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

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Chapter 2. A glimpse of the history of linguistics in the East and the West

In order to contextualize Summers' research on Chinese, this chapter presents the respective linguistic traditions of the East and the West and the status of linguistic research in Summers' time. To be more specific, the first section introduces the emergence, development and decline of the Greco-Latin model in the West, and the linguistic trends in the nineteenth century are presented in the second section. The third section provides a brief discussion about the Chinese linguistic tradition. Section four is a case study, showing how Summers viewed Chinese characters through the lenses of Eastern and Western linguistics. The chapter only touches on the issues directly related to Summers' research exclusive of grammar, because the grammatical details are the topic of later chapters.

2.1 The Greco-Latin model

The history of linguistic thought in Europe can be traced back to ancient Greece. Although at that time studying language was not their main point of departure, many topics in linguistics were touched upon by those great minds, such as the origin of language, the nature of language, parts of speech and the structure of the syllable (Robins 1997, p. 44; Law 2003, p. 13; Yáo Xiǎopíng 2011a, pp. 26–27, pp. 37–38). Dionysius Thrax (170 BC–90 BC), the representative linguist in this period of time, considered words to be the smallest unit of grammar and sentences as the largest. He proposed eight parts of speech for the Greek language (i.e., nouns, verbs, participles, articles, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, and conjunctions) according to their inflection and meaning. His research on gender, number, case and tense in the first systematic grammar *Tékhnē grammatikē* (ca. 100 BC)⁵⁸ was emblematic for early linguistic research (Robins 1997, pp. 41–48). This work was considered the standard Greek grammar for the following 1300 years (Robins 1997, p. 39). Roman scholars, such as the author of *Ars maior* and *Ars minor*, Aelius Donatus' (350 AD) and the eminent Priscian (ca. 500 AD), found that the Greek model could largely be applied effectively to Latin as well (Taylor 1995, pp. 88–89; Robins 1997, p. 58, pp. 68–75; Law 2003, pp. 67–68, pp. 89–90; Yáo Xiǎopíng 2011a, pp. 74–76). Almost all of Dionysius' eight classes of words remained unchanged in Greek and Latin grammars⁵⁹ until the end of the Middle Ages, and they subsequently influenced the analysis of the vernacular European languages (Robins 1997, pp. 42–43). This history laid the foundation for the Greco-Latin model.

⁵⁸ There are discussions about who the author of this work was. See Robins (1997, pp. 38–39) and Law (2003, pp. 55–56).

⁵⁹ Articles, however, are exceptions, since they do not exist in Latin. Latin grammarians, therefore, singled out interjection in order to keep the exact number of “eight” word classes (cf. Robins 1997, p. 65).

The Greco-Latin model evolved in the Middle Ages, when linguistic research was mostly devoted to Latin grammar, especially in the early periods, with some exceptions that explored other languages such as Old English (Robins 1997, pp. 79–80; Law 2003, pp. 192–204; McDonald 2020, p. 120). Scholars were not interested in specific languages and considered the grammar of all languages to be the same. Latin, the general academic language at that time, was taken as the departure point of language research, and “Grammatica” was interchangeable with “Latin” (Xú Zhīmín 1990, p. 30, p. 32; Bossong 2007, p. 124; McDonald 2020, p. 120).

During the Renaissance, starting with Antonio de Nebrija’s (1441–1522) grammar of Spanish published in 1492 (Bossong 2007, p. 124), the growing number of linguistic scholars found that the Greco-Latin model was also greatly effective for the study of vernacular languages (Cén Qíxiáng 1988, pp. 70–71; Xú Zhīmín 1990, p. 35; Simone 2014, pp. 154–155). However, with the “discovery” of more parts of the world, many “exotic” languages drew the attention of European missionaries and linguists (Xú Zhīmín 1990, p. 35; Robins 1997, pp. 118–119; Liú Rùmqīng 1997, p. 28).

