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# The Foundations of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language: An Investigation of Late 19th Century Textbooks

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**THE FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TEXTBOOKS**

A Thesis Presented

by

LENA M PEARSON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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## **DEDICATION**

To my nephew, Julien, and my grandmother, Shirley Graves.

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This research would not have been possible without the unwavering support and inspiring stories of Professor Zhongwei Shen, without whom I may never have known about these textbooks or so much more about myself. I would also like to thank Professors Zhijun Wang and David K. Schneider for not only serving as my committee members, but also for encouraging me to continue my goal of teaching one day.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TEXTBOOKS**

**MAY 2013**

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**Directed by: Professor Zhongwei Shen**

Although the field of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) is still a relatively emerging one, its history runs much longer than we expect. As early as the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Chinese was being shown in way that had not been done before – as textbooks. More importantly, these textbooks were created by non-native speakers. Yet their value as historical documents and as foundation pedagogical resources has not yet been fully recognized. The present study is an initial conversation of four late 19<sup>th</sup> century textbooks and how they pioneered presenting Chinese to a Western audience. After discussing the theoretical differences between China and the West that led to the need for textbooks, the four textbooks will be compared on how they addressed the aspects of pronunciation, tones, characters and the skills of reading, writing and speaking to their respective audiences. Such comparisons should reveal that by understanding the learner's perspective and utilizing non-native knowledge, these textbook authors were able to teach Chinese as a pedagogically progressive, learnable language. This study should not only add depth to our knowledge of the historical foundations and teaching precedents, but will also highlight the ways Chinese was instructed and how this can positively impact our modern teaching.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Sources and Methodology .....	3
1.2. Outline of Study .....	7
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....	9
2.1. Western Developments .....	10
2.1.1. Changes in the Teaching of Latin .....	10
2.1.2. The Impact of Industrialization and Nationalism .....	14
2.2. Chinese Relationship to Foreign and Native Languages .....	15
2.2.1. Concepts of Teaching the Native Language .....	15
2.2.2. Thoughts in Foreigners and Foreign Language Teaching .....	18
2.3. Interaction, Complications and the Need for Textbooks .....	20
3. THE FORMATION AND NECESSITY OF CHINESE TEXTBOOKS .....	23
3.1. Dictionaries .....	23
3.2. Handbooks/Phrasebooks .....	25
3.3. Grammars .....	26
3.4. Textbooks .....	26
4. AN ANALYSIS OF LATE 19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TEXTBOOKS .....	29
4.1. Joseph Edkins's <i>Progressive Lessons</i> .....	30
4.1.1. Biographical Information .....	30
4.1.2. Analysis of <i>Progressive Lessons</i> .....	32
4.2.1.1. Approach and Preface .....	32
4.2.1.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons .....	33
4.2.1.3. Analysis .....	38
4.2. Thomas Wade's <i>Colloquial Series</i> .....	40
4.2.1. Biographical Information .....	40
4.2.2. Analysis of Colloquial Series .....	42

4.2.2.1. Approach and Preface .....	42
4.2.2.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons .....	44
4.2.2.3. Analysis .....	49
4.3. F. W. Baller's <i>Mandarin Primer</i> .....	50
4.3.1. Biographical Information .....	50
4.3.2. Analysis of <i>Mandarin Primer</i> .....	52
4.2.3.1. Approach and Preface .....	52
4.2.3.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons .....	53
4.2.3.3. Analysis .....	55
4.4. C. W. Mateer's <i>Mandarin Lessons</i> .....	57
4.4.1. Biographical Information .....	57
4.4.2. Analysis of <i>Mandarin Lessons</i> .....	59
4.4.2.1. Approach and Preface .....	59
4.4.2.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons .....	60
4.4.2.3. Analysis .....	62
5. CONCLUSION .....	64
5.1. Reflection on the Four Textbooks .....	64
5.2. Limitations of Study .....	66
5.3. Areas for Future Research .....	66
5.4. General conclusion .....	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	70



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language has changed dramatically over the years, with vast improvements in the use of technology, training of teachers and methods for teaching. Such developments undoubtedly have deep historical roots, but how far back have we really explored? How are we viewing the documents tied to these changes? The topics of intercultural exchange between Chinese and Westerners and the fusion of Chinese and Western teaching have been studied from a socio-historical perspective, and many of these interchanges start as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Yet, as important as the diplomatic and religious missions are to Sino-Western studies, are we viewing this from a pedagogical perspective? There is a vast array of materials from these same people solely on the Chinese language which derives from their own experiences with the language, some of which take the form of textbooks. Many of the changes in the field of teaching Chinese can be seen in the way we have modified our textbooks to the growing number and wide range of students now studying Chinese. Studying textbooks, then, can provide us with clues to our earliest teaching of Chinese. In his article, Zhu Zhiping (2010) says of his brief study on the history of teaching Chinese as a second language:

“When this chapter discusses teaching Chinese as a second language (TCSL), it refers to students being instructed in classrooms with teachers who are professionally trained. With this criterion in mind, one can say that TCSL in China formally began

in 1950. Thus the year 1950 can be viewed as a watershed event that divides the history of Chinese language instruction into two parts: pre- and post-1950.”<sup>1</sup>

While this is certainly not a bad criterion to base the study on, the lack of definition as to what constitutes ‘professionally trained’ and the seemingly arbitrary choice for 1950 as the starting year still does not clear any of the ambiguity surround my above question of curiosity. Several questions are still raised. For instance, what do mean by ‘modern’ in modern language teaching? Why should the study of teaching Chinese only be limited to this time period? Whose perspective are we taking? And why, especially among scholars in English speaking world where there was so much Western participation in the field previously, have we not looked into the teaching before this ‘watershed event’? To fix these issues, we should recast the confines of what normally surrounded research into teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

As noted by Zhang (2008), the teaching of Chinese, especially on a global scale as it is now, is an interdisciplinary field which requires the use of multiple perspectives in order to be fully comprehended. This includes the observation of non-Chinese views and experiences on teaching and learning Chinese<sup>2</sup>. The wide range of materials on Chinese written by non-natives speakers deepens the history of Chinese as a foreign language<sup>3</sup>. We should note, too, that many early textbooks on Chinese were written by non-native writers, all of whom were at some point Chinese language learners, and these textbooks, considering the other sources available at this time, were quite an original invention. Should we view the creators of these materials, especially textbooks, as both learners *and*

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<sup>1</sup> Zhu, Zhiping (2010). “An Historical Perspective on Teaching Chinese as a Second Language”. In *Teaching and Learning Chinese: Issues and Perspectives*, ed. Jinfa Cai. p.34.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang, Xiping (2008). 《世界汉语教育史的研究对象与研究方法》. 世界汉语教学, 第1期.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on these materials, see Zhang, Weidong (2000). 《论 19 世纪中外文化交往中的汉语教学》. 北京大学学报（哲学社会科学版）, 第4期.

teachers, we can see that the history of *teaching* Chinese is much longer. In order to bring to light the deeper history of teaching Chinese and the contributions made by non-native speakers through the compiling of textbooks, I plan to analyze and compare these late nineteenth century textbooks in terms of their teaching approaches and methods, especially via their textbook designs. Such comparisons should reveal the problems and possible solutions of an issue that resonated both then and now – the bridging of Chinese and Western methods of teaching foreign languages. Some of these issues could include the way in which certain Chinese language aspects, such as pronunciation, characters or grammar, should be introduced or the extent to which English should be used. The lessons we can learn from their trials can be sources of inspiration for modern textbook compilers and Chinese teachers.

### **1.1. Sources and Methodology**

For this thesis, the source materials will be limited to language learning textbooks, here defined as a collection of foreign language material, translated directly or indirectly, presented in a progressive manner to a learner who will use their knowledge to interact with the foreign language in written and/or spoken form. This definition will allow for better analysis and conjecture because it (a) is close to our modern understanding of a textbook for the foreign language classroom and (b) provides continuity when comparing between different time periods. The defining feature of a textbook, the pedagogically progressive manner in which the language is presented, helps differentiate it from other sources which could be used as a method for acquiring a foreign language, including grammars, handbooks or phrasebooks. A textbook is more likely used for formal

classroom instruction and so gives us better understanding of what pedagogical goals, methods and approaches the compiler or the learning culture from which it came employed. Additionally, the main language used as the medium for instruction will be limited to English to provide comparability between the textbooks in terms of vocabulary and teaching styles and to maintain a focus on a particular language learner – that is, native English speakers learning Chinese as a second or foreign language.

For the purposes of this study, I will limit myself to four major textbooks written in the period of 1860-1900: Edkins' *Progressive Lessons* (1862), Wade's *Colloquial Series* (1867), Baller's *Mandarin Primer* (1900) and Mateer's *Mandarin Lessons* (1892). The choice of only these four books is for two main reasons. As noted above, I have chosen to only work with English-language sources because it is my native language and therefore least likely to be misinterpreted. Chinese textbooks in other languages from this time period do exist, but I have neither the language ability nor the access necessary to read many of these important documents. While there are many sources available, the selected textbooks are, in this author's opinion, representative of the overall developments of Chinese language textbooks within the late 19<sup>th</sup> century because of their differing approaches and target audiences. Additionally, all four of these textbooks teach only through the Mandarin dialect. To avoid confusion of Chinese terminology and make fair comparisons in the way the spoken language is addressed, there is no addition of textbooks based on other dialects such as Hong Kong, Amoy or Fujianese. Mandarin was also selected because it is the only dialect of Chinese which this author knows. Textbooks from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were selected because of the political and educational developments within China and the West and developments between the two

cultures at this time. Broadly speaking, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century educationally marks the emergence of talks of alternative methods of language teaching which may or may not have been considered by the textbook authors. The introduction of Western education to China, which ultimately affected the Chinese view of the purpose and conduction of education, may have affected the use of native speakers and native knowledge about Chinese. Additionally, the types of interactions present between native Chinese and learners of Chinese, mostly on a political or religious level, helped shaped the type of textbooks the authors published. In sum, the textbooks will only be English-published Chinese language textbooks written about the Mandarin dialect within the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to provide the best continuity for comparison.

Now that we know what sources specifically are being dealt with, we should know how these sources will be analyzed. For these four books, we should avoid applying modern standards of language teaching to analyze them but instead draw direct evidence as to what is happening in terms of *approach, method, procedure* and *design*. As defined by Richards and Rodgers (2001), method accounts for the corpus of the entire language learning and teaching experience including approach, design and procedure<sup>4</sup>. In trying to find a consensus on the teaching methods of this time, I will use as a guiding principle the questions posed by Richards and Rodgers, which assert the catalyst for discussing changes in 19<sup>th</sup> century language teaching included but were not limited to<sup>5</sup>:

1. What should the goals of language teaching be?
2. What skills do learners use to acquire proficiency?

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<sup>4</sup> For further details, please see Richards and Rodgers (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, p.33

<sup>5</sup> Richards and Rodgers, (2001). *Approaches and Methods*, p.14

### 3. What is the role of the mother tongue?

To further reveal the methods employed, the design of textbooks which instruct Chinese should be investigated. Design, the organization of the presentation of language, links the approach of language learning with its classroom procedure, and textbooks are the best representation of this. The main focus will primarily be on the content and organization – especially in the five areas of pronunciation, tones, reading, writing and grammar – to find how these aspects were presented. I will also take into account the learner and teacher roles, the objectives, the role of the instructional materials and learning activities where noteworthy. However, due to the time in which these were written – when multiple pedagogical theories had not fully come into fruition – some of these aspects are not entirely clear, and so examples will be provided as to the implied focus of these aspects.

The issue of perspective is another aspect which should be more clearly defined. First, this author's personal point of view, which is that of both a learner of Chinese and a prospective teacher, could potentially provide a multi-faceted point of view. Admittedly, this perspective does not entirely aspects of a complete view of the situation. For instance, my view as a Westerner places an Occidental view on the standards of the definition for language learning, yet a Chinese or other non-Occidental reader might have a different standard. Therefore the comments of others are invited for further improvement. The perspective that the authors of the textbooks hold is similar to my own, yet they additionally hold the responsibility of writing for a particular audience whom their textbook serves. We should therefore be aware what audiences they specifically address (found in their prefaces), how that relates to their own lives (as I address in their biographical information) and how this affects the compilation of their textbook

(addressed in my analyses). The two main audiences which these authors write for include missionaries (Edkins, Baller and Mateer) and diplomats (Wade).

