

Baihuawen: Its Origins and Significance

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The notion of *baihuawen* (白話文), the vernacular literary language as opposed to the Classical literary language *wenyan* (文言), is closely related to the New Literature Movement (*Xin wenxue yundong* 新文學運動)¹ and the May Fourth Movement (*Wusi yundong* 五四運動)² in China at the beginning of the 20th century. *New literature* is defined in terms of *baihua* and thus there is no wonder that these two terms are usually discussed together. However, the term and phenomena of *baihuawen* deserve further examination, because it did not only influence the literary style and standard language (*putonghua* 普通話) in China, but also had decisive contribution in discussions on literary language and new literature in Taiwan. The discussion on *baihuawen* introduced all the fundamental topics that were disputed in further discussions in Taiwan: on the *New and Old Literature* (*xin-jiu wenxue lunzheng* 新舊文學論爭), on the *Taiwanese Language* (*Taiwanhua wen* 臺灣話文), and on the *Literature of Native Soil* (*xiangtu wenxue* 鄉土文學). The paper aims at setting the Taiwanese *baihuawen* discussion (1921-1924)³ in the context of Chinese and Japanese literary development. It explores the fundamental topics influential for further developments of Taiwan literature. At the same time it compares the arguments used in both Taiwan and Chinese discourses, in order to show ideological shifts on the Taiwan side.

Baihua, baihua literature and baihuawen

Before examining Taiwanese discussion on the *baihuawen*, however, it is necessary to define what *baihuawen* is and how it was perceived at different time periods. Traditionally

¹ The Movement for *New Literature* started in 1916. It aimed at introduction of literature written in vernacular that should have replaced the literature written in *wenyan*. In the same time, it opposed the traditional literary conception that the literature should convey Confucian moral principles (*wen yi zai dao* 文藝載道). The critique did not target only literature itself, but also had far-reaching consequences in social and political sphere. Among main figures of the Movement belonged Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀) and Hu Shi (胡适).

² The May Fourth Movement (1919) aroused in China as a reaction to unequal international treaties after WWI. It was initiated by students from the Beijing University and soon followed by other students and workers. The May Fourth Movement influenced not only political development, but rather cultural sphere and literature. It stimulated the wave of nationalism and reevaluation of some cultural and social patterns. In the view of the new goals, literature was understood as a tool of modernization and enlightenment. The May Fourth Movement used to be designated as the symbolic shed which the new Chinese society and literature derived its existence from.

³ My primary sources are rather limited and depend on the anthology *Taiwan New Literature under Japanese Rule* edited by Li Nanheng (1979). To ensure the complex view on the topic, further research in archives would be needed. The anthology, however, includes all important texts dealing with the topic.

baihua is the vernacular-based form of written language. It was originally limited to certain genres of popular literature, mainly the medieval stories recorded by the story-tellers. (Norman 1997: 137)

The distinctive quality of the *baihua* language is that it resembles the contemporary spoken language, but as it has been a written language, stylistic, lexical and grammar changes have occurred and *baihua* has often received various influences from the other literary language - *wenyan* (文言). (Zhang 2007: 222) The early origin of *baihua* could be traced back to the end of Han when the structure of *wenyan* was settled and did not follow the changes of the spoken language any more. The development of *baihua* could be divided into three different stages separated by two border periods (Sui and Tang dynasties and the May Fourth movement).⁴

When defining both written languages, *baihua* and *wenyan*, we have to take them as complementary. Firstly, even though both of them are literary languages, each of them uses different vocabulary, grammar and stylistic devices. (Zhang 2007: 184-185) Secondly, they are also linked with different social groups.⁵ But as Zhang reminds, the boundary between the two often blurs, because there are many cases when both styles mingle into one another.⁶ The third difference is in the adaptability of the language: since *wenyan* did not follow changes in the spoken language, it could overcome differences of spoken languages in different regions or social groups. But *baihua* might have been influenced by the local dialects.⁷ (Zhang 2007: 187)

The reasons for introduction of *baihuawen* in both China and Taiwan could be traced back to the 19th century, when the request for simple literary style free of ornamentation first appeared. The first advocates of such style raised their requests in Japan in the 1870s.⁸ One of

