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[Tâi-gí/Taiwanese]

Tù-chok-koân sī Chiúⁿ Ūi-bûn (蔣為文) ê.

Tī chun-siú ē-bīn ê 3 ê CC tiâu-kiāⁿ chi-hā, lí ē-sái chū-iū iáⁿ-ìn kap thoân-pò chit hūn bûn-chiuⁿ/chheh: 

- **Chù-bêng lâi-goân** — Lí ài sek-tòng **chù-bêng siū-koân** ê lâi-goân, chò liân-kiat kap chù-bêng tó-ūi ū siu-kái--kòe.
- **Bô seng-lí bé-bē** — Lí bē-sái ká chit hūn chu-liâu thèh-lâi chò **seng-lí bé-bē**.
- **Bô seⁿ-thò^a** — Lí nā ū iōng chit hūn chu-liâu lâi **thàu-lām, choán-ōaⁿ iah-sī koh chè-chō**, lí tō bē-sái koh sì-kè iā.


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Nā ū jīn-hô bûn-tê, hoan-gêng hām chok-chiá chih-chiap.



[English]

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宣教師 chah 來 ê 文字: 越南 kap 台灣比較

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越南 kap 台灣 lóng 差不多 tī 17 世紀 ê 時透過西方宣教師 kā 羅馬字傳入國內。Tī 越南，宣教師設計 ê 羅馬字經過 sió-khóa 修改 liáu 路尾 tī 1945 年取代喃字 kap 漢字，chiâⁿ 做越南 ê 正式文字。M̄-koh，台灣白話字 soah iáu 毋是真普遍 ê 使用。M̄-nā án-ne，khah 慢來 ê 漢字 soah 乞食趕廟公，chiâⁿ 做台灣目前主要 ê 書寫文字。本文以語言學 kap 社會語言學 ê 角度來分析越南 kap 台灣 ê 羅馬字發展。本文指出，羅馬字是毋是 ē-sái 取代漢字，是社會政治問題，毋是語言學 siōng 文字設計 ê 問題。建立家己 ê 支持族語 ê 本土政權是台灣羅馬字運動 siōng 重要 ê khang-khòe，其次是組織草根團體喚醒台灣人用族語書寫 ê 意識。台灣 kap 中國之間 ê 政治衝突 lú chē，是羅馬字運動 ê 好時機。

關鍵詞：羅馬字化、國語字、白話字、越南、台灣

Missionary Scripts in Vietnam and Taiwan

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Both Vietnam and Taiwan were introduced to the Romanized writing systems in the 17th century by Western missionaries. In Vietnam, the Romanized *chữ Quốc ngữ* system eventually replaced the traditional *chữ Nôm* and Han characters and became the official national orthography in 1945. However, its counterpart in Taiwan, the *Peh-ōe-jī*, (Romanized Taiwanese) still has not yet become widespread. Moreover, the later imported Han writing system is used much more widely and has obtained the dominant status in contemporary Taiwan's society. This paper examines the missionary scripts in Vietnam and Taiwan from the perspectives of linguistics and sociolinguistics. The authors finds that what have prevented the Han characters from being replaced by Romanization are socio-political factors, rather than linguistics factors.

Keywords: Romanization, chu Quoc ngu, Peh-oe-ji, Vietnam, Taiwan

1. Introduction

In 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered the New World, and a few years later in 1498 the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama opened the sea route between Europe and India by way of The Cape of Good Hope. The end of the fifteenth century was the beginning of the great voyages, and the era of 'great discoveries' from the European point of view. In Asia, following the great discoveries were Western missionary activities, international trades between Asia and Europe, and later Western colonialism.

Accompanying the missionary activities was the design of Romanized systems for local languages. Both Vietnam and Taiwan were introduced to the Romanized writing systems by Western missionaries in the seventeenth century. In Vietnam, the Romanized *chữ Quốc ngữ* system eventually replaced the traditional *chữ Nôm* and Han characters and became the official national orthography in 1945. However, Romanized scripts in Taiwan is still a long way from achieving an official status under the Chinese ROC occupation.

Although Taiwan is currently a Hanji (Han characters)-dominated society,

Romanization once was the unique and first writing system used by the non-literati in Taiwan. Romanization in Taiwan prior to 1945 can be divided into two eras. The first era of Romanization is *Sinkang* writing, and the second Romanization is *Pèh-ōe-jī* writing. Sinkang scripts were Romanized system for writing the vernacular of the indigenous *Siraya* tribes during Dutch occupation (1624-1661) of Taiwan in the seventeenth century. Nowadays, the language of Siraya has become nearly extinct and only a very limited number of researchers could read the manuscripts written in Sinkang. Thereafter, the classical Han writing was adopted as an official language, and *Koa-á-chheh* (歌仔冊) was treated as the popular writing for the public during the *Koxinga* (鄭 1661-1683) and the *Qing* (清 1683-1895) occupations. In the nineteenth century, another Romanized system *Pèh-ōe-jī*¹ (白話字) was devised by missionaries to write Taiwanese and Hakka. Today, there are still a few among the elder generations, especially women, who read only *Pèh-ōe-jī*. After Taiwan became a part of Japan (1895-1945), Japanese writing became the official written language in Taiwan. After World War II, Mandarin Written Chinese (MWC) became the orthodox system of writing under Chiang Kai-shek's occupation of Taiwan.

Why was Vietnam successfully transferred from Han and Nom characters to Roman scripts? In contrast, why has not Romanized Taiwanese *Pèh-ōe-jī* achieved national status yet? This paper examines these issues through the missionary scripts, i.e. Vietnamese chữ Quốc Ngữ and Taiwanese *Pèh-ōe-jī* in terms of linguistics and sociolinguistics.

