The Oral Translator's "Visibility": The Chinese Translation of *David Copperfield* by Lin Shu and Wei Yi
La visibilité du traducteur oral
La traduction chinoise de *David Copperfield* par Lin Shu et Wei Yi

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Résumé de l'article

Les collaborations en tandem monolingue-bilingue dans la traduction d'un large corpus d'oeuvres occidentales ont marqué l'histoire de la traduction en Chine au début du XXe siècle. On trouve des exemples de ce type de collaboration sur une période de presque vingt ans, jusqu'à ce qu'un plus grand nombre de traducteurs bilingues soient formés dans les années 1920. Le travail commun de Lin Shu (1852-1924), célèbre traducteur monolingue, et de Wei Yi (1880-1933), l'un des traducteurs oraux de Lin Shu, s'étendit sur dix années au cours desquelles les deux hommes traduisirent plus de quarante romans anglais. L'analyse de leur traduction de *David Copperfield* en 1908 met en lumière le rôle trop souvent négligé de Wei Yi, ainsi que l'importance de l'oralité dans leur processus de traduction et son influence sur le travail de Lin Shu. Cet article comporte deux parties : la première s'attache à présenter les traducteurs et les détails de leur collaboration ; la seconde expose les traces de l'influence de Wei Yi – visibles dans le passage du discours indirect au discours direct, le recours aux notes et d'autres marques textuelles.

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Introduction

China experienced serious political turmoil at the end of the 19th century. The military defeats in the Opium War in 1842, the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Scramble for Concessions in 1900 left China in a fragile political state. Unequal treaties were imposed upon China, and Chinese territories were ceded to the Western powers and Japan. China had to come to terms with her military inferiority and political setbacks. Political reforms like the Self-strengthening Movement (1860-1894) and the Hundred Days Reform in 1898 were initiated by the Qing (1644-1911) court to revitalize the nation, but they all ended in failure. The more enlightened intellectuals then used a bottom-up approach to motivate the educated mass to push for reforms. Western culture and civilization became the objects of learning for the Chinese, and there was a strong demand for translation as a channel to understand the West, and as a self-strengthening tool in China.

In order to turn translation into a tool for reforming the country, intellectuals such as Liang Qichao (1873-1929) started the search for the "right" kind of translation. They first thought that publications on military strategies and Western political philosophy should be subjects of translation.[1] According to Guo Yanli (1998), the idea came from Japan,

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[1] Yang Lianfen (2003, pp. 58-59) says that concepts like "society", "nationals" and "civic consciousness" were non-existent before the introduction of translated works to China. The earliest and the most unsuccessful translated works in China were political novels. Despite Liang Qichao's passion for reforming China through translation, he never wrote a political novel or even translated a novel.

where the translation of Western political novels was popular. Liang Qichao, who fled to Japan after 1898, believed that the success of the Meiji Restoration after 1870 was attributed partly to the introduction of these political novels. The intellectuals at the time believed that Western knowledge coming through the translations would provide a quick fix to the problems of an impaired China. But neither creative works of political fiction nor translations of Japanese renditions of Western works on politics created an impact. While focusing on the subject matter to be translated for China, these reform-minded intellectuals missed out on the importance of mass appeal. Such kinds of Chinese translations had not met with much public sympathy, and so failed to promote their cause.

Lin Shu as an Icon of Literary Translation

The breakthrough came with Lin Shu, an established classical Chinese stylist. Although he had no knowledge of any foreign languages, he had shown some interest in translated texts and was fascinated by translation (Zhang, 1992). The subtle interest to undertake to translate was sparked off when Wang Shouchang, who had spent eight years studying engineering in Paris, approached Lin Shu and suggested co-translating with him. Wang then translated Dumas's *La Dame aux camélias* to him *viva voce*, "in ordinary Chinese colloquial, while Lin Shu began turning this translation into literary Chinese" (Waley, 1963, p. 188) on the spot. Such an exercise in impromptu co-translating was soon turned into a serious pursuit. The collaborated work was published in 1899.

The translation of *La Dame aux camélias* was so well received that the progressive intellectuals came to realize the impact of translated literature on the public that could be exploited in their reform agenda. The political scene therefore set the stage for the third major translation tide in China in the early 20th century.[2] The sweeping success of his first translation encouraged Lin Shu to translate more Western literature. In fact, collaboration became common practice in translations of the time. Since bilinguals were rare in China, Lin Shu, for example, representative of this tide of literary translation, collaborated with a total of 19 oral translators. Large publishers such as the Commercial Press commissioned him to translate more Western fiction.[3] and bilinguals also frequently approached

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[2] The first three translation tides in China were Buddhist scriptural translation in the Latter Han dynasty (25-220), science and technical translation in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and literary translation in the late Qing dynasty.

[3] After the successful publication of the Chinese translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

him for collaboration. He says in his preface to the translation of *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1907):

> I have a number of friends who from time to time bring me Western books. I cannot read any Western language, but these friends translate them aloud to me and I have come to distinguish between the different styles of writing as surely as I recognize the footsteps of the people in my house. (Chen and Xia, 1997, p. 293)

In the two decades of Lin Shu's translation career, he translated about 180 Western works, mostly fiction, with his collaborators. No one in China has yet broken such a prolific record. Among the 19 oral translators he worked with, the more prominent ones were Wang Shouchang, Wei Yi, Zeng Zonggong, Chen Jialin and Wang Qingtong (see Robert Compton, 1971, pp. 132-169 and Guo Yanli, 1998, pp. 299-301 for detailed discussions of Lin Shu's collaborators). In the preface to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Wei Yi says, "I took [Harriet Beecher Stowe's work] and told Mr. Lin about it. He is very learned and able to write well, and he agreed to a joint translation effort" (Compton, 1971, p. 138). Another collaborator who took the initiative to approach Lin Shu for a translation project was Wang Qingqi. In the preface to the translation of Charles Louis de Montesquieu's *Les Lettres persanes* (1915), Lin Shu suggests "Wang Qingqi has lived in France for eight years and displays a good command of French. He brought this book to me one day and proposed a joint translation" (Ma, 1981, p. 130).

