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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/442>

DOI: 10.4000/chinaperspectives.442

ISSN: 1996-4617

Publisher

Centre d'étude français sur la Chine contemporaine

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 December 2004

ISSN: 2070-3449

Electronic reference

Henning Klöter, « Language Policy in the KMT and DPP eras », *China Perspectives* [Online], 56 | november - december 2004, Online since 29 December 2008, connection on 28 October 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/442> ; DOI : 10.4000/chinaperspectives.442

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- 1 It is one of the paradoxes of any analysis of Taiwan's linguistic issues that the most widely spoken language lacks an established name. The name *Taiyu*, literally "the language(s) of Taiwan, Taiwanese" is often used as a collective term for the group of Southern Min dialects spoken by about 73% of Taiwan's present-day population. Other terms for the same language include *Hoklo* (also spelled *Holo*; the etymology of these terms is uncertain), Taiwanese *Min*, and Taiwanese *Hokkien*. *Hokkien* reflects the Southern Min expression *Hok-kien* for Fujian.
- 2 Its frequent use notwithstanding, the term *Taiyu*/Taiwanese has also been criticised as it suggests that Southern Min is the only local language of Taiwan. This is by no means the case. Other languages spoken in Taiwan are Mandarin Chinese—the official language—, Hakka (spoken by 12% of the population), and 12 Austronesian languages spoken by the indigenous population in central Taiwan and along the east coast. Speakers of Hakka dialects traditionally live in Xinzhu and Miaoli counties in northwestern Taiwan, where they account for about 60% of the population¹. In bigger cities, Hakka speakers constitute a minority.
- 3 Today it is not uncommon for younger speakers in Taiwan to be equally fluent in Taiwanese and Mandarin. The Taiwanese spoken by young persons is often regarded as impure and strongly Mandarinised by older Taiwanese speakers. Most speakers of Hakka dialects also have high fluency in Mandarin and often a good command of Taiwanese. The same applies to speakers of Austronesian languages. The influx of Chinese immigrants over the last four centuries has drastically reduced the proportion of the indigenous population, which is now 1.7% of the entire population. In the past two centuries, about a dozen Austronesian languages have become extinct, and the remaining 12 languages are threatened with extinction².
- 4 For stylistic reasons it seems reasonable to prefer the benefits of the term "Taiwanese" to the political correctness of cumbersome alternatives. I will use "*Taiyu*" instead of "Taiwanese" only when unambiguous reference to Taiwanese as a linguistic variety is

required, e.g., when Taiwanese literature, meaning literature produced in Taiwan, needs to be distinguished from *Taiyu* literature, i.e., literature in the Taiwanese language.

- 5 In 1945, Taiwan ceased to be a Japanese colony and became a province of the Republic of China (ROC). Since then, the official treatment of local languages has shifted from systematic oppression to toleration and, since the 1990s, modest inclusion in the school curriculum. At the beginning of its rule in Taiwan, the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) reiterated its view that linguistic diversity was a factor impeding the country's unity. In the *China Handbook* of 1951, linguistic issues receive little attention: "China has only one written language. The spoken language, however, consists of various dialects. In recent years the National Spoken Language Movement has made considerable progress in overcoming the difficulties caused by these dialects"³.
- 6 More than 50 years later, many things have changed. The KMT is no longer the ruling party, and the name of the official annual overview has been changed from the former *China Handbook* into the *Taiwan Yearbook*. In the latest edition of the Yearbook, the passage on languages likewise contrasts sharply from the above quotation: "Taiwan society is a rich mixture of diverse cultures, and more people are becoming aware of the importance of preserving various languages and dialects. This awareness has been the propelling force behind government efforts to promote nativist education (*xiangtu jiaoyu*). Starting in September 2001, primary school students throughout Taiwan have been required to take at least one local language course. For junior high school students, however, such language courses remain an elective. The government supports such courses with various levels of funding, which is used to compile teaching materials, publish teacher handbooks, hold teacher workshops, produce audio and video cassettes"⁴.
- 7 It would be tempting to attribute this about-face in language policy to the regime change in the presidential office of 2000, when for the first time in Taiwan's post-war history the KMT lost power to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and its candidate Chen Shui-bian. Chen had, after all, during the campaign, wrapped his Taiwan-centred political agenda in a strong pro-Taiwanese rhetoric, both ideologically and linguistically. By frequently addressing his electorate in *Taiyu*, he had succeeded in presenting himself as a representative of a genuine Taiwanese identity. And there is little doubt that the regime change of 2000 has led to some changes in the government's language policy. However, as I argue in this paper, it would be oversimplifying to view the turnaround from oppression to promotion of *Taiyu* in blue (KMT) and green (DPP) terms only. Important changes in the policy towards *Taiyu* had rather already been introduced during the 1980s. But they were not primarily the result of a paradigm change on the part of the government, rather being brought about by non-governmental language revivalist groups. Neither the KMT nor the DPP governments have thus far fully embraced the agenda of the revivalists. Lacking substantiality, changes achieved so far have above all a symbolic value.

