

The Historical Development of the Lexical Layer of the Chinese Language and the Role of Ming Period Novels in IT

Jasur T. Ziyamukhammadov¹ and Samida T. Mustafaeva²

Abstract

In linguistics, the issue of periodization is closely related to the diachronic study of language, the development of language levels, determining development trends in it, and drawing conclusions about the dynamics of development of a certain level or language as a whole. the language being studied. After all, changes at certain levels of language differ according to the stages of language development or, conversely, changes at certain levels of language determine the stage of development of a particular language as a criterion. Therefore, for the purpose of this article, which is dedicated to the study of the lexicon of Ming period novelistic examples in China, the language of the monuments of the period under study, in particular, the lexical layers of the studied period, to determine which stage of the development of the Chinese language corresponds to the main source of research, not only the place of the novel in the development of the language, but also its importance for the science of linguistics is also a basis for determining.

Keywords: *Linguistics, Diachronic Study, Synchronic Study, Ming Period, Novels, Lexical Evolution.*

Introduction

It is known that the development of the literary language in China is somewhat different from the development of many languages of the world. These differences can be seen, firstly, in the naming of the literary language through individual terms depending on the period and form, and secondly, in the parallel circulation of forms of the literary language, internally and externally different [1;2]. Nevertheless, in linguistics, the periodization of the Chinese language was carried out as a single system, not separating the two forms of the language. In general, the Chinese language has two major periods: 古代汉语 *gǔdài hànǔ* is divided into ancient Chinese and 现代汉语 *xiāndài hànǔ* into modern Chinese. While “modern Chinese” refers to 普通话 *pǔtōnghuà*, the spoken form of the modern Chinese literary language, *putunhua*, the ancient Chinese language came down mainly through written sources, covering a long historical period, from about 1919 to the “May 4th Movement” [3, 462].

Western linguists categorize the Chinese language as: Old Chinese: 1) archaic period 上古 *shàngǔ* - to the II century BC; 2) middle age 中古 *zhōngǔ* from the 1st century BC to the middle of the 13th century; 3) current stage 近代 *jìndài* It covers three stages from the middle of the 13th century to the middle of the 19th century [4; 136]. And in the works of B. Karlgren, E. Dj. Pulliblack: 1) the ancient Chinese language (later this term replaced the term archaic Chinese language used by Karlgren [5; 86-87]) approximately 1000-800 BC;

¹ Professor of the Department of Chinese Philology, Doctor of Philological Sciences (DSc), Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0953-6974>

² Associate Professor of the Department of Chinese Philology, Doctor of Philosophy in Philological Sciences (PhD), Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. mustafaeva.samida@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2817-8999>

2) early Middle Chinese (in place of Karlgren's term "ancient Chinese") reflects the phonetic norms of the 6th century AD; 3) late medieval Chinese, 唐 *Tang* Dynasty (618 – 907) the last years and 宋 *Song* Dynasty (960-1279) early years; 4) early (or old) Mandarin, 元 *Yuan* the language of the dynasty (1279-1368). [6; 197-239] divided into such periods. Basically four from a syntactic point of view: 上古 *shànggǔ* archaic, 中古 *zhōnggǔ* medium, 近代 *jìndài* modern and 现代 *xiàndài* includes the present period, which, in turn, have the following internal divisions: 1) pre-archaic period, inscriptions on animal bones and turtle bowls (XIV-XI centuries BC); 2) inscriptions on early archaic bronze vessels and early classical Chinese sources (X-VI centuries BC); 3) late archaic period, classical Chinese language, Confucianism, interpretation of Mengtzi's works (5th-2nd centuries BC); 4) the emergence of the written form of the pre-medieval period, the period of differentiation of oral speech from literary language (1st century BC - 1st century AD); 5) early middle period (II-VI centuries); 6) the late middle period (middle of VII-XIII); 7) the period before the modern Chinese language (middle of the XIII century - XIV century); 8) modern Chinese language (mid-XV-XIX centuries); 9) modern Chinese language (from the middle of the 19th century to the present day) [7;8].

