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“All the aids which a beginner needs”: James Summers’ (1828-1891) research on Chinese grammar

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Part I: Introduction

1. Research in the context of the historiography of linguistics

This dissertation deals with the works on Chinese grammar by James Summers (1828–1891), the second professor of Chinese literature¹ at King’s College London and the first professor who conducted systematic research on Chinese grammar in Britain.² It is a study that lies within the field of the historiography of linguistics.

The historiography of linguistics “can be defined as ‘the undertaking of writing the history of the study of language’” (Swiggers 2017, p. 74).³ The discipline focuses on how and why people acquire, describe, explain, and diffuse linguistic knowledge (Brekke 1986, p. 4; Swiggers 2010, p. 2; 2017, p. 80). It involves all aspects related to language, such as linguistics, history, philosophical thought, science and sociology (Brekke 1986, pp. 2–3; Koerner 1995b, p. 13; Swiggers 2010, p. 2). Linguistic historiography has many purposes, for example, to deepen our understanding of historical facts related to the development of linguistics, to contextualise and evaluate previous and current linguistic research, and to preserve and pass on the linguistic knowledge accumulated in the past to future generations.

Interest in the history of linguistics can be traced back to at least the nineteenth century (cf. Koerner 1990, pp. 65–69; 2020, p. 5), but it was not recognised as a scientific discipline until the 1970s (Koerner 2002, p. 374; 2020, p. 4; Swiggers 2010, p. 1). Although this field has become a well-established discipline, it has been quite Eurocentric ever since its inception. According to the table of contents of the influential journal, *Historiographia Linguistica* (1974–2021), from the 1479 total papers published in the journal, only forty-three are relevant to non-Western linguistic traditions, which is less than three percent. The number is excluding some research on non-Western languages conducted by Westerners, such as Yang (2014). The

¹ It was a professorship of “Chinese literature” (*The Calendar of King’s College London for 1853–1854*, 1853, p. 22), although the professors needed to teach the Chinese language as well. On the title page of his *A Handbook of the Chinese Language* (1863a, hereafter: *Handbook*), Summers’ title is “professor of the Chinese language and literature”. Here the official appellation “professor of Chinese literature” in the *The Calendar of King’s College London* is employed.

² There were two professors of Chinese language and literature in Britain before Summers, i.e., Samuel Kidd (1804–1843) of the University College London and Samuel Turner Fearon (1819–1853) of King’s College London. The former had several publications concerning the Chinese language and culture (1838, 1841, etc.), but his research on the Chinese language was basically about Chinese characters without delving into detailed and systematic analysis of grammar. No publication on Chinese language from the latter, Fearon, has been found to date. There is no extant document about his inaugural lecture, either (Kwan 2012, p. 47).

³ Koerner distinguished between the history of linguistics and a rigorous discipline—the historiography of linguistics, which is “conscious of methodological and epistemological requirements in adequate history-writing in linguistics” (1995d, p. 3). With regard to the definition of the historiography of linguistics, I follow Swiggers (2017) here.

reasons for this Eurocentrism are summarized by Seuren (1998, pp. xii–xiii) as follows: most of the non-European linguistic traditions were focused on interpreting religious classics and were developed for political or commercial interests, which is different from the philosophical origin and scientific analysis of the European linguistic tradition. More importantly, European linguistics is independently developed and received almost no influence from non-European linguistics. Even nowadays, the history of linguistics still focuses on the West.

Up to now, a broad spectrum of research has been conducted in the field. Koerner summarized three types of studies in the field of the historiography of linguistics (Koerner 2020, p. 24): the first type of study is dedicated to the general theories and methodology of the historiography of linguistics, such as Brekle (1986), Koerner (1987, 1995b, 2002, 2020), Zimmermann (2004), Swiggers (2010, 2017) and Zwartjes (2012; with Hovdhaugen 2004). The second type of research focuses on more specific topics, such as the development of a particular trend or thought, for example Koerner (1975), van Driel (1992), Collinge (1995), Graffi (1998) and van Driem (2005). The third type deals with the works and thoughts of individual scholars, such as the research by Kemp (1986) and Solleveld (2020). This dissertation fits into the third category because it is dedicated to the works of an individual, i.e., James Summers.