The missionary works about “exotic” languages, which are very different from European languages in their phonology, lexicon, and grammatical structure, changed European linguistics gradually but fundamentally. The difficulties in applying the Latin model to the increasingly diverse pool of languages drew some criticism and led to confused statements about classical Chinese, which was described as a language without structure (Liú Rùmqīng 1997, p. 30; Bossong 2007, p. 127; McDonald 2020, p. 120). European linguistics, therefore, had to “free itself from the frame of classical grammar opening the mind to new possibilities of linguistic categorization and presentation of information” (Hovdhaugen 1996, p. 20). These encounters with different parts of the world finally spawned a turning point in the area of linguistics in the nineteenth century.

The Greco-Latin model was nevertheless applied to a certain extent to describe the “exotic” languages by missionaries and language teachers like Summers for didactic purposes (cf. Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and Conclusion). Summers’ pedagogical grammar is rooted in the earlier European traditions and bears features of the Chinese language in mind. These aspects of Summers’ work will be dealt with in the major chapters of this dissertation.

2.2 Nineteenth-century linguistics

Compared to previous research, linguistics became an autonomous and rigorous scientific discipline in the nineteenth century (Jankowsky 2013, p. 635). It gradually gained autonomy from philosophy, rhetoric and philology by employing terms and concepts from, and by using

principles and methodology of, the natural sciences, especially that of biology (Joseph 1995, p. 221). For example, biological terms, such as ‘morphology’, ‘organism’, and ‘decay’, were introduced into linguistics and employed by Jacob Grimm (1785–1863), August Schleicher (1821–1868), Karl Ferdinand Becker (1775–1849) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), among others (Salmon 2000, p. 15; Bynon 2001, p. 1230; Yáo Xiǎopíng 2011a, p. 225, p. 235; Burridge 2013, p. 145, p. 152, p. 164). Languages began to be considered organisms, which went through evolution and could be classified into families, branches, and subbranches (Yáo Xiǎopíng 2011a, pp. 235–241). More importantly, scientific principles and rigorous methodology were employed in linguistic research. For example, Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829) argued that while identifying the kinship of languages, identical language structures between languages should be taken into consideration, instead of merely similar words, which can simply be the result of random borrowing (Jankowsky 2013, p. 643). Schleicher claimed that trustworthy conclusions cannot be drawn until a sufficient amount of evidence is procured (Jankowsky 2013, p. 649). Although discussions on linguistic topics, such as the kinship of languages, can be traced back to earlier periods, the nineteenth century saw a rigorous scientific approach to these topics.

At the same time, linguistics as an academic subject in its own right was institutionalized in European universities in the nineteenth century, and the first chair related to linguistics (for *Orientalische Literatur und allgemeine Sprachkunde*) was established at the University of Berlin in 1821 for Franz Bopp (1791–1867, Davies and Lepschy 1998, p. 3, p. 8).

In the nineteenth century, comparative historical linguistics was established and became the most fruitful linguistic field during that period (Robins 1997, p. 182; Davies and Lepschy 1998, p. 1). William Jones’ (1746–1794) famous report to the Asiatick Society of Bengal in 1786 is generally seen as the starting point of historical comparative linguistics. In this report, he pointed out that Sanskrit, Persian, Latin, Greek, Gothic and Celtic share the same origin, although several scholars had proposed similar hypotheses before Jones (Seuren 1998, pp. 79–80; Davies and Lepschy 1998, p. 61, pp. 65–66; Yáo Xiǎopíng 2011a, pp. 218–220; Jankowsky 2013, pp. 637–638). The significance of Sanskrit in the research on comparative linguistics is undeniable. Sanskrit and Persian consequently gained a lot of attention in the West (Yáo Xiǎopíng 2011a, pp. 221–222). Studying Asian languages was not a novel interest anymore, but became an integral part of linguistics in the nineteenth century.

Terms and theories from nineteenth-century linguistics are also reflected in Summers’ works. In the following sections, I introduce two particular trends of the nineteenth century in the context of Summers’ research: linguistic kinship and typology.