⁴ The first stage that ended by the period of the Tang-Sui Dynasties is defined as formative period and *baihua* is perceived within the *wenyan*. The second stage that took place during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, *baihua* became a separate language. In this period the first literary writings in *baihua* that become a canonic writings in *baihua* and the part of higher literature. The third stage is defined after the May Fourth Movement when *baihua* was considered to the only legitimate literary language. All three stages of the *baihua* can also be defined in terms of lexis, grammar and employment in literary writings. (Zhang 2007: 190-191)

⁵ While *wenyan* was used by higher, educated elites and it conveyed official literature and writings, *baihua*, on the other hand, was the language of markets and the literature, which was written in *baihua*, was perceived as lower. (Zhang 2007: 186)

⁶ As examples may serve poems appearing in the popular literature, and colloquialisms appearing in some official writings. Then *baihua* was used to record philosophical debates or talks and it was popular during Ming and Qing periods among the literati. (Zhang 2007: 186)

⁷ Zhang (2007) gives *Songs of state Chu* (Chuci 楚辭) as an example.

⁸ The first voices, who studied the foreign languages, already called for simplification of the written Japanese in the second half of the 18th century. These were the predecessors of the later advocates of simple literary style and of script movements in Japan (Romanization movement and Kana movement). For more information see Twine 1983.

them was Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉), who in 1873 in his “Teaching on Writing” (*Moji no Oshie* 文字之教) suggested reducing the number of Chinese characters to simplify the Japanese script while keeping its readability.⁹ A more decisive argument, in terms of Chinese and later Taiwanese discourse, however, was the conception of *unification of the spoken with the written language* (*yanwen yizhi, genbun itchi* 言文一致) that appeared at the beginning of the 1880s. The new literary language, which was the outcome of the conception, became the most outstanding cultural phenomenon in the Meiji Japan. It had to be a relatively simple and understandable linguistic medium, and at the same time it should have the literary value to compete with traditional styles. The new literary language also had a non-literary function: to serve as a tool for the acquisition of knowledge and to mediate spurring nationalistic sentiments caused by the encounter with Western culture. (Tomasi 1999: 333). In the 1870s and the 1880s there was a vigorous debate on the conception of the new literary language and there first appeared arguments lately used in China and Taiwan.¹⁰

As for China, the first advocate of simple written language was Huang Zunxian (黃遵憲), who already in *Records from Japan* (*Riben Guozhi* 日本國志), published in 1887, propagated the idea of *unification of spoken and written languages* (*yan wen he yi* 言文合一) that would create a new style closer to spoken language. However, he demanded this style within the *wenyan*. (Yan 1996: 20) He and other reformists from *Waiwu pai* (外物派) became the predecessors of the New Literature revolution.

The term *baihuawen* was introduced together with the New Literature Movement and the May Fourth Movement. Hu Shi, who was the ideological father of the literary revolution, introduced the term as the language of the new literature, which was based on the spoken language.¹¹ Hu Shi for the first time put *baihua* and *wenyan* into sharp opposition and assigned to both of them new significance: *baihua* and its literature was said to be living, while *wenyan* (*guwen* 古文, as Hu Shi called it) and the traditional literature was dead.

⁹ For further reading regarding script reforms (the *Kana* movement and the Romanized script movement) in Japan see Twine (1983).

¹⁰ They referred to the European national states' language policy that employed vernacular language to become official. They pointed out that the new language is egalitarian while the traditional written styles are rather elitist. As for the literary functions, it was believed that only plain, straightforward language could describe the subtleties of human life without exaggeration or ornament. Among the advocates of the new literary language belonged Tsubouchi Shōyō (坪内逍遙), who in his *Essence of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髓) emphasized imperative of description of reality without the subjective intrusion of the writer and decisively influenced further understanding of the literary language in terms of realistic description and inner authenticity. (Tomasi 1999: 340-341)

¹¹ For the claims of the New Literature Movement see Hu Shi (1917 b): “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature” and Chen Duxiu (1917): “On Literary Revolution”.

Hu Shi, when advocating the new literary traditions, used two decisive arguments. The first one was the re-construction of the history of the *baihua* literature that reached the period of the first translations of Buddhist scriptures. It included not only the text of lesser importance, but also religious, philosophical texts, and some pieces belonging to the canons of “high literature”. Thus he created an alternative canon and a long tradition of *baihua* literature¹² that could compete and even be superior to the literature in *wenyan*.¹³ By doing so, he gave the *baihua* language a symbolic meaning that supported reformists’ fight at the social and political level. The second argument, the historic determination of *baihua* role in modern society, was derived from the Darwin theory of evolution and was, in his opinion, inevitable. His arguments, symptomatically, thus combined both tradition and new Western ideas.

