

Re-presentation of the Lost Favorlang World: A Discussion on Lexical Evidence for Historical Research

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ABSTRACT

Favorlang is an extinct Formosan dialect formerly spoken by people living in the central-western plain of 17th-century Taiwan under the colonial rule of the Dutch East India Company. This historical ethnography of the Favorlang people examines lexical records from a dictionary titled *Woord-boek der Favorlangsche Taal* [*Dictionary of the Favorlang Dialect of the Formosan Language*], nominally authored by Gilbertus Happart, a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church. Analytical research reveals that the dictionary was actually compiled by more than one individual, including Reverend Simon van Breen, the first priest sent to the Favorlang area (1644-1647), who was probably the genuine author of the dictionary.

Before a manuscript study can be conducted, an examination of the process of compilation and publication of the dictionary is required. The results of this examination suggest that the dictionary was compiled between 1644 and 1662 by a group of ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church during their study and application of the Favorlang language. This process began with the group's founder and was carried through by subsequent missionaries sent to Formosa. Through the analysis of ethnographic writing from multiple perspectives, the author attempts to re-present the Favorlang world that previously existed in the perceptions of the Dutch observers.

Keywords: Favorlang, Ethnography, Plains Indigenous Peoples, The Dutch Reformed Church, Seventeenth-Century History of Taiwan