The historiography of linguistics, of course, can also focus on the history of studying a specific language. This dissertation is directly related to that of the Chinese language, especially the history of European research on Chinese linguistics. In other words, this research is positioned between Chinese and Western historiography of linguistics. Summers published a series of works concerning the Chinese language. These works are part of a tradition of Western writing about the Chinese language that commenced at least as early as the seventeenth century.

1.1 The research on the Chinese language by early Western scholars

When Europeans started to sail to other parts of the world on an unprecedented scale from the fifteenth century onwards, scholars, who had been exposed to local cultures and, in their eyes, “exotic” languages, set out to compile dictionaries and write manuals or grammar and language textbooks. Many of them were also missionaries at the same time and therefore often translated the Bible into other languages. These works laid the foundation for their evangelization efforts (Hovdhaugen 1996, p. 15). Some of these works have been preserved up to the present, among them the oldest extant grammar book about a variety of the Chinese language (i.e., the Southern

Mǐn)⁴ called *Arte de la lengua Chio Chiu*, which dates back to 1620 AD by an unknown Spanish missionary (Klöter 2011a, p. 3; 2012, pp. 39–41). The first extant Mandarin grammar book, *Grammatica linguae Sinensis* (1651–1653), was compiled by Jesuit Martino Martini (1614–1661) later in the seventeenth century (Paternicò 2013, p. 15).

Before the nineteenth century, European scholars were mainly intrigued by the “ideographic” Chinese characters, and they commonly described the Chinese language as a monosyllabic and monolingual language. With the opening-up of China during the nineteenth century, more and more information about its languages was transferred back to Europe and the abovementioned views were challenged. Whether Chinese is a monosyllabic language was debated (cf. Chapter 4 of this dissertation), more research on the varieties of Chinese language was published (cf. Chapter 1, Chapter 10, etc. of this dissertation), and the “ideographic” feature of Chinese characters was questioned (cf. Chapter 2 of this dissertation). At the same time, Chinese got entangled with the historical-comparative, kinship and typological trends of nineteenth-century linguistics (cf. Chapter 2 of this dissertation).⁵

Beginning in the twentieth century, these multifaceted materials attracted increasing academic attention (Paternicò 2013, p. 13), as these works are a treasure of information and ideas. For example, Chappell and Peyraube (2014) and Tola (2018) investigated research on Chinese classifiers, and Gianninoto (2014a) presented the word classes and the technical terms employed by the missionaries. Some studies focus on a singular scholar or book, such as Klöter’s (2011a) work on the *Arte de la lengua Chio Chiu*, Uchida’s (2011) and Levi’s (2007) work on the lexicological and grammatical research of Joaquim Gonçalves (1781–1834) and his ideas about language acquisition, Bauer (2013) and Sòng Nán’s (2017) dissertations on Georg von der Gabelentz’s (1840–1893) *Chinesische Grammatik* (1881) and Lundbæk’s (2009 [1991]) research on Joseph-Henry-Marie de Prémare’s (1666–1735) *Notitia linguae Sinicae* (1831).

Other studies compare different editions of the early publications and trace how they circulated. For example, Paternicò (2013) described the development of Martini’s *Grammatica linguae Sinensis* and analysed its editions from linguistic and documentation perspectives. Lǐ Zhēn’s (2014) research on Prémare’s *Notitia linguae Sinicae* and Sòng Jú’s (2011, 2013) works

⁴ Southern Mǐn, a subgroup of Mǐn languages, is generally spoken in Quánzhōu and Zhāngzhōu in Fujian, Cháozhōu/Shàntóu and Léizhōu in Guangdong, Hǎinán and Táiwān, as well as Southeast Asia, like the Philippines and Malaysia (Lien 2017, p. 19), with a total of fifty million users (Eberhard, Simons and Fennig 2022).

⁵ This history of European views of the Chinese language is summarized according to Gianninoto and Casacchia (2017, pp. 520–525).

on the different versions of Thomas Wade's (1818–1895) *Yü-yen Tzŭ-erh Chi* (1867) also belong in this field.

