



Short notices

Ethnic identity and ethnic recognition: a study of Taiwanese teachers' biographies, curriculum, and pedagogy

Ya-Hsuan Wang

Institute of Education, National Chung Cheng University, Chia-Yi 621, Taiwan

This thesis is an investigation into the conceptualisation of ethnicity in the Taiwanese education system. Located within the sociology of curriculum and pedagogy, this inquiry employs Charles Taylor's theory of recognition to examine the relations between ethnic identity and ethnic recognition. The research seeks to gain an understanding of the conceptualisation of ethnicity as a curriculum topic in Taiwanese secondary education as a consequence of policy shifts in changing historical periods, and the forms of pedagogic discourses on ethnicity that teachers employ within their professional practice.

The research design encompasses two large stages, the macro-politics and the micro-politics of Taiwan's ethnic educational development. The macro-politics of this research is based on a historical review of Taiwan's ethnic society and a sociological analysis of ethnic structure, including languages, media, religion, economy, and social class. There is also a major part of sociological critique of the politics of ethnic education, ranging from Japanese colonial period 1895–1945, the KMT partisan period 1945–1987, and contemporary period from 1987 till the present. The micro-politics of this research is based on oral history interviews and focus groups conducted with 40 secondary school teachers, supplemented by textbook analysis and documentary analyses of educational reports, policies and Aboriginal Laws.

The research is based on qualitative data, mostly drawing upon teachers' life histories from four different ethnic groups. Narrative data from Hoklo, Hakka, Mainlanders, and Aborigines teachers are provided to demonstrate their particular management of ethnic identity in relation to their conception of ethnic recognition. Teachers of each ethnic group have varied conceptualisation of their own ethnicity. The research involved two historical periods as well as four ethnic groups in Taiwan. I, then, draw comparisons both between pre- and post-Martial Law period and among the four ethnic groups, in order to explore the impact of the socio-political-historical complexities on teachers' identity formation and on their conceptualisation of ethnic recognition.

The conceptualisation of ethnicity, at the policy level, has been substantially affected by the current political and social climate and by curriculum and textbook reforms. In schools, pedagogical approaches to ethnicity appear to be dependent on regulative discourses that are, in turn, underpinned by the hierarchical structures of social order and cultural knowledge. This research addresses a knowledge gap between teachers' pedagogy and curriculum. Teachers have to cope, not just with the intellectual stress of ethno-cultural ignorance, but also with psychological and emotion-related stress associated with confusion about their own identity and mis-recognition by others. The

evidence uncovered in this thesis shows that identity and recognition are an inseparable couplet. The issue of ethnicity as school knowledge needs to refer to the dialogical relationship between identity and recognition. Within a his-

torically oppressed educational context, teachers' biographical reflections can be used to construct a critical professional pedagogy on ethnicity and to resist colonial curricula.