Preserving the Tai Language and Identity in Urbanized Tai Communities

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Abstract-- **The recent worldwide trend of urbanization as well as economic and security issues inside Shan State has brought thousands of Tais out of their native villages to urban centers in Shan State and Myanmar where they are exposed to new social/cultural environments. For their children, the usual way of language and cultural socialization no longer works and these children risk losing their native language and Tai ethnic identity. This paper explores how the Language Socialization Theory and some lessons from successful language revitalization movements in the developed world may be applied to help revitalize the Tai language in the Tai migrant communities in aforementioned urban centers. Moreover, it employs the Social Identity Theory to synthesize a conceptual framework to generate ideas that may mitigate the loss of Tai identity in urbanized Tai communities.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Tai speaking peoples of Southeast Asia are native to present day Northeastern India, Myanmar, Southern China, Northern Vietnam and form the majority of the populations in Thailand and Laos. However, the term Tai in this paper refers to native Tai (any dialect) speakers and the descendants of native Tai speakers in Shan State and Myanmar.

Traditionally, the Tai people of Shan State live in small towns or villages, which are generally monolingual and mono-cultural. In such an environment, one need not go beyond living a typical Tai village life to be able to speak one's own language and participate in one's cultural practices.

The common drivers of migration, such as access to better health care, education and career opportunities, as well as economic and security issues in rural Shan State have been bringing many Tais out of their rural heartland to local urban centers in Shan State, such as Taunggyi, as well as to large urban centers Myanmar, such as Yangon and Mandalay. Even in local urban centers inside Shan State, they are exposed to a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment.

It has been observed that most of the first generation of city-born children of the Tai families that migrated to Taunggyi and other Myanmar cities in the 1930s to 1990s cannot speak the Tai language. The language loss in these Tai families, combined with the lack of opportunity and interest to participate in Tai cultural events among the first generation of city-born Tais, almost certainly leads to the loss of Tai identity in the next generation. The loss of language, followed by the complete loss of identity in these earlier migrant families show that more recent Tai migrant families also face the risk of losing their own language, culture and identity in the melting pot of the urbanized world of the 21st century.

This paper makes a reference to the language socialization theory to analyze the language loss of the children of Tai migrants who left the rural heartland of Shan State in the 1930s to1990s. It then explores how the results of this analysis and some lessons from successful language revitalization movements in the developed world may be applied for preventing the loss of native language among the city born children of more recent Tai migrants. Moreover, this paper uses the Social Identity Theory to identify the factors the led to ethnic identity erosion among the descendants of the aforementioned Tai migrants of the 20th century. The insight gained from this analysis is used to synthesize a conceptual framework that may be used as a tool to generate ideas for mitigating the loss of Tai identity in urbanized Tai communities that are made up of more recent migrants from the rural heartland of Shan State.

Section II of this paper describes the problems of language loss and ethnic identity erosion. Section III presents the key points of the Language Socialization Theory and analyzes language loss in urbanized Tai communities from the perspective of this theory. The key points of the Social Identity Theory are presented in Section IV, which also analyzes the identity erosion problem. Section V of this paper describes the Language Nest concept that has successfully been employed in revitalizing the Māori language in New Zealand. Section VI proposes a conceptual framework, which may be used as a conceptual tool to generate ideas to mitigate the identity erosion problem in urbanized Tai communities.

Note that some of the statements in this paper are drawn from personal experience, which is a valid source of information for academic research according to reference [1].

II. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

This section describes the problems of Tai language loss and Tai ethnic identity erosion in urbanized Tai communities in which the members left their villages and small towns in Shan State at various times in the 20th century.

A. Migration Patterns

The migration of Tais from their hometowns villages on the Shan Plateau began before the arrival of the British as evidenced by the existence of ethnic Tai villages in the plains of central Myanmar [2]. Unlike these earliest migrants, the Tai migrants of the early to mid 20th century headed for British administered urban centers, such as Taunggyi, and Yangon, in search of education, career and business opportunities [3], [4]. This group of elite Tai migrants will be referred to as Group X migrants from this point on. Most of the Group X migrants were primarily young men and women from elite families (families of traditional rulers/Saophas and civil servants). The migration from the rural heartland of Tai culture in Shan State to large urban centers continues after the British left the region and Shan State became a part of the Union of Burma in 1948.

