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近代《圣经》汉译中的语言选择
(1822—1919)

刘 云 著

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博士文库

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序 言

王锡荣

这是一个寒窗苦读多年，即将跨出校门的学生给学术界的见面礼。

刘云跟我做博士后，已经近两年，马上要出站了。她跟我说，她的博士论文要出版了，我很为她高兴。但是，她希望我做一篇序，这却使我为难。因为她是复旦大学袁进教授的博士，她的博士论文是谈语言社会史，这又非我所长，从哪方面说，都不该我来写这篇序言。但是她说，袁进教授最近琐事缠身，实在腾不出手来，让我代劳一下。再说，这本书是我推荐给出版社的，责无旁贷，就权且写上几句吧。

刘云这篇博士论文，从题目上看是语言学，但是，后面却连着“社会史”，这却是又回到了文学的“场域”了。语言而又在社会中，那么正与文学同质了。而且其中讨论的其实主要是《圣经》的翻译史和翻译方法问题，这就更加“文学”起来了，甚而还谈到了使用方言翻译的问题，这就几乎触及近来文学史研究的热点问题：现在大家越来越认同这样的观点：翻译文学也是中国文学的组成部分。不仅在翻译过程中凝结着译者的学养和认知，不仅外国文学滋养了中国文学界，不仅启发了中国文学界的创作灵感与方法，而且外国文学作品的内容直接进入中国文学作者笔下。例如鲁迅笔下的“摩罗诗人”，例如钱锺书笔下随处可见的外国文学典故……这就正要说到《圣经》故事了：其他人笔下也所在多是。所以，《鲁迅全集》收入翻译作品，虽说是开风气之先，也曾有人

窃笑，如今却不能不说是远见卓识。

但《圣经》的翻译却是经过了何等艰难曲折的翻译历程，而其中又呈现了何等饶有兴味的语言现象，这却是以前人们不大说起，甚至有意无意忽略的。尤其是，《圣经》居然有很多方言译本，坦率地说，这是孤陋寡闻的我刚刚从刘云的论文中知道的。诚如作者所说，她试图探讨19世纪《圣经》中文译本语言变革背后的社会机制，在厘清1822—1919年间《圣经》汉译史的基础上追问：传教士们翻译《圣经》的语言选择是根据怎样的语言生态制定的？如何反映了当时的语言意识形态？对19世纪中国社会的语言产生了哪些影响？其次，在基于传统社会文化分层的书面语——口语双轨制的解构和新的民族国家书面语诞生的过程中，1822—1919年间主要书面语言的语言场域如何随着各异的社会文化原因经历剧烈的变化，最终获胜的语体又具有何种特色、代表了什么样的权力结构？《圣经》汉译的语言选择又宣示了译者在文化冲突中所秉持的何种立场，以及他们对“现代化”的何种想象？最后，《圣经》汉译语言变革背后更为深层的社会原因是什么？中国社会自1822年以来由于哪些政治、经济、文化因素而使《圣经》中文译本所采用的文体亦不得不随之发生变更？揆其要者，我给它说得白一点，19世纪的传教士把《圣经》翻译成汉文时，怎么决定所采用的文体的？怎么从最初的“委办译本”，经过了“文理译本”、“浅文理本和合本”等等，还有白话本、方言本，最后到目前通行的北京官话本，这里的周折就大了。更重要的，不仅仅是翻译的过程，而是反映了汉语言的变革。不能不说，作者的目光是深邃的，探索也是大胆的：这些问题也困惑着很多人，而要厘清这些问题，实在殊非易事：因为相关的资料太缺乏了。尤其是以往人们能看到的，多是刊本，第一手资料缺乏，尤其是相关原始资料大多藏于海外，更加困难的是，这还涉及希伯来文、希腊文。就是看得到，是否能看懂又是一个问题。实际上，这个课题，是一个跨多种学科的课题，

