

FROM MARGINS TO RECOGNITION: SECOND-GENERATION VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS AND THEIR HERITAGE LANGUAGE JOURNEY IN TAIWAN

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Abstract. This study explores the shifting role of Vietnamese as a heritage language among second-generation Vietnamese migrants in Taiwan within the broader context of globalization, transnational migration, and cultural diversity. Following Vietnam’s “đổi mới” reforms and Taiwan’s “go south policy,” increasing cross-border mobility and intermarriage have contributed to the emergence of a substantial Vietnamese immigrant community. Today, new Vietnamese immigrants represent a significant proportion of Taiwan’s new immigrants, leading to a growing population of second-generation children navigating multiple cultural and linguistic worlds. The study draws on qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with 35 second-generation Vietnamese migrants and 17 Vietnamese new immigrants, conducted across several Taiwanese cities between 2023 and 2025. Findings indicate a growing recognition of Vietnamese as both a cultural identity marker and a practical linguistic asset, particularly in the context of Taiwan’s enhanced relations with Southeast Asia under the new Southbound policy. Despite enduring stereotypes and historical stigmatization, Vietnamese is increasingly embraced by second-generation youth not only as a means of communication, family bonding but also as a path to cultural affirmation and social mobility. This study concludes that sustained recognition and support from policymakers, educators, and communities are essential to ensure the vitality of minority languages like Vietnamese in Taiwan’s future.

Keywords: heritage language, new immigrant, second-generation migrant, Taiwan, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

Vietnam’s “Doi moi” (Renovation) policy in 1986 marked a significant shift toward rapid industrialization and global economic integration (Kokko, 1998) [1; 10-11]. In parallel, Taiwan launched its “go south policy” in the 1990s to encourage Taiwanese enterprises to invest in Southeast Asian countries. These intertwined developments not only facilitated increased foreign investment, of which Taiwan consistently ranks among the top investors in Vietnam (Vu, 2025) [2; 106], but also laid the foundation for increased cross-national mobility and interconnectivity in the region.

Under the influence of globalization and internationalization, exchanges across political, economic, cultural, and social domains have become increasingly frequent, giving rise to a notable surge in cross-national marriages across Asia, especially in the four Asian tigers namely Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan (Lu & Yeung, 2024) [3; 2]. This transnational

phenomenon has been further institutionalized by matchmaking agencies specializing in introducing Southeast Asian brides to Taiwanese men, resulting in large-scale migration to Taiwan through marriage (Yeh et al., 2015) [4; 257]. As of May 2025, Taiwan's National Immigration Agency reported a total of 610,485 foreign brides residing in Taiwan, among whom Vietnamese women account for 123,207, representing 20.18% of the population (Ministry of the Interior National Immigration Agency Republic of China, 2025)[5]. The increase in transnational marriages has led to a parallel rise in the number of children born into such families – commonly referred to as new second-generation residents. In the academic year 2023–2024, the total number of second-generation new resident students in Taiwan's educational system reached 278,000, comprising 6.8% of the national student population (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2025) [6].

The growing presence of the Vietnamese community in Taiwan has not only demographic significance but also deep implications for cultural and linguistic diversity. The Vietnamese language, as used within this community, has come to be labeled as a “new resident language” or a “heritage language,” often viewed as the native tongue of children from these families (Vu, 2025) [2; 107]. Language, as Bourdieu (1991) [7; 37-39] argues, is not merely a communicative tool but also a symbolic resource tied to identity, power, and social visibility. In the context of globalization and transnational marriage, minority groups or heritage languages often find themselves in marginalized positions, excluded from the public sphere. One major contributing factor is the stigmatized portrayal of Southeast Asian migrant women, especially those married to Taiwanese men of lower socioeconomic status, in public discourse and media. Such negative representations fuel societal prejudice and hinder the integration of both these women and their children (Jones, 2012; Qian & Tsai, 2022) [8; 3], [9; 1463].

In this context, second-generation children born to Vietnamese–Taiwanese marriages occupy a complex space between two cultural and linguistic worlds. Yet, Vietnamese is frequently regarded as a peripheral or minority language in contemporary Taiwanese society. Although Taiwan has introduced policies in recent years to support heritage language education, there remains a lack of in-depth research focusing on the lived experiences and perspectives of these new migrant children. However, in recent years, there has been a notable increase in the number of second-generation students from Vietnamese new immigrant families learning the Vietnamese language. What factors have contributed to this positive shift? In today's multicultural Taiwanese society, several key questions arise: How do second-generation Vietnamese youth in Taiwan perceive and engage with their heritage language? In what contexts do they use Vietnamese in their daily life?