The analyses and possible comparisons should make two clear statements: (1) the viability of the textbooks and their teaching styles (i.e.: if they were useful for the purpose and time and if we could apply them to today) and (2) if an integration of Chinese sources and Western teaching was used and how. With each analysis of the four textbooks, I will first discuss briefly the biographical information in order for reader to understand relevant influencing factors from the author's lives; following this, a description of the content of the introductory material is given to highlight the defining features of the textbook; the third section will attempt to analyze the effectiveness of each textbooks in its ability to transmit and how each author appeals to their target audiences.

## **1.2. Outline of the Study**

As for the overall construction of the thesis, the paper will be divided into three major sections following this introduction. Chapter One will outline the sources analyzed for the study and the plans for comparative methodology. Chapter Two will detail the historical background necessary for the rest of the paper. This will largely concern the developments in China and the West in regards to developments in language teaching and learning. There is also discussion of the learning difficulties expressed by teachers and learners in the *Chinese Repository*. The evidence here largely suggests that the differences in these developments create a gap which the future textbook creators must fill. Chapter Three provides information on what other sources were available to the audiences of the textbooks, prior to their creation, including phrasebooks, dictionaries

and grammars. The conclusion here is that these sources were unable to fulfill the contemporary pedagogically progressive needs for language study by these 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese language learners and so textbooks were the only viable source to codify Chinese to make it learnable. Chapter Four will be the study of four textbooks written within the same half decade to show the varying ways in which these early Chinese educators were able to adapt Chinese to Western textbooks and Western teaching. They will be analyzed on how their compilation relates to the author's background, the author's opinion on learning Chinese and their viability and issues with introducing Chinese.



## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As stated by Titone (1968), the use of historical precedence in analyzing and comparing our modern teaching methods – or in his study, the historical-comparative approach – helps in three important ways. History can: (a) teach us important facts, (b) give us perspective and (c) offer us criterion<sup>6</sup>. With this in mind, we should understand the background of language teaching which these Western scholars came from and how it affected (1) their learning of Chinese and (2) the necessity of textbooks as a teaching tool. In this section, I will compare the historical developments of language learning and teaching in the West, particularly of England. This will be compared to the Chinese thoughts on foreigners and language teaching that precipitates the above two conditions.

The Western development of language teaching involved two major transitions as the focus: First was the transition from Latin as a *lingua franca* to the use of local languages as a viable medium for speaking, writing and eventually education. The second change-over involves how the Industrial Revolution fueled a need for practical, rather than privileged, study – even for languages. Both of these events change the study of language into a communicative tool – in other words, for utilitarian purposes of using the language outside of in-depth language or cultural cultivation. In the change Latin's status from a primary to a secondary language, we see a movement not only toward the more practical use of languages but also the teaching of languages practically through knowledge of the mother tongue. The developments in the West reflect a constant search

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<sup>6</sup> Titone, Renzo, (1968). *Teaching Foreign Languages: And Historical Sketch*. Introduction.

for legitimization of vernacular languages through relating to or exerting dominance over Chinese in language learning.

However, China had not experienced these same developments in language teaching and learning because of the nature of the relationship the Chinese had with their own language. The Chinese were in a comparatively static in language teaching methods for two major reasons: (1) China was not dependent on another nation culturally for their own legitimacy, especially for language. Many states which communicated heavily with China, however, did have to adjust their learning to maintain this relationship. (2) The written language had remained relatively unchanged, even with developments in phonology and grammar in the spoken language. Additionally, it was the sole source of transmission of information that superseded any dialectal or language differences in China and so remained unchallenged in the field of education. Both of the above conditions did not compel the Chinese to analyze and teach their language in comparison to another previously established culture as the West had. We will now see in finer detail the individual developments of these two language learning and teaching conditions.

## **1.1 Western Developments**

### **1.1.2. Changes in the Teaching of Latin**

Prior to the European Renaissance, Latin remained a *lingua franca* in most aspects of daily life for those pursuing education. For the most part, churches were the source of education run mainly by laymen or secular monks. However, the greatest impetus for change in education was a reevaluation of the role of religion, the churches and consequently the status of Latin and use of vernaculars. The rise of vernaculars

incited debates on the methods language education through assessing the usefulness of knowledge of the mother tongue in the teaching of Latin. Even in the earliest periods of the Renaissance, the appearance of literature in the languages previously regarded as “vulgar and incapable of literary use”, such as the works of Dante and Chaucer, sparked a growing sense of national identity<sup>7</sup>. Yet this evolving literature and philosophy in the vernacular was still un-established and so many educators still referred to Roman and Greek literature for education. In relation to language study, the spirit of the Renaissance embodied a call to return to Classical instead of Medieval Latin, which many thinkers at the time saw as corrupted by ignorant speakers of Teutonic and Slavic languages<sup>8</sup>. Although modern languages were being taught at the spoken level, these vernaculars still did not possess the same prestige nor did they overtake written Latin in its use in education. However, the changing relationship between vernacular languages and Latin in its practical usage affected the way Latin was instructed. Knowledge of the vernacular by both teacher and student was seen by some educational philosophers as an essential bridging tool for a more well-rounded understanding of Latin. The view of some, such as Erasmus (1466-1536), expresses that the teaching of Latin as a living language should include some informal conversation about common objects and concepts before approaching rhetoric and formal writing, but what role should the mother tongue have in teaching these? Although Erasmus did not have high regard for vernacular languages, especially in the confines of literature, later thinkers, such as Juan Luis Vives (1493-1530), held a more moderate attitude toward the use of local vernaculars in Latin

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<sup>7</sup> Boyd, William and Edmund King. (1995). *The History of Western Education*. 12th ed. p.160

<sup>8</sup> Good, Harry and James Teller (1969). *A History of Western Education*. 3rd ed. p.115-6

instruction. Teachers, as should students, must have a thorough understanding of the native language in order to properly teach the language to be learned. His idea marks the entrance of Realism, which emphasizes “the learning of languages for diplomatic rather than for literary use” in addition to instruction on history, politics, law and science, into the school curriculum<sup>9</sup>. This same view was by other reformers of the English Enlightenment period, such as John Locke in his treatise *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), in which he proposes that after English, Latin and French would be taught through conversational – not formal grammatical – methods.<sup>10</sup>

Even through the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the study of local vernaculars was not considered a serious enough subject for collegiate study and so its in-depth study and implementation as a language learning tool in primary and secondary schools was still a point of contention. Part of the reason these languages were only taught at the spoken level was to differentiate them from the more prestigious written medium, where Latin still held considerable power. However, the changing Western world in terms of economics, politics and knowledge dictated a need for knowledge of modern foreign languages for communicative purposes. The use of formal grammatical teaching and literature study, normally reserved for the teaching of Latin which was not used in a communicative way, had to be modified. We can no longer learn grammar simply to master grammar; grammar must be the medium to teach the language as a living one, to produce language and not just understand it. Additionally, this acquisition had to be done efficiently in a way which could be retained and recalled by the learner.

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<sup>9</sup> Good and Teller, p.166

<sup>10</sup> Good and Teller, p.181

The need for more efficient acquisition and a reduction in formal grammatical teaching created grounds for changes in language textbooks. The most influential of this new type were the Latin textbooks designed by John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), an early proponent of universal education and, for many, the father of modern education. In many ways, his textbooks on Latin were some of the first pre-cursors to the modern textbook.

The design of his main textbook, the *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (The Door to Languages Unlocked) (1631) allowed students to more practically acquire Latin through a more progressive learning style. Common concrete words in Latin were arranged in progressively more difficult grammatical structures without repeating the words and the sentences were classified into a broad range of topics, thus allowing students to gain an encyclopedic knowledge with less strain than forced memorization<sup>11</sup>. This new way of presenting Latin reflected both his social view that education should be for all and that language education is the key to opening the door to a more fulfilling education and life. The status of the mother tongue and modern foreign languages has a valid position in his scheme of language education, *The Method of Languages*, in which he claims for the sake of practicality, one should master both of these before learning the erudite languages of Latin, Greek or Hebrew. The parallel translation of Latin and the native language too indicates that the use of one's first language (L1), although important for everyday life in earlier times, now had a legitimate place in learning a second language (L2). Although his ideas for universal education did not take off in his lifetime, the *Janua* was met with great success, eventually translated into sixteen Western languages and four Asiatic ones (although which ones is unclear). His textbook set a precedent for teaching a language in

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<sup>11</sup> Boyd and King, p.243-4

a pedagogically progressive manner in order to better facilitate and maintain learner acquisition.

### **1.1.2. The Impact of Industrialization and Nationalism**

Besides the improvements in languages teaching theories, the changes in student demographics and learner goals ultimately shaped the design of textbooks. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these two transitions were added the rise of industrialization and nationalism. Changes in the education of the working class modified the teaching of languages to a more casual, universal learner and the call to a sense of national identity reinforced the needs of governments to consolidate power compelled a need for language standardization.

Throughout Europe, the idea of a competent industrialized force through universal education began to take hold, starting with the education of children. For example, in England, laws such as the Factory Act of 1802 required factory workers (i.e. children) to attend school for the first four years of apprenticeship for at least some hours of the day, an education usual patronized by their employers. Although this law was not entirely enforced initially, it was quickly replaced with a new Factory Act and an educational Reform Act, both in 1833, which illegalized the employment of children under nine and any child between 9 and 13 years old had to attend school for at least two hours per day. The Reform Act also established a handful of government stipended schools, allowing easier and cheaper access to education. The influx of new students and the smaller time limit for education ensured that teaching (assumedly language teaching as well) was to be done quickly and with the purpose of making an efficient and skilled workforce. Language teaching, then, would have to be tailored to one's occupation or life goals, as

we will see in the analysis of the textbooks ahead. As a caveat, the idea of universal education, in which all peoples regardless of socio-economic status should be given a basic education, had not been fully realized in England at this time, but the “activities of missionaries overseas...had already set before non-Europeans the astounding claim that Western education” was a universal concept<sup>12</sup>, but what was the condition of education in China, especially in regards to language learning? To answer this question, we should understand the Chinese thoughts and relationship to their own language and their perceptions of foreigners and foreign languages.

## **2.2. The Chinese Relationship to Foreign and Native Languages**

### **2.2.1. Concepts of Teaching the Native Language**

Regardless of the type of learner a non-native speaker is or what their motivations for study are, the initial study of Chinese for those in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was through contact and instruction with native speakers. Observing Chinese methods and motivations for studying their native language should provide some clues as to (a) native feelings on what was important about studying Chinese and (b) how non-native speakers may be been instructed. To do this, we must first establish what competency in Chinese would have meant to native speakers at the time and how this shapes language learning materials. Answering the basic questions of what is the language of scholarship and what is literacy in China at this time can solidify this.

The study of scholarship language involves learning the standard variety of the

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<sup>12</sup> Boyd and King, p.328

prestigious language (or H-variety, as defined by Kaske, 2008<sup>13</sup>). Generally speaking, a standard language is any language variety, written or spoken, which is understood in public communication. This should not be confused with a national or official language, which is most always enforced by government policy. Prior to the rise in vernacular prestige, the diglossic situation in Europe established Latin as the language of scholarship. For China, this would have been the classical language (文言文 *wényánwén*). What should be noted here is, while Latin had both a standard written and spoken form, classical Chinese contained no spoken equivalent. This lack of a standard spoken form for the prestigious language would later force foreign learners to choose a dialect as a standard to read and communicate in Chinese, essentially questioning the efficacy of the classical language in favor of a more colloquial standard. However, up through the nineteenth century, knowledge of the classical language formed the base for exams to enter socially prestigious positions and in effect the materials used for education. For early Western scholars, mastery of the language of the educated class, the social group they were more likely to seek interaction with, would have been necessary. Since the written variety of language is the basis of scholarship, we can now question what literacy – the ability to read, write, communicate with and manipulate the written word – in the Chinese context means.

