Linguistic Awareness and Language Use: The Chinese Literati at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Darja Miyajima

Abstract The linguistic situation in China at the beginning of the twentieth century confronted the Chinese literati with many challenges. While there was a rather clear decision in favor of the Vernacular Written Chinese (*baihua* 白話) as the new written language, which finally bridged the gap between spoken and written language that had been maintained by Classical Written Chinese (*wenyan* 文言) for centuries, it still remained unclear how the Vernacular would operate in all the domains necessary for a modern standard language since, up to that point, it had been restricted to certain domains (e.g. popular literature, private notes). One of the sources of inspiration was Western literature, which not only provided interesting theoretical ideas and new literary genres but also contained linguistic features that were eventually adopted into the modern Chinese language and have been preserved up to the present day. These features were integrated into Chinese mainly through translation works by outstanding scholars like Lu Xun, Liang Shiqiu, and Qu Qiubai. The first part of this paper focuses on their debates and arguments concerning free and literal translation methods, as well as on the differences and similarities in their attitudes. The second part will compare their theoretical points of view concerning the use of the third-person pronouns in their original and translated works and will attempt to use it as an indicator of the level of a text's Westernization. As a rule, we can see that linguistic awareness and language use have a rather close connection, but there are also exceptions that make more thorough research necessary.

Keywords Baihua • Wenyan • Westernization • Literal translation • Free translation • Third-person pronouns

D. Miyajima (✉)
Institute of Slavic Studies, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg
e-mail: darja.miyajima@slav.uni-heidelberg.de

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Introduction

> In order to seek social progress, it is necessary to break up the prejudices that are upheld as 'inalterable principles' or as 'established from of old'. We believe that politics, ethics, science, the arts, religion and education should all meet practical needs in the achievement of progress for present and future social life. We have to give up the useless and irrelevant elements of the traditional literature and ethics because we want to create those needed for the progress of the new era and new society. (Chow 1960, 174)

These words, taken from the New Youth Manifesto (1919), are suggestive of the atmosphere in China during the times of transition. The transition began at about the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) when, after having faced a long period of rebellion, unrest, and armed conflict, the Qing government took several half-hearted and rather ineffective measures to change things for the court and its subjects. Since these measures didn't reap the expected positive effects and because the government had also been defeated in several wars, the need to develop more effective technology, military, and industry became clear. At the beginning of the twentieth century, technological and industrial development was a highly urgent issue to some, while others were more concerned about the spiritual and intellectual development of the Chinese people, which they saw as the basis for any further undertaking (Chow 1960, 327). Some scholars at the time thought it best to mix Western science with the 'Chinese essence' in lifestyle and philosophy and to stay true to traditional values, others saw the need for sweeping social and educational reforms, to introduce the ideas of Western civilization, and to create a new China through the re-evaluation of traditions (Chow 1960, 173). Thus, the period was marked by both faith in the effects of progress and despair about the bulk of ancient thought and behavior patterns that seemed to hang like a millstone around the country's neck.

After having been soundly defeated by the superior technology of Western weapons, a good many Chinese scholars were willing to acquire the necessary knowledge for the sake of overcoming technical backwardness. Others who sought to fight 'intellectual backwardness' wished to learn from the West. Since there were very limited opportunities for people in those times to study abroad, the only way to learn about the West was through the printed word.

Lu Xun (魯迅 1881–1936), the prominent Chinese writer and thinker, understood quickly that literature was one of the most important tools used to enlighten people. As one of the key figures in the reform movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, he not only influenced the theoretical developments in the modern Chinese literature, but also made a veritable impact on the lexical stock and the grammatical structure of the written language through his innovative creations, some of which were eagerly copied by his followers and eventually adopted by large parts of China's population.

The linguistic situation at that time was indeed fertile soil for innovations, experiments, and discussions: The call for China's unity and political reforms also involved greater unity of its language, which would not only help in

communication with the population but also to strengthen it (Chow 1960, 244). However, the population consisted of people speaking mutually unintelligible dialects who were only able to reach the highest level of communication solely through written texts. Although Classical Written Chinese (*wenyan* 文言) was most probably based on a spoken language, in the enthusiasm for imitating the standards of ancient times it had basically ossified into an archetypal state over many centuries with the help of abundant rules, restrictions, and fixed patterns, thus creating a considerable gap between the spoken and the written language (Zhou 2003, 36–37). Writing a text in *wenyan* wasn't simply a matter of knowing characters, but also of understanding all the considerations necessary to produce an intricate composition; only a small part of the population had access to that highly refined and complex medium (Zhou 2003, 44). Nevertheless, *wenyan* couldn't completely prevent people from just recording day-to-day speech: The practice of writing down just what was meant to be said out loud and expressing through words that did not need further refinement and could be understood by 'your average Chinese recipient' had produced the Vernacular Written Chinese (*baihua* 白話), which was used in much less prestigious literary works (novels, plays) and in many areas of daily life (bills, notes, informal letters) (Zhou 2003, 46–48). Since the nineteenth century there had been scholars who considered abandoning the inflexible patterns of *wenyan* in favor of the more vivid *baihua*, and by the beginning of the twentieth century *baihua* was indeed seen as the base of a standard written language used to facilitate a faster literacy growth. But while *baihua* did provide a base for this standard written language there were still far too many unanswered questions in the domains of language system, functionality, and norms that occupied the minds of literati like Lu Xun. Those questions resulted in heated debates about where to acquire the lexical and grammatical entities that *baihua* still lacked in order to be a fully developed standard language, and what to do with *wenyan,* which was too deeply rooted in the culture to simply dismiss.

Liang Shiqiu (梁實秋 1903–1087) and Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白 1889–1935) were two of the most active participants in these debates who challenged some of Lu Xun's ideas and whose opinions and works have been taken into account for this study. Both were keen thinkers, brilliant translators and essayists, and they helped shape the modern Chinese language.