Previous studies, such as Yeh et al. (2015), Jones (2012), and Qian & Tsai (2022), demonstrate how media stereotypes reinforce social barriers and constrain educational and career opportunities for children of immigrant families [4], [8], [9]. However, much of this research remains policy-driven and has paid limited attention to the subjective, everyday experiences of the second generation. This article seeks to address that gap with two main contributions. First, it adopts a second-generation perspective, shifting the analytical focus from immigrant women and policy frameworks to the voices of Vietnamese-origin adolescents in Taiwan – youths who actively negotiate between dual cultural and linguistic identities. Second, it provides a scholarly and social contribution by examining how these adolescents perceive and use Vietnamese in their daily lives. In doing so, the study not only enriches the academic literature but also offers insights for designing more inclusive and effective heritage language education policies in Taiwan, thereby contributing to the development of a more equitable and multicultural society. The study contributes to expanding scholarly understanding of heritage language learning while enriching broader discussions on linguistic diversity, intercultural adaptation, and cultural equity in contemporary East Asia.

2. Content

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks

2.1.1. Heritage language

In linguistics, a heritage language (HL) is a language kept alive within a family or community despite the dominance of another language in the surrounding society. It represents the cultural and linguistic inheritance of minority or immigrant groups and coexists with the society's mainstream language(s) (Kelleher, 2010) [11; 1]. It is most commonly defined as a minority language learned at home that is not fully developed due to the overwhelming presence of the dominant societal language (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007; Yeh et al., 2015) [12], [4]. In the U.S. context, Fishman (2001) [13;81-90] offers a broader definition, viewing heritage languages as encompassing not only immigrant languages but also indigenous and colonial languages that have been marginalized over time. This conceptualization highlights the sociopolitical dimensions of language status, where heritage languages are often positioned in tension with dominant national languages and institutional power structures.

According to Valdés (2001) [14; 37-38], a heritage speaker is someone who has varying degrees of proficiency – whether passive or active – in the ancestral language but whose linguistic development is often interrupted by contact with the dominant language of the mainstream society. Similarly, Yeh et al. (2015) [4; 257-260] highlight that heritage languages are typically the ancestral or native tongues maintained by immigrant parents within transnational marriage families. These languages are often preserved in domestic or intimate spheres, where parents use them to express cultural values and familial identity. However, their children who grow up immersed in the dominant language of the host society tend to develop greater proficiency and comfort in that language due to its pervasive presence in formal education, social interaction, and mass media. Over time, this generational linguistic shift underscores the vulnerable position of heritage languages in sustaining intergenerational transmission and cultural continuity. Moreover, when the dominant or national language enjoys exclusive institutional and societal support, the maintenance of a heritage language depends largely on the family's cultural and communicative practices. Within immigrant families, parents serve as crucial mediators of ethnic identity and cultural transmission, fostering language retention through daily interaction, shared narratives, and community involvement. In the absence of such familial and cultural reinforcement, heritage languages are likely to weaken across generations, leading to diminished linguistic diversity and a gradual erosion of cultural identity (Park, 2007) [15; 408-410].

Heritage languages play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural identity across generations. In immigrant families, particularly those where parents come from different national backgrounds, the heritage language acts as a bridge that enables children to access and internalize their parental cultural heritage. The use of the heritage language within the family not only strengthens ties to ethnic origins but also contributes to the development of multilingual competence (Vu, 2025) [2; 108]. Furthermore, the value ascribed to heritage languages by society and by the immigrant community itself profoundly influences younger generations' motivation to maintain them (Bourdieu, 1991) [7; 37-39]. However, in social contexts where dominant languages hold prestige and institutional power, sustaining a heritage language presents a significant challenge. Children growing up in such environments often experience pressure to conform linguistically, viewing proficiency in the majority language as a marker of social belonging and success. Consequently, their ancestral language may gradually lose both functional relevance and emotional significance, as it receives limited recognition or support from broader society and, at times, even within their own immigrant communities (Chen & Kim, 2016) [16; 43-44].

