

**Heming Yong, Jing Peng and Xiangming Zhang.** *Chinese Lexicography in the Twentieth Century*. 2024, x + 280 pages. ISBN 978-1-6366-7529-9 (Hardback), ISBN 978-1-6366-7527-5 (eBook PDF), ISBN 978-1-6366-7528-2 (ePub). New York/Berlin/Brussels/Chennai/Lausanne/Oxford: Peter Lang. Price: US\$ 94.95 (Hardback), US\$ 90.20 (eBook)

The history of lexicography published around the globe is generally approached from two perspectives. One is to explore the history from an international perspective, mostly concerning the development of lexicography in English-speaking countries (e.g. Béjoint 2010); while the other is to adopt a domestic stance, investigating the history of a specific country (e.g. Yong et al. 2009). A large number of these works, however, sketch the general development of lexicography, and pay little attention to detailed information over a certain period. The current volume *Chinese Lexicography in the Twentieth Century* stands out from others of the same kind. It sheds light on the evolution of Chinese lexicography within a 100-year span and elaborates upon the development of major dictionary types in China from both the sociocultural and linguistic points of view.

This volume consists of seven chapters. The first five chapters respectively survey Chinese philological dictionaries, Chinese bilingual dictionaries, Chinese special and encyclopaedic dictionaries, Chinese learner's dictionaries, and Chinese electronic dictionaries thoroughly. The sixth chapter depicts how lexicography made progress in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, compared with that in the mainland. The last chapter, as sublimation of those achievements illustrated in the previous chapters, gives an overview of the theoretical explorations in Chinese lexicography.

Chapter one documents the rapid development of Chinese philological dictionaries, featuring the transition from traditional patterns to modern ones with modern linguistic attributes. This chapter begins with the presentation of the sociocultural circumstances that exerted profound effects on Chinese lexicography, such as the trend of "Chinese learning as essence, western learning for practice," the May Fourth Movement, the Anti-Japanese War, the policy for "illiteracy elimination," the Great Cultural Revolution and the Reform and Opening-up Policy. It then explicates how Chinese philological dictionaries went through three stages, from the innovation and transformation (1900–1949) to the renaissance and retrogression (1949–1976) and to the stabilisation and flourishing (1976–1999) by means of the exemplary works. *The Great Character Dictionary of the Chinese Language* (《中华大字典》1915) is recognised as epoch-making in modern Chinese lexicography, in terms of its innovative endeavour to systematically include Chinese characters, simplify the system of phonetic notation, differentiate senses and homographs, etc. This chapter pays special attention to Chinese dialect dictionaries as well. After introducing their origins and popular classification, it analyses how the compilation of such dictionaries evolved from individual-motivated behaviours to nation-supporting projects, from the empirical study to the data-based research, and from distributed models to systematic

ones. This chapter concludes with a summary of the characteristics and prospects of Chinese philological dictionaries.

Chapter two focuses on the revolutionary advancement of Chinese bilingual dictionaries in the 20th century. It emphasises the correlation between social environments and the quantity and quality of bilingual dictionary compilation. Though experiencing several social upheavals which almost led to the halt of the compilation, Chinese bilingual dictionaries finally came to thrive at the end of the 20th century and play a dominant role in the market. In the first half of the century, the frequent military aggressions and unfair treatments in the international world stirred up public fervour to learn from the Western world and Japan. Consequently, a number of English–Chinese and Japanese–Chinese dictionaries were published at the same time. Moreover, a number of Russian–Chinese dictionaries were produced when China and Russia formed strong bonds after 1949. Subsequently, the Chinese bilingual dictionary explored its way from mere simulation to the absorption and digestion, and to the original compilation. *The English–Chinese Dictionary (unabridged)* (《英汉大词典》1989–1991), with LU Gusun as the editor-in-chief, epitomised the maturity and unprecedented success of Chinese bilingual dictionary-making in that it adopted such creative techniques as the objective descriptive paradigm, the self-built database, its independent compilation, and the distinct macrostructure. Apart from bilingual dictionaries with Chinese and foreign languages, this chapter also expounds on how the scale of bilingual dictionaries with Chinese ethnic languages expanded with wider diversity and larger numbers.

Chapter three illustrates how special and encyclopaedic dictionaries as well as encyclopaedias gained momentum from 1900 to 1999. Before listing and analysing the major works, this chapter discusses the social and historical backgrounds at length, including the socioeconomic conditions for those types, the history of Chinese special and encyclopaedic dictionaries, the origin of "encyclopaedia," etc. It considers the sophistication of science and technology as the prerequisite for the advancement of special and encyclopaedic dictionaries. It then moves on to segment each type of dictionaries into different periods of time with reference to the domestic movements. In general, special, and encyclopaedic dictionaries as well as encyclopaedias share a similar track — the initial-development stage before the 1950s, the depression stage during the 1950s and the 1970s, and the accelerating stage after the 1970s. This chapter ends with a summary of the characteristics and prospects of the special and encyclopaedic lexicography.

