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An audible China: Speech and the innovation in modern Chinese writing

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Abstract The image of an “audible China” is one opposed to the traditional China’s as “voiceless.” Not only does it refer to the survival of modern Chinese out of the abandoned Classical Chinese, it also provides a new means to examine modern China’s cultural transformation and development in terms of “voice.” This essay will discuss mainly how speech, one of “the three best tools for spreading civilization,” together with newspapers and magazines and schools, contributes to the success of the Vernacular Chinese Movement (Baihuawen yundong 白话文运动, CE 1917–1919) and the innovation in modern Chinese writing (including Chinese academic writing style).

Keywords speech, the Vernacular Chinese Movement, innovation in modern Chinese writing

摘要 “有声的中国”是相对于“无声的中国”而言,不仅指“舍掉古文而生存”,而且可以从“声音”的角度探讨中国现代文化演进的新路径。本文从近现代的“演说”入手,着重讨论作为“传播文明三利器”之一的“演说”,如何与“报章”、“学校”结盟,促成了白话文运动的成功,并实现了近现代中国文章(包括述学文体)的变革。

关键词 演说, 白话文运动, 中国文章变革

In February 1927, Lu Xun 鲁迅 delivered his speech, *Wusheng de Zhongguo* 无声的中国 (*The Voiceless China*) at Hong Kong, in which he returned to the ten-year-old concept of “literary revolution” and asserted “there are only two

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roads for us to take: to die by clinging to *wenyan* 文言 (the Classical Chinese or literary Chinese) or to survive by giving up it.” Lu Xun vividly pointed out that such a one-or-the-other choice symbolized a fight between an “audible China” and a “voiceless China.” He also argued that if the new literary works continued to be written in Classical Chinese, “the voices through them will be vanished for they belong to the past.” Instead, an “audible China” would be established only if modern Chinese authors and intellectuals “speak out their minds boldly regardless of gains and losses and go ahead bravely by putting the tradition aside.”¹

Lu Xun’s concept of an “audible China” means not to “regard the literary works as archaic fossil” but as one “writing one’s thoughts freely and expressing one’s feelings openly in the alive spoken language” with the simultaneous development of innovation in thought and Chinese writing system. To describe a nation with “voice” has its symbolic meaning (for example, Lu Xun said that “We Chinese are populous but voiceless, how lonely we are!”). It also reflects the popular view taken by the new intellectuals participated in the May Fourth Movement (*Wusi yundong* 五四运动) and the New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong* 新文化运动), that is, to value spoken language rather than written language. From the perspective of “voice,” there are many ways to weigh the pros and cons of Classical Chinese and Vernacular Chinese, to consider China’s future as a modern nation and to evaluate Chinese characters—“the terrible heritage left by our ancestors” as a continuity to Lu Xun’s arguments. This essay will explore an “audible China” by stressing the importance of speech, a new oral form of expression being discussed furiously since it was introduced into China in late Qing (*Wan Qing* 晚清 CE 1840–1911).

Most present-day scholars and researchers feel pleased to reminisce about the independent thinking and “free debate”² flourished during late Qing and the May Fourth period. Such a freedom of expression in the fields of literature, academy and politics is embodied both in speaking and in writing. Yet, the historical citations and quotations in the scholars’ works are usually taken from old newspapers, magazines, books and archives. Seldom can the “speaking voices,” once being evoking and exciting, still be heard or traced back. Nor could any historian deny the importance of speaking when returning to the past. But before the appearance of sound and video recording equipments, we can only rely on the writings.

Written words can be handed down while the speaking voices usually vanished into dust. But for enlightenment, social mobilization, culture spread or knowledge dissemination, “smooth talking or speaking” functions as does what

¹ Lu Xun, 1981, Vol. 4, pp. 11–15.

² Zhou Gucheng 周谷城, 1983, pp. 411–415

in black and white. As a result, we have no reason to ignore the speaking voices which have been transferred into written words by chance although some “voices” may have inevitably been lost or “distorted” in the process.

To care about “voices,” which often die away in a flash, is not only out of the speakers’ great wishes but also of the subsequent historians’ responsibility. In the 28th year of Guangxu reign period (CE 1902), Liang Qichao 梁启超 (Liang Ch’i-ch’ao) stretched his visions of China’s future in his political novel *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji* 新中国未来记 (*Future of New China*) carried in the first issue of the magazine *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小说 (*New Novel*). According to him, Chinese will celebrate the 50th anniversary of 1898 Reform (Wuxu bianfa 戊戌变法) in Nanjing sixty years later; at the same time, a great exposition will be held in Shanghai. During the exposition period, not only the commercial affairs will be managed or arts and crafts will be exchanged but knowledge and religion will be spread as well. “Tens of thousands of well-known experts, scholars and university students from all over the world gather together at Shanghai to give or attend seminars, lectures and debates on different topics from day to day. The big city of Shanghai, including districts like Jaingbei 江北, Wusongkou 吴淞口, and Chongming Xian 崇明县 (Chongming County), turns into the site of the exposition.” The most influential lectures will be given by over thirty doctors jointly on politics, philosophy, religion, finance, customs, and literary history of China. And the most excellent one will be given by Mr. Kong Juemin 孔觉民, the minister of China’s Ministry of Education, on “The Last Sixty-year History of China.”

The discussion of speech, being regarded as the symbol of *Xinxue* 新学 (Western learning)³, can be found everywhere in the late-Qing novels. But not every novelist holds a positive attitude towards speech like Liang Qichao. For example, Li Boyuan 李伯元 in the Chapter XX, “Yanshuo tan hu sheng jingzheng, renao chang qie fu guilai” 演说坛忽生竞争, 热闹场且赋归来 (Abrupt competitions among speeches, prose writing from noisy world) of his *Wenming xiaoshi* 文明小史 (*Brief History of Civilization*), Wu Meng 吴蒙 in the Chapter XXVII, “Yanyu ke du biao xinyi, juanzhu kuan ju jian rexin” 言语科独标新义, 捐助款具见热心 (New elements in language, warm-hearted in donation) of his *Xuejiu xin tan* 学究新谈 (*New Arguments of a Scholar*), and Yansou 叟 in Chapter IV, “Shenjingbing xiangwen zhiliaofa, nǚxuetang huanying yanshuoci” 神经病详问治疗法, 女学堂欢迎演说词 (Mental patient asking for treatment, girls’ school welcoming speeches) of his *Xuejie jing* 学界镜 (*Mirror of Academic Field*) all sneered at their contemporaries’ being mad about speech. For such a new urban phenomenon, some praise it as a necessary means to establish modern

³ *Xinxue* 新学 or *Xixue* 西学 is a term used in late Qing for natural and social sciences of Western countries being in contrast with classical Chinese learning. — Translator’s note.

China; and some ridicule it as the most distinctive lip service. However, no one doubts that due to speech, Western learning spread quickly and fully over China.

Liang Qichao also wrote playfully that the finished *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji* was actually a stenographer's notes of Kong Juemin's lectures on the last sixty-year history of China. With this joke, Liang thoroughly remarked or predicted the important role played by speech in the reform movement and the establishment of a modern China. This essay, thus, will explore the significance of speech for Chinese enlightenment, knowledge dissemination, language refinement, Chinese writing innovation and academy spread.

1 Speech, Chinese Enlightenment in perspective

Having played an important role in China's modernization, speech can be viewed as new leaves grown from an old tree. The oral art of telling and speaking has been used from time immemorial by the storytellers to provide vivid performance or by the eminent Buddhist monks to spread the Buddha's teachings. But speech, an oral form of expression for clarifying one's position or persuading the audience with one's arguments is a new thing in China. It is imported from the West via Japan in late Qing. And the Chinese term, *yanshuo* 演说, is also borrowed from Japanese semantic translation of speech.

In late Qing, new-style schools, newspapers and magazines and speech had been listed as "the three best tools for spreading civilization." This popular remark is actually made by a Japanese man, Inukai Tsuyoshi. But Liang Qichao placed "speech" above the other two. He explained that "newspapers and magazines are more influential for a nation with a great number of well-educated; but speech will be more useful when most are illiterate."⁴ In effect, the popularity of speech in Japan is promoted by Yukechi Fukujawa, a Japanese thinker of Meiji Period (or Meiji Japan, CE 1868–1912); while, in modern China, it is attributed to the efforts made by Liang Qichao and his teacher Kang Youwei 康有为.

Liang Qichao once sighed with deep emotion that many Chinese failed to realize the importance of speech as one original motive force of social reform and development when he exiled in Japan after the failure of 1898 Reform:

Recently, many Chinese have understood the advantages of new-style schools, newspapers and magazines. But seldom does know the advantages of speech. Last year, Nanxuehui 南学会 (Southern Study Society) and Baoguoahui 保国会 (Society to Preserve the Nation) were organized respectively in Hunan and

⁴ Liang Qichao 梁启超, 1936, 156.

Beijing, which are like the Western speaking societies. Fostered by Nanxuehui, Hunan truly got a new social atmosphere. Unfortunately, it was closed down abruptly. Today, the insightful people need to make more efforts on the prevalence of speech.⁵

In fact, Liang Qichao mentioned these two societies more than once in his *Wuxu zhengbian ji* 戊戌政变记 (*Chronicle of 1898 Reform*). “In March 1898, Kang Youwei, Li Shengduo 李胜铎 and others founded a speaking society in Beijing named Baoguohui, which was attended by hundreds of scholar-gentry officials and imperial examination candidates who jointly presented a petition⁶ to the Emperor of Guangxu of the Qing dynasty (Qing Guangxu 清光绪 CE 1871–1908).” Liang also wrote that Kang Youwei “established another speaking society—Qiangxuehui 强学会 (Study Society for National Strength) with a number of well-known scholars as members in Beijing. They met every ten days with speeches given every time.” For Nanxuehui, “The speeches were given every seven days. Each time, provincial governors, imperial inspectors and other officials of Hunan were all present to listen to the speeches given by Huang Zunxian 黄遵宪, Tan Sitong 谭嗣同, Liang Qichao and their former schoolmate □□□ on international situation, politics theory, administration and etc. The speeches aimed at simulating the officials’ patriotic passion and provoking their commitment to the local government management.”⁷

Although 1898 Reform failed, the great impact of speech on the changes of people’s mind and on the renovation and development of China have been realized commonly in late Qing. This can be proved by the published articles and reports during that time which promoted speeches or introduced speech-making techniques.