Historical overview From oppression to toleration: 1949–1979

- 8 For several years after 1945, the ROC administration tried to adjust its language policy to Taiwan's linguistic reality. According to Feifel, "[i]n an attempt to resinify the population, the Nationalist government ran a programme to encourage the use of *Minnan hua* [i.e., *Taiyu*] in Taiwan, but this was regarded as a first step toward the acquisition of Mandarin by the local people. A phonetic script for *Minnan hua* was

adopted and promoted for this purpose”⁵. In the late 1940s, the withdrawal of the Nationalist government to Taiwan led to a new wave of immigration from the mainland and to drastic linguistic changes.

- 9 After the mid-1950s, the KMT government began severely restricting the use of local languages in public settings. The exclusive use of Mandarin was enforced on the grounds that Taiwan was a province of China and that Mandarin represented the national language of China. In Robert Cheng’s words, to survive as the legitimate government of the whole of China, the ROC government had to maintain Mandarin as the national language. Furthermore, as Mandarin speakers were in the minority, the government had to take steps “to maintain the status of Mandarin against the natural tendency of Mandarin speakers to be assimilated into the Taiwanese majority”⁶.
- 10 Following these considerations, the government began severely restricting the use of local languages in public settings after the 1950s. According to Feifel, “[t]he more benign attitude which the government had shown towards *Minnan hua* in the past was replaced by active hostility. From this time on schooling was conducted solely in Mandarin and the use of any other language variety was punished”⁷. The oppression of local languages followed a series of language laws and decrees issued between 1950 and 1980. For instance, in 1956 the KMT government officially restricted the use of dialects in schools. Schools set up disciplinary patrols (*jiuchadui*) which controlled that the law was respected⁸. One year later, an official decree ruled that missionaries were no longer allowed to preach in a dialect. The Broadcast and Television Law of 1976 limited the use of languages other than Mandarin in television and radio broadcasts.
- 11 This active promotion of Mandarin has produced a generation of multilinguals. Hence, Mandarin evolved as the main language of government, education and the media. It also serves as a lingua franca among mainland immigrants who arrived after 1945, commonly referred to as *waisheng ren* (literally “people from outside provinces”). These immigrants were in most cases speakers of different Chinese dialects, for instance Cantonese, Hunanese and Shanghainese. Nowadays these dialects are hardly used⁹.
From toleration to cultivation: 1979–2004
- 12 The about-face from the former oppression of *Taiyu* and other local Taiwanese languages was made after the late 1970s, when Taiwan’s political landscape changed drastically. Following its gradual international isolation, the island entered a period of political liberalisation and democratisation. In the same period, calls for Taiwan’s political separation from China intensified. A conception of Taiwan’s distinctiveness has meanwhile expanded beyond the political arena and it now dominates literary, linguistic, and historical discourses.
- 13 It was after the arrest of leading opposition figures in the aftermath of the Kaohsiung Incident in 1979 that cultural debates discovered the Taiwanese-ness of Taiwan. In the aftermath of the protest, leading members of the opposition were sentenced to long prison terms. Political decision-making gradually adapted to the new intellectual and social trends. Laws and regulations prohibiting the use of local languages in public settings were gradually lifted. In November 1987, for instance, the three government-controlled television stations started to broadcast news in Taiwanese. In parliament, the use of Mandarin was taken for granted without official regulation until the late 1980s. When the legislator Zhu Gaozheng used *Taiyu* during a parliamentary debate in March 1987, he provoked a substantial scandal. In the meantime, Taiwanese has

become a fully-accepted language of the legislature and the dominant language in electoral campaigns.