The “extralinguistic” perspective opens up the discussion on the history of linguistics against its socio-cultural background, including topics like the language attitudes and choices of the missionaries.⁶ For example, while debating whether there was a shift of the standard language from Nanjing-Mandarin to Beijing-Mandarin in the mid-nineteenth century in China, Rokkaku claimed that in 1876, Beijing Mandarin was taught instead of Nanjing Mandarin in Japan for the invasion and occupation of Northern China (1992 [1988], pp. 77–87). Klöter (2011a, pp. 34–38; 2017, pp. 76–78) discussed the different language choices of China-based Jesuits and Philippine-based Dominicans.⁷

Some scholars have tried to reconstruct the vernacular Chinese language (namely its phonology, grammar and lexicon) of different historical periods on the basis of the records of early sinologists. For example, Qián Nǎiróng (1997, pp. 7–10) and Jiāng Ēnzhī (2011) reconstructed the phonological system of Shanghainese⁸ in the nineteenth century based on the works of missionaries such as Joseph Edkins (1823–1905). Coblin (2000) summarized the features of Mandarin in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) by referring to the works of missionaries and other scholars. Zhāng Měilán (2007) explored the vernacular lexicons of Beijing Mandarin based on Wade's *Yü-yen Tzŭ-erh Chi* (1867). Chappell (2000) conducted comparative research on grammatical features of Southern Mǐn in the seventeenth century, to name just a few. The abovementioned academic studies were carried out from a perspective of historical linguistics rather than the historiography of linguistics.

1.2 Summers' works in between missionary linguistics and professional sinology

Missionary linguistics, one of the subfields of the historiography of linguistics, deals with the didactic and applied linguistic works by missionaries and for missionaries, most of which applied the Greco-Latin model to grammatical studies, while also taking the characteristics of the local languages into account (Zimmermann 2004, p. 7, p. 19; Zwartjes 2012, p. 193; with Hovdhaugen 2004, p. 2). Technically speaking, Summers' works do not belong in this area for three reasons: first, he primarily worked as a professional academic; second, university students

⁶ For more about historical sociolinguistics, see for example: Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2012, p. 1).

⁷ The Jesuit mission was firstly established in China in 1579, and the Dominicans arrived in Manila and firstly encountered the Chinese language in 1587 (Klöter 2011a, p. 34).

⁸ Shanghainese, one of the Wú dialects, is mainly spoken in Shanghai, a city with almost twelve million residents today. Around seventy million people speak a variety of Wú dialects (Hóu Jīngyī 2002, p. 67).

were his target readers; and third, basically, he did not have the intention to evangelize people through most of his works. Still, his works are similar to those missionaries' works in the sense that he adopted many of their ideas and concepts, and he himself had worked as a missionary in China for four years (1848–1852). He had the chance to be exposed to Chinese spoken by native speakers, just as other missionaries. Later on, he served as an Anglican Reverend. His works also include translations of the Bible and other Christian works. More importantly, his publications on the Chinese language are didactically oriented, just like many missionary manuals, as opposed to being theoretical linguistic treatises.

In the first six years of his teaching activities at King's College London from 1854 to 1860, Summers was engaged in the student interpreter programme in cooperation with the Foreign Office. Qualified students of Summers would be sent to China to be interpreters (cf. Chapter 1 and Kwan 2014a, pp. 41–42). His most comprehensive monograph, *Handbook* is dedicated to the education of these students (Summers, 13 April 1861). His goal of teaching the Chinese language and writing Chinese grammars was not to cultivate future sinologists or to conduct theoretical linguistic research but to achieve a practical purpose: to teach the Chinese language to native English speakers as fast and effectively as possible. His dedication to Chinese language acquisition can be observed in his later works after the termination of the interpreter programme, especially in *The Rudiments of the Chinese Language* (1864a, hereafter: *Rudiments*). However, after the publication of *Rudiments*, Summers stopped compiling Chinese manuals but, instead, devoted himself to other pursuits, such as editing and publishing.

