

*Parler et style chinois:*  
innovation and recovery of late Qing manuals of Chinese

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摘要：本文介紹、考察法國耶穌會傳教士戴遂良(1856 - 1933)編纂的《漢語入門》。《漢語入門》尚未得到廣泛之研究，因此更需要進一步的分析。本文首先介紹《漢語入門》，其次對此書內容進行考察。第一章分析戴遂良為學習漢語提出的若干建議，及其對“中文钥匙”的含蓄否定。第二章闡發《漢語入門》中對於漢語「三個文體」概念的陳述，以及此概念與先前傳教士、學者著作之關係。第三章闡明戴遂良對中文發音與詞法學所進行的分析，同時將此分析與當代的研究進行比較，透過對比突出戴遂良於漢語教學上之遠見；第四章則介紹《漢語入門》對於量詞的考察。筆者認為《漢語入門》值得更進一步的研究理由以下兩點。首先，此書乃是少數明確列出所引用的教材與教科書的文法書，有助於澄清這些參考文獻與作者相連的關係。其次，《漢語入門》對漢語進行語言分析的水平相當卓越，確凿無疑驗證了外國傳教士與學者對漢語分析的貢獻。因此，類似其他諸多尚未被研究的文本，深入考察《漢語入門》有利於描述並充實中文傳教士語言學的成就。

關鍵詞：《漢語入門》，戴遂良，傳教士語言學，文法書，“中文钥匙”，量詞，詞法學

Introduction

*Parler et style chinois*, by the French Jesuit missionary Léon Wieger (Dai Suiliang 戴遂良, 1856–1933), is a work composed of twelve volumes.<sup>1</sup> The focus of this article is the first volume, “Introduction, mécanisme, phraséologie, seconde édition, 1899” (introduction, mechanism, and phraseology, second edition, 1889), also titled “Parler et style chinois, rudiments” (Chinese speaking and style, basics). The text was composed, as stated in the general preface (“Préface générale”), in order to help other brothers engaged in the same field as Wieger’s (“en vue de donner à des frères occupés dans la même portion du champ [...]”).<sup>2</sup> However, *Parler et style chinois*, according to its author, does not have any

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<sup>1</sup> For a list, see Zhang Tianhao, “Shixi Dai Suilian *Hanyu rumen di yi juan* zhong de ‘qianzhici’, *Higashi Ajia bunka kōshō kenkyū—Journal of East Asian Cultural Interaction Studies* 14 (2021): 291–292. For the explanation of characters proposed by Wieger, see Wu Jihuang, Liu Ya’nan, “Dai Suilian *Hanyu rumen yong zi tedian lunlue*”, *Hanzi Hanyu yanjiu* no. 3 (2019): 88–105.

<sup>2</sup> Léon Wieger, *Parler et style chinois: rudiments* (Hejian fu: Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, 1899), 2. The volume consulted is stored at Kansai University Library (Kansai daigaku toshokan 関西大学図書館).

scientific pretension—it is essentially a practical treatise (“Tout pratique, ce manuel n’a aucune prétention scientifique”).<sup>3</sup>

*Parler et style chinois* is particularly worth researching for at least for two aspects. The first is that the manual is one of the few composed by Western missionaries and scholars in which the texts adopted as references by the author are quoted explicitly; this helps cast a brighter light on the connections between them and their textual production. The second is the generally high linguistic value of the analysis carried out in the work; this contributes to highlighting the subtleness of the authors’ research on the Chinese language and its pragmatic implications.