However, this still does not answer the question what *baihuawen* is. It is obvious that even in the terminology there is the opposition between the speech (*hua* 話) and writing/text (*wen* 文). Even though the Chinese reformists denounced the Classical literary language, it did not mean they immediately used the codified written language based on spoken language. And the script, used in this transitional period after the May Fourth Movement, is called *baihuawen*. As written above, it stood in opposition to *wenyan* and its only precondition was that it must be the language that people speak and understand. Its standards were vaguely set by the canon of the great Ming and Qing novels introduced by Hu Shi. (Hu 1940 a) Only in the late 1920s and the 1930s Hu Shi retrospectively gave definition of *baihua* and *baihua* literature:

I enlarged the scope of the “literature in *baihua*”, and it includes writings of old literature that, in terms of understanding, approached speech. I always say that “*baihua*” has three meanings: Firstly, it is derived from “reciting” on the stage; it simply means the speech that can be expressed and understood. Secondly, it resembles the meaning of the word “pure”, and refers to speech that is devoid of ornaments. Thirdly, its meaning comes from the word “understand”, so it is a speech that is understandable and smooth. (Hu 1928 a)

This adds to the traditional understanding of the term (to tell a story – the first meaning quoted above) a new significance, combines different meanings and blurs the boundaries of both literary languages and literature itself. This understanding of the terminology is decisive not only for later definitions, but also for Taiwan’s perception of the conception, which will

¹² For the canon see Hu Shi (1928): *The History of Literature in Baihua*. Part I.

¹³ It should be added that his perception, of what belonged and what did not to the *baihua* literature tradition, was not systematic and the discrepancies aroused mainly from the reason that the border between *baihua* and *wenyan* was not clearly defined by Hu Shi. Many of the literary writings that were included in his canon, were not written in cotemporary *baihua*, but were only influenced by the vernacular to some degree. For further criticism see Zhou Zuoren (1936)

be discussed later. In 1940, Hu Shi gave another specification of *baihuawen*, which is also interesting in terms of Taiwan's debate on the literary language(s). He took Fu Sinian's two arguments as a starting point,¹⁴ and emphasized that local dialects and European influence, which had lately penetrated in the *guanhua*- the Mandarin Chinese, had proved the diversity and vitality of *baihua*. The argument is again supported with the examples from the canon of *baihua* literature to show that *baihua* always accepted influences from local dialects.¹⁵ (38) On the other hand, it must be stressed that Taiwanese intellectuals did not come into touch with these concrete definitions and knew only the vague specification given by the canon of *baihua* literature.¹⁶

Baihua and literature in *baihua* had an ultimate goal, i.e. to convey new ideas and realities that appeared in the new changing society. (Hu 1940a: 13) *Wenyan* could not achieve such a goal, because new social order, new ideas, esthetics and so on required a new language that could convey them.¹⁷ At the same time both *baihua* and its literature should serve as a tool to propagate these ideas among the people, to educate them and to make them aware of the social and political reality. Social mobility, which was an aim of these reformists' efforts, is one of the most important criteria in the process of forming national identity, because it aims at making a homogenous society that would perceive itself as a political unit – the modern state.¹⁸

This rather long definition of *baihua* and *baihua* literature in China, their history, aims and relation to other languages (*wenyan*, *guanhua*, dialects etc.) are essential for understanding the *baihuawen* conception in Taiwan.

***Baihuawen* in Taiwan**

When trying to fulfill the requirements of the conception of *Genbun itchi*, the Taiwanese had several options, how to achieve it. *Baihuawen*, which was one of them, for several reasons

¹⁴ Fu Sinian argues that *baihuawen* must follow spoken language, so it includes only what can be said. Secondly, *baihuawen* should show the influence the Western languages, because it conveys the new, sophisticated Western ideas. It must be point out, that, the early writing, *baihuawen* admired by Fu Sinian and Hu Shi, was later criticized for its difficult style including a variety of local dialects and foreign phraseology. Finally it was entitled as *new wenyan* (xin wenyan 新文言). (Qu 1932)

¹⁵ Hu Shi (1940, 38) gives following examples: *Hongloumeng* (紅樓夢) as the *baihua* influenced by Beijing dialect; *Rulin waishi* (儒林外史) and *Laocan youji* (老殘遊記) are examples *guanhua* from the Central China; *Haishang hua liezhuan* (海上花列傳) is narrating the story using *guanhua* with Suzhou dialect.