This paper will describe the views of Lu Xun and his contemporaries based on translation principles, Westernization, and Chineseness. By taking translations and original writings by the authors in question as examples, we shall compare those principles with their realization in practice and from those results draw some conclusions about the degree to which an attitude can be mirrored in works and spread not only through overall diffusion of theoretical instructions, but also through inspiring other people to imitate the execution of those instructions in a tangible application. It would be quite logical to presume that the literati were willing to take the same medicine that they prescribed to others, but practice often proved to be quite different from theory. It is for this reason that thorough examinations (in fact, more thorough than this small-scale study can provide) of concrete

texts are necessary, especially when dealing with sources that both reflect and induce language change.

Literati: Literary and Literal

In his youth, Lu Xun read the translations of predecessors like Lin Shu (林紓 1852–1924), who translated a large amount of Western fiction, and Yan Fu (嚴復 1853–1921), who translated scientific treatises. The work of these two translators was indeed outstanding, and they helped to raise the acceptance level for fiction and to introduce Western ideas, scholars, and authors to a Chinese audience. Lu Xun soon produced his first translations of works by Victor Hugo and later Jules Vernes. The scientific progress of the West was set aside when it became more important for him to find a way to influence attitudes in China. He accused the Chinese of being too passive and fatalistic, for lacking interest in the fate of others (Lundberg 1989, 86), and he sought not only to help people to correct these flaws but also to demonstrate how important the spiritual development of each individual was (Chow 1960, 309–310). Thus, he began choosing works that he deemed suitable for this goal, criticizing, for example, Lin Shu for his random choices of popular fiction (Lundberg 1989, 214). Lu Xun was able to read Japanese and some German, a skill that allowed him to enjoy original works by Japanese and German authors and served as a tool by which he could access works by writers from a number of so-called oppressed countries like Russia (Lundberg 1989, 43). Lu Xun hoped works that described the unwavering vigor of a "surging stream" that paradoxically characterized an 'oppressed' Russia (Lundberg 1989, 174) might help to revive the Chinese people's spirit. He believed that Russia's fate was something Chinese people could relate to and hoped that they would draw some precious conclusions from what they read (Lundberg 1989, 42).

After having put a lot of effort into studying domestic and foreign literature and into translation, Lu Xun began to write his own short stories, poems, and essays in *baihua*. Since he was against the concept of art for art's sake (Lundberg 1989, 188), these original works, in addition to being literature that should contribute to the greater good "for man" and "for life," were meant to facilitate the above-mentioned educational aims (Lundberg 1989, 59). Although Lu Xun is best known for his original writings and although he also became interested in translating theoretical works and in participating in politics, he never really gave up translating fiction: his last—regrettably unfinished—translation was *Mërtvye duši* (*Dead Souls*) by Nikolai Gogol'.

It is not necessary to point out here that translation is not an easy task, but we should certainly be aware of how particularly tricky it was for the Chinese literati of that time to engage in this kind of activity: Unknown concepts and lifestyles needed to be transmitted, different kinds of terminology were to be developed, peculiar grammar and style features to be puzzled together, and new words to be invented. As translators tried to cope with these challenges, all the while struggling with the

insufficiency of *baihua*, new developments in the Chinese language of some sort were inevitable. Even the aforementioned Lin Shu and Yan Fu, who both displayed a rather conservative attitude to translation and who preferred to stay true to the elegant style of *wenyan* (Zhou 2003, 52; Tsien 1954, 320) which, in their opinion, was an adequate instrument to draw the attention of the Chinese public and to transmit the necessary Western ideas, still couldn't completely avoid copying sentence structures and coining new terms (Lundberg 1989, 209–212).

The 'conservative' translation methods used prior to the nineteenth century involved a 'creative tandem' where the original text was read by someone who understood the language and who retold it to the person in charge of the writing. That person not only conveyed the essence to the passage re-narrated into beautiful *wenyan* sentences, but also often took the opportunity of adding 'adjustments' or omitting parts that were not considered suitable for Chinese readers (Tsien 1954, 307–308; Chen 2009, 95). This practice carried on until the beginning of the twentieth century: Lin Shu (one of the most prominent translators who didn't read any foreign languages) as well as Yan Fu, among others, thought it best to modify the translation text according to his own considerations (Tsien 1954, 321–322). Yan Fu justified those considerations by developing the principles of faithfulness (信 *xìn*—stay true to the original), expressiveness (達 *dá*—be accessible to the reader), and elegance (雅 *yǎ*—use the language of the educated recipient) (Lundberg 1989, 211–212; Liao 2008, 39). These principles, along with their definitions and hierarchy, sparked numerous, fervid discussions similar to the controversy surrounding foreignizing and domesticating translation methods. Was it indeed best to stick to the original no matter what (foreignization), or was it better to adapt the writing to the target language and culture (domestication)? Should the work's outcome look like a translation of the alien or like an original text in one's mother tongue?

Lu Xun, who was an active and important part of these discussions, criticized Yan Fu for trying too hard to please the Chinese readers and Lin Shu for his 'assembly-line-translations' that didn't match the original style or genre and were inaccurate, distorting the original through random changes (Lundberg 1989, 213–214). For Lu Xun, translation wasn't the easiest thing either, but he did believe that by simply transmitting ideas people could actually create texts of their own; nonetheless, a foreign work should make a foreign impression as well. Lu Xun pointed out that it was better to sacrifice elegance and stick to a truthful rendition. Even if people had trouble understanding those texts initially due to their foreignness, they would soon get used to the style and understand; indeed, in the end this understanding would help them to evolve, whereas it wouldn't do the reader any good to simply read 'domesticated' literature (Lundberg 1989, 215).

With his opinions and his writings on the topic, Lu Xun triggered the debate on literal (*zhíyì* 直譯—direct) versus free translation (*yìyì* 意譯—analogous, transmitting the ideas). He argued vehemently in favor of the literal translation method, which meant following the original to the extent of refusing to change grammatical patterns and the word order (Chen 2009, 96). He decided to deliberately introduce

foreign structures into Chinese that made those translations a mental challenge for the readers (Lundberg 1989, 218–219).