As observed by Rawski (1979) and Kaske (2008), we must be aware of two things about literacy. First, different sets of skills were required by a Chinese literatus (a person

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<sup>13</sup> Kaske, Elisabeth. (2008). “The Politics of Language in China and the West (the 19<sup>th</sup> Century)”, in *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895-1919*. p. 3



with literacy skills) and a Western literatus due to differences in orthography<sup>14</sup>. The mastery of spelling mechanics for alphabetic languages exposes learners to more advanced vocabulary, and learners of non-alphabetic languages will have initially more specialized vocabulary than their literate counterparts<sup>15</sup>. Although obtaining more initial vocabulary may be harder in a non-alphabetic language, the ability to self-produce in an alphabetic language may be more difficult. Second, literacy is on a sliding scale of functional to full, depending on one's knowledge of the language. In this sense, functional literacy is a prerequisite to full literacy, yet we can see from primers intended for both ends of this spectrum that the kind of vocabulary needed are different. Orthodox elite primers made for children of the fully literate contain more words of abstract nature or more closely related to Confucian texts, whereas more popular sources for the functionally literate presented more concrete objects and concepts for use in the everyday. The type of Westerners initially learning Chinese, such as missionaries and diplomats, would be more likely instructed like fully literate elites because the materials they translated and the social groups they sought interaction with would require a knowledge of more advanced, comprehensive and abstract vocabulary. However, when these groups began to learn Chinese for the purpose of connecting with more local, less educated people, the emphasis changed to a focus on more basic comprehension like that of the functionally literate. The ability to communicate orally with another person became more necessary.

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<sup>14</sup> Kaske, E. (2008)

<sup>15</sup> Rawksi, Evelyn, (1979). *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*. p.2

### 2.2.2. Thoughts on Foreigners and Foreign Language Teaching

In addition to native attitudes and methods towards studying and learning Chinese, native feelings about foreigners – here, both the study of foreign languages and of foreigners studying Chinese – can provide a full picture of the precedents for teaching Chinese as a foreign language by native speakers. Based on the format and content of the imperial examination for which all scholars would be studying for, the teaching of foreign languages was relatively marginalized. The exclusion of foreign language teaching, even at an introductory level, in the pre-examination curriculum reflects both the low status of the translation profession and the Chinese apathy or contempt for foreign things. However, this does not mean foreign language teaching was entirely absent.

The translators bureau 四译馆 (*sìyìguǎn*)<sup>16</sup>, a subsection of the Hanlin Academy 翰林院 (*hànlínyuàn*) established in the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), was the main center for the training of translators and foreign specialists. Native speakers from tributary states and countries of political import to China were brought in as teachers and later in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Manchu bannermen sought training in Chinese and Manchu at the bureau and its related academies. These experts would have mainly been instructed by traditional means, through bilingual translation of classic material with the aid of vocabularies. The bureau itself, however, was largely neglected by the central government and its student body was of low caliber. As Pamela Crossley (1994) notes, translators, mostly due to their “obvious association with conquest regimes...remained

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<sup>16</sup> This is sometimes labeled as 四夷馆 (夷, a homophone meaning ‘barbarian’) as a play on words.

condemned by, and in the shadows of, the examination elite”<sup>17</sup>. The lack of a comparable literary tradition from foreign cultures may have been the greatest contributing factor in the neglect of foreign language study. The developments at the translators bureau was not a complete loss for foreigners studying Chinese. The use of bilingual translations is, as Zhang Xiping (2009) remarks, some of the first steps in creating a method of teaching Chinese<sup>18</sup>.

However, the profession of a Chinese language teacher was not yet a fully realized position; it was still largely dependent on individual patronage from foreigners outside translation institutions, such as missionaries, merchants or emissaries, and the method and content of teaching was largely based on that person’s occupation. Although the use of native instructors both in and out of China was evident<sup>19</sup>, the lack of scholars specifically trained to teach Chinese as a language for natives or foreigners (as opposed to the common practice of transmitting culture with language instruction as a secondary act), was influenced by two main factors. First, a point we just explored, was native attitudes towards the use and status of the Chinese language. The other major factor was overall the native attitude towards foreigners which was mostly one of apathy. In general, China attempted to distance itself from foreigners and foreign ideas by claiming the sovereignty of both ways of life. Because the search for and need to adopt new (here, foreign) ideas was relatively minimal, the reciprocal transmission of culture via language teaching was also not a state priority in early contact with Westerners.

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<sup>17</sup> Crossley, Pamela, (1994). “Manchu Education”. in *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600-1900*. p.346

<sup>18</sup> Zhang, Xiping. (2009). 世界汉语教育史, p.40

<sup>19</sup> Zhang, Xiping. (2009). 世界汉语教育史.

### 2.3. Interaction, Complications and the Need for Textbooks

In the above two sections, the change in the status of Latin over time and the general attitude towards language and foreigners by Chinese have been laid out. When these two spheres came in contact with each other in the Ming and Qing dynasties, the West slowly changed its notions of Chinese that correlated with the transformation in attitudes toward language teaching and learning. Initially, in the late Ming, Western studies on China tended to fall into two categories of scholars. In one group, Jesuit scholars had long term exposure to Chinese due to the Chinese imperial methods of sinicization, in which only those missionaries who would not leave China were allowed to enter. The second group included Western scholars, staying in Europe, on a search for the language before the time of Babel. These were ‘proto-sinologists’ because they had little to less direct exposure to the true nature of Chinese attempted to find a *clavis* (key) to unravel the mysterious, primitive nature of Chinese and perhaps other languages<sup>20</sup>. As Chinese powers of sinicization gradually diminished and diplomatic and trade relations between China and the West expanded, the aura of mystery surrounding Chinese slowly began to dissolve, and now there was a Western desire to learn Chinese for more practical purposes.

Yet, the Chinese method of language study, both foreign and native – a method which had not changed as the West had – created a difficult environment for Chinese learning. The Western change in language study habits, which geared itself slowly towards more practical usage and methodological study, would not be entirely fulfilled via the lack of Western-adapted learning materials. As the West gained a foothold in

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<sup>20</sup> Mungello, David E., (1985). *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*. p.34-6

China through diplomacy, trade and missionary work, the traditional method of studying solely culture through text could not give the incoming learners practical use of Chinese.

Anecdotes of this difficulty are present in *The Chinese Repository* (《中国丛报》*Zhōngguó Cóngbào*), a monthly journal distributed among Protestant missionaries in China between 1832 and 1851. Early entries remark that the early missionaries had the aid of some of the best native teachers, yet due to the restriction of foreigners learning Chinese (here, referring to the Canton System<sup>21</sup>) and a lack of good aids left behind by their predecessors, the acquisition of elegant Chinese was nearly impossible for the current missionaries<sup>22</sup>. Later entries asked what and how one can learn; some tried to resolve the learning issues. One such letter came from a correspondent, Tyro<sup>23</sup>, who asked several questions which we might take as representative of language learners in China at the time. In summary, we can categorize his questions into three main concerns: (1) how and when to learn the spoken languages, including tones; (2) how to learn and remember the meaning and shape of characters; and (3) what sources were available in aiding the study of Chinese<sup>24</sup>. In the next volume, one ‘Philo’ gave suggestions on approaching the study of Chinese, mostly based on his own experiences, yet even the editors commented that the suggestions, particularly for reading, were too many and too desultory<sup>25</sup>. Clearly the readers, correspondents and editors of this magazine identified

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<sup>21</sup> According to Chao (2000), Chinese citizens were prohibited from interacting with foreigners, and foreigners could not purchase Chinese materials. The Chinese government had also restricted most trade, and unable to use any Chinese, most Western merchants did not study Chinese and pidgin English flourished.

<sup>22</sup> *The Chinese Repository*, vol. 3, p.431-3

<sup>23</sup> This individual was identified by Der-lin Chao as Ira Tracy. ‘Tyro’ is an older word for a novice or beginner.

<sup>24</sup> *The Chinese Repository*, vol. 7, p.204-6

<sup>25</sup> *The Chinese Repository*, vol. 8, p.345

the difficulties in learning Chinese, even with the present amount of dictionaries and grammars on the language. What was needed was a more streamlined, uniform elementary course for Chinese study, and the answer may have been to compile textbooks.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE FORMATION AND NECESSITY OF CHINESE TEXTBOOKS

In the following section, we will observe the various materials and approaches to the study of Chinese from roughly the Late Ming through Late Qing and demonstrate how the changing relationship with the study of Chinese eventually lead to the necessity for textbooks as a teaching medium. This section will also as a secondary purpose display the adaptive capabilities of early Sinologists and the originality of textbooks in comparison to other teaching mediums.

#### 3.1. Dictionaries

The importance of dictionaries, especially to early missionaries in the Ming, cannot be understated. These learning aids provided literary scholars with access to knowledge of Chinese characters. More useful and astounding a feat than merely providing the Western language gloss is their ability to transcribe words via Romanization. The accuracy of these transcriptions had evolved over time with the advancement in phonetic studies and longer exposure to Chinese. Some of the earliest dictionaries were fairly crude in their transcription and amount of information. For example, one of the earliest Western-Chinese dictionaries, attributed to both Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci from c.1580, was Portuguese-Chinese dictionary, which contains some 6,000 Portuguese entries with 5,461 corresponding Chinese characters<sup>26</sup>. The primacy of the Portuguese entries, a language native to neither scholar, shows both the expansive use of Portuguese in China at the time and the lack of knowledge of

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<sup>26</sup> Liu, Yu. (2011). "The True Pioneer of Religion: Michele Ruggieri". *History of Religions*, 50:4. p.366

Chinese or direct access to native speakers. For missionaries, traders and local Chinese, Portuguese would have been the medium of communication, but because either the local Chinese did not speak Portuguese well or were not trained in the literary language that the Jesuit missionaries were seeking<sup>27</sup>, Portuguese entries had to be listed first and the Chinese information filled in later. This manner in turn would have affected the learner's ability to start reading Chinese sources because there was no direct way to search for a character and its Western meaning. With the change in the types of incoming learners, ones who would require not only the meanings of characters but their pronunciations and component parts, would ensure these dictionaries would not suffice.

The publishing of Robert Morrison's *Dictionary of the Chinese Language* (1815) would change access to written Chinese for English-speaking learners. Robert Morrison (1782-1834), a Protestant evangelist, pioneered many early translations of English works into Chinese, including one of the first complete translations of the Bible, and his works on Chinese grammar and vocabulary have had a lasting impression on Western sinology. The dictionary, set in three volumes, does draw inspiration from pre-existing Chinese sources, such as the Kangxi Dictionary, and perhaps earlier Western dictionaries, but the way in which the dictionary is categorized gives learners three new ways to study Chinese: by radical, by pronunciation and by English words. This not only opens up the ability to translate Chinese works into English, but the Romanization of Chinese also gives even those who want to focus on the oral language a reasonable resource for study.

Yet we should note that as a language study tool, a dictionary, even one as comprehensive as Morrison's, has some obvious limitations. Chiefly, although the basic

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



definitions of words are given, examples of their use – Morrison’s dictionary being an exception – are not given. Two words with similar translations may not in fact be used in the same context. The sentences provided by Morrison although useful are not presented to the learner in any acquisition format. Second, early dictionaries before any standard Romanization had inconsistent transcriptions and the dialect chosen for this may not have been specified or used reliably. Both of these limitations resign dictionaries only to a reference source for language learning but not for use as a language teaching tool. Dictionaries allow learners to approach language in a second-language setting, rather than the foreign language setting of textbooks, through elimination of an apparent interlanguage, but they are a means, not an end, to language learning.

### **3.2. Handbooks/Phrasebooks**

Although a less common learning material, these types of books still existed especially in major port cities such as Macao and Hong Kong/ Guangdong. Two such books are Morrison’s *Dialogues and Detached Sentences*, published in 1816, and the *Recueil de phrases chinoises* [*Collection of Chinese Sentences*], published in 1854 by Artus de Lionne (translated into English by Henry Stanley). Phrasebooks (sometimes named handbooks because of their readily accessible nature) are often bilingual in composition, with the two languages side by side and little intermediary language or grammatical explication. Looking at a phrasebook such as Morrison’s, however, one may see this as fine way to pick up on Chinese, yet the purpose of the book here is not to instruct or improve on the learner’s knowledge of Chinese. Rather, the categorical nature of the topics and sentences is meant for easy access to the phrase on the topic one wants

to know, not leading them progressively through pedagogical steps. Where in the early years of contact with China these would more likely have been used by traders, by the 1800s these could be used by scholars to facilitate the learning process with a teacher who could not speak one's native language.