Wei Yi: The Oral Translator

One of the more prominent oral translators who worked with Lin Shu is Wei Yi, and the partnership lasted for almost ten years (1901-1909).[4] Wei Yi, who had four years' education in St. John's College at Shanghai, was best known for his English proficiency and cultural knowledge of the West. Like Lin Shu, he also worked in the government's Translation Bureau

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by Lin Shu and Wei Yi, Gao Fengqian of the Commercial Press commissioned Lin Shu to translate western fiction. See Chen Fukang, 2000, p. 132.

[4] Wei Yi was noted for his competence in English, but he was also well-versed in German, French and Latin. He was an oral translator in the Translation Bureau of the Board of Education from 1900 to 1903. From 1904 to 1911, Wei Yi was an English teacher at the Normal College of Peking University. He also taught economics and law in Beijing. See Robert Compton (1971, pp. 137-143) for more about Wei Yi.

under the supervision of Yan Fu.[5] In their official capacity, the two collaborated in the translation of *Ethnicity* (1903) and *Napoleon Bonaparte* (1905), but their literary translations were carried out during their leisure time. They co-translated around 45 works (a few of these were from Japanese), at least a quarter of which enjoyed wide acclaim, such as the renditions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Ivanhoe*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *David Copperfield*. Wei Yi, 28 years younger than Lin Shu, has therefore been regarded as one of Lin Shu's best collaborative oral translators.[6] Zeng Xubai (1894-?), a distinguished translator and a close friend of Wei Yi's, says:

> One can only regret that he [Lin] had not got real scholars in Western literature to assist him, with the notable exception of T. S. Wei [Wei Yi] whose careful selection and faithfulness to the original text may occupy for him an important position in the history of translation in China. (Zeng, 1928, p. 370)

Han Guang, Lin Shu's biographer, also believes that "if Lin had not had him [Wei Yi], then he would not have achieved so much; that is certain" (1935, p. 73). In his collaboration with Lin Shu, Wei Yi was responsible for identifying Western fiction to be translated. Given the written translator's considerable reliance on the oral translator in text selection and narration, Wei Yi's understanding of the original text and his view about the original writing greatly affected the way in which Lin Shu dealt with the source text. There were limits to Lin Shu's interpretive role, however one looks at it.

Lin Shu listened to Wei Yi's explanations, received an audio message, and could notice his emotionally charged voice, facial expressions and bodily movements during his oral translation, which "sometimes reduced him to tears and laughter like a puppet of the original author" (Lin Shu's postscript to the translation of *David Copperfield* (1908); see Chen and Xia, 1997, pp. 348-349). He then put down in elegant classical prose what he heard, noticed and possibly saw in his

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[5] The Translation Bureau (part predecessor of Peking University) in Beijing was headed by Yan Fu in 1902 and engaged in translating Western textbooks such as geometry and algebra as a means to learn from the West. It was closed down in 1903.

[6] Zeng Jingzhang (1967, p. 259) concludes that although Wei Yi's collaborations with Lin Shu fell short of those of Chen Jialin in quantity, the ones by Wei Yi were mostly of higher literary value and well-translated. Zeng therefore considers Wei Yi to be the best of Lin Shu's collaborators.

mind's eye while listening to Wei Yi's oral translation. As is well known, Lin Shu's translations feature the techniques of domestication and adaptation. The domesticating features may have reflected Wei Yi's approach in telling the story to him, although the input of the written translator in changing things around, with or without discussions with the oral translator must not be ignored. Likewise, Lin Shu also employed domesticating strategies to communicate the received "original meaning" (or "Wei's Dickens") to late Qing readers in classical Chinese.

That being the case, Lin Shu's understanding and appreciation of the original work were indirect. After Wei Yi had read the original a few times, he told the story to the written translator relatively faithfully (Compton, 1971, p. 266). Lin Shu listened to Wei Yi's narration while putting the story down in writing. It sounds like a simple process, but it is not as straightforward as we might think. It is, after all, a highly complex process with many variables at work shaping the finished translation. One of the very few critics who noticed the lack of research on Lin Shu's translation process is Hu Ying. In her doctoral dissertation, Hu says :

> What [the chasing brush of Lin Shu] produced was, however, not a simple, straightforward rendition of the friend's voice, as one might imagine from Lin Shu's description of the process, or the lack of the sense of process. What gets lost in this speedy non-process is precisely translation, the choices made and rejected, the similarities produced and the differences repressed, the juggling of opacity and transparency. (Hu, 1993, p. 93)

Hu points out that much could be missing in the unknown "process" of Lin Shu's translation. In line with my argument, she admits that the oral translation process is not simple and mechanical. More importantly, she takes a liberal and unconventional stance by referring to changes made in the translated texts, without specifying these were necessarily Lin Shu's decisions.

