

Chapter 5

The National Language in Taiwan

The Republic of China on Taiwan as we know it today would be unthinkable without the “national language” *guoyu* as the official language. The “promotion of the national language” (*guoyu tuixing* 國語推行) gave the island off the coast of Fujian the role of a guardian of Chinese traditional culture, as some would claim still is today. This section will shed light on Wei Jiangong’s legitimization and promotion of the national language in Taiwan 1946–1948, ten years before the language politics of the Kuomintang (KMT) began showing the grim face of repression.

5.1 Historical Background

Taiwan was a Japanese colony from 1895 until 1945. During the wartime period (1937–1945), “politics of Japanization” (*kōminka* 皇民化)¹ was enforced. It encompassed a national language (*kokugo* 國語) program to discourage the populace from speaking Chinese and promote speaking Japanese instead. It is important to note that the varieties of Chinese spoken by most Taiwanese at the time were the Quanzhou 泉州 and Zhangzhou 漳州 varieties of the Southern Min dialect (*Minnanyu/Bân-lâm-gú* 閩南語),² that only started to be perceived as one single “Taiwanese language” (*taiyu/Tâi-gú/-gí* 臺語, *taiwanhua/Tâi-oân-oē* 台灣話 or *Hō-ló-oē* 鶴佬話) under the auspices of the Japanese colonial “other” and their language indoctrination efforts.³

1 Otherwise known as assimilation. Literal translation: turning people into imperial subjects.

2 Also often referred to as Hokkien [Fujian (-hua)] 福建話.

3 Klöter, Henning, “Re-writing language in Taiwan”, in: *Re-Writing Culture in Taiwan* (Asia’s Transformations), ed. by Shih, Fang-Long, Stuart Thompson, and Paul-François Tremlett, London / New York: Routledge, 2009, 102–122, see 107–8.

Although the Japanese *kokugo*-policy was reported to have increased the percentage of Taiwanese able to speak Japanese from about 37% in 1937 to 51% in 1940, secondary literature is not unanimous about the success of the policy. The fluency of the speakers can be doubted, since even model “national language families” (*kokugo katei* 國語家庭) were “hardly conversant” in Japanese.⁴ However, evidence indicates that fluency depended on the age of the speakers and the amount of education they had received in the Japanese-language school system. Young people apparently attained a greater level of fluency at the expense of their mother tongue, Taiwanese Minnan.⁵

While there is no evidence about the *exact* scope of *taiyu* being spoken around the time of “liberation” in 1945,⁶ there is a report by the Taiwanese literary scholar Wu Shouli 吳守禮 (1909–2005) from 1946 on the degree of Japanese spoken by the Taiwanese and its influence on *taiyu* speakers.⁷ At that time, Wei Jianguo was already in Taiwan. Wu Shouli, born in Tainan 臺南, had lived in Taiwan during the Japanese colonization and graduated in Chinese literature from Taihoku Imperial University (Taihoku Teikoku Daigaku 臺北帝國大學, [Taipei diguo daxue]), which was reorganized as National Taiwan University after the KMT retook the island. He occupied several teaching positions, also in Japan, until he became a professor at National Taiwan University after the end of the Japanese colonization. Wu Shouli became a member of the Committee for the Promotion of the National Language, and gradually shifted his interest to the research of the Minnan dialect, its literature, performing arts, and history. He authored several *taiyu* dictionaries. Just like Wei Jianguo, as we will see on the following pages, Wu Shouli advocated for the comparison of *taiyu* and *guoyu* to facilitate language acquisition.⁸

In this 1946 report, Wu Shouli mentioned three age groups of *taiyu* speakers, old people, middle-aged people, and young people, whose language were exposed

- 4 Lamley, Harry J., “Taiwan Under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism”, in: *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. by Rubinstein, Murray A., Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007, 201–260, see 240. Cheng states that these families spoke Japanese at home. See Cheng, Robert L., “Taiwan Under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism”, in: *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present*, ed. by Rubinstein, Murray A., Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, 357–391, see 360.
- 5 The circumstances of Hakka (*Kejiayu* 客家語) and the Austronesian languages, also spoken in Taiwan, are not discussed here. As well, I have not found any texts of Wei Jianguo discussing them in detail.
- 6 Huang Xuanfan 黃宣範, *Yuyan, shehui yu zuqun yishi: Taiwan yuyan shehuixue de yanjiu* 語言、社會與族群意識：台灣語言社會學的研究 [Language, society and ethnic consciousness: Research into Taiwan’s language sociology], Taipei 臺北: Wenhe chuban youxian gongsi 文鶴出版有限公司, 1993, 103.
- 7 Wu Shouli 吳守禮, “Taiwanren yuyan yishi cemianguan” 臺灣人語言意識側面觀 [Profile of the language mentality of the Taiwanese], in: *Taiwan xinsheng bao* 台灣新生報 [Taiwan New life] *Guoyu zhuanke* 國語專刊 [Special issue on the national language] vol. 1 (1946). I am very thankful to Prof. Chang Lung-chih 張隆志 and Hsu Kuo-Yang 徐國暘, both from Academia Sinica, for helping me acquire this text.
- 8 *Zhonghua Minguo dangdai mingrenlu bianji weiyuanhui* 中華民國當代名人錄編輯委員會 [‘Who’s who in the Republic of China’ editing committee] (ed.), “Wu Shouli xiansheng” 吳守禮先生 [Mr. Wu Shouli], in: *Zhonghua Minguo dangdai mingrenlu* 中華民國當代名人錄 [Who’s who in the Republic of China], ed. by *Zhonghua Minguo dangdai mingrenlu bianji weiyuanhui* 中華民國當代名人錄編輯委員會 [‘Who’s who in the Republic of China’ editing committee], vol. 1, Taipei 臺北: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju 台灣中華書局, 1978, 603.

to Japanese to different degrees. The precondition of all three age groups was that their “mother tongue” (*muyu* 母語) was Taiwanese (*taiwanhua* 台灣話).

Old people, according to Wu, still spoke Taiwanese in their everyday communication, but their vocabulary (*yuhui* 語彙) and grammar (*yufa* 語法) had absorbed a notable amount of Japanese characteristics. This did not apply to some very old people who did not receive any education in Japanese at all, while it applied rather more to those with a higher level of education.

The second age group, middle-aged people, contained a few people who had not been familiarized with Japanese. The majority, however, could speak, read and write Japanese. Wu Shouli continued that the thinking of some had been influenced by Japanese grammar. Although these people spoke their mother tongue fluently, it had already retreated from the realms of society into the realms of the family, and “they cannot help thinking in Japanese” (*tamen budebu yong riyu xiang dongxi* 他們不得不用日語想東西). Wu Shouli used a metaphor to describe this language phenomenon:

臺灣話的根幹雖沒有搖動，枝葉的作用已經變了。⁹

Although the roots of Taiwanese have not moved, the use of the branches and leaves has already changed.

