

Young Speakers of a Heritage Language: Hakka Speakers in Vienna

Ralf Vollmann*

ralf.vollmann@uni-graz.at

Institute of Linguistics

University of Graz, Austria

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1064-5104>

Tek Wooi Soon

twsoon72@gmail.com

Global Hakka Research

Abstract

Increased global migratory mobility lead to ‘superdiverse’ societies especially in urban agglomerations, with many family languages. Overseas Chinese, frequently in a secondary migration, reached European countries and established their own close-knit communities. A smaller portion of the Hakka community from Calcutta settled in Vienna (Austria) showing an interesting layering of identities as Chinese, Hakkas, Indians, Austrians -- with family ties to Toronto and other places. While the first generation of migrants is typically restrained by the linguistic barrier of the literate national language which is practically inaccessible to adult newcomers, their offspring is firmly embedded in the new culture, and therefore presents a last generation of speakers of the heritage language. In a series of qualitative interviews, young Hakka speakers from the (Austrian) Indian Hakka community were queried about their linguistic and identitarian situation, as well as their linguistic competence in Hakka, in the context of our global research on overseas Hakka usage. The young speakers effortlessly shifted from Hakka to German at kindergarten age, keeping Hakka as means of communication inside the family; some had to act as family translators when growing older. The Hakka language is held in high esteem but is being used and perceived strictly as a family language. Contrary to the older generation, there are no strong ties to other Hakka speakers, let alone a wider Hakka community. Hakka identity

and family origin relate back to India and often globally spread-out families with whom English is the best means of communication. A Chinese ancestry is a fact without much influence on the lives. The linguistic competence in Hakka is restricted to their own dialect and familial matters, as is typical of ‘weak speakers’ of a declining minority language. The language shift to German, higher education, and their emancipation from the ‘ethnic’ profession of running Chinese restaurants are indications of the full integration of the next generation into the local culture.

Keywords: Hakka Speakers, Heritage language, Language Identity, Language Shift, Minority Language Speakers

1. Background

1.1. Migrant Languages and Language Shift

The linguistic description of “language obsolescence”, “language shift” and “language death” came into the limelight with the long-term observations of Scottish Gaelic by Nancy Dorian (cf., e.g., Dorian, 1981) and other authors at that time (e.g., Dressler, 1981). It must be pointed out that “death” is an anthropomorphic metaphor and therefore potentially problematic (cf. Denison, 1977; de Swaan, 2010, p. 66). Language obsolescence studies describe what happens when a smaller, often unwritten language used locally by a minority group is being abandoned by its speakers in favour of a dominant language which has higher communicative value (cf. de Swaan, 2013), is used in meso- and acrolectal functional domains such as education, administration, science, business, for which it has been elaborated (cf., e.g., Volkmann & Soon, 2021), and is usually supported and promoted through language policies, typically across three generations, from ‘fluent speakers’ across ‘semi-speakers’ (or ‘terminal speakers’, cf. Dressler, 1981) to ‘rememberers’ or ‘non-speakers’ (cf. Dorian, 1973, 1977, 1978, 1981); as there is considerable variation of competence, these categories were further subcategorized in greater detail by said authors.

Languages become dominant by being originally used as lingua francas by non-native speakers across wider areas, and then get eventually codified in a written form, a process usually connected to some political development (cf. Hobsbawm, 1996), fulfilling a need for wider (“globalized”) communication (cf. Mufwene, 2010); in the same logic, “smaller” languages traditionally persist longer in non-central, marginal areas (cf. “hill tribes”, etc.) with fewer contacts

to central economic and cultural areas. With increased interaction and mobility, linguistic ‘minorities’ and ‘dialect speakers’ alike will come under the influence of a dominant language (cf. ‘abstand’ and ‘ausbau’ languages; Kloss, 1978 [1952]; 1967; 1987). In contemporary, historically unprecedented mobility and globalization, beginning in the middle of the 19th century and gaining momentum in the 20th century, allochthonous minorities migrated to (supposedly) monolingual nation-states (or regions) in Europe (and other parts of the world), bringing a new type of multilingualism to urban centres (cf. Extra & Yağmur, 2004). In this situation of “superdiversity” (Vertovec, 2006; 2007), it is a matter of communicative needs and usefulness, and of cultural adaptation for minority speakers to shift from their first language to the prevailing central languages (cf. de Swaan, 2010, 2013). In any case, most speakers of smaller languages are multilingual, so that the competence in the smaller language adds no or very little communicative value for a speaker (cf. de Swaan, 2010, 2013a, b). It can be assumed, though, that there has been migration at all times (cf. Mufwene, 2010), and most of the language shifts that may have happened may even remain unknown to us.

The loss of a language is often experienced as a partial loss of identity. This refers to the symbolic function of a language to express an identity. While it is useful for a social group to maintain their identity as a collective and safeguard their language-bound cultural capital, the communicative value of a language is more important for an individual (cf. de Swaan, 2010, 2013); for that reason, small languages will be abandoned by speakers and families in spite of feelings of loss.

For research on language shift, it is the semi-speakers (or “weak speakers”) who draw most attention. They are known to have a reduced set of grammatical rules influenced by a dominating language, morphological and phonological restrictions, restricted communicative competence, recourse to loanwords and foreign structures, and sometimes incomplete production, with fragmented chunks instead of full sentences (cf. Dressler & de Cillia, 2006). In many respects, these characteristics resemble findings from second-language learning, child language development and language loss (aphasia). The changes observed in language decay are reductions, not just simplifications, because they are not countered by other developments and instead reduce the functionality of the language, and thus prefer to switch to another language for certain communicative needs.

1.2. The Hakka language and identity

Hakka is a South-Sinitic language¹ which derives from Northern Middle Chinese and has its centre in northwest Guangdong (cf. Leong, 1997); it is assumed that the Hakka people are the latest layer of southward migration from 1000 to 500 years ago (Cohen, 1968; Mong, 1980; Leong, 1997). Their name Hakka (客家, lit. ‘guest people’; cf. Skinner, 1997; Leo, 2015) seems to refer to their role as tenants of land in areas owned by the Punti who spoke what is today called Cantonese). The Hakka identity probably developed in the 18th and 19th century in response to discrimination by the Puntis; due to this tension and danger, the Hakka identity relies on a superordinate Hân (漢) Chinese identity (cf. Zhang, 2017, p. 2). Hakka became a literate language among Christians missionized by the Basel missionaries (cf. Klein, 2003), a tradition which persists in Christian communities, e.g., in Hong Kong and Sabah.

The Hakka dialect continuum (Hashimoto, 1973; He, 1993; Lai, 2015; Coblin, 2019) between Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong is one of the (recognized) ‘dialects’ (*fangyan*) of Chinese and is the language of 30 to 50 million people. Since not all Hakka dialects are mutually understandable, Hakka ‘as a language’ is also defined by the political and conflicted distinction with other groups both in Fujian and Guangdong; some varieties are ‘mixed’ and therefore not fully part of “Hakka”.

The Hakkas migrated inside of South China and formed strong communities all over Guangdong and Guangxi, even in Sichuan. Furthermore, they form an important group of overseas Chinese from the times when migration happened with ships and was therefore restricted to populations with access to the sea. They are particularly numerous in various parts of Southeast Asia, Taiwan (cf. Yeh et al., 2004; Hakka Committee, 2016) and Suriname, as well as on islands such as Mauritius. Since these migrants left China before the introduction of Standard Chinese (‘Putonghua’, in 1956), they are originally not linguistically united, and their linguistic situation remained more complicated and varied.

