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Writing Taiwanese: The Development of Modern Written Taiwanese

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Writing Taiwanese

寫台語

Sia Taigú

Siar Taiguo

The Development of Modern Written Taiwanese

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Note concerning romanization:

All Mandarin pinyin used in this essay follows the “Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography” as listed in the *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary*.[✧]

Taiwanese romanization in this paper follows the church romanization and Modern Literal Taiwanese systems discussed herein; the romanization system being used will be made clear by context. For the purpose of employing a standard system in this paper, and without advocating one system over another, the church romanization system will be used as a default in linguistic examples. A brief pronunciation guide to church romanization is given in the appendix. The author apologizes for and takes full responsibility for any errors in the spelling of the romanized Taiwanese used within.

Title page: “Writing Taiwanese” as written in Taiwanese using (in descending order) Chinese characters, church romanization, and Modern Literal Taiwanese.

[✧] John DeFrancis, ed., *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996) 835-845.

Preface

The likely beginning for this paper was a small student bookstore at Taiwan Normal University which I visited in the summer of 1997 and in which I found two books: Yang Qingchu's *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary* and Robert Liangwei Cheng's *Shenghuo Taiyu* textbook. As the son of Taiwanese parents, I have had a passive knowledge of the language (being able to understand only basic phrases) and wanted to learn more. Having been dismayed at the conspicuous absence of Taiwanese language materials in several commercial bookstores, these books were an exciting discovery.

As I examined the books, I may have noticed that they represented Taiwanese in different ways, but I certainly did not think much of it. Only after researching Taiwanese and writing reform further have I come to realize that these books were part of the so-called Taiwanese Language Revival Movement (*Taiyu fuxing yundong*) which has accompanied the last decade of democratization on Taiwan. In writing this paper, I hope to examine one aspect of this movement: the development of a workable writing system for Taiwanese. As John DeFrancis recognized in his *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (1950), however, language reform is not merely a matter of coming to terms with linguistic issues. In writing this essay, I have attempted to address both the linguistic and social factors involved in developing a writing system for Taiwanese. I have also tried to place this process in the context of writing reform in mainland China, and especially the development of Cantonese writing in Hong Kong.

In the last decade or so, Taiwanese has become more and more accepted as a language of politics, media and culture. As a result, it is possible that the future will witness a proliferation of Taiwanese language materials, both for learning the language and as a medium for communicating stories and ideas. Finding a suitable writing system will be a necessary first step in this endeavor.

My own shortcomings as a student of Mandarin Chinese have prevented me from taking full advantage of the Chinese language materials available and forced me to search harder for materials written in English. I hope this will not unduly hinder my presentation of the topic. My inability to speak Taiwanese is another shortcoming, although I suppose that this shortcoming is what caused me to investigate the topic in the first place.

Finally, I would like to thank my Yale thesis adviser Valerie Hansen and the East Asian Studies senior seminar part-time acting instructors Winghoi Chan and Pat Giersch for their advice and for implementing the necessary deadlines; the Yale Council on East Asian Studies for making the major so enjoyable; the Yale Library, for having such an excellent collection of materials on Taiwanese; and finally, with a very sincere thanks, the many people whom I met in person and through the Internet who generously shared their knowledge on this topic, especially Pai Chou, Andrew Kuo, Daniel Wu, Christine Lin, and Wen H. Chang.

Alvin Lin
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January 1999

Writing Taiwanese

Table of Contents

Preface

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: The Status Quo: Characters and Taiwanese writing	
2.1 The Roots of Writing in Taiwanese: <i>Wenyan</i> , <i>baihua</i> and academic Taiwanese	3
2.2 The Missing 15 Percent: Developing a written vernacular	7
2.3 One Attempt at Finding the Missing 15 Percent: Yang Qingchu's <i>Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary</i>	11
Chapter 3: Writing Romanized Taiwanese	17
3.1 The Roots of Romanized Taiwanese: Church Romanization	18
3.2 Church Romanization Today: The Taigu listserver	23
3.3 An Indigenous System: Liim Keahioong and Modern Literal Taiwanese	25
Chapter 4: Linguistic and Social Considerations	28
4.1 Some Linguistic Classifications	29
4.2 Dealing with Homonyms: Morphophonemic spelling	31
4.3 Tones in Taiwanese: Surface vs. Lexical tones	32
4.4 Representing Dialects: Picking a standard written form or representing all dialects	33
4.5 Summary of Linguistic Concerns: Deciding the degree of coding	34
4.6 Writing, Reading, Printing, Computing, Indexing and other Practical Concerns	34
4.7 Social Concerns: Tradition and Political Meaning	35
4.8 Conclusion: Future Orthography Policy on Taiwan	37
Bibliography	39
Appendices:	
Email Survey	
Pronunciation guide to church romanization	
List of Tables and Illustrations:	
Table 1 Suggested Characters for Taiwanese Morphemes from Three Sources	8
Figure 1 Yang Qingchu's <i>Taiwanese-Mandarin Dictionary</i>	10
Figure 2 Church romanization	16
Figure 3 Modern Literal Taiwanese	16
Figure 4 Sample email from Taigu listserver	24

Chapter 1 Introduction

The basis for this essay arose out of a single question: how does one write Taiwanese, a dialect of Minnanhua (one of the 8-10 main branches of Sinitic) spoken by nearly eight-five percent of the population in the Republic of China on Taiwan?¹ The historical dominance of Classical Chinese (*wenyan*) and Vernacular Chinese (*baihua*) styles of writing has meant that vernacular writing in non-Mandarin topolects of Chinese has remained largely undeveloped.² As a result, individuals wishing to write in their local topolect are faced with the task of adapting or creating new conventions that will fit the peculiar sounds and idioms of their spoken language.

The political liberalization on Taiwan in the last decade has made the issue of topolect writing particularly timely. After having been suppressed under the mainlander Guomintang party's Mandarin language policy from the 1950s to the 1980s, Taiwanese has begun to be widely used again in public settings.³ The predominantly Taiwanese Democratic Progressive Party has pushed for the teaching of Taiwanese in addition to Mandarin in schools. Furthermore, Taiwanese has become the language of grassroots

¹ Taiwanese is a dialect derived from the topolect of Chinese variously known as Southern Min, Minnanhua (閩南話 "South of the Min River speech"), Amoy (廈門), Hoklo (Holo) or Hokkien (福建). There are 28 million speakers of Southern Min, representing 2.8 percent of Chinese speakers (DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language*, 58). The ancestors of most Southern Min speaking Taiwanese immigrated from Fujian province to Taiwan between the 14th and 17th centuries. Since then, the Southern Min brought over from the mainland has undergone significant change due to contact with other languages (the Malayo-Polynesian aboriginal population on Taiwan, Dutch and Japanese colonialists, and the mainlanders who arrived on Taiwan in 1949) and through locally developed words.

The population of Taiwan is about 75 percent Hoklo Taiwanese, 10 percent Hakka, 13 percent mainlander (post-1945 immigrants) and 2 percent aboriginal peoples. As some have noted, the term Taiwanese should perhaps more properly be used to refer to Southern Min as well as Hakka and aborigine languages. However, because Taiwanese (*taiyu*) is conventionally used to refer to the Hoklo language, this paper will follow the common usage.

² The major exception to this rule may be the case of Cantonese, which enjoys the widest modern written usage of all non-Mandarin Chinese topolects. See especially Bauer 1988 and Snow 1991.

³ In 1953, the government passed a law forbidding the use of Taiwanese or Japanese as a language of instruction, and in 1964 it forbade the use of Taiwanese in schools or official settings. For further description, see Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 107-110.

politics, popular culture (in the form of soap operas, talk shows, and music), and even some serious literature and poetry. This renewed interest in Taiwanese has been called by some the Taiwanese Language Movement, one important aspect of which is the development of a standardized, efficient and popularized form of written Taiwanese.

By writing this essay, I hope to show that how one chooses to write Taiwanese depends on both linguistic and social-political considerations. The essay begins with an examination of the roots of writing in Taiwanese: the traditional Chinese writing system of logographic characters. After discussing how character writing in Taiwanese is deficient and how some scholars have attempted to remedy this situation, the essay explores the alternative to character writing: writing in a phonetic system. Because of the long-standing presence of the Presbyterian Church on Taiwan, Taiwanese, more than other topolects of Chinese, already has a fairly entrenched system of romanization used by a small but solid group of native-speakers (as opposed to those using romanization in order to learn Taiwanese as a second language). In recent years, the Modern Literal Taiwanese romanization system developed by Liim Keahioong has also begun to gain in popularity.⁴ I examine the history of both of these romanization systems, the linguistic and practical challenges each face if they are to become more widely used, and the political implications of writing romanized Taiwanese.

⁴ Modern Literal Taiwanese is also referred to as the Taiwanese Modern Spelling System. Liim Keahioong is written according to the spelling of this system.

Chapter 2: The Status Quo: Characters and Taiwanese writing

2.1 The Roots of Writing in Taiwanese: *Wenyan*, *baihua* and academic Taiwanese

If there is at present no standard writing system for Taiwanese, it is natural to ask how Taiwanese speakers communicated in writing in the past. To answer this question, one must examine the relationship between the various forms of spoken and written Chinese. Throughout most of Chinese history, classical literary Chinese (*wenyan*) served as the basis for written communication, similar to the use of Latin in Medieval Europe.

Unlike Latin, however, classical Chinese was:

...purely a written language; unlike comparable languages in the West, it could not be spoken. The chief reason for this was that no uniform pronunciation existed; each region had its own purely local method of reading Classical texts aloud; these local pronunciations were almost always based on (or at least closely related to) local dialectal pronunciation, forming as it were dialectal varieties of the literary language.⁵

Thus, the speakers of each topolect developed a literary pronunciation system specifically for use in reading characters. In Southern Min, the difference between these two forms—the literary language and the spoken language—was particularly marked. Sung notes that “in Amoy, the difference between the literary and colloquial pronunciations is so great that they might be treated as two parallel phonological systems of one language.”⁶

Examples of this difference in pronunciation are given below:⁷

vernacular	literary	
lang 底	dzin 人	person
khau	kho 口	mouth
hi	nzi 耳	ear
tse	tso 坐	sit

⁵ Jerry Norman, *Chinese* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 245. Note that Norman refers to topolects as dialects of Chinese.