Wu Shouli closed his description with the third age group, young people. They have not only learned Japanese, but there were even quite a few who were no longer able to speak *taiwanhua*. Wei Jiagong agreed with the fact that Japanese left a notable trace in the Taiwanese language situation.¹⁰ The *kokugo*-policy also had the effect of pushing *taiyu* into the realm of the private, while in the public sphere, Japanese was spoken.¹¹

After Japan’s surrender, Taiwan came under the rule of the Kuomintang government on October 25, 1945. Decolonizing and reintegrating Taiwan into China proved difficult and was perceived negatively by the Taiwanese.¹² Promoting the Chinese national language became an integral part of the KMT policy. The first attempt of language planning was that the Kuomintang-installed “chief executive” (*xingzheng zhangguan* 行政長官) Chen Yi 陳儀 (1883–1950) prohibited speaking Taiwanese and Japanese to promote the national language *guoyu*. However, it became clear rather quickly a more elaborate strategy to promote *guoyu* was needed. On April 2, 1946, the Taiwan Committee for the Promotion of the National Language (Taiwan sheng Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui) was established and

9 Wu Shouli 吳守禮, “Taiwanren yuyan yishi cemianguan” (1946).

10 Wei Jiagong 魏建功, “Ribinren chuane le women de guoyin” 日本人傳訛了我們的國音 [The Japanese have corrupted our national pronunciation], in: *Wei Jiagong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiagong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 馬鎮, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 350–51.

11 Huang Xuanfan 黃宣範, *Yuyan, shehui yu zuqun yishi: Taiwan yuyan shehuixue de yanjiu* (1993), 103.

12 Phillips, Steven, “Between Assimilation and Independence: Taiwanese Political Aspirations Under Nationalist Chinese Rule, 1945–1948”, in: *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. by Rubinstein, Murray A.: M.E. Sharpe, 2007, 275–319, see 277. Phillips describes that many Taiwanese perceived the KMT provincial administration merely as new, less competent colonial rulers. To them, “reintegration” became synonymous with “recolonization”.

Wei Jiangong installed as its head (*zhuren weiyuan* 主任委員).¹³ We will see that Taiwanese was then seen as a stepping stone for learning *guoyu*.¹⁴ Only in 1956, an explicit prohibition on speaking dialects in public places was issued anew by the Department of Education (*Jiaoyu ting* 教育廳).¹⁵

5.2 Wei Jiangong's Legitimization of *Guoyu* in Taiwan

This part discusses Wei Jiangong's concepts of language in his texts that legitimize the promotion of the national language *guoyu* in Taiwan from 1946 to 1948. I explain why he believed China and Taiwan needed a national language and why he felt this language had to be based on the Beijing dialect pronunciation.

I argue that the main concepts he uses to legitimize the Beijing-pronunciation-based *guoyu* are the following: progress of both language and the nation, sovereignty of the state and linguistic kinship between the Chinese "dialects".¹⁶ For Wei Jiangong, the purpose of promoting *guoyu* was to (re)integrate Taiwan into the Republic of China, reverse the effects of Japanese colonization, and legitimize the national language movement (*guoyu yundong*) on the Mainland. Reversing the effects of Japanese colonization appeared to be a pretext to actually integrating Taiwan, which was in China's frontier, into the nation after 1945. This early *guoyu* movement in Taiwan was different from the later repressive language politics of the KMT: the earlier movement did not forbid but instead encouraged the use of the Taiwanese Southern Min dialect (*taiyu*). Wei Jiangong hoped that a successful promotion of *guoyu* in Taiwan would legitimize the *guoyu* movement on the Mainland.

Wei Jiangong described the *guoyu* movement as apolitical:

[...] 我們的國語運動是一種文化的社會運動，並非政治的語文政策。¹⁷

[...] our national language movement is a kind of social movement of culture and not really a political language and script policy.

Building on the basis of the above-mentioned "Guiding principles of the national language movement" of the Ministry of Education, he and his colleagues presented principles for the *guoyu* movement in Taiwan. These principles indicated

13 Ma Si 马嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jiangong* (2007), 166.

14 See, for example Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Zenyang cong taiwanhua xuexi guoyu" 怎樣從臺灣話學習國語 [How to learn the national language from Taiwanese], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇兴, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 328–336, see 328–36.

15 Huang Xuanfan 黄宣範, *Yuyan, shehui yu zuqun yishi: Taiwan yuyan shehuixue de yanjiu* (1993), 108.

16 Essentially, power decides what constitutes a "language" and a "dialect". See: Klöter, Henning, "Rewriting language in Taiwan" (2009). Since the question cannot be discussed in detail in this dissertation, I will follow the convention of calling the Sinitic languages "dialects".

17 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Guoyu de si da hanyi" 國語的四大涵義 [The four great implications of the national language], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇兴, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 322–27, see 324.

that the *guoyu* movement in Taiwan was facing entirely different challenges than the *guoyu* movement on the Mainland. For example, illiteracy was not a prevalent problem at all.¹⁸ These new “principles” stipulated that Taiwanese (*taiyu*) be “restored” (*fuyuan* 復原) to ensure that *guoyu* pronunciation could be learned by inferring from the “regional pronunciation” (*fangyin*); that the influence of Japanese syntax should be “wiped out” (*shuaqing* 刷清), and “every ethnic group” (*ge zu* 各族) should be “merged” (*rongguan* 融貫) into Chinese culture (*Zhonghua wenhua* 中華文化).¹⁹

On February 10, 1946, Wei Jiangong reached out to the public for the first time through a radio broadcast, “The purpose of the national language movement in Taiwan”, and he wrote an accompanying “Thorough explanation” that was published in *Xiandai zhoukan* 現代週刊 (The modern weekly) on February 28.²⁰ In this article, he defined *guoyu* as:

北平社會受過中等教育的人日常應用的話²¹

The language used by people of the Beiping [Peking] society who have received secondary-school education in everyday life²²

Hence, the events and discussions in the early 20th century that ensured *guoyu* would be modeled after the Beijing dialect have been addressed above. Here, I will discuss only Wei Jiangong's legitimization of it. I will demonstrate how the three main concepts of progress, sovereignty, and kinship of dialects were at the core of his legitimization strategy.

