------|------|--------|
| overall | 4.84 | 4.39 | *0.000 |

Table 8 shows cleanly that, overall, speakers think that their command of mother tongue (Fuzhou dialect) is much better than that of their Mandarin, the common language, the difference between the two being statistically highly significant. This is in sharp contrast with what we have found in Taiwan, where most people feel that their command of the two languages is about equal or their command of Mandarin is better than that of their mother tongue. It also shows indirectly that their command of Mandarin is not as good as their counterparts in Taiwan.

**Table 9** Language ability of the male and the female

| Language \ Sex | M.T.  | M     | P      |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Male           | 4.77  | 4.35  | *0.000 |
| Female         | 4.84  | 4.44  | *0.011 |
| P              | 0.408 | 0.620 |        |

In both male and female cases, we find their command of the mother tongue much better than that of Mandarin, with a difference reaching a significance level of 0.05 and above. However, the usual sexual preference, i.e., the male speakers being good at the vernacular and the female good at the prestige language, did not obtain here, indicating that the prestige factor does not play an important role in people's acquisition of these two varieties.

**Table 10** Language ability of the different age groups in Minqing

| Language<br>Age | M.T.  | M      | P      |
|-----------------|-------|--------|--------|
| L (15-30)       | 4.71  | 4.47   | *0.002 |
| M (31-50)       | 4.93  | 4.59   | *0.05  |
| H (over 50)     | 4.86  | 3.89   | *0.003 |
| P               | 0.104 | *0.016 |        |

Table 10 clearly reveals that in each age group a significant difference between speakers' ability in the mother tongue and in Mandarin. This difference is especially pronounced in the Low and High age groups.

**Table 11** Language ability of the different age groups of Minnan people in Taiwan

| Language<br>Age | M.T. | M    | P |
|-----------------|------|------|---|
| L (15-30)       | 4.35 | 4.73 | * |
| M (31-50)       | 4.87 | 4.46 | * |
| H (over 50)     | 4.85 | 4.28 | * |
| P               | *    | *    |   |

If we now compare the figures with those corresponding ones of the Minnan group in Taiwan as shown in Table 11, we find an interesting observation. While both in Minqing and in Taiwan, the mother tongue is disappearing, the gap between the middle age group and the low age group is much wider in Taiwan than it is in Minqing (0.52 vs. 0.22).

**Table 12** Language ability of people with different educational backgrounds in Minqing

| Language<br>Education | M.T.  | M     | P      |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| L                     | 4.79  | 4.47  | *0.007 |
| M                     | 4.86  | 4.69  | 0.096  |
| P                     | 0.486 | 0.136 |        |

The only significant point that is revealed by the table is that in the case of people with low education, their ability in the mother tongue is significantly higher than that in Mandarin, while in the case of people with higher education, such a difference is not found, indicating that education has played a role in the promotion of Mandarin.

### 2.2.2 Language Use

From table 13 (the next page), several important generalizations emerge. First, in the family domain, as indicated by questions 1-7, the Fuzhou dialect predominates. In all cases where a family member is talking to another family member, the frequency of use of the Fuzhou dialect surpasses that of Mandarin and the difference in each case reaches the significance level of 0.05 and above.

When it comes to the school domain, no matter whether one is talking with the teacher or with one's classmate, Mandarin predominates. In the work domain as indicated by questions 10, 11, and 12, no preference is shown no matter whether one is talking with one's boss, colleagues, or subordinators, as the difference in frequency of use between the Fuzhou dialect and Mandarin does not reach the level of statistical significance of 0.05.