The conflicts that started in Shan State since the late 1950s and caused a major displacement of the Tai people in the mid-1990s and the security situation has in some parts of Shan State has deteriorated. Combined with the world-wide trend of migrating from rural areas to large urban centers, the unstable security situation and the lack of sufficient work opportunities have driven a new wave of Tai migrants out of their villages and small towns over the past 25 years. They will be referred to as Group Y migrants. The migrants in this group hail not only from the elite class but also from middle class and grass-root families.

For a large number of migrants from grass-root families have moved to Thailand as migrant workers to jobs that pay better than the ones at home. However, a discussion of the language and identity retention of these migrants to Thailand, where the official language is a branch of the Tai language family, is beyond the scope of this paper. For the rest of the migrants, the destinations are urban centers in Shan State and Myanmar where they have access to better health care, education, business and career opportunities. Some of these migrants use these urban centers as stepping stones to move on to Singapore, Japan, the Middle East and the West for even better lives.

B. Language Loss among Group X Migrants

Upon leaving the Tai heartland of Shan State, Group X migrants were exposed to a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment in which their language is not the dominant common language. This was the case even in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State, where the local Tai community has never been the majority. Although the Saophas or traditional rulers of the constituent states of the Federated Shan States ruled their respective states under British supervision during the British Colonial Era, the Tai language was minoritized in favor of the Burmese language in Taunggyi, which was then the main base of the British administrators. In the British Colonial Era, missionary schools were stepping stones to university education in Yangon and the West. Many members of the Tai elite, including some ruling Saophas chose to send their children to such schools where lessons are conducted in English and Burmese but not in Tai. In Yangon, the largest urban center of British Burma, Tai migrants of the 20th century did not have the critical mass to form a socially and culturally active community.

Under these circumstances, the vast majority of the city born children of the Tai migrants of the 20th century lost the ability to speak the Tai language. Losing the language was the price they paid for their fluency in Burmese and English as well as access to modern education and career and business opportunities that the Tai people in their ancestral villages and hometowns cannot even dream of. Moreover, this loss was well accepted by most members of the urbanized Tai communities as "Normal". Dr. Sai Sang Aik, a well-known Tai intellectual once remarked that the ability to speak Tai does not survive for more than two generations once a Tai family moves to Yangon.

A case in point is that of two Tai ruling (Saopha) families. The last Saphas of both families came to power in the early 1930s. In the first case, the Saopha's education did not go beyond schooling at the Shan Chief High School in Taunggyi and he kept his children, who were born in the 1930s and 40s, in his rural home state. Thus, the academic and professional achievements of his children were not remarkable by any standard but all of them speak Tai as native speakers. However, most of them moved to Taunggyi in the 1970s and they were not able to pass on their linguistic heritage to their children, i.e., the grandchildren of the Saopha.

In the second case, the Saopha received his education and training as an engineer in Yangon as well as in India. Determined to provide his children with even better education, he decided to keep his children in Taunggyi and send them to a local missionary school. As a result, three of his children graduated from world-class universities in the West and the most developed countries in Asia. However, none of his children, who were born between 1932 and 1943, were able to speak Tai. In fact, the Saopha's heir, who is now a octogenarian in Taunggyi, is linguistically and culturally Burmanized.

C. Ethnic Identity Erosion

Observation of and interview with Group X migrants and their descendants show that the majority of the first generation of city-born Tais (children of the migrants) lost their ancestral language and did not fully identify themselves with the Tai society. The second generation (grand-children of the migrants), most of whom are still alive presently, tend to lose the Tai identity altogether, downplay their Tai ancestry and have very little knowledge of the Tai language, culture and history.

Revisiting the story of the two Tai ruling families in the previous subsection, the children of the first Saopha, who grew up in their father's rural home state, are fluent in Tai,

participate in the social and cultural events of the local Tai communities in their home state and in Taunggyi, and fully identify themselves as Tai. Although most of the city-born grandchildren of that Saopha cannot speak Tai, they still retain a sense of Tai identity and participate in the socio-cultural events of the local Tai community. However, their participation is quite limited because they have lost their ancestral language.