As for the first aspect, the books consulted include: “notitia linguæ sinicæ” by the French Jesuit missionary Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare (Ma Ruose 馬若瑟, 1666–1736);<sup>4</sup> the second edition of “éléments de la grammaire chinoise” by the French sinologist Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (Lei Musha 雷慕沙, 1788–1832);<sup>5</sup> “grammaire mandarine” by the French sinologist Antoine Pierre Louis Bazin (Ba Zan 巴贊, 1799–1863);<sup>6</sup> the second edition of “a grammar of the chinese [sic] colloquial language” by the English Protestant missionary Joseph Edkins (Ai Yuese 艾約瑟, 1823–1905);<sup>7</sup> “syntaxe nouvelle de la langue chinoise [sic]” by the French sinologist Stanislas Aignan Julien (Ru Lian 儒蓮, 1797–1873);<sup>8</sup> the second edition of “a progressive course of colloquial chinese [sic]” by the British sinologists Thomas Francis Wade (Wei Tuoma 威妥瑪, 1818–1895) and Walter Caine Hillier (Xi Zaiming 禧在明, 1849–1927);<sup>9</sup> “grammaire de la langue chinoise” by the French missionary Paul-Hubert Perny (Tong Wenxian

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare, *Notitia linguæ sinicæ* (Malacca: Academia Anglo-Sinensis, 1831), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Pierre Abel Rémusat, *Éléments de la grammaire chinoise, ou principes généraux du kou-wen ou style antique, et du kouan-hoa, c’est-à-dire, de la langue commune généralement usitée dans l’empire chinois* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1857), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Antoine Pierre Louis Bazin, *Grammaire mandarine, ou principes généraux de la langue chinoise parlée* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1856), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Edkins, *A Grammar of Colloquial Chinese, as Exhibited in the Shanghai Dialect* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1864), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Stanislas Aignan Julien, *Syntaxe nouvelle de la langue chinoise fondée sur la position des mots, suivie de deux traités sur les particules et les principaux termes de grammaire, d’une table des idiotismes, de fables, de légendes et d’apologues traduits mot à mot* (Paris: Librairie de Maisonneuve, 1869), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Francis Wade, Walter Caine Hillier, *Yü yen tzü êrh chi: A Progressive Course Designed to Assist the Student of Colloquial Chinese as Spoken in the Capital and the Metropolitan Department* (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1886), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2. In the passage, though, Hillier’s name is not indicated, and the second edition is attributed only to Wade.

童文獻, 1818–1907) of the Missions étrangères de Paris;<sup>10</sup> “course éclectique de langue chinoise parlée” by the French diplomat Camille Imbault-Huart (Yu Yale 于雅樂, 1857–1897);<sup>11</sup> “a course of mandarin lessons” by the American presbyterian missionary Calvin Wilson Mateer (Di Kaowen 狄考文, 1836–1908);<sup>12</sup> “how to learn the chinese [sic] language” by the American missionary Chauncey Allen Goodrich (Fu Shan 富善, 1836–1925) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission;<sup>13</sup> “some thoughts on the study of chinese [sic]” by the American presbyterian missionary Oscar Francis Wisner (Yin Shijia 尹士嘉, 1858–1947);<sup>14</sup> finally, “how to study the chinese [sic] language, so as to get a good working knowledge of it” by the American southern Methodist missionary Alvin Pierson Parker (Pan Shenwen 潘慎文, 1850–1924).<sup>15</sup> With the exception of the last three entries, representing contributions in *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*, all the others are representative monographs purposely composed by Western missionaries and scholars for the study of Chinese between the early and late Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

By looking at some examples of passages in *Parler et style chinois*, it is possible to infer the innovation and far-sightedness of Wieger’s analysis and, therefore, also of the grammar books and textbooks from which some of its considerations were derived. At the same time, it is possible to further contribute to depicting the relations, connections, and overlaps between these different documents and, consequently, the authors that composed them.<sup>16</sup>