The Main Findings and Results

The development stages of the Chinese language can be broadly divided into four periods: 上古汉语 *shànggǔ hànǚ* 'ancient chinese language'; 中古汉语 *zhōnggǔ hànǚ* 'Middle Chinese'; 近代汉语 *jìndài hànǚ* 'mandarin' and 现代汉语 *xiàndài hànǚ* 'modern Chinese'[9;18].

The analysis of the relevant literature shows that foreign and Chinese linguists have relied on the changes that occurred at the phonetic and grammatical levels of the language in the periodization of the Chinese language. However, in our opinion, the lexical layer plays an equally important role in determining the stages of language development than its phonetic and grammatical levels. In addition, the difference between the two forms of the language, *Wenyan* and *Baihua*, which were in parallel circulation in China for a long historical period, especially during the Ming period, which is the object of research, is also seen primarily in the lexical layer.

In the linguistic literature, there are views that *Wenyan* is an ancient Chinese language (QST) that absorbed certain elements of *Baihua*. For example, in the work "Ancient Chinese language" ("Древнекитайский язык") M.V. Kryukov and Huang Shu-yin defined that "*Wenyan* is a dead Chinese Latin (language) that has remained almost unchanged for several hundred years"[10; 5].

Of course, *Wenyan* is based on QXT, or rather, its grammatical construction. However, according to the grammatical construction, *Wenyan* is a language form that is unique to it and contains aspects that are not observed in QXT and *Baihua*[11;6].

In addition, *Wenyan*, in which literary works of different characters were created in different periods of Chinese history, was in parallel circulation with *Baihua*, another literary language (form), until the 20th century. And this, in turn, was not reflected in its grammatical construction. In such a situation, the two literary language forms *Wenyan* and *Baihua* cannot but interact. At this point, the *Wenyan*, which existed only in written form, changed with its own laws. Therefore, *Wenyan* is not a language with "fixed" and immutable laws, but a language that has experienced its own changes and is in constant motion [11; 7].

Around the 12th century, a new literary language, *Baihua*, was formed in China based on Northern dialects. The main genres of fiction at that time were short stories (later novels), poetic works and dramas, which were written in this language. It is from this period that two forms of literary language were in parallel circulation in China: *Wenyan* as the language

of medieval administration and *Baihua* as the language of fiction. The hieroglyphic script common to both forms of language ensured that both spread throughout the country [12; 3].

It is also clear from the above definitions that the two forms of the Chinese language, *Wenyan* and *Baihua*, differ from each other according to their use in social life, grammatical structure, and lexical reserve. The fact that *Wenyan* is mainly used in written sources and that it is far from spoken language means that its evolution was much slower than that of *Baihua*. Therefore, we believe that it is logical to approach the two forms of the language, *Wenyan* and *Baihua*, separately in the historical development of the Chinese language, the periodization of the language or a certain level in the language.

Determining the stages of development of *baihua* as a language of Chinese artistic prose, based on this, determining the development dynamics of the Chinese language lexicon is one of the tasks facing our research.

In Chinese linguistics, standards may be different for the periodization of the language, but the issue of “lexical-semantics” should be considered as one of the basic parameters in this regard [3;21]. In fact, it is important to take the issue of “lexical-semantics” as the main indicator in the periodization of language development. After all, the lexicon is the most active element for language (especially spoken language). The change in the composition of the vocabulary of the language and its meaning in a certain period affects the change in the system essence of the language, which is considered one of the bases for periodization [3;21]. As long as it is recognized that the ancient *Baihua* language is a language that reflects the ancient spoken language in writing, the change in the lexical-semantic layer is the main normative indicator of the periodization of this language form [3;21]. The transition of *Baihua* from oral form to written sources, strengthening its position as a literary language. And based on the long historical process until it was taken as a basis for the current Chinese literary language and the changes that took place in this process, it can be divided into the periods of origin, improvement and maturity. The period from the Qing and Han dynasties to the Tang period (the use of *Baihua* as a written language) is the first stage, from the Tang period to the Ming period (the systematic development of *Baihua* as a written language) is the middle stage, and from the Ming period to the Qing period (the parallel circulation of *Baihua* and *Wenyan*) is the last stage [3; 22-23].