As mentioned above, Summers had first-hand experience as a former missionary encountering the “living” Chinese language. Vernacular Chinese was undoubtedly one of his primary concerns while teaching and compiling his books (although it was not the only concern): *The Gospel of Saint John in the Chinese Language* (1853b, hereafter: *Gospel*) is on Shanghainese, while *Handbook* and *Rudiments* are on Mandarin. Since the mid- to late-nineteenth century, many European diplomats or missionaries who returned to Europe from China after finishing their duties were appointed at universities. Humboldt University of Berlin (formerly known as Friedrich Wilhelm University) established an institute for Oriental languages (Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen) in 1887, with the very practical aim of teaching diplomats languages, including Chinese. Carl Arendt (1838–1902), a former diplomat in Beijing for twenty years, held the position from 1887 to 1902 (Hammer 2005, pp. 4–5; Lǐ Xuětāo 2008, pp. 39–40). Prior to that, Gustaaf Schlegel (1840–1903) assumed the post of Chinese professor at Leiden in 1877 to train interpreters. He took up the post after his travels to China and other Asian countries where he had served as a court interpreter (Sybesma 2017c,

p. 538). Even earlier in 1869, the Polish interpreter Alexandre Kleczhowski (1871–1886) held the post at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes in France to teach vernacular Chinese (Demiéville 2006, p. 205).⁹ One can see that many of these positions were for teaching vernacular Chinese. Summers, as the third professor of Chinese in Britain, was one of the trendsetters, whose duties included training interpreters in Europe in colloquial Chinese.¹⁰

These scholars are quite different from the so-called “armchair sinologists”, who were professionally trained scholars based in Europe yet never had a chance to expose themselves to the Chinese language and culture in China. Such sinologists include Christian Mentzel (1622–1701), Antelmo Severini (1828–1909), Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832), Antoine Bazin (1799–1863), and Stanislas Julien (1797–1873).¹¹ They learnt about the Far East from the manuscripts and books by missionaries, merchants and diplomats. Many of them initially specialized in fields other than sinology, such as Manchu, Sanskrit and Classics. Their research on the Chinese language came from a philological perspective, based on texts instead of colloquial language. Chinese characters especially caught their attention. Their intent on learning Chinese was to conduct research on the varieties of the Chinese language, on Chinese as an Oriental language, or on the language as a tool for studying Chinese history, philosophy, and literature (cf. Dǒng Hǎiyīng 2005; Demiéville 2006; Alleton 2017; Walravens and Behr 2017). Therefore, the Chinese language was their research tool and also their research subject.¹²

Summers’ works also share some features with those of the armchair sinologists. Summers was one of the earliest chairholders of Chinese-related professorships in Europe. He also worked in the British Museum Library and the India Office Library (cf. Chapter 1). Summers had access to many academic works, including works from China and other East Asian countries, as well as classical and up-to-date research from Europe. These works laid the theoretical foundation of his research and expanded his interests from the Chinese language to almost all aspects of China and other parts of Asia—such as literature, history, business and

⁹ The first Italian professor who went to China as an interpreter was Lodovico Nocentini (1849–1910), and he held the chair at Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” and Sapienza Università di Roma (1849–1910, Gǔ Qiànxī 2021, p. 3). He did not need to teach interpreters so he did not focus on vernacular Chinese.

¹⁰ The first professor of King’s College London, Fearon, was a diplomat in China. He also paid much attention to colloquial language teaching (Kwan 2011, p. 148). Before Fearon, Kidd held such as chair in University College London after he learned Hakka and Mandarin in Malacca (Kwan 2014a, p. 38).

¹¹ However, in France, we see a different situation. In 1843, a chair of vernacular Chinese was created at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes in Paris (Alleton 2017, p. 479). The first professor of Chinese was Bazin, who held the position till his death (1863), and he was succeeded by Julien (1863–1869, Demiéville 2006, pp. 204–205). Both Bazin and Julien were armchair sinologists, and they are exceptional cases in the applicational trend in sinology.

¹² Summers pointed out that Europeans who only learnt Chinese in their home countries probably cannot be understood by native Chinese speakers, due to “[the] want of practice in speaking, and also the differences of dialects, and the use of book-words for colloquial” (1865c, p. 465, footnote).

society—including the culture of minority ethnic groups in China (cf. Liú Shūmò 2020). His constant curiosity about Chinese and Asia-related topics is an essential quality for a sinologist. The works also reveal his strong interest in Chinese texts. For example, in his *Handbook*, examples from Chinese classical works are explained and analysed (cf. Chapter 3). At the same time, he compiled two academic journals to introduce the East and a magazine to advertise the West (cf. Chapter 3). For Summers, one reason for learning (not teaching) the Chinese language was therefore to understand Asian cultures and further introduce them to Europe. In other words, the Chinese language was his research tool.