### **3.3. Grammars**

The compilation of grammars was an important step in the study of Chinese within the Ming and Qing dynasties for Western scholars. Compared to handbooks/phrasebooks, which often only had sentences or phrases for the scholar to read or use, grammars gave a detailed account of the functions of the Chinese language. Like the dictionaries and phrasebooks before them, the earliest grammars for the West were compiled by missionaries who after years of exposure to Chinese and contact with native scholars could give a detailed account of Chinese grammar. The terminology often used to describe the grammatical categories and functions were often based on the previously established Western terminology for Latin grammar, which in a way is one of its faults. Many grammars, in their explication of the rules of Chinese phraseology, provide numerous examples of their use. Yet the knowledge given through grammars does not by itself build off previously acquired knowledge and so do not lead the student through the upward spiral of learning that was necessary for thinkers such as Comenius and Vives.

### **3.4. Textbooks**

In observing the above sources, we can see that there was not a single source

which properly introduces Chinese as a learnable language. The textbook, then, would seem to be the solution because of its emphasis on a progressive, linear way of acquiring the language. The development of textbooks within Europe went through many stages. Originally, textbooks were printed mostly for the teacher's reference but over time were intended for students for self-study of modern languages, still not taught formally in the classroom. These books were eventually considered staples for all scholars and were required in classes. For both the study of history and foreign language teaching, textbooks provide a "reflection of the history of language teaching, its changes of emphasis and method"<sup>28</sup>. Therefore, if we start by looking to the textbooks written by the earliest Chinese teachers and former learners, we can see not only what was important in the past about acquiring Chinese from the perspective of learners; we can also understand how and why our modern Chinese textbooks have become what they are.

With the textbooks below, we should note what issues these compilers are addressing. *The Chinese Repository*, as I mentioned previously, provides many clues to this. As analyzed by Chao (2001), there were three main problems with the Chinese sources available prior to formal textbooks that often created misconception about Chinese. Grammar was often natively taught through example, rather than through rules as was traditionally done in the West. This created the misconception that Chinese had no grammar and should not be studied, but these early compilers would try display the grammar of Chinese as the central focal teaching point. Tones were normally acquired by intuition and growing up in the language. For some teachers, the assumption was that imitation of a native speaker was the only way to gain this ability and the teaching of it

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<sup>28</sup> Kelly, L.G., (1969). *25 Centuries of Language Teaching*, p.269

should be all together ignored. Their attempts to codify the tones and pronunciation would try to make this process easier for early learners. Although generally students could recognize the components of characters, the reproduction of characters (writing them from memory) was impossible, leading some to believe that characters were detrimental to the acquisition of Chinese, even for the Chinese themselves<sup>29</sup>. Some would attempt to describe and organize the characters in a way that learners could more easily comprehend. All of these attempts would involve presenting the language in a format familiar to the learner, a textbook.

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<sup>29</sup> Chao, Der-lin, (2001). "Pedagogical Issues Raised and Discussed in *The Chinese Repository* (1832-1851)".

## CHAPTER 4

### AN ANALYSIS OF LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY TEXTBOOKS

In the previous section, I have established that because of the different developments in Chinese and Western language education and the shifting focus towards oral communication among missionaries, textbooks were the most necessary and useful teaching tool for the instruction of Chinese. Unlike other available resources at the time such as dictionaries, handbooks or grammars, textbooks provided a foreign language learning environment through pedagogically progressive steps, and this new format for learning Chinese was useful not only for the missionaries immersed in China but could also be used for students outside of China. We should not assume, however, that all textbooks were compiled in the same manner. In this chapter, I will present four representative textbooks, presented in roughly chronological order: Joseph Edkins's *Progressive Lessons* (1864), Thomas Wade's *Colloquial Series* (1867), FW Baller's *Mandarin Primer* (1900) and CW Mateer's *Mandarin Lessons* (1892). Each of these displays some of the varying Chinese learner audiences, namely missionaries and diplomats, and approaches to study. The things which each author considers 'introductory' and the manner in which it is presented is intimately tied to the audience they are writing for and their own Chinese learning experiences. Prior to analyzing each book, I will provide a brief biographical explication on parts of their lives which could impact their textbooks and help establish who their target audience is. I will analyze each book first in general of what their approaches are, then in fine detail the design, including the format, the topics introduced and the way in which basic skills are explained. Basic skills here are defined as the introduction to characters, pronunciation and tone. In analyzing these

books, we can find a general consensus as to what early Chinese language teachers thought should be taught, how and what was introduced and possible strategies we can consider for our modern teaching and textbook compiling. For the purposes of this analysis, I will refer to the prefaces and the introductory chapters, here loosely defined as the chapters which introduce basic grammar and vocabulary. The exact definition changes with each author: Edkins, Lessons one through ten; Wade, the first ten of the forty lessons; Baller, Lessons one through five; and Mateer, Lessons one through ten. In analyzing these books, we can find a general consensus as to what early Chinese language teachers thought should be taught, what was introduced and how this was presented to the learner.

#### **4.1. Joseph Edkins's *Progressive Lessons***

##### **4.1.1. Biographical Information**

Rev. Joseph Edkins (1823-1905) [Chinese name: 艾约瑟 Ài Yuēsè], born in Gloucestershire, England, was a prolific writer of many works concerning China including notes on the language, the Chinese people and his own travel experiences. After graduating from the University of London, he was ordained in 1847 and sent to China in the subsequent year with the London Missionary Society, a protestant organization whose missions in China were founded by Robert Morrison. In his initial post in Shanghai, he came under the employment and mentorship of Walter H. Medhurst (1796-1857), who had worked with Morrison to create one of the first English-Chinese translations of the Bible. Although stationed in Shanghai, Tianjin and Beijing respectively, his post in Shanghai would be the foundation not only for his missionary

work but also for the compilation of Chinese language textbook. According to Richard Lovett (1899), the mission in Shanghai was predominantly a preaching mission, so the Society constructed chapels, used for sermons, near areas which could reach the greatest number of people – usually this meant the main thoroughfare. In order to communicate with such a vast array of Chinese speakers from different parts of China, Edkins understood the importance of the use of Mandarin. In regards to the building of a new chapel in 1851, he notes:

“To these strangers, Dr. Medhurst’s preaching in the Mandarin dialect is especially adapted. Happily, there is this medium of communication, which makes the impartation of our ideas practicable to the inhabitants of the most distant provinces of the empire. If these travelling merchants could be brought to take back with them the belief of the truth as well as the books which we furnish to them, our views would spread quickly over this idolatrous land.”<sup>30</sup>

What is important is his realization that in order to spread their message, the ability to communicate orally with local people in a commonly understood dialect was just as important, if not more, than knowledge of written Chinese. As I noted earlier, the choice between Nanjing and Beijing Mandarin was a point of contention among Westerners in China, yet they all agreed that the oral language had a role. This struggle to find the right balance of usefulness between standard and new, written and spoken, plays out in textbooks.

His vision of a practical and active role for missionaries was also evident in the way he adopted native Chinese into the church in leadership roles. He wanted the process of induction for any Chinese who expressed interest in the Christian life to be quick, sometimes forgoing the many months or years normally required for what some saw as

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<sup>30</sup> Lovett, Richard, (1899). *History of the London Missionary Society*, p.511

true conversion. In bringing them into the fold, he sought not only their spiritual devotion but also their employment, assumedly as teachers of Chinese in addition to facilitating the spreading of their message. This evangelical embrace of new followers grew stronger with his longer stay and replacements to Tianjin and Beijing, and this came at odds with younger missionaries, who required a slower progression of integration through a trial period. In 1880, he resigned from the Society. What we can glean from his life is an aim for quickness and efficiency in communicating with the Chinese as part of a pragmatic way to spread Protestantism and to go about everyday life in China.

#### **4.1.2. Analysis of *Progressive Lessons***

##### **4.1.2.1. Approach and Preface**

Within the preface, we can clearly observe the approach he takes and how it addresses his life and learning experiences. First, he names his audience for his book as “beginners in the Chinese spoken language”. Although he does not specifically state who these beginners are, the publisher of the work is the Presbyterian Mission Press which tells us that his target audience is more than likely other missionaries. He notes that his was “often requested” to write this, so we can also imagine the textbooks is specifically for other missionaries with the London Missionary Society posted in his same areas, Shanghai and Beijing. In order to fulfill that target audience’s need, the focus of core instruction should on the spoken language “without knowing the intricacies of the language”. According to Edkins, “those who desire to become really good speakers should study tones”, since that seems to be the hardest aspect for foreigners to acquire and is the distinguishing feature between dialects. To help learners easily acquire the necessary facets of the spoken language, he provides several important features. Learners



are given common phrases for everyday use in order to accommodate to life in China and dealing with native Chinese converts and traders. The form of a vocabulary for easy reference should allow students to access information for communication even when not in a classroom setting Pronunciations are marked according to Beijing Mandarin as laid out by Wade's orthography and the 五方元音<sup>31</sup> (*wǔ fāng yuán yīn*) system, a native arrangement of initials and finals, but tone are marked according to the five tone system prevalent in Nanjing Mandarin in order to adhere to the native dictionaries and those compiled by Morrison, Medhurst, Premare and others.<sup>32</sup>

#### **4.1.2.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons**

Because the textbook primarily focuses on the learner's speaking ability, Edkins provides a set of general rules which introduce his system of orthography and supplies a general overview of tonal transcription according to Nanjing tonal categories. While his transcription is relatively consistent with other scholars of China (such as the authors of our other textbooks), he provides some keys to pronunciation that help us understand the type of readers he is aiming to teach<sup>33</sup>. For the vowels i, e, a, o, and u, he notes that these are pronounced with their Italian sounds when not followed by n [n] or ng [ŋ], and simultaneously gives English words which contain these vowels. Some of these single written vowels are actually diphthongs, which in a way confuses the learner when they are combined with each other and do not follow these rules. The vowel ü [y] is given French equivalents, since there is no English word which contains this sound. The

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<sup>31</sup> Literally the "Original Sounds of the Five Regions" - 'five regions' is used as a term for all directions and the center. The title here is referring to what was considered standard pronunciation in the entire kingdom.

<sup>32</sup> All quotes from Edkins, Joseph, (1864). *Progressive Lessons*, preface.

<sup>33</sup> In this section, all transcriptions not marked in brackets are directly from Edkins.

consonants k, t, p, f, s, sh, and ch are suggested to be read as in English, ‘mute and sibilant’ – here referring to their voiceless pronunciation<sup>34</sup>. Edkins does acknowledge many of the rules in which some of these vowels and consonants undergo, especially in the case of the vowels i and e, and the change in aspiration his ‘mute and sibilant’ consonants. As for the transcription of tone, he concisely remarks:

“Every word is pronounced evenly [first tone], or with a rising or falling inflection [second and fourth tone], or with a double inflection [third tone]. It may be pitched high or low, according to the usage of any particular dialect, and be enunciated quickly or slowly. All words in the language are arranged in four or five large groups, and one of these tones or inflections is attached to each. Thus the great class to which each word belongs is known, by the intonation with which it is habitually pronounced.”<sup>35</sup>

From his examples and explanations of his transcriptions and the general rules of Chinese pronunciation and grammar, we can assemble a broad sketch of who his target audience is and what they know. The linguistic terms he uses, such as ‘aspirant’ or ‘sibilant’, while technical are not so narrow as to exclude only those with a shallow understanding of language. His choice to provide examples from other European languages shows that his learners are university trained or at least have some understanding of the languages referred to, yet he does not entirely rely on this. Fearing perhaps that it may not be obviously apparent to all his learners, he provides common English words for the learner’s orientation. In short, he is presenting the tones and transcriptions in a way which the learner can easily acquire, comprehend and refer to quickly for later use.

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<sup>34</sup> Sibilant, in its modern usage, refers to fricatives and affricates, of which k, p and t are not.

<sup>35</sup> Edkins (1864). *Progressive Lessons*, p. iv. Added are modern tonal categorizations normally used in textbooks.