According to its grammatical and lexical features, the period before the Qing and Han dynasties can be considered as the old Chinese language, and from the period of the Sung and Yuan dynasties as the recent Chinese language [13]. However, in this periodization, the gap from ancient Chinese to modern Chinese was not explained, and there was a gap in the periodization.

According to sources related to the Chinese language, as early as the 2nd century BC, there was a difference between the written, literary and spoken language, and the two forms of the language were separated. Until the 20th century, the *Wenyan* language, based on the ancient Chinese language, maintained its status as a written literary language. The ancient era of spoken language ended in the 6th century AD. For example, by the VI-VII centuries, pronouns and a number of auxiliary words characteristic of the Chinese language of the middle and modern era came into circulation. In the 7th century, the difference between the written literary language and the spoken language became sharp, and writers began to write their works in imitation of the language of the monuments of several centuries ago [14; 6-7]. In this approach, *Wenyan* is taken as the written literary language of China, and is based on its status as such until the 20th century. However, it became clear from the above points that *Baihua* was not only a spoken language, it was also recognized as a written literary language. Until the 20th century, *Wenyan* was mainly used as a written normative language, as an official and scientific genre language. Fiction, especially after the 12th century, was mostly written in *Baihua*.

The peculiarity of the systematic study of the history of the Chinese language is that the researchers' attention was primarily drawn to its ancient forms (ancient Chinese) [15; 3]. Later, in particular, from the second quarter of the 20th century, along with the ancient Chinese language, the modern Chinese language became the object of a number of studies. In addition to the grammatical features of the modern Chinese language, many studies have been carried out on various levels of the language, monographic works have been created [15; 3].

The Middle Chinese language remained unstudied for a long time. Also, Chinese scholar I.T.Zograf emphasized that the concept of "middle Chinese language" does not exist. The reason for this is the diversity of approaches to periodization of the Chinese language [15; 3]. In particular, while B. Karlgren indicates the language of the Tang and Sung periods as the middle Chinese language, U.A. Maspero recognizes the language in circulation from the Six Dynasties to Sungdauri as Middle Chinese. Both of them periodized the Chinese language by considering only the phonetic norms of the language. Chinese scholar Wang Li, who takes into account grammatical features as well as phonetic norms, covers the period from the 4th to the 12th century as Middle Chinese [15; 3]. Acknowledging the above, I. T. Zograf takes the period of the Sunghwa Yuan dynasty as the middle Chinese language. And in this he emphasizes that he relied on the grammatical features of the language [15; 3].

Reflecting on the limitation of the current stage of the Chinese language, the author first of all considers the fact that *Baihua*, the oral language partially reflected in the written records of the previous eras (in particular, the Tang Dynasty Yuulis and Donghuan Bianwen), has the status of a written language and is used parallel to *Wenyan* in literature. takes a special place, the fact that the written monuments of these two periods were the basis for the formation of a new literary language is the main noteworthy aspect of the research [15; 3-4].

In the work of I. T. Zograf, which researches the Middle Chinese language in a monographic plan, it is noted that the literary monuments of the Sunghwa Yuan dynasty are diverse in terms of genre, and despite the fact that the monuments of the period are written in Baihua, depending on the region where the work was created, there are differences in the signs of the grammatical system [15; 5].

