RESEARCH ARTICLE

Diglossia, Intralingual Translation, Rewriting: Towards a New Approach to the Analysis of the Relationship between Ming-Qing Vernacular Stories and their Classical Sources (2)

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The article addresses the issue of the numerous vernacular narratives of the huaben 話本 genre (late Ming/early Qing period, 17th c.) that are the result of the rewriting of earlier sources in literary language. It introduces a new method of analysis of this transformative process based on a systematic survey of the components of these stories: language, narrative points of view, rewriting micro-strategies. This allows for a detailed description of the way in which the authors/editors of the time produced these narratives. This methodology is anchored in a comprehensive theoretical approach to the development of the vernacular in the period under consideration, underlining that the definition of the vernacular is not purely linguistic but includes many other factors. It recalls that the situation of diglossia in written Chinese was a subject that authors of the time were acutely aware of and which they discussed extensively in their critical writings. It suggests that the process whereby huaben were produced from earlier sources corresponds to what has been described in modern times as intralingual translation, which could be defined as a commentary, but a commentary that plays on several language registers.

十七世紀中國出現大量基於文言小說改編的話本小說。本文通過考察話本這一敘事體裁的語言、敘事視角和微觀改寫策略，介紹一種分析小說改編過程的新方法，用以詳細描述作者或編者的寫作方式和敘述宗旨。文章立足於對明末清初通俗文學發展的綜合性理論研究，強調對"俗"的特殊定義，比如"白話"不單純指一套語言上與文言相對的體系，而是還包括許多其他因素。評論著作表明，當時的作家和文人都敏銳地意識到中文書面語中白話與文言並存的現象。基於文言模本的話本小說，其編寫過程在某種意義上實屬翻譯學的"語內翻譯"範疇。語內翻譯基本上可視爲一種評述，在這裡則表現爲一種轉換不同語體的評述。

Introduction[1]

The first part of this article was mainly devoted to describing a new method of analysis for rewriting processes involved in the production of vernacular narratives of the *huaben* genre from literary language sources. That first part was mainly technical. This second part is more theoretical, and addresses several points that I believe are important to consider in an attempt to understand these processes. This paper is partly intended to be a Sinologist's contribution to Translation Studies, particularly with regard to the issue of diglossia and intralingual translation in premodern China. A first step will be to revisit the notion of diglossia, which is implied by the authors' constant shifting back and forth between different registers of Chinese, in the context of an affirmation of the values of the vernacular language. We will also examine how this affirmation affects the uses of literary language when such language is involved in fictional narrative. Finally, we shall defend the idea that the modern concept of intralingual translation would prove useful here, as it encompasses many of the concepts and procedures described in the course of this paper, including the rewriting and commentarial dimensions within the frame of linguistic transformation. It is, I believe, a valuable approach from a pragmatic as well as a theoretical point of view, in order to apprehend some recurrences taking place in the rewriting processes involved in the creation of vernacular stories, from the perspective of both their formation and their effects.

In many respects, the concrete description of the transformative processes implied in the rewriting of classical source texts (ST) into target texts (TT) of vernacular narratives has generated relatively little interest in Sinological research, as has been noted in the introduction to the first part of this paper. Whereas there is no lack of scholarship dedicated to the diachronic aspects of the genealogy of narrative themes and textual interrelations, this scant interest in the linguistic aspect of the transformation of stories in literary Chinese into vernacular, especially in contemporary Chinese scholarship, is all the more surprising given that this feature is among the most regularly stressed by the literati of the early modern period. The relationship between literary and vernacular registers, between *wen* 文 and *su* 俗 (and this includes any terminology or turn of phrase referring to this reality) is something that premodern authors and editors incessantly referred to in their critical writings, especially in the liminal spaces of the printed editions of novels or short story collections. These critical writings are always fascinating in the perfect consciousness their authors show of these phenomena, of their effects and potentialities, in a way which sometimes seems to anticipate modern approaches. It is of primary concern here to call attention to the fact that the reality of the diglossic situation in Chinese is *not* a modern, hindsight reconstruction, but something Chinese literati themselves were acutely aware of and constantly ruminating on. We should note, though, that however discerning their comprehension of the differences between literary and vernacular writing may have been, they would never have considered their act of linguistic relocation *translation*, in the modern sense of the term. For these authors, any attempt at resemantisation through linguistic relocation would have been

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inseparable, for them, from what we would call a resemantisation through hermeneutics, *i.e.*, the implementation of intertextual procedures much less straightforward than what the notion of translation implies. Simply put, they would have felt they were commentating, rather than translating, which was related to their culture of commentary as well as to their training for examination essays. Furthermore, despite the fact that these authors were aware of and constantly exploiting a diglossic reality—*i.e.*, the existence of two distinct kinds of written expression within the same Chinese language— they would never do so in a spirit of hierarchy between "high" and "low" levels of language (a dichotomy that is mainstream, today, whenever the issue of diglossia comes to the fore). The relationship between these kinds of written expression was less one of hierarchy and more one of subtle differentiations of usage—not forgetting that the two spheres were constantly interacting. What did they say regarding diglossia? This is precisely where we need to start.

Wen vs./ *tongsu*: the framework for a native debate on "diglossia"

The concept of diglossia has always been tricky to handle. It tends to arouse a certain discomfort and distrust, as it is inseparable from a measure of conflictuality. It deals with realities that are ambivalent and often difficult to accept regarding language usage, especially when they relate, in modern times, to the sensitive area of national identities. It deals with issues of exclusion, denial (as we shall see), superior or inferior standing. Its status as an antagonistic issue is recognised. (Gardy and Lafont 1981)

English-writing scholars like to repeat that it was the "linguist Charles Ferguson [1921–1998] who coined the term 'diglossia' in 1959"—although Ferguson himself never actually claimed he did.[2] In fact, the word was coined thirty years earlier by the French neo-Hellenist Jean Psichari (Giánnis Psycháris, 1854–1929), referring to the diglossic question in the Greek context, from the Byzantine to the modern era, around the varieties of *katharevousa* and *démotiki*.[3] Jean Psichari not only creates the term "*diglossie*"; remarkably, he evokes a number of themes, some of them conflictual, that will be borrowed by Ferguson and will remain more or less permanently attached to the study of diglossia thereafter. Psichari speaks of a "struggle within a single language between the dead and the living parts of that language", (Psichari 1928, 66) referring to it as a "devastating" reality due to a "purism" or undue "fetishism" defended by elites ignorant of both the linguistic realities of ancient Greece and the living vernacular. (*Ibid.*, 74–76) He also discusses the social determinants of such a situation. (*Ibid.*, 108–109) While never theorising between "high" and "low" levels as Ferguson will do, he does speak of the "contempt" for vernacular speech, (*ibid.*, 72) reputedly devoid of "grammar", (*ibid.*, 100)—a feature that Ferguson will greatly emphasise. The title of the article, deliberately provocative, reflects the tension that would often accompany mention of the diglossic situation: Greece is presented as "A country that does not want its own language" ("Un pays qui ne veut pas de sa langue"). Finally, it is

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[2] C. W. Li 2015, 11; Vetrov 2011, 80. King (2015, 1) traces "the original and now classic definition of" diglossia to Ferguson 1959.

[3] Psichari 1928. The Greek case would be one of the linguistic situations studied by Charles Ferguson.

also interesting to note that Psichari already mentions, albeit briefly, the case of China, as Ferguson will. (*Ibid.*, 119)

After him, the term diglossia was immediately used by another French academic, this time an Arabist, William Marçais (1872–1956), who published, in a journal from Algiers, the first scholarly paper featuring the word "*diglossie*" in its title.[4] This time it referred to the Arabic situation, and although Marçais put less emphasis on the idea of conflict, he nevertheless considered Arabic diglossia to be something of an aberration (Matthey 2021, 113), which he also described in vivid terms:

> [Arabic:] One language? Two languages? [...] Let us say two states of the same language, different enough so that the knowledge of one does not imply, absolutely not, the knowledge of the other; similar enough so that the knowledge of one facilitates considerably the acquisition of the other. In any case, an instrument for the expression of thought that strangely shocks the Western habits of mind; a kind of animal with two heads, and what heads! Of the sort that the school curricula do not know how to deal with, because they are not made to accommodate monsters. (Marçais 1930, 409)

It is of course Charles Ferguson's seminal 1959 article, simply entitled "Diglossia", (Ferguson 1991; Ferguson 1972) that had the greatest impact and subsequently became the pivotal, constantly revisited, part of any study of the issue. Noting that "in many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions", (Ferguson 1959, 232) Ferguson defines diglossia as follows:

> Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. (*Ibid.*, 244–45)

One of the most important aspects of his article, which would later be bitterly debated, is the elaboration of his famous dichotomy between the two varieties H (high) *vs* L (low) of language in the diglossic situation:

> One of the most important features of diglossia is the specialization of function for H and L. In one set of situations only H is appropriate and in another only L, with the two sets overlapping only very slightly. (*Ibid.*, 235–36)

> [The] difference in method of acquisition is very important. The speaker is at home in L to a degree he almost never achieves in H. The grammatical structure of L is learned without explicit

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[4] Marçais 1930. Both Psichari and Marçais appear in Ferguson's 1959 footnotes and bibliography: Ferguson 1959, 250.

> discussion of grammatical concepts; the grammar of H is learned in terms of 'rules' and norms to be imitated. (*Ibid.*, 239)

> In all the defining languages the speakers regard H as superior to L in a number of respects. Sometimes the feeling is so strong that H alone is regarded as real and L is reported 'not to exist'. (*Ibid.*, 237)

The debate about the very notion of diglossia and the validity of Ferguson's theses was continuous and is still ongoing. Charles Ferguson himself revisited several aspects, either to clarify or to modify them.[5] One of the issues, of interest to the Sinological field, is the question of whether the H language is or is not "a written variety which is the mother tongue of nobody" (Coulmas 1987, 117), which would lead one to affirm that literary Chinese, for example, was an artificial language that was never spoken by anybody. This would be indeed a most questionable claim. (C. L. Li and Thompson 1982, 84; Rosemont 1974, 71, 77, 80; Hudson 2002, 21) The very notion of diglossia is now considered obsolete by some sociolinguists who consider it to be too monolithic and static, preferring more fluid notions such as translanguaging or metrolingualism. (Jaspers 2020, 124) Other scholars, on the contrary, consider it more topical than ever, using the case of scientific literature: it is indeed in a diglossic dynamic that (American) English would impose itself as the high language, the only one capable of conveying modern science, while the other languages would be increasingly ignored and relegated to the status of low varieties. For example, the repeated assertion, mentioned above, that the very word diglossia was coined by Ferguson in 1959, whereas that was only the year it appeared in the high language, is precisely the typical diglossic claim. (May 2014, *passim*, in particular 389; Matthey 2021, 113–14)

In the context of Chinese studies, and more broadly around the status of (classical) Chinese in the role of the H-language in relation to vernacular languages as L-languages in the overall East Asian linguistic landscape, the notion of diglossia has received, and continues to receive, a very mixed reception. A general discussion of diglossia around the Chinese language is far beyond the scope of this paper, but it should be recalled that it is as old as Ferguson's theorisation itself, as he wrote, though without further elaboration:

> Chinese should be cited because it probably represents diglossia on the largest scale of any attested instance.[6]

A relatively orthodox conception of diglossia in its Fergusonian definition has been defended by several linguists-cum-Sinologists. Thus Chris Wen-chao Li:

> Indeed the complementary roles served by the literary and vernacular languages in pre-modern China are in many ways typical of the roles of H and L languages in classic diglossia. (C. W. Li 2015, 12)

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[5] Ferguson 1991, reproduced in Ferguson 1996. See also, e.g., Wexler 1971; Hudson 2002.

[6] Ferguson 1959, 246. "Diglossia typically persists at least several centuries, and evidence in some cases seems to show that it can last well over a thousand years.": *ibid.*, 240.

> With regard to the origins of the H language, which in many traditions consist of archaisms frozen by social conventions [...], Literary Chinese likewise traces its roots to canonical writings of the Warring States (403–255 b.c.) period, after which time writers continued to model their prose on this early language while the spoken language underwent independent development. [...] Perpetuation of the H language is helped along by its high social prestige, together with restricted access to the more formal situations for which H is appropriate— normally the reserve of the educationally privileged [...], resulting in H becoming part of a tradition of restricted literacy in a speech community that is overwhelmingly illiterate [...]. Such is the case in China, where mastery of the literary language, while viewed by the populace as a road to power and glory via success in the imperial examinations, nevertheless was beyond the reach of the uneducated masses, and hence restricted to elite circles. (*Ibid.*)

Chris Wen-chao Li's assessment that "Literary Chinese, which is learned in school by a small elite [...,] is never used for daily conversation by any speech community"[7] echoes the views expressed by Don Snow, (Snow 2010b, 160) a scholar who has also largely taken up the theoretical basis laid down by Charles Ferguson, in particular in studying the differentiated social functions of dialectal varieties, especially in South China. (Snow 2021; Snow 2013a; 2013b; 2021) Snow, like many others, also sees classical Chinese as playing the role of H-language in the wider East Asian context, with the indigenous vernaculars in the role of L-languages.[8] This view, which is actually questionable and overlooks some of the realities of spoken and written practices, is criticised as rather irrelevant by the Japanologist Peter Kornicki, (Kornicki 2018, 38) while the Koreanist Ross King, in a more strident way, aims at "ditching diglossia" as a notion that simply does not even deserve to be considered, thus throwing out the baby with the bath water. (King 2015)

This position is unnecessarily dismissive, and furthermore does not stand up to the test of facts. Though we will not discuss here linguistic realities in the Sinographosphere outside China, we must recall that diglossia in premodern China, in the strict sense of the coexistence of two linguistic registers corresponding to different practices within the same language, is not a figment of the imagination: it is a simple matter of fact. Even if the word was coined later, its reality is described very early on by objective witnesses of the very period I am discussing here. One of the most authoritative of them all— none other than Matteo Ricci (1552–1610)—mentions it as one of the first and most salient features of Chinese language practices, which he describes for the European public. Another of these characteristics is that classical Chinese, far from being reserved for the written domain, is constantly spoken, so much so, Ricci explains, that Chinese literati would rather be misunderstood by expressing themselves in this monosyllabic form, if necessary with the help of character tracings on their palms, than to clarify their speech by plainly speaking in the vernacular. (Ricci and Trigault 1978, 91–92) As for the discussion on the subject among Chinese literati themselves, we will see below how rich it was.

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[7] *Ibid.* This is a rather empirical claim for which there is, in my opinion, very little empirical evidence on which to evaluate it.

[8] Snow 2010a; Lee 2008. On the reality of diglossia in the context of overseas Chinese communities: Klöter 2022.