In the case of the second ruling family, the city-born children of Saopha had access to world-class educational opportunities but lost their ancestral language as stated in the previous section. The members of the subsequent generation (i.e., grand-children of the Saopha), are all educated in the West. None of them reside in Shan State and most of them do not consider themselves Tai, do not know a single word of Tai and know next to nothing about the Tai culture and history.

D. Impact on the Tai Society

It has been observed that most city born children of Group X migrants lose the ability to communicate in their native tongue. A few of them become Burmanized to the point that they no longer consider themselves Tai anymore.

In other words, the Tai society has lost the descendants of Group X Tai migrants as its members. To the Tai society, such losses are significant because 1) it is entering the globalized world of the 21st century with very few educated and skilled members and 2) the descendants of Group X Tai migrants are the best educated among the people of Tai blood and have the potential to contribute immensely to the Tai society's struggle for ethno-cultural survival in the globalized world of the 21st century.

The worldwide trend of migrating from rural areas to large urban centers as well as economic and security issues in Shan State have driven a new wave of migrants out of the Tai rural heartland over the past 25 years. Like Group X migrants, Group Y migrants are also exposed to a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment in which their language is not the dominant common language because the Tai language is still minoritized in Shan State. Thus, the loss of language and erosion of Tai ethnic identity among the descendants of Group X migrants indicates that the descendants of current wave of Tai migrants also run the risk of losing their own language, culture and identity in the melting pot of the urbanized world of the 21st century.

Consequently, one major challenge facing the Tai ethnic community is to prevent the repetition of its loss of well-educated members through language loss and ethnic identity erosion among the descendants of the current wave of Tai migrants.

III. ANALYZING LANGUAGE LOSS

This section presents the key points of the Language Socialization Theory and uses it to analyze the language loss among the descendants of Group X migrants.

A. Language Socialization

In sociology, socialization is the process of learning and internalizing the beliefs, norms of a community so that one can behave in a way that is acceptable to that community. Language socialization studies the process of socialization into a cultural community through the use of the primary language of that cultural community and the process of socialization into a language, i.e., becoming a competent user of a language, through interaction with other members of the community and picking up/learning the norms and beliefs of the community which uses this language as its primary language [5]. Language Socialization as a field of research has its root in the proposition by Och and Schiefellin that "*the process of acquiring language is embedded in and constitutive of the process of becoming socialized to be a competent member of a social group and that socialization practices and ideologies impact language acquisition in concert with neurodevelopmental influences*" [6].

The above statement has two implications. The first one is that social interaction in the right environment is what it takes for a child to learn and master a language. The second implication is that language is a key factor that helps a person forms his or her worldview, which is a key ingredient of his or her identity [6].

B. Problem Analysis

According to the propositions of language socialization, language acquisition of a child is an integral part of learning the beliefs, norms and practices of the community by interacting with more experienced members of that community.

This is exactly what happens in typical Tai villages and small towns of the 20th century. The children in a family interact with his/her parents, grandparents, siblings and other members of the extended family who are native Tai speakers. Beyond the family home, the children's world is made up of relatives and family friends in other households, playmates in the neighborhood, schoolmates and teachers, most of whom are native Tai speakers. Besides going to school or a Buddhist temple for literacy and playing with friends in their neighborhood, other activities that contribute to the socialization process of the children include occasional visits to the market to buy goods, to the village temple with adults for merit making and to the village fairground during religious festivals to participate in and watch various shows, such as concerts and theatrical performances. Since the norms, beliefs and the practices of rural Tai communities are encoded in the Tai language and the aforementioned activities are conducted in the Tai language, socialization of the children into the rural Tai community automatically includes acquiring the Tai language. Moreover, acquiring the Tai language to the level of mastery must include the process of socialization into the rural Tai community.

City born children of Group X migrant families went through two parallel socialization processes. The first process was for becoming competent members of their parents' ethno-

cultural society, and the scope and duration of this process depended on the vision, capabilities and determination of their parents. The second process of socialization to become competent members of the socio-economic community of their home-cities was unavoidable and the scope and duration of this process did not depend on the parents.

The scope, if not the duration, of the first socialization process was limited because it took place through the children's interaction with the older members of their families but not with the members of local community beyond the perimeters of the family home. It might get even more limited if 1) the children's older siblings had already been socialized into speaking Burmese and/or English as a result of attending missionary schools and interacting with the wider community beyond the family home and 2) the children's parents did not have the confidence in themselves or in their native ethnicity, language and culture.