Oral Elements in the Co-translation Process

With the introduction of an oral element into the translation process, the work on the translation inevitably turns dynamic. In presenting the original text orally to the written translator, the oral translator would probably not have produced a word-to-word translation. As is natural in human behavior, we talk with hand and body gestures. We may also vary our voices or our facial expressions for emphatic purposes from time to time. It is therefore not impossible that when Wei Yi narrated the original to Lin Shu, what the latter received might have been an audio message plus

probably a visual image of the oral presenter. In fact, Dickens's works are known to be most suitable for public reading and stage performance, "for his prose is highly auditory and his stories offer strong narrative, emotional, and comic opportunities" (Schlicke, 1999, p. 482). Dickens himself also spent his last 17 years giving public readings of some of his selected novels in both England and America. His audience loved his skills and uncanny gestures and Dickens loved responsive audiences, who often inspired him to better performance. Schlicke also relates some reviewers' remarks to suggest that Dickens "does not only read his story; he acts it, taking on the visage, body-shape, and gestures, besides the voice of his characters" (1999, p. 484).

As an admirer of Dickens's literary achievement, who also shared his passion for drama and stage performance, Wei Yi could possibly be doing his version of "public reading" for Lin Shu. In presenting different characters in *David Copperfield*, Wei Yi might have adopted a monopolyloguistic approach, whereby he varied voices and physical gestures to "perform" them. Besides, the oral translator may insert textual changes, adaptations or modifications in his rendition, with reference to the needs or the input of the written translator, who acts also as an audience in the process of receiving an audio version of the original. Given the complexity of the co-translation process, one cannot pin down absolutely, in general terms, whether the changes made in the translation were made by either the written translator or the oral translator alone. After all, their discussions and joint decisions could also be factors which help to explain why the translation became what it was.

As a bridge between Western fiction and Lin Shu, Wei Yi served as a cultural and linguistic go-between. He actually helped Lin Shu by providing him with knowledge of English culture and literature. In his preface to the translation of *Tales from Shakespeare* (1904), Lin Shu recalls:

> My dear friend Wei Yi, who is young in years and yet whose learning is extensive, is thoroughly familiar with Western languages… At night in our spare time, Wei Yi by chance brought up one or two items of Shakespeare's writings. I then wrote them down… (Chen & Xia, 1997, p. 139)

In the preface to the translation of *Joan Haste* (1905), Lin Shu points out that it was Wei Yi who told him that novels had a high status in the West, and novelists were highly valued, unlike in China, where novels were considered a "minor enterprise" (xiaodao). This suggests that Wei Yi conversed quite freely with Lin Shu in their translation process. The

quality of their translation was also enhanced as a result of their joint effort and combined expertise. Wei Yi was a gifted orator and had a genuine interest in Chinese drama.[7] In his preface to the translation of "Westminster Abbey" of *The Sketch Book* (1907), Lin Shu says :

> This text was casually interpreted by Wei Yi, and casually reproduced by me. It was left in a worn-out bamboo basket for a few months, before I picked it up and read it again one day. I was touched by the story and was impressed by the meaning behind. The quality of the work went beyond the linguistic abilities of either Wei Yi or mine. (Lin, 1997, p. 92)

His close reading of the original and his lively and accurate oral translation of the text did largely facilitate Lin Shu's rewriting (see Compton, 1971, p. 266).[8] Is it then possible to document Wei Yi's contribution in the translated text in more concrete terms, other than simply pointing out that he was "Lin Shu's oral translator"? How possible is it to make the oral translator's contribution visible textually?

It has been a century since the first publication of Lin Shu's translations. Research about him in the past century has focused mainly on the impact of his translations on modern literary development, in China. Most significantly, the assessment of his translations was sometimes made as if Lin Shu had translated them all by himself (Hung, 1980; Zeng, 1985) (see below for further discussions). While the presence of Wei Yi as the oral translator was acknowledged in the literature on Lin Shu's translations, the actual translation process and the oral translator's role were largely neglected. This is so probably because scholars of Lin Shu's study do not generally believe it is possible to reconstruct the exact process of their co-translation, and any study of the oral translator or the co-translation process is considered inevitably futile, given the evanescent nature of interpreting events. Maria Tymoczko (1990) is particularly critical of such general neglect and marginalization of orality or the oral element in discussions of literary translation. Her position is also well supported by Michael Cronin, who laments the inattention to orality in translation history:

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[7] Wei Weiyi (1993) mentions that Wei Yi's articulate presentation won him his wife. In the feudalistic China back then, ladies were not to be seen by men, so it was entirely by Wei's vocal and oratory charm that she chose him over a rich and quiet admirer.

[8] Robert Compton (1971, p. 266) says that Wei Yi seemed to "have had fewer qualms about deviating from the original wording."

> Literates have generally failed to recognize the specificity and sophistication of oral thinking … and we tend to exaggerate the importance of textual translation and ignore the far-reaching historical and political effects of interpreting encounters. (Cronin, 2002, p. 48)

It is true that an exact reconstruction of the Lin Shu Wei Yi translation situation would not be feasible technically. It will, however, be a fruitful attempt to draw the literature's attention to the possibility that Wei Yi's role as the oral translator had an impact not only on the translation but also on the written translator as well. As such, the role of the oral translator in the co-translation process as used in early 20th. century China should not be overlooked. Taking into consideration the recent advances in the study of orality (Tymoczko, 1990), especially its psychodynamics (Ong, 1988), the use of textual analysis of the translated text will throw light on our understanding of the translation process. Without attending to the oral translator's actual contribution to the translation or what is involved in the *collaborative situation*, any evaluation of Lin Shu's translations will be incomplete. It is time that work was carried out to shed a different perspective on Lin Shu as a translator.

Oral Translator's Visibility

Obscure as it may be, the oral translator's part can be made partly visible by examining the pattern of co-translation between the written translator and the oral translator through the prefaces and postscripts of translations, and by undertaking textual analyses of the annotations, transliterations and special characteristics of the translation. Such analyses will not only unveil the translation process of the time, but also explain why Lin and Wei's translations became what they were.