涉及语言学(方言研究)、历史研究和《圣经》研究,以及文学翻译学研究,难度可想而知,谁都会感觉棘手。

但是,刘云却是有她独特的优势和契机。她以前曾经在英国剑桥大学交流,去年又到剑桥进修,在剑桥看到了大量的第一手资料,包括手抄本、写本,这就使她得了先手,有很多发现,是别人的研究都还没有涉及的,甚或是误传误读的。比如她的资料显示,对于《圣经》汉译支持最力的大英圣书公会和英国差会的相关档案资料,以前很多研究者居然都没有注意到,这就使得相关研究难免失之偏颇。又如,她多处采用文本比较的方法,不同版本文本细加比较,各自特点立现,了了分明,这都得力于她的丰赡资料,也得益于她早先为了研究《圣经》而选修希腊文的独特优势,故能在研究中驾轻就熟,举重若轻。这些,使她的梳理更为顺畅,论述更为全面准确,勾勒的历史面貌更为清晰。因此,我相信这里有不少可以让人眼睛一亮的东西。甚至即使说在这一研究上取得了有意义的突破,恐怕也不为过。当然,由于讨论语言问题,再说问题本身对一般人来说确实比较枯燥,所以,文字多少有些艰深,也是在所难免的。但是,倘若你能静心阅读的话,还是会被作者的娓娓讲述所打动的。

关于《圣经》汉译的理论探究,目前研究成果实在不多。本书虽然是年轻学者的亮相之作,但不可否认,已经取得了该领域研究的显著推进,是近年关于本课题研究的一个亮点。虽然这成绩的取得跟我并没有多大关系,但是,我作为作者的博士后联系导师,也为她感到由衷的高兴。

2015年3月5日

内容提要

语文革命是中国近代史上划时代的变革。传统语文承自先秦封建时期,并在延续数千年之久的帝制时期发展完备,支持着帝制时期的政制、典章和施政。但在晚清时期,语文革命逐渐从通商口岸萌芽,向内地延伸,这一进程在辛亥革命与五四运动时达到高潮。这场语文革命的发生,摧毁了传统的政制、思想的合法性,消除了后者生根的符号土壤,从而为政治和社会的变革打开了符号空间。同时,这也意味着政治和社会革命将不得不寻找、创造新的符号土壤,这一进程也刺激了语文革命的深化。

在上述背景下,本书集中梳理了近代中国的书面语言使用状况以及关于不同语言的社会想象。学界普遍认为,新文化运动标志着白话开始替代文言成为现代中国的书面标准语;然而,该过程并非一蹴而就,而是有着漫长的发展历程与历史渊源。从晚清开始,随着传统的社会结构遭到冲击、面临重构,近代的书面语言状况也显现出了前所未有的复杂态势:白话社会地位的上升,浅近文言的勃兴以及方言书面语的形成是该时期最为重要的三种语言变革思潮,其间的关系远非线性进化式的简单论述所能概括。

另一方面,正如社会语言学与新文化史理论所显示的,语言并非孤立的存在,而是与社会生活的方方面面有着千丝万缕的联系,语言变革实际上是对社会政治、经济、文化变革的一种反映。语言选择中反映出

的使用者身份认同与共同体建构问题,是本书的研究重点。在近代,语言一直是一个各种政治文化势力参与角力的复杂场域;本书具体讨论了这些不同的语言使用群体如何通过特定的语言规划与语言政策来划分共同体的边界、创造其凝聚力,并表述他们对重塑中的社会结构的不同期冀。对近代语言选择的研究,不但可以为语言社会史提供珍贵的样本;通过梳理从近代至当代的书面语言发展脉络,更可详细探究它对我们今日语言状况与身份认同的复杂影响。

本书以 1822—1919 年间《圣经》汉译中的语言选择作为主要研究对象。《圣经》作为一种重要的文本,其汉译积数代人筚路蓝缕之功,也承载了他们对中国变革的许多思考。其间近代几种重要的书面语言——文言、白话、浅近文言和方言均在不同场合、出于不同目的而被使用;译者选择不同语言的原因以及他们对该语言社会地位、社会作用的认识,可以集中反映近代各种书面语言的使用场域及文化意义。因此,《圣经》汉译应当被视为一个对近代书面语言状况具有高度代表性与概括性的文本。本书试图将传教士的《圣经》汉译工作还置于近代中国的历史文化语境中,通过对海外各传教差会及圣经公会馆藏之原始档案资料的深入剖析,还原近代中国的书面语言使用面貌,考察语言的兴起、风行及地位上升,与社会变革之间错综复杂的互动关系。