## 1. Suggestions for studying Chinese and a rejection of the “clavis sinica”

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Perny, *Grammaire de la langue chinoise orale et écrite* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie: Ernest Leroux: A. Lainé, 1873), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Camille Imbault-Huart, *Jinghua zhinan: cours éclectique graduel et pratique de langue chinoise parlée* (Péking: Typographie du Pei-t’ang; Paris: E. Leroux, 1887–1890), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Calvin Wilson Mateer, *A Course of Mandarin Lessons, Based on Idiom* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1892), as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Chauncey Allen Goodrich, “How to Learn the Chinese Language”, *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 24, no. 1 (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1893), 1–6, as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Oscar Francis Wisner, “Some Thoughts on the Study of Chinese”, *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 24, no. 6 (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1893), 260–263, as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Alvin Pierson Parker, “How to Study the Chinese Language so as to Get a Good Working Knowledge of It”, *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 29, no. 1 (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1898), 1–14, as indicated in Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> On this, refer to Uchida Keiichi, *A Study of Cultural Interaction and Linguistic Contact: Approaching Chinese Linguistics from the Periphery* (Göttingen: V&R unipress GmbH, 2017), 36–37.

Some elements particularly characterise *Parler et style chinois* for its novelty and clear approach, especially when compared to other manuals of the time. In the opening of his text, Wieger provides beginners with three suggestions for the study of Chinese: do not waste time with speculations about the philosophy of the language (“ne perdez pas votre temps en vaines spéculations [...] sur la philosophie du langage”); avoid long and complicated sentences and interpolated clauses (“Évitez les phrases longues et compliquées, [...] les incises”)<sup>17</sup>; never stop listening in order to learn, just like Confucius stated that the wise man willing to learn will not feel ashamed to study from low-ranking persons as well (“ne cessez jamais d’écouter pour apprendre. Confucius a dit: ‘le sage désireux de savoir, n’a pas honte d’apprendre d’un plus petit que soi”). Wieger is here presenting theories on the study of Chinese that are extremely modern in concept. The first point is indirectly rebutting ideas such as “clavis sinica”<sup>18</sup> and all similar attempts to interpret the Chinese language in a philosophical, generalist, and frequently non-linguistic perspective. The ambition of finding a key for studying and explaining Chinese existed in fact for a long time<sup>19</sup> and was adopted in many manuals composed by Western scholars and missionaries until the nineteenth century.

The second point is putting particular emphasis on composing short and terse sentences. One of the peculiarities of Chinese, as every learner can relate, is the differences in syntax and the structure of sentences and paragraphs compared to European languages. This is even more true for Romance languages, such as French, in which *Parler et style chinois* is composed. The focus on this point is particularly innovative and, to the knowledge of the author, was presented here for the first time in such a clear and detailed way among Qing dynasty manuals of Chinese composed by foreign scholars and missionaries.

Finally, Wieger adopts a strategy that can be traced back to earlier endeavours by other Western missionaries: quoting the Chinese canonical Confucian tradition to support his statements. The primers composed by missionaries were frequently not simply textbooks of Chinese, and could be filled with words from the Confucian classics that could justify, and enrich, the Jesuit mission.<sup>20</sup> Such an attitude can still be perceived, albeit blurred and from a seemingly more pragmatic perspective, in *Parler et style chinois*; the quotation here is plausibly an adaption from *Lunyu* 論語, (*Analects*), section *Li ren* 里仁 (Living in brotherliness): 子曰: 「見賢思齊焉, 見不賢而內自省也」 (When one sees [a man of] virtue, wants to equal it; when one sees [a man of] no virtue, he reflects [on his own demerits]).

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<sup>17</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> David Emil Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 174 and following.

<sup>19</sup> David Emil Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, fourth edition, 2013), 101.

<sup>20</sup> Thierry Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687): The First Translation of the Confucian Classics* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2011), 10.

## 2. The theory of the different “styles” of Chinese

In some notes for the study of Chinese (“notes sur l’étude du chinois”), Wieger quotes different manuals, analysing the various linguistic registers of the Chinese language. *Parler et style chinois* is certainly not the first document composed by scholars or Jesuit and Protestant missionaries mentioning these different styles.<sup>21</sup> Among the first ones, the Dominican Spanish missionary Francisco Varo (Wan Jiguo 萬濟國, 1627–1687), in his *Arte de la lengua mandarina*, wrote indeed about three registers, while de Prémare mentioned in *Notitia linguæ sinicæ* the existence of four styles. Both works were extensively influential on later grammar books and manuals composed by Western missionaries and scholars. *Arte de la lengua mandarina* was echoed in texts such as the German scholar Theophilus Siegfried Bayer’s (1694–1738) *Museum sinicum* and the French scholar Etienne Fourmont’s (1683–1745) *Linguæ sinarum mandarinicæ hieroglyphicæ grammatica duplex*;<sup>22</sup> on the other hand, *Notitia linguæ sinicæ* was known not only to Wieger, but was also available to a number of other later missionaries<sup>23</sup> and was adapted extensively until the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