Liang Shiqiu, one of the most prominent adversaries of Lu Xun in those debates, though not a devoted supporter of free translation either (Chen 2009, 98), regarded that challenge as an unnecessary torture. He criticized the literal word-for-word translations, because he failed to see the benefits in reading meticulous copies of something that didn't make any tangible sense (Liang 1934, 65; 302). He refused to make a scapegoat of *wenyan* or of the Chinese language itself (Liang 1934, 69) and he couldn't agree with the allegation that the texts produced with less structural constraints were mere re-narrations or that the translators who emphasized the transmission of the meaning were just avoiding difficult passages (Chen 2009, 98). Despite this criticism, Lu Xun still chose to remain exaggeratedly faithful to producing a fluent, easily readable text (Chen 2009, 96). Even if a combination of these principles seemed ideal, in practice both ways were not always possible and in cases when one course of action had to be chosen, it was still most important to keep the "original atmosphere" of the text. Making a decision in favor of elegance by sacrificing the faithfulness was absolutely unacceptable (Lundberg 1989, 227). After all, Lu Xun didn't really intend to make it easy for anyone; he couldn't adapt completely to the practice of scholars who had a rather moderate view of the matter and were struggling to find a balance between fluent writing and being faithful to the content, while avoiding thoughtless word-for-word translations and fact changing. On the other hand, he did wish for readers to notice how different things were in the West and to understand that China truly needed reforms. For Lu Xun, Westernization itself was the goal because without it the writings in *baihua* wouldn't be able to meet the expectations of a modern language (Lundberg 1989, 217).

Qu Qiubai, an intellectual and translator who was highly valued by Lu Xun, and who, like Lu Xun, favored literal translations per se, contradicted him by asserting that a text could be faithful and easy to read as long as one considered each and every word of his translation (Xu 2007, 83; Wei 2010, 95–96). In his opinion, deciding about the needs of uneducated people from the point of view of the educated wasn't the right path to reach the most urgent and important goal: the education of the masses. If one really wanted the people to understand, one needed to write as they speak and to use a common language that was easy enough to decode. Qu Qiubai made the reader a part of the creation process, a part that one needed to adjust and to respond to (Wei 2010, 97). His translation principles included "absolute correctness" and "absolute *baihua*" (*juedui de zhengque, juedui de baihua* 絕對的正確, 絕對的白話), meaning faithful rendition of the original text in the written speech of people with an average education level, which would be understandable when read aloud (Xu 2007, 81; Wei 2010, 96–97). While Lu Xun kept certain *wenyan* elements in his texts on purpose, Qu Qiubai dismissed the violation of grammar rules (Liu 2004, 12; Wei 2010, 98) and regarded faithfulness and the use of *wenyan* as incompatible (Wei 2010, 95). As a relentless proponent of free translations, Lu Xun was well aware of the problems that literal translations created for the readers. His suggestion was that translations like his own were meant

to be read by educated people, while others, deprived of access to such texts, should strive to reach that education level (Wei 2010, 97). However, Qu Qiubai still emphasized the need for literature aimed at proletarians and the political goals that needed to be achieved first (Xu 2007, 81).

In fact, when we take a closer look at the different theoretical positions and concentrate on finding similarities in the attitudes and practical implementations, we can see that in all cases extremes were dreaded and heavily criticized: that is, the dangers of free translation becoming random and literal translation becoming incomprehensible gibberish were to be avoided at all costs (Chen 2009, 98–99). If we arrange the principles of Yan Fu according to priority, we would clearly see a kind of consensus among the literati who placed content first, followed by style, and then expression. Furthermore, whether one valued *wenyan* or *baihua* more, it was often difficult to keep one's preferred variety clean of 'speckles' in the form of neologisms or archaisms; both equally served the purpose of adjusting language to the extra-linguistic reality and its demands.

While others accused, for instance, Qu Qiubai of distorting and even 'murdering' the Chinese language (Xu 2007, 81), Lu Xun was certain that it had to be remodeled. He believed that not only the particularly foreign atmosphere but also the means of expression used in a foreign text should form part of the translation and that lexical entities as well as grammar should be borrowed (Liu 2004, 10). Lu Xun criticized the grammatical structure of Chinese for being vague and imprecise, and saw it as a characteristic trait of the Chinese people whom he also found weak-minded and indecisive (Liu 2004, 9; Lundberg 1989, 225). In his opinion, a language was useless if it couldn't exactly transmit what people meant to say (Wei 2010, 98), and this is why he was so eager to introduce and create elements needed for the progress of the language and the country. Long sentences, for example, were more suitable to express complicated issues compared with the short sentences of Classical Written Chinese, and through the grammaticalization of the sentences' components the language would become more flexible, reflecting the thoughts of the people (Liu 2004, 10–11).

Lu Xun's point of view was supported by Fu Sinian (傅斯年 1896–1950), a renowned linguist who has characterized Chinese sentences as being composed of simple and loose structures. By contrast the Western texts used logical and complicated sentences, strict rules, and a great stock of specialized vocabulary, while Chinese texts seriously lacked means of expression (Liu 2007, 100). Fu Sinian has also made several proposals on how to handle the new modern Chinese language and how to lead it to greater development: *Baihua* should definitely provide its base, but since it hadn't reached the state necessary for a standard national language, it must include *wenyan* elements, as well as grammatical patterns and rhetorical devices from dialects and Western languages. With the *baihua* base being nourished by other sources, an elegant language of the people could be created (Liu 2007, 99). He claimed that it was both unrealistic and unprofitable to avoid *wenyan* influences at all costs. With all efforts directed at the construction of a modern standard language, no personal cultural or ideological preferences should be taken into account and all the decisions should be made according to linguistic

and rhetoric principles. In this context, Fu Sinian supported the idea of literal translations because they formed the experimental ground for future writers (Liu 2007, 99–100).