⁶ Margaret M. Y. Sung. “A Study of Literary and Colloquial Amoy Chinese,” *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 1.3: 415. Sung hypothesizes on p. 426 that colloquial Amoy might have migrated from Northern China to the Southern Min area before the period of the *Qieyun* rhyme dictionary (601 A.D.), while literary Amoy may have come about the time of *Qieyun*.

⁷ Jean DeBernardi, “Linguistic Nationalism: The Case of Southern Min,” *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 25 (August 1991): 3.

The Classical Chinese writing system held an enormous influence over speakers of mutually unintelligible topolects and served as the basis for the development of writing in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. As Norman writes, Classical Chinese "was the only truly national and supradialectal form of the language, and undoubtedly the single most important symbol of Chinese ethnicity and cultural unity."⁸ It was the language of the Confucian Classics, which formed the "foundation of (China's) political and quasi-religious ideology"; it made up the "vast majority of Chinese literature, history, philosophy and technical writing"; and it was the "language of administration both at the national and local levels."⁹

Although Classical Chinese remained the most respected form of writing until the twentieth century, however, a vernacular literary form (*baihua*) based on a Northern variety of spoken Chinese began to emerge in the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907) and had developed a substantial literature by the Song (AD 960-1279) and Yuan (AD 1271-1368) dynasties.¹⁰ While the North had developed a vernacular style of writing based more closely on the spoken language, however, no other region witnessed a similar phenomenon:

As far as is known, no comparable written language based on a non-standard dialect (especially the very aberrant dialects of southeastern China) ever developed. Hence, dialectal forms of Chinese generally lack a historical basis on which to build a literary language to compete with the national standard. The present-day standard written language, on the other hand, is a direct continuation and development of the literary vernacular of Song and Yuan times.

This is not to say that non-standard Chinese dialects have never been written; they have. But they have always been the vehicle for certain types of local literature which traditionally have not enjoyed high repute among the Chinese educated classes. There seems to be no case where a non-standard dialect has ever been employed in a written form as the language of administration or even of commerce. Even in periods when China has been disunited, there has never been an attempt to set up a regional literary language based on one of the local dialects. Beginning in the middle of the

⁸ Norman, *Chinese*, 245.

⁹ Norman, *Chinese*, 245.

¹⁰ Norman, *Chinese*, 2.

nineteenth century, Christian missionaries began to write certain local dialects, generally in romanized form, as part of their effort to evangelize the common people of China. A few of these written dialects, especially that of Amoy, enjoyed a certain success among converted Christians, but they have generally been viewed with hostility by Chinese authorities, and are little used nowadays.¹¹

Those educated Taiwanese who were familiar with characters would thus use Classical Chinese and Vernacular Chinese—pronounced in academic Taiwanese—as the basis for written communication, rather than attempt to reflect more closely their colloquial speech. Classical Chinese was viewed as the most prestigious form of writing, followed by Vernacular Chinese, and then writing based on local dialects, which was “restricted to the recording of folklore materials and scripts for the local theater.”¹² When *baihua* replaced Classical Chinese as the popular writing style in the twentieth century, there simply existed no equivalent written Taiwanese vernacular. In addition, while mainland China was popularizing this new form of writing based on the spoken vernacular, the colonization of Taiwan by Japan (1895-1945) and the Guomindang promotion of Mandarin after 1949 hindered the possible development of a similar standard for writing colloquial Taiwanese.

The existence of the academic Taiwanese pronunciation system associated with Classical Chinese has further implications for the writing of Taiwanese. Because academic Taiwanese was and continues to be held in high esteem among some Taiwanese, the decreased use of these readings has been viewed as a loss in the depth of the language:

Young Taiwanese... do not know the literary register of Southern Min, and older Taiwanese complain bitterly that their mother tongue has been socially degraded in the last generation. The fear is expressed that the younger generation will only speak a very commonplace Southern Min, and they predict that, deprived of the literary register, southern Min will degenerate into a lower-class language. Their concern draws attention

¹¹ Norman, *Chinese*, 2-3.

¹² Norman, *Chinese*, 246.

to the fact that loss of the literary register is not simply loss of a reading pronunciation of characters, but also entails loss of the literary vocabulary which once enriched spoken Southern Min.¹³

Thus, there are two concerns associated with academic Taiwanese. First, the emphasis placed on academic Taiwanese and its traditional association with *wenyan* and *baihua* has meant that there has been little interest until recently in developing a written form for colloquial Taiwanese. Second, a working knowledge of the pronunciation and vocabulary of academic Taiwanese is gradually being lost, leaving only the colloquial spoken language.

As these readings are no longer being widely taught, Mandarin is taking the place of academic Taiwanese as the literary language. For example, in reading the phone number "839-4779", a Taiwanese who knows academic Taiwanese would read aloud "pat sam kiu su chhit chhit kiu" rather than the colloquial pronunciation, "poeh saN kau si chhit chhit kau"; most young people today, however, would simply read the numbers in Mandarin.¹⁴ Whereas before words used in academic Taiwanese might have become part of colloquial Taiwanese, nowadays colloquial Taiwanese draws more on Mandarin:

Tai-yu has now been reduced to a colloquial language which only deals with daily affairs. Even its vocabulary about everyday life is decreasing, and part of it has already been replaced by Japanese and Mandarin phrases (Hung, 1985). This leads to the phenomenon of codemixing, especially when new ideas and things, such as 'computer network', 'washing machine', 'microwave', 'hamburger', are talked about. The more new ideas and things are dealt with, the more Mandarin is used (Yang, 1991). That is, Tai-yu has gradually lost its basic function as a medium of cultural production and reproduction.¹⁵

¹³ Jean DeBernardi, "Linguistic Nationalism: The Case of Southern Min," 5.

¹⁴ Example from electronic mail correspondence with Daniel Wu, 9 March 1998.

¹⁵ A-chin Hsiau, "Language Ideology in Taiwan: The Guomindang's Language Policy, the Tai-yu Language Movement, and Ethnic Politics" in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1997, pp. 308. The parenthetical references are to Hung Weiren, *Taiwan Holoayu shengdiao yanjiu* (The Study of the tones of the Taiwanese Hok-lo Language). (Taipei: Zili Wanbao, 1985); and Yang Xiufang, *Taiwan minnanyu yufagao* (Draft of the Grammar of Southern Min in Taiwan), (Taipei: Da-an, 1991).

The cumulative effect of language policies which discouraged the teaching of academic Taiwanese has meant that the local pronunciation of *wenyan* has gradually been forgotten; in the meantime, colloquial Taiwanese has been unable to develop a modern vocabulary separate from and comparable to that of Mandarin. While there are some modern terms which have come into the Taiwanese vernacular, such as the word for computer (*tian nau*), these words are largely drawn from their Mandarin counterparts, and young Taiwanese may not know how to or may choose not to pronounce these words in Taiwanese. Taiwanese speakers who are literate in Mandarin (as most nowadays are) may thus have little incentive to speak or write colloquial Taiwanese when the Mandarin words are already known.

2.2 The Missing 15 percent: Developing a written vernacular

The use of Classical (*wenyan*) and Vernacular (*baihua*) Chinese writing and the lack of a developed written vernacular for Taiwanese means that writing Taiwanese in characters involves certain difficulties. While it is possible to find numerous examples of Taiwanese written in characters—for example, in the lyrics to Taiwanese music or the subtitles on television—many of the characters used are unstandardized. Robert Cheng estimates that in Taiwanese “approximately 5 percent of the morphemes¹⁶ have no appropriate, established Chinese characters to represent them. Since many of these are high-frequency function words, in a written Taiwanese text they account for as much as 15 percent of the total number of characters.”¹⁷ The 85 percent of morphemes which do have definite characters generally have cognates with morphemes in Mandarin or

¹⁶ A *morpheme* is the smallest meaningful unit into which words can be analyzed (*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, 2nd ed., ed. by David Crystal, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 90.)

Table 1. The Missing 15 percent

Some examples of Taiwanese morphemes and their suggested characters as given in three sources.

Proposed Taiwanese Characters

Taiwanese morpheme	Mandarin equivalent	A. Proposed Tw characters as given by Cheng	B. <i>Guo-Tai Shuangyu Cidian</i> ^b	C. <i>Taiyu Da Zidian</i> ^c
ah, iah 'perhaps, or'	或者 huozhe	^o 抑 Md 'yi'	抑	抑
bat 'once, ever'	曾經 cengjing	* 捌 Md 'ba'	Cites 捌 and 八 but recommends new characters 言捌, 言八	八
beh 'want'	要 yao	* 欲 Md 'yu'; 卜 Md 'bu'	Cites 要, 欲, 卜 but recommends new character 要卜	卜
e 'of'	的 de	* 的 Md 'de'	的	兮 Md 'xi'
goan 'we'	我們 women	+ 院 Md 'yuan'	(Unable to find morpheme in dictionary)	Recommend new character 佤
khah 'more'	更 geng	x 卡 Md 'ka'	卡	(Unable to find morpheme in dictionary)

Sources:

A. Possible characters as given by Robert Cheng in *Yanbianzhong de Taiwan shehui yuwen—duoyu shehui ji shuangyu jiaoyu* (Essays on Taiwan's Sociolinguistic Problems) (Taipei: Zili wanbao she wenhua chubanshu, 1990), 263-268.

Symbols: o = definitely right character; * = not certain; x = definitely wrong character;
+ = same sound.

B. Yang Qingchu. *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary (Guo-Tai shuangyu cidian)*, fifth edition, (Gaoxiong: Dunli chubanshe, 1996).

C. Wei Nan-an. *Taiyu da zidian*. (Taipei: Zili Wanbaoshe wenhua chubanshu, 1992).

commonly read classics.¹⁸ As a result, while Taiwanese-speakers may be able to adapt their knowledge of written Mandarin to write in Taiwanese, there is a significant gray area for which the appropriate character to use is unclear.