¹⁶ Kleeman (2003) and Ye Shitao (2000) both report that Taiwanese intellectuals gradually lost contact with Mainland China during the 1920s and lately were not aware of China's development.

¹⁷ For example Zhang Shoupeng (1918) argued that the Western conceptions and literary writings should be read in original, because the *wenyan* could not convey it. He called for a new language that would create new vocabulary, which would fit to the new realities.

¹⁸ For these processes and criteria see Gellner (1997).

surpassed the others. Huang Chaoqin (1923) in Taiwan and Hu Shi (1940) show, that in the Chinese context there were several other attempts to unify speech and written language. These, however, unlike *baihuawen* did not gain sufficient support. (24-25)¹⁹ Needless to say, that the early articles,²⁰ which propagated employing *baihuawen* in Taiwan, clearly stemmed from the Chinese discourse. They either openly referred to Hu Shi and his perception of *baihuawen*'s role in modernizing society, or simply took over the main arguments and used it in the Taiwanese context. However, it doesn't mean they were not aware of the recent development in Japan and when finding the arguments to support *baihuawen*, the results of *Genbun itchi* movement in Japan were good example to mention. (e.g. Huang Chaoqin 1923: 29).

Functions of *baihuawen*

All texts advocating *baihuawen* in Taiwan shared similar reasons for employing it as written language. They aimed at modernization of society and progress,²¹ so Taiwan could be a legitimate member of the global community and contribute to human heritage. Similarly to their predecessors in Japan and China, they denounced the classical Chinese as the reason for the society's backwardness. Taiwanese reformists came to the conclusion that only language close to people could spread new ideas and propagate enlightenment among the population.²² Facing constantly rising pressure from Japanese colonial government and their language policy, Huang Chaoqin (1923: 32-33) suggested using *baihuawen* to educate at least the older generation, which would be much efficient than using Japanese.²³ Judging from its frequent appearance, the modernization society argument was, in comparison to other arguments, the most relevant and sensitive one.

Secondly, employing *baihuawen* has to be perceived as a reaction to Japanese occupation and presence in Taiwan. The early advocates of *baihuawen*²⁴ saw it as a way to preserve Chinese cultural identity and continuation of relationships with Mainland China.

¹⁹ In the Taiwanese context it is worth to mention for example the Romanized script introduced by Cai Peihuo (蔡培火), which appeared already in 1922.

²⁰ The "pure" *baihuawen* discussion took place from 1921-1924. Then it became the part of discussion of the *New and Old Literature*. The early articles, which are crucial for the *baihuawen* discussion, are: Chen Duanming (1921): "A Treatise on Promoting of Daily-used Language", Huang Chaoqin (1923): "Discourse on Reforming Chinese", and Huang Chengcong (1923): "On the New Mission of Popularizing *baihuawen*";. Among the articles directly influenced by Chinese achievements of literary revolution also belonged those of Zhang Wojun (1924a, 1924b, 1924c, 1925)

²¹ E.g.: Huang Chengcong (1923: 7, 9), Huang Chaoqin (1923: 23, 29), Jian Ru (1923: 49), Xi Zhou (1924: 67) and others.

²² E.g.: Chen Duanming (1921: 5), Huang Chengcong (1923: 14), Huang Chaoqin (1923: 21-22).

²³ Similar opinion had Xi Zhou (1924: 67)

²⁴ Besides the articles enumerated in the note 18, there can be included article by Cai Tiesheng (1923: 38). From 1925 the most aggressive advocate, Zhang Wojun (張我軍), took the initiative and firmly situated the literature within the larger Chinese literary tradition.

Huang Chaoqin (1923: 34) clearly pointed out that if Chinese is abandoned, “their (i.e. Chinese people on Taiwan) character, their customs, and language will disappear! So if Chinese language is not compulsory in Taiwanese schools, we will apparently vanish.” Huang Chengcong (1923) then came with pragmatic arguments. He thought that once the reforms were successful in China, there was no need to find new ways to achieve the same goals. In addition, they could use China’s books and periodicals, so the process of inhabitants’ education and mass mobilization would be faster, not so regionally limited and smooth. (15) The constant anxiety of Japanese assimilation thus caused Taiwan’s clinging to the culturally closer and influential China.