The Hakkas, originating from a scarce, mountainous land in north-western Guangdong, developed a self-image as hardworking and diligent, and usually entered borderlands as pioneers where they occupied marginal economies and often became quite successful and wealthy by occupying an economic niche (cf. Oxfeld, 2007). At the same time, they see themselves as a

marginal or mobile group, reinterpreting the word ‘Hakka’ (hag ga / ke jia) as ‘wanderers/migrants’. Like many overseas Chinese, they often act as a middleman minority (cf. Blalock, 1967; for Chinese, Wang, 1991; Sowell, 1996; Ha, 1998).

Hakka migrants, already endowed with a strong sense of lineage loyalty (cf. Klein, 2003) relied on mutual help for migration and job opportunities at new places (chain migration, cf. MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964; for Hakkas: Leo, 2015; Carstens, 2018). Family relationships and solidarity with friends or people from the same place of origin were important factors for establishing networks of trust inside a close-knit social group, a factor which has contributed to the preservation of the Hakka culture and the Hakka language abroad, even if immersed in different majorities. However, the latest generation of Hakka youth worldwide is reported to no longer speak the Hakka language (cf. Ting, 2018; Vollmann & Soon, 2018, 2022, etc.), following a global trend of minority language abandonment.

1.3. The Austrian Hakkas from India

Hakkas also settled in Calcutta (cf. Zhang & Sen, 2013, p. 206; Zhang, 2015, 2017; Biswas, 2017, p. 49) where they specialized in the leather and tanning business which made many of them wealthy (cf. Oxfeld, 2007; Liang, 2007). They created their own infrastructure with Chinese schools (cf. Zhang, 2020) and newspapers and employed Indians who learned to speak Hakka. The multi-ethnic situation of Calcutta would not allow assimilation of one group by any other (cf. Oxfeld, 1992, p. 268; Biswas, 2017), so that the Hakka culture (like other Chinese groups) remained culturally and linguistically intact. Conflicts between China and India (in 1962) led to various problems including the internment of ethnic Chinese and even the expatriation of thousands of Indian Chinese (cf. Zhang, 2015). With the decline of economic opportunities (and the political tensions), many Indian Hakkas migrated again, most went to Toronto, quite a few came to Vienna, smaller groups settled in other places (cf. Vollmann & Soon, 2020). The majority is now dispersed in other countries, with only a small community left in Calcutta where the self-maintained infrastructure (schools, newspapers) has vanished.

The ‘Indian’ Hakkas arrived in Vienna from the 1970s until the 1990s through chain migration. The earliest arrivals learned German only rudimentarily ‘on the job’ (as waiters), later migrants attended courses for German; nonetheless, the speaking of Hakka was essential in their families and even at their workplaces, which very often were Chinese restaurants in which Hakka

or Chinese was used for internal communication. An estimated 135 men originally came to Austria, then often married Hakka women from Calcutta, sometimes brought their own parents to Austria, and had Austrian-born children; there are various ties between the families, and almost all are Austrian citizens. The influx stopped after 1990, when new immigration laws made it difficult to get a work permit. Some Austrian Hakkas left for Canada or other places (UK, Sweden). The number of Hakkas from this particular group is now 560+ persons, most of them living in Vienna (Vollmann & Soon, 2023) – a minuscule linguistic minority in a superdiverse environment (Vertovec 2006, 2007).

Specialising in gastronomy was the primordial opportunity for Chinese migrants to Europe, fitting with the aim of many to have their own business, the relative cultural importance of Chinese cuisine together with the acquired Indian flavour of the Indian-Chinese recipes, and only little need to learn a lot of German for this business. In the early time, the newcomers were working in restaurants owned by Taiwanese migrants where Guoyu (Standard Chinese) was used in the kitchen; a language they could not speak, but would be able to acquire, also with the help of fellow Hakkas. Later, Hakkas were able to establish their own restaurants and subsequently employ mostly their Hakka friends; others would find (kitchen-related) jobs in hospital kitchens or supermarkets. One group of Hakkas became postal workers, again relying on group cohesion; the women's jobs are a bit more varied (Vollmann & Soon, 2023).

The restaurant business is very competitive and in order to survive, the Hakkas worked hard and sought special economic niches such as takeaway services, pizzerias, targeting Asian tourist groups or offering Japanese or Vietnamese food; a few restaurants offer Indian food and advertise the special Indian-Chinese/ Hakka cuisine. Many of the first-generation migrants are now retired, some moved on to Toronto, some are reaching retirement age soon, and the Austrian-born offspring has different plans on the basis of more varied education and proficiency in German. In this way, only a small number of Hakka restaurants remains today.

2. Material and Method

In a series of qualitative open interviews and through participant observation between 2018 and 2022 (Vollmann & Soon, 2020, 2023), Viennese “Indian” Hakkas have been observed, interviewed and recorded. Furthermore, a questionnaire and a census of most members of the

community helped to assess the linguistic situation of this small migrant group of ca. 560 people. In the interviews and conversations, Hakka, English, German and Chineseⁱⁱ languages were used in order to evaluate the linguistic competence of the speakers of various age groups. The recordings were transcribed, annotated, and qualitatively analysed. The data were collected from (and with the help of) ca. 40 to 50 consultants (40 questionnaire data, 20+ interviews as well as many informal conversations on various occasions).

The aims of this investigation are as follows: (a) the documentation of the Hakka language in the context of global migration, (b) intergenerational language maintenance and language loss in the migratory situation, (c) sociolinguistic aspects of first- and second-generation migrants' use of Hakka, (d) the construction of overseas Hakkas' identity. For this study, interviews about the intergenerational transmission of Hakka were selected.

3. Analysis

3.1. Hakka as a family language in Vienna

The Hakka language is in active use both in restaurant kitchens and in families. The picture is rather uniform among all families: First-generation migrants (G1) learned only little German, worked mostly inside the group (and if not, they were still in some Chinese-speaking environment), met mostly with the other Hakkas, and had little private contact with other groups. Beside Hakka, they usually know Hindi and English. Those who arrived historically later and at a younger age (i.e., as teenagers, young adults) (G2) speak better German, but also use Hakka; one restaurant owned by G1 Hakkas is hiring Indian employees for the delivery service, thereby relying on their Hindi language competence. They sometimes attended courses for German. The Hakkas born in Vienna (G3) learned German only when entering kindergarten or school, but quickly became proficient speakers of German, learned English at school (not in the family), can use Hakka with their family, and don't speak Hindi. Some people among the old and middle-aged generation know Chinese from their education in India (often only up to primary level, after which they may have continued education in English) and activate it for watching Chinese media and for workplaces in other Chinese restaurants; the younger generation (G3) partly attended Saturday classes, as is customary for many overseas Chinese. Some of the G3 theoretically wish to transmit Hakka to the next generation, but do not expect to marry endogamously and therefore expect Hakka to disappear. It seems that the male offspring is usually less interested in these language

matters, some are reported to understand Hakka, but answer only in German – they would usually not agree to be interviewed either.

For the G1 adult generation males, it was important to marry a Hakka woman. Many succeeded by marrying another Indian-Chinese person from Calcutta, others tried to find a spouse in Meizhou – their ancestral ‘land of origin’ in China, others could not achieve this goal and remained unmarried. A few married Chinese women of a different ‘dialect’ group which sometimes shifted the family language to Chinese. In some cases, younger G1/G2 men and women met each other in Vienna, e.g., when working in the same restaurant. In most cases, Hakka is the family language of the G1 which is also used with the children; for younger G1/G2, Hakka may have been used only with the grandparents generation, the parents speaking English or German at home already.