2.2.1 The kinship of languages

In the nineteenth century, linguistic research on language kinship became more popular. It gradually changed into comparative historical research under the guidance of scientific principles, although the “linguistic botanizing” taxonomy can be traced back to the Renaissance, if not earlier (Koerner 1995a, pp. 212–213; Davies and Lepschy 1998, p. 43). As early as 1599, the Leiden classicist Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609) classified European languages into three major genetic types in his *Diatriba de Europaeorum linguis* (1610) according to their shared vocabularies, i.e., Latin (with Greek as its source), Germanic, and Slavic. In fact, an earlier dictionary published in 1537 by Czech Sigismund Gelenius (1497–1554) showed that Greek, Latin, Germanic, and Slavic are related (Koerner 1995a, p. 212). Summers raised a similar idea in an article in his magazine *Flying Dragon Reporter* (1866–1870, hereafter: *Flying Dragon*), when he introduced the English language to Chinese readers from a perspective of the kinship of languages:

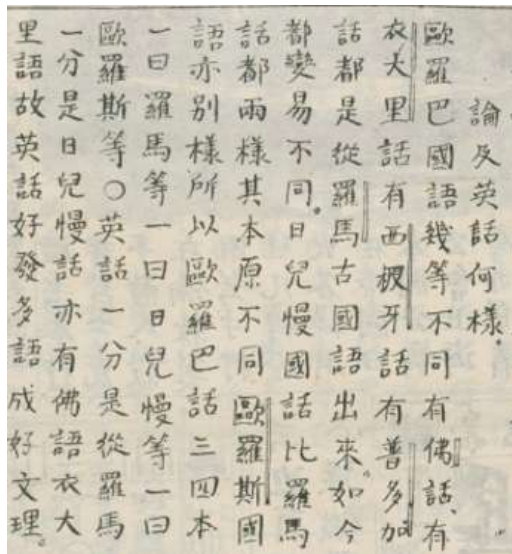


Figure 1: ‘On English’ in *Flying Dragon*⁶⁰

論及英話何樣

歐羅巴國語幾等不同，有佛話，有衣大里話，有西班牙話，有普多加話，都是從羅馬古國語出來。如今都變易不同。日兒慢國話比羅馬話都兩樣，其本源不同。歐羅斯國語亦別樣。所以歐羅巴話三、四本：一曰羅馬等，一曰日兒慢等，一曰歐羅斯等。

⁶⁰ © British Library Board (Asia, Pacific & Africa OP.711 General Reference Collection 1867–1870 LOU.LON 71A [1867] 14 Jan 1867–Dec 1870, 0021).

英話一分是從羅馬，一分是日兒慢話，亦有佛語、衣大里語，故英話好發多語成好文理。(Summers, 14 July 1866, No. 7, punctuation added)

A discussion on which kind of language English is

There are several classifications of national languages in Europe, such as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, which all originate from the language of the ancient Roman country [i.e., Latin]. They have changed and become very different nowadays. Germanic languages are different from Roman languages. Their origins are not the same. Russian is also different [in its origin]. Therefore, European languages have three or four roots: one is the Roman class, one the Germanic and one is the Russian class.

English partially [derives] from Roman [and] partially from Germanic, with [some] French and Italian [influence]. Hence, the English language arises out of many languages [as its roots and] develops [its own] proper grammar.⁶¹

Summers argued that in Europe, there are at least three language branches, i.e., Roman, Germanic and Russian. Although he did not explain how he had arrived at this conclusion, this superficial classification of European languages was not novel at his time. Summers only provided vague conclusions without mentioning the methods, so one cannot see whether this statement reflects the nineteenth-century spirit. He further stated that English is a hybrid of mainly Roman and Germanic. Similar to Summers' notion, Grimm pointed out that English is a mixture of Latin and Germanic as early as 1851 (Davies and Lepschy 1998, pp. 141–142).

Besides exploring the kinship of European languages, Summers adopted the term “Indo-Chinese languages” in his works to discuss the relationship between Chinese and other East Asian languages (1863c, p. 3, p. 7).⁶² The term “Indo-Chinese” was first coined by the Scottish scholar John Leyden (1775–1811) in 1806, who claimed that the languages from India, China and East China Sea, e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, Malay and Burmese, all have the same origin (van Driem 2005, pp. 85–86). Summers shared a similar view. As a ‘Reverend’ (his own title on the copyright page of the *Catalogue*), Summers followed the biblical tradition and claimed that language is a “power” and “a divine gift” endowed by God to express thought (1853a, pp.