In the same time, it must be mentioned that these efforts show certain degree of sprouting national awareness, which became evident in the late 1920s and the 1930s. One of the internal preconditions of the rise of nationalism is the idea of equality: equality with foreign powers (i.e. China, Japan and West) and equality among the population (i.e. citizens). The ultimate goal of their efforts – to modernize the society so that it becomes a respectable member in the world – is closely related with the international equality; and the way to approach it – acquisition of knowledge, and education of masses in understandable language – is then closely linked with the citizens’ equality.

Language basis for *baihuawen*

As said before, the intellectuals propagating *baihuawen* drew inspiration from the conception of *Genbun itchi*, and facing the language reality in Taiwan they had to choose which language would be the basis to be unified with script. Those influenced by the *New Literature Movement* and the *May Fourth Movement* naturally took over the conception as it was in China and referred to Chinese *baihuawen*, i.e. vernacular literary language based on Mandarin Chinese. However, it must be stressed here that at the beginning of the 1920s standards of *baihua* were not settled in China and the definition stayed rather blurred. And the relationship between *baihuawen* and local dialects was not clarified as well. Hu Shi’s argument on the employment of local dialects had rather literary background. It was linked with stylistic diversity and probably with increasing interest of the Chinese literary scene in local cultures, which were viewed as exotic – *literature of native soil* (*xiangtu wenxue* 鄉土文學).²⁵

²⁵ *Literature of native soil* of Mainland China distinctively differed to one in Taiwan. It was written by young writers coming from distant regions, who on one hand should have critically depict the backwardness of Chinese countryside, but in same time showed high degree of nostalgia. These writers were trying to overcome a dichotomy caused by different worlds of countryside and city. For more see Wang 1992: 249-253, 307-315.

Maybe also for these reasons besides distinct attitudes to use Mandarin Chinese, there were also uncertain voices advocating using, under special circumstances, the local Taiwan language.²⁶ Surprisingly we find such opinion in Huang Chengcong's (1923) "On the New Mission of Popularizing *baihuawen*":

I think to popularize this script in our society won't be difficult. I would like to advice people who are just starting with studying, at the beginning you do not need to be so rigid, as complex as the Chinese *baihuawen* is. It is possible to use our daily language and thus create a compromise *baihuawen*. After all this approach is temporary and then after gradual study and after reading Chinese books in *baihua*, we can create complex Chinese *baihuawen*. Only thus we can reach our uttermost ideal, and be connected with Chinese culture forever. (16)

This was in response to some opinions expressed in articles published at that time, which lamented the fact that Taiwanese language already penetrated in *baihuawen* in 1924.²⁷ This phenomenon, of course, may be seen as a transitional step toward the later requirement of *baihuawen* based on Taiwan language.

The lack of real conception of *baihuawen* can be also seen from the usage of terminology to describe different written languages. For example, one term might be used to describe opposites: Huang Chengcong (1923) and Cai Tiesheng (1923) used the term *hanwen* (漢文) to designate *wenyan*. Ci Zhou (1923), on the other hand, used the term *pingyi de hanwen* (平易的漢文) and meant *baihuawen*. Even more confusing are, however, terms designating Chinese and Taiwanese languages.

For example, in Huang Chengcong's article (1923), he uses "Chinese *baihuawen*" (*Zhongguo de baihuawen* 中國的白話文) and "their own state *baihuawen*" (*tamen de ziguode baihuawen* 他們的自國的白話文) to refer to the *baihuawen* in China. He then uses "Taiwan *baihuawen*" (*Taiwan de baihuawen* 臺灣的白話文), "innate *baihuawen*" (*guyou de baihuawen* 固有的白話文), and "our speech" (*women de hua* 我們的話) and "our ordinary spoken language" (*women de pingchang de yanyu* 平常的言語) to refer to the *baihuawen* in Taiwan. These concepts derive their meaning from a binary opposition of "us and them", while having rather vague and instable meaning within themselves.

²⁶ Here I refer to an indigenous Taiwanese language, known as Minnan or Hoklo.

²⁷ The problem of local vernacular penetrating to written language in Taiwan is mentioned in the article of Shi Wenqi 施文杞 1924: 52. Another phenomenon is emergence of Japanese within the Mandarin Chinese *baihuawen*, which is called *new style* (*xin wenti* 新文體). (Huang Chaoqin 1923: 31)

While Huang Chengcong (1923) recognized the opposition between Mainland and Taiwan *baihuawen*, for him a more important opposition existed between “our Taiwan language” v.s. Japanese.