The younger generation (G3) therefore uses Hakka as a means of communication depending on the (low) German language proficiency level of their parents and grandparents, as well as the habits of the parents. The younger G1 generation has a solid competence in German, although there are second language-learners’ phonological and grammatical deviations; the young folk will speak Hakka as their family language, if the parents are so inclined and the grandparents do not speak any German or English. However, since the teenagers are typically no longer interested in the meetings of the older people, communication in Hakka has become restricted in practice to only the closest relatives. In some cases, father and mother use different languages with their children, e.g., the father speaks German, while the mother uses English or Hakka with them. Often, Hakka is the only means of communication with the grandparents. Due to the small size of the group, most speakers have only little tolerance for other accents than their own (Indian) Meixian Hakka dialect.

We have determined that today, there are approximately 560 Indian Hakkas in Vienna (Vollmann & Soon, 2023); at the time of this analysis, we were focusing on a subgroup of 42 persons in 11 families. As shown in (01), (almost) all people speak Hakka and German, only G1 speaks Hindi, a majority speaks English, and a third can speak Chinese.

Table 1. Number of Speakers for each language per generation across 42 Viennese Hakkas with no evaluation of the degree of competence.

gen.	total	M	F	HK	EN	IN	DE	CH
------	-------	---	---	----	----	----	----	----

G1	21	16	5	21 (100%)	9 (43%)	21 (100%)	20 (100%)	06 (29%)
G2	16	7	9	14 (88%)	10 (63%)	2 (13%)	16 (100%)	05 (31%)
G3	5	3	2	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)	01 (20%)

Abbreviations: G1-G3 (generations); M/F (male/female); HK (Hakka); EN (English); IN (Indianⁱⁱⁱ); DE (German); CH (Chinese).

Of 16 G1 men, all but two were or are married to a HK woman from the same group (two couples met each other in Vienna, all others matched in Calcutta); one man married a Hakka wife from Malaysia, and one man married a Taiwanese woman (not Hakka); in the latter case, the family language shifted to Mandarin Chinese, but he is using Hakka at work. Among the G2 analysed in this sample, there are five Hakka couples; the Hakka wives are from India (Calcutta, Delhi) and (one) from Pakistan;^{iv} one of these families uses German as their family language, and another man who married an (autochthonous) Austrian wife also uses German with his family. Finally, the younger generation G3 is as yet unmarried and does not intend to restrict their partnership wishes to Hakkas (although there is one – German-speaking – young all-Hakka couple).

The linguistic practices of middle-aged migrants involves quite a bit of borrowing and code-switching, showing the influences of Hindi, English and German, cf. (excerpt 01) as an example.

(01) Excerpt 1: G1 Hakka speaker, speaking English and Hakka

Because I have to, I got a student visa, that's why I had, it's compulsory for me to go to a school and get a **Bestätigung**^v yeah, and then I go to the **Magistrat** then only I get a visa. [...] The school is just that, what's that, ə, ə, **Sprachkurs. Sprachkurs.** Not an ordinary school like my children goes, it's like **Sprachkurs.** [...] rhin vui gi ai si giu ngi ngian nga den ngin – loi rhong rhi loi ao ti li na **tourist visa, but** ngi oi **extend** ngi e visa, gi **kali**^{vi} bun **half year,** gi **kali** bun ban ngian e, ge ngi oi **extend** ngi jiu zai ki ge **university** ge o bau miang tug su, bau miang tug su. dan he ngai rhiu oi zo gung a, ngai rhiu xi rhau cien oi zo gung a.

[...] *Because it was easier for us to come to Austria with tourist visa in 92, but if you were to extend your visa, they only gave half year [extension], [...], then you want to extend you must go enrol at the university, enrol for a course. But I had to work, I needed money, I had to work.*

3.2. ♀1 (ca. 40)

The father of Austrian-born ♀1 attended a Chinese school in India and therefore can speak and write Chinese, English and Hindi; he arrived in Austria in the early 1970s together with two

friends; two years later, he could bring his fiancée from India and marry her in Austria. Together with other families, they managed to own a restaurant. Later, the old grandparents (G0) also moved to Austria, UK and Canada (where the siblings of G1 are located). At first, the restaurant was quite successful, later, the business became more difficult. The couple had only one daughter (♀1). The father learned German quite well and passed the exam for the restaurant concession; the mother reportedly did not learn much German.

The family situation was such that in the early days, three families lived (and worked) together; for this reason, Hakka was the only language of six adults and five children at home. One of the mothers was taking care of all children, while the other adults would be working in the restaurant. Therefore, the young girl in question spoke only Hakka until she attended kindergarten; she does not remember how she shifted to German; her mother reported that one day, she said “Decke zusammenlegen” (‘fold the blanket together’) – a typical command from kindergarten care.

♀1 also mentions that her parents did not explain many details of their lives and migration; they were always busy working, often also worrying about the business. She had no problems at school with language, quite the opposite, she was always eloquent in German. Her peer group were other Austrians, and ethnic differences were never discussed among them; she sees herself as ethnically Chinese – not Hakka. As a child, she could discern the difference between Chinese (which her parents could speak) and Hakka but did not question this any further. She herself went to a Chinese class for a short while, but did not learn it properly; however, she understands quite a bit when hearing it.

When her parents considered emigrating to Canada, the teenager opposed, threatening to stay back in Austria alone; later, she visited Toronto several times. Going to Calcutta for Chinese New Year was adventurous and strange for the small child, but also rewarding when she was a teenager, meeting old friends who had moved from Austria to Canada, enjoying the “old school behaviour” of the boys, even falling in love with one of them; the teenagers started exchanging letters between Austria, India and Canada, communicating in English. She was aware that her family was wealthier than many other people in India. After many relatives died or emigrated, she feels like there is now “nobody left” in Calcutta. In Austria, the contact with other Hakka youngsters decreased after puberty, but she helped other kids with their learning. In part, this is also due to the age difference, her being older than most of the other offspring.

♀1 is able to communicate well in Hakka, but quickly switches back to English and German. She recognizes that her Hakka is not fully developed and restricted to certain topics. Her two children do not speak any Hakka (their fathers are autochthonous Austrians). She mentions speaking Hakka mostly with one other woman in her extended family.

Discussing Hakka identity, ♀1 thinks highly of the ‘values’ of the parent generation such as “respect for old people and parents”. She appreciates the friendship and loyalty of the old generation in Austria (even across occasional dissonances) and would wish a similar situation for the younger people who are dispersed in the general population. Her notion of “Hakka” refers only to this small migrant group in Austria, not to the idea of the “Hakkas in the world”.

3.3. ♂2 (ca. 30)

The father of ♂2 came to Austria, secured his livelihood, and married a Hakka woman from Calcutta. The parents are proficient in Hakka, English, Hindi; they would sometimes use Hindi in order to not be understood by the children; their main language at home is Hakka. They were able to get their own restaurant and had two children; later, the family could bring the grandparents to Vienna, who are monolingual speakers of Hakka (understanding, however, Chinese on TV). The father found German very difficult, his wife managed to learn it well enough to deal with the outer world. ♂2 spoke only HK before entering kindergarten, where he quickly adopted German; there is nothing noteworthy for him about being bilingual – “one can think in both languages”. His Hakka competence did not suffer from learning German, as he needed to use Hakka at home; even the brothers spoke HK with each other, when they were younger. He thinks that his Hakka lexicon is restricted, but he understands all Indian Hakkas effortlessly; however, when he occasionally listened to tourists from Malaysia, he found them more difficult to understand.

