

Written Taiwanese:
A Problem with Many Solutions

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I. Introduction

Taiwan is home to both ethnic Han Chinese and Taiwanese Aborigines. The Han Chinese inhabiting Taiwan are split into three distinct groups; the Holo, Hakka and Mainlanders. The Holo make up roughly 73.3% of the Taiwanese population (Chiung 112, 2004). Taiwanese is the English name for the language spoken by the Holo.

Taiwanese is a dialect of Southern Min similar to the Southern Min dialect spoken in the city of Xiamen. In fact, the Holo people originated from Quanzhou and Zhangzhou, cities nearby Xiamen in Fujian province (Chiung 115, 2004). Eventually, these two dialects merged as they were mutually intelligible and in regular contact to form Taiwanese (不漳不泉 – not-Zhang not-Quan). Twelve percent of the Taiwanese people come from a Hakka speaking background (Chiung 112, 2004). These Hakka speakers originated from Southern Fujian and Northern Guangdong in Mainland China immigrating later and in much smaller numbers than the Southern Min speakers.

Thirteen percent of the Taiwanese population immigrated from all over of Mainland China to Taiwan after World War II bringing the Republican Chinese Kuomintang government with them. These Mainlanders brought many dialects with them, but all are united through knowledge of Standard Mandarin, which became the imposed language in Taiwan after their arrival. Finally, the indigenous peoples of Taiwan constitute 1.7% of the Taiwanese population. They face discrimination by the Han Chinese majority, and their languages are in danger of complete extinction. Although Standard Mandarin was the imposed language in Taiwan from the arrival of the Kuomintang after the Chinese Civil War until 1987, the Taiwanese dialect is gaining larger influence in recent years. Its sphere of influence is growing in a way that standardization and creation of

orthography are being promoted by the Taiwanese. I will provide my orthography design and Taiwanese language promotion plan after expanding upon the history of the language situation in Taiwan.

II. Historical Background

Before the Qing Dynasty began in the 1630s, along with a few European Christian missionaries, the Taiwanese Aborigines formed the vast majority of the population of Taiwan (Chiung 98, 2004). The Koxinga Ming dynasty loyalist group, after a failed attempt at restoring the Ming government, fled to Taiwan and set up their government. The Qing government regained control of Taiwan in 1683 making it an administrative division under Fujian province (Chiung 102, 2004). Against the wishes of the Qing government, countless Han Chinese immigrated to Taiwan from Fujian. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the Han Chinese outnumbered the Aborigines Taiwanese (Chiung 98, 2004). Up until 1895, the year Qing China lost Taiwan, Taiwanese and Hakka were the dialects spoken by the masses; however local officials were trained in standard Mandarin (Chen 30, 1999).

In the late nineteenth century, Qing China and Japan fought each other in the Sino-Japanese war. Japan won the Sino-Japanese war, and the Treaty of Shimonoseki ceded Taiwan to Japan (Chiung 103, 2004). During the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, Japanese became the standard language of the island. In 1903, Chinese publications were banned in Taiwan (Chen 31, 1999). In 1922, Chinese classes became electives and were no longer required classes. In 1937, Chinese was eliminated from the school curriculum and students were forced to speak Japanese. Japanese was encouraged to be spoken in all

aspects of life. By 1944, 71% of the population was proficient in Japanese and many Taiwanese had little or no Chinese proficiency.

After the Chinese took back Taiwan in 1945, the central government's Ministry of Education promoted Standard Mandarin, replacing Japanese as the high language of society (Chen 31, 1999). The local Taiwanese and Hakka dialects became the low languages of society. When the Nationalists were defeated in Mainland China by the Communists in 1949, the Nationalist Kuomintang party continued its government in Taiwan. A large influx of Mainlander immigrants arrived in Taiwan (Norman 248, 1988). These new immigrants generally spoke various dialects of Chinese along with Standard Mandarin. Generally, they did not speak the local dialects of Taiwan. They were associated with the Nationalist government and army which, were in power (Norman 248, 1988). The Nationalist government put Taiwan under martial law. It promoted Standard Mandarin as the medium of education and media. In addition, the Kuomintang forced the education to focus on Mainland Chinese history and culture, completely ignoring Taiwanese history and culture.