- 14 In 1990, Yilan County became the first county to offer elective Taiyu language courses in elementary and junior high schools. In the following years, similar programs were initiated in other counties and also included courses for Hakka and Austronesian languages. In 1993, the Interior Ministry conceded that the repressive language policy of the past had been a mistake¹⁰. Since then, the “assimilationist [language] policy has been replaced with strong support for multiculturalism and official respect for, even nurturing of, aboriginal [i.e., Austronesian] languages and other minority languages”¹¹. In late 1999, the then Minister of Education, Yang Chaur-shiang, proclaimed the inclusion of “local culture education” in the elementary and junior high school curriculum. He furthermore announced that, “in the future [...] as a part of the new [...] curriculum, indigenous languages will be listed as a required subject for third grade students and above. Other indigenous culture teaching activities will be integrated into various domains of learning”¹².
- 15 Taiwan-centred political reforms were intensified after the victory of the DPP in the presidential elections of 2000. In 2001, nativist education was declared a compulsory subject at elementary schools. In principle, the programme includes language courses in one local language, i.e., Taiwanese, Hakka, or an Austronesian language. Due to a lack of teachers and other resources, most schools offer Taiwanese classes only. One year later, a language equality law was drafted. It aims at creating legal foundations for equal treatment of all Taiwanese languages and contains guidelines for the standardisation of *Taiyu*, Hakka and Austronesian languages as well as their role in education¹³.

The architects of change Governmental and non-governmental language planners

- 16 Changing the status of a language in a society follows political decisions and a complex set of preparatory language planning measures. In the preceding paragraphs, the changing status of Taiwanese has been described as a consequence of political decision-making from above. On an official level, new language laws and decrees have chiefly been formulated by two institutions under the Ministry of Education: the Department of Elementary and Junior High School Education (*Guomin jiaoyu si*, hereafter: DEJ) and the National Languages Committee (*Guoyu tuidong weiyuanhui*, hereafter: NLC; significantly, its official English translation has been changed from the former “Mandarin Promotion Council”). The DEJ devises the guidelines for mother tongue education at primary and secondary schools, while the NLC formulates linguistic standards.
- 17 However, language planning measures can be but are not necessarily taken by government agencies. According to Cooper, “[l]anguage planning may be initiated at any level of a social hierarchy, but it is unlikely to succeed unless it is embraced and promoted by elites and counter-elites. [...] Neither elites nor counter-elites are likely to embrace the language planning initiatives of others unless they perceive it in their own interest to do so”¹⁴. From this perspective, the post 1979-period can best be described as the governmental embracement of non-governmental language planning.

Non-governmental planning: the case of written Taiwanese

- 18 Arguably the most prominent example for non-governmental language planning is the development of a written norm for *Taiyu*. In the 1960s and 1970s, debates on written Taiwanese had been impeded by the rigorous promotion of Mandarin. As A-chin Hsiau

points out, “postwar debates on literature [...] barely addressed the linguistic issue, because the use of Mandarin was taken for granted”¹⁵. Although this period “did witness the cultural elite’s lively interest in, and enthusiastic inquiry into, local social life and cultural resources,” such trends were “far from a ‘Taiwanese consciousness’ with explicit political implications”¹⁶. This changed during the 1980s, when various literary writers, lexicographers, and language revivalists started to engage in developing a *Taiyu* orthography and promoting written Taiwanese. After the late 1990s, various language revivalist organisations were founded. According to Hsiao, these non-governmental groups “were created for the purpose of reviving native languages, devising *Hoklo* (*Taiyu*) vernacular writing systems, and promoting *Hoklo* literature”¹⁷. In 2004, a number of *Taiyu* revivalist groups set up parent organisation jointly set up the Global Coalition for Taiwanese Mother Languages (*Shijie Taiwan muyu lianmeng*). The major political goal of this parent organisation is the elevation of the legal status of all Taiwanese languages¹⁸.