2. Sociolinguistic Backgrounds of Vietnam and Taiwan

2.1. The Vietnamese language

Vietnam is a country of diverse ethnicities, including such language groups as Austro-Asiatic (94% of total population), Daic (3.7%), Miao-Yao (1.1%), Austronesian (0.8%) and Tibeto-Burman. It is reported that there are 54 official ethnic groups, 106 living languages, and 1 extinct language (Lewis 2009:537; Dang 2000: 1; Tổng Cục Thống Kê 2010). Among the ethnic groups, Việt (越) or Kinh (京) is the majority, and it accounts for 85.7% of Vietnam's total population, which was reported to be 85.8 million in Vietnam's 2009 census (Tổng Cục Thống Kê 2010). The mother tongue of the ethnic Viet is called the Vietnamese language. The Vietnamese language is known to its native speakers as Tiếng Việt, and formerly known as Annamese or Annamite. Vietnamese is currently the official language of Vietnam.

Vietnamese is an isolating language, that is, one in which the words are invariable, and syntactic relationships are shown by word order, just as in the cases of Taiwanese and Chinese. Traditionally, Vietnamese was regarded as monosyllabic because most Vietnamese

¹ For details about *Pèh-ōe-jī*, see Chiung 2003 and Cheng 1977.

words consist of single syllables. However, recent statistical studies have shown that there is a clear tendency toward poly-syllabic in modern Vietnamese (Nguyễn 1997:35). In addition, Vietnamese is a tonal language. In modern Vietnamese, it consists of six tones, in which different tones distinguish different lexical meanings of words. Tone sandhi in Vietnamese is neither as substantial nor as rich as in Taiwanese.

Various foreign influences have been brought to the development of the Vietnamese language because of the contacts in the past between the Vietnamese and other peoples. Among them, the Chinese is probably the strongest and the most lasting one (Nguyễn 1971:153). Vietnam had been under the direct domination of China during the period from 111 B.C. to 938 A.D. Although the Vietnamese established their own independent monarchy in 939 A.D., Vietnamese had to recognize the suzerainty of the Chinese Empire until the late nineteenth century (SarDesai 1992:19). In other words, China's influence on Vietnam was never extinguished even though Vietnam had achieved monarchical status. Culturally and linguistically, the substantial influences of the Chinese on the Vietnamese are the adoptions of Han characters, Confucianism, Buddhism, and the civil service examination system. Consequently, the Chinese classics such as the Four Books (四書), and the Five Jing (五經) became the textbooks and orthodoxy for Vietnamese scholars and officials. Because of the great linguistic influence on Vietnamese, Vietnamese used to be regarded as a member of Sino-Tibetan language family, to which the Chinese language belongs. However, the latest research has revealed that Vietnamese should belong to Austroasiatic family (Ruhlen 1987: 149-156).

Han characters and Han writing were first employed in the writing system of Vietnam when Vietnam was under China's direct domination. Later on a domestic script *chữ Nôm* (字喃), which has similar structure as Han characters, is documented in the tenth century (DeFrancis 1977:21). *Chữ Nôm*, or *Nôm* scripts, means southern writing or southern orthography in contrast to *chữ Hán*, Han writing or Han characters. *Chữ Nôm* in the early period was used as an auxiliary tool of classical Han to record personal or geographical names and local specialties (Nguyễn 1999:2). Literary works in *chữ Nôm* achieved popularity from the 16th to the 18th century, and reached their peak at the end of the 18th century (DeFrancis 1977:44; Chiung 2007a:104).

The Romanized writing system was introduced to Vietnam by missionaries in the seventeenth century, and it eventually became the official writing system, *chữ Quốc Ngữ*, in 1945 when Ho Chi Minh declared the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Since then, Romanized *chữ Quốc Ngữ* has reached national status, and is taught through the national education system. It was reported that the literacy rate in Vietnam is somewhere between 78% and 88% (Lewis 2009:537). Nowadays, most Vietnamese people read and write in Romanized Vietnamese. Only a few professionals in Han Nôm studies still have knowledge of Han characters and *chữ Nôm*.

2.2. The Taiwanese language

Taiwan is a multilingual and multiethnic society with a total of 23 million in population in 2013. Generally speaking, there are currently four primary ethnic groups: indigenous (1.7%), Hakka (12%), *Lán-lâng*² (73.3%), and the more recent Mainlanders (13%) (Huang 1993:21). The mother tongue of the *Lán-lâng* people is called *Tâi-gí* (台語), the Taiwanese language in Taiwan. It is also occasionally called *Hô-ló-oē*, *Lán-lâng-oē* or *Bân-lâm-oē* (Southern *Min*). Although Taiwanese was originally brought from Southern Hokkien of China to Taiwan, it is not exactly the same as Southern *Min* today. For example, there are a lot of Japanese loanwords in Taiwanese, but not in Southern *Min*. The Taiwanese language is also an isolating tone language as is the Vietnamese language. In Taiwanese, there are currently seven tones with rich tone sandhi phenomenon. Generally speaking, every syllable except the last one has to become sandhi tone in a sequence of syllables. The Taiwanese language may be written in three ways: 1) Romanized *Pêh-ōe-jī* only, 2) Han characters only, and 3) mixed style with Han characters and *Pêh-ōe-jī*.