5.2.1 Progress

Like many other intellectuals of his time, Wei Jiangong was concerned about China's ability to compete on an international scale. I have summarized his article on the abolition of the Chinese script for the sake of progress from 1925 above (3.2.2, page 66).²³ In 1946, he looked at the matter with the eyes of a phonologist and phonetician. He believed that a standardized national pronunciation was required for attaining a high level of development:

文化進步而組織健全的國家，沒有不是確用一個標準聲音系統做國語的。²⁴

Among the countries with an advanced culture and perfectly organized system, all countries were determined to use a standard phonetic system as the national language.

In China's case, not only its spoken and written language, but also as in ancient times, the units of measurement, and even clothing, nutrition and housing should

18 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie” (2001), 316.

19 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong gangling” (2001), 318.

20 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie” (2001).

21 The original text has emphasis dots, see Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie” (2001), 306.

22 This definition goes back to Zhang Shiyi, 1920, see 4.1.1, page 101.

23 More on Wei Jiangong's idea of progress will be discussed in Chapter 7.1.2 on page 198.

24 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie” (2001), 308.

be standardized. This standardization would lead to a “new” and implicitly better China:

新中國一切應該真正標準化!²⁵

The new China shall really be completely standardized!

In this article Wei Jianguo put forward his utilitarian concept of language.²⁶ He called it a tool for communication,²⁷ or a “tool of the Chinese Han nationality to express its will” (我國漢族表達意志之工具).²⁸ This understanding was in line with the views of his teachers and forerunners of language planning, such as Wu Zhihui, Cai Yuanpei or Qian Xuantong. Qian Xuantong in particular called the signifiers of language mere “signs without consciousness” (*wu yishi de jihao* 無意識的記號),²⁹ and all three of them rejected the idea of a “national essence” *guocui* preserved in language. As mentioned above (page 103), they saw language as arbitrary symbols that could be replaced by more suitable ones.

As a result, claiming the reformability and changeability of language, Wei Jianguo presents mechanisms of language change: natural language change occurs on the basis of language contact and linguistic economy. The economy of language,³⁰ or that the speakers strive for the lowest articulatory effort and pronunciation evolves into the most simple and convenient one for all speakers, is what naturally shaped the standard language.³¹

As examples, he mentions two earlier concepts of a standard language from China’s history, namely *yayan* 雅言³² and *guanhua*. *Yayan* is for Wei Jianguo

25 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 311.

26 The juxtaposition of “utilitarian” and “ideological” language concepts can be seen in Ping, Chen, “China”, in: *In Language and National Identity in Asia*, ed. by Simpson, Andrew, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 141–67, see 141–42.

27 Ping, Chen, “China” (2007).

28 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Hanzi xingtai bianqianshi” 漢字形體變遷史 [History of the change of the shape of the Chinese characters], in: *Wei Jianguo wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jianguo], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 1–50, see 2. This is a lecture script from his time at the Southwestern United University (Xinan lianhe daxue), presumably dating from 1938. Wei does not mention any non-Han people.

29 Qian Xuantong 錢玄同, “Tongxin” 通信 [Correspondence], in: *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [*La Jeunesse*] 5.2 (1918), 183–84, see 183–84.

30 William Withney, Otto Jespersen and André Martinet (“loi du moindre effort”) put forward this concept. For a summary, see Vicentini, Alessandra, “The Economy Principle in Language: Notes and Observations from Early Modern English Grammars”, in: *Mots Palabras Words* 3 (2003), 37–57.

31 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 307.

32 There is some debate on the exact meaning of *yayan* in pre-imperial China, as suggested by: Behr, Wolfgang, “Phonophoric Repair Strategies in Warring States Writing as a Reflex of Orthoepic Awareness?”, presented at International EASCM-Conference “Orthopraxy, Orthography, Orthodoxy. Emic and Etic Standards and Classifications of Chinese Manuscripts”, University of Heidelberg, 2014. Unger calls it “Hochsprache”. See Unger, Ulrich, “Dialektales und Umgangssprachliches in den Klassikern”, in: *Zurück zur Freude. Studien zur chinesischen Literatur und Lebenswelt und ihrer Rezeption in Ost und West. Festschrift für Wolfgang Kubin* (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 57), ed. by Hermann, Marc, Christian Schwermann, and Jari Grosse-Ruyken, Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2007, 108. According to Park, *yayan* was the *lingua franca* or pronunciation standard roughly during the Old Chinese period. Park, Haeree, *The Writing System of Scribe Zhou: Evidence from Late Pre-imperial Chinese Manuscripts and Inscriptions (5th–3rd centuries BCE)*, Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2016, 36.

the earliest spoken standard language (*biaozhunyu* 標準語), a phonetic tool used for communication between the many different “clans” (*zongzu* 宗族) of the heterogeneous, pre-imperial society.³³ It was a sort of *lingua franca* from before the Qin 秦 dynasty (221–206 BCE). He explains the meaning of *ya* 雅 as “correct” (*zheng* 正), and correct as “standard (*biaozhun* 標準). He contrasts it with the “vulgar” (*su* 俗, a common term to describe dialects), and defines the scope of *ya* as “general” (*pubian* 普遍) and the scope of *su* as “marginal” (*pianpi* 偏僻). He presents evidence from the “Book of Odes” *Shijing* 詩經, in which two of the three sections are titled *ya* (“Elegantiae”) and *feng* 風 (“Airs”),³⁴ the latter of which he equates with “*su*”. This *yayan* changed incessantly, as people from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds integrated by adapting to the dominant culture. The most “prevalent” (*liuxing* 流行) pronunciation that would provide the basis for *yayan* was the one from the political center, i.e. the capital.³⁵

The other, more recent historic concept of standard language that was used by Wei Jiangong to legitimize the status of the Beijing pronunciation was the concept of “Mandarin” or *guanhua*. The *guanhua* definition presented in his 1946 article “On the virtue of the national language” corresponds to the definition of *yayan*. According to Wei Jiangong, *guanhua* does not mean the “language the officials spoke” (*guan shuo de hua* 官說的話), but a “public” (*gonggong* 公共) as opposed to a “private” (*si* 私) language.³⁶

Wei Jiangong stresses that Beijing (Beiping) was not only the last but also the most long-lived imperial capital. Over “more than a thousand years”, the speech of the area was increasingly used as a standard language to the extent that it was used by officials and envoys (*guan shi shehui* 官使社會) throughout the Qing dynasty. Therefore, this speech was called “Mandarin” by Westerners.³⁷ This Mandarin with the Beijing phonetic system (Beiping *yinxi*) was by far not the only variety. However, it was, according to Wei, the only “proper” one (*zhengze guanhua* 正則官話).³⁸

Because so many people practiced the Beijing dialect over such a long period of time, the principles of the lowest articulatory effort caused “the most convenient and easy” (*zui fangbian rongyi* 最方便容易) pronunciation to be instinc-

33 On the structure of early Chinese family and society, see Gassmann, Robert H., *Verwandschaft und Gesellschaft im alten China: Begriffe, Strukturen und Prozesse* (Welten Ostasiens 11), Bern: Lang, 2006.