The second socialization process took place beyond the perimeters of the family home where the children's world was made up of their schoolmates, teachers, and playmates most of whom are Burmese and English speakers. Unlike the children in the villages and small towns of the rural heartland in Shan State, most city-born children of Group X migrants went to missionary schools for modern education where the primary medium of instruction is English. He/she also had to learn the Burmese language in such schools.

Besides going to school for modern education and playing with friends in their neighborhood, other activities that contributed to the socialization process of city born Tai children may include taking sports and music lessons for enrichment, reading books to learn more about the world beyond Shan State and Myanmar, reading newspapers, magazines and journals to keep up with the current affairs, listening to musical records and watching movies for entertainment. The norms, beliefs and practices of the urban communities in both Shan State and the plains of central Burma are encoded in Burmese and the aforementioned activities of the city-born child were conducted in English and Burmese. Thus, the socialization of the city-born Tai children to become members of the urbanized socio-economic community of his home-city automatically included acquiring the Burmese and English languages but not the Tai language.

The lack of Tai language books, periodicals, musical records and movies was partially due to the lack of sizable urbanized Tai communities in Shan State and Central Myanmar. While there was a critical mass of literate and urbanized Burmans in Yangon and Mandalay that made publication of Burmese language books, periodicals and musical records economically viable, there was no such critical mass among the Tais. Thus, it was not possible for the children of the Group X migrants can learn about the 20th century world and enjoy modern means of entertainment using their ancestral language.

In many families, the time and effort invested in the second process of socialization marginalized the first socialization process, which was already limited in scope from the outset, as the children grow older. The limited scope and pre-mature termination of the first socialization eventually led to the loss of the Tai language among these children of Group X migrants.

IV. ANALYZING ETHNIC IDENTITY EROSION

This section presents the key points of the Social Identity Theory and uses it to analyze the erosion of Tai ethnic identity among the descendants of Group X migrants.

A. Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, which was developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979, is a diffuse but interrelated group of social psychological theories concerned with when and why individuals identify with and behave as part of social groups. Its main points may be summarized as follows.

1) Identification: Social identification is a perception of oneness with a group of persons [7]. This group identity then becomes an integral aspect of an individuals' sense of 'who they are' [8].

2) Categorization and Comparison: Social identification stems from the categorization of individuals [7], and human beings have the tendency to put themselves and others into categories [9]. Studies by Turner and Tajfel (1986) showed that the mere act of individuals categorizing themselves as group members was sufficient to lead them to display in-group favoritism [10]. The reason may be that, after identifying themselves with a certain group, individuals seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from a comparison out-group on some valued dimension [10]. Moreover, the need to enhance their self-esteem would lead individuals to activities, which are associated with the identity, and which they believe will improve their in-group's position relative to comparison out-groups.

B. Problem Analysis

Interviewing some city-born children of Group X migrants within the author's social circle revealed several reasons for the erosion of Tai identity. This section paper discusses three of them, namely, 1) Loss of the Tai Language 2) lack of attraction to remain part of the Tai society and 3) barrier against forming active Tai communities in urban centers.

1) Language Loss: Language loss and ethnic identity erosion in the Tai migrant community are inter-related. For city-born children of Group X migrants who still retain a sense of Tai identity, not having the ability of understand and speak the Tai language naturally limits their participation in the social and cultural activities of the local Tai community and thus potentially weakens their sense being Tai. Moreover, they have found it difficult to pass on their linguistic and cultural heritage to the next generation, rendering their children even closer to losing the Tai ethnic identity.

2) Lack of Attraction: According to one aspect of the social identity theory, individuals in a group want to see 'us' as different from and better than 'them' in a comparison out-

group in order to enhance their own self-esteem [10]. The Tai society in Shan State and Myanmar proper in the first half of the twentieth century was a peasant society ruled by feudal lords. Its forms of cultural expressions, such as dances, songs, festivals were meant to take place in rural settings for mainly illiterate, rice farming peasants. In fact, some states, such as Laikha, brought in Burman entertainers for major events in their capital towns and there was already a notion among some members of the Tai community that the Burman culture was more sophisticated and advanced than their own. For example, a former Tai Saopha recently told this author that he fell in love with the richness of Burman culture when he first got his Gramophone in the 1930s when the Burman had already developed a record industry for their urbanized population. It was in this backdrop that Group X migrants moved to Myanmar urban centers, where they were exposed to newly modernized Burmese culture as well avenues to advance themselves intellectually, professionally and economically in ways that most Tais could not even dream of. Under such circumstances, the Tai society of early and mid-twentieth century did not offer any attractions for the children of Group X migrants and was not an attractive group to be in. It was not possible at all for these younger members of the urban Tai communities to bolster their self-esteem through expressing membership in their ethnic community.