Hakka and *Tai-gi* are the so-called sinicized Han people. In fact, many of them are descendants of intermarriage between Sinitic immigrants and local Formosan Austronesians during the *Koxinga* and Chinese *Qing* periods (Brown 2004:149). Mainlanders were the soldiers, dependents, and refugees who moved to Taiwan from China around the 1940s with the Chiang Kai-shek's political regime ROC. Mandarin Chinese is the lingua franca among the Mainlanders. Although Hakka, *Tai-gi*, and Mainlanders were all immigrants originally from China, they have different national identities. Research conducted by Ông (1993) and Corcuff (2004) have revealed that most of the *Tai-gi* and Hakka people identify themselves as Taiwanese. However, more than half of the Mainlanders still identified themselves as Chinese (Chiung 2007a:110).

At the end of World War II, *Chiang Kai-shek*, the leader of the Chinese Nationalist (KMT) took over Taiwan and northern Vietnam on behalf of the Allied Powers under General Order No.1 of September 2, 1945. At the same time, Chiang was fighting against the Chinese Communist Party in Mainland China. In 1949, Chiang's troops were completely defeated and then pursued by the Chinese Communists. At that time, Taiwan's national status was supposed to be dealt with by a peace treaty among the nations at war. However, because of Nationalists' defeat in China, Chiang decided to occupy Taiwan as a base and from there he would fight back to reclaim the Chinese Mainland. Consequently, Chiang's political regime Republic of China (R.O.C) was renewed in Taiwan and has remained there since 1949.

Monolingual Mandarin Chinese policy was adopted during ROC occupation of Taiwan.

² Huang adopted the term Southern *Min* instead of *Lán-lâng*.

The Taiwanese populace was forced to learn Mandarin Chinese and to identify themselves as Chinese through the indoctrination of the national education system. Consequently, research has revealed that a language shift toward Mandarin is in progress. Nowadays, because the written Taiwanese is not well taught through the national education system, most Taiwanese speakers have learned to write in MWC instead of Written Taiwanese (WT). In other words, the written language of Taiwanese people is distinct from their daily colloquial speech; people speak in Taiwanese, but write in MWC.

3. Vietnamese chữ Quốc Ngữ

3.1. From missionary scripts to national scripts

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, and French missionaries gradually came to preach in Vietnam. To get their ideas across to the local people, it was recognized by missionaries that knowledge of the spoken Vietnamese was essential. Romanized writing was thus devised to assist missionaries to acquire the Vietnamese language. It is apparent that the Vietnamese Romanization resulted from collective efforts, with the influences of diverse backgrounds of missionaries (Thompson 1987:54-55). Among the variants of Vietnamese Romanization, Alexandre de Rhodes is usually referred to as the person who provided the first systematic work of Vietnamese Romanization (DeFrancis 1977:54). In 1624, the French Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes arrived in central Vietnam. He used Roman scripts as a writing system to describe the Vietnamese language and then he published the first Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary, *Dictionarium Annamiticum, Lusitanum et Latinum*, and a Vietnamese catechism *Catechismus* in 1651. De Rhodes' Romanized system with some later changes became the foundation of present Quốc Ngữ, the national writing system of Vietnam (Đỗ 1972; DeFrancis 1977:48-66; Thompson 1987:52-77).

From the perspective of literacy, Roman script was much easier to acquire than Han character or chữ Nôm (Chiung 2003). However, Vietnamese Romanization did not become widespread until the early twentieth century. There are two primary reasons. First, the use of Romanized Vietnamese was primarily limited to the Catholic community prior to the twentieth century. DeFrancis (1977:64) has pointed out that most missionaries “looked upon it [Romanization] chiefly as a tool in working with the Vietnamese language and were not greatly concerned with urging its use in other areas.” Moreover, even if people outside the Catholic community wanted to learn the Romanization, they were afraid of being treated as Catholic or collaborators with foreign missionaries since there were conflicts between local people and foreign missionaries. Consequently, there was no wide usage outside the Catholic community (DeFrancis 1977:61). Second, it was the reflection of people's psychological preference of the Han character since Han character has reached the orthodox status since the

Ly dynasty. This phenomenon of preference is especially true for the traditional scholars and officials. For example, it was reported that Confucian schools, which are the essential access to the acquisition of Han writing and Chinese classics, continued to exist and attract students until as late as the first decade or two of the twentieth century (DeFrancis 1977:124).

Since French colonization was involved in the colonial history of Vietnam, what role have the French (1861-1945) played in the orthographic transition of the Vietnamese language? First of all, the French had weakened or even replaced the role played by the Chinese in Vietnam. In the nineteenth century, China was losing her dominance in Asia since the Opium war in 1842. In addition, Japan's successful Westernization, shown in such wars as her victories over China in 1895 and over Tsarist Russia in 1904-1905, had impressed the Vietnamese. The appearance of the French power in Indochina³ enforced the Vietnamese people to experience the new political power from Western society, and further, to reconsider their relationship with the traditional feudal China. Second, French's antagonism toward Chinese had strengthened the promotion of the Romanized system. Their hostile attitudes toward Chinese was summed up in a letter of 15 January 1866 by a French administrator, Paulin Vial, who held the position of *Directeur du Cabinet du Gouverneur de la Cochinchine* "From the first days it was recognized that the Chinese language was a barrier between us and the natives...; it is the only one which can bring close to us the Annamites of the colony by inculcating in them the principles of European civilization and isolating them from the hostile influence of our neighbors" (quoted in DeFrancis 1977:77). Thus, the actions taken by the French colonialists included termination of the traditional civil service examination, and promotion of the Romanized Vietnamese, which was regarded as a closer connection to French since both French and Romanized Vietnamese were using Roman scripts. Nevertheless, the eventual goal of the colonialists was to replace Vietnamese with French after the Vietnamese acquired the Romanized system (DeFrancis 1977:131).