Following this, the book then has 11 introductory chapters of ‘common’ words, followed by 30 chapters on various culturally and every day relevant topics. The construction of these chapters, much like his above explanation of the tonal rules, are designed for the learner’s easy reference and lay a solid, streamlined foundation of basic words and grammatical concepts necessary for later chapters. The introductory chapters are unnamed and provide roughly 20 vocabulary words for each chapter. These words are provided with an English gloss and a Romanization using his system between the Chinese and English. Each chapter is set up in a relatively similar manner. First, the vocabulary words are set into two columns and often the words which are related to each other, either through morphemes or by meaning, are next to or on top of each other. For instance, in Lesson One, the words 我 (*wǒ*), 你 (*nǐ*) and 他 (*tā*) [English: ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘he’] are set directly opposite to 我们 (*wǒmen*), 你们 (*nǐmen*) and 他们 (*tāmen*) [English: ‘we’, ‘you’ and ‘they’]. A student could assume that 们 is the plural marker for these words. Edkins uses this same morpheme/meaning matching with other words, such as 这个/那个 (*zhège/nàge*), 这里/那里 (*zhèlǐ/nàlǐ*), and 这样/那样 (*zhèyàng/nàyàng*) [English: ‘this/that’, ‘here/there’ and ‘this sort/that sort’]. Although he never clearly states that 这 (*zhè*) is the proximal demonstrative and 那 (*nà*) is the distal demonstrative, the English translations allow the student that these are opposites, just as in their own native language. Yet the English translations do not always have an opposite or mirrored meaning, such as with 有 (*yǒu*) and 没有 (*měiyǒu*), which he translates as ‘there is’ and ‘have not’ respectively. In this instance, the student must focus on the fact that the two terms are opposites in Chinese, where they might not be exactly so in English. Not all of the

vocabulary is matched up with its opposite but rather with a word related to or often used in conjunction with it. In Lesson 5, 写 (*xiě*) and 字 (*zì*) [English: ‘write’ and ‘characters’] are lined up, as are 慢 (*màn*) and 走 (*zǒu*) [English: ‘slow’ and ‘walk’] in Chapter 7. With or without a native teacher present, this format could aid the student in remembering the meanings and pronunciation of the words by allowing them to see related words side-by-side, without a deep explanation as to the function of every word or morpheme.

After each vocabulary list, a set of example sentences follow, in the same format of Chinese, Romanization and English translation. The sentences of the introductory chapters are relatively short, not usually exceeding more than six characters and are meant to display each vocabulary word at least once. However, not all the words listed are used in some chapters. This is sometimes due to the fact that the words are morphologically related to each other and so do not need to be displayed. In Lesson 1, of the six pronouns listed, only three of them (我们, 他们 and 你) are used in the examples, and in Lesson 7, seven of the vocabulary words are unused. The learner still needs to know these ‘unused’ words, as they do appear in successive chapters. The word ‘that’ (那个), although it is not used in a sentence in Lesson 1 where it is introduced, does appear in Lesson 3 in a sentence: “那个瓶不大。 *That bottle is not large*”. Perhaps it is implied that the learner may substitute words with the same grammatical function when they know that the words hold opposite meanings. This may be why in Lesson 2 the words 多 (*duō*) and 少 (*shǎo*) [English: ‘more/many’ and ‘less/few’] are both presented, but only the latter appears as an example in the chapter while the former appears in the next

lesson<sup>36</sup>. They are grammatically of the same category to an English speaker, an adjective<sup>37</sup>, and so it is implied one may switch 多 with 少 and vice versa when needed.

This makes the addition of supplementary vocabulary after all the lessons, including words for various types of traded goods, other measure words and common phrases, all the more useful. In knowing the basic grammatical patterns, a learner can easily look up a word they need and substitute it into the appropriate grammatical place.

The last and perhaps most important part<sup>38</sup> to Edkins's textbook is the detailed notes on the tones and pronunciation of Peking (Beijing), Nanking (Nanjing) and Chefoo (Zhifu, or more specifically Yantai in Shandong province). The first will be the more important for our understanding of modern Chinese teaching foundations and therefore only discussed one. According to Edkins, the following rules can be applied to both the Mandarin dialects of Beijing and Tianjin. The tonal rules, or 四声(*sìshēng*), derive from native classical categorization of tone used in traditional poetry, classical dialectology and in official dictionaries. For each of these categorizations, he gives a brief (and slight more technical) description of how the sound is produced in relation to what the learner knows of English. For example, the 'falling inflection' sometimes produced in the 上平(*shǎngpíng*) category gives the sound of a command, and the 'slow rising inflection' in 上声(*shǎngshēng*) sounds like a question. He also notes the all-important tone sandhi rules for two third tones, the changes in 一 (*yī*) and 不 (*bù*) in the presence of other words

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<sup>36</sup> Edkins seems to have a strong preference to use the proximal demonstrative over the distal, and although some studies have shown cognitive preference for the distal with things deemed less 'familiar' (Gundel, 1993), his use may be a coincidence here.

<sup>37</sup> Few/Many can also be considered a noun and a pronoun, but in the example given, the function is as an adjective.

<sup>38</sup> I say this only because of his emphasis on the proper acquisition of tones.

and neutralization of morphemes.

#### **4.1.2.3. Analysis**

As an evangelical missionary living in the major cities of Shanghai, Tianjin and Beijing, Joseph Edkins's goal was to reach out to the Chinese through the spoken word, especially to traders who he hoped would spread the Christian message to the farthest reaches of China. From his biography and the small introduction he gave to his textbook, he clearly was aiming for the learning of Chinese to be done as quickly and efficiently as possible. This meant perhaps leaving out grammatical explanations and even the teaching of character writing and reading. However, the use of all four skills – that is, reading, writing, speaking and listening – was not a priority for everyone, especially to those missionaries accustomed to preaching rather than translating. For this textbook especially, the focus is on the skill of speaking. We should therefore expect much of the example sentences to feature less like a dialogue in which there is a partner one must understand and more like a set of sentences which the reader can refer to at a moment's notice to convey their message to a listener. The nature of the detached sentences that still are organized around a central theme in each chapter makes the textbook adaptable to both a formal and informal classroom setting. Each lesson in Edkins's textbook seems to revolve around both a topic and grammatical feature or two for the learner to acquire. Because many of the sentences are either short or incomplete, the focus is not necessarily on the meaning of the conversation between two people but the use of the new word or grammatical feature. Only after these eleven introductory chapters is the student expected to focus on the meaning of the content.

Now that we can see Edkins's book as a valid teaching tool, we should be able to

evaluate if it truly carries out the learning approach. Although I cannot personally attest to the validity of the sentences he provides (in terms of how authentic they are), they are simple enough for a beginning student to follow. Yet if he is writing this textbook strictly for other missionaries, the vocabulary words chosen for the introductory chapters, which revolve mostly around trade, might not be as well suited to them in their professional lives. For the students who need to get through everyday life in China and want to reach out to local traders, as Edkins suggested, then the learning of words and phrases which talk about more business related topics are a good teaching tool. In many ways, these topics are certainly less academic, less formal and in some cases less personal interactions, but they give the average learner a starting point for conversation. The style of the book's format, however, could make self-study nearly impossible without a native speaker present. Namely, if tones are supposed to be the most important feature, their critical explanation should not be left to the end of the book. This is perhaps the negative aspect of a textbook modeled after a vocabulary, which put emphasis on the vocabulary words and not necessarily pronunciation or tone. The use of characters, while commonplace in modern textbooks, fits less well with a textbook which emphasizes speaking and not the skill of writing or reading. Using characters to teach Chinese does aid in aligning sound with meaning and to differentiate between homophonous words and phrases, but showing characters to students without explaining their construction or formation would ultimately confuse them or at least be less meaningful. Using Romanization only might be the best way to approach the strict teaching of the speaking, a single skill which stands opposite to the very nature of textbooks as an object to be read. The overall manner in which he presents the vocabulary and grammar necessary for

further self-discovery, such as the alignment of grammatically similar vocabulary in the list preceding the example sentences and the re-introduction of old vocabulary in new lessons, can empower a learner to use this basic knowledge in a communicative, real life setting. Although this textbook does not give professional level, formal speech nor does it teach the other three skills, Edkins's *Progressive Lessons* provides examples that perhaps come from Edkins's own experiences and could be useful to others who followed the same path.

## **4.2. Thomas Wade's *Colloquial Series***

### **4.2.1. Biographical Information**

Unlike the other authors featured in this book, Sir Thomas Francis Wade (1818-1895) [Chinese name: 威妥玛 Wēi Tuōmǎ] started his career as Sinologue and Chinese pedagogue with his diplomatic and military experiences. After graduating from Trinity College and then commissioned as a lieutenant in 1841, he arrived in Hong Kong near the end of the First Opium War in 1842. He served as a Cantonese interpreter, a secretary to several British officials in China, including John Francis Davis, John Bowring and Lord Elgin, and led the negotiations before the Treaty of Nanking in 1858. Much of his nomadic life and work, as James Hevia (1995) notes, revolved around translation and the use of soft power in dealing with the Chinese<sup>39</sup>. For what the British Empire deemed the 'Great Game' at the time, the use of gunboat diplomacy – or the display of force in order to persuade the Chinese government – was the usual form of negotiations. Yet the Qing government was less concerned with, or perhaps did not take seriously, such an imminent

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<sup>39</sup> Hevia, James, (1995). "An Imperial Nomad and the Great Game." pp.5-6



threat. The only other way to reach the minds of the people they were negotiating with was for the British to enlighten the Chinese upper classes to the realities of their world. This meant not only would the Chinese have to adapt to Western ideas, but the British Legation, the main source of negotiations, should be trained to communicate to the Chinese in an authoritative manner. For Wade, the main priority would be teaching diplomats the language of officials – 官话 (*guānhuà*) – in order to gain British sympathy from the ruling elite in China.

What and how, then, would these diplomats be taught? His donation to the Cambridge University library reveals some of what he considered necessary or useful literature to the Chinese learner. His donations of works on history, biography and statues were the largest, followed by a considerable amount of translations of the classics and philosophical texts. Works on (c) geography, (d) plays and novels, (e) reference works, including dictionaries and (f) miscellaneous topics, made up the rest of the collection that Herbert Giles named “a comprehensive library admirably suited to the needs of the ordinary student”<sup>40</sup>. We can see here that Wade intended his students to be both well versed in the classical language (since only some of these were translations) and also well rounded in their knowledge about China. Their education should reflect what Chinese scholars at the time would also know, allowing them as diplomats or as scholars to reach the Chinese on a philosophical level.

His position as a translator and diplomat made him well suited to teach about the Chinese language on a more sophisticated level and about China so that Westerners and Chinese would better understand each other. In addition to writing about topics related to

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<sup>40</sup> Giles, H. (1898). *A Catalogue of the Wade Collection of Chinese and Manchu Books*. p.vi

this diplomatic work, such as the Chinese military in 1850 and 1851, he also compiled a set of vocabulary and texts in an experimental precursor to the *Colloquial Series*, entitled *Hsin Ching Lu, or, A Book of Experiments* (1859) [Chinese title: 寻津绿 (*xúnjīnlǜ*)]. This book, he acknowledges was written primarily out of the concerns of interpreters of the British Legation who wanted a better elementary textbook. The model he uses is a syllabary (a guide organized by syllables or alphabetically) specifically adapted to the Beijing dialect which he claims should be the dialect for official interpreters. In choosing a specific dialect, he notes that an interpreter's (and perhaps all scholars of Chinese) foremost duty is to learn the spoken language. Although the written language can take a while to master, one should not 'rest on his oars' or be complacent in communicating with one's teacher in poor Chinese. Perhaps part of his desire to create an elementary textbook comes from the lack of sources on the spoken language, compared to the many translations and original sources for the written language. An interpreter needs both written and spoken mastery, but the latter should be mastered before the former. This practical outlook would be more useful to the diplomats and interpreters who would use their knowledge in real-world British-Qing politics.