In reality, everyone who tried to use *baihua* for translations and writings found himself on this experimental ground. The literati needed to improvise and to be inventive, to 'recycle' archaic material and to imitate novel constructions. The written vernacular comported itself like a sponge, absorbing all kinds of influences, digesting whatever it was fed, and thus providing a rather fertile research area for those who wish to examine the linguistic situation of those times and its subsequent developments. Studies like Wang's (cf. Wang 1984; see also Kubler 1985; Hsu 1994) have shown that in subsequent years, the written Chinese language incorporated Western influences introduced through the copious translation works, thus becoming structurally stricter and developing new syntactic and morphologic features. Until recently, numerous studies of the Westernization phenomenon have been produced that have further tried to examine and exhibit the whole 'impact area' of the Western languages (mostly English) on Chinese (cf. Diao 2009; Tsai 2007; Wang 2002). However, cases investigating the Westernized structures and the development of the modern Chinese language by taking translation works and principles into account are still very few and far between. I hope to add a small puzzle piece to the larger picture by taking a closer look at the texts of the aforementioned authors.

Linguistic Awareness and Him/Her/Them

In this study I intend to demonstrate how the attitude of the literati is reflected in their translated and original works. What is most important here is to find out whether the intellectuals lived up to their own standards, that is to say, for example, whether the proponents of Westernization actually included more innovative structures into their original texts after engaging in translation works and whether the opponents of Westernization were able to avoid them.

Considering the dangerously wide scope of this study, it is convenient to limit the examination of the texts to one representative phenomenon in hopes that more thorough and extensive analyses will be carried out in the future. The third-person pronouns present themselves as suitable for such a case (cf. the extensive study by Chan 2011). When we turn our attention to Classical Written Chinese, we see that there were pronouns for the first and the second person available for use but that third-person pronouns were not necessary at all. In a *wenyan* sentence one could either omit the object or repeat a preceding name or notion for a subject that wasn't a compulsory feature of a phrase (Wang 1984, 264–247; 446). In spoken language and *baihua* texts, however, the third-person pronoun 他 (tā) was used without giving any precise information about gender or number. Its increasing occurrence

in Chinese texts since the beginning of the twentieth century has already been described as an example of Westernized language use (Kubler 1985, 77; Wang 1984, 269) with the purpose of making a 'grammatically complete' sentence (cf. Chan 2011, 32). However, it must be pointed out that it wasn't Western influence that brought about the emergence of the pronouns as such (cf. Wang 1984, 436). The character 他 (formerly 佗) existed prior to the Six Dynasties (220–589 AD), though not in the function of a personal pronoun. Instead, it was used in the sense of 其他 (*qítā* other). It later became a pronoun that was interchangeable with 它 (tā) and designated a person, mentioned earlier, with a pejorative connotation that eventually became neutral with time. During the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD) its use expanded to inanimate objects, showing distinction between the singular and plural aspects; however, it was still considered polite to record a person by name, so this character hardly ever appeared as a subject and thus wasn't seen very often together. Along with tā, 伊 (yī) had also appeared as a third-person pronoun since the Six Dynasties and even when it was replaced by 他 (tā) in the Modern Standard Written Chinese to this day it hasn't lost its function as a third-person pronoun in dialect writings (Ueda and Yu 2000, 273–276). Furthermore, to some of the literati at the beginning of the twentieth century who experimented with translations (e.g. Lu Xun) it seemed like an acceptable means of rendering the female third-person pronouns. The gender specific pronouns thus developed at the beginning of the twentieth century during the 'creative quest' period and most notably after the article by Liu Bannong (劉半農 1891–1934) "The Issue of Ta" published on 9 August 1920, which described the advantages of using 她 as the feminine (tā, she) and 牠 (tā, which was eventually replaced by 它 for neutral inanimate objects) as the neutral personal pronoun (it) (Chan 2009, 1–2; Wang 1984, 476). Considering the system, it can be stated that the singular pronouns structure was adopted from English (with 'he' and 'she' for humans and 'it' for non-humans). The phenomenon of explicit plural pronoun forms is also a development that has been inspired by Western languages, though their gender differentiation was an original Chinese construction (Wang 1984, 269; 478).

In the course of the copious translation work, new linguistic features (though formed from original Chinese stock) were introduced and later went on to become a part of the original works by the authors. In translated texts those features appear more often and at times they even contradict the genuine rules of the Chinese grammar. Altogether, the general, explicit use of subjects and objects, which make the statement more precise, has increased. This demonstrates that it was accepted by great numbers of language users in the original writings (Wang 1984, 476). In such cases, an idea was obviously advertised thoroughly enough and received enough attention (both positive and negative) that it reached a high degree of topicality and found itself entering different spheres and spreading widely among members of the speech community. After this promotion and the corresponding diffusion reached its peak, the development swung back leaving the most acceptable phenomena in use and dropping the superfluous ones. In contemporary Chinese, third-person pronouns do not feel foreign anymore, and yet certain

applications have not been truly incorporated into the language system.[1] In the research of Hsu we find the proof for explicitly Westernized phenomena, which contradict the rules of the Chinese grammar and are still being met with resistance, for example the neutral third-person pronoun in the object position (Hsu 1994, 92–94; 114–115). Kubler has also listed examples from "Jia" (家 Family) by Ba Jin (巴金 1904–2005) where the neutral singular 它 (tā) was used in the subject and object position (for inanimate objects) in the earlier version and excluded in the later version (Kubler 1985, 78). If we imagine such a development and equate it with the ascent and descent of a pendulum, it should also swing back in the opposite direction, though less strongly. Practically, this would mean that the party opposing a certain actuality cannot fully escape its influence and the phenomenon itself would eventually bring the supporters of different sides closer to the 'golden mean' area, which would in turn bring about higher acceptance within the opponent group and a more differentiated handling of the proponents of a certain trend.

Altogether, examining the use of the third-person pronouns helps us to make a statement on a text's degree of Westernization, since their frequent use in addition to gender and number differentiation are a sign of Western influence. The degree of Westernization will make it possible to compare the theoretical approach with the practical application in the cases of the previously discussed authors.

For this task, a section of approximately 20,000 characters[2] in one or more texts has been examined. Ideally, to reach a more uniform outcome the items in question would all be fictional texts (novels and short stories being another innovation in the Chinese literary world) with original works preceding and following a translation. However, the mentioned authors have not produced enough fictional works to choose from, and therefore the analyzed material consists partly of essays and argumentative compositions. While the first and the second original texts stand for the points A and B in a writer's career, thus showing the beginning and the outcome of a development, the translation shouldn't be taken literally as the opus that caused a turnaround. It should be seen as an example for the entire translation work carried out by the writers (between and even beyond the points A and B), which might have brought about changes as a whole.