Although the French colonialists and collaborationists had promoted Romanized Vietnamese for decades by the twentieth century, it received only a slow growth (DeFrancis 1977:69). In contrast, Romanized system reached a rapid growth under the promotion of the Vietnamese nationalists when they launched their modern nationalist movement in the early twentieth century (DeFrancis 1977:159). Romanized *Quốc Ngữ* or the National Language was promoted by nationalists in the example of *Đông Kinh Nghĩa Thục* (Marr 1971:156-184; Chrong 1982; Chiung 2008). In 1907 Vietnamese nationalists established Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc (東京義塾), Tokin Free School, a private school to teach students Western ideas, science, and to train students to be capable promoters of Vietnamese nationalist movement. One of the significant features of Tokin Free School was the promotion of *Quốc Ngữ*. As Marr (1971:167) stated, the teachers at Tokin Free School showed "a new willingness to

³ Indochina includes present Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

employ *quoc-ngu* when introducing outside ideas or techniques, and they urged each student to use the Romanized script subsequently as a device for passing on modern knowledge to hundreds of their less literate countrymen.”

Although *Quốc Ngữ* had spread out rapidly in the early part of the twentieth century, it does not mean that *Quốc Ngữ* had replaced Chinese or French. Spoken Vietnamese and *Quốc Ngữ* were still subordinate to French and Chinese until the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in 1945. The contemptuous attitudes towards the Vietnamese language could be well shown by a Vietnamese politician, *Ho Duy Kien*, who referred to the Vietnamese language as a “patois” similar to those found in Gascogne, Brittany, Normandy, or Provence, during an otherwise routine Cochinchina Colonial Council discussion on primary education in 1931. Furthermore, Ho even concluded that it is going to take Vietnamese more than five hundred years to improve their “patois” to the level of French and Chinese (Marr 1981:136).

The number of people who acquired reading and writing skills in *Quốc Ngữ* after the achievement of independence was reported by Le Thanh Khoi (quoted in DeFrancis 1977:240) to have risen from 20 percent in 1945 to 70 percent in 1953.

How did Vietnam successfully replace Han characters and *chữ Nôm* with Romanized *Quốc Ngữ*? Hannas (1997:88-92) stated twelve factors, and concluded that “the compelling factor behind this success is that Vietnam never had a top-down, coordinated, state-backed movement to effect the reform” (1997:84). Although it is true that bottom-up grass root movement played an important role in Vietnam’s orthographic transition, I would attribute the consequence to two crucial factors: 1) external factor of political interaction between Vietnam and China in the international situation of the first half of the twentieth century, and 2) internal factor of social demand for literacy. These two crucial points can apply to the case of Taiwanese Romanization, and explain why Romanized system has not achieved popular and official status in Taiwan.

The external factor involves the complexity of international situation in the 1940s, as Hodgkin (1981:288) stated that the Vietnamese was “faced with a varying combination of partly competing, partly collaborating imperialisms, French, Japanese, British and American, with *Kuomintang* China.” At that time, Vietnam was considered an important base to attack southern China⁴ when Japan’s invasion of China became more apparent and aggressive since the 1930s (Hodgkin 1981:288). The Japanese military eventually entered Vietnam and shared the control of Vietnam with the French in the early 1940s. From the perspective of China, suppression against Japan’s military activities in Vietnam was desired. However, in the viewpoint of the French, they were afraid that China would take over Vietnam again if

⁴ In the view point of Japan, domination of Vietnam and its northern trade-route was essential for effective control of southern China since the *Tonkin* Railway from *Haiphong* to *Yunnan* was vital source of supplies for *Kuomintang* China (Hodgkin:288).

Chinese troops entered Vietnam on the excuse of suppression against Japanese forces (Jiang 1971:181). For the Vietnamese people, how to maintain their national identity and achieve national independence from the imperialisms were considered priority by their leaders such as Ho Chi Minh. Ho's Chinese strategy was to keep Chinese forces away from Vietnam, and minimize the possibility of Chinese comeback in Indochina.

At the end of World War II, Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers issued General Order No.1. It instructed Japanese forces to surrender to designated Allied commanders: "The senior Japanese commanders and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces within China (excluding Manchuria), Formosa and French Indo-China north of 16° north latitude shall surrender to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek..." With this order, Chiang sent armies to Vietnam and Taiwan. About two hundred thousand men were then sent to northern Vietnam (Đinh 2010; Bộ Giáo Dục và Đào Tạo). During the Chinese occupation, Vietnam faced several crises: 1) Robbery and criminal acts by the undisciplined armies increased dramatically, 2) about two million Vietnamese starved to death because of Chiang's pillage, 3) Chiang's political interference with Vietnam's domestic affairs (Đinh 2010; Chiung 2011b:165-167).

In response to the Chinese occupation, Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh played a trick on the French. He pretended that Vietnam would join the French Union. In return, all Chinese armies should be withdrawn from Vietnam. Under the political pressure of the French, Chiang's armies retreated in summer 1946. Contrary to Vietnam, Taiwan was not as lucky in expelling the Chinese military. This is also the critical point why Mandarin Chinese was adopted as an official language and the Taiwanese language excluded. Politically speaking, Ho Chi Minh refused Chinese army from entering Vietnam (Jiang 1971:107) as well as instigated anti-Chinese movement (Jiang 1971:228-240). Culturally, Romanized Vietnamese was considered a distinctive feature of cultural boundary between Vietnam and China. These considerations propelled Ho in favor of Romanization rather than Han characters used in China.