When he was younger, he met the other Hakka children, but did not keep in touch when getting older. It was only at university that he met other Hakkas again, when they were studying sinology; at that time, they were mostly speaking German with each other. He had learned some Chinese at age 14 with a private teacher for four children, which proved to be useful for his studies; Hakka is also helpful for learning Chinese, as it is similar and basically differs in ‘tone’ (phonology). His brother happened to fall in love with a Hakka woman whom he married. However, the two usually don't speak Hakka with each other. ♂2 has an autochthonous Austrian girlfriend.

When speaking Hakka, ♂2 avoids using German loanwords, as his old grandparents would not understand them. He realizes, though, that he inserts German junctors into his speaking of Hakka at other times. When asked, he does not know how to say ‘because’ in Hakka, and when *ingvi* is proposed, he understands, but thinks that it is taken from Standard Chinese (*yin wei*).

As a teenager, there was no discussion among his peers about ethnicity; since his time as a student, he has become more aware of his identity and considers himself to be Chinese, based on his physical appearance and cultural background. When abroad, he will call himself an Austrian because of his citizenship, though. The “Hakka identity” is for him part of the Hân Chinese identity.

Calcutta, which he visited since childhood until age 21, is not his “homeland”, but a “holiday destination”. The family attended family events and Chinese New Year. At a younger age, the cousins would speak HK with each other, because the Indian Hakka youth speaks Hakka quite well. Only the young people from Canada are not very good at speaking Hakka. Because the Austrian children were not good in English, they would mix Hakka and English when speaking to the cousins from Canada.

The extended international family has a family chat group where they exchange photos and information. Online communication happens in the only language understood by everybody: English. Rarely, one might attempt to write Hakka in a “pinyin” form in their Viennese chat group. When writing Chinese characters, ♂2 tends to think in Standard Chinese and would not read the text in Hakka^{vii}.

Comparing a relative from China to the Viennese Hakkas, he observes some difference, assuming that Putonghua today influences the Hakka language in China, while the Viennese Hakka language is not affected in this way. When ♂2 was in Taiwan, he heard Hakka in the underground stations, but was not aware of the Taiwanese Hakka minority as such. ♂2 would like to work in China for a while and train more in speaking Chinese.

For ♂2, Chinese culture is represented by the food and family values, especially caring for the older people. He appreciates speaking Hakka, as this is “something special, being an Austrian”. He would like to teach Hakka to his children in the future. He has contemplated continuing the family restaurant but is now working in a different business.

3.4. ♀3 (ca. 17)

In this case study, it is possible to compare the interviews with the teenager with that of the parents. The ancestors of the family came from Meixian (Meizhou) to India two generations earlier, the parents of ♀3 emigrated at a young age in around 1992 and met each other in Vienna; they have two children, a girl (♀3, aged 17) and a boy (aged 14).

3.4.1. The parents

The two adults came to Austria with tourist visas and then got employed by their friends in Austria; however, in the 1990s, this method was restricted already and allotted only six-month extensions of the visa at a time; therefore, some of these later migrants applied for university courses which made them eligible for longer visas. This is also the reason why this age group is better in German than the earlier migrants. Like many migrants, the couple does not watch Austrian TV, but instead Chinese and Indian movies and series. Since they had learned Chinese at school in India (which means writing Chinese characters – which they report having forgotten in the meantime), they improved their Chinese competence from media consumption.

The two children (14; 17) speak Hakka with their parents, but their best language is German (and English); they do not speak Chinese and never learned Hindi. The parents “justify” this situation with the Austrian school curriculum where the children have to learn Latin and French already – putting language learning exclusively in the context of schools. However, the parents are happy that their children are good at Hakka, especially when compared to relatives and friends in Canada and Australia. They are, however, aware, that Hakka will not survive into the next generation.

(02) B: Yeah, the next generation, then Hakka no more.

A: Then all finish. If they marry a[n] Austrian, European or what, they won't speak any Hakka, and then it is dead.

Since the parents themselves still married from the same Hakka group, they were asked about the marital expectations for their children. The traditional view is no longer upheld, they emphasized that this is their children's decision. When asked about their own identity, they started with ‘Chinese’, but then ironically related to their situation as ‘gipsy, wanderer’ – taking the word ‘Hakka’ literally in the sense of ‘people without homeland’. However, they also explained that they prefer their new homeland Austria over India and negated any connection to China. As for the presumed

identity of their children, the parents are aware of the inevitable cultural assimilation, diagnosing a ‘European mentality’. They also report that the children do no longer want to visit India. Questions about “identity” are clearly imposed by the interviewers and are normally not an issue for the interviewees, rather, there are personal conflicts related to (incompatible) intergenerational views (excerpt 03).

- (03) Parents of ♀3, when asked about their children’s “identity”
- I1: gia deu ngin vui gia deu qi ga he ao ti li ngin o?
Do they think they are Austrians?
- A: nga moi e lai e, ja^{viii}, Chinese.
My daughter and my son, yes, Chinese.
- I1: Chinese? Austrian Chinese? So they think their identity is Austrian Chinese?
- B: But the children grow up here, the mentality is all from European.
- A: European mentality. They don't have a –
- B: Sometime we don't understand them also.
- A: It's very difficult to ə –
- B: The thinking is – learn from school is –
- A: quite different from Asian.

In another part of the conversation, a similar topic came up again, where, once again, the parents mentioned the ‘European mentality’ of their children and ended up saying that their children do not know what ‘Hakka identity’ means.

- (04a) I1: ngi hiau tung gi gong ai deu nga deu zung ged rhin a, nga deu tong rhin a, ai deu dau li he mau?
Do you tell them the Chinese values?
- A: ... gi m gong. gi diin ngin rhiu European mentality. [...]
They don't talk about it. They have European mentality.
- B: gi di ded, dan he gi voi m gong.
They know, but they don't talk about it.
- (04b) I2: And their friends are mainly Austrian?
- A: Yeah. Mainly Austrian.
- I2: And they consider themselves just Austrian? They don't say I am Chinese or Hakka?
- B: They don't know what is Hakka.

When specifically asked about Hakka values, the parents mention respect for parents, family education, obedience, not to mix with bad gangs, no drinking. These statements showed some mild dissatisfaction with the cultural clash, or simply an intergenerational dissonance related to puberty.

The discussion of identity remained vague, as the respondents simply used the racial label ‘Chinese’, which does not describe their living practices, and then only referred to being migrants (as Hakkas, i.e., ‘guests/wanderers’) now rooted in Austria. It turns out that Hakka identity is largely abstract and undefined, simply taken as a familial fact which does not require (or allow) explanation and vanishes in the next generation.

3.4.2. *The views of the daughter* ♀3

The daughter (♀3; 17 at the time of the recording), grew up speaking Hakka early in life, but then entered an Austrian kindergarten where she learned German. She kept speaking Hakka in the extended family and with her caretaker who was also a Hakka. Her younger brother (14) is reported to understand, but never replies in Hakka. ♀3 later reported to have experienced ‘stress’ during the interview for having to understand a foreign Hakka accent, however, she was able to communicate. The interviewer avoided using too complex words or sentences and resorted to inserting loanwords from English and German. Among the grammatical observations, it can be noted that the younger speakers (G2) never used Hakka junctors (i.e., they would always say *weil* ‘because’ instead of *rhin vui*) and also do not understand the Hakka counterparts, while their parents are using these words (see excerpt 01).