Chinese scholar Liu Shuxian says that although the monuments of two groups, that is, northern and southern schools of literature, belong to the same era, two dialects developing in parallel reflect the unique aspects of "Northern Guanhua" and "Southern Guanhua" [16; 148]. The northern guanhua center was considered to be Yangjin (i.e., present-day Beijing), and the southern guanhua center was Linan (present-day Hangzhou)[16;11]. The monuments of the Northern group include the works of 《刘知远诸宫调》 (*Liúzhīyuǎn zhū gōngdiào*) and 《董解元西厢记》 (*Dǒngjièyuán xīxiāngjì*), the works of northern (杂剧), 《元朝秘史》 (*Yuáncháo mìshǐ*), and the works of 《元朝秘史》 (*Yuáncháo mìshǐ*). Stories included in collections such as 《京本通俗小说》 (*Jīng běn tōngsú xiǎoshuō*) and 《清平山堂话本》 (*Qīng píngshān táng huà běn*), a 70-chapter copy of the novel 《水浒传》 (*Shuǐhǔ zhuàn*) and southern pesas (siven) are included[15;5].

I.T. Zograf's monograph includes prominent works of the specified period, as well as Tang period yuyls and dunhuan bianwen belonging to the earlier period, 《西游记》 ("Si yu tsi" 16th century), 《儒林外史》 ("Julin waishi" 18th century) belonging to later periods. beginning and 《红楼梦》 ("Hun lou men" mid-18th century) works are taken as the main source.

In Chinese linguistics, ancient *Baihua* is a period of convergence of spoken language and written language form, which marked the transition of the Chinese language to an essentially new era [3;22-23]. The transition of the ancient Baihua into written form and its popularization is associated with the translation of the Buddhist Vedas into Chinese. The

translation of Buddhist sources into Chinese began during the Eastern Han Dynasty and reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty. It is natural that this period, which occupies an important place in the history of the Chinese language, caused changes in the internal system of the language[3;32]. In religious propaganda, the common people are taken as the main audience. A religious idea and ideology is considered correct the more it reaches people, and Buddhism was no exception[3;34]. Therefore, Buddhist religious literature was translated into a language understandable for the people, that is, *Baihua*. The number of such translations that have survived to date is 5700 volumes in 1480 titles, and each of them is considered an important source in the study of the history of the Chinese *Baihua* language[17; 100]. Although the language of the translations of the Buddhist Vedas into Chinese is not pure *Baihua*, nor is it standard *Wenyan*, nor is it prose or rhymed verse according to genre, but there is a sense of rhythm when reading. These translated works reflect the real state of the Chinese language spanning several centuries from the end of the Han Dynasty. In these works, the charm of the *Baihua* language is clearly felt, and it kept that feature until the Sung dynasty [17; 100]. Translations of the Buddhist Vedas are also very important for the study of the lexical layer. The reason is that in such translations, along with the use of a large number of lexical units in the colloquial language, changes in their meaning level were also shown. In particular, the word 他 *tā*, originally used to refer to an object, began to be used relative to a person in translations typical of the Eastern Han period, and became a third-person personal pronoun [3;35]. By the Tang period, the full third person was used as a personal pronoun. Until then, the concept of someone else understood from the meaning of this word was expressed by the words 他人 *tārén*、其他 *qítā*、别人 *biérén* in the Tang period, acquiring a two-morpheme form [3;35]. Also, in the translation works of the period, the numerical superiority of two-component words compared to sources written in Chinese, in particular, words with two morphemes such as 人们 *rénmen* humanity, people, 共同 *gòngtóng* general, common, 快乐 *kuàilè* joy, 娱乐 *yúlè* joy, are new words formed in the process of translating Buddhist sources. there were words [3;35].