The internal factor of social demand for literacy is understandable. Since Ho Chi Minh claimed that 95 percent of Vietnam's total populations were illiterates, it was important to equip the people with primary education, which was considered essential to modernization in order to fight against imperialisms. Thus, the efficient and easily learned Romanization was the best choice for literacy in contrast to the complexity of Han characters. In addition, it is more possible for illiterates to accept a new writing system than for literates to shift their literacy to a different orthography. For example, in the case of English, Stubbs (1980:72) points out that "conservatism and the inertia of habits and tradition" played an important role in explaining why English spelling reform has not been successful. Since the majority of Vietnamese were illiterates, and only a few elites were skilled in Han writing or French during the promotion of Quốc Ngữ, it was clear that Romanized Vietnamese would be

favored by the majority, and thus win the literacy campaign.

3.2. A Linguistics Account of chữ Quốc Ngữ

Compared to Taiwanese, Vietnamese vowels are much more complicated and difficult. According to Doan (1999), Vietnamese vowels may be categorized into nine simple vowels, four short vowels, and three diphthongs, as listed in table **Table 1**, **Table 2** and **Table 3**.

Table 1. Vietnamese simple vowels in IPA.

		front	central	back (-rd)	back (+rd)
upper	high	i		u	u
	upper mid	e		ɤ	o
lower	lower mid	ɛ			ɔ
	low			a	

Table 2. Vietnamese short vowels in IPA

		front	central	back (-rd)	back (+rd)
upper	high				
	upper mid			ɤ	
lower	lower mid	ɛ			ɔ
	low			ă	

Table 3. Vietnamese diphthongs in IPA

		front	central	back (-rd)	back (+rd)
upper		i	ɥe	uɥ ɤ	u ɔ
lower					

There are 19 consonants in the Hanoi dialect of Vietnamese (Đoàn 1999). These consonants were listed in **Table 4** in IPA format. These consonants were represented slightly different in Vietnamese orthography. In addition to the 19 consonants, other dialects may contain retroflex consonants /tʂ/, /zʂ/, and /ʂ/ (Nguyễn 1997:20).

Table 4. Vietnamese consonants in IPA.

		bi-labial	labial-dental	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
		-asp/+asp					
voiceless	stop	p		t / t ^h	c	k	
voiced	stop	b		d			
voiceless	fricative		f	s		x	h
voiced	fricative		v	z		ɣ	
voiced	lateral			l			
voiced	nasal	m		n	ɲ	ŋ	

Mon-Khmer languages have usually been remarked upon for the linguistic category of register, which includes most prominently voice quality as a contrastive feature. Although Vietnamese is not a classic register language, voice quality as well as pitch phenomena are both important in the tone system of Vietnamese (Edmondson 1997:1) There are six tones in modern northern Vietnamese, i.e. *ngang*, *huyền*, *hỏi*, *ngã*, *sắc*, and *nặng*. They are composed of contours of pitch combined with certain other features of voice production (Thompson 1987:20). Different scholars may have different descriptions of these tones. The Vietnamese tones in contrast to Taiwanese are given in table 5 as follows (Chiung 2003:127-131; Chiung 2006:44):

Table 5. Vietnamese tones in comparison with Taiwanese.

Tones	ngang	huyền	hỏi	ngã	sắc		nặng	
Tone marks	n/a	˘	ˆ	˜	ˊ		ˋ	
Numerical tone values	33	21	313	435	35	5	3	3
Tone values in IPA	—	∨	√	√	∧	ˊ	·ˊ	·ˋ
Notes						With finals /p t c ch/		With finals /p t c ch/
Similar tone in Taiwanese	1	3	5	n/a	9	8	3or4	4

The symbols for representing Vietnamese vowels and consonants in chữ Quốc Ngữ are summarized in **Table 6** and **Table 7**.

Table 6. Symbols for Vietnamese vowels in the spelling of chữ Quốc Ngữ.

CQN	POJ*	IPA	conditions	examples
a	a	/ă/	Followed by y, u	tay ‘hand’
	a	/a/	Elsewhere	ta ‘we’
ã	a	/ă/		ăn ‘eat’
â	o	/ɤ̃/		thấy ‘see’
i	i	/i/		khi ‘while’
y			Usually for Han Viet words	đồng ý ‘agree’
u	u	/u/		cũ ‘old’
ư	n/a	/ɯ/		từ ‘word’
ê	e	/e/		ghế ‘chair’
e	e	/ɛ/		em ‘you’
ô	ȯ	/o/		cô ‘aunt’
o	ȯ	/ɔ/		co ‘to bend’
ơ	o	/ɤ/		thơ ‘poem’
iê	ie	[i̥ ɨe]	Elsewhere	tiên ‘fairy’
yê	ie		Preceded by /ʔ/ or /w/	yêu ‘love’ truyện ‘story’
ia	io	[i̥ ə]	Without glide /w/ and coda	bia ‘beer’
ya	io		Preceded by glide /w/ and without coda	khuya ‘midnight’
uô	uȯ	/u̥ ɔ̇/	Elsewhere	chuông ‘bell’
ua	uo		Without coda	vua ‘king’
ươ	n/a	/ɯ̥ ɤ̇/	Elsewhere	được ‘able’
ươ	n/a		Without coda	mưa ‘rain’

*Similar alphabets in Romanized Taiwanese Pêh-ōe-jī.