According to Wieger, three Chinese languages exist: the spoken language, the middle style, and the style (“Il y a comme trois langues chinoises, le *langage parlé*, le *demi-style* et le *style*”).<sup>25</sup> This classification was the most common among Western missionaries and scholars, dating back to the theorisation by Varo. From this description, we infer that the “*langage parlé*” corresponds to the colloquial or vernacular language, which in turn could be differentiated into different local varieties of Chinese; the “*demi-style*” is a register mixing elements of classical Chinese with vernacular; the “*style*” which, it should be noted, Wieger describes as the style par excellence, is classical Chinese. Wieger compares the last one to a chemical formula expressed with a concise scientific notation that can be understood only by experts, but should be “unfolded” in more intelligible words so it is also clear to laypeople. Only some specific expressions of the “*style*” can be used in spoken language, since they are known to everybody; the reference here is to quotations from the classics and a variety of idiomatic educated expressions typical of Chinese.

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<sup>21</sup> See also the detailed discussion on the topic in Uchida, *A Study*, 39–58.

<sup>22</sup> Ivi, 36.

<sup>23</sup> Jost Oliver Zetzsche, *The Bible in China: The History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China* (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1999), 34, footnote no. 56.

<sup>24</sup> See also Shen Guowei, “Xiyangren jilu de shiji zhi jiao de xin Hanyu”, *Kansai daigaku tōzai gakujutsu kenkyūjo kiyō* 42 (2009): 103–104.

<sup>25</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 6.

Further on,<sup>26</sup> Wieger makes an additional differentiation in Chinese, quoting in particular from Imbault-Huart,<sup>27</sup> between spoken and written language, exhorting the reader to learn both (“Viser à posséder les deux langues”). This distinction was theorised much earlier in fact, at least since the time of well-known Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610) and the Portuguese Jesuit missionary Álvaro de Semedo (Zeng Dezhao 曾德昭, also known as Xie Wulu 謝務祿, 1586–1658).<sup>28</sup> In this respect, in order to better answer the communicative needs of the missionaries, to whom the textbook was destined, Wieger suggests applying oneself to the study of the spoken language first (“Commencer par l’étude du langage parlé”),<sup>29</sup> and in particular to study the dialect of one’s own district of residence, preferring it to any artificial *guanhua* (“Apprendre le dialecte de son district, et non un *koānhua* factice”).<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Pronunciation and morphology

Wieger’s approach is modern, pertaining also to the phonological and morphological aspects of Chinese. With the exception of the general introduction to the registers and study methods of the language, analysed in the chapter above, Wieger placed his comments on Chinese pronunciation at the very beginning of *Parler et style chinois*, also in accordance with the purposes of the manual.

Good pronunciation in Chinese requires three layers, as Wieger states: correct phonetic realisation of the word, of the tone, and of the stress of the sentence (“correction dans le *son* des mots, correction dans le *ton* des mots, correction dans l’*accentuation* ou *rhythme* [sic] de la phrase”).<sup>31</sup> The emphasis on the third point, in particular, is extremely innovative: not only the self-evident importance of the segmental features of the pronunciation is stressed, but also the suprasegmental elements represented by tones, and most of all, the prosodic features of sentences.