**Table 13** Frequency of language use as determined by the role relationship

|   | M.T. | T    | P      |
|---|------|------|--------|
| 1 When you talk with your grandfather                                   | 2.75 | 2.02 | *0.000 |
| 2 When you talk with your grandmother                                   | 2.74 | 2.02 | *0.000 |
| 3 When you talk with your father  | 2.73 | 2.30 | *0.000 |
| 4 When you talk with your mother  | 2.77 | 2.28 | *0.000 |
| 5 When you talk with your sibling(s)                                    | 2.81 | 2.27 | *0.000 |
| 6 When you talk with your spouse  | 2.77 | 2.40 | *0.025 |
| 7 When you talk with your children                                      | 2.71 | 2.40 | *0.032 |
| 8 When you talk with your teachers                                      | 2.17 | 2.66 | *0.000 |
| 9 When you talk with your classmates                                    | 2.35 | 2.58 | *0.031 |
| 10 When you talk with your boss   | 2.39 | 2.56 | 0.421  |
| 11 When you talk with your colleagues                                   | 2.64 | 2.43 | 0.184  |
| 12 When you talk with your subordinates                                 | 2.64 | 2.50 | 0.453  |
| 13 When you talk with your close friends                                | 2.58 | 2.45 | 0.260  |
| 14 When you talk with neighbors   | 2.70 | 2.30 | *0.002 |
| 15 When you talk with strangers   | 2.12 | 2.53 | *0.003 |
| 16 When you talk with a person who speaks different mother tongue       | 1.60 | 2.61 | *0.000 |
| 17 When you talk with a person who speaks same mother tongue            | 2.72 | 2.18 | *0.000 |
| 18 When you talk with several persons who speak different mother tongue | 1.59 | 2.69 | *0.000 |

In the case of talking with friends (question 13), the same situation is found, i.e., no significant difference between the use of Mandarin and that of the mother tongue is found, but when talking with neighbors (question 14), the Fuzhou dialect again predominates. By comparing these two cases, it seems clear that in Minqing, one's friends might come from people with different language backgrounds, but most people still live together with speakers of the same dialect. It also indicates that there is a general principle of language use in that Mandarin is used when talking with people of various language backgrounds but the Fuzhou dialect is used with fellow Fuzhou speakers. The same principle of language use manifests itself in the answers to the questions 15–18. That is in situations where one is speaking with speakers of mixed mother tongues (question 15, 16, 18), the use of Mandarin predominates whereas when one is talking with speakers of the same mother tongue, the Fuzhou dialect is more frequently used.

From the above discussion, it seems that a general picture of language use is emerging—The Minqing speech community is approaching one of diglossia with bilingualism in which Mandarin is the high language and the Fuzhou dialect is the low language. A comparable situation existed in Taiwan in 1970s with Mandarin as the high language and Taiwanese Minnan, Hakka, and one of the aboriginal languages as the low language, depending on the exact location of the speech community.

Having said this, we must hasten to qualify it. The picture as represented by the questionnaire



return may not have reflected accurately the true situation of the speech community. From the actual performance of the three three-generation families to be presented in the following section, we can draw a slightly different picture. The performance of the younger generation is actually far more disappointing than what is reflected in their self-report. Take the vocabulary test for instance. The three youngest subjects with the average age of 16, missed 97.33 items out of an inventory of 322. The figure as compared with 5.33 of the middle generation and 1.67 of the older generation is actually quite alarming. On the basis of this observation, perhaps, the Minqing community should be characterized as a community of emergent language shift with the low language leaking into the high language.

### 2.3 The Interview

During our stay in Minqing, we were able to find three families with three speakers belonging to three age groups respectively. These people will be represented as D<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>2</sub>, D<sub>3</sub>, E<sub>1</sub>, E<sub>2</sub>, E<sub>3</sub>, and F<sub>1</sub>, F<sub>2</sub>, F<sub>3</sub>. They are shown in the following table with their respective age and sex indicated.

**Table 14** Age and sex of each informant

|     | D <sub>1</sub> | D <sub>2</sub> | D <sub>3</sub> | E <sub>1</sub> | E <sub>2</sub> | E <sub>3</sub> | F <sub>1</sub> | F <sub>2</sub> | F <sub>3</sub> |
|-----|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sex | F              | F              | M              | M              | F              | M              | M              | M              | M              |
| Age | 19             | 45             | 72             | 13             | 31             | 66             | 16             | 46             | 70             |

#### 2.3.1 Vocabulary

A number of generalizations can be drawn by closely observing the data :

1. the older generalization speakers did much better than the middle generalization speakers who outperformed the younger generalization speakers. This can be shown by the number of words they missed.

**Table 15**

| D <sub>1</sub> | D <sub>2</sub> | D <sub>3</sub> | E <sub>1</sub> | E <sub>2</sub> | E <sub>3</sub> | F <sub>1</sub> | F <sub>2</sub> | F <sub>3</sub> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 90             | 10             | 2              | 80             | 20             | 4              | 122            | 2              | 1              |

In other words, the older generalization misses 1.67 items on the average, while the middle generalization missed 5.33 items on the average but the average shoots up to 97.33 items with the youngest generation.