Back in 1901, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, once paid great attention to improve the speaking abilities of students when he was the principal advisor of the special class at Nanyang Gongxue 南洋公学 (Nanyang Public School). Huang Yanpei 黄炎培, one of the students, recalled that “Mr. Cai told us that it is necessary to be good at speaking if we want to guide the society and enlighten others in the future. So several study groups in our class were set up to practice speaking and debating. Mr. Cai guided us in person and handed out relevant reading materials concerning different schools of Japanese studies on speech. In addition, Mr. Cai encouraged us to learn to speak Mandarin because our various local vernaculars

⁵ Ibid, p. 158.

⁶ The petition refers to *Gongche shangshu* 公车上书, a Joint Petition of Imperial Examination Candidates to the Emperor led by Kang Youwei in 1895 to oppose signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki 马关条约 and institute reforms, marking the beginning of the Reformist Movement. — Translator’s note.

⁷ Liang Qichao, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 70, p. 126 & pp.137–138.

are hard to be understood by others.”⁸

In 1902, *Dagongbao* 大公报 (*Dagongbao Newspaper*) carried an article titled “Lun yanshuo” 论演说 (“On Speech”). It claimed that “translated books, newspapers and speech were the three efficient ways for Chinese enlightenment. In particular, the importance of speech cannot be realized by most people except for few insightful ones.” As for the convenience of communication between people, “writing is not as good as speaking.” That is also why “the new generation of patriots promoted the art of speech” for enlightenment. Moreover, this article suggested that “speech should be given in a standard national spoken language,” which did respond to Cai Yuanpei’s popularizing of Mandarin. Why many promoters of speech in late Qing actively popularized Mandarin and supported the limitations on speaking various regional vernaculars? This may be answered concretely by Zhang Taiyan’s 章太炎 and Liang Qichao’s experiences as typical examples. One time, Zhang was invited to give lectures at Beijing University. He recalled that “I have to invite Mr. Qian Xuantong 钱玄同 as my interpreter for my Zhejiang dialect cannot be understood by most students who are from Northern China.” By contrast, Liang Qichao “travelled around the country to give speeches without any hindrance of communication”⁹ because he has learnt to speak Mandarin from his wife.

Qiu Jin 秋瑾 argued in her article “Yanshuo de haochu” 演说的好处 (“Advantages of Speech”) published in 1904 that speech, besides newspapers, can “enrich one’s knowledge as well as touch one’s heart.” She then listed five major advantages of speech. “First, speech can be delivered anytime anywhere. Second, being free of charge, speech can attract a large number of audiences. Third, speech can be understood by anybody, beyond age and gender. Fourth, speech can be given with no or less financial pressure. Fifth, speech’s topic can be anything.”¹⁰ Qiu’s list has almost covered people’s singing the praises of speech at the time. After that, the promotion of speech in China steps into a new stage: how to give a speech.

In 1905, Zhou Guisheng’s 周桂笙 *Zhi xin shi xin yi cong* 知新室新译丛 (*New Series of Translation on New Knowledge*) were serialized in the magazine *Xin xiaoshuo*. Zhou mentioned in one piece, “Yanshuo” 演说 (“Speech”) that “Speech is easy to touch one’s heart, which looks like our traditional storytelling.” There is of course a world of difference between Chinese traditional oral art of storytelling and the new speaking form. The former tries to provoke laughter while preserving the outworn and the latter aims at expounding

⁸ Chen Pingyuan 陈平原, Zheng Yong 郑勇, 1997, p. 115.

⁹ See Zhou Zuoren 周作人, 1982, p. 520; Ding Wenjiang 丁文江, Zhao Fengtian 赵丰田, 1983, p. 252.

¹⁰ Qiu Jin 秋瑾, 1979, pp. 3–4.

arguments on concrete affairs. Zhou then indicated that an orator needs to have highest moral values and grasp excellent speech-making techniques. He further explained that “In the West, nobody can be an orator unless he or she has new ideas and new intellectual knowledge; otherwise, the audience will not feel satisfied. And because most Western people are well-educated, it is not so likely to fool the potential audience as our storytelling usually did. Western orators practice speaking everyday and arm themselves to teeth before delivering officially. Like actors and actresses, the eloquent orators feel pride in winning acclaim from the audience with their good performance.”

How to train an orator becomes a key issue when the view of “replacing teaching with speaking” has been shared and when “speaking societies using Vernacular Chinese”¹¹ have been widely established. Then, Song Shu 宋恕 offered his opinions on this issue in his essay, *Chuangshe xuanjiang chuanxisuo yi* 创设宣讲传习所议 (*On the Establishment of Institutes for Training Orators*) in 1906. Song even wittingly distorted the origin of speech by saying it was “one of everyday Chinese practices before the Tang dynasty (Tang Chao 唐朝 CE 618–907) in order to relieve Chinese aversion to it as one imported term from Japan.”¹² Song also claimed that with the growing popularity of “this ancient Chinese oral art,” it was urgent to establish institutes in China for training orators professionally. “Today, no matter in democratic or constitutional countries, speech has developed well and ordinary people are trained to be good orators.... For we Chinese, only if the new, specific institutes for training orators are established by following the examples set by Confucianists’ emphasizing on language and by the Westerners’ studying on speech, the speaking career in China may become more and more thriving.”¹³

In effect, the insightful late-Qing intellectuals usually adopt an effective propaganda strategy to promote the Western learning, that is, to emphasize it is nothing new but “handed down from our Chinese past while connecting to the West.” Song Shu’s proclaiming on speech is not an exception. So it is no surprise to find that speech, an oral art “originated in our national culture while following the world’s trend,” is spread widely and quickly around China. In the last decade of late Qing, the orators, no matter being radical anarchists or mild reformists, deliver the speeches almost everywhere, from Tokyo, Japan where they can criticize the Qing royal government openly to Beijing, China’s capital where has

¹¹ See the article “Lun Zhongguo yi bian she baihua yanshuo shuo” 论中国宜遍设白话演说说 (On the widespread of speaking societies in Vernacular Chinese in China) published in *Shuntian shibao* 顺天时报 (*Shuntian Times*) on 25 August 1905.

¹² Song Shu 宋恕 insisted that the term *yanshuo* 演说 did not borrow from Japanese to refer to English term, speech; instead this term appeared in Northern and Southern dynasties of China (CE 420–589).

¹³ Song Shu, 1993, pp. 415–416.

a restriction on the freedom of speech.

In 1907, Zhang Ji 张继, Liu Shipai 刘师培 and Liu's wife founded Shehuizhuyi jiangxihui 社会主义讲习会 (Institute of Socialism) in Tokyo. It held twenty-one speeches altogether on specific topics like anarchism, socialism, and the living conditions of Chinese civilians.¹⁴ The number of the audience varied from several to hundreds each time. And the series of speeches and the publication of *Tianyibao* (天义报 *The Justice*) played a decisive role in the spread of anarchism in China. Still in 1907, "Siyi yanshuo" 厮役演说 ("A Maidservant's Speech") was carried in *Yisen huabao* 益森画报 (*Yisen Illustrated Newspaper*), issue No. 5. It described that an over-fifty-year-old maidservant made a public speech on the advantages of reading newspapers for other servants and their families at dusk of the tenth day (of a lunar month) in front of the main gate of Zhenru nüxuetang 振儒女学堂 (Zhenru Girls School), at Maojia wan, Pai lou, Xisi, Beijing. The reporter wrote that the maidservant spoken vividly and exclaimed that "What surprised me [the reporter] is not the speech itself but the speaker is nobody but an uneducated maidservant." Actually, I am amazed at the reporter's sensible combination of newspapers, speech, and new-style school, which put Liang Qichao's ideas of "the three best tools for spreading civilization" into practice.

Except for such impromptu speeches, most speeches in late Qing are given regularly at the gathering places of non-governmental societies and organizations. Zhang Yufa 张玉法, in his book *Qingmo de lixian tuanti* 清末的立宪团体 (*Constitutional Societies in the Late-Qing China*), once counted the number of the Chinese non-governmental societies and organization at home and abroad in late Qing: six hundred sixty-eight.¹⁵ But Sang Bing 桑兵 firmly believed the number was over two thousand by summing up Li Wenhai's 李文, Zhu Ying's 朱英, and Bastid's research result.¹⁶ Speech, therefore, becomes an indispensable part on the gatherings of so many societies and organizations no matter where they are, being at home or abroad, in the city or the country. Such kinds of speeches are mainly for "awakening Chinese people and enlightening the grass-roots;" while they do help the orators to learn from each other.

In 1909, Lanying youhuan sheng 兰陵忧患生 wrote *Jinghua bai'er zhuzhici* 京华百二竹枝词 (*Hundreds of Chinese Classical Poems on Customs*). One poem is like this, "Speech institutes are founded/ Newspapers are read/ How about their effects on doing away superstitions? /While, looking at the tiny temples

¹⁴ See Yang Tianshi 杨天石 (ed.) *Shehuizhuyi jiangxihui ziliao* 社会主义讲习会资料 (*Historical Materials on Institute of Socialism*), In *Zhongguo zhexue* 中国哲学 (Chinese Philosophy), Vol. 1, 1979 & Vol. 9, 1983. See also Wang Fansen 王汎森, 2001, pp. 197–219.

¹⁵ Zhang Yufa 张玉法, 1971, pp. 90–144.