While Summers held the chair at King's College London, he was the only professor of Chinese in Britain. At the same time, some renowned scholars held Chinese professorships in other European universities. In Germany, Wilhelm Schott (1802–1889) became a professor at the University of Berlin in 1838 and conducted much research on Chinese and other Asian languages. He started optional Chinese language and philosophy courses in 1883 (Lǐ Xuětāo 2008, pp. 36–37; Walravens and Behr 2017, p. 528). In the Netherlands, J.J. Hoffmann (1805–1878) became the first professor of Chinese and Japanese based in Leiden in 1855, but he mainly focused on Japanese research (Sybesma 2017c, p. 538, p. 540). In fact, as early as 1853, J.J. Hoffmann had already pointed out that vernacular Chinese should be the focus of learning and teaching. However, he never travelled to China, and he did not teach vernacular Chinese (Kuiper 2017, p. 23, pp. 90–91). Instead, his lectures covered Chinese characters, pronunciation, grammar, translation and Chinese culture (cf. Kuiper 2017, pp. 82–101). In Italy, Severini was appointed professor for Far Eastern languages in 1863. He studied Chinese history and politics and taught Chinese and Japanese, using one of Julien's works as a textbook (Zhāng Yǒngfèn and Bái Huà 2016, pp. 167–168). In France, Julien taught Chinese at the Collège de France. Although he did not systematically analyse the Chinese grammar, he would summarize Chinese sentence structure rules when explaining original Chinese texts (Demiéville 2006, pp. 201–202). In other words, Chinese texts were his primary teaching material. At the same time, he also held the professorship at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, where vernacular Chinese was taught. While holding this position, Julien published a vernacular textbook *Ji-tch'ang-k'eou-t'eou-hoa dialogues chinois* (1863) to teach Chinese. It was based on a vernacular Manchu-Chinese manual *Ts'ing Wan K'e Mung* (清文啟蒙 *A Chinese Grammar of Manchu Tartar Language*, 1730), written by the Chinese bannerman Wǔgé 舞格 (dates of birth and death unknown, Takekoshi 2015, pp. 66–69). Unlike most European professors of Chinese, Summers' central duty at King's College London was to teach Chinese.

However, similar to them, Summers also devoted himself to other academic-related work besides teaching, for example, editing journals and working in libraries, as mentioned above.

Hence, rather than a theoretical linguist, Summers was a Chinese teacher, a sinologist and a cultural ambassador who considered language a key to accessing the other curious parts of culture (cf. Summers 1853a, pp. 10–11). His works and teaching activities should be viewed as a hybrid of missionary linguistics and professional sinology.

Summers' Chinese works have caught some attention in the academic world, though so far, no systematic investigation of his works has been carried out. The earliest research on Summers' works was by Gabelentz in 1878. He introduced two of Summers' works very briefly, pointing out that Summers was heavily influenced by Edkins and Schott (p. 628), a point that is also presented in this dissertation. However, Gabelentz did not mention John Daniel Morell's (1816–1891) influence on Summers' syntactic research (cf. Chapter 9). Much more recently, Fāng Huánhǎi and Yú Hǎikuò (2012, 2013) and Liú Shūmò and Fāng Huánhǎi (2013) translated some of Summers' works into Chinese. In 2018, Aichi University of Japan conducted some research on Summers' works on Chinese, and a collection of papers was published. The collection, called *Research on Chinese and Japanese Lexicons* (No. 8), includes papers on Summers' ideas about Chinese nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, and Six Scripts (Zhū Fèng 2018; Okumura 2018; Chiba 2018; Shioyama 2018 and Ibushi 2018). Chiba (2021), Shioyama (2021), and Ibushi (2021) did research on his ideas on copulas, existential verbs, prepositions, and adjectives. Other studies include Chén Jié (2012), Zhái Wén (2014), Fāng Huánhǎi and Lín Xīn (2015), and Chén Wēi (2016). In addition, some articles about his life have been published (e.g., Shigehisa 1932; Shōwa¹³ 1956; Brown 1967; Mǎ Jīnqiáng 2004; Koyama 2007; Nakagawa 2008). Among them, the most informative ones are the works of Kwan (2014a, 2018) and Akaishi (2021).