The problem is not so much a lack of characters, but the selection of characters. As Robert Cheng writes, "The most acute problem of achieving a standardized form of written Taiwanese, in Chinese characters, is not the lack of characters for existing morphemes, but rather the selection of one character over its alternatives. Since there are several principles for creating or selecting characters, there is no guarantee that every person will use the same principle for a given morpheme."¹⁹ (See Table 1). Cheng notes that the selection of characters is likely to depend on the educational level of the writer, with those writers well versed in classical Chinese and Mandarin tending to choose characters based on semantic value, and the masses tending to choose characters based on phonetic value.²⁰ Selecting on the basis of phonetic value, for example, one might adopt the Taiwanese morpheme 雨 *ho* 'rain' to represent the Taiwanese word *ho* 'to give.' Selecting a character based on semantic value, one might adopt the Mandarin morpheme 美 *mei* 'beautiful' to represent the Taiwanese morpheme *sui* 'beautiful.'²¹

¹⁷ Robert Liangwei Cheng, "Taiwanese Morphemes in Search of Chinese Characters," in *Zou Xiang Biaozhunhua de Taiwan Huawen* [Essays on Written Taiwanese] (Taipei: Zili Wanbao Wenhua Chubunbu, 1989), 332.

¹⁸ Cheng, "Taiwanese Morphemes in Search of Chinese Characters," 335-336.

¹⁹ Cheng, "Taiwanese Morphemes in Search of Chinese Characters," 341-342.

²⁰ Cheng, "Taiwanese Morphemes in Search of Chinese Characters," 333.

²¹ These linguistic examples are taken from Cheng, "Taiwanese Morphemes in Search of Chinese Characters," 338-339. Interestingly, Cantonese-specific characters tend to be chosen on the basis of sound, rather than meaning. See Snow 1991, 29.

<p>日 月 木 欠</p> <p>月部 二畫 有</p>	<p>月 牙 呈彎刀狀的新月。</p>	<p>月餅 扁圓形包餡的點心，中秋節應時的食品。(中秋餅^{ㄉㄨㄥ}ㄉㄨㄥ^{ㄨㄚˊ})。</p>	<p>月薪 按月計算發給的薪水。</p>	<p>月曆 每月一張曆本。</p>	<p>月蝕 地球運行到太陽和月球的中間，月球因而被地球遮蔽，而使其一部份或全部受不到陽光，使月球出現黑影的現象。(月蝕^{ㄉㄨㄥ}ㄉㄨㄥ^{ㄨㄚˊ})。</p>	 <p>月琴圖</p>	<p>月琴 樂器的名稱，琴身為扁圓或八角形，有四或三條絃。</p>	<p>月經 婦女生殖細胞發育成熟後，每二十八天左右所發生的周期性子宮出血。</p>	<p>月暈 月球四周圍繞著的光氣，是由於月光通過雲層折射而形成的情形。</p>		
 <p>月眉椅圖</p>	<p>月眉椅 靠背和扶手接連成半圓形的椅子。</p>	<p>月下老人 媒人。(月老公^{ㄉㄨㄥ}ㄉㄨㄥ^{ㄨㄚˊ})。</p>	<p>月大 一個月的大月。</p>	<p>月日 一個月中的日子。</p>	<p>月內 產褥期。月子。</p>	<p>月尾 新月的月初。</p>	<p>月頭 新月的月初。</p>	<p>月下香 多年生草木植物，也叫晚玉香。</p>	<p>月分牌 日曆、月曆或彩色單張年曆的通俗名稱。</p>		
<p>有風颳(明天要刮颳風) / 伊有徑洗衫(她現在確實在洗衣服)。</p>	<p>有 有^{ㄉㄨㄥ}ㄉㄨㄥ^{ㄨㄚˊ} ①無的反面，表示存在、擁有；等肯定意義；②有錢有勢；③親近、通「友」；④「不友寡君」見左傳。⑤為；⑥「跛能履，不足以為行也。」見易經。⑦或許；⑧「有限自天。」見易經。⑨置名詞或動詞前加強語氣；⑩有周一朝，有勞大駕、有損尊嚴。</p>	<p>有 有^{ㄉㄨㄥ}ㄉㄨㄥ^{ㄨㄚˊ} ①表示對於事實的肯定，用在過去事實相當於「會定」，用在未來事實，相當於「將要」，用在現在的事實，則有加強語氣的作用；②伊有去楓港(他會到楓港) / 明仔早有風颳(明天要刮颳風) / 伊有徑洗衫(她現在確實在洗衣服)。</p>	 <p>月圓門圖</p>	<p>月暗 月黑天。</p>	<p>月圓門 院子裏牆上的圓形門。</p>	<p>月光 晚上有月光的晚上。</p>	<p>月補日 一個月把月。</p>	<p>月瘦仔 瘦的月亮。</p>	<p>月圓門 院子裏牆上的圓形門。</p>		
<p>有情 ①有情趣。②佛經稱所有動</p>	<p>有神 ①精神充足飽滿的樣子。②喻事情奇妙難測，如有神助一般。</p>	<p>有效 ①有效果、達到預期目的。②達到要求的推理過程。</p>	<p>有限 ①有一定的限度。②數量不多。③程度不高。</p>	<p>有恆 人有毅力，行事能夠堅持到底。</p>	<p>有名 ①名字聲譽為大家所知曉。②出名。</p>	<p>有司 ①官吏的別稱。②指算命的人。</p>	<p>有心 ①故意。②有某種心意或想法。</p>	<p>有力 ①強勁有力。②有權有勢。</p>	<p>有十有七年。</p>	<p>有額 很、強調性質的確實性；②有額(份量足夠或很夠份量) / 有大額(份量很胖)。③得到某種結果；④考有額(考上)。</p>	<p>有額 很、強調性質的確實性；②有額(份量足夠或很夠份量) / 有大額(份量很胖)。③得到某種結果；④考有額(考上)。</p>

Figure 1. Yang Qingchu's *Taiwanese-Mandarin Dictionary*.

Note the use of characters, National Phonetic Symbols giving mandarin pronunciation, modified National Phonetic Symbols and romanization for Taiwanese pronunciation (both 百 *baihua* and 文 *wenyan*), and the inclusion of Taiwanese specific explanations (台).

2.3 One Attempt at Finding the Missing 15 Percent:

Yang Qingchu's *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary*

With the renewed interest in Taiwanese in the last decade, a number of local scholars have compiled dictionaries which contain characters for Taiwanese morphemes as well as pronunciation guides usually using either some form of romanization or a modified *zhuyin fuhao* (*bo po mo fo*). One such dictionary is the writer Yang Qingchu's *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary* (*Guo-Tai shuangyu cidian*).²² In this 1,428-page publication, Yang has attempted to find a Chinese character for every Taiwanese morpheme, using both a romanization system and a modified *zhuyin fuhao* system to represent the sound of these words; Yang also gives both colloquial and academic Taiwanese readings of characters, as well as dialectal variations in pronunciation. Significantly, in contrast with the proponents of romanized Taiwanese, Yang views romanization and *zhuyin fuhao* only as ways to learn the correct pronunciation of characters, not as independent writing systems. (See Figure 1).

Compiling such a dictionary is no easy task, and requires both time and money. Yang's dictionary, which he compiled over some twenty years, was funded by businessman Zhang Rongfa's Institute for National Policy Research and includes an essay by Taipei mayor Chen Shuipian. In the afterword to the dictionary, "Everyone Come and Join the Taiwanese Revival Movement (*Taiyu fuxing yundong*)", Yang explains the process of compiling the dictionary and criticizes the government for not supporting the teaching of Taiwanese in schools. He writes that the dictionary has been

²² Yang Qingchu, *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary* (*Guo-Tai shuangyu cidian*), fifth edition, (Gaoxiang: Dunli chubanshe, 1996). For a translated collection of Yang's writings, see *Selected Stories of Yang Ch'ing-Ch'u*, translated and with an introduction by Thomas B. Gold (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: First Publishing Co., 1983).

well received by teachers, and that "assuming that there is a character for every Taiwanese word, you can find the most accurate character to use."²³ Yang has put significant effort into his work, creating a sizable set of educational materials for teaching Taiwanese:

In these three to four years, in order to build the Taiwanese language, I have written an entire book on the character system and calligraphy. I set about writing another book, "Yang Qingchu's Taiwanese Pronunciation Book." There are 15 volumes in this set: Buddhist scripture, middle school, high school, college, Tang poetry, Song prose and other Taiwanese pronunciation books with classical Chinese and Taiwanese explanations of poems. There are also other books such as Taiwanese sayings.... These have a system for reading and writing as well as 41 cassette tapes to go along with them....

For the last four years I have taken advantage of the dictionary's pronunciation system to write these 15 books of Taiwanese literary works with 3 million words. If I found something to be lacking in pronunciation, or characters or important explanations or usage, I immediately noted it and added it to the dictionary. Even though there aren't many changes, I've revised this book four times with each edition and gone through works totaling 3 million words. [For each Taiwanese word] the book has the right character or character by extension and is already very complete—let this volume be the definitive volume.²⁴

Yang thus seems to want both to revive academic Taiwanese in order to read Classical Chinese (such as Tang poetry) as well as suggest characters for morphemes in the colloquial language (so that one could, for instance, read Taiwanese folk sayings).

Yang is critical of the government—specifically the Guomintang—for failing to recognize his work and for its history of suppressing the Taiwanese language:

In the newspapers recently, it was reported that the Education Department has entrusted a certain university with finding the original characters for Taiwanese pronunciation, even though this book has had those characters for ten years already.... In the [Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary], I have already found the characters for Taiwanese, which are about 98-99% accurate and complete. The Education Department is late in recognizing this kind of work. If I were to wait for the Education Department to publish this, it would delay me 16 or 17 years.

Of course, because of the 20-odd years I've spent finding characters, if the Education Department wanted to do this and consult me, it would be very easy. I say this because I think people should know that the Education Department's policy towards Taiwanese people has always been that of the Guomintang's colonial attitude.