3) Barriers to Forming Active Tai Communities: Even for the children of Group X migrants who wanted to remain part of the Tai society, there were barriers against forming culturally active communities in their adopted home-cities. These barriers included the lack of critical mass as well as modern forms of cultural expressions that would appeal to educated urban dwellers. Moreover, virtually no Tai language books, periodicals, recorded music and movies were available to fulfill the intellectual and cultural needs of these newly educated Tai migrants. Without being part of a culturally active Tai communities to counter the attractions of new found groups, the Tai identity of the children of Group X migrants became either dormant or faded away. Consciously or unconsciously, they chose not to pass down their Tai linguistic and cultural heritage to their children.

V. IDEAS FOR PREVENTING LANGUAGE LOSS

It is helpful to restate that Group Y migrants are the Tai migrants who have moved to major cities in Myanmar over the past 25 years. This section uses the insight gained in the analysis of Section III to help answer the question, "how can we minimize the language loss among the descendants of Group Y migrants?"

It is stated in Section III that the limited scope and pre-mature termination of the first socialization into the local Tai community eventually leads to the loss of the Tai language among these children of Group X migrants. Thus, it can be concluded that widening the scope of the socialization process and sustaining it until the completion of the process is essential for the children of Group Y migrants to acquire and master their ancestral language along with the sociocultural knowledge that is embedded in the language.

One such program to facilitate socialization of ethnic minority children into their sociocultural community is the Language Nest program. It was pioneered by the Maori people in New Zealand. According to the Wikipedia article on Maori language revitalization [11], *"the language nest is an immersion-based approach to language revitalization which was originated as a part of the Māori language revival. Until World War II most Māori people spoke Māori as their first language but by the 1980s fewer than 20% of Māori spoke the language well enough to be classed as native speakers. The causes of the decline included the switch from using Māori to using English as the compulsory language in schools and increasing urbanization, which disconnected younger generations from their extended families and in particular their grandparents. As a result, many Māori children failed to learn their ancestral language, and generations of non-Māori-speaking Māori emerged. Māori leaders initiated Māori-language recovery-programs such as the "language nest" movement, which is a family development and language revitalization initiative grounded in Māori cultural principles and ideals. It facilitates the growth and development of children through the transmission of Māori language, knowledge and culture. Conducted entirely in Māori language, the language is an environment where children aged 0 – 6 years old, their families and community elders spend time together talking, playing, praying and learning. Daily activities may take place anywhere that is safe, warm and homely."* The Language Nest Concept has been adopted in Hawaii, USA and in British Columbia, Canada to revitalize some of the native languages.

The commonality among the city born children of Group X and Group Y migrants and the Māoris in New Zealand is that they need to go through two socialization processes if they are to retain their ethnic identities and cultures while participating in the socio-economic life of the main-stream societies of the cities where they live. As stated in Section III B, the first process is for becoming a competent member of the respective ethno-cultural community and the second process is for becoming socialized to be a competent citizen of the city where his/her family lives and to participate in the socio-economic life of the modern main-stream society.

What the language nests do for the Māoris in New Zealand is to create space for the first socialization process to take place beyond the perimeters of individual family homes. A language nest, if designed correctly, can be a microcosm with a socio-cultural environment that facilitates natural socialization of city-born Tai children into becoming competent members of the local Tai ethno-cultural community. For the aforementioned cultural and language socialization to take place naturally, a language nest must create a socio-cultural environment that has similar language

socializing attributes as a typical Tai village environment. These attributes are as follows. Firstly, the activities within the language nest must be led by adults who have been fully socialized into becoming socially and culturally competent members of the Tai community. Secondly, the norms, rituals and practices of the community within the language nest must be encoded in the Tai language. Thirdly, all the activities, be they for learning, personal development or entertainment, must be conducted exclusively in the Tai language. Finally, the activities within a language nest must encompass the traditional Tai culture as well as the socio-cultural practices and artifacts of the 21st century world.