#### **4.2.2. Analysis of the *Colloquial Series***

##### **4.2.2.1. Preface and Approach**

Although he has the most experience with diplomacy and therefore instructing interpreters, Wade designs a type of learning which should be applicable to all learners. Within the preface to his work, he considers the most important question a student should ask themselves, which is what 'type of Chinese' they want to learn. The answer to this should be based on one's occupation and or their intentions for using the language in

everyday life. In other words, what a philologist or a merchant wants to study should be different than a missionary or a diplomat. He emphasizes this differentiation by dividing the textbook series into two parts: Colloquial based on spoken words and phrases, or 语言 (yǔyán), and Documentary based on the written language of officials in correspondences, or 文件 (wénjiàn). Here, one could argue he creates a distinction between the colloquial, 白话 (báihuà), and book language, 书面 (shūmiàn). Knowledge of written and spoken Chinese were both useful skills, but Wade notes, however, that only a textbook based on the colloquial language can truly be deemed progressive because it deals with ‘what is near’ 自近 (zì ér)<sup>41</sup> – or, more practicable – to the learner. It is unclear what he feels is progressive and why only the colloquial language can serve as progressive, yet we can assume that the practical mastery of the spoken language is harder to do without guided practice yet more applicable to the learner’s life. However, Wade’s goal, unlike Edkins, is not to make proficient average speakers, rather speakers whose eloquence could change the Chinese perception of Westerners and their role in Chinese politics. He notes in the preface that the ‘foreign agent’ (here, translators and interpreters for the West), have the rare opportunity to make that lasting impression, and therefore “it is by no means an extravagant ambition that our speech should become sufficiently polished to disabuse the learned man of his belief that we are incapable of cultivation”<sup>42</sup>.

Yet in order to do this, every student must start by mastering the most basic skills:

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<sup>41</sup> Here, Wade takes the phrase from a passage in the Doctrine of the Mean 中庸: “君子之道，譬如行远必自近；譬如登高，必自卑。”

<sup>42</sup> Wade, TF (1867). *Colloquial Series*. Preface. (Hereafter, the book is referred to as YYZEJ).

that is pronunciation – broken down into sound, tone and rhythm – the radicals and the parts of speech. The last section is especially difficult, since the use of European grammatical nomenclature is impossible and often yields embarrassing results in its application to explanations of Chinese grammar. Yet some explanation of Chinese phraseology is necessary and helpful to the beginning student, especially to those for whom he designed the book. Over all, Wade sends a clear message that the early student should not ignore the learning of basics just because he find it ‘less serious’, and to ignore the spoken for the written in his early learning is a mistake one will later regret. All learning should be taken seriously and the mastery of the colloquial should lead the scholar down a path greater than just his own self-interest.

#### **4.2.2.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons**

Compared to the textbook previously discussed and subsequent textbooks hereafter, Wade’s textbook series is extremely expansive with numerous editions. Each edition (published in 1867, 1886 and 1902) comes in three or four volumes, and some later editions have several revisions which intended to improve the learner’s use the textbook. Unless otherwise noted, I will only be referring to the first edition (1867), volumes 1 and 2 including the main Chinese text and key. Most of the revisions are reductions in the amount of vocabulary and exercises to help ease the learning burden, but the format is relatively unchanged. The overall goal within these introductory sections is to help facilitate a sophisticated learner with knowledge of the finer points of Chinese who can begin to learn independently by seeing the language closer to how the Chinese see it. He starts by introducing the most basic of skills, pronunciation and characters, with one section dedicated to each.

The first section, on pronunciation, is broken down into three main components that lead to correct speaking: sound, tone and rhythm. Sound, or the combination of initial and final, independent of tone, is again introduced through the author's explanation of their orthography. Unlike Edkins who focused much of his attention on the pronunciation of main vowels, each individual consonant and every combination of finals, including main vowels, medials and endings, are given an example. He still refers to sounds in other languages, such as Italian, French and German where the English equivalent doesn't exist. In all, he hopes his orthography reaches the nearest representation, but understands that it is foolish to think that any written representation could accurately describe the sounds. The goal is to write an accurate enough account of Chinese sounds to train the ear. In the description, he carefully attempts to design a system of transcription which would not confuse a learner. For example, in writing aspirated consonants, someone might mistake "ph" for the 'f' sound at the end of 'triumph', so instead, he uses an inverted comma.

Yet for all the attention he gives to his transcription of the sounds of Chinese, Wade considers the aspect of sound the least important because compared to a muddling of tones, one is less like to be misunderstood if he were to pronounce his initials or finals incorrectly. Knowing tones is useful for both spoken and written Chinese. Knowledge of tones prior to listening to one's teacher is useful for correcting one's intonation. Additionally, the knowledge of native transcription can be equally helpful for using native dictionaries, which categorize words based on tonal categories. He explains tones, as did Edkins, with Chinese terms for them but still manages to use learner knowledge without using overbearing European terminology. For example: in explaining the four

tones of the Beijing dialect (上平 *shāngpíng*, 下平 *xiàpíng*, 上声 *shǎngshēng*, 去声 *qùshēng*), Wade suggests the learner can think of them as notes on a scale. For describing the inflection of these, he uses a scenario and the voice inflections to demonstrate what the tones sound like, but he thoughtfully reminds the students that tones are fixed to the word, not moved by intention. In order to make the tones more apparent, he numbers the tones one through four for better memory recall than with current native transcription. Rhythm, the last section in his introduction to pronunciation, is a feature which can only be learned through observation of the teacher and so no lengthy description or exercises are included. Accompanying this section is a sound table, which lists all possible combinations of initial and finals with corresponding characters, to give the student practice listening to their teacher and putting sound to sight. The main use of a syllabary according to Wade is to connect the ear and the eye together and so that the student can, when learning characters, remember what components are radicals and what give sound. The table and the exercises in Part VII are arranged in alphabetical order (according to his orthography) so that, should a teacher present a word which the student doesn't recognize, he may look it up with his knowledge of sound and tone. What we can see from this introduction is Wade writing a system orthography which he does not intend the learner to become dependent on, but rather use as a guide for training the learner to read Chinese.

The heavy emphasis on building reading skills continues when he introduces radicals. For Wade, the importance of learning the radicals speaks for itself because knowing radicals is an essential tool for using dictionaries. Additionally, once a student is familiar with the radicals, he might then look at a character and determine that whatever

is not the radical is the sound component, or the Phonetic. Although he admits that the process of determining which radical is the main radical is a difficult case of trial in error, familiarity with the radicals can make the process of counting the remaining strokes, which constitute the phonetic component, more economical. After the radicals are thoroughly reviewed, he gives the learner a chance to practice their knowledge by asking them to translate a set of phrases, such as 田土 (*tiāntǔ*) or 非止一人 (*fēi zhǐ yī rén*). All of them are composed of characters which happen to be radicals. This is where we can see the learning of pronunciation come full circle: the ability to identify the pronunciation of a word, including its sound and tone, combined with the knowledge of radicals can make learning new words in their written form much easier.

With sufficient practice in pronunciation and the radicals, the student is then moved on to the Forty Exercises, a collection of detached phrases and sentences. None of these seem to revolve around a single topic, but rather first on a simple grammatical construction and gradually creating longer phrases to full sentences. When read closer, too, we can see that the longer phrases fit together in a dialogue, sometimes in a question-and-answer format to reinforce the grammatical constructions introduced. This differs from both Morrison and Edkins, whose detached sentences seem to stay at one length. Wade's choice of what words to include and the amount of words in the introductory chapters is far different from what we saw in Edkins. These choices in some respects reflect the more thorough and refined learning Wade expects of his students.

The very first lesson introduces the construction of numbers and subsequently shows the use of several common measure words and their appropriate uses. While this may seem a small issue, presenting these measure words outside the confines of an

appendix shows that Wade thinks these are important enough to learn now, rather than put off until later. Reinforcing the knowledge of appropriate measure words can create a learning environment where the learner is more invested in knowing Chinese thoroughly. Each new word which appears in the lesson is always listed to the right of the text<sup>43</sup>, and regardless if they are part of a disyllabic word or phrase, they are always listed singularly to give the learner practice in memorizing the meaning and pronunciation of individual characters. In knowing the words individually, the learner can also better view how individual words combine to form a new meaning. Within the second lesson for instance, Wade gives a translation of ‘trader’ for 买卖人 (*mǎimàirén*). By breaking down the three characters in their meaning and sounds, the student has clearer insight as to how all three combine together to make the single English word and therefore easier to remember, rather than memorizing an entire chunk. All of these words and their combinations are given numerous examples of usage, and morphemically or grammatically related pieces are shown in parallel use. In Lesson 4 for instance, he gives parallel usage of the 得 *de*-construction in a pair of sentences: “我们走得快[,] 他们走得慢。” [English: “We walk fast, (and) they walk slow.”]. Rather than Edkins’s method of only showing one example of the related words ‘fast’ and ‘slow’, Wade shows how both are used while still showing their relationship to each other and their proper grammatical usage. The focus here is on both the grammar being explicated and the words. This requires a different kind of understanding of how Chinese functions, compared to Edkins’s *ad hoc*, fill-in-the-blank

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<sup>43</sup> In the first volume, there is no Romanization for these characters. They only appear in the second volume, the key to the book, where there is also given a translation for each word and the phrases and sentences used. This perhaps indicates that only the first volume, without Romanization as a crutch, would be brought before the tutor or teacher.



method. While this seemingly takes up more space, the building of basic words and grammar lays a solid foundation for later reading exercises in further sections for the book and practical reasoning and usage in real life.

#### **4.2.2.3. Analysis**

James Hevia and James Cooley both note that much of what we know about the life of Thomas Wade, the Sinologue and diplomat, are bits and pieces, yet from his surviving works on teaching Chinese, we can gain some clues as to who the man was. The nature of the *Colloquial Series* speaks of a meticulous man, wanting to know the finer details of Chinese in order to connect with how the Chinese think. He knew that starting from the basics was essential to a good foundation of learning and that both the skills of speaking and writing were the vital tools of a future translator. The study of Chinese, though sometimes arduous, had to be taken seriously. The most reasonable way to overcome these learning obstacles is to retrain the mind and think more about Chinese the way native speakers do. Although his main target audience was the interpreters for the British Consul he was training, this type of thinking clearly hit home with other learners outside this specific audience. Its popularity and use spread to Japan, Russia, the United States, his home England and beyond and has recently gained ground in research on his teaching ability and grammatical and phonetic notes. The appeal this series gains rests not only in its comprehensive, systematic nature, but also in how well he integrates Chinese culture and Chinese thoughts on grammar and phonetics. This in effect makes the study of Chinese much more acquirable and approachable from a learner's perspective.

Yet the series is not entirely without some flaws that in later editions Wade seems

to take into consideration. Namely, the amount of effort in memorization the student is required is far too taxing. Wade admits, in the preface to his second edition, that his “novices, at all events, were right” that the requirement of committing 20 to 25 new vocabulary words was too much<sup>44</sup>. And with all of these new vocabulary words, the student is never given the opportunity to translate from English to Chinese, a skill one would assume would be necessary for a consular student. Perhaps this was in an effort to create an immersive learning environment, where after much training such a skill would become more natural or perhaps nonexistent. I would not assume, however, that this was done in an effort to save room. The expansive form of the series, with three to four books required to complete the set, makes the series less compact and therefore more expensive to use. Although perhaps it is left for the instructor to announce, he does not make clear what volume should be used when and how. Yet both of these setbacks, especially the first, do not shy away from Wade’s goal he set forth for his audience. Much of the burden of learning, as perhaps it should be, is laid upon the student to make an effort of serious study. Adaptation of this series is entirely possible, perhaps already thought of, but some compacting and editing would be required to fit with the much broader modern audience of Chinese learners.

### **4.3. FW Baller’s *Mandarin Primer***

#### **4.3.1. Biographical Information**

Like our previous author Edkins, Frederick William Baller (1852-1922) [Chinese

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<sup>44</sup> Wade, T.F. (1886). *YYZEJ*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Preface.

name: 鲍康宁 Bào Kāngníng] was part of a missionary group that sought to evangelize China. We know very little about Baller's life, since there is no autobiography written, but his name frequently appears in accounts of the organization he joined. He was a member of the China Inland Mission (CIM), an evangelical, interdenominational Protestant group founded by Hudson Taylor in 1865, which prioritized converting the Chinese in the most remote areas. The organization recruited missionaries on spiritual qualities, not education or rank in the church, and frequently employed single women. Before joining the group, Baller was one of the first students of the Missionary Institute founded by Henry Guinness, an Irish preacher, in London and arrived in China in 1873. After arriving in Shanghai, he began studying Chinese in Nanjing, just after the city was overrun by the Taiping rebels. It is unclear whether Baller was sympathetic to their cause. In 1887, in response to an influx of new missionary arrivals, Baller began to "devote his linguistic gifts to the preparation of books for the use of young missionaries"<sup>45</sup>. Later editions of the *Mandarin Primer* were actually a combination of the original Vocabulary and an analysis of the Gospel of John. The initial edition was compiled and edited with the help of R. J. Landale, a missionary of Oxford training, and "four competent Chinese teachers"<sup>46</sup>. This primer would eventually undergo thirteen editions, but the main focus will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> edition (with some comparisons to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition). The primer was apparently warmly received, and in the wake of its success, Baller also created a guide on literary Chinese, *Lessons in Elementary Wenli*, and several translated pieces. As the mission's best linguist, he headed the China Inland Mission language school, where his

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<sup>45</sup> Broomhall, M. (1915). *The Jubilee Story of the China Inland Mission*. p.300

<sup>46</sup> Broomhall, p.173

textbook would have been most frequently used.