²³ Yang Qingchu, *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary*, 1130.

²⁴ Yang Qingchu, *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary*, 1130.

Annihilating aboriginal language and culture has been part of its policy all along, except that in recent years, due to the will of the people, it has been less perfunctory. In order to save our original language and culture, everyone must unceasingly urge and pressure the government.

Yang also criticizes the government's current attempts at teaching Taiwanese as inadequate, and draws a historical comparison with the *Pingpu* people in order to illustrate the possibility that a language—and consequently its associated culture and people—can disappear as the result of assimilation:

As a model for teaching the native language, the Education Department has stipulated an elective one-hour class on Saturdays. In a school of four to five thousand, however, only 50 students might choose to take the course. In addition, what can one learn in one hour every week? Then you have native culture and music, all to be accomplished in this one hour! And the younger generation can hardly speak Taiwanese at all. Taiwanese has been ruined by the Education Department's colonial attitude; language is the root of culture, so if the Taiwanese language perishes, then so must Taiwanese culture, and thus the Taiwanese people will disappear from this land. They will become a people of the barbarian Beijing dialect. Three to four hundred years ago, Taiwan was completely occupied by *Pingpu* people, but Han control and culture were aggressive, causing *Pingpu* language, as well as the culture and people, to disappear.

I appeal here to the reader to actively support the movement to revive the Taiwanese language. In the past, the Guomindang has used its political power to support the Beijing dialect. Now we must in the same way revive Taiwanese. There is bound to be over-correction of mistakes before we can succeed, otherwise in 50 years the Taiwanese language will have perished. The Taiwanese people must overcome the fate of the *Pingpu* people: the language dies, and then the culture and the people perish.

The comparison with the *Pingpu* people is a curious example, for if these people did live in Taiwan three to four hundred years ago, they would have been assimilated by the Southern Min speakers immigrating to Taiwan at that time—in other words, the Taiwanese people whose own language and culture are now threatened by the “barbarian Beijing dialect.” Yang's reference to Mandarin as the “barbarian Beijing dialect” probably reflects the view that Taiwanese is not only a language equal to Mandarin, but is actually superior and more refined. Others have made similar observations, arguing that

Southern Min preserves more closely the sounds of ancient Chinese (i.e., the pronunciation of the Tang dynasty).²⁵

As this criticism demonstrates, the writing of Taiwanese is not simply a question of finding the right characters. Instead, the linguistic issues involved are part of a larger debate over the value placed on the Taiwanese language by the government. Yang believes that the government must be more proactive in consulting with scholars over the appropriate characters for Taiwanese morphemes and advocating bilingual education in Taiwanese and Mandarin.

In his essay for Yang's dictionary, Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-pian writes that "one must speak Taiwanese in order to create a deeper feeling and be one with this land."²⁶ He continues:

Although those like me who were raised after [World War II] can speak entirely fluent Taiwanese, because schools didn't teach Taiwanese, there are not many of us who can read aloud in Taiwanese. Taiwanese is a language of Han characters (*hanzi yuyan*), so Taiwanese people should not only be able to speak Taiwanese, but they should be able to use Taiwanese to read characters (*hanzi*), to read Chinese (*zhongwen*), and even write Taiwanese characters (*taiyu de hanzi*).²⁷

As a member of the Democratic Progressive Party, Chen represents one of the recently empowered Taiwanese politicians who are likely to be more receptive to calls for Taiwanese language education. Like Yang, Chen apparently favors both the revival of academic Taiwanese to read characters and Chinese (presumably both Classical Chinese and Vernacular Chinese) and the use of "Taiwanese characters" to write colloquial Taiwanese. His assertion that Taiwanese is a language of Han characters, however, is not

²⁵ Jean DeBernardi, "Linguistic Nationalism: The Case of Southern Min," 8-10. According to one theory, Fujian was settled by immigrants who moved south after the fall of the Tang dynasty.

²⁶ Chen Shui-pian, "The Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary and Bilingual Education," in the *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary* 1996, 54.

²⁷ Chen Shui-pian, *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary*, 54.

Alvin Lin, "Writing Taiwanese" *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 89 (January, 1999)

shared by all Taiwanese language supporters. In the next section, we will examine the alternatives to writing Taiwanese in characters.

I Things	Mih
1. What is this? That is a book.	1. Chit-ê sī sīm-mih? Hit-ê sī chheh.
2. What is that? This is a pencil.	2. Hit-ê sī sīm-mih? Chit-ê sī iân-pit.
3. Which is the chair? That is the chair.	3. Tó-lòh chit tē í? Sī hit tē.
4. Is this the chair? Yes, that is it.	4. Sī chit tē í, á m-sī? Sī; sī hit tē.
5. Is not that the chair? No, that is not it.	5. Kiám m-sī hit tē í? M-sī; m-sī hit tē.
6. Which is it? This is it.	6. Sī tó-lòh chit-ê? Sī chit-ê.

Figure 2. Church Romanization

From *Easy Conversations in the Taiwanese Vernacular* by Rev. Edward Band and Tan Ian-leng. Tainan, 1927.



Bea befar.
 Befchiaf
 Befar thoaf befchiaf.
 Barng bafng'ar
 Bafng'ar öe ka laang texng.
 Bafng'ar böeq texng apöo.

馬 馬仔
 馬車
 馬仔拖馬車。
 蚊 蚊仔
 蚊仔會給人釘。
 蚊仔欲釘阿婆。

Figure 3. Modern Literal Taiwanese: Learning the letter 'B' in Modern Literal Taiwanese

From *Taioaan-oe ABC* by Zhao Hongya and Feng Zhaoqing. *Taiyu xiandaiwen tuiguanghui yinxing* (Committee for the Popularization of Modern Literal Taiwanese Publishers), 1997.

Chapter 3: Writing Romanized Taiwanese

Although the Taiwanese language has been linked by academic Taiwanese to *wenyan* and *baihua*, and familiarity with Chinese characters has become nearly universal because of the influence of Japanese colonialism and Mandarin language education, there do exist alternative writing systems for Taiwanese based on phonetic alphabets rather than characters. The church romanization created by the Presybyterian church, which has existed for over a century, is by far the most widely known system, with about one hundred thousand users.²⁸ However, other romanization systems, as well as proposals advocating writing based on the *zhuyin fuhao* (National Phonetic Symbols) and the Korean script, have also been proposed. Among these proposals, however, the only system which appears to be gaining popularity relative to church romanization is the Modern Literal Taiwanese system designed by Liim Keahioong. Modern Literal Taiwanese differs from Church romanization mainly in its employment of "tonal spelling," in which tones are represented by the spelling of words rather than through tone marks. (See Figures 2 and 3).

The issues involved in popularizing these romanization systems fall generally into two categories:

1. *Linguistic concerns*: how accurately each system is able to reflect the spoken language and reflect aspects of the language such as homonyms, tones and dialects; punctuation and segmentation of words; how easy each is to learn and to use;
2. *Practical concerns*: acceptability to Taiwanese who are more familiar with character writing; body of literature available in each system; compatibility with computers, publishing, etc.

In addition, advocates of romanization systems may prefer one system over the other because of extra-linguistic factors. Some view romanization as a means to express symbolically a Taiwanese identity separate from Chinese culture and Chinese characters. Others may prefer a romanization system simply because they learned it first and are comfortable with it.

This chapter provides a history of both the church romanization and Modern Literal Taiwanese systems, explaining the reasons they were created and how they are being promoted today. In the next chapter, I will examine more closely how each deals with the linguistic issues involved in romanization schemes, and provide a more comprehensive analysis of the extralinguistic issues involved.

3.1 The Roots of Romanized Taiwanese: Church Romanization

The first systematic attempt at romanizing a Chinese language occurred about 1598 when the missionary Matteo Ricci and others compiled a dictionary which used five marks to indicate tones and another to indicate aspiration.²⁹ A romanization system did not arrive on Taiwan until the mid-nineteenth century, however, when missionaries who had developed a romanization system for Amoy Southern Min brought Christianity across the Taiwan strait. Even so, the church romanization for Taiwanese pre-dated the Wade-Giles system for Mandarin, as well as the Yale, Gwoyeu Romatzyh and pinyin systems which would later be created. Church romanization continues to be used among

²⁸ Mei-ling Lu, "The Potential Impact of the Modern Literal Taiwanese in Latin Alphabet on the Ethnic Identity and Communication among the Taiwanese People." Master's Thesis, Boston University, School of Mass Communication and Public Relations (September 1993): 109.

²⁹ John DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 15.

the 100,000 or so Presbyterians on Taiwan, and there exists a substantial body of literature written in church romanization, mainly Church liturgy, songs and poems.³⁰

Missionary attempts at romanizing Fujianese began as early as the 1850s with the work of the Protestant missionary S. Wells Williams, who described his attempts at writing Amoy as "one of the first attempts at Romanizing the Chinese language for the purpose of teaching the natives through another medium than their own characters."³¹ While Williams noted that the romanization helped missionaries to learn the language and allowed Chinese to read romanized text after about a year of practice, he also cautioned that "so long as there are scores of homophonous characters, the characters are indispensable in order to discriminate the homophones. Even with the assistance of double and triple compounds, references to the characters are constantly made in speaking, in order to render the sense clear."³² Williams also noted that the creation of separate romanization systems for every topolect of Chinese would inhibit the cross-language communication possible with *wenyan*, threaten the Christianization of China and "tend to break up the people into little clans and states."³³ Williams' observations identify some of the major linguistic and political questions that remain central to advocates of romanized Taiwanese today: how does one solve the ambiguity present in romanization, and what political and social repercussions does romanization entail?

A fair number of missionaries followed Williams in creating phonetic systems and building a body of romanized literature. As DeFrancis writes:

In the fifteen year period between 1851 and 1866 some thirty-seven missionaries, more than one-tenth of all the Protestant missionaries who had ever worked

³⁰ Electronic mail correspondence, Daniel Wu, 9 March 1998.

³¹ DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*, 21. DeFrancis's source is S. Wells Williams, review of Chhong-se Toan, &c., in *The Chinese Repository*, XX, No. 7 (July, 1851), 472-478.

³² DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*, 21-22.

³³ DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*, 22.

in China, published Chinese materials in some form of phonetic script. Their production included seventy-five separate items and totaled several thousand pages. Topically there was a heavy concentration on sacred scriptures, theology, catechism, prayers, and hymns. There were also a few works dealing with geography, arithmetic, and other secular subjects.³⁴

It was in this atmosphere of spreading the gospel through romanized Chinese that the English Presbyterian Carstairs Douglas of Amoy visited northern Taiwan in 1860. Christianity had not been present on Taiwan for two hundred years, since the Dutch left Taiwan.³⁵ In 1864, the Presbyterians decided to set up a mission in the southern city of Tainan, the capital of Taiwan at the time. Growth in the first two decades was slow, and many of the Taiwanese who converted were later determined to be "backsliders and insincere self-seekers" who sought only personal benefit.³⁶ Believing that a strong church required members who could read and understand the scriptures and conscious of the fact that many of the converts were illiterate, the church advocated the use of romanized vernacular Taiwanese instead of characters.³⁷ Thomas Barclay, whose translation of the Bible into Amoy would become widely used on Taiwan, wrote in 1881:

Among our present church members, I know of no woman, with perhaps one or two exceptions, who can read Chinese characters, and almost certainly, not more than 10 percent of the male members can do so.³⁸

However, Barclay reported that nearly half of the members, excluding those with bad eyesight, could read romanized script.³⁹

In addition to spreading the word, the Presbyterians also founded hospitals, seminaries, and schools. The mission was given a further boost when it was sent a

³⁴ DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*, 22. DeFrancis's source is Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai, 1879), *passim*.

³⁵ Hollington K. Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan: A History* (Taipei: China Post, 1972 2nd ed.), 21.

³⁶ Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 40.

³⁷ Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 40.

³⁸ Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 40.

³⁹ Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 40.

printing press from England in 1881. On May 24, 1884, the first publication was run off the press, and in July 1885, the Mission published the first monthly "Church News," probably the oldest church newspaper in the Far East.⁴⁰

During the Japanese occupation beginning in 1895, the Presbyterians were granted a virtual monopoly as the only Protestant church allowed on Taiwan until 1925. This monopoly arose because the Japanese were impressed by the Church's work in romanizing Taiwanese and in improving education and health standards, and they were also wary of the effects of competing denominations.⁴¹ When the Japanese declared war on China in 1937 and decided to Japanify Taiwan, however, romanized Taiwanese came to be viewed as a hindrance to learning Japanese and as a possible tool for subversion.⁴² The Japanese placed severe penalties on the use of romanized Bibles rather than character Bibles, and were suspicious that romanized Taiwanese "concealed codes and secret revolutionary messages."⁴³

Even after denominations such as the mainland-based True Jesus Church and the Japanese Holiness Church arrived in 1925, however, the Presbyterian church continued to be the church most strongly identified with Taiwanese. When the Japanese occupation ended and the Guomindang came into power in 1945, the Presbyterian church had come to view itself as a Taiwanese church that represented Taiwanese, Hakkas and mountain people; its missionaries had translated the Bible into Taiwanese, and the church continued to sing hymns and conduct services in Taiwanese.⁴⁴ After the February 28

⁴⁰ Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 41.

⁴¹ Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991) 20-21.

⁴² Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 71.

⁴³ Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan*, 78.

⁴⁴ Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan*, 29.

Incident in 1947, the Presbyterian church became firmly opposed to the Guomintang.⁴⁵ Despite Guomintang repression, church members continued to speak out against the government in support of human rights and political freedom, and many church members are active in the Democratic Progressive Party today.⁴⁶

Under the Guomintang, although church romanization was allowed, there was still significant suppression. In 1974, a Taiwanese-English dictionary which used Taiwanese romanization was banned in Taiwan. Entitled *A Dictionary of Southern Min*, the book was compiled by a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, Bernard L. M. Embree, with the cooperation of the Taipei Language Institute, a private language school in Taipei. When it was completed in 1972 after ten years of work, the government refused to grant permission to publish it; Embree then had the dictionary published in Hong Kong, and copies were brought into Taiwan, an act which the government considered smuggling. The Government Information Office explained the government's position:

We have no objection to the dictionary being used by foreigners. They could use it in mimeographed form. But we don't want it published as a book and sold publicly because of the Romanization it contains. Chinese should not be learning Chinese through Romanization.⁴⁷

While the government allowed the use of romanization within the relatively small group of Protestant Taiwanese, it apparently felt in the 1970s that widespread dissemination of a Taiwanese dictionary with romanization would threaten its Mandarin language policy: Writing in 1979, Robert Cheng noted that "the proportion of those who use romanization of the Taiwanese vernacular has not increased, because the government has banned the

⁴⁵ For two weeks beginning on February 28, 1947, Nationalist troops executed thousands of protesting Taiwanese who were unhappy with Guomintang rule. This event has become a major symbol of Taiwanese identity. For further description see Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

⁴⁶ Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan*, 29.

⁴⁷ "Guide to Dialect Banned in Taiwan." *New York Times*, September 15, 1974, sec. 1, p. 15.

teaching of Taiwanese romanization and the printing of new romanized texts."⁴⁸ In addition, Cheng noted that writing in Taiwanese was allowed only for folk poetry and proverbs but not prose.⁴⁹

3.2 Church Romanization Today: The Taigu listserver

While church romanization has been used mainly within the Church, it has gradually come to be learned by others interested in writing Taiwanese. A number of improvements to church romanization have been proposed, including such systems as Taiwanese Language Phonetic Alphabetics.⁵⁰ In addition, although no exact figures are available, individuals not necessarily affiliated with the church who are interested in promoting the language have begun to learn and use church romanization.

One such example, which may be one of the few forums today in which romanized Chinese functions as an independent form of written communication (rather than as a teaching or pronunciation aid) is the Taigu listserver.⁵¹ Formed in 1991 by a group of college students, Taigu has a membership of about 100 Taiwanese-speaking individuals of varying ages and backgrounds, although about only 30 of these post messages regularly.⁵² In the two months which I have subscribed to the listserver (beginning on February 18, 1998), there have been an average of 80 messages posted per week. Topics discussed include Taiwanese language issues, romanization, and Taiwanese politics. Although church romanization is the basic system on which writing

⁴⁸ Robert L. Cheng, "Language Unification in Taiwan: Present and Future," in *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present* ed. by Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1994): 366. Originally published in William C. McCormack and Stephen A. Wurm, eds., *Language and Society* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), 541-78.

⁴⁹ Robert L. Cheng, "Language Unification in Taiwan: Present and Future," 368.

⁵⁰ See the Daiwanway homepage for systems which propose to reform church romanization.

⁵¹ The listserv address is taigu@formosa.org. Inquiries about joining the list should be sent to majordomo@formosa.org. Recent messages can be viewed at <http://tc.formosa.org/main.html>.

⁵² Email correspondence with Kai-hsu Tai, 23 February 1998.

08:06 AM 3/26/98 , Re: Hanji

From:
Date: Thu, 26 Mar 1998 08:06:15 EST
To: taigu@formosa.org
Subject: Re: Hanji
Sender: owner-taigu@formosa.org
Reply-To: taigu@formosa.org

Khaisu hianN pengan.

Lan teh tholun kokchiong gugian bunji tiannau hoa, teh kong toh-chitchiong khah khunlan?? Chit e bunte punsin, goa ia kampak chin u bunte!!

Inui lan long ikeng u "liptiuN5", u koekhi e kenggiam. Ti se3-kan, lan chin khunlan khi chhoetioh chit e lang si "pehchoa2", kio i khi pikau 2 chiong bunji kong toh-chitchiong khah kantan a-si khah khunlan? (Goa koekhi thak Greek kap Hebrew e si, lang mng goa kong, Lan Taioan lang beh thak Greek khah khunlan, a-si thak Hebrew khah khunlan. Goa chiu kong: Taioan lang, na u Enggi e kichhou e lang, chiu thak Greek khah iong-iN, tan-si na long bo Indo-european language e kichho e lang, chiu khi thak Hebrew khah iong-iN, inui Hebrew si khah Achiu-khoan2. Goa koh u chit e kenggiam: Goa ti 34-ni cheng iong Chinese sia chitpun Greek e kho3-pun2, iong Chinese siong Greek e kho3. Goa kampak chin hongpian, tansi goa bo-ku i-au chiu li-khui Taioan. Hian-chai bo lang teh iong Chinese siong Greek kho, in-ui beh ka e lang, tloh ai hui3 chin che chengsin, chiong Indo-european language e the-he kai cho Chinese e the-he lai kong, chin hui-khi, in-ui ti Taioan e Sinhak Giankiu-sou e hakseng long u Indo-european language e ki-chhou2. Goa chitchun u chiong chitpun Greek e kho-pun koh teng-sia2, tan-si goa bo siuNbeh koh chhutpan, chi-u khng ti goa e tiannau laibin, na u lang ai iong, goa chiu kia khi hou i (It requires Chinese Window 3.1 or 95, koh goa e kia Sgreek.fot khi hou i) Chongkong chitku: Lan chin khunlan kong: "Simmih khah khunlan!!!!!" What an irony!

Koeh Tekliat siong

Figure 4. Sample Email from Taigu Listserv.

A demonstration of the feasibility of communicating via romanized Taiwanese. Note the selective use of tone numbers when necessary, as well as the code-mixing with English.

is based, each writer tends to have his or her own specific system of writing. Most drop the tone mark of each syllable, indicating tones only when they deem it necessary by writing the tone number after the syllable. Writers vary in their use of specific spellings, as well as in their use of hyphens, apostrophes and other punctuation. (See Figure 4).