34 These translations of *ya* and *feng* are taken from Chen, Zhi, *The Shaping of the Book of Songs: From Ritualization to Secularization* (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 52), Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2007, 13. Chen Zhi discusses the concept of *ya* in detail.

35 Wei explains that since Zhou 周 times (1046–256), the capital (*duyi* 都邑) was located around the Yellow River drainage area (*Huang He liuyu* 黃河流域), and he names Xianyang 咸陽 (capital of the state of Qin, Luoyang 洛陽, Chang’an 長安 and Kaifeng 開封 and finishes with Beiping, which was the “last and longest one” (*zui hou zui jiu de* 最後最久的). Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 306–7.

36 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu de dexing” 國語的德行 [The virtue of the national language], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 373–75, see 373.

37 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 307.

38 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Zhongguo shengyunxue shigang” (2001), 134. As discussed on page 47, Wei Jiangong presents several distinct varieties of *guanhua*.

tively “chosen” (*xuanze* 選擇). This process resulted in the most progressive, namely “simplest and clearest structure” (*zui jiandan mingliao de zuzhi* 最簡單明瞭的組織)³⁹ in the Beijing dialect:

我們可以說這種標準的國語條件是聲音系統和組織習慣是全國人民最方便使用的。不用談學理，我們只要把現在的標準國語，北平話，跟任何的土語方言對照一下，就很明白。⁴⁰

We can say that this kind of condition (requirement) for the standard(ized) national language is that the sound system and the structural conventions are most convenient⁴¹ for the people of the entire country. We do not even have to mention scientific principles; we only have to compare the present standard national language, Beijing speech, to any local dialect, and it will be very clear.

As we have seen in his “Thorough explanation”, he sees the origin of *guoyu* on the basis of the Beijing dialect as an organic, natural development, and an evolution towards progress. In another article from 1946, on “The virtue of the national language”, he makes this claim even more obvious:

我們的國語標準的形成是文化的自然演變，它的推行也靠着文化自然的發展；[...]⁴²

The formation of the national language standard is [the result of] a natural evolution of culture; its implementation is also dependent on the natural development of culture; [...]

This shows that Wei Jiāngōng does not only have an organic understanding of language but also of culture. He saw language as one form of the expression of culture. In “The virtue of the national language”, Wei Jiāngōng justifies why *guoyu* has not yet been completely “established” (*shuli qi lai* 樹立起來): it is an organic process and therefore takes time.⁴³

However, Wei Jiāngōng felt that this natural development was not sufficient on its own: it is complemented and in constant interaction with language policy. In addition to showing natural processes led to the formation of the standard language, he also states that the standardization of *guoyu* made the standard language more modern and more progressive.⁴⁴ Wei Jiāngōng used language planning measures to illustrate how *guoyu* already looks back on several decades of promotion by the government and that it attained a certain level of progress: since the Republic was established, meetings were held to standardize the pronunciation, Zhuyin fuhao was promulgated, the dictionaries *Guoyin changyong zihui*, and *Zhonghua xinyun* were published, and the primary school curriculum was rewritten to include *guoyu*. He concludes with a rhetorical question: “can

39 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 307.

40 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 308–9.

41 Compare to the economy of language discussed on page 142.

42 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu de dexing” (2001), 373.

43 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu de dexing” (2001), 373.

44 Here, we may add that as a veritable May Fourth intellectual, Wei blamed tradition for ossifying the language and impeding its natural development. The goal of modern language policy was to combat tradition and get the organic evolution of language back on track.

such a process still not obtain the people's recognition?" (如此的經過，還不能得人了解嗎?)⁴⁵

5.2.2 Sovereignty

In a next step in his argument, he blames the Japanese for interfering with the alleged natural state of language. Wei Jiangong then explains how the term *guoyu* came to denote the standard language in a short sketch of the concept's history. In the first phase (*jieduan* 階段) of the *guoyu* concept, it referred not to the single language of the state but *what people in the various states were speaking*, such as in the title of the book *Guoyu* 國語, "Discourses of the States".⁴⁶ In its second phase, the term *guoyu* was

統治中國的外來民族自稱他們的語言的名目。⁴⁷

The name foreign nations controlling China called their own languages.

Wei Jiangong hereby referred to conquerors (*zhengfuzhe* 征服者) such as the Jurchen (Nüzhen 女真), Mongols (Menggu 蒙古) and Manchus (Manzhou 滿洲), and says that this concept of *guoyu* had a certain "smell of blood" (*xiexingqi* 血腥氣) to it.⁴⁸ Without doubt, this was also understood by the readers as an allusion to the Japanese occupation and their politics of "Japanization" (*kōminka*) during their colonial rule over Taiwan, where the "national language" (*kokugo* 國語) referred to Japanese.⁴⁹ Wei Jiangong's view on the conceptual history of *guoyu* is accepted by other scholars. After first appearing as a book title, it was used to denote the Manchu language and took on its modern meaning as Chinese "national language" – ironically – via Japan during the first years of the 20th century.⁵⁰

The third and last phase of the *guoyu* concept brings the aspect of sovereignty into play, as the Republic is juxtaposed to alien regimes. Wei Jiangong not only legitimizes the national language but also the Republic of China as a whole, emphasizing the right to self-determination:

民國成立了以後，才演變成第三階段現在的意義，“中華民國人民共同採用的一種標準的語言是國語；國語是國家法定的對內對外，公用的語言系統。”⁵¹

Only after the Republic was established, did the third stage evolve which is today's meaning, [namely] “the kind of standard language commonly employed by the people of the Republic of China is *guoyu*; *guoyu* is the official language system for internal and external public use.”

45 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 309.

46 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 307.

47 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 307.

48 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 307.

49 Chou, Wan-yao, "The Kōminka Movement: Taiwan under Wartime Japan, 1937–1945", PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1991.

50 Kaske, Elisabeth, "Mandarin, Vernacular and National Language – China's Emerging Concept of a National Language In the Early Twentieth Century" (2004), 287.

51 Emphasis and punctuation as in original. Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 307.

The article's title is "Thorough explanation of 'The purpose of the national language movement in Taiwan'", and Wei Jiāngōng alludes to it. With regard to *guoyu* being the legitimate language of a sovereign state, it follows that:

臺灣光復了以後，推行國語的唯一的意義是“恢復台灣同胞應用祖國語言聲音和組織的自由”！⁵²

Since Taiwan was recovered, the only purpose of promoting the national language is to “restore the freedom of the Taiwanese compatriots to use their nation's language's pronunciation and structure”!