Table 7. Symbols for Vietnamese consonants in the spelling of chữ Quốc Ngữ

CQN	POJ*	IPA	conditions	examples
đ	l	/d/		đi ‘go’
t	t	/t/		tôi ‘I’
th	th	/tʰ/		thu ‘autumn’
ch	ch	/c/		cho ‘give’
tr	n/a	/tʂ/	dialect	trông ‘to plant’
b	b	/b/		ba ‘three’
p	p	/p/		pin ‘battery’
ph	n/a	/f/		pháp ‘French’
d	j	/z/		da ‘skin’
gi	j		Usually Han Viet words	gia ‘home’
g	j		Followed by i	gì ‘what’
	g	/ɣ/	Elsewhere	gà ‘chicken’
gh	g		Followed by i, e, ê	ghi ‘record’
k	k	/k/	Followed by i, y, e, ê,	kê ‘chicken’
q			Followed by glide /w/	quả ‘fruit’
c			Elsewhere	cá ‘fish’
kh	h	/x/		khó ‘difficult’
h	h	/h/		hỏi ‘ask’
v	n/a	/v/		về ‘go back’
r	n/a	/z/	dialect	ra ‘go out’
l	l	/l/		là ‘is’
x	s	/s/		xa ‘far’
s	n/a	/ʂ/	dialect	so ‘compare’
m	m	/m/		mẹ ‘mother’
n	n	/n/		nam ‘south’
nh	ng	/ŋ/		nhớ ‘miss’
ngh	ng	/ŋ/	Followed by i, e, ê	ngủ ‘rest’
ng	ng		Elsewhere	ngọc ‘jade’

*Similar alphabets in Romanized Taiwanese Pêh-ōe-jī.

4. Taiwanese Pêh-ōe-jī

4.1. From missionary scripts to Taiwanese scripts

More and more missionaries came to preach in China in the seventeenth century, even though there were several restrictions on foreign missionaries under the Qing empire. The restrictions on foreign missionaries were continued until the Treaty of *Tientsin* was signed between the Qing Empire and foreign countries in 1858. Taiwan, at that time, was under the occupation of Qing empire, therefore, foreign missionaries were allowed after that treaty. Consequently, the first mission after the Dutch settled in Tainan by missionary James L.

Maxwell and his assistants in 1865 (Hsu 1995:6-8; Lai 1990:277-280).⁵

Pêh-ōe-jī, a Romanized scheme to write Taiwanese, was introduced to Taiwan by Western missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶ Pêh-ōe-jī means the scripts of vernacular speech, in contrast to the complicated Han characters of wenyen (classical Han writing). It had important effects in three significant aspects: 1) cultural enlightenment, 2) education for all people and 3) literary creation in colloquial Taiwanese (Chiung 2005; Chiung 2011a).

Those applications and publications of Pêh-ōe-jī since the nineteenth century can be summarized in the following six categories: 1) textbooks, 2) dictionaries, 3) translation of the Bible, catechisms, and religious tracts, 4) newspapers, 5) private note-taking or letter writing letters, and 6) other publications, such as physiology, math, and novels (Chiung 2005).

Missionaries' linguistic efforts on the Romanization are reflected in various Romanized dictionaries. Water H. Medhurst's (1796-1857) *A Dictionary of the Hok-keen Dialect of the Chinese Language* published in 1837 is considered the first existing Romanized dictionary of Southern Min compiled by western missionary (Âng 1993: 197-259). The role of Medhurst's dictionary to Southern Min is somewhat similar to Alexandre de Rhodes's dictionary to Vietnamese. Carstairs Douglas' (1830-1877) *Chinese-English Dictionary of the Vernacular or Spoken Language of Amoy* of 1873 is regarded as the dictionary of influence on the orthography of Pêh-ōe-jī. After Douglas' dictionary, most Romanized dictionaries and publications followed his orthography without or with just minor changes (Âng 1993:1-9). William Campbell's (1841-1921) dictionary *Ē-mńg Im Sin Jī-tián (A Dictionary of the Amoy Vernacular Spoken Throughout the Prefectures of Chin-chiu, Chiang-chiu and Formosa* 1913), the first Pêh-ōe-jī dictionary published in Taiwan, is the most widely used Romanized dictionary in Taiwan (Lai 1990; Âng 1996). This dictionary is reprinted and renamed as *Kam Uî-lîm Tâi-gú Jī-tián* or William Campbell's Taiwanese Dictionary since 2009.

The first New Testament Bible in Romanized Amoy, *Lán ê Kiù-chú Ia-so Ki-tok ê Sin-iok* was published in 1873, and the first Old Testament Bible *Kū-iok ê Sêng Keng* in 1884. The popular use of Poe-oe-ji in Taiwan was promoted by the missionary Reverend Thomas Barclay (1849-1935) while he published the monthly newspaper *Tâi-oân-hú-siâ" Kàu-hōe-pò* (Taiwan Prefectural City Church News) in July 1885. This newspaper was published in Pêh-ōe-jī until 1969. Thereafter, it was shifted to Mandarin Chinese under the political pressure from ROC. In addition to publications related to Christianity, there were some other publications written in Pêh-ōe-jī, such as *Pit Soàn ê Chhō Hák* (Fundamental Mathematics) by *Gê Uî-lîm* in 1897, *Lāi Gōa Kho Khàn-hō-hák* (The Principles and Practice

⁵ For the information on early development of Romanization in Amoy China, please refer to Pitcher (1912).