2.1.2. Linguistic capital

In recent years, the concept of linguistic capital has drawn increasing attention as a vital dimension of second and foreign language acquisition (Hoa et al., 2024) [17; 177]. Linguistic capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and communicative competence an individual possesses in a particular language, which can profoundly shape their personal, educational, and professional trajectories. This form of capital is especially crucial in today's globalized world, where intercultural communication and transnational mobility have become common.

Grounded in the sociological framework of Pierre Bourdieu, linguistic capital is conceptualized as a subset of cultural capital – alongside economic, social, and symbolic capital – that reflects the socio-political value assigned to language use in particular contexts (Bourdieu, 1991) [7; 37-39]. According to Bourdieu, language is not merely a neutral medium for conveying information; it functions as a symbolic resource embedded in power relations. The ability to use language in ways that align with socially accepted norms such as fluency, accent, and register confers status, legitimacy, and access to elite institutions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) [18; 71-72].

This dynamic is particularly evident in the global dominance of languages like English, which have accumulated substantial linguistic capital due to historical, political, economic, and cultural hegemony. English proficiency is often regarded as a gateway to upward mobility, international education, and participation in global markets. However, Bourdieu (1991) [7; 40-42] emphasizes that the value of linguistic capital is context-dependent. Within every society exists a “linguistic market,” where specific language varieties are assigned different values. In such markets, standardized or dominant language forms such as Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan are viewed as having high linguistic capital, enabling access to education, employment, and socio-political inclusion. Conversely, minority and immigrant languages are frequently devalued, marginalized, or excluded from official discourse, limiting the social and economic opportunities of their speakers.

2.1.3. Heritage Language Education Policy in the Multilingual Context of Taiwan

Annamalai (2002) [10; 17-18] categorizes governmental responses to multilingualism into three broad orientations: language suppression, tolerance, and promotion. Under a suppression policy, the state may deliberately portray a minority or heritage language as backward or burdensome, discouraging its use and ultimately accelerating linguistic assimilation. A tolerance approach, by contrast, acknowledges the presence of multiple languages but remains largely passive, neither supporting nor restricting their use within private or community domains. Finally, a promotion-oriented policy entails proactive measures to sustain linguistic diversity – such as mitigating factors that lead to language loss, fostering multilingual practices in education and society, and protecting minority speakers from linguistic discrimination in public life. Importantly, linguistic inclusion does not necessarily mean equal usage, but it requires institutional acceptance of multiple languages within the same social space.

In the context of Taiwan, until the early 2000s, new immigrants were largely ignored in both educational and cultural policy frameworks (Kasai, 2022) [19; 514]. However, amid increasing globalization and transnational migration, language policy has become a key mechanism for fostering social integration, equity, and sustainable development among diverse communities. Taiwan has gradually evolved into a multicultural society, where new immigrants from various countries have become integral members of local communities, enriching the island's cultural fabric. In response to these demographic changes, Taiwan's educational policy has gradually been restructured to enhance the cultural and linguistic competencies of the children of new immigrants (Vu, 2005) [2; 109].

Since the 2010 academic year, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has begun allocating budgets to support schools in offering “heritage language” courses. These courses encourage children of new residents to learn the language and culture of their ancestral homeland, thereby

enhancing their cultural self-awareness (Khoa, 2025) [2; 109]. In alignment with Taiwan's new Southbound policy, starting from the 2019 academic year, the Ministry mandated that the "heritage languages" of new immigrant communities be included as part of the elementary school language curriculum. Students may choose to study either an indigenous language or a heritage language, with one session (50 minutes) per week allocated for instruction (Kasai, 2022; Khoa, 2025) [19; 514-515], [2; 109].

2.2. Research Methodology

This study was conducted over an extended period from 2023 through early 2025. The researcher carried out in-depth interviews with 35 second-generation university students (22 females, 13 males) from Vietnamese new immigrant families who are currently studying Vietnamese at universities located in Puli, Taichung, New Taipei, and Taipei. These students, hereafter referred to as "SV", have been studying Vietnamese for a period ranging from one to four years and are between 18 and 23 years old. In addition, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 17 Vietnamese new immigrants, hereafter referred to as "CD", who have been residing in Taiwan (Puli, Taichung, New Taipei, and Taipei) for over 15 years. These participants are between the ages of 41 and 56 and typically have two to three children.