Japan as the enemy is blamed for the non-homogeneous or fragmented language situation between Taiwan and the Mainland. This implies that there either was before or could otherwise be a linguistic uniformity between Taiwan and the Mainland:

我們要 [...] 再把敵人攪亂過的語言組織方式，一一在全臺灣返本還原起來！⁵³

We have to return to the way that language was originally structured, which has been put in disorder by the enemy, one by one!

Here, not only Wei Jiāngōng, but also Wu Shouli pointed out the influence of Japanese grammar (*yufa*) on *taiyu* speakers. Wei Jiāngōng, however, focused mainly on the aspect of pronunciation. Two months after Wu Shouli, Wei Jiāngōng published two articles in the same journal.⁵⁴

In the first article, Wei discussed the “influence of Japanese on Taiwanese phonetics”.⁵⁵ While Wei praised the diligence of the Taiwanese people studying *guoyu*, he pointed out that:

[...] 我們却發現幾點受日本語影響而不能分辨的現狀。⁵⁶

[...] we however notice a few conditions in which [the pronunciation] is not distinguishable because it was influenced by Japanese.

The first influence he mentioned was the pronunciation of the unaspirated (*bu songqi* 不送氣) initials *g* ㄍ [g̚] and *d* ㄉ [d̚] as aspirated (*songqi* 送氣) *k* ㄎ [kʰ] and *t* ㄊ [tʰ], since the Japanese used the katakana syllables *ka* ㄎ and *ta* ㄊ to transliterate them.⁵⁷ As the second influence, he listed the confusion of tones, which was an especially severe problem for him: he stressed that the existence of tones is an important common feature of all Chinese dialects, and because the

52 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 310.

53 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 314.

54 The journal “Taiwan new life” (*Taiwan Xinsheng bao* 臺灣新生報, short: *Xinsheng bao*), was established in 1945 on the basis of an existing Japanese journal in Taiwan and became the official organ of the KMT. Zhao Libin 趙立彬, “Taiwan guangfu yu *Xinsheng bao*” 台灣光復與《新生報》[The recovering of Taiwan and the ‘New life journal’], in: *Zhongshan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 中山大學學報 (社會科學版 [*Journal of Sun Yat-sen University (Social Science Edition)*]) 3.56 (2016), 90–98.

55 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Taiwan yuyin shou Ribenyu yinxiang de qingxing” 臺灣語音受日本語影響的情形 [The circumstances of the influence of Japanese on Taiwanese phonetics], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 馬鎮, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江蘇教育出版社, 2001, 348–49.

56 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Taiwan yuyin shou Ribenyu yinxiang de qingxing” (2001), 348.

57 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Taiwan yuyin shou Ribenyu yinxiang de qingxing” (2001), 348.

guoyu tones could be learned by inferring from one's home dialect. He illustrated his views with a joke about a Japanese person in Beiping who wanted to buy "soap" (*yizi* 胰子⁵⁸) but was given a "chair" (*yizi* 椅子) instead.

The third pronunciation problem that he felt the Taiwanese adopted from the Japanese was the pronunciation of one syllable by one syllable. All these aspects, Wei Jiāngōng concluded, made some of the Taiwanese learners of *guoyu* sound as if they did not even know *taiwanhua*.⁵⁹

In the next text published in the same *Xinsheng bao* issue, Wei Jiāngōng focused on the pronunciation mistakes by Japanese who speak Chinese as a second language. He mainly attributes these to the inadequacy of katakana for representing Chinese phonetics. An example he mentioned is how Japanese speakers pronounced the final *er* 儿 like *a-ru* アール or *o-ru* オール.⁶⁰

In a slightly damaged manuscript from 1947 or 1948,⁶¹ Wei even goes so far as to call the Japanese education policy an "education to stultify the people" (*yumin jiaoyu* 愚民教育): in this way, the failure of the KMT politics could be blamed on the Japanese rule. The goal of *guoyu* education was to remove the "poison" (*dusu* 毒素) of the Japanese education measures. Ironically, in the same manuscript, he also admits that Taiwan has a high level of education and literacy as well as a higher number of schools of all levels than anywhere in the Mainland.⁶²

5.2.3 Kinship of *Guoyu* and *Taiyu* 臺語

Apart from blaming differences between *taiyu* and *guoyu* on the enemy, Wei Jiāngōng stresses that *guoyu* and *taiyu* are related through blood (*xuemai xiangong* 血脉相通).⁶³ This relation is a close one, unlike the relationship to Japanese:

國語和臺語是兄弟姊妹的關係，國語的字音和日語漢字音讀是外祖外孫或舅甥的關係 [...]。⁶⁴

The relationship between *guoyu* and *taiyu* is that of brother and sister. The *guoyu* pronunciation of characters and the Japanese reading of Chinese characters⁶⁵ are related to each other like maternal uncle and nephew⁶⁶ [...].

58 This term was especially used in the Northeast of China.

59 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Taiwan yuyin shou Riben yu yinxiang de qingxing" (2001), 349.

60 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Ribennren chuane le women de guoyin" (2001), 350.

61 Wei mentions the February 28 incident, 1947 (*er-erba shijian* 二二八事件). In this incident, several thousand anti-KMT protesters were killed. Therefore, it must have been written afterwards.

62 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Tai sheng guangfu wei jiu" 臺省光復未久 [Taiwan province has not been recovered for long], Beijing, family possession, 1947/48.

63 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 309, 312. Wei reiterates this medical metaphor to describe the relationship between the two language varieties on several occasions.

64 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi' shenjie" (2001), 310.

65 Also known as the Sino-Japanese reading, (*on'yomi* 音読み). See Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2013), 56.

66 As the traditional Chinese family is virilocal (i.e. the bride goes to live with the husband's family) and the lineage and inheritance passes from father to son(s), the relationship to uncles on one's mother's side or nephews on one's sister's side is considered less close. See Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2013), 95, 101.

The Min dialects are indeed very important for the reconstruction of Old Chinese, since they took a different development from the others beginning in the 3rd or 2nd century BC.⁶⁷ Min dialects furthermore retain a large amount of the Middle Chinese lexicon.⁶⁸ With regard to the coherence of the many different Chinese dialects, Wei Jianguo claims that although their pronunciation is very diverse and that many dialects are mutually unintelligible (although some are more intelligible than others), in terms of “script and grammar, there is nothing that is not intelligible” (*wenzi he wenfa meiyou shenme bu xiangtong de* 文字和文法沒有不相通的).⁶⁹ Having established the coherence of all dialects via script and grammar, he legitimizes standardization in general and specifically the Beijing (Peking) dialect:

我們沒有分歧的文字和文法之中，共同拿最方便容易的聲音來表示，便是國語要標準化的惟一理由。⁷⁰

As we have no differences within script and grammar, together adopting the most convenient and simple sound to express ourselves is the only reason for standardizing the national language.