¹⁶ Sang Bing, 1995, p. 274.

housing the village god/ Beautiful pilgrims are crowded.” He then explained that “this poem is to ask why people are still cling to the superstitions while various educational institutions, speeches and newspapers try hard to liberate them from blind faith.” But to confine speech’s function only to do away with superstitions is a limited realization. The speeches in Shanghai did break the limitation. Liang Qichao described two celebrities of Shanghai, Huang Keqiang 黄克强 and Li Qubing 李去病 went to listen to speeches in Zhang Yuan 张园 (Zhang’s Garden) in the Chapter Five of *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji*. The two characters found that the topics of the speeches were Russians’ rude behaviors in Dongsansheng 东三省 (Three Northeast Provinces of China)¹⁷, the weak and incompetent Qing government and how Chinese people get ready to resist many western countries’ invasion and aggression. The two also evaluated that “some speakers are eloquent, some are not, some speak for twenty to thirty minutes and some just speak few sentences. But altogether, about twenty speakers gave speeches on that day.” In the eyes of poets and novelists, speech, as a new form of oral art, makes a good beginning in China but is not up to their expectation.

Speech has been regarded as new leaves grown from an old tree of storytelling and preaching in late Qing. It is then necessary to clarify the relationship between the three for understanding why it is speech that worked efficiently on China’s political revolution and social renovation at the time.

If saying that “the most driving force in fostering a new social atmosphere in China is nothing but speech,” it at least assumes that “speech does impart new knowledge and truth to the public.” But, it is not the whole story. In 1905, the article “Jinggao xuanjiangsuo zhujiang de zhugong” 敬告宣讲所主讲的诸公 (“To Speakers at Speaking Societies”) published in *Dagongbao*, for example, once warned that “When one speech is given inappropriately, it will sound like the monks’ expounding Buddhist doctrine and scripture if being lucky enough; otherwise, it will fall completely into the old customs and habits of storytelling.”

Indeed, the traditional ideological education in China has its unique set of systems and modes. For instance, Emperor Taizu of the Ming (Ming Taizu 明太祖 CE 1328–1398) set up the system of Lilaoren zhi 里老人制 (Community Elders System) in the 27th year of the Hongwu reign period (CE 1394). Four years later, he issued an imperial edict named *Jiaomin bangwen* 教民榜文 (*Regulations on People’s Behavior*), in which regulation No. 19 prescribed that each community and village needed to prepare a wooden bell and elected an elder, no matter being disable or blind. Each time, with the loud beating of the bell in hand, the elected elder traveled around the community accompanied and guided by a child to teach all the neighbors to do good deeds by calling the

¹⁷ Three Northeast Provinces of China are Heilongjiang 黑龙江, Jilin 吉林 and Liaoning 辽宁.
—Translator’s note.

so-called “Six Imperial decrees”—“Show your filial piety to your parents, show your respects to the senior, to be in harmony with others, to educate your children and grandchildren, and to behave yourself properly and not to cause any trouble in defiance of the law.” Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (CE 1654–1722) and Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (CE 1687–1735) of the Qing dynasty (CE 1644–1911) issued the imperial decrees respectively in the name of *Kangxi shengyu* 康熙圣谕 (*Imperial Decrees of Emperor Kangxi*) and of *Shengyu guangxun* 圣谕广训 (*Imperial Decrees and Instructions*), which all preached the traditional Chinese moral and ethic thoughts and ideas.¹⁸ Similarly, speech can be used to publicize the government and local new policies, in particular, for the people living in the remote places in addition to its functions in advocating family harmony and filial piety. This can explain why the Qing government never held a total negative attitude toward speech. In fact, it hoped to spread the new policies via speech on one hand while tried to “forbid the spread of any radical or dangerous thoughts” on the other. But it is only the Qing government’s wishful thinking. At the same time, the revolutionists or reformists refused to see speech, the new form of oral art, to become the old stereotyped stuff for publicizing imperial decrees. Consequently, the promoters of speech did pay great attention to the speech content,” because “the speaker is not only a person who has great talent of speaking but one having knowledge, great vision and new thoughts. ... If not so, the speech may mislead the listeners instead.”¹⁹ Actually, at the time, only when the speeches concerning the nation’s economy, people’s livelihood or the international situations, they will be warmly welcomed by the young people who were thirst for knowledge and passionate for the politics.

Compared to that between speech and preaching, the relationship between speech and storytelling is more complex and interesting. Storytelling and Classical Chinese drama are two main channels for traditional Chinese to be educated, which usually spread specific ideological thoughts and moral values with moving stories. This method is also borrowed by the reformists in late Qing. Liang Qichao’s novel revolution is just out of his realization of novel’s incomparable value in “bringing out the human nature and feelings.” He praised that new novel “awakes Chinese people to a new world”²⁰ and criticized “the traditional, old novel being full of sex and violence.”²¹ However, Liang’s arguments fail to break away from the Chinese traditional criterion for literary criticism, that is, “literary writings are meant to expound truth.” And when there

¹⁸ Li Xiaoti 李孝悌, 2001, pp.65–66.

¹⁹ Xia Xiaohong 夏晓虹, 2006, pp. 379–410.

²⁰ Chen Pingyuan, 1989, Vol. 1, pp. 1–8. See also Chen Pingyuan, 1993, pp. 227–242.

²¹ Yinbingshi zhuren, Preface, *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji* 新中国未来记 *Future of New China*. (Yinbingshi zhuren Liang Qichao’s *hao*.—Translator’s note.)

are political novels for “declaring personal political views” as well as young storytellers who speak out opinions on public affairs in the theatre, how is it possible to make a clean distinction between speech and storytelling? Sure, the basic distinction between the two is clear: one is to tell a story; the other is to deliver an argument. But it is no surprise to see an orator stepping out of the rostrum delivers the speech by adopting other artistic forms like novel, drama and storytelling to arouse listeners’ emotion within a certain context. For example, *Beijing huabao* 北京画报 (*Beijing Illustrated Newspaper*) published a picture “Xiyuanzi jinhua” 戏园子进化 (“Evolution of Theatres in China”) in 1906, which said:

The rehearsal of new plays is easy to move people’s heart and renovate the old habits and customs. During the three days, the fourth, fifth and sixth day of Leap 4th Lunar month (extra lunar month), Tian Jiyun 田际云, the head of Yuchengban 玉成班 (Yucheng Theatrical Troupe), acted in a new play, *Huixin nüshi zhuan* 惠兴女士传 (*Biography of Ms. Huixing*), which was staged especially for the founding of Kuangxuehui 匡学会 (Assistant Study Society). Its admission fee increased 500 coins, but all the additional income was finally contributed to the public. In particular, the troupe invited Peng Yizhong 彭翼, Wang Zizhen 王子贞 and Zhang Zhanyun 张展云, the publisher of *Beijing huabao*, to deliver speeches before the performance. Their speeches were cheered and applauded warmly by the audience, who were completely absorbed. ...If each Chinese theatrical troupe rehearses and stages new plays, if speeches are given before each play, the Chinese public will be enlightened and changed rapidly.

This new move of Yuchengban did make a great stir at the time, which was reported by *Dagongbao* and *Shuntian shibao* 顺天时报 (*Shuntian Times*).²² When speech improves new theatrical play’s moral values and in turn, new theatrical play creates a good atmosphere for speech-making, why not let each shine brilliantly in the company of the other?

However, any speech is doomed to vanish in a flash no matter how moving and fantastic it has been. At an age without sound and video recording equipments, the best way of making speech be received by more people is to transfer the speaking voices into written words. Qiu Jin, except for promoting speaking societies as mentioned above, she also supported “to publish speech texts. Thus, many readers will have the chance to know more about worldly affairs and academic knowledge.”²³ In addition, Liu Shipai 刘师培 put forward

²² Li Xiaoti, 2001, p. 109; Xia Xiaohong, 2004, 134.

²³ Li Miaogen, 1990, p. 484.

a practical suggestion: the best way to popularize speech around China is to combine it with the newspapers and magazines published in Vernacular Chinese:

Recently, speech-making has become a common practice in China. However, the vernacular spoken varieties of Chinese did obstruct its sound growth all over China beyond regional and provincial differences. The number of listeners is, therefore, limited. However, the newspapers and magazines written in Vernacular Chinese can reach readers throughout China regardless of all varieties of spoken Chinese.

In fact, both speech and newspapers and magazines work for spreading new knowledge in an easy read and easy understood way. To launch “speech column” on the newspapers and magazines is to create a win-win situation.

Fortunately, the efforts of transferring speaking voices into written words made by some people like Qiu Jin and Liu Shiwei make us possible to have a present-day discussion on the “enlightenment in voices” in late Qing. The initial intention of combining speech with newspapers and publishers is to enlarge the range of speech’s receivers. But such a combination finally influences the development of the Vernacular Chinese Movement and the innovation of modern Chinese literature, which is absolutely out of initiators’ expectation.

2 Speech, more functions in perspective

Speech, like any other newborn things in late Qing, has its models to follow. The issue No. 20 of the magazine *Xin xiaoshuo* traced the development of speech back to its western origin in 1905:

Speech has gained a great popularity in the West because it is easy to touch people’s heart. And it can be on any topic. Recently, after being introduced into Japan, speech is almost made at any gatherings and meetings no matter how big or small.

While the newspaper *Shuntian shibao* emphasized the speech-making examples set by the Japanese:

Japan, one of China’s East Asian neighbors, has developed into a new great power in the world system. The great Japanese reformists like Kido Takayoshi and Okubo Toshimichi all promoted speech for Japanese enlightenment at the beginning of Meiji Reform. When today’s China is striving to become stronger and prosperous, Chinese people are also needed to be enlightened at first,

which depends on a well-spread educational system. And speech given in Vernacular Chinese can be regarded as a basic step for such an Enlightenment.

Indeed, the popularity of speech in Meiji Japan is a product of the spreading of Western culture into the East. Thus, it makes sense that *Xin xiaoshuo* set up Western models for late-Qing Chinese to follow. But practically, the promotion of speech as a means for Chinese Enlightenment was following Japan's example as indicated by *Shuntian shibao*. By the way, the newspaper itself was launched by the Japanese.