2. There are cases which indicate clearly that the younger and the middle generations were much susceptible to the influence of Mandarin. Take the word [k<sup>h</sup>ɿŋ] (rainbow) for instance. All the speakers in the younger generation miss it while in the speech of a middle generation speakers it becomes [hɔŋ], showing unmistakably the influence of Mandarin, whose pronunciation of the word is [hɔŋ]. Another case of interest is [a kiu] 'maternal uncle' which was missed by a younger generation speaker and one middle generation speaker and was read as /kiu kiu/ by a middle generation speaker, showing unmistakably influence of Mandarin.

3. When Fuzhou word order is different from that in Mandarin, it is replaced by the Mandarin word order. For example, in this Fuzhou dialect, a male pig is called /ty ba<sup>242</sup>/ (pig father) which was answered correctly by all three older generation speakers but was missed by all the speakers from the younger generation and the middle generation except one who turned it into /koŋty/ (male pig).

4. An interesting alternation was found between words with or without a nasal ending [ŋ], as shown in the following table.

**Table 16**

|           | D1  | D2     | D3    | E1   | E2   | E3       | F1    | F2     | F3       |
|-----------|-----|--------|-------|------|------|----------|-------|--------|----------|
| Chimney   | X   | 煙 nœŋ  | 煙 nœŋ | X    | 煙 nœ | 煙 nœ     | X     | 煙 nœŋ  | 煙 nœŋ    |
| Breakfast | Puɔ | sɪppuɔ | puɔŋ  | Puɔŋ | puɔ  | sɪp puɔŋ | 早 puɔ | 早 buɔŋ | sɪp puɔŋ |

This is a clear indication that the nasal ending in the rime part of a word is on its way of being lost, a tendency that is also found with quite a few southern dialects.

**Part 3: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Comparison**

By comparing the two speech communities, as characterized in the previous two sections, some interesting points emerge. To begin with, an obvious difference in the community's repertoire exists between the two communities. While in Minqing only two varieties are involved, Fuzhou and Mandarin, the former being the L language while the latter H, in Sibiu while the Fuzhou dialect can be regarded as the L language, the H languages are three, English, Mandarin & Malay. The situation is actually quite similar to what was found by Kuo (1979) in Singapore.

Secondly, as common to cases of emergent language shift, we find cases of shrinking lexicon and grammatical reduction and simplification (Holmes 1992:61-64). These phenomena will be further elaborated in the following.

An interesting alternation to be observed is that some words are pronounced with a nasal ending by some speakers while they are pronounced without such an ending by others and such a phenomenon is found in both communities as shown in Table 17 below.

**Table 17** Final Nasal Alternation in Sibiu and Minqing

|           |         | A1                | B1                                    | C1                                    | A2                                      | B2                                      | C2                                       | A3                                     | B3                                   | C3                         |
|-----------|---------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Breakfast | Sibiu   | —                 | tsa <sup>53</sup><br>βo <sup>21</sup> | tsa <sup>53</sup><br>βo <sup>21</sup> | tsa <sup>53</sup><br>puoŋ <sup>21</sup> | tsa <sup>33</sup><br>tsoŋ <sup>55</sup> | sia <sup>5</sup><br>puo <sup>24</sup>    | tsa <sup>55</sup><br>buŋ <sup>21</sup> | sia <sup>35</sup><br>po <sup>3</sup> | NA                         |
|           | Minqing | puo <sup>35</sup> | puoŋ <sup>242</sup>                   | puo <sup>242</sup>                    | sip<br>puo <sup>35</sup>                | puo <sup>242</sup>                      | tsa <sup>55</sup><br>buoŋ <sup>242</sup> | puoŋ <sup>242</sup>                    | sip<br>puoŋ <sup>242</sup>           | sip<br>puoŋ <sup>242</sup> |

Similarly, the corresponding velar stop [-k] also appears to be either replaced by a glottal stop or disappeared altogether, as shown in the following examples.