A semi-structured interview was employed to collect rich qualitative data from all participants. The interviews were designed to explore their perspectives on learning and maintaining Vietnamese as a heritage language. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. To ensure confidentiality, all participants were anonymized through the use of pseudonyms. Additionally, the researcher engaged in participant observation during home visits to examine whether Vietnamese was used in parent-child interactions and to gain insight into the family environments of the Vietnamese new immigrants. These visits also helped to build rapport and trust between the researcher and the participating families.

2.3. Results and Discussions

2.3.1. The Current Use of Vietnamese as a Heritage Language among Second-generation Vietnamese in Taiwan

According to interview results, many Vietnamese women – classified as new immigrants in Taiwan – shared personal experiences that clearly illustrate the low social status and marginalization they faced from the moment they entered into marriage and became mothers. Among them, twelve participants reported being explicitly asked by their husbands' families not to speak Vietnamese to their children, due to the belief that exposure to Vietnamese would interfere with the acquisition of Mandarin Chinese – the official language of Taiwan. According to the participants, mainstream narratives at the time portrayed transnational marriages in a highly negative light: Taiwanese men were often depicted as older, poor, and undereducated, unable to find local spouses and thus turning to Southeast Asia to "purchase" wives. In contrast, Southeast Asian women were stereotyped as impoverished, uneducated, and motivated by economic gain to "marry up" in Taiwan.

Consequently, the languages of new immigrant families, including Vietnamese, came to be perceived as inferior and lacking social value. Many parents chose not to transmit their mother tongue to their children, believing that proficiency in the dominant language was essential for social acceptance and upward mobility in Taiwanese society. This perception, in turn, shaped the linguistic attitudes of their children, who internalized similar beliefs through interactions at school and within peer groups. As a result, members of the second generation became increasingly aware of the low status of their heritage language in both educational and social contexts, prompting some to distance themselves from or deliberately avoid learning Vietnamese.

Since the launch of Taiwan's new southbound policy in 2016, the government has placed greater emphasis on encouraging new immigrants and their children to embrace multiculturalism, strengthen the connection between language and cultural identity, and support the transmission of heritage languages. To this end, a number of educational and support initiatives have been introduced to promote the learning and preservation of mother tongues, as well as to enhance awareness of the cultural backgrounds of parents who are new immigrants.

In addition, the growing trade and cultural exchanges between Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries in recent years have significantly influenced Taiwanese public perceptions of new immigrants from the region. This shift in societal attitudes has been substantiated through in-depth interviews with Vietnamese new immigrants, many of whom reported a noticeable improvement in how their language and culture are recognized and valued within both educational settings and broader Taiwanese society. As they explained:

"In the past, I rarely spoke Vietnamese with my child at home. Now, after attending government-sponsored training courses on teaching the languages of new immigrants, some schools have even invited me to teach Vietnamese. I feel happier." (CD3, aged 43, Taipei, personal interview, October 2024)

"After the government launched the new southbound policy, the languages of new immigrants have gained greater respect among Taiwanese people. More and more Taiwanese are learning Vietnamese, which helps them gain a deeper understanding of Vietnamese culture and society". (CD5, age 47, Taichung, personal interview, March 2024)

An analysis of the interview data shows that second-generation Vietnamese youth in Taiwan develop diverse perceptions of Vietnamese as a heritage language. First, most student participants regard Vietnamese as an important symbol of identity, helping them better understand their mixed Vietnamese–Taiwanese background and affirm their place within Taiwan's multicultural society. Learning and using Vietnamese not only brings them a sense of pride but also enables them to reconstruct a more positive self-image.

In addition, Vietnamese is viewed as an emotional and communicative bridge to their maternal relatives, particularly grandparents in Vietnam. For many student participants, even when their linguistic proficiency is limited, understanding and using Vietnamese still plays a crucial role in maintaining intergenerational connections. Through Vietnamese, they can access family stories, gain deeper insight into their mother's homeland, and preserve a strong emotional bond with their Vietnamese cultural roots. As they explained:

"After studying Vietnamese at university, I have felt prouder to introduce myself as a "second-generation new resident of Vietnamese heritage," and I have become more willing to participate in Vietnamese cultural activities organized in Taiwan together with my mother." (SV 5, female, aged 20, personal interview, May 2023)