Chapter four ushers in the concept of "learner's dictionaries" which was completely new for China before the twentieth century. As the learner's dictionary is a relatively young type in lexicography, this chapter investigates its historical background first. The theoretical findings from the 1920s to the 1930s, including those of descriptivism, phraseology, and grammar, laid a solid foundation for the emergence of learner's dictionaries whose targeted readers are English as second or foreign language learners. Under the three pioneers' leadership

(i.e. Harold Edward Palmer, Michael Philip West, and Albert Sydney Hornby), English learner's dictionaries manifest unique qualities. Learner's dictionaries are characterised with the timely application of the latest linguistic theories and technologies, the selective entry coverage, abundant grammatical instructions, multi-functional examples, and the control of defining vocabularies. Next, this chapter enumerates the footprints of English monolingual learner's dictionaries, Chinese–English learner's dictionaries, and Chinese monolingual dictionaries. Significant terms (e.g. the "Big Four") and groundbreaking dictionaries are elucidated, contributing to a broad overview of this topic. This chapter ends with the deficiencies and prospects of Chinese learner's dictionaries in the 20th century.

Chapter five examines the role computer technology played in Chinese dictionary-making in the twentieth century. Overall, computer science was burgeoning in the last two decades of the century, thus giving birth to electronic dictionaries. Resembling the development of Chinese bilingual dictionaries, Chinese electronic dictionaries followed the order from inception, simulation, integration, to rapid development. To make a comprehensive description, this chapter starts with a survey of the typology and characteristics of electronic dictionaries. Then it unfolds the advancement of Chinese electronic dictionaries in a whole-to-part manner. Notably, it was Taiwan and Hong Kong that advanced and assumed the key roles in the expansion of Chinese electronic dictionaries since the first Chinese electronic dictionary was generated in Hong Kong and the first Chinese CD electronic dictionary was made in cooperation with Taiwan. The last section reminds readers about some deficiencies of Chinese electronic dictionaries and gives directions of the path ahead.

Chapter six reports on the 20th-century Chinese lexicography in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. As the places that were subject to invasions and occupation and once separated from mainland China, they all conformed to their own developmental paces and attributes. As for Hong Kong, limited varieties and number characterised the early years of the century. After the 1950s, the rapidly expanding population and accelerating economic growth gave rise to a gradual increase in dictionary production. After the 1970s, with the establishment of excellent publishing companies, Hong Kong became a global base for Chinese publication, promoting the making of large-scale dictionaries. In contrast to Hong Kong, Macao, which boasted a rather long and glorious history of communication with Western civilisation, suffered from a decline in terms of the dictionary publication. This can be ascribed to the 20th-century downtrend to the weakening status of Macao for international communication compared with the past. The 20th-century lexicography in Taiwan was concomitant with the political turmoil. The Japanese occupation from 1900 to 1945 saw the prevalence of Taiwan dialect-Japanese dictionaries; from 1945 to 1987, notwithstanding the strict ideological control of the Kuomintang government, Chinese lexicography still made its way forward with better quality and quantity; after 1987, driven by the lift of martial law and the communication with the mainland China, lexi-

cography made greater strides in multi-aspects, such as a wider coverage of themes and more varieties published.

The last chapter of this volume provides an overview of lexicographical theories in China. It probes into the theoretical inquiries into Chinese lexicography during the 20th century. It describes in detail the ways of elevation from the Chinese dictionary-making to the academic research, the general trend towards systematic and in-depth explorations as well as corresponding events. Following this, it discusses the features in the foundation, construction and formation stages of inquiries, the debates over the status of lexicography as an independent discipline, studies in various branches of Chinese lexicography, and application of linguistic findings to lexicography. Furthermore, this chapter delineates a picture of lexicographic academic activities during the twentieth century, involving the establishment of academic teams and organisations, the contributions of publishing companies and journals, and the organisation of domestic associations and international conferences.

Overall, the volume under review is distinguished from other similar publications in at least three aspects. Firstly, different from other monographs on Chinese lexicography, which centre on the whole history spanning over hundreds of years from the origin to the modern time, this volume narrows its time span of explorations down to the twentieth century. As a result, in addition to the inquiries into those dictionaries with profound and archetypal impacts, others with pivotal values are listed as well, delivering a more panoramic view of the developmental path. Secondly, this volume is innovative in the incorporation of the sociolinguistic paradigm into the illustration of lexicographical history. No field of study could survive without the social environment, and lexicography is of no exception. This work demystifies the fluctuations of the 20th-century Chinese lexicography in a broader context of political, cultural, and economic changes, the inherent bonds with Chinese traditions, and the interdependence of the international backgrounds. Thirdly, the methods of the demonstration in this volume are distinct. Contrary to the regular plain statement, it repeatedly supports claims with convincing statistical evidence. Besides, the content of every influential dictionary is discussed exhaustively, covering the selection of entries, the retrieval system, sense differentiation, definitions, quotations, phonetic notations, as well as the external perspectives, like the motive of compilation, the prestige, the influence, and the process of revisions.

Aside from the aforementioned virtues, there is still some room for this volume to attain excellence. There are a few minor mistakes, such as the misspelling of some dictionary editors' names (e.g. "Liang Shih-chiu" is incorrectly spelt as "Liang Qiushi"), and inconsistencies in the symbols and names of Chinese dictionaries (e.g. there are two different English renderings of 《词诠》). In Chapter Five, the definition of electronic dictionaries is lengthy, and may easily perplex readers. Additionally, the structure would be more coherent if there were a concluding chapter which summarises the main findings of previous chapters and discusses the implications and avenues for further research.

To conclude, this deserves recognition as the first volume on the history of the 20th-century Chinese lexicography applying both sociolinguistic and lexicographical theories. It depicts a dynamic, objective, comprehensive and detailed path of how Chinese lexicography, motivated by the torrents of the challenging times, has developed from its traditional mode to the modern, scientific, linguistics-related, and systematic one. This volume is a timely addition to the literature of history of lexicography.

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