One of the problems that has arisen for many critics of the notion of diglossia is its association, which has become almost mandatory, with the H/L dichotomy. Generally speaking, modern scholars do not talk about the diglossic situation *stricto sensu*, but about *the Fergusonian theory of diglossia, i.e.,* essentially about the hierarchical discourse between registers induced by Ferguson's analysis. It does not need to be that way. In fact, when treating of language practices of premodern China, and probably also of earlier periods, this dichotomy should certainly be put aside, or at least treated critically, since the Fergusonian model as it is certainly needs to be taken critically, to say the least. Some researchers try to identify continuities and discontinuities in these practices between the premodern period and the present time, but they typically tend to remain trapped in the H/L binarity. (J. Su 2014, 55–57) In one of the most well-constructed critiques of the subject, Vetrov rejects the mechanical application of the Fergusonian scheme to the linguistic situation in China at least from the Song onwards. (Vetrov 2011, 80–82) Basing his demonstration on *Zhu Xi's Sayings* (*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類), he recalls that "It is significant that Zhu Xi relates ethical correctness with a strong belief in the power of the word, with a full conviction that the verbal medium is able to correspond to the moral principle and to express it". (*Ibid.*, 87) He illustrates through many examples the importance attached by Zhu Xi to using simple language in order to access, in its authenticity, the word of the Master. (*Ibid.*, 82-84) Thus:

> 聖人教人，大概只是說孝弟忠信日用常行底話。
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> When the Sage instructed people, generally speaking he was talking about things of everyday concern, about filial piety, brotherly relations, loyalty and truthfulness.[9]
>
> 不惟念得正文，要自家暗地以俗語解得，方是。
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> It is not enough to read the text of the Classics and the commentaries. Understanding them is possible only if you are able to explain them in your mind, using the vernacular language.[10]

The ethical character attached to the use of the vernacular undoubtedly invalidates the possibility of equating it with a "low" language. If I understand him correctly, Vetrov believes that the Fergusonian scheme does not apply to the literary field either, but for another reason: because the Chinese case would be less related to a sociolinguistic reality (a condition for the application of the diglossic theory) than to artistic or aesthetic options. (Vetrov, *ibid.*, 82) While I fully agree with his remarks on the literary resources offered by the variety of writing choices that the dual register of literary and vernacular languages allows, I do not believe that such literary choices are cut off from ethical requirements nor from sociolinguistic realities. For all that, I also agree with a critique of any mechanistic application of the H/L scheme to the linguistic situation of premodern China, at least as witnessed in the texts, but without renouncing the notion of diglossia itself. This is the reason why I briefly recalled the history of the word diglossia/*diglossie* at the beginning of this section. Since Ferguson, despite his footnotes, did little to make clear his borrowing of the word, and the notion,

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[9]Zhu 1986, 129, vol. 1, translation by Vetrov 2011, 88.

[10]Zhu 1986, 2805, vol. 7, translation by Vetrov 2011, 94.

from Psichari, most English-speaking scholars believe, as we have pointed out, that the term begins with him, and especially that the H/L dichotomy was integral to the concept from the start. This is not the case. In fact, this addition is practically the only theoretical novelty of Ferguson's as compared to Psichari, but also the point at which he inflects, if not distorts the most the original meaning of the term (Psichari does not mention at any point the notions of "high" or "low" language, and Marçais is mainly concerned with issues of the teaching of Arabic). So, the least I could say is that the word is worth reconsidering.

Diglossia seems to me to be indispensable, if only to describe realities which are not by any means modern inventions, but a fact constantly discussed by the very authors of the periods concerned. For if we deprive ourselves of this term, what better term can replace it to describe the situation that prevailed at the time? Those who press for "ditching" it should come up with an alternative term that would capture this situation; I cannot think of one.

In what follows I would like to give some exemplary fragments of the discourse found in many texts of the Ming-Qing periods in relation to the reality of the diglossic situation, that is, of the discourse between *tongsu* 通俗 and *wenyan* 文言. Whether in the very text of works of fiction or in critical texts, especially prefaces, the discussion of language registers is indeed a constant one. It reflects, among the literati, not only an acute awareness of the diglossic reality, but a strong desire to take advantage of it from both a literary and an ethical point of view. In fact, the *wen* 文 *vs./ tongsu* 通俗 relationship is one of the most hotly debated topics in the critical literature of the period. From prefaces to commentaries, from narrative settings to techniques of addressing the reader that mimic orality—a topic that has been extensively documented—(Børdahl 2010) we always find the same proclivity, renewed from author to author, to ensure the defence and illustration of vernacular language expression.

The prefaces to works of fiction or *huaben* collections constitute only a small sector of the critical literature that developed exponentially from the end of the Ming period.[11] Without giving an account of this vast body of work, which would be beyond our present scope,[12] we must remember that the statements we read from various preface writers are rooted in a critical tradition of narrative literature which, from its founding figures, such as Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602) or Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610), has markedly supported a discourse valorising vernacular expression. The latter is defended in a voluntarist, not to say militant, manner, with a contrast, most often explicit, with classical forms or expressions whose qualities are judged to be less effective, particularly in ethical terms. The legacy of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) is of course to be found here.[13] But the praise of *tongsu* is so

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[11] A good overall synthesis is Rolston 2001. It is a very short summary of his book: Rolston 1997.

[12] One of the most comprehensive recent studies on the critical approach to fiction through prefaces is by Wang Ping 王平, Wang Junming 王军明 and Shi Xin 史欣: Wang, Wang, and Shi 2020. On Ming prefaces and postfaces of fiction: *ibid*, 181–311; on the prefaces and postfaces of the San Yan Er Pai 三言二拍: *ibid*, 296–311.

[13] On Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602), Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 1568–1610, and the beginnings of fiction and theatre criticism: Lévy 1981, 283–91; Nienhauser et al. 1985, 533–34, 955–56; Plaks 1987, 288–90; Rolston 1997, 31–35; Hegel and Sibau 2014; Handler-Spitz 2017, 29–30.

permanent and repetitive that it can be felt to be defensive; its very reiteration shows that its status is anything but settled, a point to which we must pay attention.

As a major publisher and author of *huaben* stories, but also as a renovator of the genre, Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) repeatedly spoke out on the merits of vernacular writing in the prefaces to his collections forming the so-called *San Yan* 三言 (Three Words), whose influence has been considerable.[14] The following quotation, taken from his preface to his first collection, encapsulates many of the arguments about the qualities of vernacular expression in contrast to literary language. These points are so commonly found in other writers and critics that, rather than as an influence of Feng Menglong, they should be seen as the effect of a discourse that was widespread at the time, and which Feng Menglong in turn merely reflects.

> 天下之文心少而里耳多；則小說之資於選言者少，而資於通俗者多。試今說話人當場描寫，可喜可愕，可悲可涕，可歌可舞；再欲捉刀，再欲下拜，再欲決脰，再欲捐金；怯者勇，淫者貞，薄者敦，頑鈍者汗下。雖小誦《孝經》、《論語》，其感人未必如是之捷且深也。噫！不通俗而能之乎？

> Under Heaven, literary minds are few, while common ears are many; and as it happens, fiction lends itself less to the crafted language than to the colloquial. Well, just ask a storyteller to illustrate something on the spot, and you will see the rapture and the sensation, the grief and the tears, the singing and dancing! Let the storyteller go on and he will have people draw their swords, others prostrate themselves, others prepare to cut throats, or to donate money. The cowardly will find themselves brave, the lecherous chaste, the miserly generous, and the unprincipled sweating with shame. You can keep chanting the *Classic of Filial Piety* and the *Analects*, but you will never succeed in moving people with such swiftness and such depth. Aye! How could you achieve this, if you are not colloquial?[15]

The efficacy of the vernacular discourse, represented here by the universal figure of the storyteller, lies in the fact that it addresses the subjectivity, an effect that the literary ("the crafted language" 選言) seems unable to achieve because it does not speak the natural tongue. This aspect is reflected in the series of emotions that are described. But more than that, we immediately move to a higher register: that of ethics and conduct. This point is crucial and shows the affinity of this argument with Zhu Xi's above-mentioned approach to emotions. This achievement is not aimed at an elite, but at the general public. This large number refers to the wide readership expected by the author/publisher, which gives

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[14] The *Sanyan* collection collectively refers to the 120 *huaben* stories published in Feng's three compilations, of 40 stories each: *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說 (Stories Old and New,1620, later republished as *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言, Illustrious Words to Instruct the World), *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 (Penetrating Words to Caution the World, 1624), and *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言 (Constant Words to Awaken the World, 1627). Feng 2000, xv; Hanan 1981, 98-119; S. Hu 1980, 412-59, vol. 1. On their impact in Jiangnan at the time of their publication, see Cheng 2008, 382-96.

[15] Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574－1646) (under his pseudonym Lütianguan zhuren 綠天館主人, the Master of the Green Sky Studio), "Preface to *Gujin xiaoshuo*" 古今小說序. See Zeng et al. 1982, 91-92; Huang L. and Han 1982, 217; Ding 1996, 774, vol. 2; Wang, Wang, and Shi 2020, 298-99. On the pseudonyms of Feng Menglong: Hu W. 1994, 123-38. Keulemans reflects on this efficiency of emotionality in his article on Li Yu's 李玉 (1602 ?- post 1676) drama. He cites Zhang Dai's 張岱 (1597-1689) criticism in his *Dream Memories of Tao'an (Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶) of an emotional effectiveness in narrative literature that at times leads to laughable excess. See Keulemans 2014, 185-86.

us the opportunity to recall, from the point of view of social history, that it would be wrong to say that the effect of the vernacular on the size of the readership is "largely imagined". (Ling 2014, 4, n. 12) On the contrary, we have ample proof of the considerable commercial success of publications in the vernacular, and do not lack evidence about the publishing activities of many authors and publishers of *huaben* stories, novels, and plays. We are able to assess the market response to their publications by the large number of reprints of their works from at least the late Ming to the mid-Qing period.[16]

A typical effect of the modern definition of intralingual translation as proposed by Karen Zethsen (see section "The intralingual translation paradigm" below) is the ability of the vernacular to bring together past and present, to update classics written in a language that most people no longer understand. This function, involving the temporal characteristic implied by Zethsen's definition, is closely related to that of the expert-to-lay relationship, or, one might say more generally, the (for that matter "largely imagined") pedagogical relationship invariably involved in any rewriting enterprise. Such a statement is widely found in prefaces, as in the following example, where the point is to be able to recount the Classics in simple words and to cultivate a capacity to engage the reader:

> 今是編以通俗語言鼓吹經傳，以入情啼笑接引頑癡。殆老泉所謂「蘇張無其心，而龍比無其術」者歟？

> Now this publication promotes the Classics and the Commentaries through the medium of the vernacular language, which allows it to penetrate into the feelings of the public, and, in appealing to their tears and laughter, to reach out to the most stubborn minds. Is this not pretty much what Laoquan meant when he said that "Su and Zhang lacked their heart while Long and Bi lacked their technique"?[17]

This quote is interesting because, as in Zethsen's theory of intralingual translation, it highlights how the vernacularisation of the Classics functions as a missing link. The vernacular language has an inherent technical efficacy that gives classical culture a topicality it no longer possesses because its original language has become frozen. It is able to "move" a wider group of readers more effectively than Classical language does. It gives classical culture a set of linguistic techniques (both syntactically and lexically, but also thanks to its rich palette of narrative means) that the latter lacks, and conversely it is endowed, as a natural language, with a truth and sincerity that is matched to the moral culture promoted by the Classics.[18]

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[16] Hegel 2005. On Feng Menglong and contemporary authors of novellas and novels in relation to book production, the book market, and common literacy: Carlitz 2005, 287–89; Brokaw 2007, 478–98, 559–68; McLaren 2005, 152–76; Hegel 2005, 236–40; Son 2018, 17–20, 55–56, 133. On the premodern reprints of the *Sanyan*: Ōtsuka 1987, 9–21, #12001–#12011.

[17] Preface to Li Yu's 李漁 (1610–1680) *Shi'er lou* 十二樓 (*Jueshi mingyan* 覺世明言) by Du Jun 杜濬 (1611–1678) under his pseudonym Zhongli Ruishui 鍾離睿水. See: Li Y. 1986, 11 ; Huang L. and Han 1982, 357 ; Dalian tushuguan cankaobu 1983, 32 ; Ding 1996, vol. 2.

[18] Guan Longfeng 關龍逢 (Huan Longfeng 豢龍逢) and Bi Gan 比干 were two upright ministers. The former was put to death by Tyrant Jie, the last king of the Xia 夏桀, for admonishing him. Bi Gan, uncle and adviser to Tyrant Zhou, last king of the Shang 商紂, was executed by the latter for giving him displeasing advice. The political strategists Su Qin 蘇秦 ?-317 BC) and Zhang Yi 張儀 (?-309 BC), from the School of Diplomacy (*Zongheng jia* 縱橫家), were famous for their oratorical skills, but this did not prevent them from ending up executed by their employers. If the four mentioned figures died violent deaths, the quotation suggests that it was because they mutually lacked the qualities the others possessed: the good advisers were not linguistically convincing; the good rhetors lacked sincerity. Note that the preface mentions

This updating of classical culture, a constant preoccupation of preface writers, which calls for a prominent mission of the vernacular in the aforementioned tradition of Zhu Xi, is reflected in the preface to Feng Menglong's second *huaben* collection:

《六經》、《語》、《孟》，譚者紛如，歸於令人為忠臣，為孝子，為賢牧，為良友，為義夫，為節婦，為樹德之士，為積善之家，如是而已矣。經書著其理，史傳述其事，其揆一也。理著而世不皆切磋之彥，事述而世不皆博雅之儒。於是乎村夫稚子，里婦估兒，以甲是乙非為喜怒，以前因後果為勸懲，以道聽途說為學問，而通俗演義一種遂足以佐經書史傳之窮。

The Six Classics, *The Analects*, and *Mencius*, about which discussions abound, are, in summary, nothing but exhortations for ministers to be loyal, children to be filial, officials to be wise, friends to be trustworthy, husbands to be honorable, wives to be chaste, scholars to cultivate virtue, and families to accumulate good deeds. The Classics state the values, and the Histories narrate the events: their principle is the same. Yet, the values are explained to a world inhabited not exclusively by venerable men who diligently compare notes with each other in their moral pursuits, and the histories are narrated to a world consisting not exclusively of erudite scholars of distinguished behavior. And since villagers, children, ordinary women, and pedlars are easily stirred to joy or wrath by what others do rightly or wrongly, take their moral guidance from stories about cause and effect of actions, and gain knowledge from street gossip and road hearsay, the genres of dramatised romances in vernacular can thus well serve to support the Classics and the Histories where they reach their limits.[19]

The theoretical added value here, in relation to the previous quotations, is the notion of "support" for the supposed limitations of texts in literary language. This is a point of argument often discussed in the prefaces, with the use of words such as *zuo* 佐 ("support"), *bu* 補 ("supplement"), etc. It is rarely stated where the classical texts would be found lacking, but in the example cited here it seems to have to do with the professed exceptionalism of its exponents, *i.e.* again with an ethos of their practice and reception.

In the following instance, what is lacking is, to put it in a Barthean way, "the pleasure of the text". Since it is quite common in prefaces to works of fiction to find references to women, children, and people with limited education, it is interesting to see a child's point of view evoked here. From it the prefacer makes quite clear that the real issue is the dissociation between the need to transmit the Classics and the expectations of the readership: the Classics, literally, no longer speak.