Both during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan and up until the late 1980s, after martial law was lifted in Taiwan, Taiwan had a strict language policy known as *Guoyu Zhengce* (National Language Policy) (Chiung 118, 2004). Under this policy only one language could be the national language. During the Japanese occupation, this language was Japanese. Prior to the Taiwanization policies of Taiwan during the late 1980s, which shifted the main focus promoted by the government back to Taiwan, from China, Mandarin was the one and only national language.

When the Democratic Progressive Party became more influential in Taiwanese politics, in the late 1980s, an increased awareness of regional identity emerged (Chen 61, 1999). This awareness led to protests seeking change in the strict monolingual policy in Taiwan. In 1987, the Ministry of Education of Taiwan lifted the ban on Taiwanese usage in the education system. Shortly afterwards, in 1991, the central government allowed broadcasts in the local dialects. Since then Taiwanese has gained an increasing influence in Taiwanese society. Many jobs in Taiwan now require fluency in Taiwanese (Chen 62, 1999). The promotion of Taiwanese as a medium of education and media is now high on the list of priorities of many Taiwanese legislators. This movement for promoting Taiwanese as both a spoken and written high language is called *Taibun* in Taiwanese (Chiung 131, 2004).

The idea of promoting the Taiwanese dialect as the high language in Taiwan is likely a ploy by the (Democratic Progressive Party) DDP to separate Taiwan and Mainland China culturally by linguistic warfare. However, the idea of promoting Taiwanese is easier said than done. In order for Taiwanese to become the high language of Taiwan, or at least have equal status as Mandarin, the Taiwanese language itself would first need to be standardized.

III. Phonological Complexities

The Taiwanese language is incredibly complex in terms of phonology and phonetics. Taiwanese maintains a phonemic difference between nasalized and non-nasalized vowels (Yeh 277, 2005). In Taiwanese the nasalized lateral [n] and the liquid lateral [l] are conditioned variants of the same phoneme (Norman 236, 1988). With the exception of alveolars, Taiwanese makes a three-way distinction between voiceless

aspirated, voiceless unaspirated and voiced stops (Yeh 274, 2005). While these phonetic features make Taiwanese phonology complicated and difficult to transcribe in Romanization, they are mere detours to the true road block in Taiwanese orthography.

The tones of Taiwanese are by far the most complicated aspect of Taiwanese phonology. First of all, Taiwanese has seven tones (Yeh 249, 2005). Tone 1 is a high level tone; tone 2/6 is a high-falling tone; tone 3 is a low-falling tone; tone 4 is a low-stopping tone; tone 5 is a low-rising tone; tone 7 is a mid-level tone and tone 8 is a high-stopping tone. According to the Chinese method of organizing tones in Chinese dialects, all dialects originally had eight tones (Norman 45, 1988). Taiwanese tones 2 and 6 have merged. The syllables that fall under the stopping tone categories end in the voiceless stop consonants *-p*, *-t*, *-k* or the glottal stop.

In addition to the large number of tones, all tones in Taiwanese switch to other tones, except at the end of a sentence or phrase through a process known as tone sandhi. Tone 1 becomes tone 7. Tone 2 becomes tone 1. Tone 3 becomes tone 2. Tone 4 becomes tone 2 if it has a glottal stop in its coda otherwise it becomes tone 8. Tone 5 becomes tone 3 in Northern Taiwan and tone 7 in Southern Taiwan. Tone 7 becomes tone 3. Tone 8 becomes tone 3 if it has a glottal stop in its coda and in other cases it switches to tone 4. The complexity of the tones in Taiwanese makes it difficult to mark in Romanization or an alphabetic system. In addition, many Taiwanese speakers are unaware of the complexity of the tone sandhi in their own language (Chiung 153, 2004). In order for Taiwanese to become a medium of education, the Taiwanese people need to be informed of this phenomenon and the sandhi tone of tone 5 needs to be standardized either to its Northern pronunciation or its Southern pronunciation for universal instructional purposes.

IV. Literary Tradition

Taiwanese does not have a strong written tradition; in fact most dialects other than Standard Mandarin generally have little, if any, written tradition at all. Prior to the May 4th Movement replacing *wenyan* with *baihua* as the standard written code, the Chinese generally were literate in Classical Chinese (*wenyan*) which does not conform to any modern spoken Chinese dialect, but rather the ancient literary language which has existed for more than 2,000 years (Norman 70, 1988).