(05) I1: *ngi go ded ngi zui comfortable e language he mag gai?*

With which language do you feel most comfortable?

♀3: **Ähm, ded vun.** *dan he ngai rha rhi zung rhi English.* [...]

German. But I also like to speak English. [...]

dan he hag ga fa jiu ngai tung nga ma mi ba bi gong.

But I speak Hakka with my parents.

♀3 is fully proficient in German, and fluent, but lexically weaker in Hakka which she uses with her family and, more rarely, with friends. When ♀3 was young, she was sent to a Chinese school, but soon gave up due to her school workload, and reports not remembering much. While the parents were somewhat unhappy with the ‘European mentality’ (see above), ♀3 (and other young people) actually respected their families very much and considered competence in the Hakka language as an important family identity marker.

- (06) ♀3: Ja. Also es ist so: Für meine Eltern es ist eben sehr wichtig,
dass ich Hakka gelernt habe, [...]
*Yes. Well, it is like that: For my parents, it is very important that
I have learned Hakka, [...]*

♀3 admits that she stopped meeting the Hakka community since she was a teenager, which correlates with the minor dissatisfaction of her parents about the supposed disinterest of the children in family meetings – which are probably boring for the young folk. On the other hand, ♀3 is keen to know more about her own ‘ethnic’ background.

♀3 reported that her identity construction as a child/youth was problematic, because her racial characteristics (Chinese) do not match her cultural affiliation (Indian) and her linguistic background (Hakka), reinforced by her own and other people’s lack of background knowledge about both Hakkaness and global migration patterns. The teenager reports her unease speaking about it in (excerpt 07), also giving an example of her Hakka competence.

- (07) Explaining one’s identity to others as a Hakka teenager
I1: ə, rhiu rhin mun go ngi he me a **Chinese** mau?
Eh have ppl ask PST 2 be not.be DEM Chinese not
Have you ever been asked if you are Chinese?
♀3: an do ngin.
so many ppl
Many people [asked me].
I1: and then ngi rham men dab?
and then 2 how answer?
And then how do you answer?
♀3: **Ähm, also,** [...] xien ngai va, **ja,** ngai he **Chinese,**
Ähm, also first 1 say yes 1 be Chinese
then ngai m oi gi di ngin mun mag ge, mi ha zang
then 1 not want 3 PL ppl ask what later
ngai go tai e, ngai va, m he, nga ge ma mi ba bi
1 cross big R 1 say not be 1.PSS R mama papa
rhin tu loi e, **and then** gia di ngin mi bai mun ngi
India come R and then 3.PSS PL ppl underst ask 2
rhong e rhin tu loi e, **then** zang ngai voi **explain,**
look REL India come R then only 1 will explain,
gia di rhin tu cud se e, dan he nga deu ngin nga e
3.PSS PL India come.out R but 1.PSS PL ppl 1 R
Großeltern han rhiu ped ge **generation e,** ge di ngin jiu
Großeltern or have other R generation R 3 PL ppl then
he em em **China** cud se e mi a zang jiu aa rhin tu

be em em China come.out R ??? only then DEM India
 loi e. gia deu va: **Oh, OK.**
 come R 3 PL say oh OK.

Uh, well, [...] first I say, yeah, I am Chinese, then I don't want them to ask anything else. Later, when I grew older, I said, no, my parents were from India, and then every time they would ask how come you are from India, then only I would explain, yeah, they were born in India, but our grandparents and other generations, they were born in China and later came to India. They say, oh, OK.

Interestingly, while the parents sensed a lack of knowledge and interest in the young people on their familial background, ♀3 (and others) expressed regret for not having been told more about what it actually means to be Hakka.

- (08). I1: ngi cii ga bun sin, ə, rhiu mau hin qi xiong oi ə, di dau do
 did, ə, guan rhi hag ga e,
 *Are you personally interested in knowing more about
 Hakka, anything? [...]*
- ♀3: ngai he interested mo?^{ix} Yeah, weil ngai siong bai^x like,
 ähm:, in the past, I, like, my parents, they didn't tell me
 much, like, I'm, like, why are you coming from India, why
 am I not black? Like, I really, I really asked that question
 because I was that little. And then I searched it in Google.
 And it says, like, oh, it's a, it's a place in China, and it's a–
 another Chinese language, and my parents didn't tell me
 that. I had to search for that. So I really don't know much
 about the cultures and so on, so yeah.

Another ‘problem’ with this Indian-Chinese identity concerned the family name. Since the Hakka youth do not speak Chinese and do not relate to China, but their names are nowadays often written in pinyin in official documents, while the family uses the Hakka spelling, the teenager could not tell at school how her name is ‘correctly’ pronounced.

- (09). ♀3: and like, ähm: the, my Chinese name is also, in the school
 Klassenbuch^{xi}, and a lot of teachers asked me once, ähm:,
 how to pronounce the name, and I'm like, “I don't know.”
 And they are, like, really confused, but I'm like, “it's not
 my fault.”

♀3 also feels like she is a ‘weak speaker’ of her heritage language. Since she expects to marry a non-Hakka, she thinks, like the people before, that the decline of the language is imminent.

3.5. ♀4 (ca. 18)

The grandparents (G1) of ♀4 (18) came from India to Vienna, ran restaurants, and did not learn much German; instead, they asked their children (i.e., ♀4's parents, G2) to translate for them. This G2, who were also born in India and married Indian Hakka spouses, is now running the family restaurants, but speak mostly German (with an accent). Having grown up with Hakka as a small child, ♀4 (G3) speaks Hakka with her grandparents and some other relatives but uses German with her parents and her friends. While she is able to speak Hakka with, e.g., ♀3 – which they sometimes do as their secret language – she has greater problems to understand the interviewer with her different accent (a Malaysian-Hakka mixed dialect). The differences between the interviewer and the Viennese Hakkas can be exemplified in a short example in excerpt (10).

(10)	can	guan	coi	lai	vui?	ML
	con	gon	hoi	ngai	a?	VIE-G3
	con	gon	hoi	nai	e?	VIE-G2
	restaurant	at	where	PTC		(gloss)
	<i>Where is [your] restaurant?</i>					

These differences led to meta-discourses with ♀4 about her difficulty to fully understand the interviewer, as in the following passage:

- (11) I1: Okay. rhin vui ngi gong ngia ge gung gung po po he **teacher**,
yeah? |
Okay. Because you said your uncle is a teacher, yeah?
 ♀4: [No answer.]
 I1: No? Did you just say that your **gung gung po po** –
 ♀4: Oh, yeah yeah yeah, sorry, I- I'm just not used to your Hakka,
 that's why.
 I1: Because of my accent, or –?
 ♀4: Yeah, it's because, **ja**, your Hakka has, **ahm**, a different, **ahm** –
 I1: Did you understand what I just said, when I asked her [♀3] the
 question?
 ♀4: Oh, like, I didn't understand the first part, but, like, I could tell
 from the context.

Both young speakers ♀3 and ♀4 applied kinship terms from either Hindi (*chacha*) or German (*Onkel*) instead of the more specific Chinese kinship terminology, and thus did not distinguish uncles and aunts on one's father's side and mother's side – as Chinese and Hakka would normally

do. Austrian friends are puzzled nonetheless by these forms of address which are unusual in contemporary German.

The teenagers speak English well, but regret that their parents did not actively teach them, since they are themselves proficient speakers. Like ♀3, ♀4 had been sent to a Chinese school for learning Mandarin Chinese, but also gave up after some time; she is able to understand simple questions in Chinese, though.