吾年十歲，方入鄉塾，隨例讀《大學》《中庸》《論語》《孟子》等書，意惛如也。每與同塾兒竊作是語：不知習此將何為者？又窺見大人徹夜吟誦，其意樂甚，殊不知

Laoquan 老泉 as the author of the quote. Laoquan 老泉 is Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1038–1101) *hao*, but actually the quotation (somewhat condensed here) comes from his father Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009–1066): *Jiayou ji* 嘉祐集, 9, "Jianlun" 諫論, I: see Su X., Zeng, and Jin 1993, 244.

[19] Preface to *Jingshi tongyan* by Feng Menglong, under his pseudonym Wu'ai jushi 無礙居士. See Zeng et al. 1982, 97; Huang L. and Han 1982, 222; Ding 1996, 776–77, vol. 2; Wang, Wang, and Shi 2020, 299–300. My translation is adapted from Yang Shuhui and Yang Shuqin: Feng 2005, 5. Also quoted by Hsu 2010, 42.

其何所得樂，又不知盡天下書，當有幾許，其中皆何所言，不雷同耶？如是之事，總未能明於心。

When I was ten, I entered the local school, and following the rule studied such books as *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects*, and *Mencius*, and they would put my mind in utter confusion. With my comrades, we would whisper between us: of what use is it to be trained in all this? Yet we could see that the adults spent their nights reading them, and that they seemed to take great pleasure in them. Where this pleasure came from was a complete mystery to us. And all in all, how many books were there under the sky? What did they say? Were they not all of the same ilk? Things like this were inexplicable to my heart.[20]

Although Jin Shengtan does not state explicitly here what it was about the Classics that confused the schoolboy in him, the fact that he makes such statements in one of his prefaces to his edition of the *Shuihu zhuan* is an implicit indication that at least part of the problem lies, for the infantile (or its equivalent: uneducated) reader, in the problem of language. Proof of this is found in an item in his *dufa* 讀法, in the same critical edition, where he states, this time explicitly, that it is through the elimination of literary language that the question of the text/reader dissociation is resolved: there the characters are made "true" by the truth of the language they speak.

《水滸傳》並無之乎者也等字，一樣人，便還他一樣說話，真是絕奇本事。

The *Shuihu zhuan* does not contain literary language particles like *zhi* 之, *hu* 乎, *zhe* 者, and *ye* 也. Each individual character is made to speak in his own individual way. This is truly marvelous skill![21]

The following quote is interesting because it is a deliberate alteration of a classical quotation. It is now the use of the vernacular, not the literary language, that is entrusted with the task of transmitting ethics. Again, the same eminent function of the vernacular is emphasised, that of being the bearer of moral authority, here expressed in a distich, this time found not in a critical text, but in the body of a story:

話須通俗方傳遠，

語必關風始動人。

Only when the language is accessible to the vulgar is it able to carry far,

The talk has to be intriguing/deal with the mores if it is meant to touch people.[22]

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[20] Third "Preface to the Fifth Book of Genius, The Water Margin by Shi Nai'an" 第五才子書施耐庵水滸傳序(三) by Jin Shengtan 金聖歎 (Jin Renrui 金人瑞, 1608 - 1661). See Zeng et al. 1982, 43; Huang L. and Han 1982, 277; Ding 1996, 1483–84, vol. 3.

[21] "How to read the Fifth Book of Genius" 讀第五才子書法, item 14. See *Diwu caizi shu Shi Nai'an Shuihu zhuan* 1985, 19, vol. 1. The regrouping of typical "empty words" (*xuci* 虛詞) *zhi hu zhe ye* 之乎者也, like *zhi hu zhe ye yi yan zai* 之乎者也已焉哉, is a metonymic phrase for literary language or pedantic jargon in general. Here I quote John Wang and David Rolston's translation: Rolston and Lin 1990, 134.

[22] Feng Menglong, ed., *Jingshi tongyan*, chap. 12, "Fan Qiu'er shuangjing chongyuan" 范鰍兒雙鏡重圓, main story: Feng 1981, 161, vol. 1. Translation (under the title "A double mirror brings Fan the Loach and his wife together again") by Yang Shuhui and Yang Yunqin: Feng 2005, 190 (translation of the distich: "Stories in simple words circulate more widely; Stories that teach morals touch the heart more deeply."). According to Hanan, the *huaben* is "late", "possibly by Feng Menglong" himself: Hanan 1973, 240; Lévy et al. 1978–2006, 412–17, vol. 2 The story was included, under a different title ("Feng Yumei tuanyuan" 馮玉梅團圓) and with a few changes, in the "fake" edition published

The formulation takes on its full force from the fact that it is obviously a response to that of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, where it is placed in the mouth of Confucius: 言之無文，行而不遠 "If his expressions are not well chosen, the effect of his speech will not extend far." This is assuredly not to contradict Confucius, but rather to renew his word and make it clear that henceforth it is the vernacular that has taken the place of *wen* as the vehicle capable of influencing ever wider circles and audiences.[23]

The prefaces, rather than establishing a hierarchy between *wen* and *tongsu*, tend to emphasise the historical evolution of the genres, a traditional theme in literary criticism. The justification for writing in vernacular language is that of modernity, of the expression of the present time—an idea invariably developed in elegant literary language, as in this fine passage from Feng Menglong's preface to *Stories Old and New*:

> 皇明文治既鬱，靡流不波；即演義一斑，往往有遠過宋人者。而或以為恨乏唐人風致，謬矣。食桃者不費杏，絺縠毳錦，惟時所適。以唐說律宋，將有以漢說律唐、以春秋戰國說律漢，不至於盡掃羲聖之一畫不止！

> During the reign of the august Ming, culture has flourished to such an extent that there is no area in which the tide has not moved forward. The [vernacular] romance of amplification often surpasses the Song by a long way. And it would be a mistake to regret that it lacks the perfection of the Tang style. He who eats the peach does not throw away the apricots. Linen, silk, felt, brocade, to each the season that suits them! If we want the Tang to be the model of the Song and the Han the model of the Tang, would we not declare the era of the Spring and Autumn and the Warring Kingdoms the model of the Han, and so on without being able to stop before having swept all the way back to the single line drawn by the Sage Fuxi![24]

Notes about the ease with which children can read a text are by no means insignificant. Here the clarity of style is what accompanies the acquisition of moral principles. This establishes the ethical function of the common language, while insisting on its capacity to convey knowledge, including the most sublime or the most secret.

> 此一傳者，雖市井之常談，閨房之碎語，使三尺童子聞之，如飫天漿而拔鯨牙，洞洞然易曉。雖不比古之集，理趣文墨，綽有可觀。

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by the well-known bibliophile Miao Quansun 繆荃孫 (1844-1919) in 1915, *Jingben tongsu xiaoshuo* 京本通俗小說 (Capital Editions of Popular Stories), chap. 16. This distich: Miao 1988, 92. On the *Jingben tongsu xiaoshuo* collection, see Liu et al. 1993, 228-30; Idema and Haft 1997, 213-14; Zhang B. 2014.

[23] Duke Xiang 襄公, 25th year, 547 B.C.E., j. 36: *Shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokan ji* 1982, 1985c, vol. 2; Watson 1992, 146. I am thankful to Maria Franca Sibau for drawing my attention to this connection.

[24] Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646) (under his pseudonym Lütianguan zhuren 綠天館主人, the Master of the Green Sky Studio), "Preface to *Gujin xiaoshuo*" 古今小說序. See Zeng et al. 1982, 91; Huang L. and Han 1982, 217; Ding 1996, 774, vol. 2. Cf. Patrick Hanan: "In the long period of its dominance, there were virtually no serious proposals to replace Classical with the vernacular. The critics who praised vernacular works praised them, generally, in elegant Classical Chinese; their concern was with literary merit, not with the literary medium, or if with the literary medium, then only as used in that genre. The theory of historical change in literature, especially with regard to the succession of prevalent genres, helped drama and even popular song and vernacular fiction to gain a critical hearing in certain circles. In the latter part of the Ming, this theory was combined, by a few critics, with the conviction of the superior authenticity of an oral and vernacular literature free from the artifice of the literary language.": Hanan 1981, 4. See also Lévy 1981, 303.

This novel, though written in the ordinary speech used in streets and markets, or made up of such bits of talk as are found in women's quarters, makes a three-foot-tall child, on hearing it, feel as if gorged with heavenly nectar, as if in a position to pull the teeth out of whales, so limpid and easy to understand is it. It is because, without comparing itself to the older works, as regards its interest and principles as well as its style, it conceals an abundance of things deserving of attention.[25]

Much of the critical discourse, such as the latter, or the twisted allusion to the *Zuozhuan* quoted above, emphasises the unparalleled vividness and effectiveness of the vernacular, which belongs to the real-life spectrum, whereas the "ancient works" receive a much more static admiration— which incidentally does not prevent them from setting standards to promote the vernacular. In the word *tongsu*, it is perhaps the notion of *tong* 通, even more than that of *su* 俗, that is important. A good example of this dynamic definition is given by none other than Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, in connection with the important question of the transmission of historical knowledge to a wide audience lying outside the circles of the elite. For him the conclusion is very straightforward: *su* is on the side of a transmission dynamic that *wen* cannot dispense, and all the merit of the dissemination of historical knowledge is placed on the side, not of the original texts, but of their vernacular rewriting:

今天下自衣冠以至村哥里婦，自七十老翁以至三尺童子，談及劉季起豐沛，項羽不渡烏江，王莽篡位，光武中興等事，無不能悉數顛末，詳其姓氏里居。自朝至暮，自昏徹旦，幾忘食忘寢，聚訟言之不倦。及舉《漢書》、《漢史》示人，毋論不能解，即解，亦多不能竟。幾使聽者垂頭，見者卻步。噫！今古茫茫，大率爾爾，真可怪也，可痛也。則《兩漢演義》之所為繼《水滸》而刻也，文不能通而俗可通，則又通俗演義之所由名也。

Nowadays under the sky, from the scholars in official attire to the village lads and the townswomen, from the seventy-year-olds to the three-foot-tall children, as soon as there is talk of Liu Ji (Liu Bang 劉邦) raising troops in Fengpei, of Xiang Yu not crossing the Wu River, of Wang Mang usurping the throne, of the restoration by Emperor Guangwu, there is no one who is not capable of enumerating it all from beginning to end, detailing surnames and places of origin. From morning to night, from sunset to dawn, almost forgetting to eat or sleep, everyone discusses it endlessly and without tiring. But when it comes to taking *The History of the Han* or *The Annals of the Han* and showing them to people, without mentioning those who do not understand anything, even those who do understand do not understand all of it. There is no better way to make the listeners nod off and to make the spectators recoil. Alas! The present and the past form an immense and vague expanse, and it is always the same thing: there is truly

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[25] "Preface to *Jin Ping Mei cihua*" 金瓶梅詞話序 by Xinxinzi 欣欣子. See Huang L. and Han 1982, 192; Xinxinzi 1998, 1469; Ding 1996, 1078, vol. 2. "Gorged with heavenly nectar" (*yu tianjiang* 飫天漿) and "pulling the teeth out of whales" (*ba jingya* 拔鯨牙) are quotations borrowed from the poem "Tiao Zhang Ji" 調張籍 (Teasing Zhang Ji) by Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) (who is said to have himself borrowed the formula from one Wei Daofu 魏道輔). The former has the meaning of reaching the sublime, the latter that of giving the spectacle of a serene and imposing, but at the same time secret, magnificence (for few can explore the mouth of a whale). Together they evoke the ability to unveil a whole world of unknown marvels. Han 1984, 989, vol. 2; n. 19–20, 1984, 992–93, vol. 2.

something to be irritated about and something to be sad about. But what makes the printing of this *Historical Romance of the Two Han* a worthy successor to *Water Margin* is that while the literary language fails to communicate, it is the vernacular that has this ability [*wen bu tong er su ke tong* 文不能通而俗可通]. That is why the vernacular romances [*tongsu yanyi* 通俗演義] were named as such.[26]

Without naming it, what Yuan Hongdao thus criticises is none other than diglossia, whose problems are present at the heart of what we might call the archiving of knowledge, as opposed to its dissemination. It is customary for this tension to be expressed in terms of communication or connection (*tong* 通), that is, in dynamic terms. (This is the very reason why the methodology of textual comparison we propose is thought of as a tool enabling us to account for the dynamics of transformation between ST and TT.) If it is indeed, as Yuan Hongdao says, at the level of their usages that literary expression and vernacular expression are distinguished, the question of the audience becomes central. As such, it is often posed *de facto* as a matter of conflictuality, however muted, which we noted above as being typical of diglossic situations. In the example of Yuan Hongdao, as in those mentioned above of Jin Shengtan remembering his childhood, or of Feng Menglong in his preface to *Gujin xiaoshuo*, this conflictuality is expressed in terms of frustration: because of the language barrier, some of the information is not properly conveyed; the expected pleasure of the text fails to materialise, so that it has to be remedied by readjustment within the framework of the diglossic landscape.

This conflicting relationship has at times taken the form of a defiant derision of literate culture and its language. In Yuan theatre, the literary language is often debased through quotations that deliberately take the opposite view of classical meanings from vernacular usage.[27] This buffoonish tendency targets scholarly pedantry, within the framework of a broader social defiance that is expressed in other aspects, for example in the hatred of the parvenu who forgets the wife from difficult times, an important theme from the Song onwards.[28] But this more or less expressed hostility around language skills cuts both ways: the misunderstanding of classical meanings by the vernacular audience can also be seen, from the literate point of view, as something worth mocking. When, in *Peach Blossom Fan*, a negative character like General Gao Jie 高傑 (?-1645) quotes a *chengyu* taken from a *Lunyu* quotation, he does it in a faulty way, so that his literary lack of culture becomes synonymous with his imbecility as a soldier.[29]

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[26] "*Dong Xi Han tongsu yanyi* xu" 東西漢通俗演義序 ("Preface to *The Vernacular romance of the Eastern and Western Han*"). See Huang L. and Han 1982, 176; Zeng et al. 1982, 71; Ding 1996, 883, vol. 2.

[27] Vetrov 2008, 384–85 (Sub-chapter: "The Art of 'Profaning' Literary Quotations and Allusions in the Spoken Register"): "(...) another mechanism of constituting artistic meaning by means of classical allusions and quotations regularly employed in the Yuan drama may be defined as the "carnivalesque" use of words from the literary tradition, *i.e.*, a way of adapting an expression to the speaking register by turning upside-down the meaning traditionally associated with it. (...) [It] usually serves to produce a comic scenic effect."

[28] Huang S. 2002; Yangguo 2011.

[29] Scene 20. Gao Jie misunderstands *lin shi er ju* 臨事而懼 as: "in front of the situation I feel fearful", because he interprets *ju* 懼 in the common sense of "fear", not in the rarer sense it has in *Lunyu* 7.11: "to show caution". A scholarly commentator on the 1708 edition of *Taohua shan* mocks his blunder by supplementing the original quotation with its second half, which precisely combines the prudence of the good military man with his strategic intelligence—the very qualities Gao Jie lacks. Cf. Kong 2016, 131; Kong 2012, 55 for the *meipi* 眉批 (marginal commentary).