The only dialect to truly develop a conventionalized medium of writing, able to convey all necessary functions of a writing system is Cantonese (Chen 115, 1999). Cantonese has special characters representing morphemes that are either unique to Cantonese or do not exist in Standard Written Chinese. In addition, Cantonese words made up of morphemes that do exist in Standard Written Chinese are written with their corresponding standard characters. Although Cantonese has a written tradition, written Cantonese is regarded as lower class writing, even in Hong Kong where the standard means of communication is in Cantonese (Chen 117, 1999). In fact, dialect writing is not popular in the eyes of many Chinese. Dialect writing has been discouraged both by the governments of Mainland China and Taiwan, due to fear that regionalism would arise causing the different dialect groups to separate from mainstream Chinese society. The uniformity of written Chinese unites speakers of several unintelligible dialects (Chen 118, 1999).

V. The Debate Over Written Taiwanese

The current debate over promotion of *Taibun* by the Taiwanese is not a new issue. The Taiwanese first proposed vernacular writing in the 1920s (Chiung 131, 2004). Under

Japanese occupation, Taiwanese intellectuals proposed writing based on colloquial speech instead of Classical Chinese. The Taiwanese intellectuals felt that promoting a written language based off a spoken language would increase literacy, as Taiwanese society was largely illiterate in the early twentieth century (Chiung 137 2004). In 1925, in his “Opinions on Ten Issues,” The Taiwanese intellectual Poe-hoe Chhoa addressed the Taiwanese issue of illiteracy:

“We Taiwanese have a population of 3.6 million, but only two hundred thousand of them are literate. Isn’t it too few? What are the reasons? One is that we think little of literacy; another reason is that the ruler is not sincere to promote education; and the third is that the orthography and language are too difficult to learn literacy. (Chiung 140, 2004)”

Poe-hoe Chhoa referred to Chinese characters as the orthography and Classical Chinese as the language Chinese characters were used to write. The Taiwanese intellectuals came to the consensus that vernacular writing would solve the problem of illiteracy; however, they debated over which language the vernacular writing should be (Chiung 140, 2004).

Some Taiwanese intellectuals promoted written Japanese. Japanese already had a strong literary tradition and a standardized orthography. In addition, the Japanese occupied Taiwan during the promotion of vernacular writing. Nevertheless, the majority of the Taiwanese intellectuals were opposed to the promotion of Japanese (Chiung 137, 2004). Although Japanese was the high language of the diglossia in Taiwan during the Japanese occupation period, Japanese was not the mother tongue of the Taiwanese people.

Many Taiwanese became fluent speakers of Japanese, but still could not express their true feelings in the Japanese language.

Most Taiwanese intellectuals felt that the new vernacular writing should be based on either Taiwanese or Mandarin (Chiung 138, 2004). Mandarin already had an established written tradition and vernacular writing based off of Standard Mandarin, which had been promoted in Mainland China since the May 4th movement in 1919. The intellectuals who supported a Mandarin-based writing system proposed that Taiwanese was not sufficient to become a literary language as much of its lexicon was vulgar and informal compared to Mandarin (Chiung 138, 2004). The intellectuals who supported Taiwanese as the basis for the written vernacular believed that the written vernacular should be based off of the language actually spoken by its users. The Taibun promoters wanted to make it as easy as possible for Taiwanese speakers to become literate and establish a written tradition through writing literature. In 1930, Chioh-hui Ng advocated that colloquial Taiwanese should be used in poetry and literature in his “Why not promote homeland literature? (Chiung 137, 2004)” In 1931, Chhiu-seng Koeh explained his Chinese character-based method for writing Taiwanese in “A Proposal for Constructing the Taiwanese Language.” (Chiung 137, 2004)

The New Literature movement developed in the 1920s out of the original proposals by Taiwanese intellectuals (Chiung 131, 2004). This literature was written in Japanese, Mandarin, and Taiwanese. The literature produced in Taiwanese was generally written using a Chinese character-based orthography. This literature focused on life in Taiwan during the Japanese occupation in the 1920s and 1930s. The New Literature

movement ended when Japan attacked China in 1937, as Japan banned Chinese writing through its empire.

After the Japanese were defeated in World War II and the Kuomintang government went into exile in Taiwan, the Kuomintang government banned written Taiwanese and forced its people to learn standard Mandarin. The first Taibun movement lasted from the 1920s and ended as soon as Japan attacked China in 1937. The Kuomintang imposed its monolingual policy and suppressed the Taibun movement as it was seen as oriented towards Taiwanese culture and not oriented towards Chinese culture (Norman 251, 1988).