Nevertheless, it would be much better to mention Fukuzawa Yukichi rather than Kido Takayoshi and Okubo Toshimichi when talking about Japanese speech-making experience. For one thing, he made the first Japanese semantic translation of speech. He also opened special courses on speech-making together with others at Keio Gijuku (the forerunner of Keio University) for four years since the 6th year of the Meiji reign period (CE 1873). Speeches, especially that talking about political situations, changed the traditional political operation of releasing written political documents from higher to lower levels. Under this circumstance, speech, being one of new media, not only enriches oral expression but also enlarges the urban space. It finally becomes a symbol of Meiji period, a new era in Japanese history.²⁴

In one article—"On Promoting Speech" collected in his *Gakumon no Susume* (*An Encouragement of Learning*), Fukuzawa Yukichi, like Chinese scholars of later generations, started from the definition of speech:

The Japanese word "enzetsu," or the English word "speech," means that a speaker who gives a talk on gatherings to share his views with the audience. It is a new thing in Japan. Only the way that Buddhist monks' expounding Buddhist doctrines in Buddha temples seems to be a little likes it. But in the West, speech is very popular which is given almost everywhere: at parliament house of the government or scholarly meetings, in companies or civilians' gatherings or on the occasion of wedding or funeral only if over ten people gather together. Speakers usually point out the gatherings' purposes, provide their opinions, or even share their feelings, which foster the social atmosphere of voicing one's opinions in public.²⁵

Fukuzawa Yukichi mainly discussed speech's functions or values in two aspects: literary and scholarly. He suggested that "Oral expression in speech can naturally arouses audience's interest" and "speaking plays an important role in

²⁴ Yōichi, Komori, Chen Duoyou 陈多友 (trans.), 2003, p. 30, p. 40 & pp. 110–111.

²⁵ Fukuzawa Yukichi, Qun Li 群力 (trans.), 1984, p. 65.

learning and teaching.”²⁶ Fukuzawa Yukichi’s emphasis is put on speaking as an oral form but not on spoken language’s shallowness and vulgarity. He also stressed that the popularization of speech is not only for enlightenment but also for language learning, which he explained in Chapter Seventeen, “On Expectation” of *Gakumon no Susume*.²⁷ Also Fukuzawa Yukichi discussed how to encourage debating in the first chapter of his *Bunmeiron no Gairyaku (Outline of Civilization)*.²⁸ It is, therefore, easy to find that Fukuzawa Yukichi’s arguments on speech’s functions are mainly around Japanese intellectuals’ self-education or self-enlightenment, which is different from that made by Chinese intellectuals in late Qing.

An orator should not take on a condescending air before the audience all the time. Instead, he or she needs self-questioning and self-examination. In late Qing and Early Republic of China, there are such orators who are good at learning, full of noble thoughts, and know how to examine themselves. However, they stressed excessively on speech’s function for Chinese Enlightenment while ignoring its other functions. For instance, we care more about speech’s significance in the politics history of China but seldom mention its contribution to the development of Chinese academy. How speech is beneficial for the development of a brand new learning proposed by Fukuzawa Yukichi is seldom mentioned in Late-Qing and modern China.

Li Xiaoti 李孝悌 in one section of his *Qingmo de xiaceng shehui qimeng yundong* 清末的下层社会启蒙运动 (*The Enlightenment Movement of Late Qing Grassroots*) classified speech topics into eight categories: “foot-binding admonishment,” “giving up opium-smoking,” “big events” (i.e. The 1905 Anti-American boycott against American exclusion of Chinese laborers; the 1907 big flood of North of the Yangtze River), “encouraging silkworm raising and industrial development,” “current political situation and patriotism,” “any topic related to reformists,” “army and police,” and “revolution propaganda.”²⁹ All the topics listed by Li have nothing to do with the spread of culture or intellectual knowledge but with political propagation and social mobilization for the illiterate or the less-educated. In fact, there is another kind of “speech” existed in China at that time. Zhang Taiyan once delivered speeches on “a systematic introduction to different academic knowledge” in “simple and easy-understood language” during his lecture tour in Japan (CE 1906–1910) and the launch of his magazine *Jiaoyu jinyu zazhi* 教育今语杂志 (*Today’s Education*, CE 1910). Such “speech-like” lectures are not for the partially literate but for the high-educated. With the

²⁶ Ibid., p. 98.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 98.

²⁸ Fukuzawa Yukichi, Beijing bianyishe 北京编译社 (trans.), 1982, pp. 5–6.

²⁹ Li Xiaoti, 2001, pp. 114–150.

prevalence of new-style schools in China, this kind of speech for intellectual knowledge spread and cultural exchanges gain great popularity.

Ren Hongjuan 任鸿隽 recalled his experience of listening to Zhang Taiyan's lectures on *Shuowen* 说文 (*Origin of Chinese Character*), *Zhuangzi* 庄子 (*Book of Master Zhuang*) and "Chinese literature history" in Tokyo. Ren wrote that "if Zhang's lectures could be recorded word by word, it will be a wonderful article in Vernacular Chinese having no need to be polished." But "unfortunately, when Zhang published his speeches in Classical Chinese, the vividness and wit of his spoken language have been lost."³⁰ It is no doubt to see that Ren's remarks made several years later have the mistakes and omissions because he valued Vernacular Chinese completely. Ren thus confused the functions of Vernacular Chinese with that of Classical Chinese. But he did hit a right point when noting the big differences between speaking and writing in creating atmosphere and bringing out striking effects. As far as the published books on Zhang's lecture tour in Japan is concerned, there are a book named *Guogu lunheng* 国故论衡 (*Discourses on Chinese Cultural Heritage*) and a lecture collection titled *Zhang Taiyan de baihuawen* 章太炎的白话文 (*Zhang Taiyan's Works in Vernacular Chinese*). Although a reader having no idea of the articles collected in *Zhang Taiyan de baihuawen*, he or she still can classify them as "lectures" by intuition for they are widely different from Zhang's usual writing style. However, to read these articles as recorded lectures, or as the original lecturing texts, or as Zhang's lecture-like writing is not an easy judgment to be made. But they surely aimed at potential "listeners" rather than "readers." The writing style exemplified by these articles published by magazines in Vernacular Chinese is free and loose, full of casual digression and subjective arguments, which is different from Zhang's ordinary well-organized, precise and measured writing style. It really responded perfectly to Zhang's vivid and humorous lecturing style instead.

Teaching at the new-style schools, it is unlikely to be a phrase-monger as *Lixuejia* 理学家 (the idealist Confucianists)³¹ were at Chinese old-style schools but to impart specialized knowledge within some scientific teaching system no matter what political views or academic ideas the teachers hold. Such a change of learning materials as well as teaching styles can be easily found when reading Kang Youwei's *Wanmu Caotang shuo* 万木草堂说 (*Lectures Given at Wanmu Caotang*) and Liang Qichao's *Zhongguo jinsanbainian xueshu shi* 中国近三百年学术史 (*Chinese Intellectual History of Recent Three Hundred Years*) in comparison. Among the modern Chinese intellectuals, some who were not good

³⁰ Ren Hongjuan 任鸿隽, 2002, p. 708.

³¹ *Lixue* 理学, also *Daoxue* 道学; *Songxue* 宋学, is a Confucian school of idealist philosophy of the Song Dynasty (CE 960–1279) and the Ming dynasty (CE 1368–1644).—Translator's note.

at speaking mainly focused on writing but most engaged in both of them, such as Kang Youwei, Cai Yuanpei, Zhang Taiyan, Liang Qichao, Liu Shiwei, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren 周作人, Hu Shi 胡适, Tao Xingzhi 陶行知, Liang Shumin 梁漱溟, Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, and Wen Yiduo 闻一多. They all once made excellent speeches. As a result, the study of Chinese intellectuals since late Qing depends not only on their writings but on their vanished “speaking voices” or the “speeches” that happened to be noted down as well.

In January 1912, Cai Yuanpei published immediately an open telegram to the provincial military governors for urging them to carry out society education centering on speech after being appointed as the Republic’s first Minister of Education:

Society education is an urgent task in today’s China, which may start with speech. Now I request earnestly each provincial government, according to its specific regional environment, to set up temporary provisional speech standards, select speech materials and issue circular order for speech-making around the province assisted by other useful means like pictures and films.³²

In June and July of the same year, Cai Yuanpei assigned others to open “Beijing xiaqi yanjianghui” 北京夏期演讲会 (“Summer Speaking Society in Beijing”) for doing research, deepening understanding and gaining academic achievements during the summer vocation. A number of domestic and foreign experts in different academic fields, invited by the Republic’s Ministry of Education, made series of speeches on humanities, social studies, natural science and military science, for example, Yan Fu’s 严复 speech on “Jinhua tianyan” 进化天演 (“On Theory of Evolution”), Zhang Taiyan’s “Dongyang zhexue” 东洋哲学 (“Japanese Philosophy”), Xu Shouchang’s 许寿裳 “Jiaoyu xue” 教育学 (“On Education”) and Lu Xun’s “Meishu luelun” 美术略论 (“Introduction to Aesthetics”).³³

It might as well to take Lu Xun as an example to discuss how the modern Chinese intellectuals give consideration to both political and academic values of speech. Lu Xun once claimed, “I [Lu Xun] may be a good teacher but not an eloquent orator.”³⁴ He may refer to his teaching experiences at Beijing and Xiamen universities by giving courses “History of Chinese Novel”(its lectures later published as *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中国小说史略 *A Brief History of Chinese Novel*) and “History of Chinese Literature” (its lectures published as *Han wenxue shi gangyao* 汉文学史纲要 *Essentials of Chinese literature History*)

³² Gao Pingshu 高平叔, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 402

³³ Ibid., pp. 450–451.

³⁴ Lu Xun, 1981, Vol. 7, p.5.

respectively in 1920s. And his claim that “not being an eloquent orator” is actually to ridicule his numerous speeches made in Shanghai during those ten years. He said there was no necessary to keep these speeches not because the speeches’ texts were lost but:

The one who noted down my speeches made commissions and omissions for his misunderstanding of my dialect. He even made an obscure selection of my speaking contents for we have different views: the important parts for me were totally lost while my very general opinions he kept a detail record. And even some seemed to be created by himself on purpose, which were absolutely opposite to my original meaning. I have to regard such records of my speeches as the notetaker’s own writing that need to be deleted.³⁵

Thus, “being not an eloquent orator” is not Lu Xun’s modest self-evaluation but a sarcastic remark made on speech record.