2. The aims of the present study

As mentioned above, Summers' works on the Chinese language have not yet been studied systematically or holistically. So far, his ideas have not been discussed in the context of works published by scholars before and after him in order to place his contributions to Chinese linguistics into a broader historical context. This desideratum is what this dissertation aims to fill.

¹³ “Shōwa” is short for “Shōwa Joshi Daigaku Kindai Bunka Kenkyujo” in this dissertation.

This dissertation does not intend to reconstruct the grammatical system of the Chinese language of the nineteenth century based on Summers' works,¹⁴ nor does it try to judge to what extent Summers' records reflect the Chinese language of his time. Instead, it aims at presenting a comprehensive picture of the nature of Summers' research: what he did, how he did it, and why he did it in the way he did.

My focus is on Summers' ideas on Chinese grammar. The term "grammar" is employed here in a general sense, basically referring to morphology and syntax, and excluding phonology and semantics. The Chinese writing system and transcription methods are mentioned only briefly (Chapter 10). In particular, I am interested in the following issues:

- (1) What are Summers' ideas on Chinese grammar, in particular morphology and syntax, as presented in all his works? How did he present these ideas and why did he do it that way?
- (2) What is the source of Summers' ideas? Compared to his precursors, what are Summers' innovative ideas regarding the abovementioned topics?
- (3) To what extent did Summers inspire his contemporaries or successors with regard to their research on the Chinese language?

The word "Chinese" is used rather loosely in this dissertation. It is sometimes used to refer to the Chinese language in all its varieties in time and space (for example, "Chinese is a tonal language"). At other times, it is used to refer to the (court) language that Summers described or to refer to the current Chinese koine, also known as "Mandarin" or "Mandarin Chinese". When dealing with a specific variety of the language, the name of that particular topolect is applied, such as Shanghainese or Cantonese.¹⁵

Regarding the historical periodization of the language and its terminology, the dissertation follows Peyraube's (2017, pp. 346–349) summary of the generally accepted periodization (based on Chinese phonology): the language before the *Qiēyùn* (切韻 *Spelling the Rimes*, 601 AD) is termed Old Chinese; that between the *Qiēyùn* and *Zhōngyuán yīnyùn* (中原音韻 *Rimes according to the Pronunciation of the Central Plains*, 1324) is Middle Chinese; that between 1324 and mid-Ming dynasty (the beginning of the sixteenth century) is termed Old Mandarin, and the language after the mid-Ming dynasty is termed Modern Mandarin. The terms "classical

¹⁴ Although chapter 10 of this dissertation presents the phonological and orthographic system shown in Summers' works, the dissertation does not aim at reconstructing the Chinese language of the nineteenth century in any sense (phonological system, lexicon, etc.).

¹⁵ Cantonese, i.e., the dialect of Guǎngzhōu is the most prestigious dialect of the Yuè dialects, mainly spoken in Guǎngzhōu, Hong Kong and Macau, other cities situated in the Pearl River Delta, and some areas in the middle and northern Guangdong province. There are around eighty million speakers of Yuè dialects inside and outside China (Hóu Jīngyī 2002, p. 174, p. 176).

Chinese” and “literary Chinese” refer to the premodern written register, whose standard archetype is the Chinese language in the Warring States period (475 BC–221 BC), in contrast to the vernacular style.

3. Framework and methodology

The first three chapters set the stage for the following major chapters of the dissertation. Chapter 1 sketches Summers’ time and life on the basis of secondary and primary sources, such as manuscripts and newspapers. Chapter 2 overviews the linguistic tradition in Europe and China briefly, with a section dedicated to Summers’ ideas on the Chinese script, followed by Chapter 3, an introduction to Summers’ sinological works. The bulk of this dissertation consists of seven chapters on monosyllabism, morphology, parts of speech, classifiers, particles, syntax, and phonology and orthography, respectively. Most of these main chapters comprise five parts.