- 19 The proposed orthographies make use of a variety of scripts. Typologically, these scripts can be divided into the Chinese character script, alphabetic orthographies, phonetic symbols, and mixed scripts. Whereas all these orthographies have important philological dimensions, answers to questions on the diversity of written Taiwanese lie outside the realm of grapheme-morpheme relations¹⁹. Instead, they are to be sought in the changing ideological patterns which have emerged from Taiwan’s tumultuous past. For the sake of brevity, the following paragraphs are restricted to the character-based and alphabetic orthographies.
- 20 Character-based scripts for Taiwanese are largely to be found in *Taiyu* fiction and dictionaries. Taiwanese dialect poems (*fangyan shi*) were an important input for the postwar debate on written Taiwanese. In the 1970s, literary experimentation in the local vernacular was initiated by Lin Zongyuan who in turn inspired the younger poet Xiang Yang²⁰. This new generation of dialect poets was originally not driven by any political motivations. However, the new theoretical debate on genuine Taiwanese literature and the establishment of a Taiwanese orthography soon became closely linked to the socio-political and cultural movement against the “Greater China” policy of the KMT government.
- 21 Today, the number of authors writing in Taiwanese has increased considerably. Whereas pioneering collections of prose or poetry were initially often published at the author’s own expense, recognised publishing houses now include various genres of dialect literature in their programme. The Taipei-based Qianwei Chubanshe (Vanguard Publishing House) for instance, has regularly published series of *Taiyu* literature. The recognition of *Taiyu* literature by commercial publishers, however, has not contributed to orthographic standardisation, as the publishing houses do not have internal standards for the writing of Taiwanese²¹.
- 22 Recognised and up-and-coming young writers also publish in literary journals exclusively devoted to the promotion of written Taiwanese. One of the first major journals in and about the Taiwanese language— the *Tai-Bun Thong-Sin* (Taiwanese Writing Forum)—has been published in the United States since 1991. Among major magazines presently published in Taiwan we find *La-cing* (Sowing seeds) and *Tai-bun bong-po* (Casual reports on written Taiwanese). The former was first published in 1995, the latter one year later. The editions contain announcements, short stories, poems, and historical anecdotes.

- 23 Taiwanese lexicography has likewise developed quickly in the last two decades. Without exception, *Taiyu* dictionaries published during the 1990s result from the private efforts of single authors²². Lacking official authorisation and general acceptance, particular spellings of such dictionaries have remained individual suggestions for written Taiwanese rather than a normative codification. The authors generally adhere to individual principles of character selection and do not feel bound to the prevalence of particular characters in Taiwanese literature. As a result, there is generally little orthographic overlap between written Taiwanese in a literary context and written Taiwanese arranged in *Taiyu* dictionaries.
- 24 Alphabetic orthographies for Taiwanese and other Southern Min dialects were initially only used by missionaries for church-related publications. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the use of either script was thus restricted to distinct social groups and literary genres. The disassociation of alphabetic writing from the missionary context was first promoted by the political activist Cai Peihuo during the Japanese period (1895–1945). Since the 1990s, the use of alphabetic writing has gone different directions within and outside the missionary context. Whereas the Presbyterian Church has switched to the use of characters, the traditional missionary romanisation system has considerably gained ground among local *Taiyu* groups not associated with the church. This new trend has been initiated by two organisations based in the southern port of Kaohsiung, viz. the *Ko-hiong Tai-gi Lo-ma-ji Gian-sip-hoe* (Kaohsiung Seminar for Church Romanisation), and the *Tai-oan Lo-ma-ji Hiap-hoe* (Association of Taiwanese Romanisation). The former is a rather loose, seminar-like group established in 1996. It is supported by some 600 people, mostly local school teachers, interested in the cultivation of Taiwanese and its alphabetic representation. The latter was formally registered with the Interior Ministry in 2001. It comprises about two hundred members from Taiwan and abroad. Among the members are scholars, politicians, journalists, teachers and clergy of the Presbyterian Church²³.
- 25 As indicated above, arguments in favour of or against particular scripts belong largely to socio-political debates on practical needs and cultural symbolism. The choice of a particular writing system may generally serve as an indicator for a changing national identity in colonial or post-colonial societies, as for instance in the former Soviet states Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, where the abolition of Cyrillic writing clearly reflects a cultural trend towards de-russification after the fall of the Soviet empire²⁴. Similarly, sociological studies on written Taiwanese analyse the option for a particular script in ideological terms. For instance, comparing ideological convictions of *Taiyu* activists of the 1930s with those of the present generation, A-chin Hsiao writes:²⁵ “Comparatively speaking, contemporary attempts to establish a *Hoklo* [i.e., *Taiyu*] script and establish *Hoklo* literature has achieved more than the efforts to promote writing in *tai-oan-oe* and *hsiang-t’u* literature in the Japanese colonial period. On the one hand, the promoters of the latter in the early 1930s still held a relatively intense Han cultural consciousness. Thus, all of them, with the notable exception of Ts’ai P’ei-huo (Cai Peihuo), advocated using characters to write *Hoklo* in order to maintain Taiwanese connections with the Chinese Mainland and Han culture. [...] By contrast, devoting themselves to the establishment of a unique Taiwanese culture, the advocates of new writing methods in the last decade have been, almost without exception, Taiwanese nationalists. Most of them do not stick to Chinese characters and freely romanise certain *Hoklo* morphemes. Romanisation makes it easier to write *Hoklo*