In a survey posted to the Taigu listserver to which there were six responses, respondents varied in their views. Some belonged to the Presbyterian church, while others had learned romanization on their own. Some preferred to write in romanization because it was easier or faster; others preferred characters because they could read them faster than romanization. One respondent wrote that "Taiwanese Hanji (*hanzi*) is not Taiwanese," but that he still wrote in characters because of its "effectiveness" in communicating to his readers. Respondents were generally not affiliated with any political party, but all supported an independent Taiwan.⁵³

3.3 An Indigenous System: Liim Keahioong and Modern Literal Taiwanese

Among the several romanization systems proposed as an alternative to church romanization, one system in particular seems to be gaining ground: the Modern Literal Taiwanese system created by Liim Keahioong. Liim and his friends created the system in 1943, when they were in junior high school. After being ridiculed by a Japanese teacher for being unable to write in their own native language, they decided to learn church romanization. However, they found that CR was more of a "phonetic notation" rather than a "literal form of language", since it required the use of diacritical marks for

⁵³ Survey developed by Alvin Lin and Dartmouth senior Christine Lin and submitted to taigu listserver on 3/30/98. The survey is included in the appendix.

tones.⁵⁴ Liim wanted a system in which, as Lu writes:

...each word indicated a whole concept; people could memorize words through spelling and write down any word with the concept indicated by the word appearing in their mind simultaneously. This process of writing would be like... in English or French; for example, when people write an English text, they spell words without the analysis and pondering of the phonetic combination of these words.⁵⁵

In order to accomplish this, he created a system in which tones were incorporated into the spelling of words rather than marked by diacritics or tone numbers. In this respect, the relationship between Liim's MLT and church romanization for Taiwanese is analagous to the tonal spelling found in Yuen Ren Chao's Gwoyeu Romatzyh and the tone marks found in pinyin for Mandarin.⁵⁶ Although Liim had the basic idea for the system over fifty years ago, he did not make the system public until 1987 because of the oppressive political environment on Taiwan.⁵⁷

With regard to church romanization, Liim has both praise and criticism:

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is recognized as a fortress protecting the mother tongue of the Taiwanese people. Regardless of the fact that other churches have switched to use the Bibles in Mandarin Chinese, it has been keeping on using the Bible printed in spelled Taiwanese which for a hundred years has never been changed or revised; and has been keeping on giving church services in the Taiwanese language. All these have made its followers fluent speakers of elegant and refined Taiwanese language.

The spelled Taiwanese in the Bible of the Presbyterian Church has indeed contributed a lot in preserving the pronunciations of the Taiwanese language. However, there are still many drawbacks in this method of recording the language. Above all, it is a phonetic notation instead of a literal writing; it is excellent in terms of reading, but absolutely not an appropriate form for writing. The Taiwanese people often dared not write down their own words because they felt the difference between their own pronunciations and those which are in the Bible. Therefore, it is no wonder that Taiwanese had made no start in their own literature.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Mei-ling Lu, "The Potential Impact of the Modern Literal Taiwanese in Latin Alphabet on the Ethnic Identity and Communication among the Taiwanese People." Master's Thesis, Boston University, School of Mass Communication and Public Relations, September 1993, 38. Lu's source is Liim Keehiong, *Taigour Hiexntaix Buun* [Taiwanese Modern Prose] (Tainan, Taiwan: Taix-Ha Publishing Inc., 1990).

⁵⁵ Lu, "The Potential Impact of the Modern Literal Taiwanese in Latin Alphabet," 38-39.

⁵⁶ Yuen Ren Chao developed Gwoyeu Romatzh in 1928 for Mandarin. He also developed a tonal spelling system for use in teaching Cantonese.

⁵⁷ Lu, "The Potential Impact of the Modern Literal Taiwanese in Latin Alphabet," 39.

Liim's assertion that MLT is a better form of writing is supported by Yuen Ren Chao's comment that although tonal spelling "makes the spelling more complicated... [it] gives an individuality to the physiognomy of words, with which it is possible to associate meaning in a way not possible in the case of forms with tone-signs added as an afterthought."⁵⁹ His praise of church romanization for making "its followers fluent speakers of elegant and refined Taiwanese language" reflects the value he and other romanization supporters continue to place on academic Taiwanese; even if characters are no longer used as a writing system, it seems, some romanization supporters hope to maintain the academic pronunciation and vocabulary. In comparison to church romanization's 100,000 users, Modern Literal Taiwanese has perhaps only a few thousand in Taiwan and abroad; it is currently being promoted in the United States among Taiwanese-Americans and is also being used to teach Taiwanese to second-generation Taiwanese-American students in schools in Washington, D.C. and New Jersey.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Lu, "The Potential Impact of the Modern Literal Taiwanese in Latin Alphabet," 35-36. Lu's source is Liim Keahioong, *Zusun Si-tai EE Taiioaan-oe Gou-buun*. [The Taiwanese Language in the Age of Information] (Tainan, Taiwan: Taix-ha Publishing Inc, 1990).

⁵⁹ Yuen Ren Chao, *Mandarin Primer*, (Clinton, Massachusetts: The Colonial Press, Inc., 1948), 11.

⁶⁰ I attended a presentation on the MLT given at the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association conference at Princeton University on February 28, 1998. There, I met a teacher of a Taiwanese language school in New Jersey who is teaching Taiwanese using the MLT system.

Chapter 4 Linguistic and Social Considerations

At present, there exist a number of alternatives for writing Taiwanese. This section, without advocating any one system over another, will explore the linguistic and social considerations which are likely to influence the nature of Taiwanese writing in the future. The promotion of one or the other system of writing Taiwanese is by nature a sensitive issue, simply by virtue of the value that its promoters place on Taiwanese. This section will examine the following questions:

- 1.) What are the linguistic considerations that arise when writing Taiwanese in characters and in romanization?
- 2.) What are the extra-linguistic, political values attached to writing Taiwanese?
- 3.) What kind of policy, if any, should be adopted in order to develop a standardized form of written Taiwanese?

This examination will proceed on the assumption that linguistic analysis of a language and the "scientific" development of a writing system must be coupled with a consideration of more practical concerns. As the sociolinguist Joshua Fishman has written, "the creation of writing systems is significant only insofar as it leads to the acceptance and implementation of writing systems."⁶¹ One must also recognize the subjectivity and objectivity of writing systems: while a linguistic analysis can highlight the differences between various systems, most writers are naturally most comfortable expressing themselves using the system which they are already familiar with, whether it is characters or a phonetic system. In Mandarin, for example, whether one prefers Wade-Giles, pinyin or Gwoyeu Romatzyh often depends on which system was learned first or is

most often used. Thus, for individual users and for the propagation of writing systems in general, timing is important and may outweigh considerations such as efficiency and linguistic accuracy.

4.1 Some Linguistic Classifications

In examining the writing systems available for Taiwanese, the major decision seems to be whether one should use characters or a phonetic system. It is important, however, to note that even if one advocates characters, a phonetic system is still needed as a pronunciation guide for Taiwanese. Developing a suitable phonetic system is thus desirable, even if one prefers to write Taiwanese in characters. The purpose of a phonetic system will affect the degree of specificity which it must indicate. As Ping Chen has written, such a phonetic system may fall into one of four categories:⁶²

1. *Auxiliary* -- Used as a pronunciation guide for characters, facilitating learning of characters, indexing of characters, typing characters into computers. For example, the use of pinyin along with Mandarin character-writing in mainland China.
2. *Supplementary* -- Used together with characters, either to annotate the pronunciation of obscure characters or as a partial replacement for characters. For example, as Japanese kana is used with characters. Robert Cheng has used such a mixed system, using characters with romanization to fill in the gaps where necessary.
3. *Alternative* -- Used as an alternative to writing in *characters*, functioning as a complete and competing system which is easier to learn and more convenient. Such a situation, in which there are two widely used writing systems, has been termed "digraphia."
4. *Superseding* -- Used as a complete replacement of characters. For example, the replacement of characters with Quoc Ngu in Vietnam and Hangul in North Korea.

⁶¹ Joshua Fishman, "Advances in the Creation and Revision of Writing Systems," in *Advances in the Creation and Revision of Writing Systems*, ed. by Joshua Fishman (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1977), pp. XV.

⁶² Ping Chen, "Four Projected Functions of New Writing Systems for Chinese," *Anthropological Linguistics* Vol. 36, No. 3 (Fall 1994), 366-381.

As an auxiliary or supplementary system, a Taiwanese phonetic system might not have to distinguish between homonyms (morphemes with the same sound but different meaning). However, if the anticipated role of the phonetic system is greater, it will need to be able to communicate language unambiguously; this is one of the problems which phonetic systems for all Chinese languages must solve if they are to be used as complete writing systems.

In addition to function, phonetic systems may be classified by appearance. For Taiwanese, there are three major kinds of proposed writing systems:⁶³

1. Those based on the roman alphabet, such as church romanization and Modern Literal Taiwanese.
2. Those which are similar to Japanese kana, i.e. whose appearance is based on characters. For example, a modified version of the Mandarin Phonetic System (*bo po mo fo*) currently used to teach Mandarin in Taiwanese schools.
3. Mixed writing using characters and a phonetic system. Robert Cheng has advocated writing in characters and romanization, while Hong Weiren has advocated writing in characters and a Korean hangul-like script.⁶⁴

These systems must also specify if, when and how to indicate tones, as well as how to punctuate multi-syllabic words. An adaptation of the Mandarin Phonetic Symbols may be preferred by some Taiwanese, since they have used it to learn Mandarin (unlike mainland China, where pinyin is used). However, proponents of romanization have argued that it conveys the additional benefit of assisting in learning romanized languages, especially English, which almost all Taiwanese students learn in school.

⁶³ There have also been Korean hangul-like systems supposedly suggested, although I have not been able to find information on such a system.

⁶⁴ A-chin Hsiau, "Language Ideology in Taiwan...", 311.

Finally, the linguistic environment on Taiwan is best classified as one of *diglossia* (two languages, Mandarin and Taiwanese, are widely spoken) and emerging *digraphia* (more than one writing system for Taiwanese).⁶⁵ In this case, the promotion of Mandarin by the Guomindang government has caused Mandarin to be viewed as the high language in politics and academics, while Taiwanese is the low language used in business and at home. However, this situation is currently undergoing some changes, since Taiwanese is being promoted not only as a native language but as a language of high culture, superior to Mandarin.⁶⁶

In addition to diglossia, Taiwan is also characterized by an emerging digraphia for the Taiwanese language (though there does not appear to be a similar push for Mandarin). Because of the written culture associated with characters, it may be viewed as the high writing system, as opposed to the lower, phonetic writing systems. Furthermore, the creation of a writing system for Taiwanese differs from the situation found elsewhere in that most Taiwanese speakers are already literate in Mandarin characters; the inventors of phonetic systems are not starting from scratch, but must take into account the current use of character writing.