### **4.3.2. Analysis of the *Mandarin Primer***

#### **4.3.2.1. Preface and Approach**

Much like Wade and Edkins before him, Baller has decided to alter the format and topics of the textbook specifically for one audience, young preachers – an audience he knows best, but the message on how to approach the learning of Chinese rings true to all the textbooks we have seen so far: Students should learn vocabulary and phrases that are appropriate for their work and everyday life. Remembering sentences and phrases from the textbook is a gateway to using it with native speakers beyond one's instructor, but Baller seems to side with Edkins in finding out what the local equivalents are to the phrases learned, not any standard, high form that Wade suggests. While it is true that Wade presents a localized form of Mandarin, specific to the Beijing dialect, he does not make the suggestion as Baller does to seek out locals to find more highly localized phrases and words. The specificity of Wade's orthography to Beijing Mandarin is part of the reason Baller substitutes the system developed by the CIM; for Baller, it leaves out some ways of noting critical aspects of the Shandong dialect, including the realization of the medial /i/ and the presence of the fifth tone, the entering tone 入声 (*rùshēng*). Yet he hesitates to call his Romanization anywhere near exact, just closer to what is real for the area he resides. Baller in fact encourages the learner to, after several years of familiarity with the area and complete memorization of one orthography, make some recommendations for corrections. Because these learners are at a time when standard orthography was still in its infancy, they are put in the position of an active participant in their learning. Learning Chinese well could in fact help improve the field, and the way to

achieve is through constant conversation.

Baller makes several recommendations to the students (and the instructor as well) as to how one can effectively conduct and use conversation. Clarity, including clear pronunciation and avoiding mumbling, is the key concept. Memorizing and practicing the sound table he provides will lead to a good sense of diction that precludes the learner from being misinterpreted in meaning and from sounding too foreign. Secondly, the way one expresses himself can help the teacher hear what is being said. Baller suggests to speak slowly, enunciate (or speak with force at a volume higher than normal conversation) and with as short of sentences as possible. The learner should also be aware of overreliance on ‘accommodated Chinese’ (possibly meaning the sentences of the textbook) and should be prepared to adjust his phrasing according to the local dialect. Over all, the learner should converse not only with the locals but as much as possible with their teacher. In later studies, one can use the Chinese they have learned to ask their teacher the meaning of what they are reading, a way to further reinforce both conversation and meaning comprehension.

#### **4.3.2.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons**

As a forward to his lessons, Baller addresses the reoccurring issue of pronunciation, but aspiration and tones, although they may have some general rules, “they must be learnt from the living voice”. For aspirates, the “guttural roughness” that comes from creating aspiration to distinguish 套 (*tào*) from the “soft and smooth” 到 (*dào*) makes no difference in English, yet generally speaking, most Mandarin dialects observe this distinction and in the same way. Unlike aspiration, tones are not realized the same everywhere, so no descriptions are given as to what the five tones sound like. Tones,

a hard aspect especially for adults not immersed in them (compared to children or natives), can only be observed through the teacher's example, and the student should listen, not "construct a theory of what the teacher should sound like". For the learner's reference, however, the tones are marked on one of the corners of the character provided. After listening to the teacher's example, the learner is given a chance to practice distinguishing, first between all tones with the same pronunciation then between different pairs of aspiration accompanied by one of the five tones.

Imitation, it seems, is part of the process. However, Baller strikes a good middle road between this and metalinguistic awareness through personal discovery and informative talks, much in the fashion of Wade. For instance, when informing the learner about writing characters, he starts off by suggesting (should one feel uncomfortable about his handwriting) copying the draft a teacher gives him or watch him as he writes. At the same time, he appends a small chart which shows the rough order of strokes. Both Edkins and Wade before him presented to the learner the importance of characters and the presence of radicals<sup>47</sup>, including the meaning and phonetic components. The writing of characters, or at least an awareness of how they were composed by the hand, was left solely to imitating the teacher and not any other tool for the student to analyze character writing for themselves. This enhancement of learner awareness continues in the composition of the lessons, at times playing to Baller's strength as a (perhaps, self-taught) linguist.

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<sup>47</sup> Edkins later published a handbook on characters, titled *Introduction to the study of Chinese characters* (1876), yet this seems to draw extensively on his philological studies. The explanations are mostly on the origin of characters and components, but there is no graphic detailing of how to write characters. Wade provides detail in the *Colloquial Series* on the radicals and phonetics (as explained previously) but does not show either how to compose characters by hand.

The chapters are untitled and not usually organized around a single topic. The index shows that they are referred to by the grammatical or vocabulary issue he means the reader to address. The references seem to always draw parallels to its usage in English and speaking as plainly as possible with very limited use of technical words. The strong usage of English parallels may indicate that, from Baller's own experience, these are things which the learner might already be questioning or could get confused with. Although Wade as well does thoroughly explain the fine features of grammar, its connection with English is not as prominent. For example, when introducing the feature 请/请问 (*qǐng/qǐngwèn*) [English: 'invite'/'excuse me'], Baller recognizes the similarity in Chinese and English to address or request something kindly and gives a few examples from each language; Wade only provides a translation. The point to each lesson, then, is to lecture about the grammatical or vocabulary features which help the learner understand the text. Each of these chapters is brought together in pairs (Lesson 1 with 2, 3 with 4...) in a reading which follows both, along with translation exercises. The translations are both English to Chinese and Romanization to Chinese (character). The readings, whether meant for reading aloud or to translate, are not merely a collection of sentences. They have two main features: (a) they highlight grammar through alternating parallel structure, and (b) are in the framework of a conversation. Both of these have been seen in Wade, yet rather than building on small foundations to lead to fuller sentences, Baller shows the full sentence right away.

#### **4.3.2.3. Analysis**

We can see in this textbook two key aspects of Baller's teaching method. First, Baller plays to his strengths as a linguist and learner: he provides the student with meta-

knowledge of Chinese that coordinates with their own knowledge of English, a mode which neither Wade nor Edkins fully touched on. Yet, while applying his linguistic grammatical knowledge, he affirms that the principle of language acquisition should be (in preface to third edition) “based on the principles of Correspondence and Contrast, rather than... grammatical analysis. Hence the points of similarity and difference have been emphasized by placing side by side parallel or opposite constructions.”<sup>48</sup> These are especially evident in the structure of his textbook. Even within the introductory sections of his preface, he systematically breaks down how to find the radical of a character, necessary for reading and using a dictionary; the order of strokes for some of the radicals are even provided to make the student more aware of the component they are learning. Each chapter gives the learner a chance to reflect on their questions about the vocabulary and understand key issues of the text to be learner before diving right in. Most every piece of grammatical advice is given an example when necessary and explained in as clear language as possible. He makes a good choice too, in providing exercises in both directions – English to Chinese and Chinese to English – and testing the student on the harder ability, the former, before the latter. The sentences for the translation and reading exercises are set in parallel structure to reinforce the grammatical skills he is trying to impart.

Yet his attempt to slowly break down the Chinese language for the reader runs into the same problem as some faced with Wade: the amount of memorization required is extremely burdensome. In not having a full sample exercise of the Chinese characters, vocabulary and grammar for reading comprehension immediately following the list and

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<sup>48</sup> Baller, F. W., (1900). *A Mandarin Primer*. Preface to third edition, in fourth edition, p. vii



explication, the student would have to refer back to a list of words which might not have been taught for an entire chapter. Yet, like Wade, he addressed this issue, and we see major improvements in between the fourth edition (analyzed here) and his eight editions (1911). Even within the exercises of his Romanization system, he modifies the spelling to coordinate with the Chinese method of ‘spelling’, 反切 (*fǎnqiè*), in order to make memorization of the system more streamlined. Each chapter is given its own reading section, but in still emphasizing the parallel structure method of instruction, he overcompensates by giving what might be considered far too many examples. The grammatical sections, however, are clearly labeled as to what they are mentioning, which is a welcomed improvement in providing students better access to recall.

The source in these flaws comes in part from the audience he is writing for and the way in which he is writing for them. We see that unlike the missionaries Edkins was writing for, the missionaries of Baller’s society are required to have the skills of both speaking *and* reading. The very attempt to include both of these skills in a textbooks leads to some interesting conflicts in expressing the teaching and learning of Chinese, a topic which I will touch on later in this chapter in an overall analysis of these textbooks.

#### **4.4. CW Mateer’s *Mandarin Lessons***

##### **4.4.1. Biographical Information**

The only American among the authors, Calvin Wilson Mateer (1836-1908) [Chinese name: 狄考文 *Dí Kǎowén*], native of Pennsylvania, graduated from Theological Seminary School in Pittsburgh. After doing mission work in the United States, he became part of the American Presbyterian Mission, and subsequently stationed in Shandong, a

section of the Central China Mission. Prior to the compilation of this textbook, Mateer had experience with teaching and creating textbooks. Namely, he was a board member of the Educational Association, which oversaw the compilation of mathematics textbooks for students in APM mission schools within China. Additionally, he and his wife founded a boy's schools in which he developed a 'three point system' of education that the school adopted: (a) instruction was only given in Chinese; (b) traditional Chinese education was supplemented by Western scientific scholarship traditions; and (c) standards of admissions were raised through emphasizing Christian character. The success of the school eventually converted it into the first Christian college in China<sup>49</sup>.

Mateer was also part of an (incomplete) colossal project “indicative of the large things to which early in his missionary career he was already eager to give his time and abilities”<sup>50</sup> – a large-scale dictionary, which included many idioms and di- and polysyllabic words and phrases. Of the dictionary, he stated:

“My idea of the book is a dictionary of the spoken language of north China, in all its length and breadth, including on the one hand all the colloquialisms that the people use in everyday life,—all they use in Chi-li and in Shantung, and in all the Mandarin speaking provinces, so far as we can get it, noting, of course, as such, the words and phrases we know to be local. Further, let it include as a prominent feature all sorts of ready-made idiomatic phrases, and in general all combinations of two or more characters in which the meaning coalesces, or varies from the simple rendering of the separate characters.”<sup>51</sup>

The dictionary was only a precursor to the completion of his textbook, yet his goal of providing Chinese instruction through idiom that could be used anywhere remained the same. The compiling of the book was several years in the making that started with simply

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<sup>49</sup> Brown, G. Thompson, (1999), “Mateer, Calvin Wilson” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*.

<sup>50</sup> Broomhall, p.165

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

teaching his wife's sister, Maggie, to "bring out the peculiarities of Chinese idiom".

These lessons were collected and converted for use in teaching the boys in the school he and his wife founded. Within his preface, although he states that the book was formed for these students, the source from which he drew inspiration means that the format could possibly be applicable to those who are not missionaries.

#### **4.4.2. Analysis of *Mandarin Lessons***

##### **4.4.2.1. Preface and Approach**

Mateer makes general remarks on how to study Chinese and gives advice to the students in a relatively encouraging tone. For him, the two key ingredients for success are memorization and communication. Over all, students should memorize the sounds tables, lessons and idioms set before them and to not be afraid to speak with natives to acquire more colloquialisms, rather they should "strike out with more boldness" in using and improving on what they have learned.

For Baller, the four steps in speaking Chinese properly require the learner to: (a) put words in the correct idiomatic/grammatical order; (b) apply proper rhythmical emphasis; (c) use correct syllable pronunciation; (d) make sure aspiration and tones are correct. The first two skills can come through reading; the other two must be imitated. Learning to read, then, as opposed to learning to speak, is ultimately the strongest and most important method of acquisition. The primary way to achieve both of these goals is through a study "idioms". His term is very vague and should not be confused with the general understanding of the term; he seems to refer to "idiom" as a general term for anything which is particular to a language or cannot be readily understood outside its context, or more specifically for his textbook, grammar. There are several major

advantages in studying through individual idioms, (here reduced from the preface):

(1) The introduction of individual idioms proceeds in a naturally progressive order, from simplest to more complex. By mastering them one at a time, the idioms “thus become to the student so many landmarks of progress, and by their acquisition he is made master of the whole structure of the language”.