The striking difference between their co-translations and non-collaborative translations is the *use of an oral translator* and the *introduction of oral elements* in the translation process. Once orality becomes part of the process, the collaboration turns dynamic (Ong, 1988), with the oral translator's voice and possibly visual effects conveyed to the written translator. The speaker (Wei Yi) and the audience-receptor (Lin Shu) will then exert mutual impact on each other in the collaboration. These oral-related elements stand as a sharp contrast to the non-collaborative translation mode in which the translator only "sees" the written text, and the text is processed mentally, silently and statically.

From Indirect Speech into Direct Speech

Since interpreting is evanescent by nature, there is no hard evidence on what actually transpired as Lin and Wei translated their source texts. It is a complex process in which different factors or forces could have been at work in varying degrees to shape the translation. We can, at best, speculate on what might have happened in the process, based on our understanding of the translators' personalities and textual analyses of the translation, but no one can be absolutely sure of the exact mechanics of the co-translation process. As someone keenly interested in drama and vocal performance, Wei Yi was likely to have focused on dramatic scenes in the original and enliven his oral presentation with "live performance". The dramatic elements of Dickens's novels, for instance, may have provided Wei Yi with a platform for demonstrating his dramatization skills while translating *David Copperfield* orally. If we take a close look at the translation, we find that the Chinese rendition somehow reveals how Wei Yi dramatized scenes in the novel for Lin Shu by turning descriptions into spoken texts.[9] In Example 1, Aunt Betsy is about to adopt young David and she is prepared to meet Mr. Murdstone to discuss this matter.

Example 1

> Our dinner had been indefinitely postponed; but it was growing so late, that my aunt had ordered it to be got ready, when she gave a sudden alarm of donkeys… (Dickens, 1996, ch. 14, p. 198)

> 姨防其來，令遲其飯。及久久不至，方令傳餐。**忽大怒曰：'驢至矣！'** (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 764).

> Back translation: My aunt was expecting him (Murdstone), so dinner was delayed. She only ordered that the dinner be served when there was no sign of him for quite a while, when suddenly she roared, "Donkeys are around!"

The objective description "*she gave a sudden alarm of donkeys*" was turned into direct speech (at the end of the quotation above) in the Chinese rendition. Such a kind of manipulation, if not tampering with the original, is *not* common practice for non-collaborative translation. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Wei Yi may have dramatized the description by putting words in Aunt Betsy's mouth, in his course of telling the story.

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[9] Compton (1971, p. 265) also makes such an observation when he compares the works of Lin Shu's collaborators. However, he does not elaborate on this, other than making some comments about the degree of freedom in these translations.

Such textual changes in the translation somehow suggest that it is possible that Wei Yi was "performing" the text while rendering it into Chinese orally. In another example, Dora urges David to kiss her dog, Jip: "…Oh, do kiss Jip, and be agreeable!" (Dickens, 1996, ch. 37, p. 500). Some physical actions, again, were added in the Chinese translation: 推吉迫與余曰：「汝與之親吻，勿為喋喋。」 (Lin & Wei, 1908, p. 933) (Back translation: [Dora] pushed Jip to me, and said, "You kiss Jip, and be agreeable.")

Again, Lin Shu is less likely to have invented Dora's physical actions in the translation. It is perfectly conceivable that Wei Yi "performed" Dora while orally translating what she said to David, with some bodily movements. In translating a literary text orally (as in interpreting), it seems natural for one to exercise a bit more flexibility and versatility in the verbal delivery. But for someone so much into performing art, Wei Yi could have gone even further along this direction than other oral translators working for Lin Shu. Other examples of textual changes in the translation also point to the possibility that the oral translator had done some acting during the translation process. For instance, during the first encounter between Mr. Dick and Traddles, on hearing Traddles's suggestion that Mr. Dick could copy others' writings, "Mr. Dick in the meanwhile [looked] very deferentially and seriously at Traddles" (Dickens, 1996, ch. 36, p. 488) was rendered succinctly and a lot more dramatically than the original sentence, as 狄克攢眉縮項 (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 927) (Back translation: "Dick crossed his eyebrows and shrank his neck"). Apparently, there are more physical actions and facial expressions inserted in the Chinese rendition than the original. It is unlikely that Lin Shu could have created these cartoon-like and comic contortions entirely by himself. Although Lin Shu might have given some input in the translation process from time to time, Wei Yi might have performed the physical movements and mimicked the facial expressions of Mr. Dick, so that Lin Shu had a feel of the sort of character Wei Yi was trying to portray in his oral translation. In this example, at least, Lin Shu may simply have put down what he saw in the oral translator's performance.

Instead of giving a mechanical kind of oral translation, Wei Yi may have used all sorts of opportunities, where appropriate, to re-create the original texts dramatically. This no doubt made a vivid impression on Lin Shu, who then described "his act" in lively classical Chinese. If such an assumption were viable, then their translation process could not have been

undertaken mechanically. Instead, an array of operations, such as the interpretive stance of either the written translator or the oral translator, or alternatively the translators' joint agreement, to change things around in the original, is possible when an oral presentation of the original is rendered in written form. The change from objective description to the use of direct speech, for instance, departs radically from non-collaborative methods of translation, and is less likely to have been the choice made by Lin Shu alone. The input, partly at least, of the oral translator here is hardly deniable. Without direct access to the original text, Lin Shu would have no idea that he had actually replaced a descriptive paragraph in the original with Wei Yi's contrived direct speech. Therefore, Wei Yi's presence is not entirely invisible in the Chinese rendition.