The Hakka of the teenagers contains English and German loanwords; they only partly know that some of their words are Indian (e.g., *alu* ‘potato’), as they did not learn Indian languages like their parents. In a self-reflective statement, ♀4 explains that she does not ‘think about Hakka’ when using it, which is why she cannot ‘translate’ to and from Hakka. The spoken language is an unconscious competence for her, not like school languages which are a consciously available resource, including grammatical insights. For instance, she cannot give the paradigm of Hakka pronouns. This is a remarkable difference between spoken vernaculars and school-taught, standardised and codified languages which are made accessible through the teaching of grammar. Communication with ♀4’s younger brother takes place only in German, because he does not reply in Hakka, although he can understand. He seems to show no interest in the matter so far.

- (12) ♀4: No, I only speak German with my brother, because his Hakka is not really – great, and sometimes, I try to speak Hakka with him, but he always resp – like, answers in German, so – yeah.
I1: As long as he can understand you, you can still speak Hakka with him, right?
♀4: Genau^{xiii}, but I think it's, I feel, like, it feels weird to me, if I, like, speak to, like, Hakka to someone, and the person doesn't respond in Hakka. It's like I'm talking to a wall.

It turns out that, like ♀3, ♀4 has not been informed about her family history in India, and ‘dared not ask’ about it.

- (13) ♀4: gi di, gi di ngin m xiong va ngai di, **yeah**, ngai m di ded zo mag gai.
They, they wouldn't want to tell me, yeah, I don't know why.
I1: ngi rha m mun?
You also didn't ask?

- ♀4: ngai m gam mun.
I dared not ask.
- I1: m gam mun? ei, **OK**, rhong e m gam mun?
Dared not ask? Ok, why dared not ask?
- ♀4: ngai m di ded, ngai – [laughter]
I don't know, I –

The young people know that there were ‘problems’ in India, but do not know which – i.e., the internment of Indian Chinese in a Rajasthan camp, the expatriation of people, various kinds of obstacles for Chinese businesses, and public outrage against Chinese following military India-China conflicts; not to mention the misery in China before migrating to India. Additionally, to these historical events, the relatively wealthy Hakkas lived in impoverished quarters of the town (Tangra, Dhapa) known for violence and crime.

- (14) ♀4: Ahm, ich hab immer das Gefühl gehabt, daß irgendwie so viel passiert ist [...], daß sie mir nicht erzählen wollen, daß ich mich quasi damit auseinandersetzen muß, [...], weshalb ich dann auch gelernt hab, nicht nachzufragen. Weil ich glaub, [...] meine Großeltern haben viel durchgemacht, [...]
Well, I always had the feeling that a lot has happened [...], that they would not want to tell me, that I should not be bothered with it, [...], which is why I also learned not to ask further. Because I think my grandparents had bad experiences, [...]

As seen before, the complex combination of Chinese race, Indian culture, and Austrian citizenship creates a more difficult-to-define self-image for ♀4, a very similar description as found earlier with ♀3.

- (15) ♀4: I am Chinese, I am Hakka-Chinese, and I grew up, like, with the – all the traditions and stuff like that, but since I grew up here, it's still not 100 percent Chinese. Because, I would say that I am pretty integrated into Austrian culture. I am still Chinese, but it's kind of a mix, I would say.
- I1: Where is your Hakka identity? [laughs]
- ♀4: I do have, I- I, I don't really know.
- I1: So when you think of Chinese, what you have in mind, ahm, Chinese, and you – Hakka is not included in this Chinese.

- ♀4: No, yeah yeah, it is included. It is included. But ahm a lot of people, when they think of China, it's like mainland China, and like –
- ♀3: Mandarin, the language.
- ♀4: like **ja**, people from Shanghai, Peking and stuff, like that. But I don't feel like a part of that, because we – our culture is so different. It's kind of the same, but it's also different as well. So that's why I don't really put myself there. And I always say, okay, listen, I am Chinese, but I do not speak Mandarin, and that's the difference. [laughter] | **Ja**.
- ♀3: I used to say that I am Indian.
- ♀4: Oh. No, I never did that, because a lot of people assume that I am Indian, like, by blood. And I'm like, no, my parents were born there, but that doesn't mean I am Indian by blood. They were so confused. [laughter]

♀4 finally concluded by saying she 'feels really strongly bonded to Austria', to which ♀3 opposed saying she always wanted to move to Canada.

At the last meeting, the interviewers had prepared materials about Hakka history, language and culture for the young consultants; therefore, the meetings were an interesting experience for the young people who had not had previous exposure to other dialects of Hakka, barely knew anything about Hakka culture and language, and were eager to learn more about the matter.

3.6. Phonological and grammatical changes

It is immediately evident to a listener that the two younger speakers, ♀3 and ♀4, don't distinguish tones, and have an 'Austrian' kind of intonation also in Hakka. All L1-Hakkas would understand Malaysian Hakka, but the younger teenagers have problems, as they are not used to hearing a different accent of their language.

All speakers in this sample inserted German or English junctors, interjections and sometimes nouns and verbs into their speech. It is not entirely clear whether junctors such as 'because' originally existed in Hakka or might have possibly been borrowed from Standard Chinese which is an available elaborated resource for the other Sinitic languages.

The young speakers could understand and speak Hakka, nonetheless, constantly returned to speaking German or English, probably due to the content of the conversation for which they were sometimes struggling for the right words. Their competence in Hakka is, as they are well aware,

restricted to certain topics. It seems that other youth do not even usually speak Hakka, in spite of understanding it. Some people have no interest in languages, but only in communication.

3.7. ♂5: An Indian Hakka in Taiwan (ca. 25)

As mentioned earlier, the Austrian Hakka group described here are from Calcutta. The Calcutta Hakkas are constantly moving away from India, and therefore, it was possible to interview Indian Hakkas of various age groups in Taiwan, too. In this case, the linguistic situation of a young adult ♂5 (ca. 25 years old) is shortly described.

♂5 and the Hakkas in Vienna know each other in the sense that they know the respective family situations. He does not recall having personally met any young Vienna Hakkas, though. ♂5 grew up in Calcutta speaking HK in his family and teenage peer group; they would speak only Hakka and English, but not Hindi. He learned Hindi at school and does not think that he is very good at it; he reports being proficient in Nepali, because he lived in Gangtok (Sikkim) where he attended a boarding school^{xiii}. He does not know any Bengali, the local language of Bengal. His family is wealthy, but he decided to emigrate, and his family wishes him to go to Canada where parts of his family and most of his high school mates are already living, in order to bring them all over, too. However, this plan did not work out so far; he was instead accepted at a Taiwanese university in an English-language economics study program. He feels very comfortable in Taiwan, although he did not speak any Chinese before arriving there, and it took him one year to learn Chinese; however, he enjoys the personal freedom in a less enclosed community. At one point, he had a Taiwanese Hakka girlfriend, but her Hakka was weaker than his (for Taiwanese Hakka, cf. also Yeh et al., 2004, Vollmann & Soon, 2022). He could speak Hakka with her relatives, though, to their surprise; he mentioned that the Taiwanese Hakkas have a different identity from his own, though.

♂5 knows that the young people in Vienna can speak Hakka, but he can only use English with his Canadian Hakka peers. He does not know or care much about a “Hakka identity”, does not know the Chinese origins of his family, and he thinks that soon there won’t be any Hakkas left in Calcutta. Those who did not yet leave are bound by property which is difficult to sell. Although he could help with some of our linguistic questions, he considers his HK competence to be “lower intermediate level”; in case of lacking words, he would ask his father, or insert Chinese or English words. At his family in India, even the Indian maids are able to speak Hakka.