⁶¹ This is a transcription of Figure 1, followed by my own translation.

⁶² This term became “Sino-Tibetan” in 1924 (van Driem 2005, p. 87).

4–5; 1863d, p. 113). After the “catastrophe at Babel”, languages were differentiated (1853a, p. 6). Summers asserted that Chinese is the “classical language” among the languages spoken around China and “occupies the same position as Latin and Greek do among Europeans” (1863a, p. xviii), which reflects the prestigious status the Chinese language held throughout East Asia. He further argued that Chinese is the primary language in Asia, especially among the East Asian languages; he asserted that other languages, such as Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, were derived from Chinese, or in his words, that Chinese is the “parent” of these languages (1863c, p. 7; 1863a, p. xvii). Summers likewise elucidated that all the variations of the Chinese language also have the same origin (Appendix V, 1863a, p. 226, p. xvii).

2.2.2 Linguistic typology

In the sixteenth century, rationalists sought to discover common principles shared by vastly different languages (Liú Rùmqīng 1997, p. 34; Bossong 2007, pp. 124–125). The creation of a universal language was even seen by some as a possible goal to fill the gap left in Europe after the use of Latin declined (Xú Zhīmín 1990, pp. 47–49; Robins 1997, p. 128–129; Liú Rùmqīng 1997, pp. 31–32; Simone 2014, pp. 170–176). That was when Chinese characters became a popular research subject (see Section 2.4). The Port-Royal grammarians of the seventeenth century were classical representatives of this school of thought, who argued that different languages should have the same categories and principles. In their publications, they explained such general principles of grammar. Their works were influential until the late eighteenth century and even the early nineteenth century (Wheeler 1995, pp. 172–174; Liú Rùmqīng 1997, p. 33, p. 37; Robins 1997, pp. 131–132, p. 140; Graffi 2001, p. 17; Bossong 2007, p. 124; Simone 2014, p. 166). In contrast to the Middle Ages, the endeavour of discovering the general principles of languages in this period took the diversity of languages into account, which demonstrated the abovementioned trend of linguistic typology. It was not until the nineteenth century that typological research was distinguished from the research on kinship of languages (Robins 1997, pp. 187–191). Typology, unlike kinship, is not based on historical comparisons of languages (Jankowsky 2013, p. 651).

Linguistic typology was not a focus of Summers’ research, yet it was a popular topic in the nineteenth century. In Summers’ works, the terms “inflexion”,⁶³ “agglutination”⁶⁴ and “isolated”⁶⁵ appeared. Unlike many linguists of the nineteenth century, who conducted research

⁶³ For example: in 1863a (p. xii, p. xx, p. 12) and 1853a (p. 5).

⁶⁴ For example: in 1863a (p. xx).

⁶⁵ For example: in 1863a (p. 117).

on linguistic typology based on morphological structure (for example, Friedrich von Schlegel, his brother August von Schlegel (1767–1845), and Humboldt),⁶⁶ Summers did not use these terms to classify languages but only to analyse the structure of words. For example, discussing pronouns, he stated: “[i]n their isolated state, without the addition of any grammatical particle, their position alone will show the case to which they belong” (Summers 1863a, p. 117) and “[the Chinese] employ no inflexions to show the mutual relations of words” (Summers 1864a, p. 5).

August von Schlegel divided inflectional languages into synthetic and analytic ones. Synthetic languages are those with “high morpheme-per-word ratio”, for example, Sanskrit; analytic languages, on the other hand, are languages that use “particles instead of inflections”, for example, English (Koerner 1995a, p. 214; 1999, p. 45; Jankowsky 2013, p. 651). Correlatively, Schleicher separated the history of language into two phases: prehistory and documented history. The former phase contains a development from monosyllabic structure to agglutination and finally arrived at inflection, while the latter shows degeneration from synthetic languages to analytic languages (Koerner 1995b, p. 62; Itkonen 2013, p. 762). Summers agreed that there was a process from isolated languages to agglutination languages and inflected languages, though he did not state this clearly. He claimed that Chinese had also become “more analytic” (1863a, p. 143). He even tried to explain why Chinese did not go through the same steps to become an inflected language:

- a. In course of time the monosyllabic character of some languages appears to have changed by the union of words of different qualities, e.g. as by adding prepositions, &c, which had originally a substantive meaning. (1853a, p. 7)
- b. The reason why Chinese has never undergone this process, and obtained inflexions, appears to be, because the original terms, which were employed as the names of objects and relations of things, were so definite and distinct from each other, and the characters, which at a very early period represented them, so unique and separate, that union of two of the latter being impossible, two of the former could not well be agglutinated. (1863a, p. xx)

For Summers, the Chinese language and its writing system at an early stage prevented the words from agglutinating and inflecting.

⁶⁶ See Koerner (1995a, pp. 213–214), Seuren (1998, pp. 81–82) and Jankowsky (2013, pp. 651–652).

Summers further analysed the grammatical structure by applying the terms “analytic” and “synthetic” for pedagogical purposes. He proposed to the students to study and memorize verbs together with adverbs, in order to show the time when the action takes place as the equivalent of tenses in English. Summers actually argued that using the analytical method means learning words out of any context, while using the synthetic method means learning the collocation of words:

The *tenses* of the verb can be distinguished only by the various adverbs of time or by the context; and all that can be done here is to give the auxiliaries, which may be said to form the principal tenses, the *present*, the *past*, and the *future*. The numerous modifications of the time of an action are produced by the arrangement of the words and the form of the sentence, for which the student may refer to the syntax. It will be necessary even here to follow the synthetical rather than the analytical method, and to show the student how the exact meanings of the tenses found in European languages are conveyed in Chinese. (1863a, p. 82)

For Summers, Chinese is very well capable of expressing complicated thoughts and emotions, despite its isolated traits.⁶⁷ Summers wrote:

Chinese is just that kind of language which leaves the speaker free from the technicalities of grammar and of artificial forms of expression, and allows him to rise in sublimity by the power of allusion and the various figures of the rhetor’s art, and through the various styles of composition to affect his hearers; or to descend into the vulgar colloquial, and raise a smile at his antagonist’s expense, or ridicule the cavils of a supposed objector. (1863a, p. xxii)

In this sense, Summers agreed with those who argued that Chinese has its own self-sufficient system. For example, Joshua Marshman (1768–1837, 1814, p. 189) stated although Chinese has no inflection at all, the Chinese language does “subserve the same purposes” as languages with inflections do. Edkins criticizes Becker’s comment on Chinese as being allegedly “less perfect”, “abnormal”, and “misshapen”. He recommended that European scholars study Chinese closely before coming to such conclusions (Edkins 1857, pp. ii–iii). French Jesuit Calude Buffier (1661–1737) was probably the first who claimed that the grammatical system

⁶⁷ But on the other hand, Summers always undervalued Chinese characters. He stated that although the characters meet the needs of the Chinese language, they cannot record the pronunciation, let alone the phoneme, and suggested applying the Roman alphabet as the notation system of Chinese (cf. Chapter 10).

of each language has its own autonomy and therefore the Latin model cannot be imposed onto all languages (Seuren 1998, pp. 65–66).

2.3 The Chinese linguistic tradition

In general, due to practical pedagogical reasons, missionaries only borrowed limited details of the local linguistic traditions to describe the indigenous languages of different parts of the world (Zwartjes 2011, p. 14). The same approach can be found in Summers' works. In other words, although Summers mentioned some Chinese traditional grammatical terms and concepts, he did not receive any direct or great influence from Chinese authors, only indirectly learning about them from other sinologists' works.