A Q Zhengzhuan (阿Q 正傳 *The True Story of Ah Q*) (originally published in 1921–1922) is not only one of the most representative works by Lu Xun, it is also considered very important in the canon of modern Chinese fiction since it is one of the first short stories written entirely in *baihua*. It depicts episodes in a man's life until his execution. The man (Ah Q) lives in a rural area and has a low education level. His individual actions consist of taking pride in bullying smaller and weaker people and trying to present himself as a winner in unfavorable situations, these are meant to represent the faults of the Chinese nation at large, which Lu Xun had

[1] Compare the numbers in the study of Chan (2009, 5–6): Lowest number at the beginning of the twentieth century, largest number in the 1950s, and the number decreasing in 2002–2003, which is still greater than a century earlier in both original ("indigenous") and translated texts.

[2] This is the approximate length of "A Q Zhengzhuan" (see below).

already criticized. Due to its highly experimental character and the writer's progressive attitude, the story can be expected to exhibit many Westernized features.

Most of the works translated by Lu Xun are originals written by Western authors, but in the majority of the cases he used the version written in Japanese to translate into Chinese, which in itself challenges the whole notion of Westernization. Thus, *Xiao Yuehan* (小約翰 *Little Johannes*, translation finished in 1927), a translation from the German, was chosen for examination here; its Dutch original by Frederik van Eeden (*De kleine Johannes*), first published in 1885, was translated into German by Anna Fles in 1892. The novel tells the adventures of the boy Johannes who travels through the different worlds of animals, mythical creatures, and people and has many experiences with life and death.

As a comparison with these two texts, I have chosen two stories from *Gushi Xin Bian* (故事新編 *Old Tales Retold*, pieces of fiction written and revised over a period of 13 years, where Lu Xun presents his versions of Chinese legends, 1922–1935, cf. Lu 1973), *Ben Yue* (奔月 *Flight to the Moon*, written in 1926), and *Li Shui* (理水 *Curbing the Flood*, written in 1935). *Ben Yue* retells the legend of Houyi (后羿), the legendary archer, and Chang'e (嫦娥), his wife who left him for the moon when she became disappointed with his failing to provide for her adequately. *Li Shui* deals with the flood control by Da Yu (大禹 Yu the Great), the founder of the Xia Dynasty (~ 2070–1600 BC), and describes, among others, the behavior of the elites in comparison with the commoners.

A translation of Shakespeare's *Li'er Wang* (李爾王 *King Lear*, translated in 1936, cf. Liang 1976) by Liang Shiqiu has been examined along with his original essays gathered in *Pianjianji* (偏見集 *Collection of Prejudices*, originally published in 1934, cf. Liang 1934) and *Yashe Xiaopin* (雅舍小品 *Sketches from an Elegant Residence*, originally published in 1949, cf. Liang 1987).[3] William Shakespeare's famous tragedy narrates the consequences of the king's dividing his property among his three daughters, which ultimately drives him to madness. *Pianjianji,* as well as *Yashe Xiaopin*, both contain various essays that present the author's reflections on different social, political, and cultural matters. *Pianjianji* concentrates on concrete phenomena and incidents (especially in literature), and *Yashe Xiaopin* presents a more general approach and a broader scope in subject selection.

Only one work by Lin Shu has been examined here because his translations aren't expected to exhibit significant style differences and because they were re-narrations and thus a mixture of translation and original work. *Bali Chahuanü Yishi* (巴黎茶花女逸事 *The Past Affairs of the Lady of the Camelias*, published in 1899), like the original novel,[4] tells the story of a Parisian courtesan from the point of view of her lover and is the only work written in *wenyan* in all the samples.

As for Qu Qiubai, his original works *Eguo Wenxue Shi* (俄國文學史 *History of Russian Literature*, published in 1927, first version written in 1921–1922), which, as the title suggests, gives a historical overview of the development of Russian

[3] See the detailed list of titles in the bibliography.

[4] Alexandre Dumas, fils: *La Dame aux Camélias*.

Literature, and *Luantan* (亂彈 *Random Shots*, 1932–1933, cf. Qu 1985), which consists of argumentative compositions on literature, arts, and society, are framed by translations. The first part comprises six works finished prior to 1921 and united in the compilation called *Zaoqi Yizuo Jiu Pian* (早期譯作九篇 *Nine Early Translations*, cf. Qu 1986): *Xiantan* (閒談 *Leisure Talk*, published in 1919, a sequence illustrating different people's thoughts on life and the right way to lead it)[5]; *Qidao* (祈禱 *Prayer*, published in 1920, a short story about a woman's dream rooted in her despair about her child's death)[6]; *Puyushi* (仆御室 *Lackey Room*, published in 1920, a short play showing people of different social status and occupation interacting while passing through a lackey room)[7]; *Funü* (婦女 *Woman*, published in 1920, a short but emotional essay on women)[8]; *Fuguo Gongqian Zhihou* (付過工錢之後 *After Having Been Paid Salary*, published in 1920, a short story about the agony of a woman trying to keep her husband from wasting his wage on drink)[9]; and *Kepa de Zi* (可怕的字 *Horrible Word*, published in 1921, a short story showing a simple woman's evaluation of a neighbor's political attitude and behavior).[10] Another piece that has been taken into account is the translation of the short story *Ma'erhua* (馬爾華 *Mal'va*, translated in 1933, cf. Qu 1987), which describes the complicated relationship between a woman, her lover, and his son in a rural setting.[11] In Qu Qiubai's case, a longer translation produced between 1927 and 1932 wasn't available, which is why the two translation texts produced at the same time as the original texts were taken. Their average in pronoun use should be a substitute for the single translation text between the points A and B mentioned above.

The number of all the third-person pronouns applied by one author was divided by the number of texts examined, thus providing an average of his third-person pronoun use, which was then compared with the sources mentioned below.