The description of the morphology of Chinese word formation is ahead of the times as well. Wieger divides Chinese nouns into simple and composed substantives (“Substantifs simples” and “Substantifs composés”), roughly corresponding to monosyllabic and polysyllabic words.<sup>32</sup> As can be inferred from *Parler et style chinois*, this classification is inspired from earlier categories of *Éléments de la*

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<sup>26</sup> Ivi, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Imbault-Huart, *Cours éclectique*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Uchida, *A Study*, 31, and Jeremiah Zhu Shuai, “The Bible and Calligraphy in China”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in China*, ed. Yeo Khiok-Khng (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 756.

<sup>29</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Ivi, 9.

<sup>31</sup> Ivi, 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ivi, 44-45.

*grammaire chinoise*,<sup>33</sup> by Rémusat, and *Grammaire mandarine*,<sup>34</sup> by Bazin. However, Wieger modifies some of their previous categories and adds others, the final result being ten items, most of which are in turn divided into subcategories: nouns composed by reduplication (“par simple réduplication”); by the addition of a suffix without meaning (“par addition d’un suffixe pratiquement dépourvu de sens”); by the addition of a character indicating categories (“par addition d’un caractère exprimant une catégorie”); by the addition of a character with a similar or the same meaning (“par adjonction d’un caractère de sens identique ou analogue”); by the addition of a character with a different or contrary meaning (“par adjonction d’un caractère de sens contraire ou disparate”); by the addition of one or two characters indicating the nature, functions or purpose of the main one (“par adjonction d’un ou deux caractères indiquant la nature, [...], les fonctions ou la fin du caractère principal”); by combining two characters, the second putting the first into a genitive function (“par conjonction de deux caractères, dont le seconde met le premier, par position, au génitif”); by combining an adjective and a substantive (“par conjonction d’un adjectif avec un substantif”); by combining an adverb and a substantive (“par conjonction d’un adverbe avec un nom”); by combining a verb and a substantive (“par conjonction d’un verbe avec un nom”).

Some of the categories above correspond to contemporary interpretations of the Chinese lexicon. For example, nouns created by the addition of a suffix without meaning are “derived words”, specifically root words plus word-forming affixes,<sup>35</sup> as in the case of “房子 *fāngze*, une maison”,<sup>36</sup> or the non-hierarchical relation<sup>37</sup> expressed by the addition of a character with a similar or the same meaning, as in the case of “分別 *fēnpiē*, différence”<sup>38</sup>; on the other hand, nouns created by the addition of a character with a different or contrary meaning, such as “禽獸 *k’inncheou*, animaux en général”<sup>39</sup> are examples of “gestalt” nouns referring to superordinate classes to which both nouns belong.<sup>40</sup> This analysis by Wieger is important in two respects. Firstly, it fine-tuned and perfected linguistic theorisations on the formation of the lexicon that had already been introduced, at least since the work of Rémusat, almost one century before<sup>41</sup>. Secondly, it indirectly confirms these theorisations as a valid and

<sup>33</sup> Rémusat, *Éléments*, 107–113.

<sup>34</sup> Bazin, *Grammaire mandarine*, 1–26.

<sup>35</sup> Jerome L. Packard, *The Morphology of Chinese: A Linguistic and Cognitive Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 81.

<sup>36</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 46.

<sup>37</sup> Packard, *The Morphology*, 85.

<sup>38</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 50.

<sup>39</sup> Ivi, 51.

<sup>40</sup> Packard, *The Morphology*, 89.

<sup>41</sup> Rémusat, *Éléments*, 107–113.

subtle analysis of the Chinese language carried out by Western missionaries and scholars. This, as with other research pertaining to missionary linguistics, is like a game of mirrors in which the study of one text can also shed new or clearer light on already well-researched documents.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4. Classifiers, massifiers, and miscellaneous characters

Let us now have a brief look at how Wieger described classifiers. The latter are particularly telling of the level of the analysis proposed and of its connections with earlier textbooks. In fact, since they are not present in European languages, they are one of the main focuses of the manuals composed by Western missionaries and scholars for the study of Chinese.