Since an oral component was evident in the translation process, I can cite other examples in the Chinese rendition indicating that Wei Yi had probably transformed plain descriptions into dialogues as a means of conveying the story to Lin Shu dramatically. For example, during young David's visit to Mr. Peggotty's home, David learns of the latter's drinking habits from Mrs. Gummidge.

Example 2

> Mr. Peggotty went occasionally to a public-house called The Willing Mind. I discovered this, by his being out on the second or third evening of our visit, and by Mrs. Gummidge's looking up at the Dutch clock, between eight and nine, and saying he was there, and that, what was more, she had known in the morning he would go there. (Dickens, 1996, ch. 3, p. 44)

Such a description, however, was transformed into direct speech by Mrs. Gummidge in the Chinese rendition:

> 而漁兄則時出外飲酒。蓋余始至之第二日，根密支以目視鐘可八九點之間，則言曰：'彼又沈酣酒肆矣，吾今日侵晨，已知其赴彼矣。'(Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 671)

> Back translation: Mr. Peggotty went out to drink quite often. On my second day of visit, Mrs. Gummidge looked at the clock when it was sometime between eight and nine, and said, "He [Mr. Peggotty] is in the pub drinking again, I knew this morning that he would."

The intentional use of direct speech in place of descriptions in the original may be Wei Yi's strategy to make the story interesting. The use of direct speech also provides an occasion for Wei Yi to display his theatrical talent.

The "dramatic enactment" of parts of the story in the form of dialogue definitely enhances the effect and spices up the narration in the translation. A similar example involves the carrier and young David, where the way Wei Yi dramatized the scene by turning indirect speech into dialogue is even more obvious. The example is taken from the point where Peggotty leaves David with the carrier after bidding a brief farewell on his way to the boarding school.

Example 3

> The carrier looked at me, as if to inquire if she were coming back. I shook my head, and said I thought not. (Dickens, 1996, ch. 5, p. 66)

> 御者顧余曰：'彼尚來乎？'余搖首曰：'否。' (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 685)

> Back translation: The carrier looked at me and asked, "Is she [Peggotty] coming back?" I shook my head and said, "No."

A piece of indirect speech was turned into a dialogue between the carrier and young David. While it is often thought that the insertion of dialogue could make the translation process more interesting, one cannot say with absolute certainty whether the dialogue-insertion idea was initiated entirely by Wei Yi or whether it was a characteristic feature of Lin Shu's rewriting style. It is, however, safe to assume that Wei Yi's suggestion, if there was indeed one, was not objected to by the written translator. Maria Tymoczko notes that in translating a literary text orally, "word-to-word translation is not a feature of the transmission of oral literature" (1990, p. 50). She also points out that:

> Translation in oral tradition involves the adaptation of narrative to the poetics and ideology of the target culture. In oral tradition translated narrative is naturalized to the natural and social context and to the ideology of the receptor culture… In some cases the naturalization of translations in oral tradition even affects the plot sequences of narratives in radical ways. (Tymoczko, 1990, p. 53)

If we agree with what Maria Tymoczko said about the natural tendency of an oral presenter to "adjusting" the narration, it is likely that Wei Yi might have a larger part to play in the textual alterations in the translation. In analyzing the impact of Lin Shu's translations on literary developments in 20th century China, Yang Lianfen compliments Lin by saying that his translations were "relatively faithful and close to the original" (2003, p. 96). She says this was "quite a commendable achievement since free translation was really the trend" in the early 20th century in China. Yang,

however, is not convinced of Lin Shu's mastery of the original, since "what he writes in his prefaces and postscripts does not show that he entirely understands the original". Yang suggests that "Lin Shu's oral translators were the ones who had an adequate understanding of the original" (2003, p. 98). Therefore, it is justified to suggest that owing to the oral−and presumably dramatized−nature of Wei Yi's oral translation, Lin Shu managed to produce a vivid rendition, without missing the dramatized elements of the original text. It is also reasonable to assume that Wei Yi contributed to giving a faithful Chinese rendition of *David Copperfield*.

Annotations in the Translation

The annotations in the translation are linked to the discussions that might have been carried out between the written translator and the oral translator. Although in theory it is also a regular practice for translators to make clarifications in the form of footnotes or endnotes, the monolingual and mono-cultural backgrounds of Lin Shu enable us to deduce that the culture-related annotations found in the translation were more likely to be the result of Wei Yi's explanation to Lin Shu during the translation process in the first place, before the clarification was written down by Lin. In their Chinese rendition of *David Copperfield*, for instance, instances of wordplay are sometimes accompanied by annotations. Example 4 is an exchange between Mr. Barkis, the carrier and young David. Here we have an example of wordplay on "sweethearts" and "sweetmeats", two words which sound similar.

Example 4

> By-and-by, he said:
> 'No Sweethearts, I b'lieve?'
> 'Sweetmeats did you say, Mr. Barkis?' For I thought he wanted something else to eat, and had pointedly alluded to that description of refreshment.
> 'Hearts,' said Mr. Barkis. 'Sweethearts; no person walks with her!'
> 'With Peggotty?'
> 'Ah!' he said. 'Her.'
> 'Oh, no. She never had a sweetheart.' (Dickens, 1996, ch. 5, p. 67)

> 御者…久之言曰：「彼未有甜心乎？」(意謂有意中人否) 余不審，以為得餅後，尚欲更求，即曰：「汝言甜餅耶？」 御者曰：「非也，吾言甜心，問有人與之纏縣否？」 余曰：「汝言人與壁各德耶？」 御

者曰：「然。」 余曰：「未也，殊無意中之人。」 (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 686)

To create a similar effect, the two words "sweetheart" and "sweetmeat" are translated as "甜心" and "甜餅" respectively. But since "甜心" (a literal translation of "sweet" and "heart") was a new term to late Qing readers, an annotation (meaning "whether [you] have someone you admire romantically") is given in brackets in the translation for clarification. When a cultural term like this turns up in the co-translation, it is quite likely that some discussions might have occurred between the two whereby, for example, the oral translator would pause and explain the word "sweetheart" to the written translator. It is also likely that the oral translator advised Lin Shu to retain the wordplay of the original in the form of a literal translation, with supplementary information provided on the Western concept "sweetheart". The inclusion of a footnote in the translation therefore figures as the fruit of their discussions.