Wei emphasizes that the dialects are “local languages” (*tuyu* 土語) that are regionally specific. Therefore, they cannot be used as the standard. Moreover, they have often been perceived as lacking prestige.⁷¹ However, they were only prohibited in Taiwan in 1956.⁷² The *guoyu* movement in Wei Jianguo’s times was still very different. While marginalizing dialects, Wei much more prominently presented the above-mentioned “restoration” of the *taiyu* dialect as an important stepping stone towards the promotion of *guoyu*.⁷³

As Wei Jianguo himself taught *guoyu* or observed his colleagues teaching, he also learned *taiyu* from his students. Opposing the widespread conception that *taiyu* did not have a script, he not only wrote dialect expressions in Chi-

67 Schuessler, Axel, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007, 125.

68 Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2018), 30.

69 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 308. Wei deliberately ignores the many important differences in vocabulary. In his defense, dialect research only experienced a state-sponsored boost a few years later after the establishment of the PRC. Cf. the 1956 directive: *Wenzi gaige chubanshe* 文字改革出版社 [Script reform publishing house] (ed.), “Gaojiao bu, Jiaoyu bu guanyu Hanyu fangyan diaocha gongzuo de zhishi” 高教部、教育部关于汉语方言调查工作的指示 [Directive for the survey work about Chinese dialects by the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Education], in: *Tuiguang Putonghua wenjian huibian* 推广普通话文件汇编 [Collection of documents about the promotion of the common language], ed. by *Wenzi gaige chubanshe* 文字改革出版社 [Script reform publishing house], Beijing 北京: *Wenzi gaige chubanshe* 文字改革出版社, 1985.

70 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 308.

71 Chris Wen-Chao Li’s description of the contemporary language situation in Taiwan basically resonates with Wei’s image of a perceived vulgarity of the dialects vs. social prestige of Mandarin. Li, Chris Wen-Chao, “Shifting Patterns of Chinese Diglossia: Why the Dialects May Be Headed for Extinction”, in: *Divided Languages? Diglossia, Translation and the Rise of Modernity in Japan, China and the Slavic World*, ed. by Ārokay, Judit, Jadranka Gvozdanović, and Darja Miyajima, Cham: Springer, 2014, 65–86, see 75.

72 Huang Xuanfan 黃宣範, *Yuyan, shehui yu zuqun yishi: Taiwan yuyan shehuixue de yanjiu* (1993), 108.

73 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong gangling” (2001), 318.

nese characters but also used specialized Zhuyin fuhao transcription for dialects.⁷⁴ This practice shows how he restored the recognition of *taiyu* as a full-fledged language, existing not only in the verbal but also in the graphical dimension through Chinese characters. As for learning *guoyu* by inferring from Taiwanese as stated in the above-mentioned “Guiding principles”, he tried to realize this approach: His “How to learn *guoyu* from *taiyu*” article compares *guoyu* and *taiyu* pronunciation and places a particular emphasis on the common vocabulary.⁷⁵

Wei Jiangong's view that a systematic relationship exists between *taiyu* and *guoyu* has been noted by secondary literature. Cai stresses that Wei Jiangong saw an important difference between the learning of a foreign language and of *guoyu* as another Chinese dialect, since the dialect could be used as springboard.⁷⁶ In this context, Wei Jiangong refers to the possibility of individual study in particular.⁷⁷

Apart from the influence of Japanese grammar on the *taiyu* speakers, Wei Jiangong also saw that they were alienated from Chinese in general. *Taiyu* speakers found it “not as convenient to speak *taiyu* as it is to speak Japanese”.⁷⁸ Furthermore, he felt while *taiyu* and *guoyu* share extensive vocabulary, *taiyu* speakers had great difficulty to infer from *taiyu* to *guoyu*.⁷⁹ He was of the opinion that the Taiwanese should be encouraged to keep their mother tongue (*baocun muyu* 保存母語, i.e. *taiyu*), and even make an effort in standardizing (*biaozhunhua* 標準化) it⁸⁰ while learning *guoyu* to:

恢復民族意識，建設學習心理。⁸¹

Renew the national consciousness and build up the learning mentality.

For Wei, the relationship between *guoyu* and *taiyu* not only legitimized but also facilitated the promotion of *guoyu*.

74 Such as “banana”: Wei transcribes 芭蕉 [*gongjiao*] in dialect Zhuyin as: ㄅㄚˊㄅㄢㄠˊㄅㄢㄠˊ. The dialect Zhuyin reads *kim jio*. Since 芭蕉 should be romanized *king-tsoi*, it may also be that Wei accidentally transcribed the synonym 金蕉 [*jinjiao*]. Cf. Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi shenjie” (2001), 311–12. Many thanks to Herbert Voß and DANTE e.V. for the help in displaying the specialized Zhuyin characters and to Dr. Egas Moniz Bandeira for his linguistic expertise.

75 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, *Zenyang cong taiwanhua xuexi guoyu* (2001).

76 Cai Shengqi 蔡盛琦, “Zhanhou chuqi xue guoyu rechao yu guoyu duben” 戰後初期學國語熱潮與國語讀本 [The early postwar national language learning wave and Chinese language textbooks], in: *Guojia tushuguan guankan* 國家圖書館館刊 [National library journal] 2 (2011), 83.

77 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Heyi yao tichang cong taiwanhua xuexi guoyu” 何以要提倡從台灣話學習國語 [How to encourage learning the national language from Taiwanese], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 馬鎮, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 319–21, see 321.

78 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Heyi yao tichang cong taiwanhua xuexi guoyu” (2001), 320; Compare the above-quoted report Wu Shouli 吳守禮, “Taiwanren yuyan yishi cemianguan” (1946).

79 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Heyi yao tichang cong taiwanhua xuexi guoyu” (2001), 320.

80 Dialects are usually characterized by the absence of standardization, manifested by a great geographic variety and oral tradition. Bußmann, Hadumod, “Dialekt”, in: *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft*, Stuttgart: Kröner, 2008, 131–132. To preserve them and teach them, they need to be written down. As well, dictionaries and textbooks have to be compiled. These efforts inevitably lead to a compromise and sometimes even loss of local varieties. Roberts summarizes the challenges but mostly merits of dialect standardization for their preservation in his review article: Roberts, David, “Dialogue on dialect standardization”, in: *Writing Systems Research* 10.1 (2018), 68–71.