In fact, from late Qing on, the teaching activities at new-style schools are mainly around classroom teaching rather than students’ self-study emphasized by old-style schools. Consequently, all the teachers need to learn how to speak in public no matter in classroom or in public. Lu Xun’s growth as an orator from early years’ unsuccessful experiences to his later years’ great popularity contributes not only to the establishment of his leadership position in modern Chinese literature but to his gradual grasp of speech-making techniques as well.

Lu Xun gave a series of speeches on “Introduction to Aesthetics” at Beijing xiaqi yanjianghui in June and July of 1912 when he was the chief of the First Section of Society Education Department of Republic’s Ministry of Education. By reading Lu Xun’s diary, it is possible to get a glimpse of his speeches’ effects. Lu Xun noted down that “There were about thirty listeners, five or six of them left in the middle” during his first speech; “about twenty people are present” during the third; the fourth one “began with one person but ended with ten.”³⁶ Only the second one is not mentioned. Lu Xun’s diary features in its simplicity and brief, but he even mentioned how many people left in the middle of his speech in these diaries, which proves that Lu Xun made a careful observation of his audience and also cared about their response. Fortunately, the increased number of audience make Lu Xun feel relieved.

Over ten years later, Lu Xun, having been one great writer of his time, was invited to give a speech at Beijing University when going to visit his relatives in Beijing. In his letter to his wife, Xu Guangping 许广平, Lu Xun described the audiences’ response like this:

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Lu Xun, 1981, Vol. 14, pp. 6–10.

This afternoon I went to Weimingshe 未名社 (Society of Weiming). Later, friends and acquaintances invited me for a dinner in Senlong 森隆 Restaurant at Dong An 东安 market. At 7:00 p.m., I delivered a one-hour speech at the second college of Beijing University to thousands of audience. I guess there is no such big gathering like this one before, so the university students did take it as a new thing.³⁷

It is evident to see Lu Xun was satisfied with his own speech that night although he remarked in a ridiculous mood. Li Jiye 李霁野, one member of Weimingshe, also recalled in his memorial article that Lu Xun talked about his speaking experience in the south during that night's feast, where he was warmly welcomed by the youth although his speeches given in dialect needed to be interpreted. Li acknowledged that "Mr. Lu felt happy with his popularity." Moreover, Li wrote that after the speech, "When talking about the alive atmosphere at end of each speech, Mr. Lu told us that the young people in the south, unlike that in the north, were more excited and passionate, who usually held and lifted him up, then threw him high into the sky, even at some time, made him feel dizzy and faint."³⁸

There are no historical materials to show that Lu Xun had any speech training experience. But it is certain that he did grasp the art of speech making since 1926, at least, when he gave speeches at Xiamen University. As a professor giving courses on Chinese literature history at Chinese Department as well as at Faculty of Chinese National Culture, Lu Xun should "have persuaded the readers to concentrate on studying ancient and classical Chinese books." In fact, Lu Xun did in a diametrically opposite way. He once made a speech titled "Shao du Zhongguo shu, zuo haoshizhitu" 少读中国书, 做好事之徒 ("Reading less classical Chinese books and to be a Meddler"), which "gained thunderous applause lasting for a long time."³⁹ Reading Lu Xun's diary, it is easy to find that Lu Xun's speeches usually last for half an hour (sometimes for an hour), which is different from the usual class hour. For both teachers and students, it is a hard test when being bombed by speaking voices continually for two hours in a class. By contrast, it is easy to create active atmosphere with novel arrangement and gain warm response by reaching two or three climax during a thirty or forty minutes' speech. The recorded texts of Lu Xun's speeches in his last ten years are mainly collections of his random thoughts instead of serious argumentative essays. This is what helps him hit the success.

From late Qing on, with the rapid development of new-style education, the

³⁷ Lu Xun, 1981, Vol. 11, p. 308.

³⁸ Li Jiye 李霁野, 2004, pp. 29–30.

³⁹ Zhu Jinshun 朱金顺, 1979, pp. 16–19.

Chinese intellectuals balance themselves freely in writing monographs, textbooks and speeches. A monograph is usually expected to be thought-provoking, a textbook focuses on a systematic presentation of one subject and a speech cares about the audience's spontaneous response. Such kind of distinction among the three is well understood by Lu Xun. For his over fifty speeches that were recorded, only sixteen of them have been collected in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 (*The Complete Works of Lu Xun*). It is not because most speech texts were lost; instead, they were given up by Lu Xun willingly for the incorrect record or the repetition in topic. But the sixteen speeches published do reflect Lu Xun's thoughts and ideas which run through his writings.⁴⁰ Between politics and academy, Lu Xun holds a "necessary tension"—he stands against "Academy for academic sake" initiated by some academic groups on one hand and refuses to regard the literary, ideological or academic speeches as political propaganda on the other.

Speech has been used in China for Chinese enlightenment, social motivation, cultural spread or intellectual knowledge dissemination since late Qing. And these functions of speech are not opposite against each other but interacted and interrelated. Thus, speech-making, being the prevailing trend in modern China, can be discussed with education system, Vernacular Chinese Movement and Chinese writing style in perspectives rather than with "Chinese Enlightenment" only.

3 Speech and China's new-style schools

In *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji*, Liang Qichao imagined that "speeches and debates will be made and held everywhere everyday" when Chinese celebrate the 50th anniversary of 1898 Reform. Liang also assumed that the speakers would be the well-known scholars and experts from all over the world and the listeners would be Chinese university students. Such a link between speech and new-style schools made by Liang has its profound implication because the new-style schools did play an important role in achieving widespread acceptance of speech in China since late Qing.

At first, speech is championed because it is viewed as a supplement to the classroom studying. Then, the speech training courses or activities given at China's new-style schools improve speech-making techniques and enrich speech contents. Thus speech and new-style schools interact with each other both as causes and effects. As for the three best tools for spreading civilization, it is

⁴⁰ Chen Pingyuan (2005), "Fenlie de lequ yu dikang de lichang—Lu Xun de shuxue wenti jiqi jieshou" 分裂的乐趣与抵抗的立场—鲁迅的述学文体及其接受 ("Tast and Resistance: Lu Xun's Scholarly Style and its Reception"), *Wenxue pinglun* 文学评论 (*Literary Review*). No. 5.

speech rather than new-style schools and newspapers and magazines, as Liang Qichao suggested, should be used more in China, a country being poor and full of illiterates. *Shuntian shibao* once said in 1905 that the easy-to-understand speech “provides messages that has been failed to be taught at school or be reported in newspapers and magazines.” This appraisal is also acknowledged by Zhao Er’xun 赵而巽, the governor of Shanxi 山西 province in late Qing. As early as 1902, Zhao presented a memorial to the throne to discuss openly on how to build up new-style schools in China to get more people educated. But Zhao pointed out that “Unlike shallow and empty speech that exerts its influence on the audience immediately, school will produce notable results ten years later.” Owing to different political standpoints, the late-Qing intellectuals’ ideas and thoughts on education varied greatly. But they almost agreed that speech was a supplement or substitute for classroom studying.

Not every one can make a good speech as wished because speech-making needs knowledge, passion and techniques. Zhou Guisheng revealed that his *Zhi xin shi xin yi cong* serialized in the magazine *Xin xiaoshuo* was “a collection of my [Zhou’s] translation of the interesting essays published in foreign newspapers and magazines.” And at end of each of his translated essay, Zhou also provided his opinions or comments under the name of Jianchenzi 检尘子. In one essay “Speech,” Jianchenzi [Zhou himself] said, “After June 1905, the anti-American boycott arose. The speeches on this were given in the society almost everyday. I listened to some of them but found a speaker always delivered the same speech from one place to another. The speaker is almost like a moving recording machine appeared at different places. Or anything else?”⁴¹ Such ironic remarks on speech can also be found in the novels of *Wenming xiaoshi* 文明小史 (*Brief History of Civilization*), *Xuejiu xin tan* 学究新谈 (*New Arguments of Scholars*) and *Xuejie jing* 学界镜 (*Mirror of Educational Circle*). Speech is a good thing but speech-making is not an easy job, which requires special training and continuous practicing. On this part, new-styles schools have an unavoidable responsibility.

Huang Yanpei recalled that Cai Yuanpei helped students “to set up speaking society to practice speeches regularly at Nanyang Gongxue,”⁴² when Cai was the principal Chinese teacher of the special class. Zhu Youhuan 朱有骞, once collected some historical materials on this speaking society in his edited *Zhongguo jindai xuezhi shiliao* 中国近代学制史料 (*Historical Materials on Modern Chinese Education System*). But it is hard to confirm that these historical materials are related to Cai and Huang for they are undated. Among them, there is one titled “The Origin of the Speaking Society at Nanyang Gongxue,” which

⁴¹ Li Xiaoti, 2001, pp. 95–96.

⁴² Zhu Youhuan 朱有骞, 1986, p. 537.

says:

Speech! Speech! It will last forever. Being born with new China, it not only satisfies our teachers' expectation but makes our students shining brilliantly as well.⁴³

Such exciting claims sound a little exaggerated at present; but they do reflect the tastes and sense of responsibilities of teachers and students in China's new-style schools at that time.

Almost being at the same step with the first sign of a new century, the speaking societies are established one by one at China's new-style schools to develop speech training and practice. The speech-making level is then improved rapidly both within and outside campus with the unremitting efforts of presidents and teachers and the earnest and conscious practice of students. A general view of speech practice and training at Fudan University, Nankai University, Tsinghua University and The Imperial University of Beijing (the former body of Beijing University) in early years can be gained by reading the related historical materials.