The linguistic research conducted by ancient Chinese scholars contains three disciplines: *wénzìxué* 文字學 'grammatology', *yīnyùnxué* 音韻學 'phonology' and *xùngǔxué* 訓詁學 'philology'. Generally speaking, grammatology deals with the structure of the characters (including the evolution of the characters). Phonology studies the diachronic and synchronic pronunciation (initial consonants, finals, and tones) of words. Philology not only focuses on the meaning of words, but also "explains the semantics according to the position and relationship of words in a sentence, and furthermore takes this as the basis of grammatical research" (Lǐ Bǎojiā 2007, p. 23). For most of history, traditional linguistic research in China was conducted within the interpretation of classical works and literary research.⁶⁸

Many ancient Chinese scholars devoted themselves to compiling dictionaries, for example, *Shuōwén jiězì* (說文解字 *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, 100 AD) by Xǔ Shèn (ca. 58–147) in the Han dynasty (202 BC–220 AD). In this dictionary, characters are arranged into 540 classes according to their graphic radicals, which was an innovation introduced by the author (Wáng Lì 1981, p. 33). For example, the characters 河 *hé* 'river', 江 *jiāng*, 'river', 湖 *hú*, 'lake' and 海 *hǎi*, 'sea' all share the same radical for water 氵 and, therefore, are arranged lexically under this radical. Another example is the noted *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* (康熙字典 *Dictionary of Kāngxī*), compiled by scholars in the 1710s. It became the main source of many early Chinese dictionaries compiled by western scholars, for example, Morrison (1815b, p. ix). In his *Catalogue* (1872a), Summers mentioned this *Dictionary of Kāngxī* briefly. When he was in

⁶⁸ Some scholars advocated that traditional Chinese linguistic research is an independent discipline, for example, Fāng Xiàoyuè (1964, p. 149) and Hé Jiǔyíng (1995, p. 4). However, it cannot be denied that the study of Chinese classics had profound effects on traditional Chinese linguistics in its development (cf. Zhōu Fǎgāo 1966, p. 2; Wáng Lì 1981, p. 209).

Japan, Summers also tried to compile a Chinese dictionary. His ideas about Chinese characters and compiling dictionaries are introduced in Section 2.4 and Chapter 3.

When the Jesuits started to learn Chinese, they also adopted some Chinese pedagogical techniques, for instance, memorizing Chinese classics and trying to recite them (Klötter 2011a, p. 35). Many other missionaries also emphasised the importance of memorizing. That is why in his *Handbook*, Summers provided the students with Chinese chrestomathy, i.e., a selection of Chinese works.

The linguistic research conducted by Chinese scholars was influenced by other traditions as well, i.e., the phonetic knowledge from India (introduced to China together with Buddhism, cf. Chapter 10) at the end of Han dynasty and a substantial amount of linguistic knowledge from Europe through the works of missionaries, diplomats and also Chinese scholars who travelled overseas and learnt about Western linguistics. There was no systematic grammatical research on Chinese conducted by Chinese scholars until the publication of *Mǎshì wéntōng* (馬氏文通 *Basic Principles for Writing Clearly and Coherently by Mister Mǎ*) in 1898 by Mǎ Jiànzhōng 馬建忠 (1845–1900), a work influenced by the European and Chinese linguistic tradition (cf. Zhōu Fǎgāo 1966, p. 8; Wáng Lì 1981, p. 174; Yáo Xiǎopíng 2003a, pp. 112–132; Zádrapa 2017, pp. 682–683).⁶⁹

2.4 A case study: Chinese characters

Although discussing the Chinese script is beyond the scope of grammar, it is an important research subject within Chinese linguistics. In order to give a complete view of Summers' ideas on Chinese, and to get an idea of how European and Chinese linguistic ideas influenced Summers' research, this section presents Summers' views on Chinese characters and their origins.

It is a long-standing assumption that Chinese characters are ideographic, i.e., that they represent ideas or notions directly without the involvement of any elements of the spoken language itself. This idea is inextricably linked to the endeavour to find or devise a universal language and the “real character”. Ever since the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the world started to become more interconnected, and an urgent need for an efficient tool to communicate with the entire world arose. Against this background and because of reports provided by

⁶⁹ For more detailed discussions on traditional Chinese linguistics, see Fāng Xiàoyuè (1964), Zhōu Fǎgāo (1966), Wáng Lì (1981, 1990, 2004 [1956]), Shào Jīngmǐn (1990), Malmqvist (1994), Hé Jiǔyíng (1995), Gōng Qiānyán (1997), Pú Zhīzhēn (2002), Sūn Liángmíng (2005b), Lǐ Bǎojiā (2007), Harbsmeier (2009), Wilkinson (2013), Shēn Xiǎolóng (2013) and McDonald (2020).