Thus, if, as we have agreed, it would certainly be inappropriate to apply Ferguson's H/L dichotomy to the Chinese situation with the degree of formalism in which he presents it, it is not true either to claim that the two linguistic registers coexist in a peaceful manner. The Chinese situation calls for a nuanced approach, which does not ignore the conflictual dimension inherent in any diglossic situation. There is indeed a hierarchical difference between the two types of expression; otherwise, how can we explain the fact that prefaces and other critical texts of vernacular literature, especially in the seventeenth century, spend so much effort justifying the usefulness of *tongsu*: would this be necessary if it was not a response to a denial?

There is obviously a hierarchy between written genres, for example, in these well-known remarks by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072):

> 錢思公雖生長富貴，而少所嗜好。在西洛時，嘗語僚屬言：「平生惟好讀書。坐則讀經史，臥則讀小說，上廁則閱小辭。蓋未嘗頃刻釋卷也。」

> Although the Respected Master Qian Si was born and raised in a wealthy family, he did not indulge in any addiction. When he lived in Luoyang, the western capital, he used to tell his subordinates: "In life, I like nothing but reading. When I am seated I read the Classics and history books, when I am lying down I read fictional stories, and when I go to the privy I browse through petty lyrics. I guess there is not a moment when I do not have some book in my hand."[30]

This habit of classifying genres in a hierarchical manner has remained relatively common. It is found in Tang Xianzu, who also places "petty lyrics" (*i.e.*, in the vernacular) at the very bottom of the ladder, which one indulges in when one has failed in the nobler genres; it is through the use of this term that he depreciatively alludes to his art as a dramatist:

> 學道無成，而學為文；學文無成，而學詩賦；學詩賦無成，而學小詞；學小詞無成，且轉而學道。猶未能忘情於所習也 。

> I embarked on learning about the Way without any accomplishment, so I turned to studying prose essays; as in learning prose essays I was still without any accomplishment, I turned to learning poetry and rhapsodies; as in learning poetry and rhapsodies I was still without any accomplishment, I turned to learning petty lyrics; as in learning petty lyrics I was still without any accomplishment, I returned again to learn about the Way; throughout, I have been unable to stay detached from what I practise.[31]

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[30] The Respected Master Qian Si, Qian Sigong 錢思公, is Qian Weiyan 錢惟演 (977–1034), whose posthumous name was Si 思. See Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Guitian lu* 歸田錄, ch. 2: Ouyang 2012, 22. Here I render *xiaoshuo* 小說 as closely as possible to its meaning in the Song period (French "historiettes", "récits d'imagination"), with regard to the classification given, e.g., by the anonymous Guanyuan naideweng 灌園奈德翁, The Patient Gaffer who Waters his Garden, in his *Ducheng jisheng* 都城紀勝 Splendours of A Capital, Highlighted (on which see Schaab-Hanke 2011), section 7, "Washe zhongji" 瓦捨眾伎, "All the talents of the pleasure precincts": see *Ducheng jisheng*, included in the compilation Meng et al. 1982, 11 (multiple pagination).

[31] Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550–1616), letter to Lu Jingye 陸景鄴 (Lu Menglong 陸夢龍, *jinshi* 1610): see X. Tang 2015, 1905, vol. 4.

Literary language as vernacular

The debate about the Chinese diglossic situation and the comparative merits of *wen* and *tongsu* is thus a constant in the period under consideration, whether it is found in the narratives themselves, in introductory texts such as prefaces, or elsewhere in the critical literature. For all that, we should also be aware that the literati of the time never actually give us a definition of *what* exactly the notion of *tongsu* means to them. Obviously, they talk about it as some commonly discussed topic. They do not provide us with any precise explanation of the term; more importantly, they do not tell us that the *tongsu* would necessarily carry a linguistic meaning, or at any rate in all situations. Despite the many examples we have given in the first part of this paper that show how expert the authors of the time were at linguistically transforming a source text into a target text, displaying in the process their sheer virtuosity in the fields of syntax and terminology, it remains very likely that, from their point of view, the issue presented itself in *stylistic* rather than linguistic terms. Even when a critic like Jin Shengtan, in the example quoted above, makes fun of the lifeless language full of "*zhi hu zhe ye* 之乎者也" and explicitly refers to the repertoire of grammatical "empty words", he is probably directing his criticism at a style more than at a language proper—a common trait in how diglossic situations are experienced by their own actors, who tend to reduce the strictly linguistic aspects of discontinuity in favour of other factors. This is why I believe we need to separate the notion of *tongsu* as a "vernacular register" from what would be the *tongsu* as a strict "vernacular language". It is clear that narratives such as *huaben*, novels, and drama have tended in the long run to help standardise the vernacular, modelled on the standardisation of literary language. But one of the purposes of the vernacular narrative is also to spread classical literacy, to make it accessible to new audiences, and this often-overlooked aspect is no less important. The role and presence of literary language within the field of vernacular literature is indeed a huge topic, worthy of a separate study, but I would like to demonstrate through a few examples how what deserve to be called *tongsu* stories can easily fall within the linguistic domain of classical Chinese, as long as there has been some form of colonisation of that domain by living, vernacular speech.

Examples are countless. One of the most familiar situations is that of the historical narrative in which the editor of the vernacular version wants to preserve as much as possible of the appearance of the original text—typically an authoritative historical source. A deservedly famous example is the rewriting of the story of the Prince of Jin, Hailing 海陵王 (1115–1234), in Feng Menglong's collection *Constant Words to Awaken the World*. This story consists of sixteen successive vignettes, almost all of them taken from the *History of Jin*.[32] They are mostly verbatim quotes from the official history. Despite his remarkable fidelity to the letter of the original text, the author/editor has completely transformed his source, through a consummate art of rearranging the micro-sequences, with a multitude of what we would call today copy/paste. In addition, points of view are multiplied and rendered more vivid,

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[32] *Constant Words to Awaken the World, Xingshi hengyan*, chap. 23, "Jin Hailing zongyu wangshen" 金海陵縱慾亡身 ("Prince Hailing of Jin dies from indulgence in lust"). Translated by Yang Shuhui and Yang Yunqin: Feng 2009, 501–41. Source in *Jin Shi* 金史, chap. 63, but also organised from a sequence of tales in the *Yanyi bian* 豔異編, chap. 14. See Lévy et al. 1978–2006, 688–98, vol. 2; Tan 1980, 482–90, vol. 2.

transitions are provided; some elements, for example of an erotic nature, are clearly amplified to give more bawdiness to the narrative, and one even finds in exceptionally high numbers dialectal pronouns such as *nen* 恁, *nenme* 恁麼, that make the text appear more spoken.[33] The result is both linguistically very close to the source and yet very different, as the work of rewriting completely transforms and diversifies the perspectives, giving a true voice to a narrator who, in the original, observes the neutrality of the official story—something Jin Shengtan might have deplored as dull.[34]

We could multiply examples like this, but doing so would not demonstrate much beyond generalities. It would still be difficult to account for the reasons why an author-editor chooses the literary language rather than the vernacular in their passage from a source to a story. (Lanselle 2021) This is where the method I have developed allows us to establish a more precise description of the process, and to make hypotheses about the logic behind such a choice by authors.

Chapter 10 of *Xingshi yan* (Words to Rectify the World), by Lu Renlong 陸人龍 (*ca.* 1632), provides a good example of how linguistic choices reflect options affecting the discourse.[35] The method analysis described in part 1 of this paper allows us to show in a linear display the distribution of language registers throughout the story, which in this case gives the following diagrammatic representation:
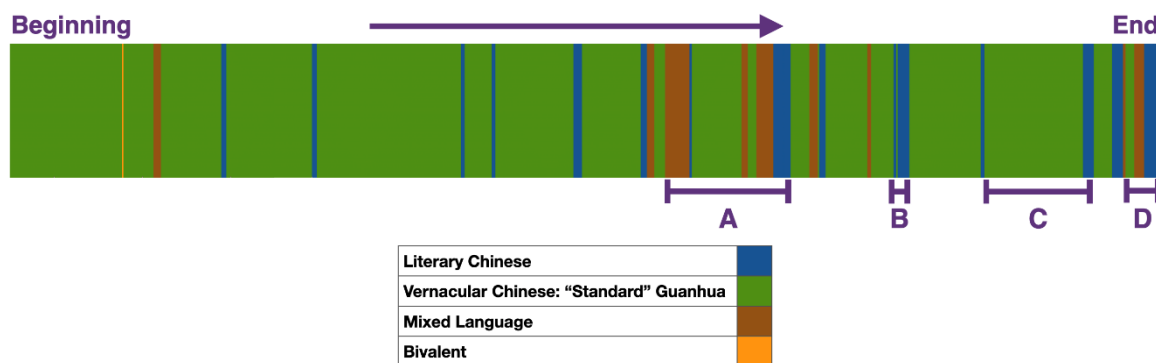
Language register distribution in Xingshi yan 型世言, *chap. 10*

While the story is written predominantly in the vernacular, some areas of the narrative continuum show a greater density of literary or mixed language, and the whole graphic is quite instructive on how these usages are implemented. We should not believe, for example, that lively dialogues would rather be in natural, vernacular language, as in places the contrary is true, and always somehow motivated. Let us recall that the story referred to here is about a young widow who decides to follow her husband in death, despite the opposition of her entire family-in-law, who urge her to stay alive. The collection is known to adhere to a rigorous moral code, and regarding the issue of a daughter-in-law's duties in such situations, it hardly hides its advocacy for widow suicide. Section A in the above graphic

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[33] These appear nineteen times in the text. Hanan notes it, adding that this story "stands out clearly from the rest of the late stories": Hanan 1973, 244 & 76, n. 31.

[34] Hanan still finds the result "shapeless": Hanan, *ibid.* p. 76. On the sources and transformations leading to the making of the story: Feng 2011, 81–119; Lanselle 2015b, slides 29–43. See also Feng 1999, 13–14.

[35] See reference in part I of this paper: Lanselle 2022, 228, n. 37.

corresponds to the crux of the whole story's moral message, a dialogue between the heroine (the young widow) and her mother. The daughter tries to persuade her mother that she (the daughter) should follow her husband in death. The widow (systematically called "the exemplary/heroic woman" "烈女" in the TT) speaks in mixed or literary language, exposing with rigorous logic the principles by which she intends not to outlive her husband. Her mother, a simple woman far less advanced than she is in the ways of wisdom (and obviously less formally educated), responds in at times very colloquial vernacular, with popular turns of phrase, contrasting sharply with the daughter's unabated classical wording.[36] The heroine ends up with a verbatim citation of ST referring to the ancient tradition of placing a precious object in the dead person's mouth, as her whole tirade magisterially echoes the *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienü zhuan* 烈女傳), which, as pointed out from the beginning of the story, has formed the bedrock of her childhood education.[37] Section B on the diagram shows the point where the "heroic woman" reiterates her pledge to commit suicide, expressing herself with a mix of verbatim quotation and of translation into literary language of ST. Her tirade in the first person ends up with a concluding, extradiegetic couplet in the literary register. The couplet punctuates the stern moral significance of her words, in which she sticks to the dry, rhythmic, even rhymed, original text as well as to her ethical principles.[38] When the "heroic woman" ceases to speak and is no longer anything but action (section C), the extradiegetic narration or her mother's words revert to the vernacular, until she hangs herself. This culminates in the final punctuation that crowns her death in the form of a five-character eight-line regulated verse extolling her memorable and exemplary action.[39]

It is clear that the moral authority of the vernacular narrative is supported by a repeated use of the literary language, which in this case echoes authoritative texts. It is often contrasted with a distinct effect expected from the use of the vernacular. But we should note that the literary form intervenes from all possible points of view: third person, dialogue, versified forms, etc..., diversifying greatly the narrative effects as compared with the original ST. It is what I have called the "colonisation" of the realm of classical Chinese by the living, vernacular speech. This fact has been well documented: it has been shown that the fictional narratives in the classical language that made a comeback from the end of the 17th century onwards consciously integrated narrative methods developed by vernacular literature. (See Allan Barr on Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異: Barr 2007.)

The following example will help us demonstrate how the statistical tool allows us to highlight and analyse this process. Here is the linear representation of the linguistic distribution in the main story of *Zuixing shi* (The Sobering Stone), chap. 6, a few passages of which have been quoted above:[40]

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[36] E.g: "如今正在熱水頭上" ("in this dire situation"); "你若有些山高水低" ("if some unexpected misfortune happens to you").

[37] Quotations of this passage in ST and TT figure among the examples cited in part I: Lanselle 2022, 227, 236–237, 238–239.

[38] "九原無起日，一死有貞心": "From the abode of the departed there is no return, It is when death comes that loyalty shows." See Lu 1993, 184.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 186. Note that part D is a quick account, predominantly in mixed language, of the treatment of the heroine's memory by the official authorities and by her biographer. The last few sentences in literary language are a quotation from Yuhou 雨侯, one of the book's commentators, but this is elided, as the last page is missing.

