

## Within the Cultural Field of Holo People: Study on the Etymology of Taiwanese *khan-chhiú*

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### ABSTRACT

The essay reconsiders and verifies the etymology of the word “*khan-chhiú* (牽手)”, literally “hand in hand”, an idiom often mentioned in Taiwan history. The origin of the term “*khan-chhiú*” is not from the language of the Taiwan indigenous people, but possibly a new word created by the overseas Changchou (漳州) and Choanchou (泉州) people in the historical and cultural process of their encountering with other nations during the early modern period. While in all probability, the etymology of “*khan-chhiú*” is Chang-Choan language, we should not exclude other possibilities, such as the Spanish word *casar* or *casarse*. But then, why did the Taiwanese believe the word “*khan-chhiú*” was originated from Taiwan’s indigenous people? It was mainly due to the writing and presentation of Taiwan by scholars and officials in the Ch’ing dynasty. They were inclined to see Taiwan as a “double savage land”; however, this understanding of “otherness” had been accepted by the Taiwanese themselves as their world view. Therefore, the etymological study of Taiwanese historical idioms should not just pay attention to the Austronesian languages or Dutch. On the contrary, we should trace back to a historical stage on which the Changchou and Choanchou peoples, encountering and mingling with the Japanese and the Europeans. The essay further presents a research concept called “the cultural field of the Holo people.” Such a broad Holo language, including Changchou, Choanchou and Chaochou (潮州), can be viewed as a historical cultural field for studying the scope of early modern Taiwan history.

**Keywords:** *khan-chhiú*, etymology, Chang-choan Language, Cultural field, Holo People