

Chapter III Methodology

1. Secondary Research

Secondary research is applied in the present study. Secondary data includes various sources, coming from government reports, industrial research, document data bases, organization information, books and journals. In addition to providing a convenient and economic approach to answer different questions, secondary data research conveys an even more important function, to analyze the primary data in a new direction.

The application of secondary data has many advantages compared with collecting primary data from the beginning. Saving time and money is the most obvious one. When researchers intend to answer research questions in a short time, secondary research can be a practical and efficient method, especially when primary data collection is restricted by budget and time.

Our research topic is place names in central Taiwan. There are two difficulties if we would apply primary research. First, the amount of place names are numerous and diffused in a great area, it is time-consuming if we collect them ourselves and might not result in a complete set of data. Secondly, since we focus on the historical change of place names, this data can only be available in historical accounts. Thus the present study applies secondary research in the analysis.

2. The Scope of the Study

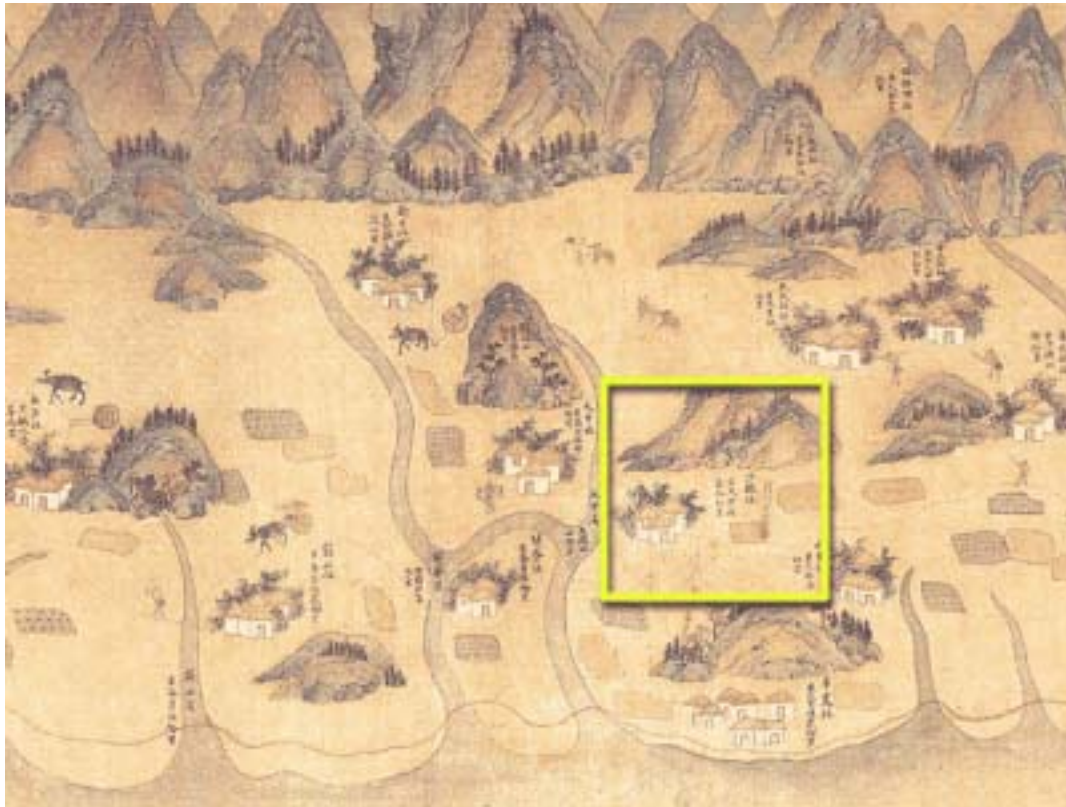
The scope of the present study is in central Taiwan, with the northern boundary extending to the southern part of Miao-li County (苗栗縣), going south to the northern part of Yun-lin County (雲林縣), extending east to Pu-li (埔里) and Zhu-shan (竹山), and going west to the coast. In terms of administrative units, this area covers Miao-li County, Taichung County, Taichung City, Chang-hwa County, Nantou County and Yun-lin County. In terms of geography, it basically includes four main Rivers and their basins: Da-an Xi (大安溪), Da-jia Xi (大甲溪), Da-du Xi (大肚溪) and Zhuo-shui Xi (濁水溪). While Taichung, Nantou and Chang-hwa are our main focus, by including Miao-li and Yun-lin areas we can obtain a lot of data on Hakka for comparison (see the circled part of Map 1).



Map 1 The Administrative Map of Taiwan

The present study uses various secondary field work data, including:

- (1) history books of each township in central Taiwan
- (2) journals, books and dictionaries on place names
- (3) maps from different periods of time (e.g. Map 2)
- (4) relative linguistic literatures



Map 2 The Old Map of Central Taiwan during the Ching Dynasty

(Cited from 平埔文化資訊網: <http://www.sinica.edu.tw/~pingpu/>)

All this data and literature was recorded and written by people, thus subjectivity or even conflicts can be expected from different authors and perspectives. Through

thorough study and comparison, the present study plans to investigate different ethnic groups' linguistic theories, and from a sociolinguistic point of view, making a systematic comparison among them along the time axis aims to reconstruct the process of development and the relationships among various ethnic groups in central Taiwan through the study of place names.