4.2 Dealing with Homonyms: Morphophonemic spelling

Chinese characters, compared to current phonetic systems for Taiwanese, are better able to distinguish between the homonyms found in Taiwanese and other Chinese topolects. For example, the phoneme *hun* in Taiwanese can refer to the morphemes 分 'separate' or 'minute', 婚 'marriage', and 熏 'smoke'. This is because

⁶⁵ See Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word*, Vol. 15, 1959, 325-340. Also see Ian R. H. Dale, "Digraphia," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 26, 5-13 and John DeFrancis, "Digraphia," *Word*, Vol 35, No. 1, April 1984, 59-66.

⁶⁶ Jean DeBernardi, "Linguistic Nationalism: The Case of Southern Min," 8-13.

characters represent morphemes, while the proposed romanization systems represent phonemes; neither church romanization nor Modern Literal Taiwanese is able to deal with this completely, although in most cases meaning is clear from context.

One solution which has been proposed to solve this problem is morphophonemic spelling, which distinguishes between homonyms through alternative spellings.⁶⁷ In English, for example, morphophonemic spelling is used to differentiate 'be' and 'bee', 'so' and 'sew'. If a similar approach were to be taken with Taiwanese, one might write the above words as 'fun', 'hun' and 'xun', but still pronounce them exactly the same as hun. In most cases, then, the writing system would maintain regular, predictable spelling rules. When necessary to distinguish between homophones, however, alternative spellings could be developed.

4.3 Tones in Taiwanese: Surface vs. Lexical tones

In addition to homonyms which would not be distinguished by normal phonetic writing systems, Taiwanese is characterized by seven tones which undergo tone shifts (a phenomenon known as tone sandhi) in which all of the morphemes in a sentence except the last undergo a regular, predictable change in tone.⁶⁸ Thus, each morpheme has a lexical tone (its tone before undergoing tone sandhi shifts) and a surface tone (after tone sandhi). Taiwanese writing systems must thus choose between indicating only one of these tones, indicating both, indicating tones only when necessary, or indicating none at

⁶⁷ Ekki Lu has proposed morphophonemic spelling for Taiwanese; however, in an electronic mail correspondence dated 20 April 1998 he wrote "This is a tough and challenging subject. Unless you are 1) very bright, 2) very open-minded, 3) willing to invest a few years of your time, I would suggest not even to touch this topic."

⁶⁸ Mandarin also displays tone sandhi, although to a lesser degree. For example, if two third tone morphemes are back to back, the first morpheme becomes a second tone (ni3 hao3 -> ni2 hao3). See appendix for a description of the tone shifts in Taiwanese.

all. Church spelling represents only the lexical tones, while Modern Literal Taiwanese indicates the tones in a sentence after it has undergone tone sandhi.

4.4 Representing Dialects: Picking a standard written form or representing all dialects

One of the major obstacles faced by proponents of phonetic writing systems is the question of how to represent dialects of Taiwanese. There are two major dialects of Taiwanese, the northern dialect spoken in Taipei and the central/southern dialect spoken in Tainan:⁶⁹

northern dialect	central/southern dialect	
boe7	be7	to sell
ke3 khi3	koe3 khi3	to go over there
hu5	hi5	fish
tu1	ti1	pig

The options available are to follow the pronunciation of: 1. each individual writer, 2. his or her dialect group, or 3. an agreed upon standard dialect of Taiwanese. Chinese characters, because they are less closely tied to a single pronunciation than phonetic systems, are able to deal with this problem quite well. Of course, the upshot of this is that characters also tend to work against the standardization of pronunciations.

One solution is to unite the dialects under one spelling. The word 豬 'pig', for example, has three pronunciations: *di*, *du*, and *dy*. One could design a system where the standard written form is *dy*, and have each dialect speaker pronounce it according to his dialect. Advocates of phonetic systems must thus either choose a single dialect as the standard written form—in which case one is left with the difficult task of choosing the

⁶⁹ Linguistic examples from electronic mail correspondence, Henry H. Tan-Tenn, 19 April 1998.

'standard' dialect—or allow for dialectal spelling, which may hinder cross-dialectal communication.

4.5 Summary of Linguistic Concerns: Deciding the degree of coding

In short, those who advocate phonetic writing must resolve certain linguistic problems which do not occur when characters are used: how to differentiate homonyms and represent tones and dialects. They must find a compromise, where the degree of specificity given in the writing system is enough to communicate unambiguously and clearly, but not so much that the system becomes burdensome. They must also decide whether it is appropriate to leave out tones when the meaning is clear from context or whether the meaning of a word should be apparent even in isolation.

4.6 Writing, Reading, Printing, Computing, Indexing and other Practical Concerns

In terms of facility of use in entering Taiwanese into computers, organizing words in a dictionary, arranging a phone book, etc. the use of a phonetic system—even if in addition to characters—is without question more efficient than characters alone. In terms of learning to read and write, characters are cumbersome and take longer to master than a phonetic system with a limited number of phonemes. Some have suggested that the use of phonetic systems to enter characters into computers may be the first step in promoting a widespread diagraphia for Mandarin, and the same possibility exists for Taiwanese.⁷⁰ Modern Literal Taiwanese, because it represents tones through spelling, may be somewhat more compatible with computers than church romanization, which uses tone marks or numbers.

⁷⁰ For more on computers and Chinese characters, see *Characters and Computers*, ed. by Victor H. Mair and Yongquan Liu, (Washington: IOS Press, 1991). A software program called HOTSYS for entering Taiwanese romanization and characters into computers has in fact been created.

On the other hand, because characters are visually more differentiated than a series of letters, it is easier to scan a text for a particular word in characters than in a romanization system, where word shape is less distinctive. In Japanese, for example, which uses characters and kana, characters are easily distinguished in a body of text. Current proposals for a mixed system in Taiwanese, however, would likely use a phonetic system only to fill in the 15 percent of ambiguous characters, meaning characters would comprise the majority of the text. Finally, characters also take up less space on a page (but more space in computer memory).

4.7 Social Concerns: Tradition and Political Meaning

As the connection to a vast cultural tradition of character writing, characters may be more attractive to many Taiwanese people because it is already used by most to read and write Mandarin; some may also view it as the higher form of writing by virtue of its difficulty and aesthetic appeal. On the other hand, following a similar logic, some Taiwanese who support an independent Taiwan, and perhaps even resent the mandatory Mandarin education imposed by the Guomindang government, view the use of a phonetic script as a symbolic break with traditional Chinese culture. Moreover, by advocating romanization, these Taiwanese are not only breaking with traditional culture, but they are preventing non-Taiwanese speakers from being able to read written Taiwanese; whereas a Mandarin speaker might be able to understand at least the gist of a Taiwanese text written in characters, a romanized Taiwanese text would be virtually unintelligible because of its use of a specialized alphabet which conveys meaning through sound.

The political symbolism of writing systems, of course, is nothing new to Taiwan. In writing Mandarin, the use of simplified characters and pinyin on the mainland stands

in stark contrast to the use of traditional characters and the Mandarin Phonetic System II on Taiwan. Rather than switch to the pinyin system employed on the mainland and by Western news media, the Taiwanese government, which had since 1932 adopted Gwoyueu Romatzyh as the official Mandarin romanization system, approved the Mandarin Phonetic Symbols II, which has much in common with the pinyin system. Although certain linguistic arguments can be made for adopting the Mandarin Phonetic System II, one suspects that the choice was not entirely linguistic, and that the adoption of pinyin was consciously avoided. The ROC government's prohibition on the sale of the church-romanized *A Dictionary of Southern Min* in 1974 suggests that government officials may be aware of the potential implications of the promotion of Taiwanese, and that of romanized Taiwanese even more.

Perhaps the most relevant comparison with Taiwanese is the case of written Cantonese, which has enjoyed the most widespread usage of any non-Mandarin Chinese topolect. The use of Cantonese-specific characters in newspapers, comics and popular literature has reinforced a sense of identity based on shared language. Snow has suggested that:

...the role which Cantonese is allowed to play in Hong Kong's publishing industry after the Special Administrative Region is established in 1997 will be a significant indicator of the extent to which Hong Kong is allowed cultural autonomy.⁷¹

In a similar fashion, the development of written Taiwanese will be a measure of the value placed on Taiwanese culture. Cantonese, however, differs from Taiwanese in that it has a widely accepted written form in characters, while Taiwanese has multiple character and romanization schemes proposed but none universally accepted. Both topolects face a

⁷¹ Donald Bruce^{Snow}, "Written Cantonese and the culture of Hong Kong: The growth of a dialect literature," Ph.D dissertation, Indiana University, 1991, 1-2

certain tension in their relationship with standard written Chinese, in terms of the value placed on "unorthodox" characters and topolect-specific vocabulary and grammar. In sum, these tensions are part of the unresolved dilemmas of Chinese language reform.

4.8 Conclusion: Future Orthography Policy on Taiwan

The most distinguishing feature of orthography reform on Taiwan is its bottom-up, grassroots approach. Rather than a government-sponsored committee or voluntary group of scholars who will develop a cohesive, cooperative Taiwanese language policy, there have been mainly a few isolated scholars who assemble dictionaries, and proponents of one or the other system who try to spread its use. The current system resembles something of a free market, in which writing systems compete with each other for potential readers and writers; however, as DeFrancis has noted, unless there is a substantive literature in which to exercise one's ability to read, there is little incentive to learn a writing system (although interpersonal communication, such as in the Taigu listserv, or use in specialized circumstances, such as in church, does offer some incentive).⁷² Writing systems thus need not only readers, but writers who will produce materials which will draw a reading audience; their propagation depends on the assumption that Taiwanese people want to write and read Taiwanese in addition to Mandarin. Such a free market approach would avoid the debates which would likely occur among the members of an official committee. On the other hand, it is likely to be a slower process of gradual diffusion. An official committee might be able to reach a compromise and effect a more definite direction for Taiwanese orthography reform.