The first part of each of these chapters introduces the main topic of the chapter from a general point of view, often with reference to some modern views. The purpose of presenting the modern views is not to set a “standard” or a goal for Summers to reach, nor to claim that there is a “correct” approach (which would easily lead to the fallacy of disparaging the past by extolling the present—*yǐ jīn fēi gǔ* 以今非古) or to discount the contribution of Summers and other earlier scholars in this field more generally.¹⁶ Instead, these introductions aim to point out the problems scholars face while studying the Chinese language. According to the theory of uniformitarianism,¹⁷ human beings remain approximately the same biologically, psychologically and socially throughout time. The past can hence be deduced from an analogy of the present, and the basic principles and rules of today can be deployed to explain the past (Labov 1972a, p. 275; 1972b, p. 828; Christy 1983, pp. ix–x; Koerner 1995b, pp. 63–64; Lass 1997, pp. 25–29; Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2012, pp. 24–25; Bergs 2012, p. 82; McDonald 2020, p. 146). Therefore, this thesis assumes that currently unsolved puzzles also challenged early scholars in their learning, teaching, and research. The first part of each chapter then sets the stage for introducing and analysing the ideas and contributions of Summers and his contemporaries.

The second part of each of these chapters presents and analyses Summers’ ideas with a focus on his metalanguage, i.e., the terminological language that he utilises to describe the

¹⁶ For more on the approach of *yǐ jīn fēi gǔ*, see Klöter (2011a, p. 14).

¹⁷ Uniformitarianism is firstly brought up by geologist James Hutton (1726–1797) in 1785 (Christy 1983, p. ix). It is widely adopted in historical research, such as historical sociolinguistics (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2012, p. 24).

object language, Chinese (Koerner 1995b, p. 31; Crystal 2008, p. 302). According to Klöter (2011a, p. 84, p. 90), the “metalanguage” embraces more than only the “language” or words. All tools used to analyse the Chinese language should be viewed as the metalanguage, including the macrostructure of the works, the tables and all that has been mentioned or left out on purpose. Therefore, besides focusing on the words or language that Summers used or the detailed examples that he provided, other relevant elements will also be taken into account, such as the macrostructure of his works (cf. Chapter 3; the introduction of his *Handbook*).

The language employed in this thesis while analysing Summers’ ideas must also be considered a metalanguage according to Koerner (1987, p. 13; 1995b, p. 28). Three basic principles raised by Koerner will be followed (Koerner 1989, pp. 25–26; 1995b, pp. 17–18, pp. 41–42; 1995c, pp. 13–14): (1) the Principle of Contextualization—The historical background has to be taken into consideration adequately while studying the texts, especially the “general intellectual currents of the time”, including the social, economic, and political context; (2) the Principal of Immanence—The analysis of a text has to be based on the text itself and not on modern ideas or concepts; (3) the Principle of Adequation—When necessary, modern concepts and terms, provided with a clarification, can be used to explain old texts to modern readers. This last principle will only be applied when the first two principles are strictly followed. It reminds us to avoid anachronisms in our own writing or confusing the terms and their related concepts in history and today (Bergs 2012, pp. 82–84).

The third and fourth parts of these chapters present influential ideas in the works of Summers’ precursors and investigate his impact on the literature of his respective successors. On most occasions, the terms “precursor” and “successor” refer, respectively, to scholars whose grammatical works were mentioned and criticized by Summers, and to those who read and commented on Summers’ works, regardless of whether any direct influence can be traced between their works and Summers’.

Almost all research is built on what precedes it, and Summers’ is no different. His thoughts on Chinese, including his detailed analyses, terminology, and general approach, were rooted in preceding linguistic research and formed against a special historical, scientific, sociological, and political background. For that reason, the third part of each major chapter will first sketch an outline of the linguistic background by introducing the Western and Chinese traditions and the *Zeitgeist* of Summers’ time. I follow Yáo Xiǎopíng (2003a, pp. 112–113) by distinguishing four types of relevant historical sources, which are listed as follows:

- (1) definite evidence affirmed by the author himself: this is the most reliable evidence, which serves as the preferred source of this dissertation. In other words, while discussing

which works influenced Summers, those works must be clearly referred to by Summers himself. In the preface of his *Handbook*, Summers commented on many sinological works. Titles of other sinological or linguistic works are mentioned in other places of Summers' monographs and articles. They are counted as definite evidence of the potential influences that Summers got from his predecessors. Works with just one mention in some section or chapter of Summers' works might have a particular influence on that part. For example, Summers mentioned a syntactic work (1852, 1853) by Morell in his *Handbook* only once, i.e., in 'Chapter II. Syntax' (1863a, pp. 97–190). It is, therefore, plausible that Morell inspired Summers' research on Chinese syntax. After presenting Summers' own views, the source of Summers' ideas will be traced to clarify his contribution to the field. The "definite evidence" is also applied to Summers' influence on his successors, namely those scholars who mentioned Summers and his works.