and facilitates the development of *Hoklo* literature. The use of phonetic characters represents a historic step toward local nationalism within an old ideographic area dominated by China, including other bordering countries”.

Written Taiwanese: official measures

- 26 Official language planning agencies have thus far steered off orthographic standardisation. The extent to which statements and decrees formulated by government agencies have passed over this issue is striking²⁶. In 2002, official examinations for Taiwanese and Hakka teachers took place. The procedure of the examinations was regulated in a law that passed the legislature in late 2001²⁷. According to the examination sample published in advance, candidate teachers were free to use characters, any romanisation system or a mixed script in the written examinations²⁸. Standardisation of requirements for language teaching has, in other words, not been matched with orthographic specifications.
- 27 This neglect cannot be attributed to a lack of awareness, as orthographic issues have long been on the agenda of academic symposia organised by language planning institutions. A first symposium ‘Issues concerning local language education’ was held in June 1990 at the Academia Sinica. The event was jointly organised by seven local governments. The nine papers presented at this occasion focused on two issues exclusively: character usage and romanisation. Since then, numerous similar events have followed, and orthographic issues have continued to play an important role in the academic agenda. Also in the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education encouraged private research on local languages by awarding prizes for studies on Taiwanese and Hakka in five different categories: lexicon and orthography, grammar, teaching, traditional popular sources, and Chinese translations of studies on *Taiyu*²⁹.
- 28 Official measures in the field of orthographic standardisation for local languages have not gone beyond non-binding recommendations. Spelling schemes for three script types have been put forward, viz. Chinese characters, a romanisation system, and phonetic symbols. Recommendations for character usage were devised in a research project initiated by the NLC and carried out between 1995 and 1999. The project aimed at the compilation of the four-volume lexicon for Taiwanese with approximately 600 monosyllabic entries. By the spring of 2000, two volumes of the lexicon had been published³⁰. The publication of the final issues is listed among the NLC current projects³¹. As regards orthographic standardisation, the aim of the project is described in rather vague terms. The compilers express the hope that the lexicon will “reduce difficulties in writing Southern Min”³².
- 29 Phonetic symbols for Mandarin, Taiwanese and Hakka were devised in a research project carried out at the Preparatory Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica, between October 1999 and September 2000³³. The need for a new system was explained with the high degree of orthographic diversity in Taiwanese and Hakka sources. This was considered “inconvenient for the reader and harmful for the research on and development of Southern Min and Hakka”³⁴. It is assumed that the project will benefit the promotion of local language education, the compilation of books in and reference works for local languages, and the development of local language literature³⁵.
- 30 Systems for the romanisation of local languages were published in early 1998, viz. the Taiwan Language Phonetic Alphabet (TLPA) for Taiwanese and Hakka. Both systems were developed by the Linguistic Society of Taiwan (*Taiwan yuwen xuehui*)³⁶. TLPA systems are recommended for the indication of character readings and not as

substitutions for the character system. Both TLPA versions have gained acceptance in textbooks and dictionaries³⁷.

- 31 Meanwhile, the NLC has announced the establishment of a database for national languages. This project is scheduled for completion in June 2004. The plan includes the publication of online databases for Mandarin and local languages, the compilation of language atlases, research on Taiwanese and Hakka grammars, the compilation of teaching materials, the compilation of a trilingual Mandarin-Taiwanese-Hakka dictionary of frequently used expressions, databases for Taiwanese and Hakka proverbs, a database of loan words used in Taiwan, and dictionaries for Austronesian languages. It is not clear what the status of the databases is. The Minister of Education is merely quoted as saying that “the work on databases for local languages (Taiwanese, Hakka, Austronesian languages) should be intensified in order to fit the needs of the new school curriculum”³⁸. One of the “expected benefits” of the databases is the “availability for use in scientific research and education”³⁹.