[40] ST: "Li Zheng", in *Taiping guangji*, chap. 427, *op. cit.*; TT: Dong Lu Gukuang sheng, *Zuixing shi*, chap. 6, main story, "Gaocai sheng aoshi shi yuanxing Yiqi you niangu fen banfeng" *op. cit.* See *Taiping guangji* 1981, 3476–79, vol. 9; Dong Lu Gukuang sheng 1985, 77–91. See this paper's first part, Lanselle 2022, 231, 235–236, 243.
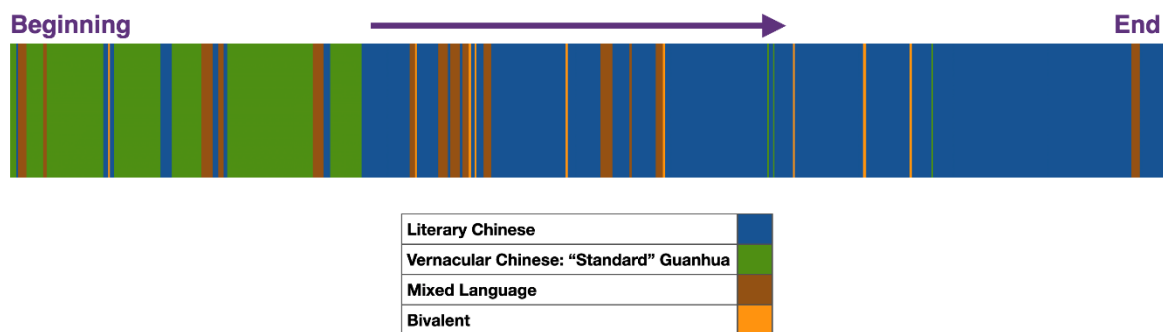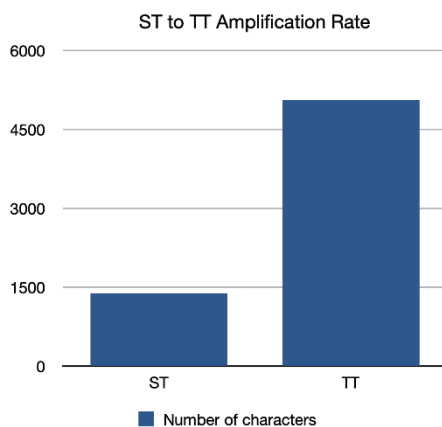
Language register distribution in Zuixing shi 醉醒石, *chap. 6*

As we can see, the story is mostly written in literary or mixed language, with only a quarter in vernacular, as shown in the following graph:
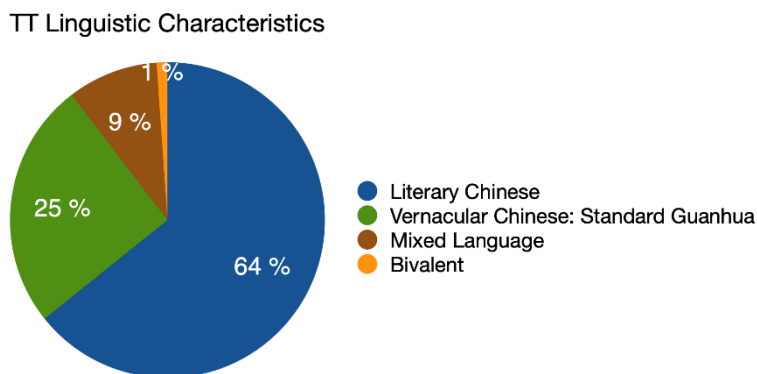

This tale is an amplification of a single, relatively long source, preserved in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, with an amplification ratio of +269%:

The story has been recrafted very carefully by the editor of the *Zuixing shi*, who has tried to stay as faithful as possible to the original *zhiguai* 志怪 tale, and all the more so that the moral issue is paramount to him. The narrative is the account of a man who, because of his cruelty and harshness, has been transformed into a man-eating tiger. One of his former friends passes through the mountains where he now roams, and the better part of the last two thirds of the story consists in a conversation between the two characters, the tiger and the former friend. The tiger explains his torment to his friend,

and how he has reflected deeply on his past conduct. He reveals that he has undergone profound moral reform, even though his appearance has not changed—he remains a tiger. The animal does not speak in the vernacular: on the contrary, the classical or mixed language with which he expresses himself throughout what is essentially a long monologue is the very mark of the elevation of his spirit and the exemplarity of his personal journey. The classical eloquence of the language in which he talks seems to be in proportion to the lesson he is likely to offer to the reader.
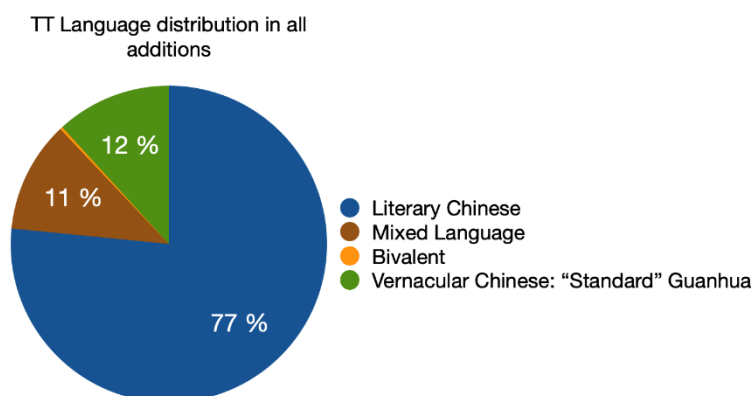
In this chapter the whole range of micro-strategies has been used in the rewriting from ST to TT:
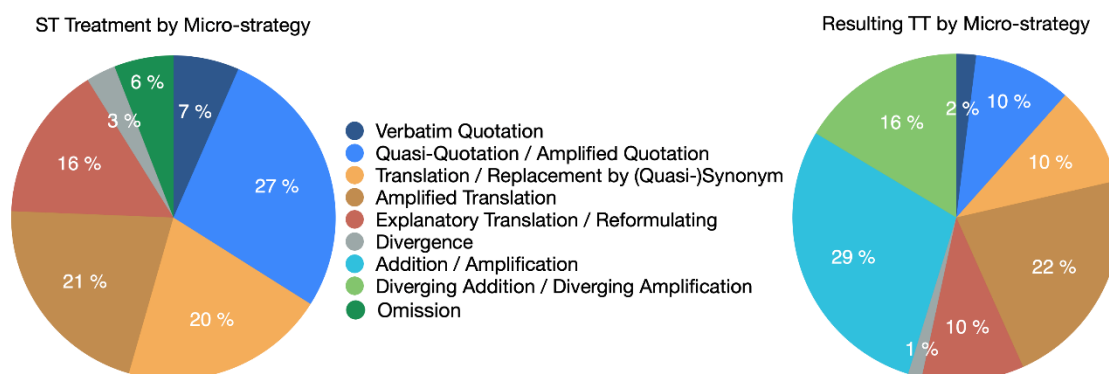
Fidelity to the original text is reflected in the indicated figures: 34% of ST was quoted, either verbatim or amplified, while 57% was translated in one form or another. Thus 91% of the text was taken into account, and a very small proportion (6%) was omitted. Moreover, the textual displacements (not indicated on the two graphs) correspond to only 7% of ST and 3% of TT, which shows that the original structure of the story has been negligibly affected. On the TT side, 12% of the text results from quotations, while 42% comes from some form of translation; the two types of addition account for 45% of the whole. The presence of literary language or mixed language in TT therefore does not result from the relatively small share of quotations, but from the effects of rewriting. Taking all three types of translations together, 55% of them were carried out in literary or mixed language:
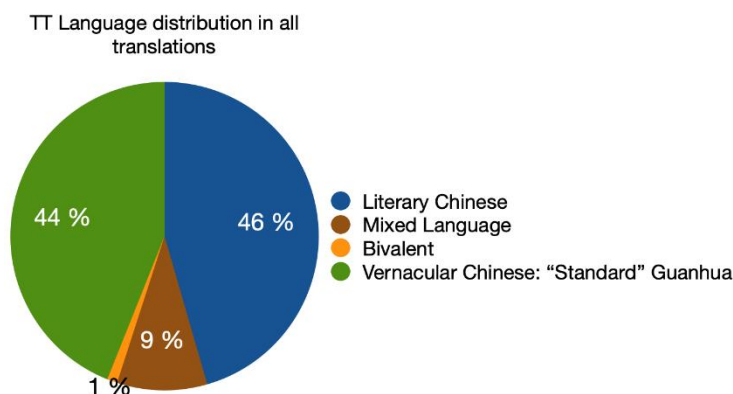
The proportion of these registers is much higher in both types of additions, where the vernacular is reduced to only 12% of the whole:

TT Language distribution in all additions

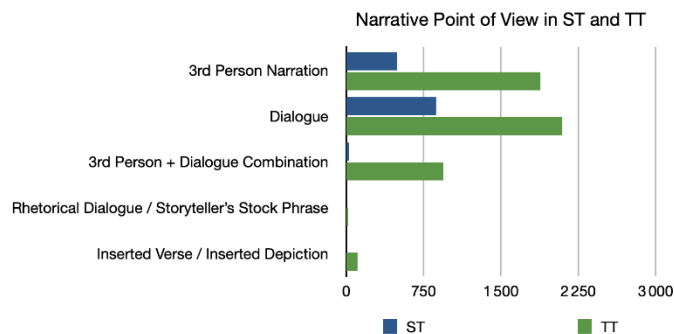- Literary Chinese
- Mixed Language
- Bivalent
- Vernacular Chinese: "Standard" Guanhua

77 %, 11 %, 12 %

Within the different types of translation, if we look at the category of 'pure' translation, it is fascinating to see that the intralingual translation effort remains confined to the search for equivalents in the same field of the literary language, the use of the vernacular not exceeding 8% of the total:

TT Language distribution in Translation / Replacement by (Quasi-)Synonym

- Literary Chinese
- Mixed Language
- Bivalent
- Vernacular Chinese: "Standard" Guanhua

62 %, 27 %, 3 %, 8 %
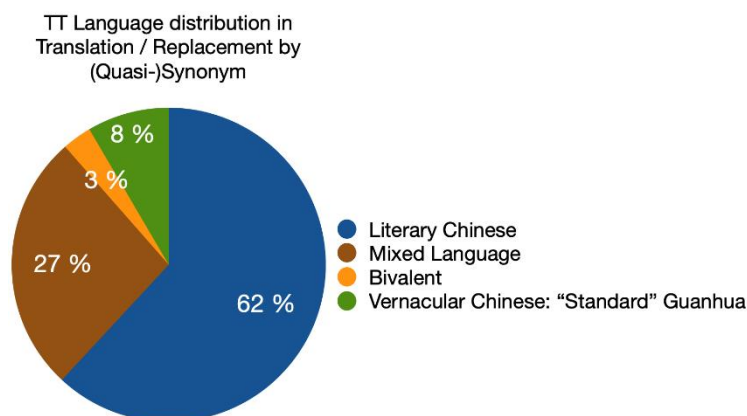
As far as the narrative points of view are concerned, the author's policy on linguistic registers is consistent with his narratological choice to remain in a classical register: despite the significant increase in dialogue parts, the categories Rhetorical Dialogue/Storyteller's Stock Phrase and Inserted Verse/Inserted Depiction are virtually unrepresented:

Narrative Point of View in ST and TT

- 3rd Person Narration
- Dialogue
- 3rd Person + Dialogue Combination
- Rhetorical Dialogue / Storyteller's Stock Phrase
- Inserted Verse / Inserted Depiction

0   750   1 500   2 250   3 000

■ ST   ■ TT

This may seem surprising if one considers that the same author shows an otherwise outstanding command of the most vernacular language, often with dialectal aspects and even slang. He is also a particularly prolific versifier, since, of all the *huaben* collections, the *Zuixing shi* is one that makes the most extensive use of inserted verse.[41] The choice to rewrite an already relatively detailed story by opting mainly for literary language is therefore deliberate. For the author, it corresponds clearly to the gravitas of his purpose, and represents a resource in terms of language register that is part of the rich arsenal of vernacular strategies he has at his disposal. For there is no doubt that for him his act of rewriting is part of an enterprise of vernacularisation of the story, as is shown by the high level of use of the vernacular language in the same tale in both Amplified Translation and Explanatory Translation (as mentioned earlier, the latter always shows a high percentage of vernacular):
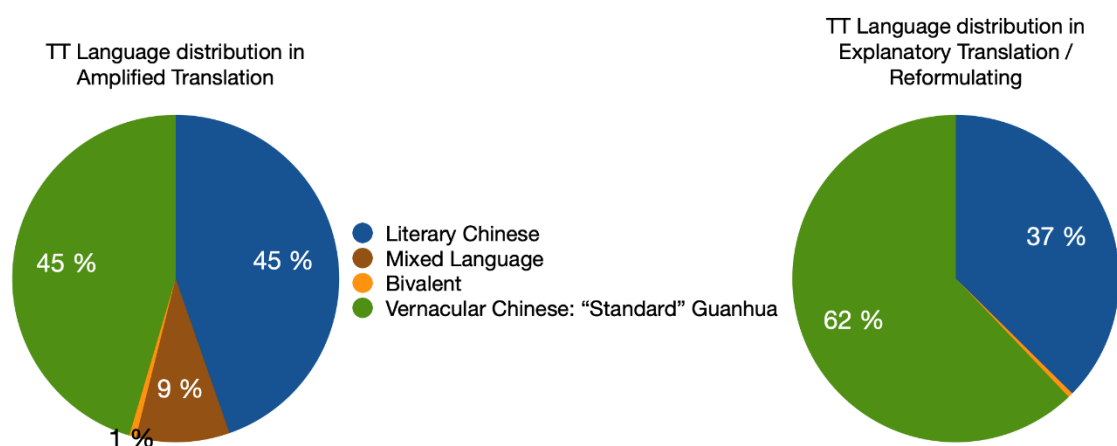
Did this kind of rewriting in such a classical register achieve its claimed goal of opening up the meaning of a text to a wide audience? Probably not entirely, if the audience was a truly popular one: the writing of *huaben* tales is primarily an exercise of the literati—which in no way diminishes the sincerity of their commitment to the vernacular. It has been suggested, convincingly in my view, that Dong Lu Gukuangsheng 東魯古狂生, the anonymous author/editor of the *Zuixing shi*, might be none other than the famous Jia Fuxi 賈鳧西 (Jia Yingchong 賈應寵, *ca.* 1590–*ca.* 1676), alias "Mupi sanke" 木皮散客, "The Wood-and-Leather Wanderer", who rewrote the entire history of China, as well as passages from the *Lunyu*, in the form of Northern drum-ballads (*guci* 鼓詞).[42] His Qufu compatriot Kong Shangren, who had known him well in his youth (he was a friend of Kong's father, Kong Zhenfan 孔貞璠 [1581–1653]), notes the way he always argued "in a logic of storyteller's discourse" (皆以稗辭證), but pokes fun at the fact that he mixed up the linguistic registers so badly that the local villagers could not understand him.[43]

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[41] The *Zuixing shi* has an average of 22.93 inserted poems per chapter, and a total of 344 poems, songs and other prosimetric pieces in the whole collection. According to Liang Dongli's 梁冬丽 survey, which covers fifty *huaben* collections, only two collections have a higher frequency of inserted verse by chapter than *Zuixing shi*. See Liang 2013, 318.

[42] See Xu 1994; 1997; Q. Zhang 1997. Thus, Dong Lu Gukuangsheng 東魯古狂生 could be a pun that should read 東魯鼓狂生.

[43] "His style mixed elegance and vulgarity, the serious and the satirical, much like Li Zhi, Xu Wei, and Yuan Hongdao of the late Ming. Hardly

The fact remains that, like many other authors/editors, he shows through this case all that is involved for a scholar of his time, beyond the vernacular language, in the writing of a vernacular story. It is first of all a question of renewing and modifying its content, but also of manipulating the language along the various categories of discourse components that our method of analysis aims at identifying. What defines vernacular narratives, outside the linguistic register, may indeed lie elsewhere, and actually in a great number of places: for example in rewriting, re-entextualisation, or recontextualisation processes; in the use of effects as varied as the insertion of opportunistic developments under cover of the previous text's authority, the continuous changes in point of view, the addition of shifters or deictic elements (such as pronouns, temporal indicators, etc.), the dis-location and re-location of the very fabric of the narrative at a very minute level, be it sentences or even words, and in the lavish reworking of what we should call the phatic function. The latter is of special importance. It refers to this particular function of language—that our authors so successfully entrusted to their own storyteller's persona—whose purpose is to maintain communication between the speaker and the addressee without necessarily communicating a specific message (cf. Jakobson elaborating on the basis of Bronisław Malinovsky).[44] (Jakobson 1985, 146, 152–53; Hébert 2020, 234–39) All these specifics constitute what I am referring to, by and large, when talking about "indexical level" in my analysis of the rewriting procedures (*i.e.*: not "what is said", but "how it is said"). In contrast with a typically more distant ST, the phatic function and other recontextualising devices developed in TT create and maintain a certain relationship between the narrator and the reader, as if the former was talking personally to the latter. This cultivated relationship thus makes other goals possible—such as exerting a moral authority, persuading, influencing, or bridging gaps in order to share knowledge.