Although the first Taibun movement lasted almost 20 years, the Taiwanese written language was never standardized and virtually all but vanished until the second Taibun movement (Chiung 143, 2004). The second Taibun movement is ongoing since the late 1980s. The focus of Taiwanese society shifted from Chinese culture to Taiwanese culture when martial law was lifted in the late 1980s and the Democratic Progressive Party became more influential in Taiwanese politics (Chen 122, 2006). The second Taibun movement is focused more on standardizing Taiwanese, making it a high language in the Taiwanese diglossia, in contrast to the first Taibun movement which focused on creating literature and improving literacy.

VI. Existing Taiwanese Orthographies

The lack of a standard orthography for Taiwanese has allowed many writing systems to evolve both in the distant and recent past. Remnants of the first writing system for Taiwanese, the Sinkang manuscripts, are dated from the late seventeenth century (Chiung 120, 2004). Several new Taiwanese orthographies were recently created during

the second Taibun movement. The three main types of Taiwanese writing systems are Chinese character based, Romanizations and mixtures of Chinese characters and Romanizations (Chen 122, 1999). There are a couple additional orthographies for Taiwanese that do not fall into either of these categories.

The most well received orthographies for Taiwanese are Chinese character-based. The earliest Chinese character based writing system for Taiwanese is called Koa-a-chheh (Chiung 125, 2004). This system was first found in Taiwanese songbooks in the late seventeenth century. This system was originally used to transcribe songs based off of colloquial Taiwanese speech. This system, along with most of the newer proposals for character based orthographies, was not standardized. Character usage varied from user to user. Roughly 75% of Taiwanese morphemes, which were easily identifiable with their Standard Chinese counterparts, were written with their corresponding Chinese characters (Chen 116, 1999). When Taiwanese morphemes either did not exist in written Chinese or were not easily identifiable, then other characters were borrowed, sometimes for their pronunciation and sometimes for their meaning. An analogy to this system is the Korean Idu system. Idu sometimes borrowed Chinese characters based on their meaning and at other times borrowed Chinese characters based on their pronunciation, yielding an unsatisfactory solution for writing Korean. (Taylor and Taylor 206, 1995)

Modern Chinese-character based orthographies have the same flaws as Koa-a-chheh. While the 75% of morphemes with similar etymological roots as Standard Chinese are represented with their Standard Chinese characters and are easily identifiable in their contexts, it is often hard to understand and identify the additional characters that are used to write the uniquely Taiwanese morphemes (Chiung 151, 2004). There are four

methods for “finding” characters for these morphemes (Chen 116, 1999). The first method, which is used by the poorly educated, is borrowing based on the phonetics of the morpheme. For example, the character 𠵼 means foot in standard Chinese. This character is pronounced as “chiok”; homophonous with the word “very” in Taiwanese. Therefore, this character is borrowed for its sound only having the meaning of “very” in written Taiwanese (Chiung 152, 2004). The second method, which is used by the well educated, is borrowing based on the semantics of the morpheme. For example, the standard Chinese character 蚊(wén) means mosquito. This word does not share the same entomological root with the Taiwanese word for mosquito *bang*. In this schema for writing Taiwanese, the character 蚊 represents the Taiwanese word for mosquito based on its meaning, ignoring its sound and true entomological root (Chiung 152, 2004). The third method is controversially restoring ancient characters by searching through ancient texts. The fourth method used by many of the second Taibun movement activists creates completely new characters—in a manner similar to the semantic-phonetic type Chinese characters—by compounding a meaning radical with another character whose pronunciation is similar. While the Chinese-character based orthography is most popular in the eyes of the Taibun supporters, the characters that are used to write Taiwanese morphemes need to first be agreed upon and later standardized before the character-based orthography can be successful.

The earliest written form of Taiwanese is found in the Sinkang manuscripts. These manuscripts are dated prior to the large-scale immigration of the Han Chinese to Taiwan in the late seventeenth century (Chiung 120, 2004). These manuscripts were created by the Dutch missionaries who wanted to convert both the Taiwanese Aborigines

and the Han Chinese living in Taiwan. Thus the Sinkang manuscripts provide the first Romanizations for both the Aborigines languages as well as the early form of Taiwanese (Chiung 2004). These Dutch missionaries were largely successful in converting the Aborigines and many Taiwanese Aborigines follow different Christian religions reading the Bible in the Romanizations created by the original Dutch missionaries. The Han-Chinese Taiwanese speakers stopped using the Sinkang Romanization after Qing China reclaimed Taiwan, reverting back to Classical Chinese as the standard written language.

