

Writing Taiwanese: Now and Then, Who and Why?

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Abstract:

In the late 1990s, Taiwan witnessed controversial debates regarding the status of local languages vis-a-vis Mandarin as the national standard language. One issue in these debates was the question whether Taiwanese Minnan, also known as Taiwanese (Taiyu), should be written in a standard orthography. Many different proposals in this respect were devised and promoted by local language revivalist groups. My talk will introduce the agendas of some of these groups and their language ideological standpoints. I will also compare language activism of the late 1990s with the current situation.