⁶ It was reported that the earliest development of Pêh-ōe-jī was contributed by the Spanish missionaries of Mania in the early 17th century (Klötter 2002 & 2004).

of Nursing) by George Gushue-Taylor (Tè Jîn-siū) in 1917, the novel *Chhut Sí-Sòa*ⁿ (The Line between Life and Death) by Tēⁿ *Khe-phoàn* in 1926, and the collection of commentaries *Cháp-hāng Koán-kiàn* (Opinions on Ten Issues) by *Chhòà Pòe-hóe* in 1925.

Usually, the religious believers apply Pèh-ōe-jī writing to their daily life after they acquire the skill of Romanization. For example, they may use Pèh-ōe-jī as a skill of note taking or writing letters to their children or friends in addition to reading the Bible. Pèh-ōe-jī was widely used among the church people in Taiwan prior to 1970s. Among its users, women were the majority. Most of these women did not command any other form of literacy except Pèh-ōe-jī. Even today, there are still a few among the older generations, especially women, who read only Pèh-ōe-jī.

Why did Pèh-ōe-jī declined severely in the 1970s? It is the consequence of the ROC colonialism. Because of the Nationalist leader Chiang kai-shek's defeat in China, Chiang decided to occupy Taiwan as a base from which to fight back and reclaim the Mainland. Consequently, Chiang's political regime Republic of China (R.O.C) resurrected in Taiwan and has remained since 1949. The ROC government adopted the Monolingual Mandarin Chinese policy forcing the people to learn Mandarin Chinese and to identify themselves as Chinese by using the national education system as a propagandistic tool. In consequence, language use shift toward Mandarin.

Although Pèh-ōe-jī was originally devised for religious purposes, it is no longer limited to religious applications after the contemporary *Tâi-bûn* movement was raised in the late 1980s. Pèh-ōe-jī has been adopted by many Tai-bun promoters as one of the Romanized writing systems to write Taiwanese. For example, famous Tai-bun periodicals such as *Tô-i-oân-jī*, *Tâi-bûn Thong-sìn* and *Tâi-bûn Bóng Pò* adopted Pèh-ōe-jī as the Romanization for writing Taiwanese.

In short, the Pèh-ōe-jī was the ground of Romanization of modern Taiwanese colloquial writing. Even though there were several different schemes of Romanization for writing Taiwanese, many of them were derived from Pèh-ōe-jī.⁷ Pèh-ōe-jī and its derivatives are the most widely used Romanization until today.

Although Romanization is much more efficient⁸ than Han characters, Romanizations are currently not widely accepted by people in Taiwan.⁹ Writing in Roman script is regarded as the low language in digraphia.¹⁰ There are several reasons for this phenomenon:

First, people's preference for Han characters is caused by their internalized socialization.

⁷ For more information about different Romanized schemes, see Iûⁿ 1999.

⁸ Regarding the efficiency issues, refers to DeFrancis 1996, 1990; Chiung 2003.

⁹ For more details about the public's attitudes toward Han characters and Romanization, see Chiung 2001.

¹⁰ Digraphia, which parallels to Ferguson's (1959) idea of diglossia, has been defined by Dale (1980:5) as "the use of two (or more) writing systems for representing a single language," or by DeFrancis (1984:59) as "the use of two or more different systems of writing the same language." For discussion on the digraphia in Taiwan, refer to Tiuⁿ 1998; Chiung 2001.

Because Han characters have been adopted as the official orthography for two thousand years, being able to master Han characters well is the mark of a scholar in the Han cultural areas. Writing in scripts other than Han characters may be regarded as childish writing (Chiung 2005:284). Thus, when *Tai-oan-hu-siaⁿ Kau-hoe-po*, the first Taiwanese newspaper in Romanization, was published in 1885, the editor and publisher Rev. Thomas Barclay exhorted readers of the newspaper not to “look down at Peh-pe-ji; do not regard it as childish writing” (Barclay 1885).

Second, misunderstanding of the nature and function of Han characters has enforced people’s preference for Han characters. Many people believe that Han characters are ideally suited for all members of the Han language family, which includes Hakka and Taiwanese. They believe that Taiwanese cannot be expressed well without Han characters because Han characters are logographs and each character expresses a distinctive semantic function. In addition, many people believe Liân Hêng’s (1987) claim that “there are no Taiwanese words which do not have corresponding characters.” However, DeFrancis (1996:40) has pointed out that Han characters are “primarily sound-based and only secondarily semantically oriented.” In DeFrancis’ opinion, it is a myth to regard Han characters as logographic (DeFrancis 1990). He even concludes that “the inefficiency of the system stems precisely from its clumsy method of sound representation and the added complication of an even more clumsy system of semantic determinatives” (DeFrancis 1996:40). If Han characters are logographs, the process involved in reading them should be different from phonological or phonetic writings. However, research conducted by Tzeng et al. has pointed out that “the phonological effect in the reading of the Chinese characters is real and its nature seems to be similar to that generated in an alphabetic script” (Tzeng et al. 1992:128). Their research reveals that the reading process of Han characters is similar to that for phonetic writing. In short, there is no sufficient evidence to support the view that the Han characters are logographs.

The third reason that Romanization is not widespread in Taiwan is due to political factors. Symbolically, writing in Han characters was regarded as a symbol of Chinese culture by Taiwan’s ruling Chinese KMT regime. Writing in scripts other than Han characters was forbidden because it was perceived as a challenge to Chinese culture and Chinese nationalism. For example, the Romanized New Testament “*Sin Iok*” was once confiscated by government agents in 1975 because writing in Roman script was regarded as a challenge to the orthodox status of Han characters.