In the nineteenth century, European missionary activity was very prominent in Southeast Asia. Prior to arriving in Taiwan to spread Christianity, these European missionaries already had a strong foundation of Taiwanese, since Taiwanese is a dialect of Southern Min originating in the outskirts of Xiamen, Fujian (Chiung 126, 2004). This Southern Min dialect spread all over Southeast Asia along with the Chinese who immigrated to this region from Southern Fujian. The missionaries slightly modified their Romanization of the Xiamen dialect to represent Taiwanese, as the differences between Taiwanese and Xiamen dialect are phonetic and not phonemic. This missionary Romanization is called Peh-oe-ji (POJ), which translates loosely into “Colloquial Script.” It is the Romanization with the largest readership and is the medium by which the majority of Romanized Taiwanese publications are written (Chen 122, 1999). There are two main reasons why POJ is not popular. The first reason is largely due to the fact that POJ is associated with Christianity and the majority of Taiwanese people are not Christians. In fact the Taiwanese often refer to POJ as Kaau-lo “Church Romanization”. The second reason POJ is unpopular is because it uses complicated diacritics which are hard to access on computers. Vowel nasality in POJ is indicated by a superscript n “ⁿ”

after the nasalized vowel. The awkward “dotted o” “o” is used to indicate the mid back rounded vowel if the syllable has no consonant coda (Yeh 4, 2005).

Several Romanization-based orthographies for Taiwanese have been created over the years based upon POJ. These include Tai-lo, Tong-iong, TLPA and Phofsit Daibuun (Chiung 151, 2004). The popularity of these Romanizations is largely based on politics and not on usability and practicality. The promotion of Taiwanese Romanizations schemes are influenced by the promotion of Mandarin Romanization schemes in Taiwan. In 1999, Taiwan adopted the Mandarin Romanization Pinyin that is used in Mainland China (Sun 56, 2006). When the Democratic Progressive Party gained power over the Kuomintang in Taiwan by election, they repealed the adoption of Pinyin. Tongyong Pinyin was adopted by the Taiwan National Languages Council in 2002 (Sun 56, 2006).

Tai-lo was standardized and adopted by the Taiwan National Languages Council as the Romanization for Taiwanese (Yeh 4, 2005). Tai-lo means “Taiwanese Romanization”. Tai-lo is very similar to POJ. The main differences between Tai-lo and POJ are that “dotted o” is replaced with “double o” (oo) and POJ affricates *ch* and *chh* have been replaced with their Romanized IPA equivalents *ts* and *tsh* (Yeh 4, 2005). Tai-lo may not be the standard Romanization much longer, as the Tongyong Pinyin movement for Mandarin includes Romanizations for Taiwanese and Hakka and is becoming increasingly popular in Taiwan (Chiung 152, 2004).

Tong-iong is the Taiwanese scheme of Tongyong Pinyin created by the Taiwanese linguist Bo-quan Yu (Chiung 152, 2004). Yu created the Tongyong system to Romanize the three Chinese dialects spoken in Taiwan; Mandarin, Taiwanese and Hakka. Tong-iong is different from the other Taiwanese Romanizations in that it writes its

syllables out after their tone sandhi changes, instead of preserving the original tone and morpheme (Chiung 152, 2004). While writing the syllables after their sandhi changes make Tong-iong easier to write and read aloud preserving the surface structure, readers need to spend more time thinking about the meaning of what is written as the writing no longer preserves the original underlying phonemic level which expresses morphemes in a manner which is easier for readers to comprehend.

The remaining Romanizations Phofshit Daibuun and TLPA are less known and less popular. Phofshit Daibuun is a Romanization similar to the Gwoyue Romatzyh for Mandarin (Chiung 154, 2004). It spells out the tones and vowel nasality by using complex spelling rules. We can use the name of the system to see how it works. First, we have the first syllable “Phof”; the *f* in “Phof” indicates that the syllable “Pho”, is pronounced in the second tone. Next we have our second syllable, “shit”; there is no consonant in the coda so this syllable is pronounced in the first tone. The benefit of this system is that the tones and nasality essential for pronouncing the written syllables as well as for understanding what is written will always be included as they can be typed on a standard keyboard. However, many people feel that the spelling rules are too complex; making this system unpopular. TLPA is essentially the same as POJ except it uses numbers to represent tones and capital *N* to transcribe vowel nasality (Chiung 154, 2004). However, this system was promoted by the Kuomintang in the early 1990s and is very unpopular, as the Taibun movement is largely associated with the Democratic Progressive Party.