In 1902, Ma Xiangbo 马相伯 founded Zhendan Xueyuan 震旦学院 (Aurora University)⁴⁴ in Shanghai, which planned to construct a spacious speech hall from the start. With its opening in March 1903, Ma Xiangbo exclaimed to promote speech-making at campus in system.⁴⁵ For opposing the missionaries' complete control of Zhendan Xueyuan, Ma Xiangbo established Zhendan Gongxue 震旦公学 (Zhendan Public School) in 1905. Again, the new school regulations prescribed clearly that "the President and other staff need to give speeches in public every Saturday or Sunday afternoon" and "the students need to practice speaking manners and debating skills." The concrete procedure is that "one student gives a speech at first and then one or two other students take turns to provide their opinions and evaluation. In this way, the students gain mutual improvement by observing each other's performance."⁴⁶ Years later, Ma Xiangbo recalled satisfactorily how he taught students the speech-making techniques at the gatherings, for example, "how to make sections in a speech, how to arouse

⁴³ Ibid., p. 544.

⁴⁴ Translator's note: Zhendan Xueyuan (Aurora University, French: Université l'Aurore) was a pre-eminent Catholic university in Shanghai from 1903 to 1952. The founder was Father Joseph Ma Xiangbo S.J. (1840–1939). In 1952, Université l'Aurore was merged into Fudan University and the Medical School of it has been a part of Shanghai Second Medical College since 1952.

⁴⁵ See Xuan Bingshan 宣炳善, 2005, "Daxue yanjiang yu ziwo qimeng" 大学演讲与自我启蒙 (Speaking practice of university students and their self-enlightenment), *Shu Wu* 书屋 (*The Study*), No. 8.

⁴⁶ Zhu Youhuan 朱有贻, 1986, p. 714.

audience's attention at the beginning, and how to make a good conclusion with a clear summary of the key points."⁴⁷ As for Ma's charisma as a speaker, Yu Youren 于右任, one of his early students once described as follows:

Every Sunday, Mr. Ma called our students together at the great hall to deliver speeches on current political situation or on new knowledge introduction. We never felt tired of listening for one or two hours. ... Maybe it is because Mr. Ma was good at creating active atmosphere with his humorous words and vivid description. The audience always felt having a heart-to-heart communion with him. Among all the speakers I have met, Mr. Ma is really the first one who keeps a great balance between scientific analysis and emotional expression during the speech. He makes each problem sound interesting.⁴⁸

Generally, a person who knows the importance of speech does not mean he may fall in love with speech-making. Even he loves it, which does not guarantee he will be good at it. So a person, like Mr. Ma Xiangbo, who both loves and is good at speech-making, is really hard to come by. Ma Xiangbo's methods for improving students' speech abilities by holding speech meetings every Sunday not only follow the tradition of Society of Jesus but also contain the essences of lecturing adopted at Chinese academy of classical learning.⁴⁹

The other University President who both loves and is good at speech-making is Zhang Boling 张伯苓. He founded Nankai Private Middle School (Sili nankai zhongxue 私立南开中学) in 1904 and Nankai University in 1919. *Dagongbao* once reported specially that Zhang Boling led the students of Nankai Private Middle School to attend the second speech contest held at Xuanjiang suo 宣讲所 (Speech Institute) at Xima 西马 Road, Tianjin 天津 on 16 November 1900. On that day, thousands of listeners were reported to be present, who listened to the enthusiastic and fervent political speeches but enjoyed slide shows on European, American and Japanese sceneries as well from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The students' going into streets to give speeches is a result of their ordinary training and practice. Huang Yusheng 黄钰生, an early graduate from Nankai Private Middle School and later worked for a long time at Nankai University as one leader, once reminded with deep emotion how President Zhang encouraged them to participate in making speeches:

⁴⁷ Zhu Weizheng 朱维铮, 1996, p. 1110; p. 1151.

⁴⁸ Yu Youren 于右任, "Zhuinian xiangbo fuzi bing lueshu qi yanxing" 追念相伯夫子并略述其言行 "A Reminiscence of Mr. Ma Xiangbo and a Sketch of His Words and Deeds" carried in *Guomin Gongbao* 国民公报 (*National Public Newspaper*) on 26 November 1939.

⁴⁹ See Fudan University History Writing Group, *Fudan daxue zhi* 复旦大学志 (*History of Fudan University*), Vol. 1 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1985), p. 29.

Under the encouragement of President Zhang, the speech practice and contests were developed vigorously at school. No matter in each class or for the Students Association, speech-making practice becomes one main activity. The champions on school speech contests also gained prize. Our respected and beloved Prime Minister Zhou Enlai 周恩来 of People's Republic of China, at that time, was the head of the speaking society and I was one member.⁵⁰

As for Zhang Boling, he gave speeches to all the students at School's great hall in the fifth and sixth section of class every Wednesday. Huang memorized that "At the beginning of a speech, Zhang's speaking tone is low and slow; gradually it becomes higher and serious. Accordingly, his whole expression changes to be passionate and vigorous."⁵¹ According to Wu Dayou 吴大猷, another student who later became the Dean of Central Academy of Taiwan, President Zhang's speech has its special flavor: "He [Zhang] give speeches so freely as the speaking topics slip out of his mouth by nature. His speaking words are serious as well as facetious. But he never spoke hollow and big words."⁵²

The university that paid most attention to speech at that time is Tsinghua University because it was established originally as a preparation university for students who will study in the United States. It has professional teachers on speech-making and specific textbooks; it required all the students to practice speech, at least, for three years from Grade four of its secondary school. Meanwhile, a large number of speaking or debating societies were established. For example, there were English-speaking societies like Wenyouthui 文友会, Yingyu yanshuo bianlunhui 英语演说辩论会 (English Speaking and Debating Society), De'erta she 得而他社 and Chinese-speaking societies like Daci she 达辞社, Ciming yanjiuhui 辞命研究会, Guoyu yanshuo bianlunhui 国语演说辩论会 (Chinese Speaking and Debating Society). In particular, Tsinghua University set up speech committee for holding various speech contests at campus regularly.⁵³

However, is it worthy to put such a great effort into improving students' speech-making abilities and techniques (including students' spoken language, speech structure, speaking rate, tone, signs, expression in the eyes and psychological quality and etc.)? It is a question that has been asked and argued all the time. Wen Yiduo's experience may be a good example to answer it. Wen spent ten years at Tsinghai University, from being admitted in 1912 to be a graduate to advance his studies in the United States in 1922. During the ten years,

⁵⁰ Shen Panwen 申泮文, 1991, p. 39.

⁵¹ See Nankai University History Writing Group, *Nankai daxue xiaoshii* 南开大学校史 (*History of Nankai University*), (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1989), p. 37.

⁵² Wu Dayou 吴大猷, 1981, 262.

⁵³ Su Yunfeng 苏云峰, 1996, pp. 301–309.

Wen participated actively in speech-making training and practice. In his diaries, Wen wrote down his practice experiences as well as expressed his anxiety over falling behind other students in speech-making. Until one day, he wrote in a relief that “I [Wen] have made a great progress in speech-making. But I know I need to keep on practicing as before.”⁵⁴ No matter how hard he worked to improve his speech-making techniques, Wen actually kept disagreement to himself on such an emphasis over students’ oral expression abilities at Tsinghua.⁵⁵ However, the solid foundation laid by his early years at Tsinghua University really helped him to give impetuous speeches with ease to various audience when he had been a professor at Xinan lianda 西南联大 (South-west Associated University)⁵⁶ and an activist for democratic movement in Kunming 昆明 twenty years later.

The relationship between speech and new-style schools is best embodied by the well-known event of “Ming zhong shang tang” 鸣钟上堂. It is about the protest against Russia’s interference in the affairs of Dongsansheng. In 1903, the Anti-Russia Movement participated by many Chinese educational institutions spread nationwide. Lots of protest activities and speech texts were reported or published in newspapers and magazines. The participation of the staff and students from the Imperial University of Beijing was very influential because of its leading status in China’s new-style schools. This event even started the student movements in China which lasted throughout the twentieth century.⁵⁷

On 3 May 1903, *Dagongbao* carried an article titled “Anti-Russia Protest by Students of the Imperial University of Beijing.” It reported in detail how the staff and students of the university began Anti-Russia protest: “At first, Lecturer Fan gave a speech on the serious consequence of Russia’s interference in the affairs of Dongsansheng. Fan’s speech was warmly applauded and even moved some to tears. Then almost each student standing behind the rostrum spoke out their opinions and suggestions.”⁵⁸ It was notable that during this Anti-Russia Movement, the students not only adopted traditional Chinese means of submitting written requests to the authorities but also used new social motivation methods, such as giving public speech and publishing open telegrams. The new

⁵⁴ Wen Yiduo 闻一多, 1993, Vol. 12, p. 413.

⁵⁵ See Yan Hao (2006), “Qianggu wenzhang wei jin cai—‘Wen Yiduo yanjiang ji’ xuyan” 千古文章未尽才—《闻一多演讲集》序言 (Preface to Collection of Wen Yiduo’s Speeches), In Chen Pingyuan (ed.), *Xiandai Zhongguo* 现代中国 (*Modern China*), Vol. 7, Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe.

⁵⁶ Xinan Lianda 西南联大, also Xinan lianhe daxue 西南联合大学 (South-West Associated University) is formed by combining Beijing, Tsinghua and Nankai universities during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. — Translator’s note.

⁵⁷ Xiao Chaoran 萧超然, 1988, p. 31.