(2) secondary evidence stated by informed contemporaries and friends: in this thesis, the works by those who were associated with Summers will also be taken into consideration. This will help especially to justify Summers' influence when it comes to the works of his students, because Summers taught Chinese at King's College London for twenty years. Several of his students became well-known scholars, who compiled and published works on sinology.

The definite and secondary types of evidence mentioned above will be the major criteria when discussing influences on and of Summers in this dissertation. In this way, the likelihood of possible chains of influence is maximized.

(3) conditions: this refers to the context or historical background of Summers' research, i.e., the historical context of nineteenth century Britain and China, the European linguistic tradition and the Chinese linguistic tradition, which must all have left some trace in Summers' research. This kind of evidence is, however, not as reliable or direct as the definite and secondary types of evidence and will therefore only serve to "back up" the context. When Summers' ideas cannot be deduced from some definite and secondary evidence, conditional evidence will be taken into consideration cautiously.

(4) affinity: this kind of evidence is mainly based on the comparison between the content of the texts and the convergence of the terminology. Similarities in content can emerge from imitation or plagiarism. However, it can also just be a case of "great minds thinking alike". Therefore, in this dissertation, affinity will be combined with other types of evidence in order to avoid the arbitrary association of two random texts. Resemblances in wording, which are similar to "textual parallels", coined by Koerner (1987, p. 23), are

rather different from affinity as such. Although it is not the primary concern of this dissertation, textual parallels will also be considered by combining them with definite evidence. In other words, if the wording and phrasing of Summers are similar to that of others whose work has been mentioned by Summers, a strong influence is assumed.¹⁸

The works regarding the Chinese language that influenced Summers or were influenced by Summers have been selected according to the abovementioned conditions. A list of them can be found in Appendices 1 and 2, with a brief introduction to each of them.

¹⁸ The discussion of different types of evidence is based on Chén [accepted]. These four types of evidence are named as *zhǔzhèng* 主證, *fùzhèng* 副證, *tiáojiàn* 條件 and *lèitóng* 類同 respectively by Yáo Xiǎopíng. In my consultation with Yáo Xiǎopíng, he stated that the terms were coined and the arrangement of them are organized by himself to research *Mǎshì wéntōng*. I want to express my gratitude to Professor Yáo Xiǎopíng for answering my question. A similar methodology can be traced back to Chinese philologist Gù Yánwǔ (顧炎武, 1613–1682), although he used different terms in his works. In order to scrutinize the pronunciation and the meaning referred to by the characters in *Shījīng* (詩經 *The Book of Songs*, 800 BC–600 BC), Gù Yánwǔ proposed to rely on *běnzèng* 本證 ‘evidence provided in the book itself’ and *pángzhèng* 旁證 ‘evidence from other contemporary books’, supported by other evidence (The original text reads: “列本證、旁證二條。本證者，《詩》自相證也。旁證者，采之他書也。二者俱無，則宛轉以審其音，參伍以諧其韻” 1982 [16??], p. 35, punctuation added). *Tiáojiàn* and *lèitóng* therefore fall under “other evidence”. Gù Yánwǔ’s method is based on that of the two late-Ming-dynasty scholars (cf. Xǔ Sūmín 2006, pp. 287–289). The term *pángzhèng* can be traced further back to *Táng lǜ shū yì* (唐律疏議 *Commentaries on the Law of Tang*, 652 AD), where *pángzhèng* refers to the evidence provided by witnesses (Zhōu Mǐ 1986, p. 42, in Yáo Xiǎopíng’s term, *fùzhèng*), which is opposed to a statement by the accused (in Yáo Xiǎopíng’s term, *zhǔzhèng* or in Gù Yánwǔ’s term, *běnzèng*). *Lèitóng* is also used as a term of comparative literature, referring to the resemblance in style, structure and ideas between two unrelated works (Diāo Shàohuá 1990, p. 113).