4.2. A Linguistics Account of Pêh-ōe-jī

The inventory of Taiwanese vowels and consonants are listed in **Table 9** and **Table 8** (Cheng and Cheng 1971). In general, there are seventeen consonants (excluding zero consonant and glottal stop /ʔ/), six simple vowels, and seven tones, though they may vary

from variety to variety. Among the consonants, the phoneme /l/ is in fact pronounced as a voiced [d] or a flap sound in most circumstances. Nevertheless, we follow the traditional description of listing /l/ as a phoneme.

Table 8. Taiwanese vowels in IPA.

	front	central	back
high	i		u
mid	e	ə	o
low		a	

Table 9. Taiwanese consonants in IPA.

	bi-labial	alveolar	velar
	-asp/+asp	-asp/+asp	-asp/+asp
voiceless stop	p/p ^h	t / t ^h	k/k ^h
voiced stop	b		g
voiceless C. fricative			h
voiceless G. fricative		s	
voiceless affricate		ts/ts ^h	
voiced affricate		dz	
voiced lateral		l	
voiced nasal	m	n	ŋ

The spelling rules of Pêh-ōe-jī are easier than the Vietnamese Chữ Quốc Ngữ. In general, there is a one-to-one relationship between orthographic symbols and phonemes as shown in **Table 10** and **Table 11**. After phonemes are represented, tone marks are imposed to the nuclei of syllables and a hyphen ‘-’ is added between syllables, such as **ō·koé·khiau** (芋粿曲 Taiwanese cake). Because Taiwanese is a tone language with rich tone sandhi, there can be several ways to represent tones. In the design of Pêh-ōe-jī, the base tone or underlying tone of each syllable is chosen and represented by its tone mark. For example, ‘Taiwanese cake’ must be represented by its underlying form **ō·koé·khiau** rather than surface form **ò·koe·khiau** (this is the form in actual pronunciation).

Table 10. Symbols for Taiwanese vowels in the spelling of Pêh-ōe-jī.

POJ	CQN	IPA	Conditions	examples
a	a	/a/		ta ‘dry’
i	i	/i/		ti ‘pig’
u	u	/u/		tú ‘meet’

e	ê	/e/		tê ‘tea’
ọ	ô	/o/		ọ ‘black’
o	σ	/ə/	Elsewhere	to ‘knife’ koh ‘more’
	ô	/o/	With any coda except h	tong ‘East’ kok ‘state’

Table 11. Symbols for Taiwanese consonants in the spelling of Pêh-ōe-jī.

POJ	CQN	IPA	Conditions	examples
b	b	/b/		bûn ‘literary’
p	p	/p/		pí ‘compare’
ph	n/a	/p ^h /		phoe ‘letter’
l	đ	[d]	Elsewhere	lí ‘you’
	l	[l]	Followed by a	lâi ‘come’
t	t	/t/		tê ‘tea’
th	th	/t ^h /		thâi ‘kill’
g	gh	/g/		gí ‘language’
k	k , c , q	/k/		ka ‘plus’
kh	kh	/k ^h /		kha ‘foot’
h	h	[h]		hí ‘happy’
	n/a	[ʔ]		ah ‘duck’
s	x	/s/		sì ‘four’
ch	ch	/ts/		chi ‘of’
chh	n/a	/ts ^h /		chha ‘bad’
j	d	/dz/		jít ‘sun’
m	m	[m]		mī ‘noodles’
	n/a	[m̩]	Syllabic	m̩ ‘no’
n	n	/n/		ni ‘milk’
ng	ng	[ŋ]		âng ‘red’
	n/a	[ŋ]	syllabic	ng̩ ‘yellow’

Table 12. Taiwanese tones in comparison with Vietnamese and Chinese

Categories	君 [kun] gentle	滾 [kun] boil	棍 [kun] stick	骨 [kut] bone	裙 [kun] skirt	-	近 [kun] near	滑 [kut] glide
Numerical categories	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tone marks in Pêh-ōe-jī	unmarked	ˊ	ˋ	unmarked	ˆ		-	ˊ
Pêh-ōe-jī samples	kun	kún	kùn	kut	kûn		k ̄	ku̇t
IPA tone values	˥	˧	˨	˥˥	˥˩		˥˩	˥˥
Equivalent CQN	ngang	high huyèn	huyèn	nang	hói		low ngang	short sắc
Equivalent tones in Taipei Mandarin	1	4	3	n/a	2		low 1	n/a
Equivalent tones in Beijing Mandarin	1	4	low 4	n/a	3		low 1	n/a

5. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how Vietnamese and Taiwanese are represented by Romanized writing systems, i.e. Chữ Quốc Ngữ and Pêh-ōe-jī respectively. Generally speaking, the missionaries' knowledge of Vietnamese and Taiwanese was proficient enough so the designs of chữ Quốc Ngữ and Pêh-ōe-jī are pretty accurate and efficient compared to the complicated Han writing system.

In Taiwan and China, many people doubt the capacity of Romanization for the Han character-based languages. However, the cases of Vietnamese chữ Quốc Ngữ and Taiwanese Pêh-ōe-jī have shown that it is possible for the Han character-based languages to be written in Romanization. What have prevented the Han characters from being replaced by Romanization are socio-political factors rather than linguistic factors. To improve the Romanization movement, the most important things for the Taiwanese promoters might be: first, to establish their own Taiwanese political regime in strong support of national writing in Taiwanese, and second, to awake Taiwanese people a sense of writing in Taiwanese and in Roman scripts. More political conflicts between Taiwan and China may contribute to Taiwanese people's awareness of and willingness for Romanized Taiwanese.

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