missionaries about Chinese characters, for example, those by Portuguese Dominican Friar Gaspar da Gruz (ca. 1520–1570) and the Italian Jesuit Ricci, intellectuals like Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1713) were confronted with Chinese characters. These scholars held the opinion that Chinese characters denoted ideas directly. Therefore, Chinese characters were considered “real characters” and thought to be able to spread “real knowledge”.⁷⁰ In the early nineteenth century, Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) successfully deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphs and coined the term “*idéographique*/ideographic” (DeFrancis 1984, p. 135). Hence, in many works “hieroglyph(ic)” shares the same sense with “ideograph” (Boltz 2017b, p. 404). In fact, Champollion argued against the claim that the Egyptian script is purely ideographic and non-phonetic, but his works accidentally popularized the term and the subsequent notion of the “ideograph (ic)” (DeFrancis 1984, p. 136). In the nineteenth century, however, some other scholars claimed that Chinese characters were not ideographic but that they designated some elements of the Chinese language. For instance, Peter Du Ponceau (1760–1844) argued that Chinese characters should be considered “lexigraphic” since they represent words in Chinese (1838, p. xxxi). Joseph Marie Callery (1810–1862) claimed that sound also plays a role in characters (1841, *Pars Prima*, p. 5). Their works were Summers’ reference works.⁷¹

Generally speaking, Summers was of the opinion that in the early stage of the development of the Chinese writing system, characters should be regarded as hieroglyphs, i.e., the “signs of concrete notions” (1863a, p. xix). As time passed by, some characters were created or evolved to convey generic notions (Summers 1863a, p. xix, pp. 17–18) or even only their “etymology” (1853a, p. 16). Finally, some characters should be judged as being “purely phonetic”, especially when used as a part of another character (1853a, p. 16).

Summers used the concepts of *bùshǒu* (部首 radical) and *Liùshū* (六書 Six Scripts). Both of them are rooted in traditional Chinese philology. “Radical” has two meanings in Summers’ works, just as in other Chinese linguistic works. Firstly, it refers to the “generic heads for classes of characters [...], [which serve as] an index [to all characters]” (1863a, p. 19), and they

⁷⁰ This part of the ideographic assumption is based on DeFrancis (1984, pp. 133–135), Yáo Xiǎopíng (2011a, pp. 148–151), Handel (2017), Boltz (2017b) and Erbaugh (2017).

⁷¹ In his *Handbook* (1863a, pp. xviii–xix), Summers mentioned several works about scripts in order to explain the origin, the development, and the classification of the writing systems. They are *Grammaire égyptienne* (Vol. 1, 1836) by Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832), *Bilder und Schriften der Vorzeit* (Vol. 2, 1821) by Ulrich Friedrich Kopp (1762–1834), *Göttingisches historisches Magazin* (Vol. III, 1788) by Christoph Meiners (1747–1810) and Ludwig Timotheus Spittler (1752–1810), *Neues Lehrgebäude der Diplomatie* (Vol. 2, 1761) by Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806) and ‘Paläographie’ (1837) by Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius (1786–1842) in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*. These works were only mentioned while discussing the scripts by Summers, and they did not have particular influence on Summers’ grammatical research.

are the “characters which classify [characters]” (1853a, p. 15), i.e., *bùshǒu* 部首 in traditional Chinese linguistics. Therefore, “radical” here is a lexicographic concept. There are, according to Summers, two hundred and fourteen radicals in total (1863a, p. 6; 1864a, p. 17). Rather than following the classification of characters in *Shuōwén jiězì*, Summers apparently used that of the later works, most likely from the *Dictionary of Kāngxī*.⁷² Secondly, Summers employed “radical” to designate the ideographic parts of a character. Moreover, he took the perspective of grammatology in claiming that the *bùshǒu* and the ideographic parts are usually the same for a specific character (1853a, p. 16).⁷³ Here, radicals are considered as supplements of “alphabets” by Summers in the sense that they are also a type of elementary writing form, although they are “alphabet[s] of ideas, not of sounds” (1863a, p. xx). The notions that the radicals convey are fundamental as they have to be expressed by all human languages and are at the same time generic, such as referring to parts of bodies, zoology, and botany (1864a, pp. 17–19).