Wei Yi and Lin Shu co-translated five Dickensian novels, which all enjoyed wide acclaim. Scholars like Han Guang (1935), Hu Shi (1929), and Arthur Waley (1963) all have high opinions of Lin Shu's ability to capture the humor in the original. Incidentally, the examples they have given are all taken from Dickens's novels, and Wei Yi happens to have been the oral translator for all these works. It seems again reasonable, therefore, to associate the successful rendition of humor in the Chinese translations, partly, to Wei Yi's presentation of the humorous aspects involved to Lin Shu in the first place. Many examples in their translations suggest that Wei Yi was culturally and linguistically gifted. Eva Hung justifiably points out that, since Lin Shu is handicapped by his lack of knowledge in English,

> Wei Yi has a large share in rendering biblical references in detail… it is very likely that details in the original, as well as Wei Yi's explanations, would be retained in Lin's version… If this is the case then Lin's translation not only mirrors his approach and skills as a translator, but also reflects his collaborator's approach and skill as an oral translator. (Hung, 1980, p. 134)

In line with the argument and the position expressed in this article, Hung hints at the possibility that an oral translation format could be traced in the written translation. The "visibility" of the oral translator and the way in which the original text was transmuted into spoken Chinese can be identified through a close textual analysis. In Example 5 below, when Miss Trotwood's ex-husband is mentioned, Dickens indulges in wordplay to

create a humorous effect :

Example 5

> He went to India with his capital, and there, according to a wild legend
> in our family, he was once seen riding on an elephant, in company with a
> Baboon; but I think it must have been a Baboo—or a Begum. (Dickens,
> 1996, ch. 1, p. 13)

> 此人即挾貲赴印度。據吾家熟於掌故者，謂此人挾一巴本（大猴也）
> 同騎一象，以余思之，非巴本，必巴布(印度貴人) (Lin and Wei, 1908,
> p. 656)

In the translation, footnotes are added to give extra information to readers,
when apparently transliteration alone is inadequate. When words like
"Baboon" 巴本 and "Baboo" 巴布 are used side by side because they
sound similar, annotated explanations such as "大猴也" (big monkey, that
is) for "Baboon" and "印度貴人" (Indian nobles) for "Baboo" are given in
the translation. It is likely that Wei Yi was behind the insertion of these
annotations. It takes someone who knows English well to be able to detect
the wordplay and to render it into Chinese with transliterations and then
supplement them by annotations while retaining the humor. Wei Yi's
significant role is therefore not only found in the transfer of meaning, but
also in helping to safeguard that the linguistic effect of the original does
not disappear in the translation.

Characteristics of the Translation

Many critics of Lin Shu (Han Guang, 1935; Hu, 1929; Waley, 1963) have
high regard for Lin Shu's translations and consider his translations highly
readable while displaying a fine classical style. Zheng Zhenduo remarks
that:

> [I]f one reads the original in one sitting, and then reads the translation,
> the feeling of the author is retained without the slightest change;
> sometimes even the humor, which is most difficult to achieve, is
> nevertheless captured in Lin's translations. Sometimes even clever
> phrasings are retained in those translations. (Zheng, 1924/1981, p. 15)

Arthur Waley also compliments Lin Shu's writing and says:

> [I]t is perhaps by his translation of Dickens that he is best known. He translated all the principal Dickens novels, and I have compared a number of passages with the original. To put Dickens into classical Chinese would on the face of it seem to be a grotesque undertaking. But the results are not at all grotesque. Dickens, inevitably, becomes a rather different and to my mind a better writer. All the over-elaboration, the overstatement and uncurbed garrulity disappear. The humor is there, but is transmuted by a precise, economical style; every point that Dickens spoils by uncontrolled exuberance, Lin Shu makes quietly and efficiently. (Waley, 1963, p. 109)

While slashing away at Lin Shu's constant distortions in the translations, Qian Zhongshu says that he "would rather read Lin Shu's translation than to read Henry Rider Haggard's original" (1981, p. 45). The reason he gave was that "Lin Shu's Chinese style was a lot better than Haggard's English writing" (1981, p. 45). Such a smooth translation, which feels like a creative piece of writing (Si Guo, 1982) is probably a result of Lin Shu's (inevitable) detachment from the original. Another compliment given to his translations is the intelligent use of domesticating strategies. Zeng Youchuan suggests that "Lin Shu's distance from the original enables him to improve the original" (1985, p. 255) in his rendition and "facilitates his deletion of content, which may cause comprehension problems to his readers" (1985, p. 255). Such remarks are indicative of the translator overshadowing the oral translator, as well as the critics' disregard of the oral translator's role in the co-translation. For one thing, since it was a joint effort, and the process of their translation cannot be reconstructed exactly, no one can make any absolute claims as to who made the deletions or additions in the rendition. It can be either Lin Shu or Wei Yi, or both. In translation theory, ideas of "domestication" and "foreignization" did not quite exist a century ago. Yet, some critics (Wong, 2002; Zeng, 1967; Zeng, 1985) believe that domestication was an intended strategy used in Lin Shu's translations to facilitate readers' understanding.