Wieger specifies that classifiers can be called classifiers or specifiers (“*classifiques* ou *spécificatifs*”), preferring the second suggestion; the term particles (“*particules*”)<sup>43</sup> would not be appropriate, since they are substantives. On the topic, he quotes the words of Imbault-Huart and Mateer: specifically, the first adopted the same theory Wieger reported, in which one of the main functions of classifiers is to help disambiguate homophonic monosyllabic nouns,<sup>44</sup> a theory that was indeed advanced at least since Rémusat.<sup>45</sup>

According to Wieger, in the written language it is necessary to use the specific classifiers required by the referred noun, while in spoken language only about thirty of the most common ones are used among the roughly one hundred available (“*Dès que l’on écrit, l’emploi de tous les spécifiques propres est absolument de rigueur; mais, dans le langage parlé, une trentaine seulement, sur cent environ, ont cours forcé*”).<sup>46</sup> This statement recalls estimates of the number of classifiers already advanced in previous manuals by Western missionaries and scholars, such as Edkins’ *A Grammar*.<sup>47</sup>

The same can be said of the explanation proposed in *Parler et style chinois* for massifiers: according to Wieger, in *yi jin rou* 一斤肉, the word *jin* 斤 tells the learner that we are talking about something weighed, in this case meat, and not some homophones denoting other referents. The noun in question, therefore, does not require other classifiers; according to Wieger, this principle applies to all massifiers. In this case,

<sup>42</sup> For a similar dissertation applied to verbs, the reader can refer to Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 92–112; this part of *Parler et style chinois* also includes ahead-of-time explanations of the result and directional complements.

<sup>43</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Gabriele Tola, “Origin, Role and Use of Chinese Classifiers: Linguistic Observations from late Qing Western Grammars”, in *Italian Association for Chinese Studies: Selected Papers 3*, ed. Elisa Giunipero and Chiara Piccinini (Venice: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2020), 160 and the relevant footnote no. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Gabriele Tola, “‘Shuci’ ji ‘zhuci’— Shijiu shiji waiguo chuanjiaoshi he xuezhe dui Hanyu liangci de lijie”, *Higashi Ajia bunka kōshō kenkyū—Journal of East Asian Cultural Interaction Studies* 11 (2018): 41.

<sup>46</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 60.

<sup>47</sup> Edkins, *A Grammar*, 30–36.



Wieger's explanation is not as appropriate as the one proposed earlier by Bazin, according to whom the role of massifiers is to narrow the reference from a bigger to a smaller extent (“[...] d'une plus grande étendue à une plus petite”).<sup>48</sup>

Further on,<sup>49</sup> among the huge amount of information included in this text, which it should be remembered, is only the first of a twelve-volume manual, it is worth mentioning the section that Wieger calls idiomatic verbs (“Idiotismes verbaux”): according to his explanation, this category includes verbs that need specific attention for their function. One is the instrumental verb (“verbes instrumentaux”) *na* 拿. Meaning “to take”, it is frequently used as the instrumental preposition meaning “with”, “by”. The example provided, “*na choèi sisi* 拿水洗洗, laver avec de l'eau”, expresses this usage of the verb. In prepositional structures, these verbs tend to lose their verbal function and acquire a prepositional one, as explained nowadays in contemporary teaching materials. The same applies to “*yóung* 用”: other than its meaning as “to use”, it is frequently employed almost as an instrumental preposition (“[...] employer, servant aussi de quasi-prépositions instrumentales, avec, de moyen de, par”), as in “*young pèi sie tzéull* 用筆寫字兒”,<sup>50</sup> to write characters with a brush (“écrire des caractères avec un pinceau”).<sup>51</sup>

Finally, in *Parler et style chinois*, *ba* 把 sentences are explained as a way to put the object before the verb (“*pá* 把, tenir, sert de préfixe à l'accusatif précédant le verbe”). On the topic, among other details, Wieger adds that *ba* has a written synonym in “*tsiāng* 將”; the latter, however, is not frequently used in spoken language.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusions

As is the case with dozens of other textbooks and manuals, *Parler et style chinois* is an important and under-researched document composed by Western missionaries and scholars for the study of Chinese. It is fundamental to analyse these documents in depth for a variety of reasons. Firstly, this research can contribute to better defining the subtlety of the analysis of Chinese grammatical features carried out by

<sup>48</sup> Bazin, *Grammaire mandarine*, 23.