Teaching us in Japanese is good, but isn't it true that, teaching in our Taiwan language (*women Taiwan hua* 我們臺灣話), which would convey all sorts of sciences starting from the primary schools using our language (*women de hua* 我們的話), will faster propagate the culture? (Huang Chengcong 1923, 17)

Even though Huang was well-known for his cultural affinity to the Mainland and his propagation of Chinese *baihuawen* as written and educational language for Taiwan, in this quotation he also exhibits a certain ambiguity regarding the language foundation for a particular Taiwan *baihuawen*. This ambiguity, not only in Huang's articles, might have anticipated the promotion of Taiwanese language as a literary language at the beginning of the 1930s.²⁸

Besides Mandarin Chinese or Chinese *baihuawen* there was a second, and in terms of the *Genbun itchi* movement, even more appropriate option – Taiwanese dialect, the real spoken, and relatively spread language in Taiwan. By the end of the 1920, with the weakening of ties between the mainland and Taiwan intellectual communities, Taiwanese intellectuals, such as Huang Shihui and Guo Qiusheng, now focused more on the local language, which could convey knowledge and modernize society.²⁹ Choosing Taiwanese language as a basis for Taiwanese *baihuawen*, however, bring another problem, i.e. how to write down purely spoken language. The power of the Taiwanese language, defined in terms of Taiwanese *baihuawen*, laid in the ability to exert influence upon the masses and mobilize them. These arguments worked not only for the modernization of society, but also for both the leftist and later proletarian movement, and for the nationalist goals. Since nationalism often co-exists with another ideology, they both took advantage of this Taiwanese language's ability.

²⁸ For the arguments advocating Taiwanese as the literary language and *Taiwan Native Soil Movement* see Huang Shihui 黃石輝 (1930): “How Could We not Advocate Nativist Literature?” *Wu ren bao* 伍人報, No.9. and Guo Qiusheng 郭秋生 (1931): (Jianshe „Taiwan hua wen“ yi ti an 建設「臺灣話文」一提案). *Taiwan xinwen* 臺灣新聞 7.7.

²⁹ Under the danger of rising Japanese colonial influence and loosing ties with Mainland China, they, in accordance with *ganbun itchi*, preferred vernacular language and literature written in this language that would be understandable and able convey unique condition of Taiwan, which people can identify with. The stress put on the egalitarianism of the vernacular language lead them to denounced *wenyan*, Mandarin Chinese and Japanese as elitist. Their argumentation, however, came closer to proletarian approach. (Kleeman 2003: 153-155)

Conclusion

Even though it is evident that the *baihuawen* conception is derived from China, comparison of Chinese and Taiwanese understanding of *baihuawen* shows that both discourses display some differences. When examining both Chinese and Taiwanese views on *baihuawen* from the literary perspective, one evident phenomenon appears. In Chinese, or better say Hu Shi's understanding, usage of *baihua* is historically closely related to literature and it is defined via literature. Because *baihua* ought to replace *wenyan* in conveying the Chinese tradition, from the early beginnings it was demanded that *baihua* should have the literary value. On the contrary Taiwanese intellectuals, no matter whether in the early 1920s or the 1930s, did not follow purely literary arguments, but rather utilitarian ones. *Baihuawen* is viewed as language of ideological and scientific propagation, the language of education, and the language preserving cultural identity, but till 1924 it was not perceived as a literary language. This understanding, as shown above, was caused by political priorities, and is related to the colonial presence in Taiwan. The second reason, I think, has something to do with the fact that the significant literary production in Taiwan started only by 1925, which drew attention to more literary topics, such as the content of literature rather than the form.

The local needs forced the Taiwanese intellectuals to concentrate more on the language itself, which represents the second plane under the scrutiny. The *baihuawen* discussion in Taiwan established a set of functions of the possible written language, which would fulfill social, ideological, and national goals. And since the ultimate goals of the arguments (i.e. social mobilization) did not change throughout differently oriented discussions during the 1920s and the 1930s, it seems that the new language model set by the *Baihuawen* discussion well served to propagate Taiwanese language. From this point of view, the discussion on *baihuawen* is, though very short and soon absorbed by the discussion on *New and Old Literature*, relevant for understanding later discussion on *Taiwanese Language*, which generally receives more attention in the academic circles.

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