In Chinese linguistics, there is a slightly different approach to the periodization of the historical development of the lexicon, in particular, in Wang Li's work "The History of the Lexicon of the Chinese Language", the stages of the development of the lexicon are classified as follows, depending on the development of social life: 1) the lexicon of the period of the primitive community system. Words related to natural phenomena, for example: sun, sky, cloud, rain, lightning, rainbow, snow. Also, some personal pronouns representing the first and second person were formed during the primitive community system and were recorded in inscriptions on turtle bowls and animal bones [18; 491-492]; 2) lexical development in the hunting society, in which the main lexicon was related to the names of the hunted animals, hunting equipment and methods; 3) lexicon of livestock and farming society. With the development of agriculture in the society, the names of crops suitable for consumption, such as rice, wheat, millet, as well as the implements used in tillage, were originally made of wood, so graphically, the grapheme 木 *mù* "wood" was used in such words, and with the discovery of metal, words representing agricultural implements were written. The 铁 *tiě* grapheme was used. For example: in the word 耨 *chóu* (a tiller according to the dictionary "Shuoven"), the left side part 木 *mù* is a "wooden" key, while its metal variant 铸 *zhù* is formed as a result of replacing the left side part with a grapheme meaning metal. In addition, farming, in particular, the names of ceremonies to increase the productivity of crops, the words expressing the actions in it, and the nouns related to the names of livestock also belong to the same period of social development; 4) lexical development of slave society. Several words related to the system of slavery are used in inscriptions on jiaguwen, turtle bowls, and animal bones. For example, 巨 *jù* meant a male slave, later its meaning changed to express the meanings of big, huge, large, as a result of its combination with the morpheme *rénrén* meaning human, 人 *rén*; giant; means a big person (a person with a high position in society, or a person who has

made a great contribution to the development of a field). 妾 *qiè* a female slave, later used as a first-person personal pronoun in women's speech in the sense of modesty and modesty, etc. [18; 494-500] 5) was the lexicon of feudal society, and in the lexicon of this stage, words with abstract meanings prevailed. Such words as 忠 *zhōng* loyalty, 孝 *xiào* obedience, 仁 *rén* humanity, kindness, 贤 *xián* selflessness, 敬 *jìng* respect [18; 501]. 6) the development of household lexical words in ancient Chinese society with meaning of clothes, food, living; 7) development of the lexicon of historical periods. According to Van Lee, the lexicon of the Chinese language was already fully formed in the archaic period, and the lexical fund of the language was enriched in line with the social development of the next historical period (during the dynasties)[18; 511]. However, in our opinion, the above classification of the development stages of the language lexicon is not justified. First, in the stages, the lexicon mainly referred to the emergence and development of nouns, partially verbs and a small number of personal pronouns; secondly, the words of a certain social aspect have been enriched with new words over time, for example, farming and animal husbandry, no matter how long ago they have in human history, are still developing as a part of social life, naturally, the field has not stopped being enriched with new lexical units; thirdly, as a result of social development, some lexical units have fallen out of use, while some continue to be used with semantic, structural or functional changes; fourthly, this classification does not take into account auxiliary words in the language, the features of the use of words in the sentence, and the issue of improvement in it.

The historical development of the Chinese language in linguistics, the issue of periodization according to the stages of language development, the views of Chinese and foreign linguists on the role of the lexical factor in it, and the analysis of the literature on the subject show that there is no unanimous approach to defining the stages of the development of the Chinese language. While relying on the changes of the Chinese language at the phonetic level, it became known that the Russian Chinese scholars derived from the phonetic and grammatical features of the language (i.e. aspects such as sentence construction, expression of grammatical meaning). In the 90s of the last century, it was found that Chinese linguists defined the stages of language improvement based on the phonetic, grammatical and social development of the language. Only after 2000, it can be observed that the question of the lexical factor in the development of the language, and the place of the lexical layering of the language in the stages of the development of the language have risen in the researches carried out by Chinese linguists. Another aspect in the periodization of the development of the Chinese language, including the development of the lexical layer, is that in most works, the two language forms of *Wenyan* and *Baihua*, which have been in parallel circulation in China for a long historical period, are considered not separately, but as a whole, which has led to the inability to draw clear conclusions in this regard. In our opinion, the obvious differences between the two language forms at the grammatical and especially the lexical level, the aspects of their use, in particular, the development of *Wenyan* mainly in written form, and *Baihua* without interruption from the spoken language, are enough reasons to see their stages of development separately.