"I have studied Vietnamese for more than two years, and now I can have simple conversations with my maternal grandparents through Zalo or when I visit them in Vietnam. I feel very happy that I can use Vietnamese to communicate with them, even in simple ways." (SV 19, female, aged 21, personal interview, June 2024)

"After studying Vietnamese, I have been trying to have simple conversations with my mother and my grandparents in Vietnamese. In addition, since my mother runs a Vietnamese restaurant, many Vietnamese customers come to eat there, I also have opportunities to speak Vietnamese with them. I now feel more confident when using Vietnamese." (SV 20, female, aged 20, personal interview, June 2024)

Besides, 21 student participants noted a growing interest in Southeast Asian languages – particularly Vietnamese. These student participants recognized that proficiency in Vietnamese serves not only to maintain familial and cultural ties with their maternal heritage, but also to enhance future career prospects. In light of Taiwan's new southbound policy and its expanding

economic engagement with Vietnam – one of Taiwan’s most significant trade partners in Southeast Asia – Vietnamese language skills are becoming an increasingly valuable asset. As Taiwanese companies continue to invest and collaborate with partners in Vietnam, there is a growing demand for bilingual professionals fluent in both Vietnamese and Mandarin. As they explained:

“Recently, Vietnamese has become quite popular in Taiwan because mastering the language can lead to better job opportunities after graduation. In addition to language learning, we also study and explore various aspects of Vietnamese culture, society, and politics. I have been learning Vietnamese for about three years” (SV 23, female, aged 22, personal interview, June 2024).

“I’ve been learning Vietnamese for one year now. At present, I can communicate a little with my maternal grandparents. I hope to work in Vietnam in the future because many Taiwanese companies are investing there, and if I work in Vietnam, the salary will be higher.” (SV 17, male, age 19, personal interview, January 2025)

Interview findings indicate that Taiwan’s heritage language education policy has profoundly shaped how Vietnamese immigrant mothers and their children perceive and value their mother tongue. As governmental and institutional support for heritage language programs has increased, social attitudes toward Vietnamese have gradually shifted from marginalization to appreciation. Many Vietnamese mothers now view their native language not only as an emotional link to their homeland but also as a legitimate form of cultural and linguistic capital that can enhance their children’s educational and career opportunities in an increasingly multicultural Taiwan. They actively encourage their children to enroll in Vietnamese language classes at school.

As a result, a growing number of second-generation Vietnamese youth are developing a stronger sense of ethnic identity and linguistic confidence, regarding Vietnamese both as a “heritage language” that preserves their family origins and as a “symbolic asset” that connects them to the broader transnational Vietnamese community. They actively participate in Vietnamese language courses and Vietnamese cultural activities organized in schools and local communities. In addition, they make efforts to use Vietnamese to communicate with their relatives in Vietnam.

2.3.2 Heritage Language Policy in Taiwan’s Multilingual Society

Since the 1990s, Taiwan has witnessed a rapid rise in transnational marriages, primarily between Taiwanese men and women from Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. This demographic shift has given rise to a new generation of children with bicultural identities, shaped by diverse linguistic, cultural, and value-based foundations. However, for many years, the mother tongues of immigrant mothers were not recognized as “heritage languages” worthy of preservation. Instead, they were viewed as secondary and lacking value within the mainstream education system, resulting in a gradual disconnection of subsequent generations from their cultural roots, and contributing to the erosion of cultural identity and confidence.

A major milestone in this development was the 2019 decision by Taiwan’s Ministry of Education to officially incorporate the languages of new immigrants including Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai, Burmese, and other South and Southeast Asian languages into the formal elementary school curriculum. In addition to integrating heritage languages into the official curriculum, the Taiwanese government has implemented a range of comprehensive support measures, including the training of native-speaking teachers, the development of culturally appropriate teaching materials and textbooks tailored to specific language communities, and the organization of extracurricular activities to raise public awareness about the value of multilingualism.

The interview results show that all 35 students reported a noticeable shift in their awareness and decision to study Vietnamese at school since the introduction of the new southbound policy

in 2016. Previously, Vietnamese was not a top choice for many Taiwanese students, especially when compared to more popular languages such as English, Japanese, or Korean. However, with the policy's focus on strengthening cooperation with Southeast Asian countries including Vietnam, the new southbound policy has significantly boosted the demand for Vietnamese-speaking persons in fields such as commerce, tourism, education, and diplomacy.