基于上述观点,本书共分五部分:

在第一章中,我主要考察了作为研究课题历史前提的《圣经》汉译史。在《圣经》汉译传播机制中,作为原典的《圣经》具有至高无上的地位。在长达数千年的时间中,《圣经》的翻译实践已经形成悠久的历史,也确立了一系列其间必须遵守的独特规则。这一点构成了 19 世纪《圣经》汉译传播机制的基础。

第二章展现了 19 世纪早期与中期《圣经》汉译史上两种互补的翻译思路,即向精英化路向发展的文理译本和向大众化路向发展的方言

译本。前者追求语言的高尚得体,希望借端正优雅的文言博得士大夫阶层对基督教的尊敬;而后者则是因向民众传教的急切需求而诞生的译本,最大特色是语言俚俗易懂。两者间泾渭分明,但在实际运用中又相互补足,这代表了《圣经》传播的精英化与大众化路向的截然分离。传教士们在此时选择采用这样一种两极化的《圣经》传播机制,主要原因是在19世纪60年代之前,中国传统社会文化结构并未受到根本性的冲击,与文言紧密相连的科举制依旧是社会流动的主要进身之阶,文化精英群体掌握着最大的话语权;而能够使用“优雅端正”的文言是跻身这一群体的主要方式,也是该群体的共同特征。

然而,从19世纪中后期开始,随着文理译本不便传播的特点日益凸显,文理译本逐渐退出了日常领域,成为一种象征意义大于实际意义的译本。而方言译本过于俚俗、地域限制过强的特征,亦使其传播范围和受众群体大大受限。对传统翻译思路的不满使得传教士开始趋向于寻找一种能够被精英和大众同时接受、可以弥合两者间裂隙的“中间语体”。

第三章、第四章和第五章主要检视在该背景下传教士中产生的三种语言变革思路。第三章讨论了浅文理译本的勃兴与失败。“中间阶层”的兴起、城市化进程的加速以及随之而来的传教重心的转移使寻找一种介于文言与白话之间的“中间语体”的呼求愈发迫切,而商人阶层对于浅近文言的偏爱以及“报章体”的勃兴一度使传教士认为浅近文言将成为未来中国的“大众语言”,因此也是翻译中文《圣经》通用译本最合适的文体。但浅近文言亦存在着致命的缺陷,各方对于何谓“浅近”无法取得统一的认知;而随着社会环境的改变,对“大众”和“大众语言”的定义也发生了变化,浅近文言所代表的政治想象和文化想象亦变得不合时宜。浅文理和合本最终成为一个“无用的译本”,标志着以浅近文言作为“中间语体”的构想彻底失败。

第四章主要探索在近代语文变革史上另一股重要的变革思潮,即

方言的地位抬升。随着传教士希望通过“改造汉语”来创造一种“基督教的语言”，方言在他们眼中的政治重要性亦急剧上升。晚清传教士的方言改革方案主要沿袭了两种发展路向：一种是试图使用基于方言的拼音文字以彻底代替汉字，另一种则是追求方言的书面化、雅驯化，希望能借《圣经》的翻译来提高方言的社会地位，最终使方言取代言文。后者所取得的主要成果便是方言联合标准译本。方言联合译本的出现改变了方言译本在《圣经》汉译传播机制中的定位，使其从一种单纯的“口语语体”上升为“书面语体”，为近代方言的标准化和书面化进程作出了重要贡献。在这种对方言的认识的改变背后，潜藏的实际上是传教士对未来的现代共同语的预期；而方言社会地位的上升、标准化与书面化进程，则反映出晚清地方主义者试图确立以省为边界的现代化政治共同体的希冀。然而，由于政治形势的急剧变化，这种思想在民国建立后为强势的国家话语所遮蔽，而方言译本的命运也由此失败。