Governmental and non-governmental co-operation

- 32 The inclusion of Taiwanese and other local languages into the school curriculum marks a crucial turning point in Taiwanese language policies. For various practical reasons, the decision to make learning a local language compulsory for primary school students entails a number of related language-planning measures. Most importantly, *Taiyu* textbooks need to be compiled. Textbook compilation is for obvious reasons receiving increasing attention of academics and language revivalists: they are the only source of written Taiwanese with a substantial readership outside particular interest groups. Thus far, textbooks for various levels have been published, viz. for elementary and secondary school students⁴⁰. School textbooks are typically compiled by municipal or county governments, in co-operation with academics and local language revivalists. Textbooks jointly compiled by groups of authors generally gain more acceptance than those published by individuals.
- 33 Textbook compilation has thus far not come along with orthographic standardisation. This has led to the awkward situation that primary school students at different schools learn different forms of written Taiwanese, depending on the policy of the respective school authority and the non-governmental advisors. Future research needs to examine the way central and local government agencies, universities and private interest groups interact in implementing language education reforms. For the purpose of this present study it is sufficient to point out that the co-operation of non-governmental and governmental language planners goes beyond the compilation of textbooks. Academics and members of private *Taiyu* circles are furthermore recruited for the organisation of preparatory courses for *Taiyu* school teachers and the development of curricula.
- 34 Is Taiwan on the way to becoming a multilinguistic society in which all languages are equal? I argue that despite the recent promotion of local languages Mandarin will remain more equal than other languages. The main reason is that language planning measures taken so far are largely of symbolic value, and will arguably not lead to substantial changes in Taiwan’s linguistic hierarchy.
- 35 In language planning theory, determining the written standard for a language relates to the field of corpus planning. Other aspects of corpus planning are “elaboration of phonological, grammatical, and lexical norms for a standard language variety”⁴¹. Orthographic standardisation as a part of corpus planning is unlikely to succeed if

implemented independently from other fields of language planning, such as status planning. Status planning relates to the sociocultural and political status of languages, for example “the status of a language as a medium of school education to various specialised functions, such as those of a working language to be used in a state bureaucracy, in juridical affairs, or as an official state language”⁴². In other words, the success of particular corpus planning measures ultimately depends on whether these measures occur within the context of status planning, and vice versa. As Haarmann puts it, “the elaboration of a written standard for a hitherto unwritten language requires the planning of social functions in which it can be used”⁴³. A similar stance is formulated by Gadelii, who holds that “well-intentioned bilingual programmes and similar actions only have symbolic value in the long run if the languages involved are not recognized in other formal contexts”⁴⁴.

- 36 Taking these aspects into account, it is obvious that recent language planning measures with regard to *Taiyu* and other local languages still lack comprehensiveness. Within the field of corpus planning, the main focus has been orthographic standardisation. Other aspects, like standardisation of pronunciation and grammar, have largely been ignored. More importantly, there are also crucial missing links between the different fields of language planning. Despite the introduction of nativist education, *Taiyu* continues to play a marginal role in education and in the media. In Shuanfan Huang’s words, “local languages have to contend not only with Mandarin, the official language, for breathing space, but also with international languages [...] for survival”⁴⁵. The role of Taiwanese in the school curriculum is thus not a sufficient formal context that could contribute to the implementation of a Taiwanese orthography. Stated conversely, the fact that the introduction of mother tongue education was not accompanied by orthographic standardisation is in line with the modest position of local language education in the school curriculum.
- 37 The MOE’s cautious approach to orthographic regulation is apparently not without reason. Official language planning institutions still suffer from their past sins. Bitter reminiscences about the government’s oppression of local languages before the 1980s now clearly undermine what Cooper calls “the coercive power of the state to enforce language-planning decisions”⁴⁶. In other words, the governmental authority of the MOE and its NLC is in fact counterproductive when it comes to acceptance in *Taiyu* circles.

NOTES

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ABSTRACTS

The revival of the Taiwanese language (Taiyu) in the past two decades is a significant about-face, after the restrictive measures that the government has adopted for local languages in the past. This article compares the treatment of Taiyu by official language planning agencies during the Kuomintang (KMT) and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) eras. It focuses on the debates on the creation of a written norm for Taiyu. Attention is also given to the activities of non-governmental language revival groups and the co-operation between official and unofficial language planners in the implementation of recent language reforms.