As a result, there has been a marked increase in the number of Taiwanese students and children of new Vietnamese immigrants enrolling in Vietnamese language courses to enhance their future career prospects. In addition, the policy has contributed to elevating the status of Vietnamese as a strategically valuable language in the region. It has also encouraged educational institutions in Taiwan to expand their programs in Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture. As they explained:

"I had never thought about learning Vietnamese before, but since the policy encouraging the teaching of Southeast Asian languages was introduced, my university has included Vietnamese and Thai in its curriculum. That's why I chose to study Vietnamese. I hope that in the future, I will be able to speak Vietnamese with my maternal relatives." (SV 31, male, aged 20, personal interview, March 2025)

"Currently, many organizations offer Vietnamese language courses for the children of new Vietnamese immigrants. I am currently studying Vietnamese at university. On weekends, I often work as a teaching assistant in a Vietnamese class organized by the New Immigrants Association for children of new Vietnamese immigrants" (SV 35, female, aged 21, personal interview, April 2025).

2.3.3. The Importance and Challenges of Maintaining Heritage Languages in Taiwan

In the context of globalization and the rapid increase of transnational migration, the preservation and development of heritage languages have become increasingly urgent, particularly in multicultural societies such as Taiwan. With the growing number of immigrant families – especially from Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand – the maintenance of the mother tongue among second-generation children is no longer merely a linguistic issue. It is closely tied to cultural identity, social equity, and inclusive integration.

Heritage languages play a crucial role in preserving both individual and collective cultural identities. For children of immigrant families in Taiwan, the ability to speak the language of either parent not only facilitates communication with family members – particularly grandparents – but also serves as a bridge to the traditional values, history, and worldview of their ancestral homeland. Maintaining the mother tongue helps strengthen intergenerational bonds and fosters a stronger sense of self, contributing to the formation of a coherent and resilient cultural identity.

Interviews with Vietnamese immigrant parents in Taiwan reveal significant obstacles in heritage language transmission. Many parents reported that their own Vietnamese proficiency is limited to a primary or lower secondary level, making it difficult for them to teach their children reading and writing skills. As a result, they tend to focus on oral communication, ensuring that their children retain basic speaking ability in their heritage language. As one new Vietnamese immigrant explained: *"Because my family was poor in the past, I only completed primary school and then helped my parents sell goods at the market. As a result, my Vietnamese reading and writing skills are not very good. When my child studies Vietnamese, I can't provide much help, so my child mainly learns Vietnamese at school"*. (CD15, aged 49, New Taipei, personal interview, April 2025)

From the perspective of Vietnamese-Taiwanese children themselves, many have acknowledged challenges in learning to read and write in Vietnamese. Several have also pointed out that Vietnamese is rarely used outside the family setting, especially within the school system and broader social environment. This limited exposure significantly reduces their opportunities

to practice and improve their heritage language proficiency. Therefore, the responsibility for preserving heritage languages in Taiwan should not rest solely on immigrant families. It must also be recognized as an integral component of the nation's multicultural cultural and educational policy.

3. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the shifting landscape of Vietnamese heritage language learning and maintenance among second-generation Vietnamese youth in Taiwan. First, the positive shift in learning Vietnamese has been driven by multiple intertwined factors: the new Southbound policy, the integration of heritage languages into the national curriculum, the increasingly close economic cooperation between Vietnam and Taiwan, and the improvement of social attitudes toward Southeast Asian immigrant communities. These factors have collectively elevated the status of Vietnamese from a marginalized language to one recognized as a valuable cultural and economic resource.

In addition, second-generation youth are developing more diversified perceptions of Vietnamese. They view the language as an integral part of their identity, helping them better understand their Vietnamese-Taiwanese heritage; as an emotional bridge connecting them with relatives in Vietnam; and as a form of cultural and linguistic capital that enhances their confidence and career opportunities. Notably, they actively use Vietnamese in various everyday contexts – such as communicating with family members, participating in cultural activities, and engaging with the local Vietnamese community. Overall, the revitalization of Vietnamese in Taiwan results from the combined effects of policy reform, social change, family engagement, and individual motivation. By centering the perspectives of second-generation youth, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of heritage language maintenance and underscores the importance of inclusive language policies in supporting linguistic and cultural diversity in contemporary Taiwan.

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