The third main type of Taiwanese Romanization, known as Han-lo, utilizes both Chinese characters and Romanization (Chiung 2004). In this system, Chinese characters

are used when morphemes in Taiwanese have the same etymological roots as their Standard Written Chinese equivalents, and Romanization is used when Taiwanese morphemes do not have equivalents in Standard Written Chinese (Chen 1999). Han-lo is prevalent in Taiwan and in recent years is the most common style used by Taibun authors. This system has the advantage of saving the author time by using Romanization when a morpheme's etymological root is controversial or unknown to the author. The flaw with this system is that since Taiwanese Romanization is often self-learned and not formally taught, Taibun writers often misspell syllables or forget to add the essential diacritics indicating nasality and tone causing homophony and confusion.

Although Character-based systems and Romanization schemes are the most prevalent methods for writing Taiwanese, they are not the only existing orthographies. The Japanese created their own method for writing Taiwanese (Chiung 130, 2004). During the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, the Japanese authorities created a system modifying the Japanese Kana syllabaries into an alphabetic writing system for writing Taiwanese. This system fragments the Kana syllabaries into many little pieces giving us an alphabet representing consonants, vowels and tones. This Japanese Kana-based orthography can be found in the Japanese-Taiwanese Dictionary of 1907 and the Taiwanese-Japanese Dictionary of 1931 (Chiung 130, 2004). This system is highly unpopular and hardly even known because of the anti-Japanese sentiment in Taiwan after WWII.

Zhuyin Fuhao, which evolved from Guoyin zimu in 1930, is a phonetic system originally used to transcribe Mandarin Chinese in the Republic of China (Chen 181, 1999). The phonetic symbols are derived from Chinese characters in a similar fashion to

the manner in which Chinese characters were used to create the Japanese Kana. After the Republic of China was exiled to Taiwan, it continued (to this day) using Zhuyin to transcribe Mandarin Chinese. In Mainland China, Zhuyin was replaced by Pinyin (Chen 187, 1999). The Taiwanese have expanded Zhuyin Fuhao by creating new symbols that can be used to write both Taiwanese and Hakka (Chiung 166, 2004). Tones and vowel nasality are both indicated with phonetic symbols in Zhuyin Fuhao. This expanded system is standardized and part of Unicode, making it easy to input on computers (Chiung 150, 2004).

VII. My Solution

After giving a survey of the common orthographies, the author will propose his solution to the issue of finding a suitable orthography for Taiwanese. A study conducted in both Tamsui and Tamkang Universities by 244 students demonstrates that the Taiwanese prefer a Chinese character only orthography for written Taiwanese over any other method (Chiung 166, 2004). This is completely understandable since the Taiwanese currently use Chinese characters as their standard written medium. In addition, Chinese characters are the optimum writing system for Chinese dialects. The criteria for measuring the appropriateness of a writing system are based upon economy, simplicity and unequivocalness (Coulmas 45, 1989). When anyone first learns Chinese, natively or non-natively, it becomes obvious that the Chinese writing system is uneconomical, having many symbols with more than one symbol to represent the same sound. It also becomes obvious that the Chinese writing system is not simple. Although many Chinese characters are a combination of semantic and phonetic elements, this combination is not always the case and is often arbitrary or outdated.

Nevertheless, after gaining knowledge of at least several hundred characters, the learner realizes that the Chinese writing system makes up for its uneconomical and complicated properties with its unequivocal. The Chinese writing system is unequivocal because the meaning is easily accessed through context of unique characters for each morpheme (Columas 46, 1989). Due to the phonetic poverty of Chinese dialects, homophony often occurs. Many morphemes have the exact same pronunciation but are distinguished by character. In Chinese each character almost always represents both a single morpheme and a single syllable; making the writing system morpho-syllabic (Taylor and Taylor 78, 1995).