Although the main source of the research, 《水浒传》“*Shuixu juan*” and its contemporary 《三国演义》“*Sanguo yan*’I” contain elements of the *Wenyan* language to a certain extent, they are written in *Baihua*, moreover, it is a fiction literature that has regularly developed as a colloquial language. As a language, the Chinese *Baihua* language, which has refined the standards of written form and has the status of a literary language, which is the basis of the current Chinese language, its main difference from the written standard language *Wenyan*, as well as an important factor determining the historical development of the *Baihua* language, is a solution to determine the development stages of the lexical layer. is one of the urgent issues that should be addressed.

Conclusion

Based on this, analyzing the current views on this matter, the following stages of development of the lexicon of the Chinese *Baihua* language can be distinguished: 1) the ancient period - the first stage formed on the foundation of the *Wenyan* lexicon and enriched mainly by the translation of religious works related to Buddhism, from the Han period to the Tang period including the stage of lexical development up to the Sung dynasty. Although in many sources, the Tang period is included in the middle period, in our opinion, it is considered the first stage in the development of *Baihua* lexicon. Because it was during the Tang period that most of the Buddhist literature was translated into vernacular and *Baihua* became a written form of language. However, as a contrary process, the language system, including the lexical layer, did not allow to “move forward one step” as supporters of “*fugu*” (restoration of history) increased to preserve the standards of the classical language in the literature of the Tang period, to write the monuments of the period without departing from the classical language pattern; 2) the middle period - in this stage, which includes the first half of the Sun, Yuan, and Ming periods (前期 *qiánqī*), there were significant changes at the lexical level, a sharp increase in the number of words with two morphemes, internal and external (including the direct influence of the Mongolian language) factors in the composition of the vocabulary. It marks a new era in the history of the *Baihua* lexicon with its enrichment under the influence and the increase of auxiliary words with grammatical meaning 3) the new period - the period from the middle of the Ming Dynasty to the Xinhai Revolution of 1911. The lexicon of this period is the period that formed the fundamental lexicon for the modern Chinese language, that is, the stage that brought the lexical layer of the language to the structural, semantic, and functional improvement of the modern Chinese language corresponds to this period. At these stages of the improvement of the Chinese language lexicon, a unique process of “rehabilitation” took place in the history of the Chinese language with the help of the work “*Shuihu Juan*” and, in particular, the lexicon of the work.

References

- Konrad N.I. About the literary language of China and Japan// Questions of linguistics. 1954, no. 3. -WITH. 25-41.
- Mustafaeva S.T. On the term *hanyu* ‘Chinese language’// Current research journal of philological sciences. 2020, December. -P.19-23.
- 徐时仪. 汉语白话史. -北京大学出版社, 2017.
- Roger D. Woodard. The ancient languages of Asia and the Americas. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Kurdyumov V.A. Chinese language course: theoretical grammar. - Moscow, 2006.
- Pulleyblank E. Late Middle Chinese. Asia Major, 1970
- Chou F. 1963. Stages in the development of the Chinese language, *Zhongguo yuwen luncong*, Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju.
- Wang L. 1958. *Hanyu shigao* (History of Chinese). Beijing: kexue chubanshe.
- Wilkinson E. Chinese history a manual. 中国历史手册. USA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000.
- Kryukov M.V., Huang Shu-ying. Ancient Chinese language- M., 1978
- Zograf I.T. *Wenyang and ancient Chinese language*// Current issues in Chinese linguistics (Materials of the IV All-Union Conference). -M. 1988.
- Astrakhan E.B., Zavyalova O.I., Sofronov M.V. Dialects and national language in China. -M.: Nauka, 1985.
- 吕叔湘. 近代汉语读本·序. -上海: 上海教育出版社, 1985.
- Yakhontov S.E. Ancient Chinese language. -Moscow: Nauka, 1965.
- Zograf T.I. Central Chinese language (formation and development trends). -M.: Nauka, 1979.
- 吕叔湘. 汉语语法论文集. -北京: 科学出版社, 1955.
- 罗杰瑞. 汉语该说.-北京: 语文出版社, 1995.
- 王力. 汉语词汇史.-山东: 山东教育出版社, 1990.