While the first three attributes are for recreating the socio-cultural environment of a Tai village or small town in a microcosm, the fourth is for ensuring that the activities at the language nest are attractive to the city born children of the 21st century. Moreover, educational trips to summer camps in the Tai heartland can be arranged for older city-born Tai children so that they can experience the natural socializing environment of a typical Tai village.

VI. IDEAS FOR MITIGATING ETHNIC IDENTITY EROSION

This section uses the insight gained in the analysis of Section IV to help answer the question, "how can we minimize the chance of ethnic identity erosion among the descendants of Group Y Tai migrants?"

In comparison with Group X migrants, there are sufficiently large numbers of Group Y migrants in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi to form culturally active communities. Moreover, modern Tai books, songs and videos are available on various media including the internet. However, many urban based Tai youths may not yet find the Tai community to be an attractive group. In light of the material presented in section II, it is clear that the Tai ethnic community should:

1. Make itself attractive for city dwelling Tai youths to identify with;
2. Create an environment in which community members can participate in activities that are aimed at the advancement of the community;
3. Be open to Tai youths with no or little prior knowledge of their own language and culture.

A. Attractiveness

The messages, which contemporary young Tais receive from the core members of the Tai society, urge them not to abandon their ethnic identity by speaking the language, attending cultural events and marrying within the Tai community. Many of these messages further warn them of possible disappearance of the Tai ethnicity if they do not maintain their traditional culture and way of life. These messages may be sufficient to induce the individuals from the rural Tai heartland in Shan State to keep their loyalty to the Tai community out of guilty conscience. However, these messages do not mean much to most Tai youths who were born and raised in non-Tai urban centers. Thus, it is proposed that the Tai community build a positive and attractive image of itself for consumption of its existing members and for attracting potential members in urbanized Tai communities. For the image to be credible, it should be based on the current strengths of the Tai society, advantages of membership, an objective assessment of where it fits in the 21st century world and a statement of achievable common goals for the foreseeable future. The objective of the image building exercise is to show current and potential members of the Tai community that 'we' are different from and better than 'them' in some comparison out-groups on some valued dimensions so that membership in and service to the Tai society will enhance their self-esteem. As part of image building, the Tai culture should be modernized further. Moreover, finer forms of cultural expressions should be developed.

B. Activities for Community Advancement

It has been stated that an individual may achieve positive self-esteem by being part of a group that he/she sees as being better than comparison out-groups on certain dimensions. This may imply that participation of that individual in activities to improve his/her in-group's position relative to the out-groups may further enhance his/her self-esteem and loyalty to the group. Thus, urbanized Tai communities should encourage and facilitate activities by its existing and potential members to help advance their respective communities.

C. Accessibility

There are many urban dwelling Tai youths who do not know their own language and culture and are no longer certain about their ethnic identity. Urbanized Tai communities cannot afford to reject them. These youths should be accepted with open arms if they wish to join the local Tai community and learn their lost language and culture. It is worth developing suitable study material for such Tai youths to facilitate their integration into urbanized Tai communities in their home-cities.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This paper employs the language socialization and social identity theories to analyze the language loss and ethnic identity erosion among the descendants of the Tai people who migrated from the small towns and villages of Shan State to the urban centers of Shan State and Myanmar in early and mid-twentieth century. It then explores how insights gained from these analyses as well as a language revitalization example may be applied to help revitalize the Tai language and to construct a conceptual framework that may help sustain the Tai ethnic identity among the descendants of more recent migrants.

This work finds that the lack of socialization into a Tai speaking community is the cause of language loss among the children of earlier migrants and that the lack of attractiveness was a major factor contributing to identity erosion in the same

group. Based on this finding, it recommends that the Tai ethnic communities in the urban centers of Shan State and Myanmar take pro-active measures to 1) create language/culture nests to create microcosms for socialization of the children of recent migrants into the local Tai community and 2) make themselves attractive to the children of recent immigrants.

This work is by no means a complete study of its subject. It may even raise more questions than it has answered. The author is not qualified to undertake more rigorous research in this area. As such, this paper is intended as a mere starting point that may prompt concerned social science researchers to conduct further investigation.

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