第五章则讨论白话是如何成为最终的“通用译本”所选择的语体的。19世纪传教士对白话的看法分为两种：一种认为它只是对口语的摹写，白话作品是粗俗而不受尊重的，它的优势不过是易于传播；另一种认为白话是一种独立的文学语体，而随着“言文合一”思潮带来了白话社会地位的上升，它也必将成为未来的书面共同语，因此，他们希望创造一种更加雅化与书面化的白话。传教士关于白话的分歧，实际上正可以对应于从晚清到民国“推行白话”的两种不同思路，即胡适所谓的“为他们的白话”和“为我们的白话”：前者将白话视为“普及教育”的工具，因此追求的仍然是尽量通俗、接近口语；后者则将白话视为未来的“国语”，因而要抽离方言土语对白话的影响，使之普遍化，适用于所有阶级的使用与文学化的书写。后者对于白话的追求，实际上与从北京官话本到和合本译者们所追求的优雅的、书面化的、广泛吸收了从文言到外语的诸多优点的书面语体“殊途同归”。

Abstract

This dissertation examines contexts for the evolution of written language in early modern China. It is generally accepted in the academic circle that the literature revolution marks the beginning of the vernacular Chinese taking over the classical Chinese, becoming the official written language of modern China. However, this transition has a long and complex history, which is a long development process. Since the late Qing dynasty, the context of written language was extraordinarily complicated, when the traditional social structure was about to collapse and reconstructed. During this period, three trends of the transition of Chinese were most remarkable: the rising of vernacular Chinese and plain classical Chinese as well as the formation of dialectic written language. The relationship between the aforementioned three trends cannot simply be summed up by the discourse of “linear evolution”. On the other hand, just as shown in social linguistic theories, language does not exist in isolation, but closely linked to all aspects of the society. In fact, language revolution actually mirrors political, economic and cultural revolutions in a society. From a language user’s perspective, regardless of the purpose, an individual

intention to use a language or a dialect implies an identification, which further demonstrates different expectations for reshaping the social structure. Various choices of modern languages could not only serve as precious samples for social linguistic studies, but also exert deep impacts on the language situation nowadays.

The object of research in this dissertation is the choice of languages in the Chinese translation of the Bible during 1822—1919. Translation of the Bible is a huge project in early modern China. Varied influential modern written languages could be used under different circumstances for different purposes, including classical Chinese, vernacular Chinese, plain classical Chinese and other regional dialects. The translators' choices are based on their own recognitions of the social status and importance of the languages they use, which well reflects the very circumstances and cultural significance of those written languages. Therefore, the Chinese translation of the Bible should be considered as a text that is highly representative and recapitulative of the context of written languages in early modern China. This research tries to reevaluate the missionaries' efforts of translating the Bible in early modern Chinese historical and cultural context, and examine the complex interactions between language changes and social revolution through in-depth analysis of primary documents preserved in missionary societies as well as the Bible societies overseas.

This dissertation is composed of five chapters that discuss the topics proposed above.

The first chapter examines the history of Chinese translation of

the Bible, which serves as the historical premise of the research. In the Chinese translation of the Bible, the Bible enjoys its canonical status. During the long history of Bible translation, unique rules of the Bible translation are also gradually formed, which laid the foundation for the Chinese translation of the Bible in the 19th century.

Chapter Two reveals two mutually-complementary ways of translating the Bible into English in the early 19th century, which are the elite-oriented Wenli Version and the mass-oriented Dialect Version. The former cater for elegant and accurate use of the language, hoping to win respect for Christianity from the scholar-bureaucrat class; while the latter intends to satisfy the urgent need to preach Christianity to the ordinary people, thus the language is plain and simple. The two methods of translation are different but mutually-complementary at the same time, representing the tension between the elite-oriented translation of the Bible and the mass-oriented method. At this very moment, the reason why the missionaries chose the two contradictory ways for Bible translation is mainly that the traditional Chinese cultural structure had kept its integrity while the imperial examination system which was closely related to ancient Chinese, still dominated social mobility and cultural elites were in charge of the dominant discourse. Proper use of “elegant and correct” ancient language was a way to ascend to social elite and distinguished such a group.