One of the reasons why I have chosen to draw attention to the case of narratives rewritten in literary language is that it is a form of extreme case which raises the very question of vernacular rewriting. Such cases, by making the need to go through the strictly linguistic component of vernacularisation less obvious, highlight by contrast all the other elements, of a discursive nature, which seem to make the very act of rewriting so compelling. For ultimately the underlying question that arises in all these narratives that attest to the need to transform previous sources, even without leaving the confines of the same linguistic register, is the following: why rewrite what has already been written? This is where I believe the notion of intralingual translation proves useful.

The intralingual translation paradigm

The subject in itself is a huge one and would undoubtedly deserve another paper in its own right. But since the notion has never been applied to the present context in any study, we consider it essential in

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anyone among the local people understood it." 文字雅俚，莊諧不倫；頗類明之李卓吾、徐文長、袁中郎者。鄉人多不解. In Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648–1718), "Mupi sanke zhuan" 木皮散客傳 ("Biography of The Wood-and-Leather Wanderer "), included in F. Jia 1982, 161–63; English translation: Strassberg 1983, 36–40. This passage: Jia 1982, *ibid.* 162; Strassberg 1983, *ibid.* 39.

[44] See, for example, the stock-phrases and quotations cited in part 1 of this paper, Lanselle 2022, 223–24.

this final section to refer to it, albeit briefly, as we believe this theoretical approach is coherent with many aspects that have been described so far.

Through many examples given above, we have seen how consistently Chinese authors have sought to renew the narration of a whole heritage of stories through rewriting, often in a manner akin to some form of translation—a clear sign that they believed this act brought out aspects of these stories that the mere reading or publication of the original texts were unable to achieve. As we have expressed repeatedly, the authors of the time did not think they were conducting intralingual translation—or translation at all. The idea would never have crossed their minds. Such an approach is still almost non-existent in Chinese Sinology today, where it would be ideologically risky to speak of "translation" between two states of Chinese, as if the national language could be foreign to itself. In Western Sinology, the notion has so far received relatively little attention—an effect of the discipline's scant interest in Translation Studies more generally. There are several reasons for this, one of them being that referring to intralingual translation more or less forces one to refer also to diglossia, which, as we have shown, many scholars remain wary of. More generally, the concept of intralingual translation remains far from being universally accepted. In the context of translation studies, it is plainly tied to the fact that the very notion of translation itself is notoriously ill-defined and subject to heated debate. As Andrew Chesterman puts it, two camps are opposed: on one side are the "splitters", who favor a very narrow definition of translation, limited to a basically technical operation restricted to the sole field of interlingual translation; on the other side are the "lumpers", who advocate a much broader definition, not necessarily tied to the interlingual field and even welcoming to metaphoric understandings of the term. (Chesterman 2018, 14–18) Chesterman's good-natured way of presenting the debate should not hide the fact that it is acrimonious, implying claims of competence versus suspicions of incompetence, with academic posts at stake. In this context some authors would rather that the concept of intralingual translation did not exist—as there were the ones who would rather that diglossia should be "ditched". (Mossop 2016)

For many reasons, I am clearly in the camp of the "lumpers". Without ignoring modern criticism of a broader definition of translation, I see no convincing justification to reject the tripartite definition of translation given by Roman Jakobson in his seminal 1959 article, putting in first position "intralingual translation or rewording", as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language".[45] As Jakobson recalls, this should be understood in the light of "the deepest inquirer into the essence of signs", Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), for whom "the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign", and "a sign is not a sign"—in the linguistic sense—unless it "translates itself into another sign in which it is more fully developed". (Dewey 1946, 91)

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[45] The two other kinds of translation are: "2. Interlingual translation or translation proper [as] interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. 3. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation [as] interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems." (Jakobson 1959, 232). See Jia Hongwei's interesting critical approach based on Juri Lotman's idea on semiosphere: H. Jia 2017, 33–38.

Much has happened since Jakobson, and today the study of intralingual translation is an integral part, despite some resistance, of Translation Studies in general. Paradoxically, it has developed from a critique of Jakobson's very definition of "same language". Indeed, to what extent can we speak of "same language" between different dialects, idiolects, or sociolects? (Berk Albachten 2014, 574) In the case we are dealing with here, it is indeed this question of the existence of sociolects (with all that it implies in terms of practices and familiarity with references, over and above the linguistic aspect alone) that is at the heart of the constant preoccupation with the relationship between *wen* and *tongsu*. Translation between these diversified forms of the "same language", Anthony Pym points out, is "no different from those between more radically distanced language systems", adding: "there is no strict cut-off point at which wholly intralingual rewriting can be said to have become wholly interlingual."[46] Özlem Berk Albachten states: "All these questions make Jakobson's division between interlingual and intralingual translation ambiguous, and linguists still do not agree on clear dividing lines."[47] This touches on the very definition of what a language is, the contours of which may be unstable. Some authors, such as Kathleen Davis, go so far as to argue that in order to translate, one need not be conscious of the frontiers of a given language, and that the customary order should be reversed: translation, and more precisely intralingual translation, is less the consequence of explicitly recognised language differences than a practice that pre-exists any defined "language". "Translation," she says, "does not simply mediate between different phases of a single language. To the contrary, translation is precisely what generates the historical lineage and the boundaries used to define a unified language in the first place." (Davis 2014, 587) In the context of Ming-Qing China, this proposition is interesting since it can serve to explain why rewriting practices involving important diglossic differences can be carried out without any reference to the unity or otherwise of the language, while stressing time and again the obvious distinction existing between the two different realms of *wen* and *tongsu* (see the many examples cited in the first section above). The reason is that they precede its very notion, relying on traditions that are more akin to commentary, and as such need no direct reference to translation. Nevertheless, such a process of commentary actively participates in the emergence of the vernacular register's undeniably linguistic nature. But this register is not the only one at stake: it is associated, in intralingual translation, with elements of cultural transfer that were essential in the eyes of premodern literati. This subtle position of intralingual translation as a modality of transfer situated between linguistic and other factors is accounted for by Hilla Karas in these terms: "The idea of relative otherness also explains why in intralingual diachronic transfer, the *balance between translation and other modalities* depends on perceptions of the historical layers' 'added values,' intelligibility, and linguistic continuity. Translation therefore fulfills here in a particularly clear way another role, that of constituting a border concept between transfer modalities." (Karas 2016, 461)

It is within the critique of a somewhat misleading unity of language—which "unity" lies at the origin of restrictive, purely interlingual definitions of translation—that one of the main contemporary theorists

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[46] Pym 1992, 25, quoted by Berk Albachten, *ibid.* Cf. Jean-René Ladmiral: "There is no point where translation ends and adaptation begins." ("Il n'existe pas de point ou s'arrête la traduction et où commence l'adaptation."): Ladmiral 2004, 23.

[47] *Ibid.* See also Tymoczko 2007, 56.

of intralingual translation, Karen Zethsen, proposes to go "beyond *translation proper*" (my italics), using Jakobson's own term in his tripartite definition of the various forms of translation. She does so not to criticise the tripartition itself, but on the contrary to regret that "since Jakobson's definition, general definitions of translation have become less inclusive." (Zethsen 2007, 282) She believes that practices such as "localisation, précis-writing, some kinds of news reporting as well as numerous varieties of expert-to-layman communication" function as "highly functional translations," which deserve to be treated in the proper field of translation. (*Ibid.,* 306)

Again, in the specific field we are dealing with here, a whole series of aspects in the practices described should be placed at the centre of the theoretical spectrum of translation in general, all of them being topics discussed in Translation Studies. One can cite, first of all and obviously, the existence of intertextual relations, but also the notion of source text and target text, as well as the issues of semantic transfers, or of similarities and differences. (Chesterman 1996; Chesterman 1997, 62) Equally discussed in Translation Studies are the notions of interpretation, which is inseparable from the taking into account of the relationship between language and culture—as any given "language" only functions in relationship with a given group, of which it forms the linguistic culture. (Toury 2012, 33–34) By "linguistic culture" I mean the whole spectrum of references as well as the reading and writing abilities attached, in practice, to a given language. For example, the Chinese literary language is not only distinguished by its syntax and lexicon, but by the fact that it operates through a particularly rich universe of references, and by the fact that it creates a relatively large gap between the spoken language and its written equivalent. It is evident from many of the critical comments quoted above that the literati who turn classical sources into vernacular stories feel that the linguistic culture attached to literary language is not shared, or is only incompletely shared, by those for whom they rewrite. For them, the linguistic work they perform is a response to the need to reduce the problems posed by this cultural difference. One of the major contributions of intralingual translation studies is thus to put the issue of the cultural group back at the heart of the practice and of the very definition of translation. (Zethsen, 2007, 293) It has been shown, in the examples taken from prefaces cited above, to what extent this aspect is always presented as one of the main motivations for the need to rewrite. The translation then concerns idiolects or sociolects, which are covered by the diglossic aspects of Chinese. The notion of comprehensibility is invoked constantly by the prefacers cited above. As it happens, this very notion has been the subject of studies that precisely justify the validity of the concept of intralingual translation. Matilde Nisbeth Jensen justly points out that the latter is in fact intrinsic to the task of the interlingual translator: "to achieve comprehensibility, linguistic differences within a language are also relevant as the translator must choose words or expressions which are the least complex and optimally comprehensible. It can thus be argued that making a target text optimally comprehensible [in the case of interlingual translation] also requires intralingual translation competence, *i.e.* competence in "rewording" [cf. Jakobson], which means replacing a linguistic element belonging to a certain language with another linguistic element belonging to the same language." (Nisbeth Jensen 2015, 167)

The crucial factor in the need to implement intralingual translation is that of asymmetry, *i.e.*, the difference in position between the sender and the receiver of a given information, message, or discourse. This difference in position can take all possible forms, whether in terms of culture, knowledge, expertise, social affiliation, real or supposed hierarchical distinction, or any other situation where certain codes are more or less shared. "One could thus argue that despite the level of comprehensibility of the source text, high or low, the translator needs to tailor the text intralingually to ensure maximum comprehensibility," says Nisbeth Jensen (*ibid.*, 168). She cites Isabel García-Izquierdo and Vicent Montalt, who criticise the largely fictional view prevailing in Translation Studies, which have "traditionally been based on the notion of equifunctional and interlinguistic translation."

> It needs to be borne in mind that as well as situations of intra- and intergeneric symmetry, we may also find ourselves faced with situations of asymmetry produced not only by interlinguistic differences, but also by differences in the expectations and needs of receivers of a single language or culture. (García-Izquierdo and Montalt 2013, 46)

If we reflect on the striking scene, discussed above, of a tiger's dialogue with a human being, we can only observe that the translation of the animal's language into a language understandable to humans (morally understandable, that is) is carried out in this story through a process of pure intralingual translation, and within the sole realm of literary Chinese at that. In a way it is a good metaphor of a very stratified society, where very different sociolects are simultaneously present, creating a need for cross-comprehension.

Despisers, or, when less virulent, critics of the validity of the notion of intralingual translation, will argue that the processes described are more akin to paraphrastic commentary, or "equivalencing" in the terminology of Brian Mossop, for example, and therefore would not qualify for inclusion in Translation Studies, translation being narrowly defined. (Mossop 2016, 7–11) This raises the question of why this notion of equivalencing was so easily formulated in Western countries in terms of translation, or more precisely "assumed translation," as Gideon Toury puts it. (Toury 1985, 23; Karas 2016, 451) In Europe, where the humanist tradition was multilingual and made much of the translation of ancient languages (Greek, Latin, Hebrew) into national vernaculars, and where translation has risen to the level of a concept, it is no surprise that Peircean semiotics, from which Jakobson operates, may have been associated with this particular paradigm. In China, it is clearly not the paradigm of translation that prevails but that of *commentary*. But in my opinion, it is precisely because this paradigm has permeated the entire Chinese literary culture that it fits so beautifully into the concept of intralingual translation, a notion that implies a very broad definition of translation and, above all, includes a massive commentarial component. Intralingual translation in the context of the Chinese diglossia of the premodern period should thus be understood as commentary, but *commentary playing on different language registers.*[48] Paraphrasing authors that have been quoted above, we might say that there is no strict cut-off point at which commentary can be said to have become a translation.

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[48] On the frontier between translation and interpretation, see Karas 2007, 234–35.

Yet it is fascinating to see how the concept of intralingual translation works well in the case of the vernacular narratives whose formative techniques we have described above. In the body of literature on the subject, I would like to refer here to a landmark article published by Karen Zethsen in 2009, from a completely different linguistic and cultural context (the Danish language and the reading of the Bible). This article is relevant for our discussion in that, unlike many publications which discuss the subject in a more theoretical way, it deals with concrete aspects of what might be called the making of intralingual translation. What it describes from a very different context resonates quite well with what we can observe about the formation of the *huaben* and vernacular literature more generally. In what follows we have to remember that what we can say on the subject relies in part on the critical literature from the period, which we have cited above, to inform us about the motivations and aims of the authors and publishers of these stories.

Karen Zethsen defines four significant parameters that she found "to be influential in intralingual translation" and are "at the same time, the very reasons for the existence of intralingual translation". These are:

> 1. Knowledge
> 2. Time
> 3. Culture
> 4. Space (Zethsen 2009, 805–7)

1. Knowledge

> "Typical intralingual translations instigated by the parameter of knowledge (explanatory translations) are typically of the expert-to-layman kind (…) or children's versions (easy-readers) of classical texts." (*Ibid.*, 806)

This is the most basic requirement. The only word we would have to change here would be "children" because for Chinese authors, the knowledge discrepancy is part of an even wider context that extends to broad categories of adults. The literati, who consider very seriously their role as repositories of classical culture, wish to share their knowledge—or at least claim their doing so—with an audience that would not have access to it if they did not rewrite the texts for them. This is a universal claim, found throughout all forms of vernacular literatures and the numerous forms of commentarial and critical writings attached to them. If they actually often mention "children" in their prefaces, the literati also include "women", "merchants", and diverse social sub-classes, an entire semi-cultured public. The authors always position themselves from an affected attitude of educators: not so much as teachers, which could be boring, but rather as professional storytellers, certain to captivate their audience, as storytellers deal with emotions, not only knowledge.

The explicit professorial position is, however, far from absent. One of the most interesting cases that can be mentioned in this respect is that of the *Doupeng xianhua* 豆棚閒話 (Idle Talk under the Bean

Arbour) by Aina jushi 艾衲居士, that famous collection composed in the 1660s which, over the course of twelve days, brings together successive narrators and their audiences (themselves enthusiastically argumentative) under a rural bean arbour. The stories are made up of pieces of contemporary news, hearsay, or tendentious reinterpretations of well-known themes (e.g., that of Jie Zhitui 介之推, or Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊, or Xi Shi 西施 and Fan Li 範蠡). The twelfth and final day (chapter) and its fortunes offer us cascading hermeneutical lessons, some of which are quite unexpected and raise important issues.[49] This chapter is not a rewriting in the vernacular of a specific source in literary language: it is a lecture given by someone with the status of an erudite, addressing an audience of peasants and small rural notabilities. But in this position, placed at the end of the book, the chapter implicitly provides a key to the reading of the whole book, revolving precisely around the issue of the transmission of knowledge in a vernacular context.