(2) Compared to the use of topics, one can “embrace as wide a range as possible of words and ideas” and by singling out the individual idioms, more careful explanations can be given. Besides helping the learner acquire idioms, the skill of reading (and its counterpart, writing) has additional benefits for studying Chinese. Both of these are the more difficult aspects of the language and the line of demarcation between classical and colloquial is blurred in the written language. Since both styles of writing were still present among the educated classes, knowledge of the written language and the skills of reading and writing, especially from Chinese to English, were necessary. Knowledge and practice of the skill of speaking would take the place of any exercises of translating from English to Chinese. Very little, if any, intermediary language is involved. The overall goal, it seems, is to start thinking in Chinese by internalizing grammar through the written language.

#### **4.4.2.2. Text/Chapters/Lessons**

Prior to the start of his lessons, Mateer provides exercises in radicals, tones and aspirates. Within many of these, there is a limited amount (and sometimes, none at all) of Romanization given for the characters in order to emphasize meaning (through radicals) and sound (through tones and aspirates) in context and to reduce the labor of memorization. Less attention given to the latter two aspects because they are less needed

for the purposes of the textbook, which focuses on meaning and grammatical comprehension through writing. For the radicals, Mateer forwards with a chart which lists the radicals in order as they appear in the dictionary. They are arranged in columns, and although the sound of the character comes first in the listing, the meaning is written closer to the character, which emphasizes the meaning association rather than sound association; Additionally, a “radical ode” (created by another missionary) is provided to help the student remember both the meaning and the order – each group of strokes is given its own story to put the meaning in a fabricated context. A table of sounds is provided to show the number of tones associated with all possible syllabic combinations. Some are absent (such as 嚼 (*jiáo*), ‘to chew/mull over’) because some tone-syllable combinations are not agreeable between dialects of Northern (or Southern) Mandarin. No exercises in tones are given because according to Mateer, “it is not a profitable method of study” – all pronunciation should be learned in isolation. Learning pronunciation can be done in the context through the example phrases and sentences in the lessons; therefore, every sentence is a tone exercise. Lastly, aspiration is addressed in a chart in which aspirated and their non-aspirated counterparts are placed side-by-side to allow the student to hear the differences and see how they are related.

Following these exercises and charts, there is a total of over two hundred lessons, each dedicated to only one grammatical aspect<sup>52</sup>. Each lessons starts with a (brief) explanation as to what the given grammatical piece means or why they are used, but its function is only shown by example to the student, not explicated upon. Following the

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<sup>52</sup> None of the chapters are labeled as introductory, so due to the large amount of lessons, I decided to the amount of chapters needed as an introduction could be suitably reduced to the first ten.

explanation, vocabulary necessary for comprehending the example sentences are given with all possible meanings, especially in the case of words such as 东西 (*dōngxi*), which can the meaning of both ‘thing’ and in the right context, a worthless person. For the sake of full comprehension of individual words, disyllabic words are deconstructed and then brought together for their combined meaning, such as the case of 明白 (*míngbái*) in Lesson 3. 明 (*míng*) is explained as “bright, brilliant, or to explain” and 白 (*bái*) is defined as “white, plain or obvious”, giving the combination of “clear, intelligent or to understand”. Such a large amount of vocabulary is meant to vary the sentences and increase the learner’s repertoire of words. Once the vocabulary is thoroughly explained, the lesson then consists of sentences – with Chinese on the left, English translation on the right, no intermediary Romanization – to emphasize the grammar to be learned. Notes following these sentences contain secondary uses, underlying meanings or cultural/dialectal notes on the use of words or phrases.

#### **4.4.2.3. Analysis**

Mateer offers many methods for the non-native student to remember the Chinese which he has just acquired and to recall it. The radicals, the key to learning to write, are not only categorized by the number of strokes, but the definitions for these meaningful components are also given. Additionally the radicals are put in a context of an ode which further reinforces association of meaning through context. The great strength in Mateer’s textbook lies in his use of singular analysis of grammar, which can provide some pedagogical benefits to learners. Particularly, this type of learning allows the student to see each grammatical piece with multiple examples, and they are still led progressively from easier to hard ‘idiomatic’ pieces. The way in which this learning could be tailored to

the individual is to substitute the vocabulary that they want to know and want to use. For the vocabulary which is provided, every character is given its own meaning so the student can clearly see all the meanings, which is a way for the student to immediately answer the questions he might have about vocabulary and start a conversation with his teacher.

Yet this style still exhibits some flaws which can inhibit the learner's true acquisition. Although each chapter is only meant to focus on a single grammar, other pieces might have to be introduced in order to make complete thoughts. For instance, Lesson Three focuses on the use of personal pronouns, yet in making complete sentences, Mateer must use the negative 没 (méi), as in 他没(有) 吃早/朝饭。 [English: 'He has not eaten breakfast']. The only time he can take to explain the use of this negation is within the confines of the vocabulary list, yet it might take an entire lesson (of which he does not have) to explain when 不 (bù) and 没 (měi), both negators, are respectively used. Bringing up individual grammatical pieces will inevitably draw in other grammatical issues, and so directing the student to acquire a broader grammatical topic, not a single piece, might have been the better choice.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Reflections on the Four Textbooks

The textbooks which we have analyzed above have many major differences from the textbooks now, some changes of which have been for the benefit of students living in the modern age. There is a greater addition of cultural input, where students are given more information on aspects of Chinese culture that they might encounter with native speakers of while traveling in China. Dialogues are the main tool for expressing Chinese and showing its situational uses, such as the case of the *Integrated Chinese* series. These include reoccurring characters with whom the students can identify. The dialogue format is also much better suited to the larger classroom sizes and wider-reaching audience of Chinese learners.

Yet what has been lost in the process of conforming to more modern standards and methods of teaching may prove to be detrimental to student learning. The way these pioneering compilers addressed issues in teaching characters, vocabulary, reading skills and speaking (including tones and pronunciation) made an environment of more serious, better informed students that we should consider for our teaching nowadays. Characters were explained by their components of sound and meaning, and much more time was dedicated to learning and mastering these. Instead of the modern method of teaching vocabulary in disyllabic compounds, the more successful of these old textbooks explained each word in the compound in terms of its meaning and how it functioned with other words. This could dramatically increase a student's ability to pick up new



vocabulary. These vocabulary words, while their meanings are taught in isolation, are not taught to be read in isolation. Reading a word from a vocabulary list and reading one in context are two very different skills, which some of these textbook authors seemed to recognize. The source material used for reading and writing skills were taken from authentic sources, with real language written by living people. The dialogue format, with little emphasis on the reading of newspapers, short novels and the like, makes for memorization of stilted conversation which might not have even taken place in real life. The benefit of these textbooks, in mostly emphasizing reading and writing skills, made it so that speaking skills, especially conversation, would be practiced with a real person and the materials they just read a conversation starter. This in its own way is a much more natural way of acquiring language.

The value of these textbooks, then, is not just in their originality as Chinese learning materials. They address issues which we still face today and can possibly apply to our own teaching. Yet it is hard to judge their applicability because the learning audience and teaching standards we have now are so far removed from the past. The authors of these books wrote for an audience which was capable of self-study with a tutor as a natural partner in the learning process. These students could give suggestions on how the book should be compiled and therefore had a greater impact in the teaching process. Authentic language materials and real conversation, coming from a native speaker, made for an equally role in the compilation and teaching process, and the role of the teacher or tutor was not as a lecturer but as a conversant. These non-native teachers, using their own experiences and without any precedent for making a text, created something that has laid

the foundation for what we have now and can help us start a conversation about what we can do to improve ourselves now.

## **5.2. Limitations of Study**

There are some considerations for broadening the scope and analysis of this study that could aid future studies of this subject. This study mostly concerns the introductory lessons and the prefaces which introduce these lessons, yet a more precise and deeper study of specific elements could reveal the changes in certain aspects of the field, such as the teaching of tones, pronunciation, characters or Chinese culture. The choice to remain broad in the analysis of these textbooks was because of the newness of the topic within Western research and the lack of comparative features between textbooks. The analysis of these features is perhaps subjective, but this author's role as a teacher and learner hopefully provides a new perspective on the effectiveness of these textbooks. Additionally, this study is only an overview of these textbooks. Many other textbooks on Chinese from this time period and beyond exist, both in English and in other foreign languages, and the study of these other books could add more depth to this topic. The textbooks in this study are, in this author's opinion, relatively comparable, and they properly reveal the changing patterns and the difficulties of teaching and textbook compiling.

## **5.3. Areas for Future Research**

The textbook hopefully can make contributions to some current areas of study and open the doors to areas for future research. First, we should consider the teaching of

Chinese from the learner's perspective in order to have a more complete picture of the field of teaching Chinese. A statistical understanding of the popularity of these textbooks or personal accounts from students on their feelings of the textbooks and their experiences using them could enhance this perspective further. Additionally, discovering the teaching of languages from the perspective of non-native speakers can broaden the field of foreign language teaching. This study should show that non-native speakers of Chinese can make as meaningful contributions to textbook compilation and Chinese teaching as native speakers, and their role as teachers is clearly evident. We should look at these books not just for the authenticity of the language presented; rather, we should start considering textbooks for *how* they present the language to a learner in an *approachable, learnable* way. This case study should help provide evidence of the history of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and bring to light the issues and perspectives of Chinese from non-native learners and teachers.

#### **5.4. General Conclusion**

In the search for finding where and how the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language began, many different aspects had to be analyzed. The need for textbooks and their use in teaching Chinese in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century derived from the differences in Western and Chinese relationships to foreign languages, foreigners, vernacular and stratified languages. In the West, the change in the status of Latin as a prestige language elevated the use and prominence of vernaculars. The teaching of foreign languages was connected to the European search for legitimacy of how languages were related to one another, particularly through the rules of grammar that had their basis in Latin. Textbooks

solidified the method of teaching languages through grammar and often the teaching of newer languages was done in the same manner. China, however, did not derive its legitimacy in language from another culture, and the written language, as opposed to the spoken language which played a larger role in the West, remained relatively unchanged and unchallenged in its status. Consequently, no established method for teaching Chinese, especially to foreigners, ever evolved. Textbooks, therefore, would be the key to Western comprehension of Chinese.

Compared to other available sources for those living in China, textbooks answered many of the problems learners felt about the acquisition of Chinese. They were able to codify the language in a pedagogically progressive way that revealed Chinese as a learnable language, ultimately tearing down the veil of mystery that had constantly surrounded it. Yet not every textbook approached the teaching of Chinese in the same way; often a textbook's structure and content was based on the author's own experiences or in lieu of the needs of their target audience. Over time, the trend of textbooks leaned towards a more general audience that would need to utilize all aspects of the language. Both ends of this teaching spectrum – the specified and the more generalized – run into problems with the presentation of the language. Yet, as Chao (2001) notes, many of these problems, both the ones the textbooks authors attempted to address and those which they still encountered, are ones which we still face in our teaching and textbook compiling today<sup>53</sup>. What we should understand from this study, then, is this: Considering the time in which they were written – mostly absent of any precedent of Chinese textbook compilation – and their status as non-native speakers, the attempt of these early teachers

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<sup>53</sup> Chao, Der-lin. (2001). "Issues Raised and Discussed". p.96.

to pioneer the teaching of Chinese is an accomplishment nothing short of extraordinary.

Moreover, their achievements should help us understand two valuable lessons for teaching Chinese: effective textbooks are a mix of the non-native experience of teaching and learning and native input of realistic language use. The textbook authors not only drew from their own experiences but also frequently used native editors as consultants. This partnership between native and non-native perspectives is something we should consider when trying to find source material. Additionally, learning for what is relevant to one's life is the greatest motivational factor in language. All four authors had specific audiences in mind and added information that was important for those careers<sup>54</sup>. What we should consider as teachers is how teaching should always be for the sake of how and why our students learn. These textbooks show how both of these aspects can be effectively integrated, and so discussing and analyzing them is worth it to our current teaching.

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<sup>54</sup> Chao, Der-lin, (2000). "Promoting the Study of the Chinese Language in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century: "*The Chinese Repository*" as a Resource". *JCLTA*, 35:2.

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