<sup>49</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 115.

<sup>50</sup> *Er* 兒 is explained in the text as a way to determine a “light pronunciation” (“prononciation légère”) and is usually indicated with a smaller character.

<sup>51</sup> Wieger, *Parler et style chinois*, 122–123.

<sup>52</sup> One possible research perspective opened up in the field of Chinese missionary linguistics is to further address the use of *ba* sentences in the manuals by Western scholars in the late Qing and the early Republican Era as well, in relation both to its diachronic evolution and its pragmatic function in teaching Chinese, as recently carried out in Li Ling, “Wan Qing Min chu Hanyu jiaocai ‘ba’ zi ju kaocha”, *Haiwai huawen jiaoyu—Overseas Chinese Education* no. 2 (2019): 103–111, and Wang Lujin, “Fu Duoma *Han-Ying Beijing guanhua cihui* ‘ba zi ju’ chutan”, *Wenxue jiaoyu* no. 23 (2021): 132–133.

Western scholars and missionaries, not only during the Qing dynasty, as well as the complicated relations between them and their textual production. In addition, such grammar texts offer precious research materials for the study of the diachronic evolution of grammatical, morphological, and other peculiarities of Chinese. Secondly, the study of under-researched documents can also shed new light on other already-studied materials. Sometimes this points out their innovations, at times their backward steps, when compared to earlier ones. This analysis can also be helped by, and shed new light on, contemporary interpretations of the Chinese language and implications for its study as a second language. Lastly, *Parler et style chinois* mirrors and reflects the Hejian 河間 variety of the Chinese language as expressed at the end of the nineteenth century. The romanisation systems included in materials composed by Western missionaries and scholars are at times an essential and unique record of phonological peculiarities of the language of the time that would be otherwise lost. This attention devoted not exclusively to the official language, or languages, known as *guanhua* 官話, also reflects a cultural change in attitude by later Jesuits compared to the first missionaries who arrived in China, something Protestant missionaries already noticed.<sup>53</sup>

This is why *Parler et style chinois*, analogously to many other hidden relevant texts, deserves further study, in the hope of contributing to a better description of the achievements accomplished in this peculiar and crucial phase of Chinese missionary linguistics.

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<sup>53</sup> Federico Masini, “Chinese Missionary Linguistics: A New Field of Research”, in *Chinese Missionary Linguistics*, ed. Davor Antonucci and Pieter Ackerman (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2017), 21.

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**Abstract:** This article introduces and briefly analyses an under-researched text, *Parler et style chinois*, composed by the French Jesuit missionary Léon Wieger (1856–1933). After a general introduction to the manual, the article examines some of its aspects. In the first chapter, suggestions by Wieger for studying Chinese and the implicit rejection of the idea of “clavis sinica” are presented; in the second, the theory of the three styles of Chinese is analysed in relation to earlier works that introduced it. The third chapter focuses on Wieger’s analysis of Chinese pronunciation and most of all of its morphology, in light of contemporary interpretations and research. Finally, the explanation of classifiers in Wieger’s work is presented. *Parler et style chinois* is worth researching for a variety of reasons: it is one of the few manuals composed by Western missionaries and scholars in which the texts adopted as references by the author are quoted explicitly, helping to highlight the connections between them and their textual production. Moreover, the value of the linguistic analysis carried out in the work is generally high, which helps point out the subtleness of the missionaries’ and scholars’ research on the Chinese language. Therefore, analogously to numerous other hidden relevant texts, further study on *Parler et style chinois* can fully contribute to a better description of the achievements accomplished in the field of Chinese missionary linguistics.

**Keywords:** *Parler et style chinois*; Léon Wieger; Jesuits; missionary linguistics; grammar books; clavis sinica; classifiers; morphology;