The question of whether writing can be developed for Taiwanese is based as much on practical and social concerns as linguistic considerations. Although both

characters and romanization would need to become more standardized if writing in Taiwanese were to become popularized, the development of character-written Cantonese and the substantial literature developed for Mandarin romanizations in the People's Republic of China suggest that both options are certainly possible.⁷³ At present, the movement for written Taiwanese is still in its early stages. How the written language develops will depend on the interaction of a small but growing group of Taiwanese who are interested in writing their language, and their ability to convince both the Taiwanese government and the Taiwanese people of the value of their goal.

⁷² John DeFrancis, "Digraphia," *Word*, Vol 35, No. 1, April 1984, 66.

⁷³ For a description of the romanization movement in Mainland China in the twentieth century, see John DeFrancis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*.

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The listserv address is taigu@formosa.org. Inquiries about joining the list should be sent to majordomo@formosa.org. Recent messages can be viewed at <http://tc.formosa.org/main.html>.

Survey developed by Alvin Lin and Dartmouth student Christine Lin and submitted to taigu listserve on 3/30/98.

WWW Homepages: See below

Email Correspondence:

Example and romanization from electronic mail correspondence with Daniel Wu, 3/9/98.

Email correspondence with Kai-hsu Tai, February 23, 1998.

Other

Presentation of Modern Literal Taiwanese given by Hong Ya-Chao at the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association conference at Princeton University on February 28, 1998.

Computer Resources -- WWW pages available at the time of this paper

DaiwanWay: Taiwanese Language site

<http://daiwanway.dynip.com/>

Ekki's Home Page

<http://ekki.simplenet.com/>

Modern Literal Taiwanese

<http://taiguo.com/>

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Rev. Moses C. White "Article X. Chinese Local Dialects Reduced to Writing" (~1853?) to which is appended Hon. Charles W. Bradley, "An Outline of the System Adopted for Romanizing the Dialect of Amoy."

Contemporary Dictionaries

Yang Qingchu. *Mandarin-Taiwanese Dictionary (Guo-Tai shuangyu cidian)*, fifth edition, (Gaoxiong: Dunli chubanshe, 1996).

Embree, Bernard L.M. *A Dictionary of Southern Min (Taiwanese-English Dictionary)* (Taipei: Taipei Language Institute, 1984).

Wei Nan-an. *Taiyu da zidian*. (Taipei: Zili Wanbaoshe wenhua chubanshe, 1992).

Teaching Materials

Spoken Taiwanese, adapted by Wu Su-Chu from *Spoken Amoy Hokkien* by Nicholas Cleaveland Bodman. (Ithaca, New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1983).

--For information, contact Spoken Language Services, Inc. is PO Box 783, Ithaca, New York 14851.

--An adaptation of Cleaveland's *Spoken Amoy Hokkien* to Taiwanese dialect Fujianese.

Bodman, Nicholas Cleaveland. *Spoken Amoy Hokkien*. (Kuala Lumpur: Charles Grenier & Son Ltd., 1955). Two volumes.

--One of the few in-depth Fujianese language texts written for English speakers, although it is based on the Amoy dialect.

Cheng, Robert Liang Wei. *Shenghuo Taiyu*. (Taipei: Zili Wanbaoshe wenhua chubanshe, 1996).

--Contains characters and church-type romanization.

Taioaan-oe ABC, *Taiyu xiandaiwen tuiguanghui yinxing* (Committee for the Popularization of Modern Literal Taiwanese Publishers), 1997.

--Modern Literal Taiwanese language materials. For information, contact Taiwanese Accent, 5309 Orchard St., Piscataway, NJ 08854.

To: owner-taigu@formosa.org
From: Alvin Lin <alvin.lin@yale.edu>
Subject: Taigu questionnaire
Cc:
Bcc:

Hi,

Christine Lin and I are continuing to work on our respective senior theses, and have benefitted a lot from the experiences and information provided by many Taigu members. We are interested in submitting a survey to learn more about Taigu members' linguistic backgrounds, affiliation with the church and views on Taiwan. Would it be okay if we submitted a survey like the one below? Please let me know how you feel, and whether you think there is any way we could improve the survey.

Sincerely,
Alvin Lin

Dear Taigu List:

We are currently conducting research on the romanization of the Taiwanese language and would appreciate it if you could help us out by answering the questionnaire that follows.

Christine is currently a senior at Dartmouth College who is writing a thesis in Asian Studies on the role of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and their promotion of Taiwanese language and human rights.

Alvin is a senior at Yale University writing a senior essay in East Asian Studies on the ways Taiwanese has been written in the past and present, and the political and linguistic issues that arise when considering romanization versus character writing.

We are interested in learning more about the Taigu List--i.e., when was it founded? why was it founded? how many members belong to it? etc...

Any help you could offer us regarding this topic would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Alvin Lin
Christine Lin

Please note that all replies will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

TAIGU LIST QUESTIONNAIRE--Please send all replies to <christine.l.lin@dartmouth.edu>
Alternatively, you may mail them to: Christine Lin, Dartmouth College, 2688 Hinman,
Hanover NH 03755

YEAR and PLACE of birth:

PART A -- LANGUAGE QUESTIONS:

NOTE: Please use T to indicate Taiwanese, M for Mandarin, H for Hakka, E for English and spell out all other languages. Indicate more than one language if applicable.

Languages which you can SPEAK:
Languages which you can WRITE:

MOST COMMONLY USED language of SPOKEN communication

- a. at home:
- b. at work:
- c. with friends and peers:
- d. with grandparents:
- e. at church (if relevant)

PREFERRED language of SPOKEN communication

- a. at home:
- b. at work:
- c. with friends and peers:
- d. with grandparents:
- e. at church (if relevant)

MOST COMMONLY USED language of WRITTEN communication

- a. at home:
- b. at work:
- c. with friends and peers:
- d. with grandparents:
- e. at church (if relevant)

PREFERRED language of WRITTEN communication

- a. at home:
- b. at work:
- c. with friends and peers:
- d. with grandparents:
- e. at church (if relevant)

PART B -- BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been a member of the Taigu List?
2. Why did you join the Taigu List?
3. What topics do you write about in the Taigu List?
4. Are you a member of the Presbyterian Church or any other Church? Please specify church organization.
5. When did you learn Church romanization? How and why did you learn it?
6. Do you prefer to write in romanized Taiwanese or Hanji? Why?
7. Do you know other romanization systems for Taiwanese?
8. Do you use romaji outside of the Taigu List (e.g., writing letters, reading books)? If yes, please explain.
9. Are you affiliated with any political party (i.e. DPP, KMT, Independence Party)?
10. What are your views on Taiwan's status? Do you believe Taiwan should be independent, part of the PRC, or other?
11. Please feel free to make any other comments.

Summary of Pronunciation of Church Romanization according to International Phonetic Alphabet*

(Church romanization) /IPA/

(p) /p/

(ph) /p`/

(b) Could be /beta/ or /b/. /beta/ is a fricative, while /b/ is a stop. /beta/ is like Spanish /v/.

(m) /m/ -- actually, this is simply /beta/+nasal.

(t) /t/

(th) /t`/

(l) /d with a rounded top/ (almost like the top of "G"'s mirror image).

(n) /n/ -- actually, this is simply /d with a round top/ + nasal.

(k) /k/

(kh) /k`/

(g) /gamma/ or /g/

(ng) /ng -- actually n with g's tail/ = /gamma/+nasal.

(ch) /ts/ (supposedly with a slur over the two letters to indicate the fact they denote a single consonant -- affricate in this case) if in front of anything but /i/

/tc,/ (it's really the French c with a tail underneath it) if in front of /i/

(chh) /ts`/ when not in front of /i/, /tc,`/ when in front of /i/

(s) /s/ when not in front of [i], /c,/ when in front of [i]

(j) /z/ when not in front of [i], /j/ when in front of /i/

vowels

(a) /a/

(e) /e -- actually it's ^amirror image of 3 with a round top, with the height of e/

(i) /i/

(u) /u/

(o.) /o/ -- Church roman's (o.) is written with a superscripted dot

(o) /o-slash/ -- o with a 45-degree slash thru it.

church roman is missing /i-bar/ and /schwa/.

diphthongs

(ai) /ai/ (au) /au/ (ia) /ia/ (iu) /iu/ (io) /io/

triphthongs

(iau) /iau/

ideosyncratic:

(o.a)* /ua/ or /wa/ * the dot is often omitted

(o.e)* /ue/ or /we/

(o.ai)* /uai/ or /wai/

(am) /am/ (ap) /ap/ (an) /an/ (at) /at/ (ang) /ang/ (ak) /ak/

(o.ng)* /ong/** * the dot is usually dropped ** IPA ng is n+g's tail

(o.k)* /ok/

(im) /im/ (ip) /ip/ (in) /in/ (it) /it/ (io.ng)* /iong/**

(un) /un/ (ut) /ut/

(eng) /ieng/+ ** + the /e/ is actually /schwa/

(ek) /iek/+

(iam) /iam/ (iap) /iap/

(ian) /ien/ or /en/

(iat) /iet/ or /et/

* Summary of pronunciation taken from electronic mail correspondence, Pai Chou, 15 April 1998.

(iang) /iang/** (iak) /iak/

(o.an)* /wan/ or /uan/ (o.at)* /wat/ or /uat/

syllabic consonants:

(m) /m/

(ng) /ng/**

tone marks

(no mark and does not end in -h,-p,-t,-k)

(/ mark)

(` mark)

(no mark but ends in -h,-p,-t,-k)

(^ mark)

(- overbar mark, can also write ~)

(| mark, ends in -h,-p,-t,-k)

tone 1 (high level)

tone 2 (high-to-middle falling)

tone 3 (low)

tone 4 (middle-falling)

tone 5 (low-to-middle rising)

(no tone 6)

tone 7 (middle-level)

tone 8

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