The guest speaker in this final lesson is the rector of the Confucian school of the neighbouring town. His talk is a lesson in neo-Confucian cosmogony, supported by a detailed, well-argued, somewhat personal demonstration, and even by diagrams that he draws on the spot for his audience to support his speech (and which are reproduced in the text). Although he speaks in a language that mingles the vernacular with all the nuances of classical and mixed language, this speaker is quite different from the unintelligible Jia Fuxi, gently mocked by Kong Shangren, to whom we referred earlier. If this *xianhua*, this palaver, is the last one in the book and leads, at the end of the chapter, to the dismantling of the bean arbour, one would have to be a particularly simplistic reader to believe that it would be due to a failure of communication, either linguistically or semantically. On the contrary, the rector—a skilful rhetorician if sometimes an object of ridicule with his scholarly speech offered to a rural assembly—is so well understood by his audience that they cannot stand it. They protest against a Confucian rationality that clashes head-on with their attachment to the marvellous that is part and parcel of their favorite creeds, Buddhism and Taoism. One of the members of the audience recognises that:

> 先生之言俱是窮源探本之論，大醒群迷。我輩聞所未聞，開盡從來茅塞。但佛老之教盈滿天地、浸灌人心久矣。(…) 先生未必能為世人福，而世人實能為先生禍也！

> "Your speech, Master, really gets to the bottom of things; it ruthlessly awakens the crowd of the misguided. We have never heard anything like this before, and it has cleared away all our mental obstacles. But Buddhism and Taoism have already spread all over the world; they have been irrigating people's hearts for a long time (…) You will certainly not be able to bring blessings to the people of the world, Master, but the people of the world are quite capable of causing your misfortune."[50]

This Confucian knowledge transmits so well that, delivered outside the usual context of the Confucian school, its novelty frightens: this is where, in a completely different way, it transmits badly. Not only

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[49] *Doupeng xianhua*, chap. 12, "Chen Zhaizhang lun di tan tian" 陳齋長論地談天 ("Rector Chen talks about Heaven and Earth", translated by Hegel et al. as "In Detail, Rector Chen Discourses on the Cosmos"): Aina jushi 1984, 127–42; Aina jushi 2017, 187–209; Aina jushi 2010, 306–38.

[50] My translation. Aina jushi 1984, 141; Aina jushi 2017, 206–7; Aina jushi 2010, 335.

can it constitute a danger that can disturb old knowledge, thus arousing resistance, but its way of interpreting historical anecdotes known to all can also become a double-edged sword. It is acknowledged, for example, that the dialogue's references to the Jürchen and the Mongols, in this chapter, dangerously criticise the Manchu power. (Hanan 1981, 196–98) The success of the vernacular discourse is thus coupled with something menacing in this very way of transmitting knowledge. On the book's last page, the original organiser of the meetings recognises that they are victims of their own success: "Word of them spread to the surrounding area and day after day they turned into mass gatherings" (今四遠風聞，聚集日眾。), even though the prefectural authorities have banned them for fear of sedition. (*Ibid.*) So many people are present that one of the listeners finally causes the bean arbour to collapse as he leans his shoulder against a post. This timely accident signals the end of the *xianhua*: it also symbolically signals the danger inherent in vernacular discourse.

This problem is discussed in the *zongping* 總評 (final commentary) to the chapter by the anonymous Yuanhu Ziran kuangke 鴛湖紫髯狂客 (Purple-Beard [Ziran] the Eccentric Wanderer from Mandarin Duck Lake). A densely argued text, it explicitly refers to the tradition of novelistic and theatrical commentary, borrowing its concepts from Li Zhi or, even more, from Jin Shengtan. In substance, Ziran kuangke indicates that the transmission of knowledge through vernacular literature, in terms of its linguistic or even conceptual factors, though desirable, can become problematic through the access it offers to all to a widely shared knowledge. By simplifying this access, the vernacular discourse creates a new layer of difficulty which is an ironic consequence—and the *Doupeng xianhua* is indeed ironic in many respects. But irony is by no means the last word. The answer to the problem of vernacular openness lies elsewhere: in a new ethics of reading. This is carried by the notion, borrowed from Jin Shengtan's elaborations, of "good" (or "true", or "skilful") "reading" (*shandu* 善讀). It enables one, according to a well-tested argument, to see in the *Story of the Water Margin* 水滸記 (*sic*) something other than a call to banditry, and in that of *Ximen [Qing]* 西門傳 (the *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅) something other than an encouragement to debauchery.[51] To be sure, the ability to read well is not something that is given to everyone. However, in the social situation of the time, the solution to the possible danger of misreading does not lie, the commentator explains, in renouncing the openness of the text: on the contrary, it lies in a continuation of the effort to achieve vernacular clarity, for which he credits the author of the collection: "Those [strata of the text that ordinary people 世人 may not understand at first] must all wait upon a true reading in order to do justice to the authors' deeply hidden meanings. Yet I believe nothing is better than what is clear, simple, and easy, what is self-explanatory in the course of reading and enlightens you all at once, like the stick or the shout of the *chan* master. It only takes a moment, and is truly more suited to the ways of the world." (此雖作者深

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[51] On *shandu* 善讀: Jin Shengtan, third preface to *Shuihu zhuan: Diwu caizi shu Shi Nai'an Shuihu zhuan* 1985, 9, vol. 1; *passim* in Jin's *jiapi* 夾批 of *Shuihu zhuan*. Jin Shengtan is a regular user of the notion in the context of fiction commentary, but the notion itself dates back to much earlier times, in the classical tradition, e.g., under the Song. See Rolston 1997, 128, & n. 66. Jin's numerous comments on "bad readers" belong to the same problematic (cf. Jin on "morons" and "stubborn fellas", *cangfu* 傖夫, *wunu* 忤奴, found *passim* in his commentary on the *Xixiang ji* 西廂記).

意，俟人善讀，而吾以為不如明白簡易，隨讀隨解，棒喝悟道，止在片時，殊有關乎世道也。).[52]

Thus, in terms of internal criticism, the *Doupeng xianhua* provides us with plenty of clues about the validity of knowledge-sharing through vernacular narration. It is possible to rewrite sources in literary language, and to develop an expert-to-layman discourse, provided that it includes the proper reading training that goes with it. This sharing of knowledge is staged everywhere in this collection: on an intra-diegetic level, in the complex setting up of transmission channels, and within the system of the bean arbour, including the multiple discourses that are superimposed on it—author, narrator, storyteller of the day, and speakers of contrasting social levels engaging in dialogues centred on the reinterpretation of re-told stories. It is further reinforced at the level of internal criticism by a powerful critical view of the text expressed at the end of the chapter by the voice of the anonymous commentator. On this internal criticism side, the vernacular success is striking. But what about its reality from the point of view of external criticism? What about the reality of the readership?

This aspect is particularly difficult to address since, while we know a lot about the educational intentions of the senders (in this case, the author, through their avatars such as the narrator, the protagonists, or the commentator), we know much less about the actual receivers (the readers, the general public). In the vernacular situation, the latter by definition leave little trace of the reality of their practices. If we can learn about them at all, it is incidentally.

A common clue that can be invoked is the number of editions that a work has gone through, which testifies to its commercial success over time. The *Doupeng xianhua* is indeed one of the *huaben* collections that had the most reprints throughout the 18th century and into the early 19th century (which was rather uncommon for *huaben* collections, most of which had gone out of fashion), testifying to a readership spanning several generations.[53] But one of the most spectacular examples that we can mention of an authentic testimony from the readership (and which is not unrelated to this obviously wide diffusion of the text throughout the 18th century), is the way in which this same twelfth and last chapter of *Doupeng Xianhua* we mentioned was translated into French by Father François-Xavier Dentrecolles (1664–1741) and published in Du Halde's great *Description de la Chine* in 1735, where it was presented as an authentic lesson in philosophy. This exceptional case of dissemination for the pre-modern period provides tangible evidence that the facilitating effect of vernacular writing allowed readers who had no access to the standard literary training (Europeans) to acquire knowledge on a difficult philosophical subject.[54] It is not to distort reality to say that, with respect to the culture of the

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[52] My translation. Aina jushi 1984, 142; Aina jushi 2017, 208; Aina jushi 2010, 337–38.

[53] Sun 1982, 120; Ōtsuka 1987, 27–28, #12031. Another clue could be the *Doupeng*'s virtual presence in a pivotal scene in the *Peach Blossom Fan*, another major work concerned with the discourse on historical veracity and its transmission as vernacular narrative.

[54] Du Halde 1735. The translator intentionally erased the origin of the text as belonging to a collection of fictional tales, and it was not until *ca.* 2010 that the text published by Du Halde was identified as part of the *Doupeng xianhua*. We owe this discovery to Wu Huiyi 吳蕙儀 who published it as part of her 2013 PhD dissertation. See Wu 2017a, Wu 2017b, 229–89. See also Youd 2013. For Robert Hegel, "The historian seems to have mistaken this parody for a sincere exposition on contemporary philosophy." (Aina jushi 2017, Introduction, p. xxii). Hegel's assertion is clearly invalidated by Wu Huiyi's detailed analysis of Dentrecolles' conscious exploitation of Aina's text and the strategic profit he makes from it. Furthermore, Wu Huiyi's careful account of the content of the rector's speech in the story strongly argues against taking it as a mere parody.

literati, Europeans formed a semi-literate class. We can infer from this that the lesson may have had the same impact on other receivers, as these foreigners were in the same position of the average Chinese *tongsu* readers attracted like them by the easy reading (use of easy classical or vernacular) and the accessibility of a "digest" format. The European reader could be furthermore responsive to the relative formal familiarity of the philosophical dialogue as a *mise en scène*.

To conclude, knowledge is a crucial parameter in the system of intralingual translation, one with epistemological ramifications. By referring to "knowledge" here, I mean the possibility of increasing accessibility and reducing barriers to the dissemination of information, by creating bridges between different sociolects. The mention of the Jesuit translator leads us to perceive the relationship between sociolects as not fundamentally different from the relationship between foreign languages.

2. Time

> "The schematic model of translation is one in which a message from a source-language passes into a receptor-language via a transformational process. The barrier is the obvious fact that one language differs from the other [...] Exactly the same model—and this is what is rarely stressed— is operative within a single language. But here the barrier or distance between source and receptor is time."[55]

In the case of premodern China, if what we are talking about is the updating, in vernacular rewriting, of narratives set in previous times, Zethsen's statement barely needs to be discussed, since this literature (novels, *huaben*-style short stories, drama) has served to give a new currency to every single theme set in any period of the national history; through it, everything past is made vividly present again. If we are talking about language, the matter needs to be nuanced with regard to European situations: we have insisted upon the fact that the literary language in China has never been a dead language, as Greek or Latin may have been. But it is true that it is a survival, or persistence, in any given contemporary period, of ancient states of the Chinese language, and that its access does not come as naturally as it would for a vernacular language. It can only be acquired through specific training, which shows that it is indeed a language that is at a certain distance from lived linguistic reality. It is this distance that the authors of rewritten narratives aim to bridge: critics repeatedly express that without them, ordinary readers would not cross the barrier of a language that is too *wen*, too literary. This is, as we have seen, the very justification of the *tongsu* endeavour.

From the 19th century onwards, when Chinese scholars began to take into account other languages and the value of translation, it is interesting to note that voices were heard that were able to compare the traditional task of the commentator with that of the translator. A fine example is provided by the scholar and philologist Chen Li 陳澧 (1810–1882). His collection of philological notations, which was

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[55] Zethsen 2009, 806, quoting Steiner 1975, 28.

left unfinished at his death and was edited and published by his disciple Liao Tingxiang 廖廷相, entitled *Dongshu dushuji* 東塾讀書記 (Eastern-School's Records on Reading),[56] was widely read until the Republican period. Chapter 11, "Xiaoxue" 小學 ("Philology") opens with the following statement:

> "詁者，古也；古今異言，通之使人知也。" 蓋時有古今，猶地有東西，有南北。相隔遠，則言語不通矣。地遠則有翻譯，時遠則有訓詁。有翻譯則能使別國如鄉鄰。有訓詁，則能使古今如旦暮。所謂通之也。訓詁之功大矣哉！

> "*Glossing* (*gǔ* 詁) refers to what is *ancient* (*gǔ* 古). Past and present had different languages; have them communicate and you will allow people to access knowledge." In time there are past and present, as in space there are East and West, there are South and North. When they are far apart, languages do not communicate. In the case of spatial distance, there is translation; in the case of time, there is glossing. With translation you can have separate countries become like neighbours of the same village. With glossing you can make past and present like morning and evening [of the same day]. This is what is called to have them communicate. How great is the achievement of glossing![57]

This is perhaps the first time in China that such a clear and direct relationship of equivalence has been established between gloss (*xungu* 訓詁), *i.e.*, a necessarily intralingual rephrasing, and interlingual translation (*fanyi* 翻譯). The author seems to be trying to take the full measure of this discovery. We have not copied into the above quotation the various interlinear comments (*jiapi* 夾批) that he added to clarify his point. This opening paragraph begins with a quotation, here in inverted commas, whose origin the author indicates: it is a subcommentary (*shu* 疏) by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) to Mao's edition of the *Shijing* (*Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, j. 1). (Bisetto 2018, 99, n. 3) He thus indicates that Kong Yingda is motivated, in his great work as a commentator, by a desire to bridge a gap whose nature is primarily linguistic, before being hermeneutic. So true is this that he further states that the concern expressed here by Kong has its origin in the earlier words of Guo Pu 郭璞 (276–324) already proposing to deal with "all that by which the different languages of the past and present communicate, shedding light on same realities bearing two different names" (皆所以通古今之異語，明同實而兩名。).[58] One is left with the impression that it is armed with the modern concept of translation that Chen Li acquires, one might say, a new nimbleness to envisage the work of glossing and permanent reinterpretation required in the traditional practice of reading by the great temporal distances implied by the different states of the language. After availing himself of the beginning of the Tang (Kong Yingda), then of the Jin (Guo Pu), he goes back even further in time, to the Former Han, by inserting, after the sentence: "With translation you can have separate countries be like neighbours of the same village," another comment: "The *Fangyan* is all about translation." (《方言》即翻譯也。) Again, Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (~53–18) famous dictionary of topolects, intended to facilitate access by

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[56] *Dongshu xiansheng* 東塾先生, Master Eastern-School, was Chen Li's *hao*.

[57] Chen 2012a, 171; Chen 2012b, 204. My translation is based on but slightly differs from that by Barbara Bisetto. I am indebted to Bisetto's first quotation of this passage in Western Sinology, accompanied with interesting remarks: see Bisetto 2018, 99.