Haishang Hua Liezhuan (海上花列傳 *The Biographies of Shanghai Flowers*) by Han Bangqing (韓邦慶 1856–1894) is a popular novel written in *baihua* at the end of the Qing dynasty (published as a full book in 1894), depicting the life of the courtesans with an outlook on the world of merchants, officials, and people from other social levels and serving here as an example for the written use of *baihua* prior to Lu Xun and his contemporaries.

Furthermore, a comparison should be also drawn between the works by the authors in focus and contemporary works by writers on mainland China and Taiwan. Zhang Dachun's (張大春 born in 1957) novel *Lingting Fuqin* (聆聽父親 *Listening to Father*, published in 2003, cf. Zhang 2003) and Han Han's (born in

[5] Original work: Lev Tolstoj: *Beseda dosužix ljudej*.

[6] Original work: Lev Tolstoj: *Molitva*.

[7] Original work: Nikolaj Gogol': *Lakejskaja*.

[8] Original work: Nikolaj Gogol': *Ženščina*.

[9] Original work: Alphonse Daudet: *Le Singe*.

[10] Original work: Mixail Al'bov: *Strašnoe slovo*.

[11] Original work: Maksim Gor'kij: *Mal'va*.

1982) *Ling Xia Yi Du* (零下一度 *One Degree Below Zero*, published in 2000, cf. Han 2000) have been selected rather randomly. Both texts are autobiographic: *Lingting Fuqin* traces Zhang's family history as he tells it to his unborn son, putting stress on notable ancestors, while *Ling Xia Yi Du* is a collection of essays and notes on different aspects of Han Han's life. These works should hint at the development of the Westernized grammatical features from their emergence at the beginning of the twentieth century up to the present-day usage in creative writing.

Given this background information, when we examine the works of the above-mentioned authors we expect the following results:

(a) Either a rather cautious use and comparatively low number (Liang Shiqiu) or a fervent, and highly experimental use and a great number (Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai) of third-person pronouns in the first original text, which more likely formed the testing ground for a new means of expression; highest frequency of third-person pronouns in the translation, due to the extensive use of pronouns and explicit verbalization of the subject and object in Western languages (English, German, French, and Russian all merged in this term, though it would be beneficial to treat them separately in the future through more thorough studies); continuously frequent/rising use of third-person pronouns in the second original text due to familiarization with the newly introduced structures, but with a lower number (compared to the translation) based on a more differentiated application and the firm connection to the traditional grammatical patterns.
(b) The character 他 (tā) as the most frequently used, whether as the masculine singular third-person pronoun or as the generic third-person pronoun without gender and number differentiation. Others used in rather small numbers.
(c) The average number of third-person pronouns used by Liang Shiqiu should be lower than the number found in the works of Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai. It's rather difficult to make a prognosis for the correlation between the results of Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai. From Lu Xun we can expect meticulous accuracy in the rendition of the foreign text and thus a large quantity of third-person pronouns, as well as enthusiasm for linguistic experiments in his own works. On the other hand, he has also expressed a rather strong bond with *wenyan*, which was an important source for his creations. Qu Qiubai can be expected to show more consistency in his pronoun usage considering his firm principle of 'absolute *baihua*', but it is most probable that he also went through a period of experimentation, which might offer some surprises.
(d) No occurrence of 他 (tā) in the sense of third-person pronoun in *Bali Chahuanü Yishi* and rather scarce occurrence of 他 (tā) only (generic third-person pronoun) in *Haishang Hua Liezhuan*.
(e) Frequent occurrence of third-person pronouns of all sorts in the modern fiction works, though the number can be expected to have decreased in accordance with the Westernization and language modernization euphoria over the course of time.

Results and Discussion

As expected, the examination of Lu Xun's works (Table 1) reveal the highest amount of third-person pronouns in the translation of *Xiao Yuehan*, which also offers the greatest variety when it comes to gender and number differentiation. The main characters in *Xiao Yuehan*, as well as *A Q Zhengzhuan* are male, thus the high turnout for the singular masculine pronoun in both texts is not surprising. But the number of singular, as well as plural and neutral pronouns in *Xiao Yuehan* is eye-catching, especially when we compare it to his original texts where they are virtually absent. The lack of use of those pronouns in the original texts has been explained above: A neutral pronoun in the object position sounds unnatural and is preferably left out in Chinese, while it is included in German and has thus also been included into the translation by Lu Xun. As for the subject position, it might feel rather awkward to see an inanimate object or a non-human taking the role of an agent and being the subject of a sentence, but *Xiao Yuehan* is a fairy-tale and in its first part the protagonist engages in lengthy conversations with animals, insects, and flowers, all of those designated by the neutral third-person pronouns. As for the feminine pronouns, we see that in his first story Lu Xun used 伊 (yī) for singular and the analogously built 伊們 (yīmen) for plural reference, but in the translation and the other stories he eventually switched to 她 (tā) and 她們 (tāmen), as suggested by Liu Bannong. Raymond S. W. Hsü, who has examined the style of Lu Xun on the basis of his vocabulary use, states that Lu Xun gave up on 伊 (yī) or 伊們 (yīmen) in original writings and had been using 她 (tā) and 她們 (tāmen) since 1922 (Hsü 1979, 148). In *Xiao Yuehan* we find 伊 (yī) twice in a quotation from an old book, which hints that Lu Xun regarded it as obsolete. Another eye-catcher from the Table is that the original texts in comparison reveal a rather unexpected, almost 2:1 correlation. We have already speculated that there would be a high degree of Westernization and linguistic 'audaciousness' in *A Q Zhengzhuan* as well as more stylistic maturity that includes a rather measured application of means of expression in subsequent texts. However, this concrete result can also be attributed to the strikingly high number of the singular masculine pronouns that can be explained by the author's purposeful concentration on that single character (Ah Q) resulting in a lack of extensive direct speech (like dialogues that would use first- and second-person pronouns more often, cf. *"Gushi Xinbian"*), in Lu Xun's use of repetition as a stylistic device for emphasis, and in his using 他 (tā) for non-humans at that point prior to *Xiao Yuehan*, as for example in Ah Q's sassy reply to the nun who asks him about the turnips that he is about to steal:

> 你能叫得他答應你麼? (Lu Xun 1976, 121)
> Nǐ néng jiàodé **tā** dāyìng nǐ me?
> Can you make **it** answer you?[12]

[12] Translation and emphasis by Miyajima.