⁵⁸ See Beijing University History Writing Group, *Beijing daxue xiaoshi* 北京大学校史 (*History of Beijing University*), (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1993).

methods did have a great deal to do with the students' daily speech training and practice promoted at new-style schools. Yu Tongkui 俞同奎, who first submitted the written request to the Education Secretary for Anti-Russia, wrote the article "Si shi liu nian qian wo kao jin muxiao de jingyan" 四十六年前我考进母校的经验 ("My Experience in Passing the Entrance Exams of Beijing University Forty-six Years Ago") when celebrating the 50th anniversary of Beijing University. The article said, "At that time, we got some political thoughts and ideas mainly by reading parts of banned books in secret. Although we could not get enough information, we did like to develop discussions on gains and losses in national policies, diplomatic affairs and social customs and habits. Some eloquent students liked to give talks, too. I remembered that we usually gathered together at the North or South buildings almost every day to debate and argue after school. We reveled in bombast, liked to quote copiously from a great variety of sources to support our arguments, and even sometimes argued with each other until we were red in the face. It seemed that all of us had the air of Zhuge Liang 诸葛亮⁵⁹ (Chu Keh Liang CE 181–234).⁶⁰

Originally, speech is only a way for speaking out one's thoughts and ideas for inter-communication, which has nothing to do with political parties. However, for a dictatorship state, speech really challenges the power of autocratic monarch by emphasizing independent thinking and freedom of speech. Thus, it is no wonder to find that the central government of the Qing dynasty strictly prohibited students' getting together to give speeches in public. In the 29th year of the Guangxu reign period (CE 1903), Zhang Baixi 张百熙 and others drew up *Xuewu gangyao* 学务纲要 (*Rules and Regulations on Educational Affairs*). It censured that "Recently, the educational circle was permeated with an impudent atmosphere. The intellectuals were inclined to corrupt the society by spreading absurd thoughts. They also tried to interfere in the national affairs by inciting mob disturbance." So the central government "has to lay a prohibition on the student movement completely." Later, in the 33rd year of the Guangxu reign period (CE 1908), the Department of Education proclaimed *Xuebu wei zunzhi buxu xuesheng ganyu guojia zhengzhi, lianmeng jiuzhong, lihui yanshuo deng zhizhao da xuetang* 学部为遵旨不许学生干预国家政治, 联盟纠众, 立会演说等知照大学堂 (*A Notice on Prohibiting Students from Interfering National Politics, Inciting Mob Distance and Establishing Speaking Societies*). This notice stated clearly that "all the actions which interfere in national politics, rebel against

⁵⁹ Zhuge Liang 诸葛亮, statesman and strategist in the State of Shu during the period of the Three Kingdoms, who became an incarnation of wisdom and resourcefulness in Chinese folklore. — Translator's note.

⁶⁰ Yu Tongkui 俞同奎, 1998, p. 24.

orthodoxy, incite mob distance and set up speaking societies are all banned.”⁶¹

If speech were only about general ideas for Chinese enlightenment, if the speech-making courses given at new-style schools on speech texts, speech structure, speaking rate, signs and gestures never drew public attention and if the spread of speech were never prohibited strictly by governments, speech would never be the research target in the academic fields of Chinese politics history and Chinese culture history. In fact, speech always plays a significant role in each Chinese student movement, from the 1903 Anti-Russia Movement to the 1919 May Fourth Movement. Or it is even to say that there would be no surging and various student movements in modern China if “speech” did not work as a special means to enlighten and motivate Chinese people.

Meanwhile, it is also not true to connect any speech given within and outside campus with political protests. Indeed, speech seems like a kaleidoscope in modern China, which works for political propaganda as well as knowledge spread, cares about standpoints as well as speech-making techniques, argues for the justice as well as the equality. The development of two student societies of Beijing University, Xiongbianhui 雄辩会 (Orators Club) and Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan 平民教育讲演团 (Speaking Society for Chinese Mass Education), have proved how Chinese students tried to achieve an equilibrium amidst antagonistic forces in speech.

4 Speech, “Learning a skill” or “Building a career”

Among many active student societies of Beijing University during the May Fourth Movement, there are two main speaking societies: one is Pinmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan founded in March 1913 and the other is Xiongbianhui established in December 1917. Today, the former still draws researchers’ attention while the latter is almost faded out of sight. The essay will conduct a comparative case study of the two societies in their basic structures, ideological causes and development directions to draw a distinct picture of new Chinese intellectuals’ cultural attitudes and modes of thinking. The aims and strategies of a speaking or debating society are not only decided by the potential audience (listeners) but also involved in a series of big, general topics, such as, school and society, thinking and acting, doubt and belief, dialogue and self-opinion, logic and attitude, élites and grassroots and etc. They exert a great influence on the historical destiny of Chinese intellectuals after the May Fourth Movement.

Beijing daxue rikan 北京大学日刊 (*Beijing University Daily*) specially carried

⁶¹ Shu Xincheng 舒新城, 1961, p. 209. See also Beijing University History Writing Group, 1993, Vol. 1, p. 580.

an article to introduce “Beijing university students’ lives and their activities” on its issue published on 17 December 1920 for the celebration of its founding. It listed 21 student societies focused on “learning a skill,” like Yingyue yanjiuhui 音乐研究会 (Music Study Group), Huafa yanjiuhui 画法研究会 (Study Group of Paining Techniques), Zhexue yanjiuhui 哲学研究会 (Philosophy Society), 新潮社 Xinchaoshe (New Fashion Club), Yingwen yanshuohui 英文演说会 (English-Speaking Society) and Xiongbianhui; and mentioned some student societies centered on “building a career,” like Pingmin yexiao 平民夜校 (Evening School for Common People), Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan, and Xuesheng yinhang 学生银行 (Students’ Bank). As for Xiongbianhui, the article introduced it like this: “The society has two divisions: Chinese-speaking division and English-speaking division aimed at improvement of expression and development of thoughts. Public speaking meeting is to be held once a month and debating contest once a semester.” As for Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan, it said, “The society aims to enlighten and awaken the common people with the easy-to-understand speech. Except for the casual ones, the regular speeches are given four times a month.” Although Xiongbianhui and Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan are two speaking societies, they have different target listeners—the former is for university students while the latter is for the common people. As a result, Xiongbianhui is classified as one of student societies focused on “learning a skill” for students’ self-improvement and Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan as one centered on “building a career” with social responsibility. Then the two different kinds of student societies at the same campus cooperated with or opposed to each other? To answer this question, we need, above all, to keep in mind the different functions and aims of speech.

On March 22, 1919, *Beijing daxue rikan* published two notices. The first one said that Pinmin jiangyan tuan would hold its inaugural meeting in the Dean Office of Faculty of Science at Mashenmiao 马神庙 next day. “The society’s committee members will be elected and how to develop the activities will be discussed.” Moreover, a list of thirty nine members was appended to the notice. The second notice mentioned that “the university will provide financial aid to hold speech contest in May each year in order to encourage English-speaking and to train orators.” Unlike Pinmi jiangyan tuan, a student society with a distinct purpose and a clear stand, other active students societies and clubs at Beijing University at that time had no specific aims. From 1917 to 1926, Xiongbianhui, Bianlunhui 辩论会 (Debating Club), Yingwen yanshuohui and Guoyu yanshuohui 国语演说会 (Chinese-speaking Society) were active at campus.

On 16 December 1917, Xiongbianhui held its inaugural meeting at Beijing University to revise its regulations, elect committee members, and invite Prof. Zhang Xingyan 章行严, a professor in ethnics, delivering a speech. Three days later, the society published its official regulations: “The society has two divisions,

Chinese-speaking division and English-speaking division worked for improvement of expression and development of thoughts. Among each division, there are many groups to have speech training and practice everyday. Each semester, a debate contest will be held.” Afterwards, *Beijing daxue rikan* carried the notices of or reports on Xiongbianhui from time to time. On its issue published on 1 January 1918, it carried the “Detailed Regulations of First Group of Chinese-speaking Division of Xiongbianhui”. From the Detailed Regulations, we get to know that first, all the members of the group need to practice speaking and debating; second, they meet regularly every two weeks with two appointed student giving speeches and six other students attending debates; third, the members of review committee are the staff of Beijing University; fourth, the speech topics are self decided but the debate topics are given by review committee.

It is not hard to imagine what a speech is like, but how about a debate? On the issue of *Beijing daxue rikan* published on 2 February 1918, it described a debate on “Growth and Decline of Science and Religion” held by Xiongbianhui in the Classroom One of Department of Law at 10:00 a.m. on January 27, 1918. The positive side argued that “science is making progress while religion is declining.” There were three debaters of each side. The marks were given from four aspects: theory, language, manner and defending. In the debate, the positive side got the upper hand by gaining high marks in the items of theory and language. Finally, the con side lost to the positive side by a score of 415 to 505. In May of the same year, Xiongbianhui held another debate on “Power wins over justice or visa verse?” But the final score of the debate remained unknown.

On 14 March 1919, *Beijing daxue rikan* carried the article, “Gaizu Xiongbianhui zhi tiyi” 改组雄辩会之提议 (“A Proposal on Restructuring Xiongbianhui”), which said that Xiongbianhui will be restructured to Beijing daxue bianlunhui 北京大学辩论会 (Debating Society of Beijing University) proposed by Chen Qixiu 陈启修 and others. The article put the reasons in this way:

Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius) taught his students proper speech, and his contemporary Zichan 子产, a reforming government official in the nearby state of Zheng 郑, made his country avoid being attached by hegemonic system of alliance with his eloquent words. Thus the importance of verbal skills in knowledge spread and statecraft has been fully understood from generation to generation. The earlier establishment of Xiongbianhui is just to improve student’s expression and develop their thoughts. However, the society failed to develop greatly owing to the shortage of qualified orators and limited practice period. ... Now because our former President of the society went to study abroad, we decide to restructure Xiongbianhui to Beijing daxue

bianlunhui by drawing up new regulations to have a continuity of our basic aims.

The members of new debating society still met once every two weeks to improve their verbal skills. But the new society invited the President of Beijing University at that time to be its president and some staff to be its committee members and even claimed to “hold joint debating contest with other universities.” It is then clear that the new society is no longer a pure student society but gets a strong bond with the University Administration.

When the May Fourth Movement broke out in 1919, Beijing daxue bianlunhui announced at *Beijing daxue rikan* that “The debating society will hold no more activities until the campus upheaval calms down...because all the members have been fully engaged in campaigning for national affairs.” But the reason behind the scene may be that the stormy power struggle made by student movements is out of tune with the elegant and peaceful speech practice at campus. Thus, the members of the society “will get together to practice speaking and debating at leisure when the movements are over.”