81 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Heyi yao tichang cong taiwanhua xuexi guoyu” (2001), 321.

5.2.4 Taiwan as “Sandbox”

Wei’s legitimization of *guoyu*, which is based on the Beijing pronunciation, rests on three main concepts: progress, sovereignty, and kinship. In Wei Jiangong’s eyes, the natural development of language constantly evolves, leading to an ever-improving standard language. Policies can enhance this development and enable the nation’s further progress.

The concept of state sovereignty is somehow connected to the concept of kinship between the languages and dialects of that state. While the choice and implementation of a national language is an expression of the state’s sovereignty, the state also demonstrates that it is able to protect the indigenous languages from detrimental foreign influences. This is demonstrated by Wei Jiangong through the example of *taiyu* first being “corrupted” (*chuan’e* 傳訛) under Japanese colonial rule and then recovering under the KMT government. This is possible since a close linguistic kinship between all languages or dialects within the state is assumed, meaning that *taiyu* speakers can easily learn *guoyu*. Although the national standard language takes precedence over the language varieties, they are alike and have a right to exist in both spoken and written form.

These characteristics of the national language movement were evidence for Wei Jiangong that the successful promotion of *guoyu* is feasible and realistic:

我們有得經過一千多年培養，二三百年應用，幾十年政府提倡的聲音系統，當然應該切實推行。所以，北平話做標準國語是有它的來歷的。⁸²

We have acquired a sound system that has been cultivated over more than one thousand years, used for two to three hundred years and advocated by the government for several decades. Of course, it can realistically be put into practice. Therefore, it is not an accident that the Beijing dialect is the standard national language.

Apart from illustrating its feasibility, Wei Jiangong also saw how the promotion of *guoyu* in Taiwan would play a role for the rest of China:

所以臺灣光復以後的國語運動，使得我們直覺的知道國語的重要，而更顯明的教訓了我們理智的認識國語的實質。⁸³

Therefore, Taiwan’s post-liberation national language movement made us intuitively understand the importance of the national language and even more clearly taught us to intellectually recognize the essence of the national language.

For Wei Jiangong, the aim of promoting *guoyu* in Taiwan had a greater goal: showing the significance of *guoyu* for and to all of China. He perceived Taiwan as a sandbox experiment, a test area, and a propaganda example for the entire Republic. A successful promotion of *guoyu* in Taiwan would legitimate the entire *guoyu* movement on the Mainland.

As well, the level of infrastructure, electrification and education in Taiwan made it a veritable testing ground. In the manuscript from above (page 147) that he must have written roughly one year later, Wei states that Taiwan “is the most

82 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 308.

83 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 309.

ideal experimental site for the promotion of language education” (推行語文教育最理想的實驗地). The *Guoyu* tuixing weiyuanhui just needs to implement measures such as reopening closed-down schools, reactivating radio broadcasting stations, and making *guoyu* gramophone recordings to ensure the successful promotion of *guoyu*.⁸⁴ With this statement, however, he also indirectly admits the positive effects of Japanese colonization and the inability of the KMT to maintain Taiwan at the same level.

5.2.5 Language as Sign

When in Taiwan, Wei Jiangong formulated his concept of language in the foreword to Dong Changzhi's 董長志⁸⁵ “Practical grammar of the national language” (*Shiyong guoyu wenfa* 實用國語文法) in 1948. This “Theory and practice of grammar studies” by Wei was also published in *Guowen yuekan* 國文月刊 (National [written] language monthly), vol. 76, 1948.⁸⁷

The classical literary language *wenyan* was, according to Wei Jiangong, a “sign-language” (*fuhaoyu* 符號語),⁸⁸ and has never been a spoken language. In this view, he follows Liu Fu and his “Talk on Chinese grammar” (*Zhongguo wenfa jianghua* 中國文法講話). In the past, when education was taken care of by individual families, few people had the opportunity to study. Those fortunate enough to study became the “scholars” (*shi* 士). Their status was linked to the knowledge of the script. Wei Jiangong criticized the fact that people would learn characters by heart without reasoning (*wu lixing de* 無理性的), blindly reciting some formulas in this sign language and become officials.⁸⁹

The new education was different; now the state had taken over the responsibility for the schooling of its citizens. Citizens were supposed to receive basic education, ensuring that language and script needed for everyday life would be commonly transmitted. According to Wei Jiangong, a new concept was created only recently: language is a system of sound expressing meaning that is produced with our mouths: *Zui shang yong shengyin xitong biaoshi yisi de shi yuyan* 嘴上用聲音系統表示意思的是語言. Script is what expresses meaning with a structure of shapes on paper: *Zhi shang yong xingti zuzhi biaoshi yisi de shi wenzi* 紙上用形體組織表示意思的是文字. What is recorded (*jilu* 記錄, written down) is the national written language (*guowen* 國文, national writing).

About the structure (*zuzhi* 組織, referring to both syntax and morphology) of *guoyu*, Wei Jiangong says that it is a sequence of sounds produced by the mouth; what is written down on paper should also represent a sequence of sounds. To research this sequence is “grammar studies” (*wenfaxue* 文法學).

Wei Jiangong explains that these “grammar studies” underwent significant development in the last 50 years. At the beginning, only the formulaic *wenyan* was

84 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Tai sheng guangfu wei jiu” (1947/48), 4-5.

85 Wei Jiangong describes how he knew Dong from Beijing and invited him to go to Taiwan with him to promote *guoyu*, which Dong did.⁸⁶

87 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Wenfaxue de lilun yu shiji” (2001), 402.

88 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Wenfaxue de lilun yu shiji” (2001), 402.

89 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Wenfaxue de lilun yu shiji” (2001), 401.

researched, the sign language mentioned above. Morphology (*xingtaixue* 形態學) then slowly was considered, and grammarians such as Dong Changzhi broke away from *wenyan* research and started addressing the question of practice (*shiyong* 實用), i.e. the spoken language.⁹⁰ This also shows how the aspect of teaching methods and material gained further ground within the *guoyu* promotion efforts.