Table 1 Lu Xun

Lu Xun	A Q Zhengzhuan (1921–1922)	Xiao Yuehan (1927)	Gushi Xinbian (1926–1935)
他 tā Sing. Masc.	381	305	154
她 tā Sing. Fem.	—	26	18
它 tā Sing. Neut.	—	138	6
伊 yī Sing. Fem. (arch.)	14	2	—
他們 tāmen Plural Masc.	27	52	30
她們 tāmen Plural Fem.	—	4	2
它們 tāmen Plural Neut.	—	45	—
伊們 yīmen Plural Fem. (arch.)	3	—	—
Total number of personal pronouns	425	572	210

Liang Shiqiu's pronoun use (Table 2) shows the predicted considerable rise in the examined translation compared with the first original work and a considerable fall after it. Third-person pronouns are found in large numbers in *Li'er Wang*, once again covering all the potential scope with singular masculine pronouns securing the top position. Singular feminine pronouns are—interestingly enough—the runners-up (with the exception of *Pianjianji*, which obviously doesn't really concern itself with women). This is easily explained by frequent appearances of female characters in the plays and in an essay dedicated to women in *Yashe Xiaopin*. The occurrence of the singular neutral pronoun in the first original text is based on the stress put on literature as the topic of one of the essays and on a citation from another scholar's translation. Taken together the results tell us that although Liang Shiqiu didn't feel the need to include many third-person pronouns in his original work (their overall number in *Pianjianji* was amazingly low compared to *A Q Zhengzhuan* by Lu Xun), he couldn't avoid them in his translation at the beginning of the twentieth century. The rise of the pronouns in his second original text can be attributed to the general acceptance and increased usage of third-person pronouns as such.

In the case of Qu Qiubai (Table 3), we can see that his translations both present large numbers of third-person pronouns. The main difference between his translations is that in the examined texts of his early translations we mostly find masculine (singular and plural) pronouns with only one single exception, while in *Ma'erhua* only the female plural pronouns are missing. (Altogether, there is only one single female plural third-person pronoun in all the examined texts; this refers explicitly to a group consisting of women only.) The near absolute exclusivity of the masculine pronouns in the early translation texts can be explained by the fact that Qu Qiubai used them in a manner similar to old *baihua* literature—that is, in the generic sense: 他 (tā) did not represent males only, but also females and non-humans, sometimes with appropriate indications in brackets to avoid confusion:

他 (婦女) 是詩! (Qu 1986, vol. 4, 397)
Tā (fùnǚ) shì shī!
***generic pronoun* (woman)** is a poem![13]

[13] Translation and emphasis by Miyajima.

Table 2 Liang Shiqiu

Liang Shiqiu	Pianjianji (1934)	Li'er Wang (1936)	Yashe Xiaopin (1949)
他 tā Sing. Masc.	44	283	136
她 tā Sing. Fem.	0	97	28
它 tā Sing. Neut.	9	5	4
他們 tāmen Plural Masc.	29	43	6
她們 tāmen Plural Fem.	0	7	3
它們 tāmen Plural Neut.	6	1	—
Total number of personal pronouns	89	436	177

Table 3 Qu Qiubai

Qu Qiubai	Zaoqi Yizuo Jiu Pian (1919–1921)	Eguo Wenxue Shi (1921–1922)	Luantan (1932–1933)	Ma'erhua (1933)
他 tā Sing. Masc.	446	205	39	301
她 tā Sing. Fem.	—	14	2	212
它 tā Sing. Neut.	1	3	18	20
他們 tāmen Plural Masc.	54	30	86	51
她們 tāmen Plural Fem.	—	1	—	—
它們 tāmen Plural Neut.	—	—	16	5
Total number of personal pronouns	505	253	161	589

However, unlike the old *baihua* texts, he emphasized plurality by using 他們 (tāmen). In later writings he used the extra characters for feminine and neutral pronouns with the highest occurrence of singular masculine pronouns occurring in *Eguo Wenxue Shi* and *Ma'erhua*, while *Ma'erhua* also reveals a large number of singular feminine pronouns due to its female protagonist. *Luantan* is the only source where plural masculine pronouns prevail; this is rooted in the author's criticism of certain groups of people in those texts. Another interesting feature of those is a significant number of neutral pronouns that stand for inanimate objects or animals (all written as 它 tā or 它們 tāmen) and are used in the subject as well as in the object positions. Going back to the early translations, we have one singular neutral pronoun written as 它 (tā) that refers to an inanimate object in *Kepa de Zi*:

> 你們看見那屋子裡的情境,這樣的擺飾,一定能猜出它的主人是怎樣的人,他那樣的人... (Qu 1986, 4: 406)
> Nǐmen kànjiàn nà wūzi lǐ de qíngjìng, zhèyàng de bǎishì, yídìng néng cāichū **tā** de zhǔrén shì zěnyàng de rén, **tā** nàyàng de rén...
> If you saw the situation inside that house, that kind of decoration, you would certainly be able to guess what kind of person **its** owner is, **he** is the kind of person...[14]

[14] Translation and emphasis by Miyajima.

This is not so easy to explain, especially since all the other pronouns in this and the following texts (which haven't been considered for this study) refer to people, but also because another short story *Haoren* (好人 *Good people*)[15] translated in 1921 (Qu 1986, 4: 425–438) shows a male–female differentiation in the characters, we might cautiously presume that *Kepa de Zi* was the starting point for Qu Qiubai's explicit use of 它 (tā) as the singular neutral pronoun and not a simple typing error.

We should also note that the first of the original texts by Qu Qiubai presents a higher number of personal pronouns compared with the second, which can actually be explained by Qu's writing about Russian authors and thus making greater use of the pronouns. Nevertheless, the amount of pronouns in *Luantan* is peculiarly low, even lower than in *Yashe Xiaopin* by Liang Shiqiu, which also consists of short essays. We will return to this point later, but first I would like to take a look at the remaining sources (Table 4).