Although ♂5 is a proficient speaker of Hakka, it is clear that he sees his Hakkaness only as a family and environment variable with no further significance. The main goal of the Indian Hakkas as a group or his family is to reach Toronto; for him as an individual, he began to appreciate Taiwan, but he feels obliged to look for ways to move to Canada.

4. Discussion

Although the Hakka language has dozens of millions of speakers, it seems to be in fast intergenerational decline around the globe, being replaced by national standard languages and a global lingua franca (English) held in high esteem by most overseas Hakkas, with the further offer of learning Chinese (Putonghua/Guoyu) which is associated with the superordinate identity as Chinese. Hakka is being preserved only in very few places in the world (e.g., Sabah) for specific reasons (e.g., religion), but even there, changes are happening (cf. Ding & Goh, 2020). It is still strong in rural South China as a ‘dialect’, however, even there, general education in Putonghua influences the language, and the youth seems to shift to speaking Chinese as well.

Due to the relative exclusiveness of the Indian Hakka culture, the Hakka language of the old generation in Vienna is a rather authentic Meixian Hakka (with Hindi loanwords); they are self-conscious about speaking “the best” (i.e., an ‘unchanged’) Hakka, also referring to the status of Meixian Hakka as the most prestigious dialect, and to the fact that even in Meixian, Hakka is nowadays influenced by Putonghua which the old respondents by and large do not know. It is a common fact that migration separates language communities which from then on have differing developments. The allochthonous minority of the Hakkas in Calcutta does not seem to have learned Bengali, which shows, once again, how smaller languages are being replaced by the more central ones (cf. de Swaan, 2013a, b). All speakers are motivated to learn English as the globally useful (and ethnically neutral) lingua franca. This attitude gives prestige to English-speaking countries in terms of the aspirations of the migrants, whereas, e.g., learning (Austrian) German is an additional hurdle which leads to fewer business options for the first generation.

The Austrian-born generation, however, does not report any linguistic (or social) problems and is fully adapted to the German-speaking country and European culture, with the exception of some rather vague “Chinese values” of family and respect (which are neither specifically “Hakka” nor alien to Austrian culture). Other traditional values such as marriage traditions are rejected by the young people and replaced with “western” interpretations, leading to the same sociocultural

settings of marrying late or not at all, not having children early in adulthood, having few children only, or living in a patchwork family.

Hakka language use in the absence of Standard Chinese gave the language a particular value for a while, but cannot be maintained by such a small community, the more so, because of inter-generational differences. The younger generation defines themselves as ethnically Chinese Austrians who happen to know Calcutta well on familial grounds.

Questions of identity are not salient for this group; ‘being Hakka’ is a fact of life, but not further analysed and defined. The older people have a rather narrow definition of Hakka referring mostly to their own ‘Indian’ group, and ancestral roots in Meixian; for the young people, ‘Hakka’ is a family matter, and there is no sense of a broader ‘Hakka identity’. They just have a particular family language. On the other hand, Hakkaness can always rely on Chineseness, although this identification proves to be more difficult for some teenagers who feel no personal connection to China, while a few others seem to have accepted this broader self-definition, some by studying Chinese at the university.

5. Conclusion

In times of global migration, urban and international lifestyles, general education in central (dominant, elaborated, standardized) languages, and an ongoing dilution of minorities in superdiverse environments, it would be unrealistic to expect the maintenance of such a small linguistic community – a community which has survived as a somewhat larger group in the multi-ethnic, but highly segmented, predominantly “orate”^{xiv} society of Calcutta where no group would be able to absorb any other group (cf. Oxfeld, 2007). Even in Calcutta, the situation has now turned in favour of English-speaking education and a sharp reduction in the number of Hakka speakers, especially among young people who almost always emigrate. As such, they are an example of an internationally dispersed community. Linguistically, this situation leads to a relative importance of English as the most useful means of communication across the continents.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments and corrections; all remaining mistakes are the responsibility of the authors. Furthermore, we thank

our Hakka consultants in Austria who allowed us into their families, became friends, and provided us with their excellent cuisine.

References

- Biswas, D. (2017). The Chinese community of Kolkata: A case study on social geography. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 22(8), 48-54.
- Blalock, H. M. (1967). *Toward a theory of minority-group relations*. Wiley.
- Carstens, S. (2018). Multilingual Chinese Malaysians: The global dimensions of language choice. *Grazer Linguistische Studien* 89, 7-34.
- Coblin, W. S. (2019). *Common Neo-Hakka: A comparative reconstruction* (Language and Linguistics Monograph Series 63). Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica.
- Cohen, M. L. (1968). The Hakka or "Guest People": Dialect as a sociocultural variable in South-eastern China. *Ethnohistory* 15(3), 237-292. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/480829>
- Coluzzi, P., Du, J., & Woo, W. S. (2023). Are Cantonese (Yue) and Hokkien (Southern Min) contested languages? Language planning and language attitudes in China and Malaysia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2200401>
- Denison, N. (1977). Language death or language suicide? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 12(13), 13-22. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1977.15.191.13>
- De Swaan, A. (2010). Language systems. In N. Coupland (Ed.), *The handbook of language and globalization* (pp. 56-76). Blackwell.
- De Swaan, A. (2013). *Words of the world: The global language system*. Polity Press & Blackwell.
- Ding, S. L. & Goh, K. L. (2020). The impact of religion on language maintenance and shift. *Language in Society* 49(1), 31-59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404519000642>
- Dorian, N. (1973). Grammatical change in a dying dialect. *Language* 49, 413-438. <https://doi.org/10.2307/412461>
- Dorian, N. (1977). The problem of the semi-speaker in language death. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 12, 23-32. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1977.15.191.23>
- Dorian, N. C. (1978). The fate of morphological complexity in language death: Evidence from East Sutherland Gaelic. *Language* 54(3), 590-609. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.1978.0024>
- Dorian, Nancy C. (1981). *Language death: The life cycle of a Scottish Gaelic dialect*. University

of Pennsylvania Press.

- Dressler, W. U. (1981). Language shift and language death: A protean challenge for the linguist. *Folia Linguistica XV*(1-2), 5-28. <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin.1981.15.1-2.5>
- Dressler, W. & de Cillia, R. (2006). Spracherhaltung, sprachverfall, sprachtod [Language maintenance, language decline and language death]. In H. E. Wiegand (Ed.), *Soziolinguistik [Sociolinguistics]* (HSK 3.3) (2nd edn.) (pp. 2258-2271). de Gruyter.
- Extra, G. & Yağmur, K. (2004). *Urban multilingualism in Europe: Immigrant minority languages at home and school* (Multilingual Matters 130). Multilingual Matters.
- Ha, M.-P. (1998). Cultural identities in the Chinese diaspora. *Mots pluriels* 7. Retrieved from <https://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP798mph.html>
- Hakka Committee (2016). 105年度全國客家人口暨語言 [National Hakka Population and Language in 2016.] 基礎資料調查研究 [Basic data investigation.] 中華民國 106 年 6 月 [Republic of China June 106] <https://srda.sinica.edu.tw/>
- Hashimoto, M. J. (1973). *The Hakka dialect (A linguistic study of its phonology syntax and lexicon)*. Cambridge University Press.
- He G. (1993). 客家方言语法研究. [*Hakka dialect grammar research.*]. Xiamen University Press].
- Hobsbawm, E. (1996). Language, culture, and national identity. *Social Research* 63(4), 1065-1080. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971324>
- Klein, Th. (2003). *Die Basler Mission in Guangdong (Südchina) 1859-1931: Akkulturationsprozesse und kulturelle Grenzziehungen zwischen Missionaren, chinesischen Christen und lokaler Gesellschaft*. [The Basel mission in Guangdong (South China) 1859-1931: Acculturation processes and cultural boundaries between missionaries, Chinese Christians and local society.] Iudicium.
- Kloss, H. (1967). Abstand-languages and Ausbau-languages. *Anthropological Linguistics* 9, 29-41. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30029461>
- Kloss, H. (1978 [1952]). *Die Entwicklung neuer germanischer Kultursprachen seit 1800 [The development of new Germanic cultural languages since 1800]*. Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann.
- Kloss, H. (1987). Abstandsprache und Ausbausprache [abstand/distance and ausbau/elaboration