The truth is, the matter of a translation approach was not even something to be systematically discussed a century ago. The major distortion seen here is caused by the fact that critics look at the translations and assume that it must be the translators' deliberate choice to adopt a domesticating strategy. Somehow, I believe that the misinformed conclusions drawn could be a result of the overwhelming focus on the translation product and a gross disregard of the translation process in which orality plays a major part. If critics could take one step backward to examine the nature of oral translation in the process and try to analyze the possible impact of such an oral element on the translation product, they

would probably come to a different conclusion. Recent advances in the introduction of "psychodynamics of orality" (Ong, 1988) and the study of orality in translation (Cronin, 2002; Tymoczko, 1990), however, enable us to take a different critical stance that departs from the more conventional view. Walter Ong introduces the concept of psychodynamics in oral cultures and emphasizes that body gestures and sounds of narrative performance will in turn stimulate the audience, whose responses will also have an immediate impact on the narrator's presentation. Besides, with the intention of communicating the original story to the audience more effectively, the oral presenter tends to:

> […] use concepts in operational frame, minimally abstract, close to the living world, same story stitched together differently in each rendition by the same person, depending on audience reaction, the mood, the occasion and other social and psychological factors. (Ong, 1988, p. 59)

The view of Ong is important in three aspects: firstly, the narrator is as important as the audience; secondly, the audio and visual effects produced by the narrator have to be critically examined; thirdly, the interaction of the narrator and the audience is emphasized. Ong's model conceptualizes all the features of oral culture, one of which is to verbalize all knowledge with close reference to human experience concretely. The oral presenter tends also to adjust his narration for new audiences. If such a psychodynamic model of orality is used to analyze the collaboration of Lin Shu and Wei Yi, we can have a fresh understanding of the intricacies of the co-translation process, and of the characteristics of their translations.

The participation of Wei Yi in the translation process introduces an oral element into their collaborative work and therefore should not be discarded lightly. Of equal, if not greater, importance is the tricky issue about Lin Shu's "distance" from the original text. One cannot simply ignore the fact that his access to the original is only made possible through the intervention of the oral translator. As such, his translations cannot be uniformly and simplistically examined as if the oral translator were not there at all, as in texts translated the usual way. In fact, Lin Shu, as the "audience" in the interpreting event, was practically surrounded by an auditory and visual world, where primarily the sounds and gestures of Wei Yi existed, and where Lin Shu's imagination was nurtured. Inevitably, any reference to the written text available to Wei Yi was not available to Lin Shu. It is Wei Yi's version of Dickens that Lin Shu perceived through Wei's auditory and possibly dramatized presentation. Since Wei Yi had to translate the story *orally* and to make it accessible to an audience *on the spot*, it is natural in terms of psychodynamics or orality that the original text was made more explicit and unfamiliar items rendered more familiar

by allusion, in order that Lin (the audience) can easily relate to them. Ong says that oral narrators tend to reword the narrative while complying with audience demand. He also adds that:

> Oral word … never exists in a simply verbal context, as a written word does. Spoken words are always modifications of a total, existential situation, which always engages the body. Bodily activity beyond mere vocalization is not adventitious or contrived in oral communication, but is natural and inevitable. (Ong, 1988, p. 67)

The Lin-Wei translation method is something they were compelled to use. Instead of a pre-determined course of action agreed upon by the two, Wei Yi's method of narration, which might have involved the use of dialogue in replacing indirect descriptions, the use of annotations and adaptations, was only natural in the light of the psychodynamics of oral narration. It is therefore a non-sequential leap when Eva Hung says "it is a usual practice for Lin Shu to avoid confusion and misunderstanding by resorting to cultural shifts" (1980, p. 130). Lin Shu's role in the collaboration is further exaggerated when Hung says that:

> Lin Shu tends to omit or change the religious references probably not only because he himself is unfamiliar with them, but also because of his consideration for his potential readers, most of whom would not have been much more knowledgeable than him in such matters. (Hung, 1980, p. 132)

This is yet another example in the critical literature whereby Lin Shu's co-translations are assessed as if the written translator had translated them all by himself. The oral element in the translation process and its possible impact are left out in most discussions of the co-translations. Although it is possible that Lin Shu may have filtered out unfamiliar elements in the original (through Wei Yi's narration) for a smooth translation in his "writing", other possibilities for the "smoothing out" should be acknowledged, given the presence of orality in the process of co-translation. Considering Lin Shu's monolingual background, he could not have been the only person shaping the translation. He was, however, the first representative of the Qing readers to whom Wei Yi told the Dickensian stories, probably in an adjusted and yet familiar fashion. The characteristics of the translation are therefore also affected by the oral element involved in the translation process, the input of the oral translator, as well as the joint discussions between the two translators.