5.3 Outlook: From *Guoyu* to *Putonghua* 普通話

After the February 28 incident in Taiwan in 1947, the government gradually took over more control of the *guoyu* promotion. Speaking dialects (the “mother tongue” *muyu*, i.e. Hokkien) and Japanese faced more and more constraints, and even the method to learn *guoyu* by inferring from *taiyu* was completely discarded. Teaching materials that were formerly published by many individual actors soon fell under government control as well.⁹¹

Wei Jiangong started to feel dissatisfied with his role in Taiwan, as the political circumstances changed and the “White Terror” began.⁹² During his visit to Beijing in 1946, the Peking University authorities already invited him to return to his Alma Mater. As well, since the administrative system in Taiwan changed, there was not much that could hold Wei Jiangong back. After Chen Yi’s retirement from his position as chief executive, the Bureau of Education (Jiaoyu chu 教育處) was transformed into the Department of Education (Jiaoyu ting 教育廳), which was rather hostile towards the National language committee (Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui), and Wei Jiangong gave up his position as head member.⁹³ He Rong took his place.⁹⁴

In the surviving manuscript still in Wei’s family’s possession from above (see page 147 and 150), Wei argues in favor of a Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui that is directly subordinate to the Taiwanese Provincial government and not to the Jiaoyu ting (臺灣省國語推行委員會應使為省政府之一單位，不必隸屬於教育廳).⁹⁵ He acknowledges that the *guoyu* promotion was not as successful as hoped. While he mainly blamed the Japanese education policy for the lack of success,⁹⁶ he also attacked the “rash” (*caoshuai* 草率) education measures following the February 28 incident that did not improve the situation. As the Taiwanese com-

90 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Wenfaxue de lilun yu shiji” (2001), 402.

91 Cai Shengqi 蔡盛琦, “Zhanhou chuqi xue guoyu rechao yu guoyu duben” (2011), 85–86.

92 Martial law was introduced in 1949 and not lifted until 1987. During this time period, which has also been called “White Terror” (*baise kongbu* 白色恐怖), many people were persecuted as communist spies. Phillips, Steven, “Between Assimilation and Independence: Taiwanese Political Aspirations Under Nationalist Chinese Rule, 1945–1948” (2007), 302.

93 Huang Yingzhe 黃英哲, “Wei Jiangong yu zhanhou Taiwan ‘guoyu’ yundong (1946–1948)” (2005), 103–4.

94 Shijie huayuwen jiaoyuhui 世界華語文教育會 [World Chinese educational association] (ed.), *Guoyu yundong bai nian shilüe* 國語運動百年史略 [Brief history of 100 years national language movement], Taipei 臺北: Guoyu ribao she 國語日報社, 2012, 166.

95 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Tai sheng guangfu wei jiu” (1947/48), 5, 9.

96 The “poisonous Japanese propaganda” (Riren edu xuanchuan 日人惡毒宣傳) has made the Taiwanese adopt an “anti-outsider” (*paiwai* 排外) attitude. See Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Tai sheng guangfu wei jiu” (1947/48), 4.

patriots (*taibao* 台胞)⁹⁷ indeed had a thirst for and extensive experience with culture and education, their *guoyu* education cannot be compared to other border areas (*bianjiang* 邊疆) with a much lower education standard. In order to “attract the Taiwanese’s inner psychology” (吸引台胞之內嚮心理), a Min-Taiwan-Area (Min-Tai-*qu* 閩臺區) should be established that caters to the needs of the Taiwanese *guoyu*-learners.⁹⁸ However, the fact that the *Guoyu* tuixing weiyuanhui would be an independent organ directly under the Provincial government would show the Taiwanese that *guoyu* promotion is a nationwide pursuit.⁹⁹

These suggestions were not implemented, and it is not clear if the ideas in the manuscript were circulated. In 1948, as the communist victory was indeed already becoming more and more likely,¹⁰⁰ Wei Jianguo left Taiwan to take up a professorship at Peking University.¹⁰¹ When the Communist Party rose to power in 1949, Wei Jianguo had already started to plan his next important linguistic project, the compilation of the *Xinhua zidian*. The dictionary will be discussed in the next chapter.

While language planning in the PRC was *de facto* a continuation of the ROC movements and policies, it had to be radically relabelled. The standard language of the PRC came to be named *putonghua* 普通話 (common language). Its characteristics, however, remained very much identical to *guoyu*. It is based on the Beijing pronunciation, the northern dialects, and the grammar of the written vernacular.

Wei Jianguo discussed the standard language once again, but his article on *putonghua* remained a fragment. In this article, he presented the historical development of the standard language and showed how there had been a common language of the Han ethnic group for a long time.¹⁰² The rhetorical similarity to his former *guoyu* legitimization is striking.

When he looked back on the *guoyu* movement from the PRC perspective, he pictured the *guoyu* activists as representatives of the bourgeois new intellectuals (“國語” 運動者代表着資產階級新知識階層). In order to differentiate between the two (nearly identical) standard languages, and to increase the legit-

97 Wei Jianguo alternates between 臺 and 台 for *tai*.

98 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Tai sheng guangfu wei jiu” (1947/48), 3–4, 9.

99 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Tai sheng guangfu wei jiu” (1947/48), 9.

100 Phillips, Steven, “Between Assimilation and Independence: Taiwanese Political Aspirations Under Nationalist Chinese Rule, 1945–1948” (2007), 277.

101 Cao Da 曹达, “Wei Jianguo nianpu” (1996), 15. He was able to realize one last success in Taiwan: the establishment of the *Mandarin Daily News* (*Guoyu ribao* 國語日報), a newspaper with short and simple texts for children which were entirely transcribed in Zhuyin. It is still published today. The idea came from the 1947 Beijing founded *Guoyu xiaobao* 國語小報 (National language small newspaper). Lin Che-Chang 林哲璋, “*Guoyu Ribao* de lishi shuxie” [國語日報] 的歷史書寫 [The Development of *Mandarin Daily News*—A Historical Viewpoint], MA dissertation, Guoli Taidong daxue 國立台東大學, 2006, 15–16.

102 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Putonghua’ jianshuo” “普通話” 簡說 [Brief explanation of the ‘common speech’], Beijing, family possession, 1956 (?) The date was reconstructed according to the script.

imacy of *putonghua*, Wei Jianguo equated *guoyu* with *guanhua*.¹⁰³ In that way, Wei Jianguo distanced himself from his past as Republican language planner.¹⁰⁴

In the meantime, the KMT retreated to Taiwan and the Republic of China was confined to the island. The KMT language policy became more and more repressive, until in 1956, it became very different to what Wei Jianguo had imagined: The use of dialects was prohibited.

103 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Cong ‘guoyu’ yundong dao Hanyu guifanhua” 從“國語”運動到漢語規範化 [From the “national language” movement to standardization of the Chinese language], in: *Wei Jianguo wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jianguo], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇兴, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 595–603, see 597.

104 I have discussed his self-censorship after the regime change in Münning, Mariana, “Sprachpolitik als Selbstzensur. ‘Elegante Sprache’ (*yayan*) und ‘volkstümliche Zeichen’ (*suzi*) bei Wei Jianguo (1901–1980)”, in: *Worüber man nicht spricht. Tabus, Schweigen und Redeverbote in China*, ed. by Breuer, Rüdiger, and Heiner Roetz, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018, 91–112.