Traditionally, Chinese characters are classified into six types (i.e., the Six Scripts) according to their structure and formation. This classification can be traced back to the first century, and the “first full description” of it is in *Shuōwén jiězì* (Boltz 2017c, p. 615). Summers’ description of the Six Scripts is very similar to that in *Shuōwén jiězì*. In Summers’ translation of the terms of the Six Scripts, *xiàngxíng* 象形 ‘representing a form’ is translated as “hieroglyphic”, *huìyì* 會意 ‘conjoining meanings’ as “ideographic” and *zhǐshì* 指事 ‘indicating the matter’ as “significative”. Among them, “ideographics” are formed by two of the “hieroglyphics” and denote a new idea (Summers 1863a, pp. 15–16). The components of an “ideographic” are all radicals since they all contribute some meaningful elements to the “ideographic” (1864a, pp. 2–3).

Xíngshēng 形聲 ‘giving form to sound’⁷⁴ is translated as “phonetic”. This type of character, Summers explained, includes a part that denotes some kind of “generic notion” and a sound-indicating part (1863a, pp. 17–18), while the term “phonetic” suggests that Summers focused more on the latter. The sound-indicating part, as argued by Summers, sometimes denotes meaning, and these parts originally are also radicals (1853a, p. 18; 1863a, p. 17). This argument, on the one hand, reflects Summers’ ideas of the diachronic evolution of the Chinese

⁷² He also mentioned the number of five hundred radicals in *Shuōwén jiězì*, for example in 1863a (p. 19).

⁷³ The original text reads: “[t]he name radical is given to that part of the character which appears most prominent and distinct, and has an influence on its meaning. It is often the *generic* word for the series or class at the head of which it stands” (Summers 1853a, p. 16).

⁷⁴ The literal English translations of these terms are from Boltz (2017c).

characters as mentioned above; on the other hand, it corresponds to the general understanding of Wáng Shèngmǐ's "Right-script theory" (*Yòuwénshuō* 右文說).⁷⁵

Besides, the other two classes, namely *zhuǎnzhù* 轉註 'reversed and refocused' and *jiǎjiè* 假借 'substituted and lent' were also introduced by Summers. *Zhuǎnzhù*, Summers argued, refers to those pairs of characters which possess inverted "figures" and denote "antithetic" meaning, for example, the "hieroglyphic" "figures" of *zuǒ* 左 'left' and *yòu* 右 'right'. Therefore, his translation of *zhuǎnzhù* is *antithetic* (1863a, pp. 16–17). For *jiǎjiè*, Summers' translation is *metaphorical*, which includes "all particles and proper names". For example, the designation 'wife' of the character *shì* 室 is derived from its basic meaning 'house' (1863a, p. 17). This indicates that he considered *jiǎjiè* to be a method of using existing characters instead of creating new characters. Hence, both Western and Chinese linguistic research and thoughts helped forming Summers' ideas of Chinese characters. Summers' attitude towards Chinese characters is related to his endeavour to Romanize Chinese, which will be discussed in Chapter 10.

To conclude, when Summers became a professor of Chinese, European academics had expanded their scope of linguistic research to include more than just the European languages. "Exotic" languages drew their attention and the research on Asian languages became an important part of linguistic research. Linguistics evolved as an independent discipline with rigorous principals and methods. At the same time, the Greco-Latin model continued to influence missionary grammars for pedagogical purposes. Meanwhile, Chinese linguistic thoughts had been in development throughout history. All these ideas, methods and terms from the East and the West, helped shape Summers' research on the Chinese language.

⁷⁵ Wáng Shèngmǐ was a scholar in the Song dynasty (960–1279), who argued that the right component of a character denotes some meaning of the entire character (凡字，其類在左，其義在右), according to Shěn Kuò (1031–1095). Many scholars, therefore, argued that Wáng suggested that the phonetic part of a *xíngshēng* character indicates the meaning as well as the sound of the character (cf. Liú Yòuxīn 1982; Cài Yǒngguì and Lǐ Yán 1988).