
[72] ***Hu Yilu's Re-Presentation of Comparative-Historical Linguistics in Early Nationalist China***

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The study on language was among the fields of humanities and social sciences being encouragingly revolutionized after the fall of the Manchurian empire in 1911 and the establishment of the Republic of China in the following year. Compared with the flourishing pedagogical Chinese grammars during the first two decades of the nationalist republic, Chinese scholars' works on general linguistics of the same stage are relatively less well-known both inside and outside China. Among the efforts of the latter category, Hu Yilu (1888-1917) is best remembered for his posthumously published *Guóyǔxué Cǎochuàng* (A Draft of the Study on the Chinese Language), a de facto book on general linguistics in spite of its misleading title. Unlike the pedagogical grammars that concentrating on cramming the linguistic facts of Chinese into the Latin or English grammatical categories, Hu Yilu's book mainly discussed on such general issues as the concept, the origin, and the development of language, quite often with references to the biological, sociological and psychological perspectives. Based on the theory of comparative-historical linguistics that had been prevalent in the preceding century, Hu Yilu's book widely cited Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), Franz Bopp (1791-1867), August Schleicher (1821-1868), Max Müller (1823-1900), Georg von Gabelentz (1840-1893) and many other renowned linguists of the day. While the recent interest in Hu Yilu (e.g. Hai Xiaofang [2014], Bo Shousheng [2016], Zhao Zhenduo [2017]) generally focuses on introducing his contributions, the present author's closer reading of Hu Yilu's text reveals a distance from the original German and English works. Therefore the present paper explores Hu Yilu's re-presentation (rather than presentation) of these European linguistic texts in the academic circumstances of a newly established nationalist republic, and tries to determine both the linguistic and the extra-linguistic reasons that led to these textual differences.

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