- language]. In U. Ammon, N. Dittmar & K. J. Mattheier (Eds.), *Soziolinguistik [Sociolinguistics]. Handbuch zur Wissenschaft von Sprache und Gesellschaft [An international handbook of the science of language and society]* 1 (pp. 302-315). Berlin.
- Lai W.-Y. [赖文英] (2015). 臺灣客語語法導論;台湾客语语法导论 [*Hakka Grammar of Taiwan: An introduction*]. National Taiwan University Press.
- Leo, J. (2015). *Global Hakka. Hakka identity in the remaking. (Chinese Overseas 10)* Brill.
- Leong S.-T. (1997). *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history: Hakkas, Pengmin, and their neighbours*. T. Wright & G. W. Skinner (Eds.). Stanford University Press.
- Liang, J. (2007). Migration pattern and occupational specialisations of Kolkata Chinese: An insider's story. *China Report* 43, 397-410.
- MacDonald, J. S. & L. D. MacDonald (1964). Chain migration, ethnic neighborhood formation and social networks. *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 42(1), 82-97. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3348581>
- Mong, T. S. L. S. (1980). The Hakkas. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 53(1)(237), 107-110. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41493565>
- Mufwene, S. S. (2010). Globalization, Global English, and World English(es). In N. Coupland (Ed.), *The handbook of language and globalization* (pp. 31-55). Blackwell.
- Norman, J. (1988). *Chinese*. Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, E. (2007). Still guest people: The reproduction of Hakka identity in Kolkata, India. *China Report* 43(4), 411-435. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000944550704300403>
- Skinner, G. W. (1997). Introduction. In S.-T. Leong, *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history: Hakkas, Pengmin, and their neighbours* (pp. 1-18.). Stanford University Press.
- Sowell, T. (1996). *Migrations and cultures: A world view*. Basic Books.
- Ting S.-H. (2018). Intergenerational transmission of the ethnic language: Hakka stops at Gen X. *Grazer Linguistische Studien* 89, 63-88.
- Van Driem, G. 1992. *rdzong khavi brda sprod pavi gzhung [The grammar of Dzongkha]*. dpal ldan vbrug gzhung rdzong kha khong vphel ldan tshogs [Dzongkha Development Commission Royal Government of Bhutan].
- Vertovec, S. (2006). *The emergence of super-diversity in Britain* (Working Paper 25). Oxford Centre on Migration, Policy and Society.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30(6), 1024-

1054. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465>

- Vollmann, R. & Soon, T. W. (2018). Multilingualism and language shift in a Malaysian Hakka family. *Grazer Linguistische Studien* 89, 89-110.
- Vollmann, R. & Soon, T. W. (2020). Migration, language, identity: The journey of Meixian Hakkas from Calcutta to Vienna. In Asmah Haji Omar, S. Needham & N. Hill (Eds.), *The GLOCAL Conference in Asia - The GLOCAL 2020, Bintulu, Sarawak, Malaysia, 5-8 February 2020* (pp. 113-132). GLOCAL SOAS
- Vollmann, R. & Soon, T. W. (2022). Convergence of Hakka with Chinese in Taiwan. *Global Chinese* 8(2), 221-229. <https://doi.org/10.1515/glochi-2022-0008>
- Vollmann, R. & Soon, T. W. (2023). Migration, language and business: The Indian Hakkas in Austria. *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 11. [to appear]
- Wang G. (1991). Patterns of Chinese migration in historical perspective. In W. Gungwu (Ed.), *China and the Chinese overseas* (pp. 3-21). Times Academic Press.
- Yeh, H. N., Chan, H. C., & Cheng Y. S. (2004). Language use in Taiwan: Language proficiency and domain analysis. *Journal of Taiwan Normal University: Humanities & Social Sciences* 49(1), 75-108.
- Zhang, X. (2015). Who is a Chinese-Indian? Search for the cultural identity of the Chinese-Indians in Kolkata, Sihui and Toronto. In G. Bhattacharya & C. Kripalani (Eds.), *Indian and Chinese immigrant communities: Comparative perspectives* (pp. 219-232). Institute of Anthem Press.
- Zhang, X. (2017). Study on the cultural identity of the Chinese-Indians in Kolkata, Sihui and Toronto. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 24(3), 237-253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2015.1105805>
- Zhang, X. (2020). *Preserving cultural identity through education: The schools of the Chinese community in Calcutta, India*. Nalanda Srivijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Zhang, X. & Sen, T. (2013). The Chinese in South Asia. In C.B. Tan (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of the Chinese diaspora* (pp. 205-226). Routledge.

ⁱ Chinese' is a complex term: *Putonghua*, derived from *Mandarin Chinese*, is the prestigious standard variety; there are many dialect differences, of which eight 'dialects' are officially recognized; Hakka is one of them, itself showing considerable dialect variation. These dialects, or *Sinitic languages*, have been compared to Romance languages, both groups being derived from an imperial language (Latin/Chinese, respectively), but are no longer mutually intelligible (cf. Norman, 1988, p. 213; Coluzzi et al., 2023). Especially the South of China distinguishes a number of languages which are themselves split up in various dialects and separate identities.

- ⁱⁱ In this paper, ‘Chinese’ refers to *Mandarin Chinese* or *Putonghua*, i.e., the standard variety, as opposed to *Hakka* (and other ‘dialects’).
- ⁱⁱⁱ The speakers always referred to their ‘Indian’ language competence which seems to mean Hindi, not, e.g., Bengali. Back in India, English and Hindi seem to have been learned at school, while the community language was Hakka
- ^{iv} Some ‘Indian’ Hakkas are scattered in India, too. There is a small community in Hyderabad, for example. One (Hyderabad) Hakka in Taiwan described how his father moved as far as Kashmir in search of a new home
- ^v German words: confirmation, magistrate, language course.
- ^{vi} Hindi *kali* ‘only’ (lit. ‘empty’).
- ^{vii} It used to be common to pronounce Chinese characters in “dialects”; some old speakers reported having learned Chinese (writing) in Calcutta with Hakka pronunciation, before *standard pronunciation* was introduced in overseas communities.
- ^{viii} German ‘yes’.
- ^{ix} ‘[Whether] I am interested?’
- ^x I previously ...’
- ^{xi} German ‘class register’
- ^{xii} Exactly
- ^{xiii} Nepali is a widely used *lingua franca* in the multilingual areas Nepal, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Bhutan (cf., e.g., van Driem, 1992, p. 26).
- ^{xiv} Orate, i.e., a society relying on non-standardized, non-elaborated languages and not so much on the written word as modern cultures do.