Considering this psychodynamic view of the Lin-Wei collaboration, the use of a domestication method (see Wong, 2002, pp. 13-23 for more

textual evidence of domestication in the Chinese rendition of *David Copperfield*) appears most natural, but it is not a pre-determined strategy. I argue therefore that the use of a domesticating strategy may not be so much a pre-determined strategy as a natural method used by Wei in getting the message across verbally in a face-to-face encounter. For instance, children's games in Western societies such as "cards" (ch. 3, p. 39), "dominoes" (ch. 16, p. 221) and "skittles" (ch. 16, p. 215) in the novel (Dickens, 1996) were presented and summarized as "葉子戲" (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 669, p. 777), a traditional Chinese game, which resembles the pastime of reading tea leaves while drinking tea. Also, the virtues of characters in the original are transformed and re-framed in the Chinese Confucian schema. Miss Trotwood is depicted as "…one of the most tender-hearted and excellent of women" (Dickens, 1996, ch. 59, p. 767), and her qualities are transformed into Confucian feminine virtues, "仁, 毅, 烈女" (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 1084), which mean, respectively, "kind, persevering and strong". Agnes Wickfield is described by Miss Trotwood as "good, beautiful, earnest and disinterested" (Dickens, 1996, ch. 60, p. 769) in the original, but these are turned into the Confucius qualities of "德言容工" (Lin and Wei, 1908, p. 1085) (literally, virtuous, pretty and graceful). These "familiar" translations may well show the filtering effect of the written translator based on his cultural perception; they may well be initiated by Wei Yi; or they are possibly the result of discussions between the two. Neither person's presence in the co-translation is entirely passive. The presence of Lin Shu in the translation process as an "audience" is particularly significant in shaping the Chinese rendition. As Ong says:

> Oral traditions reflect a society's present cultural values. Skilled oral narrators deliberately vary their traditional narratives because part of their skills is their ability to adjust to new audiences and new situations or simply to be coquettish. (Ong, 1988, p. 48)

Likewise, Eva Hung (1980) suggests that Lin Shu may have judged that elaborate biblical references could be too much for either him or his readers. So he may have taken the liberty to filter them out in the translation, without notifying or discussing it with the oral translator. But, alternatively, we can say Wei Yi may also have drawn and employed items in traditional Chinese culture to replace comparable items in Western societies as depicted in the novel. Adjustment is most necessary for an oral transfer of meaning given the immediacy of face-to-face interactions (Tymoczko, 1990). What makes Lin and Wei's translations original is not just the introduction of new materials to backward and secluded China, but also the way the two translators introduced Chinese traditional materials

effectively and explained Western ideas adequately in the translation against a unique setting. Due to the involvement of an oral translator in the process of translation, different forces became operative at the same time at varying strengths. Our best effort is to acknowledge the existence of the various forces at work, and most importantly, *not* to exclude the possibility of some input from the oral translator and his significance in the operation.

Conclusion

Wei Yi's role as an intermediary oral translator has been marginalized for a century. While he played a crucial part in the co-translation, he has been curiously overshadowed by the written translator. Though monolingual, Lin Shu somehow became the unrivalled "translator" of his time. The term *linyi xiaoshuo* or "Linian Translated Fiction" coined by late Qing readers fully reflects the marginal role occupied by his collaborators. Such neglect of the role of oral translators in the introduction of foreign literature to China and in the systematic study of Lin Shu's co-translations has been found in both readers of Lin's translations and academic circles. It is time proper recognition be given to the "invisible" oral translators in shaping this critical phase of translation history in China.

In this article, the traces left by Wei Yi and Lin Shu in the Chinese rendition of *David Copperfield* are made "visible" through textual analyses of the translation. All the evidence substantially points to the input of the oral translator and possibly alongside with the written translator. This article represents an attempt to draw attention to the active part played by the oral translator in the co-translation with Lin Shu. It has also shown that co-translation can be fruitfully analyzed with due consideration of the element of orality in the translation process. In contrast to non-collaborative translations, the co-translation of a written translator and an oral translator displays a more complex dynamics, and therefore warrants research attention to not just Lin Shu but Wei Yi as well−and for that matter, to not just the translation product but also the translation process as well.

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article.

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ABSTRACT: The Oral Translator's "Visibility": The Chinese Translation of *David Copperfield* by Lin Shu and Wei Yi — An important feature in the translation history of China in the early 20th century was the collaboration between a Chinese monolingual and a Chinese bilingual in a large-scale translation of Western fiction. Such a collaboration pattern lasted for almost two decades before more Chinese bilinguals were trained in the 1920s. The partnership of Lin Shu (1852-1924) (a prominent written translator) and Wei Yi (1880-1933) (one

of Lin Shu's oral translators) lasted for 10 years, during which they translated over 40 English novels into Chinese. Through textual analyses of their co-translation of Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* in 1908, this article unravels the long-neglected contribution of Wei Yi in the work, and points to the importance of "orality" in their translation process in shaping Lin Shu's translations. The article is structured into two parts: first, the background of Lin Shu and Wei Yi, and their collaboration; second, evidence of Wei Yi's visibility in the translation in terms of textual changes from indirect speech to direct speech, the use of annotations, and the characteristics of the translation.

RÉSUMÉ: La visibilité du traducteur oral. La traduction chinoise de *David Copperfield* par Lin Shu et Wei Yi ─ Les collaborations en tandem monolingue-bilingue dans la traduction d'un large corpus d'oeuvres occidentales ont marqué l'histoire de la traduction en Chine au début du XXe. siècle. On trouve des exemples de ce type de collaboration sur une période de presque vingt ans, jusqu'à ce qu'un plus grand nombre de traducteurs bilingues soient formés dans les années 1920. Le travail commun de Lin Shu (1852-1924), célèbre traducteur monolingue, et de Wei Yi (1880-1933), l'un des traducteurs oraux de Lin Shu, s'étendit sur dix années au cours desquelles les deux hommes traduisirent plus de quarante romans anglais. L'analyse de leur traduction de *David Copperfield* en 1908 met en lumière le rôle trop souvent négligé de Wei Yi, ainsi que l'importance de l'oralité dans leur processus de traduction et son influence sur le travail de Lin Shu. Cet article comporte deux parties : la première s'attache à présenter les traducteurs et les détails de leur collaboration ; la seconde expose les traces de l'influence de Wei Yi – visibles dans le passage du discours indirect au discours direct, le recours aux notes et d'autres marques textuelles.

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