However, after the mid 19th-century, the elite-oriented Wenli Version gradually lost its influence in the public domain due to its increasing disadvantages in communication. Such a version became more symbolic than practical. As for the mass-oriented dialect

version, its circulation and target audience had been largely limited due to its vulgarity and limited geography. Dissatisfaction then led the missionaries to seek a “middle way”, which could bridge the contradictions between the two methods and could be widely accepted by both the elite class and ordinary people.

Under the aforementioned circumstances, the missionaries proposed three possible ways for language revolution, which are to be examined in chapter Three, chapter Four and chapter Five. The prosperity and decline of the Easy Wenli Version is thoroughly analyzed in chapter Three. It became more urgent to seek a “middle way” that bridges the elite-oriented Wenli method and the mass-oriented dialect method, as a result of the emergence of the business class, acceleration of urbanization and the shift of the core of mission. The business class’s preference of plain classical Chinese and the emergence of “journalist style” enabled the missionaries to believe that plain classical Chinese was going to become the “common language” in modern China, which therefore, would be the best choice of language for the Bible translation. But plain classical Chinese had its own disadvantage, which lacked clear definition of “plain”; the concept of “common” and “common language” varied as social environment varied, making the political and cultural imagination represented by plain classical Chinese inappropriate. The Easy Wenli Union Version finally ended up as a “useless translation”, which marked the futility of using plain classical Chinese as a “middle way”.

The fourth chapter examines another important way proposed for language evolution—the promotion of the status of dialects. As the

missionaries hoped to reform the Chinese and create a kind of “Christian language”, they began to realize the political importance of the dialect. There were two main directions of the missionaries’ reform proposals: one was to popularize the use of alphabetic writing instead of characters, the other was to tame the dialect to elegant and written standard language. The latter hoped to raise the social status of the dialect through the translation of the Bible, and finally take the place of the classical Chinese. Their main achievement was the local dialect standard union version. The local dialect union version, which changed the traditional place of the dialect version in the Chinese translation and transmission system of the Bible, marked a drastic change by contributing to the standardization of local dialects. Dialect began to be viewed as not only a kind of spoken language but also written language. The change reflected the missionaries’ expectation of the national language in future and the regionalist’s hope of constructing a political community within the provincial border. However, as the variation of political situation, this discourse was shaded by dominated national discourse in the period of Republic of China, which led to the failure of the dialect version.

In Chapter five, how vernacular Chinese became an alternative of the “common version” is discussed. There are two major views of vernacular Chinese in the 19th century among the missionaries. Some considered it as a mimic of spoken Chinese, which was vulgar and did not deserve respect. Its convenience for communication is its only advantage. Others recognized the rising social status of vernacular Chinese brought by the “combination of spoken and written Chinese”,

thinking it as an independent literary language and would become the common written language in the future. Therefore, they wished to create a vernacular Chinese that was to be an elegant written language. From the controversies on vernacular Chinese among the missionaries in the late Qing dynasty, it is possible to envision the two different methods in the Republic of China, when Hu Shi proposed the so-called “vernacular Chinese for them” and “the vernacular Chinese for us”. In the former concept, vernacular Chinese was to be a tool to guarantee “access to education for all”, therefore, it pursued simplicity and was closer to spoken Chinese; the latter views vernacular Chinese as a “official language”, in this case, it tried to eliminate the impacts that dialects had on vernacular Chinese, making it common and suitable for literary writing for all classes. The pursuit of vernacular Chinese by the latter group actually “reached the same goal” as the pursuit of a written language which would be elegant, and widely absorb advantages from classical Chinese and foreign languages, through the formation of both the Peking Mandarin Version and the Union Version.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς
ἦν ὁ λόγος.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and
the Word was God.

元始有道,道与上帝共在,道即上帝。

太初有道,道与神同在,道就是神。

《约翰福音》1:1