**Table 18** Final Velar Stop Alternating with a Glottal Stop

|                      |         | A1 | B1   | C1 | A2                     | B2   | C2   | A3   | B3   | C3   |
|----------------------|---------|----|--|----|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Dragon Boat Festival | Sibiu   | —  | toŋ <sup>24</sup><br>ŋu <sup>54</sup><br>tsik <sup>3</sup> | —  | —                      | tuaj <sup>33</sup><br>u <sup>21</sup><br>tsik <sup>5</sup> | —  | tiŋ <sup>21</sup><br>ŋu <sup>21</sup><br>ie? <sup>5</sup>  | tuaj <sup>21</sup><br>u <sup>21</sup><br>tsik <sup>5</sup> | NA   |
|                      | Minqing | —  | —  | —  | 作<br>tsik <sup>5</sup> | 五月<br>tsik <sup>5</sup>                                    | tuaj <sup>33</sup><br>u <sup>21</sup><br>tsik <sup>5</sup> | tuaj <sup>33</sup><br>u <sup>21</sup><br>tsik <sup>5</sup> | tuaj<br>u<br>tsik  | tuaj <sup>33</sup><br>u <sup>21</sup><br>tsi? <sup>5</sup> |

Another aspect of change is to give up on what is distinctively Fuzhou. In the Fuzhou dialect, the diminutive suffix is [-iaŋ] as in /t<sup>h</sup>o<sup>55</sup> iaŋ<sup>33</sup>/ 'peach' or /k<sup>h</sup>en<sup>21</sup> iaŋ<sup>55</sup>/ 'dog.' In both cases, it is either replaced by /tsy<sup>53</sup>/, a far more common diminutive shared by many Chinese dialects, or simply disappears, as shown in the following tables.

**Table 19** Various Ways of Saying 'Peach' in Sibiu and Minqing

|       |         | A <sub>1</sub>                 | B <sub>1</sub>                 | C <sub>1</sub>                 | A <sub>2</sub>                                      | B <sub>2</sub>                                      | C <sub>2</sub>                 | A <sub>3</sub>                                      | B <sub>3</sub>                 | C <sub>3</sub>                 |
|-------|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Peach | Sibu    | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | —                              | —                              | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>21</sup><br>tsy <sup>53</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>55</sup><br>ian <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup><br>ian <sup>55</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>55</sup> | NA                             |
|       | Minqing | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup>                      | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup>                      | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup>                      | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup> |

**Table 20** Various Ways of Saying ‘Dog’ in Sibu and Minqing

|     |         |   |  |   |                                 |                                 |  |  |  |  |
|-----|---------|---|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Dog | Sibu    | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>21</sup><br>ɲian <sup>53</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>55</sup><br>ian <sup>55</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>21</sup><br>nian <sup>53</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>53</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>21</sup><br>ian <sup>53</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>21</sup><br>ian <sup>55</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>21</sup><br>ian <sup>55</sup> | NA   |
|     | Minqing | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup>                       | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup>                      | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup>                       | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup>                      | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup>                      | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup>                      | k <sup>h</sup> ej <sup>33</sup><br>ian <sup>53</sup> |

What is even more prominent is the tendency to use the Mandarin equivalents to replace the original Fuzhou expressions. This is found in cases like ‘mother’s brother,’ which was originally pronounced as /a<sup>5</sup> kiu<sup>24</sup>/, where /a/ is a common prefix for kinship terms, but this prefix + head construction is now often replaced by a reduplication form used in Mandarin, as shown in the following table.

**Table 21** a-kiu ‘mother’s brother’ and its variants in Sibu and Minqing Fuzhou dialect

|                     |         |  |  |                                  |                                       |                                       |  |                                       |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------|---------|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| mother’s<br>brother | Sibu    | kiu <sup>33</sup><br>kiu <sup>21</sup> | kiu <sup>53</sup><br>kiu               | a <sup>5</sup> kiu <sup>24</sup> | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>21</sup>  | a <sup>33</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup> | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup>  | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>24</sup>  | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>24</sup>  | NA                                    |
|                     | Minqing | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>24</sup>   | kiu <sup>33</sup><br>kiu <sup>21</sup> | —                                | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup> | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup> | kiu <sup>33</sup><br>kiu <sup>21</sup> | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup> | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup> | a <sup>55</sup><br>kiu <sup>242</sup> |

The Fuzhou dialect also exhibits different order in the names of some male and female animals. For example a female pig is referred to as /ty<sup>33</sup> mo<sup>53</sup>/ ‘pig female’ in the speech of older generation but the term is either forgotten or replaced by /mo<sup>21</sup> ty<sup>24</sup>/ ‘female pig’ in the speech of the two younger generations in conformity with the word order of Mandarin. Table 22 shows this tendency.