When looking at the readability aspect of a writing system, an alphabetic writing system is not practical for functionally literate people read and process words (Columas 52, 1989). They do not read each letter and process information phoneme by phoneme. A system like Chinese, in which each character represents a syllable and a morpheme, is very practical in terms of reading. One who reads Chinese can read faster than one who reads English, as Chinese characters stand out more on paper, and as they each have a unique form and provide syllables and morphemes instead of just phonemes (Columas 52, 1989).

Respecting the desires of the Taiwanese people, the author proposes language planning policies leading to the development of a Chinese character-only orthography. As stated earlier, 75% of Taiwanese morphemes can be easily found, with little or no disagreement, in Standard Written Chinese. I propose that these morphemes be written with their Standard Written Chinese equivalents and have their pronunciations standardized to the city of Tainan. This choice stems from the fact that the region around

Tainan is where the most avid supporters of the Taibun movement live (Chiung 108, 2004).

In addition to standardizing the pronunciation to Tainan, a phonetic system needs to be promoted in order to introduce and standardize this pronunciation. The author believes that the modified version of Zhuyin Fuhao should be this phonetic system. All educated people in Taiwan are already familiar with the original Zhuyin Fuhao phonetic system used to transcribe Mandarin (Chen 187, 1999). In representing Taiwanese, only 25 new symbols need to be added to the original Zhuyin system. Furthermore, Zhuyin can be written above horizontally and to the side vertically about Chinese characters –like Furigana in Japanese– which is used to indicate the pronunciation of a given character written along the character either above or below the character through the Japanese Kana syllabaries (Taylor and Taylor 313, 1995).

I believe that while a Romanization system will be friendlier to the worldwide community, a Romanization system transcribing Taiwanese will be less popular to the Taiwanese. The Taiwanese already are familiar with Zhuyin Fuhao, since they are taught the Mandarin pronunciations of Chinese characters with Zhuyin Fuhao. Many Taiwanese have never studied English or any other European language and are not familiar with the Roman alphabet. To the Taiwanese, a Romanization is not as simple as Zhuyin Fuhao. They have a harder time seeing the relation between the Roman alphabet and what it represents in writing, as opposed to Zhuyin Fuhao. However, the current standardized Romanization Tai-lo should be kept for transcription purposes to be used by the worldwide community.

The characters for the remaining morphemes that cannot be easily found in Standard Written Chinese must either be created or found by researchers in ancient texts. Researchers in the Taibun movement have been searching ancient texts for the equivalent characters since the second Taibun movement began in the late 1980s (Chiung 131, 2004). These characters should be restored and standardized. In cases where the ancient characters representing the contemporary Taiwanese morphemes are too controversially connected, new characters should be created. New characters can be created based on the system by which semantic-phonetic Chinese characters are formed (Chen 117, 1999). A radical can hint the meaning and a phonetic element based on another Chinese character can be combined to construct these written Taiwanese characters (Taylor and Taylor 78, 1995). Borrowing existing Chinese characters for either pronunciation or meaning is too confusing to the readers, as they will need to figure out whether the borrowed character is a phonetic or semantic borrowing as has been seen through the previously mentioned historical system for writing Korean with Chinese characters known as Idu (Taylor and Taylor 206, 1995). In addition, if the borrowed character is used in other instances conflicting with the Taiwanese morphemes corresponding to Standard Written Chinese characters, then great confusion will arise.

It is evident that this process will be time consuming for both the creators and the readers. The creators will need to research and standardize Taiwanese characters while the readers will need to become familiar with new phonetic symbols and Chinese characters. However, it is apparent that the Taiwanese prefer a character only system and thusly there is a need to conform to this preference. In order for this system to work, all Taiwanese readers will first need to learn or be taught the modified Zhuyin. The

characters need to first be agreed upon by the Taibun authorities and then standardized. After these characters are standardized, they need to be added to a new text-encoding system on computers as the Taiwanese Big-5 text encoding for Mandarin is already complete and would not support the new Taiwanese characters (Chiung 145, 2004). These characters should also be included in when the newest form of Unicode is produced, so that they are easily viewable to readers all over the world. The characters should be taught in schools alongside standard Chinese characters. These characters should be introduced in written Taiwanese newspapers and media along with the superscript Zhuyin annotation above, so that they can be gradually learned by Taiwanese adults. This solution will standardize Taiwanese so that it can be taught, and literature using Taiwanese as its medium can be produced and easily received by Taiwanese society.

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