As expected, Lin Shu did not use 他 (tā) as a personal pronoun in his translation of *Bali Chahuanü Liezhuan*, but we still find that in the examined section he used 伊 (yī) for a female person once:

伊何人也? (Lin 1981, 18)
Yī hé rén yě?
Who is **she**?[16]

To discover the extent to which his *wenyan* writing was influenced by Western languages and the innovations introduced by scholars like Lu Xun, we need to examine a larger quantity of texts and, of course, to carry out qualitative studies that would take into account other phenomena as well.

Haishang Hua Liezhuan presents a rather moderate number of third-person pronouns, most of which are generic, even when referring to women:

秀寶也拉著樸齋袖子,說:『坐來浪。』樸齋被他一拉,... (Han 1974, Chaps. 2, 11)
Xiùbǎo yě lāzhe Pǔzhāi xiùzi, shuō: "Zuòláilàng." Pǔzhāi bèi tā yì lā,...
Xiubao pulled the sleeve of Puzhai and said: "Sit down." Puzhai being pulled by **her**, ...

However, we also find the masculine plural pronoun three times in the examined section.

Among the contemporary writers, Zhang Dachun's novel presents a number that is closest to Qu Qiubai's average of the original texts (≈ 207) and is also quite close to the second original work by Liang Shiqiu, which is not surprising. This number shows that the use of third-person pronouns had become rather common in modern written Chinese and also that their use stopped being experimental and excessive and, as suggested before, became rather moderate. While the written variety of Chinese in Taiwan is often said to cultivate closer ties with *wenyan*, it wouldn't be surprising to find more third-person pronouns in a text from mainland China; however, this was not the case with Han Han's *Ling Xia Yi Du*. We can attempt to explain this low number by virtue of the book being autobiographic and thus

[15] Original work: Anton Čexov: *Xorošie ljudi*.

[16] Translation and emphasis by Miyajima.

Table 4 Further texts

Further texts	Lin Shu: Bali Chahuanü Yishi (1899)	Han Bangqing: Haishang Hua Liezhuan (1894)	Han Han: Ling Xia Yi Du (2000)	Zhang Dachun: Lingting Fuqin (2003)
他 tā Sing. Masc.	—	46	92	158
她 tā Sing. Fem.	—	—	4	25
它 tā Sing. Neut.	—	—	2	15
伊 yī Sing. Arch.	1	—	—	—
他們 tāmen Plural Masc.	—	3	18	12
她們 tāmen Plural Fem.	—	—	—	—
它們 tāmen Plural Neut.	—	—	—	4
Total number of third person pronouns	1	49	116	214

logically including more first-person than third-person pronouns, but we also need to work with a larger corpus to make more precise conclusions, as well as take a look at more homogenous kinds of texts to be able to see a pattern connected with topics or genre.

Altogether, the use of feminine third-person pronouns does not appear frequently. First, we need to consider the fact that gender isn't explicitly shown in the plural forms of English, German, or Russian. Furthermore, the feminine forms are only applied when all the group members are female, otherwise 他們 (tāmen) is used. Another reason for the small number of feminine pronouns in original writings may have to do with the topics (protagonists) of the literature examined or with the fact that male authors tended to present their own point of view. Even if some essays or short stories dealt explicitly with females, most didn't include important female characters and didn't stress a woman's point of view. Comparing the writings of male and female authors and their use of third-person pronouns would be a great project for the future.

Final Comparison and Remarks

To make a final comparison of the authors that were examined more thoroughly, the average number of third-person pronouns used can be considered. As predicted, Liang Shiqiu's writings present the lowest number: ≈ 234 (≈ 133 in the original works). Qu Qiubai is in the middle with ≈ 377 (≈ 207), and Lu Xun turns out to be the author with the highest numbers ≈ 402 (≈ 318). Looking at the results of Liang Shiqiu and Lu Xun, we can confirm the assumption that the writings by the literati mirror their attitude. Lu Xun was keen on experiments and on imitating foreign structures and his translations and even original work offer many examples for this kind of language use, although he lost some of his audaciousness over time. Liang

Shiqiu, who didn't plan to translate word-for-word, showed a careful handling of certain structures and a differentiated use of grammatical loans. However, Qu Qiubai's case is quite ambiguous compared to his unambiguous slogan ('absolute *baihua*'). The average of all his works is closer to Lu Xun's number, but the average of his original works is closer to that of Liang Shiqiu. This leads me to conclude that he was adhering to double-standards in his translations and original texts, which isn't problematic per se, but does contradict his own call for uncompromising 'proletarian' language use. Another example that reveals Qu Qiubai didn't really practice what he preached is provided by Raymond S. W. Hsü, who compared Qu Qiubai's vocabulary with Lu Xun's, finding three times more *wenyan* elements in Qu Qiubai's text (Hsü 1979, 93–94). Apart from that, the comparison of Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai might simply be an instance where the differences between the languages become an important issue, since in Russian textual reference is possible without the explicit use of third-person pronouns (as opposed to in German or English) as seen, for example, in the following pattern:

> My **ego** nakormili, napoili i spat' uložili.
> Wir fütterten **ihn**, gaben **ihm** zu trinken und legten **ihn** schlafen.
> We fed **him**, gave **him** something to drink and brought **him** to bed.[17]

The fact that Qu Qiubai mostly translated from Russian might be another reason for his using fewer third-person pronouns, but it is a suggestion that needs to be confirmed by further investigations where other possible sentence patterns can be considered and where comparisons between translation and original, as well as between translations into different languages, can be made.

One thing that this paper makes abundantly clear is that the subject has not yet been sufficiently examined. With this study I have attempted to gather background information on the important literati of the beginning twentieth century in China and on their (abundantly available) theoretical contribution to the development of the modern Chinese language. I have tried to connect it to the practical side of their work (such studies being a desideratum), thus providing what I hope will be a small stepping stone for further more thorough, quantitative and especially qualitative investigations in the fields of the Westernization phenomena, language change, and linguistic awareness.

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[17] Example and emphasis by Miyajima.

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