**Table 22** /ty<sup>33</sup> mo<sup>53</sup>/ ‘pig female’ and its variants in Sibu and Minqing Fuzhou dialect

|               |         |   |                                      |                                    |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                      |
|---------------|---------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| female<br>pig | Sibu    | — | mu <sup>21</sup><br>ty <sup>24</sup> | Mo <sup>3</sup><br>ty <sup>5</sup> | mu <sup>21</sup><br>ty <sup>24</sup> | —                                    | —                                    | —                                    | ty <sup>33</sup><br>mo <sup>53</sup> | NA                                   |
|               | Minqing | — | —                                    | —                                  | ty <sup>33</sup><br>mo <sup>53</sup> | ty <sup>33</sup><br>mo <sup>53</sup> | mo <sup>53</sup><br>ty <sup>33</sup> | ty <sup>33</sup><br>mo <sup>53</sup> | ty <sup>33</sup><br>mo <sup>53</sup> | ty <sup>33</sup><br>mo <sup>53</sup> |

Yet another aspect of change is found in syllable contraction. What is pronounced as a trisyllabic word by the older generation is often reduced to a disyllabic one in the speech of the younger generations, as shown in the following table.

**Table 23** /po liŋ ts<sup>h</sup>ai/ ‘spinage’ and its variants in Sibu and Minqing Fuzhou dialect

|         |         |   |  |  |   |   |  |   |   |   |
|---------|---------|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| spinage | Sibu    | puo <sup>21</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | —  | —  | po <sup>21</sup><br>lai <sup>53</sup>                                     | p <sup>h</sup> o <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup>        | ku <sup>24</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>ia <sup>53</sup>                                      | p <sup>h</sup> o <sup>24</sup><br>lai <sup>21</sup>                       | NA  |
|         | Minqing | —   | po <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>liŋ <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>liŋ <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>liŋ <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>liŋ <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> | po <sup>33</sup><br>liŋ <sup>33</sup><br>ts <sup>h</sup> ai <sup>53</sup> |

In some cases what is pronounced by the older generation as a disyllabic word is reduced to a monosyllabic one by the younger generations, as in the case /t<sup>h</sup>o ian/ ‘peach’ and /k<sup>h</sup>ej ian/ ‘dog’ shown in Tables 19 and 20. While this tendency towards reduction can be easily observed, it is rather difficult to determine whether this is due to the loss of language ability in the case of language shift or due to the influence of Mandarin, the H language or both.

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## 沙勞越詩巫與福建閩清的福州話： 語言學與社會語言學的比較

**提要** 本文根據作者在 1999 年元月與 2000 年 6 月分別在馬來西亞沙勞越詩巫城與福建閩清語言調查資料撰寫而成。調查分兩部分：一是包括語言能力與語言使用及其他社會變項在內的書面問卷，一是語言調查的錄音訪談。訪談對象為該地的三個三代同堂的家庭，老（51 歲以上）、中（31-50 歲）、青（30 歲以下）各找一個代表。訪談問卷分三部分：辭彙、句子與看圖說故事。我們選擇詩巫與閩清兩個地方，是因為住在詩巫小城的 80% 的居民的先祖來自福建閩清。本文分三個部分。第一部分是有關華語和閩清福州話在沙勞越詩巫城的語言學與社會語言學描述。第二部分是同樣兩種語言在福建閩清的描述。第三部分是兩地的比較，很明顯，兩地的語言社區都可以概稱為雙言與雙語社區，其中華語為高階語言，福州話為低階語言。不過在詩巫的社區，情況相對複雜，除了華語之外，還有馬來語與英語兩個高階語言，所以嚴格地說它是一個一低多高的雙言雙語地區。除此之外，我們還發現兩個語言社區都有明顯的福州話流失現象，這在青年層尤其明顯。在閩清是福州話向普通話流失，而在詩巫則是福州話向華語、英語與馬來話流失。最後我們發現就像其他正在經歷語言變換的社區一樣，變換中的語言（兩地都是福州話）都發生了辭匯替換與語法簡化等現象。

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