[58] Guo Pu's commentary to *Erya* 爾雅, j. 5, "Shi Gong" (释宫第五). See: *Shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokan ji* 1982, 2597, shang 上, vol 2; in the Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=281267&remap=gb.

representatives of the imperial court to the local languages of the various regions, gives rise to this pithy statement, which sounds like a sudden insight. Not only does Chen Li see translation where tradition sees a lexicon of regional synonyms, but he states this at the very point in his text where he speaks of translation as bridging the distance between distinct countries. In doing so, he even sets up close village neighbours within the same Chinese space as entities as distinct as countries, between which there would be a need for the language to be translated. When Chen Li concludes: "How great is the achievement of glossing!", one gets the impression that behind this exclamation in honour of a traditional concept actually lies the discovery of the possibilities offered by a completely new point of view: that of translation.

One of the manifestations, in the narrative field, of this need to update the past is the abundance of anachronisms in the stories. Chinese scholars were well aware of the problems posed by anachronisms, but in the case of vernacular narratives they are often accepted, typically when it turns out that the edifying purpose outweighs the knowledge-sharing purpose. They are found as early as the Dunhuang "transformation texts" (*bianwen* 變文): in the story of Shun (*Shunzi bian* 舜子變), Shun, living at the dawn of civilisation, is shown reciting the *Analects*, the *Classic of Filial Piety*, and other classics as evidence of his moral elevation. (Yang 1961, 131, vol. 1; Waley 1960, 69; Mair 1989, 137) In a 17th century *guci* (drum ballad), it is Confucius' contemporaries who go in search of the... Peach Blossom Spring, a theme of the Six Dynasties.[59] We should ask ourselves whether the very fact of updating the language in contemporary forms does not also lead to the abrogation of historical chronology, placing elements belonging to different periods on the same common horizon of the present time.

3. Culture

"The parameter of culture refers to the need to explain cultural references in a text which time or general background knowledge prevent the target group from understanding even though the languages involved are the same (...)." (Zethsen 2009, 807)

To take the case of the *huaben* genre alone, it is safe to say that there is not a single case in which an ST in literary Chinese rewritten into the vernacular would have been published as is. It is always recontextualised (Zethsen 2009: "localisation"), *i.e.,* framed by an introduction and a conclusion and interspersed with commentaries, morals, and lyrical, versified, thought-provoking or thought-controlling elements, all of which aim to ensure that reading the text does not in itself constitute an insurmountable cultural leap despite the intralingual translation effort. For it is not enough to rewrite a story: it must also be given meaning for the specific audience(s) it is intended for. This is where the phatic function I mentioned earlier is crucial. This is also where micro-strategies such as explanatory

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[59] F. Jia 1982, 151; quoted in the drama *Taohua shan*: Kong 2016, 9.

translation or amplified translation play their role in remodelling the whole story's background and making it more "telling".

Again, the example given above of the early translation into French by François-Xavier Dentrecolles of chapter 12 of the *Doupeng xianhua* provides interesting food for thought in this regard. While being quite faithful, the interlingual translation is largely decontextualised, the novelistic origin erased, and the meaning of the text recontextualised for a European audience. The rector of the Confucian school of the original becomes a "philosopher", the text is so heavily and scientifically footnoted that at times footnotes take up half the page, and the whole dialogue is cleverly enrolled in a derived, secondary dialogue, this time between Chinese and European philosophies. We can say that the interlingual translation is accompanied by a whole set of resemantisation: through the shift in context, the change of audience, the change of status of the narrator, the change in textual significance, and a variety of details. What happens here in the context of interlingual translation is exactly what happens in intralingual translation when Zethsen refers to adapting to a new cultural environment. She also shows that there is no fundamental difference between how *inter-* and *intra-*lingual translations operate, thus fully justifying the use of the term "translation". In their respective cultural frameworks, the early French translator and the original editor of the *Doupeng* collection acted in many respects through the same strategies.

It is important to note that in both cases, the translation strategies are characterised by a rather loose relationship to the original, aiming to acclimatise the text, to naturalise it in order to make it more familiar to the reader, erasing to some extent its strangeness. Such translations, target-oriented rather than source-oriented, try to secure a common language, and to maintain bridges between different cultures. (Ladmiral 2004, 20) This is a typical feature of the intralingual translation endeavour, and perhaps what today, for many, places it outside the field of translation proper, although it has been shown that *retranslation,* itself a huge Translation Studies topic, typically appears in the wake of "unfaithful" translations deemed excessively adapted to the target audience. (See Lanselle 2020, 313, about the writing of Voltaire's *Orphan of Zhao.*) The remarkable proximity of Dentrecolles' approach to intralingual translation strategies is arguably indicative of a conception of translation that was prevalent in Europe until the end of the 18th century. Henrietta Harrison notes how George Thomas Staunton (1781–1859) was an advocate of "translation that minimised difference and emphasised what was shared between the two cultures." She contrasts this with a very different approach, that of his contemporary, the Protestant missionary Robert Morrison (1782–1834). Morrison sought to eliminate all paraphrastic effects that maintained a common language but distanced from the original text. His reference, the Bible, "expressed a truth that he believed could not be paraphrased," leading him to a very different vision of the act of translation: "The alienating effect of the resulting translations also fit with ideas of cultural difference and political hierarchy." This view, she says, influenced the whole of the 19th century—and up to the present day, one might add. (Harrison 2021, 271)

4. Space

> "The parameter of space refers to instances where the text is either reduced or extended, *i.e.*, the physical space of the text is changed. (...) Intralingual translations instigated by the parameter of space (reducing/extending translations) are typically various kinds of summarizing (...) or extension/addition, which is typically seen when explanation is needed due to comprehension limits in the target group caused by time, culture or lack of knowledge." (Zethsen 2009, 807)

As several examples cited in the course of this paper have shown, even when we are dealing with a case of "pure" translation from literary language to vernacular, the side-by-side comparison of ST and TT shows that the spatial factor differs: the classical language almost always occupies much less space than the vernacular. In some cases, however, it is indeed reduction from ST to TT that is seen as necessary. A good example of this is given in the way the author of the novel *Jingshi yinyang meng* 警世陰陽夢 reconstitutes for his readers the famous memorial by Yang Lian 楊漣 (1572–1625) presenting the list of the "Twenty-four Great Crimes" (二十四大罪) of Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568–1627): the text is summarised with great clarity and stripped of many secondary details and all the stylistic heaviness of a memorial to the throne. At places several paragraphs are condensed into a single one. It is also "moralised", for example by avoiding (and thus reducing to a mere few words) the scabrous fate of the assassinated imperial concubines the document refers to. The "digest" version of the novel is only 33% of the length of the original text.[60]

Overall, however, as the graphs we have given show, the amplification ratio between ST and TT always results in a longer TT, often much longer than ST. If the vernacular language appears to occupy more space, it is also because of the sheer fact that the natural language is essentially polysyllabic: the fundamental monosyllabism of literary Chinese is precisely what makes it a different expression, which needs to be "translated", *i.e.*, in part, extended. Moreover, the treatment of ST is subject to condensation or amplification effects implied by the various micro-strategies we have described. This is related to the highly "commentarial" and subjective character of intralingual translation, also discussed by Zethsen:

> "(...) the *de facto* degree of freedom is larger in intralingual translation than in most instances of translation proper. In addition, this may entail that there is also more room for interpretation, and perhaps even a certain degree of subjectivity, in intralingual translation." (Zethsen 2009, 809)

These assertions are fully reflected in the cases studied. It can even be said that in the Chinese situation these aspects are particularly marked, owing to the predominance of the commentary rather than the translation paradigm. It can be safely said that the rewriting of a story in literary language into a vernacular form places interpretation as its primary purpose, and that a high degree of subjectivity is usually involved in the process. In the micro-strategies described in the first part of this article, pure

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[60] See Zhang T. et al. 1974, 6324–28 (chap. 244, "Liezhuan" 列傳 132); Chang'an daoren guoqing 1985, 64–65, chap. 14, j. 4.

additions or amplifications are obviously not translations in the interlingual sense of the term: they are indeed extensions of the text. But these amplifications and additions are nonetheless an integral part of the project of what is known as intralingual translation, an operation with a strong component of narrative creation.

As Terry Eagleton puts it: "All literary works (…) are 'rewritten', if only unconsciously, by the societies which read them; indeed, there is no reading of a work which is not also a 're-writing'." (Eagleton [1983] 2008, 11; Chandler 2017, 255) This assertion is coherent with the experience of intralingual translation as linked to reading, or more accurately, to re-reading, and therefore, commenting. This leads us to a fifth characteristic of intralingual translation that I would be tempted to add to the four relevant factors described by Zethsen, which is its tremendous efficacy, its ability to impact as wide an audience as possible. I refer here to what André Lefevere writes about translation and rewriting when talking about "images of a writer, a work, a period, a genre, sometimes a whole literature":

> "These images existed side by side with the realities they competed with, but the images always tended to reach more people than the corresponding realities did. (…) The impact [of these images] (…) the power wielded by these images, and therefore by their makers, is enormous." (Lefevere 1992, 5)

Although he adds that one of the forms these images take is that of translation, (*Ibid.*, 9) Lefevere never speaks of intralingual translation. Yet the case of the *huaben* confirms his intuition to often spectacular proportions. Even though the textual sources on which they are based may be ignored or even forgotten by the public, the products of rewriting that are the stories in vernacular have often had a considerable impact, out of all proportion to their source texts. It is often through them that characters have passed down to posterity, that stories have become fixed in the collective memory, that narrative themes have achieved a truly classical status. The way in which *huaben* stories often constitute a laboratory where a narrative theme crystallises and becomes fixed forever is indeed something of a prodigy. The driving force behind such a fortune is largely due to the effect of rewriting as studied by André Lefevere. Stories made up in this way can then be passed on unchanged over centuries. When, for example, the editor of *Penetrating Words to Caution the World* writes the story of Li Bai "Drafting in drunkenness the letter that daunts the Barbarians", he combines no less than thirteen textual sources. The result he creates becomes canonical to an extent that is so out of all proportion to its (mainly forgotten) sources that its every detail, no doubt through its subsequent theatrical adaptations, ends up literally carved in stone. [61] Like this one, many stories have been rewritten in theatrical forms, but it is always the *huaben* tale, and not its sources, that has served as the pivotal point for this enduring legacy. [62]

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[61] "Li Zhexian zui cao he Man shu" 李謫仙醉草嚇蠻書, *Jingshi tongyan*, chap. 9. Sources: Tan 1980, 259–66, vol. 1, Lévy et al. 1978–2006, 398, vol. 2, Lanselle 2015a, slide 113, *Spectacles Curieux d'aujourd'hui et d'autrefois* 1996, 1703–8. Images of the details of Li Bai's story as narrated by Feng Menglong in Zhanghua 彰化 Chengmei gongtang's 成美公堂 paintings and in high relief carvings at Mengjia Longshan Temple 艋舺龍山寺, Taibei: Taibeiren, 2012.

[62] Fifty-three of the 120 chapters of the *Sanyan*, *i.e.* 44% of the whole, were rewritten into plays. No less than 85 *chuanqi* were produced in this way. See Tang R. 2017, 9. I am thankful to Wang Yiwen for sharing this reference with me.

Again, the above considerations about the intralingual translation paradigm are only a very general overview of some of the theoretical issues raised by the widespread phenomenon of the rewriting of *huaben* stories based on sources in literary language. Many of these points deserve to be explored in greater depth in subsequent papers.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would first say that this contribution was motivated, apart from a long acquaintance with the *huaben* genre, by a need to depart from the often incomplete, even impressionistic, or at least sporadic, descriptions or evaluations of the writing mechanisms present at the heart of these stories when derived from earlier sources. This is an important reality, not only from the point of view of literary history, but as it concerns more generally our understanding of the practices surrounding the use of the vernacular language in early modern China. I also wish to emphasise the experimental aspect of the results presented here. I have put forward a number of hypotheses in these pages, and on many aspects, I will be careful not to jump to conclusions. Further verification is needed, and experimentation must continue, in order to enrich the data with the results of textual analysis, and possibly to modify the model developed to date. It would be highly desirable to resort to resources in digital humanities, thanks to which much seems possible: in studying larger numbers of texts or collections, or automating certain tasks (for example in the identification of verbatim or quasi-verbatim quotations, or in the search within lexical corpora of the 17th century which would enable the detection of correspondences between terms of the literary *vs* vernacular realms).

The tool presented here must be taken for what it is: precisely a tool, and at this stage still experimental, and far from flawless. It is certainly not intended to replace the in-depth reading of texts, which remains the primary task of the philologist. But it is part of a need to advance further in the analysis of these texts, and a need to propose new approaches. The experimental framework presented here is intended to help us identify as objectively as possible the discursive aspects present in the texts and in the passages from one text to another, such as language registers, types of statements, points of view, rewriting strategies, etc. It seems to me that at this early stage this methodology already reveals certain realities of the texts which are not always easily visible. Only a wider and cumulative use would bring out both its qualities and shortcomings, and show what should be improved. It is definitely part of a work in progress, that I hope to develop in a collaborative way.

Another aspect of this article is its theoretical side, which is inseparable from the practical and experimental aspect. This work is the result of several years of research punctuated by various presentations at conferences. It originates from a reflection on the potential contribution of translation studies—generally speaking much neglected by Sinologists—and in particular on what they tell us about the concept of intralingual translation. This concept seemed to me to be relevant and operative in this particular area of *huaben* stories as the result of rewriting. It is to put it to the test that I have attempted this approach.

The notion of intralingual translation is inseparable, in any case for the specific situation we are dealing with, from that of diglossia—a term that I use in its strictly defined sense (two registers of the same language), detaching it from the problems posed by the clear-cut H/L opposition present in its Fergusonian definition. An apparently disturbing concept for some, it should be possible to study it dispassionately, without preconceived ideas, and constructively, with the awareness that it can be the subject of debate, and with a recognition that the issues at stake are manifested differently within the Sinographosphere, in Chinese-speaking and non-Chinese-speaking areas. While we are aware that other approaches, like translanguaging, are currently being explored, we should remember that the binarity implied by the term diglossia is by no means a modern construction: it is an objective reality that reflects the *wen* / *tongsu* dichotomy constantly put forward by Chinese authors when they describe the situation in which they find themselves and advocate the use of the vernacular. I have therefore attempted to contribute to this sometimes insufficiently known debate by citing a number of prefaces as examples. Taking into account the critical discourse of the time on the texts, when available, is in my view a primordial methodological necessity. Only by acknowledging these perspectives can we move towards hypotheses that are not simply the constructions of modern Sinologists.

Some directions have only been sketched out and should lead to further studies. The experiments should be pursued, and this paper is also a call for collaboration with researchers ready to propose digital humanities tools for textual analysis. The stakes are high. The study of the formation of *huaben* narratives enables us to explore in greater depth, beyond the techniques of writing and rewriting, the practices of the literate and semi-literate social strata more generally, the relationship the Chinese of this period entertained with the diglossic situation of their language, and the conditions of the diffusion of a vernacular culture. For what we are exploring indirectly here is also how the Chinese of that time developed, and systematically codified, their own modern national language.

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