Unlike Xiongbianhui (the former body of Beijing daxue bianlunhui) being suspended, Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan rode on the crest of success during the May Fourth Movement. It recruited new members, found new speaking venues and enlarged the audience by walking into villages and towns. On the issue of *Beijing daxue rikan* printed on 29 September 1929, Zhu Wushan 朱务善, the chief of general affairs of Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan, published “Beijing daxue Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan yuanqi ji zuzhi dagang” 北京大学平民教育讲演团缘起及组织大纲 (The Origin and Organization Outline of Speaking Society for Chinese Mass Education of Beijing University), which said:

The launch of this speaking society for Chinese mass education is successful. Our members participated in the May Fourth Movement and the June Third Movement actively to awaken the common people to the necessity of attending the student movements. The speeches given at rural places exerted the most significant influence on the enlightenment of the common rural people.⁶²

Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan was established to “enlighten and awaken the common people with the easy-to-understand speech” in March 1919 at Beijing university with 39 students from Guominshe 国民社 (Chinese Club) and Xinchao she as its first members. According to the statistics, there are altogether 157 students who once attended this society, even including Yu Pingbo 俞平伯

⁶² See also Wang Xuezheng 王学珍, Vol. 2, 2000, p. 2611.

and Zhu Ziqing who were not good at speaking.⁶³ The activities developed by this society during the May Fourth Movement were reported mostly by *Beijing daxue rikan*. And because most of its key members are also the members of Beijing gongchanzhuyi xiaozu 北京共产主义小组 (Beijing Communist Group), its development accordingly draws great attention of many historians of later generations.

On 8 March 1919, *Beijing daxue rikan* carried “Beijing daxue Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan zhengji tuanyuan qi” 北京大学平民教育讲演团征集团员启 (“Notice on Calling up New Members by Speaking Society for Chinese Mass Education of Beijing University”), which stated:

There two types of education: one is school education for getting educated with school knowledge; the other is mass education for spreading knowledge among people by giving public speech or publishing newspapers and magazines. As for a republic country, mass education is the basis which means to make education universal and equal. ...The mass education in China can only be done through the means of speech for most Chinese for the time being are illiterates.

This statement did respond to Liang Qichao’s earlier arguments that “it is speech rather than new-style schools and newspapers and magazines should be used more in China, a country being poor and full of illiterates.”

The promotion of mass education in China is not only to enlighten most illiterates but to advance speakers’ moral self-perfection. Deng Kang 邓康 (also Deng Zhongxia 邓仲夏) started his Chinese studies at Beijing University in 1917 and later transferred to study philosophy. He was one of the first members of Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan and also launched Beijing daxue Makesi xueshuo yanjiuhui 北京大学马克思学说研究会 (Study Group on Marx of Beijing University). Being an early Chinese communist, Deng Kang has his special understanding of speech. In June 1920, Deng gave a speech on “Women weishime yao lai jiangyan” 我们为什么来演讲 (“Why we deliver a speech?”). He answered this question directly in his subtitle, that is, to promote mass higher education. He further argued that mass education was important for both listeners and speakers; in other words, it was a thing for all Chinese. The efforts made within and outside campus together bring Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan to a great success.

Unfortunately, the exciting “speaking voices” once echoed in people’s ears from inside and outside Beijing have vanished like wind.⁶⁴ Today, we are unable

⁶³ See also Cao Juren, 1999, p. 36. Wu Zuxiang 吴组缜, 1987, p. 167.

⁶⁴ On this point see Wang Xuezheng, Vol. 2, 2000, pp. 2601–2612, Wang Xuezheng, 1998, pp. 228–230.

to recover the specific content in Deng Kang's or others' speech. In fact, speakers and listeners at that time all know that "speaking voices" will not last longer or forever as did "written words". However, the shortage of funds forced the speaking society to give up the original plan of publishing members' speech texts. According to "Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan kai disanci changhui lueji" 平民教育讲演团开第三次常会略记 ("Minutes of the third regular meeting of Speaking Society for Chinese Mass Education") carried in *Beijing daxue rikan* on 16 March 1920, the society "will distribute the texts of speeches for avoiding listeners' misunderstanding and misinterpretation and will publish collections of speeches among the audience outside Beijing." Half a month later, "Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan qishi" 平民教育讲演团启事 ("Notice of Speaking Society for Chinese Mass Education") claimed in *Beijing daxue rikan* that "Being afraid that some speaker's dialects may not be fully understood by listeners, the society decide to mimeograph all the speech texts." However, the operation of the society depended on "each member's yearly membership fee, which is only for 1 *yuan* and some donations from listeners." The society, therefore, has to face a drastic shortage of funds. On the issue of *Beijing daxue rikan* published on 22 March 1922, "Beida Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan changnian dahui jishi" 北大平民教育讲演团常年大会纪事 ("Notes of Yearly Meeting of Speaking Society for Chinese Mass Education of Beijing University") mentioned again how to raise funds "to publish speech texts." Compared to publish speech texts in vernacular newspapers, it is really harder to publish speech collections. Although the society claimed that "a collection of speeches has been published with 50 *yuan* borrowed from the university," I doubt it because nobody read it up to now.

When everything changes in time, the student societies at Beijing University, even the most active ones have lost in the past. At present, it is harder to know the specific time when each of the student societies closed although there are some notices left. As for Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan, a society wished to "building a career" almost came to an end in 1923 when China's political situation became stable.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Xiongbianhui, Bianlunhui, Guoyu yanshuohui, the societies emphasized on "learning a skill" became more active.

On April 21, 1922, a speaking contest was held at Beijing University with Hu Shi, the Head of English Department as contest President and Tao Xingzhi 陶行知 of Dongnan daxue 东南大学 (Southeast University), Bo Chenguang 博晨光 of Yanjing daxue 燕京大学 (Yanching University) and Zhuang Shidun 庄士敦 as review committees. The marks are given from three aspects: first, the aspect of ideas, which means a speaker should have his or her own ideas to share with listeners; second, the aspect of structure, which suggests a speaker should provide his or her opinions logically; and third, the aspect of techniques that

⁶⁵ Wang Xuezhen, 1998, pp. 96–97.

focuses on speaker's voices, manners, expressions and etc. The champion of this speaking contest was Xiong Xunqi 熊训启, a student from English Department at his third year. Later, Xiong attended the speaking contest held jointly by the northern universities in China as the representative of Beijing University. During the contest, Xiong almost got the same marks with the representative of Nankai University by giving a speech on "Zhiye de guohui daiti shengcheng de guohui" 职业的国会代替省城的国会 (National Parliament Replaced Provincial Parliaments). As a result, the representatives of Beijing University and Nankai University shared champion and runner-up, and the representative of Tsinghua University got the third place.

On the issue of *Chenbao* 晨报 (*Morning Post*) published on 10 March 1925 and that of *Beijing daxue rikan* on 16 March 1925, they reported that the representatives of Beijing University won the debates no matter from positive or con sides in a debating contest held jointly by six northern universities of China. *Beijing daxue rikan* also carried a lot of messages on various students debating societies and articles on how to improve debating skills.⁶⁶ When Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan that once connected closely with political movements was fading out of sight gradually, various student speaking or debating societies and contests (including both English-speaking and Chinese-speaking) are kept forever at campus as one part of higher education. Up to now, "to improve verbal skills and to spread knowledge" is still being accepted by various people who may hold different political or cultural views as one of the basic aims of speech.

The historian Zhou Cezong 周策纵 stressed there are two categories of speech in modern China: "academic speech and general speech," when he talked about "the mass education aroused by new intellectuals" with the rising of the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement. The academic speech refers to speeches given by John Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Paul Monroe, Hans Driesch in China. Their speech texts were all published in newspapers or issued as books at that time which produced an everlasting influence on Chinese intellectuals. And the general speech refers mainly to the Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyan tuan of Beijing University launched by Liao Shucang 廖书仓, Deng Zhongxia, Luo Jialun 罗家伦, Kang Baiqing 康白情, Zhang Guotao 张国焘, Xu Deheng 许德珩 on 23 March 1919. In Zhou's view, the speaking society like Xiongbianhui is not worth discussing for it only works as a part of school education.

However, the significances of the speaking or debating societies like Xiongbianhui in modern China cannot be ignored or blotted out for they make the Chinese university students pay attention to speaking, the verbal expressions besides reading and writing. Unlike a speaker, who is to speak out his or her

⁶⁶ Zhou Cezong, 1996, pp. 262–264.

personal opinions and ideas, a debater need to admit the great variety in an argument, face other debaters' challenge, have the spirit of self-examination and care about the combination of theory and logic. To respect others and to have self-doubt is the beginning of a person's self-enlightenment. Before, the Chinese historians paid great attention to the speakers who devoted themselves passionately to deliver speeches for mass education but failed to criticize the condescending air supported by their political ambitions. In fact, the speakers and debaters who worked for knowledge spread and verbal skill improvement cannot be ignored in Chinese ideology or Chinese culture history because their efforts can still be found in today's speaking or debating societies at different campus which exert its hidden influence on university students' thoughts and expressions.

Indeed, debating cannot go on like the way of giving a speech, vigorous, powerful and free. It needs to consider more specific academic views and ideas for the debating is carried on between the people of same level. At the same time, debating seldom can get a final conclusion as an authority for the possibilities of understanding the same thing are usually endless. In this sense, speech is easy to be accepted by the society while debating is always left behind within campus. However, both speaking and debating need eloquent expressions. When reading Chapter Three "Lun shiju liang mingshi shezhan" 论时局两名士舌战 (Two celebrates debated over current situations) of Liang Qichao's *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji*, Pingdeng ge zhuren (also Di Pingzi) 平等阁主人 (狄平子) published his comments on the second issue of *Xin xiaoshuo* in 1902 that "On one problem, the person and his opponent argued, disputed, and rejected with each other from different perspectives vigorously. Their eloquent words would become a well-qualified, long piece of writing if being noted down." Of course, a person needs to be trained professionally for a long time to grasp the excellent debating skills.

Huang Yanpei memorized that Cai Yuanpei "handed out relevant reading materials of different schools of Japanese studies on speech" when he taught speech-making to the students of special class at Nanyang Gongxue as we have mentioned above. However, Huang did not provide detailed information on what have been distributed. Fortunately, *Jingzhong ribao* 警钟日报 (*Alarming Daily Newspaper*) with Cai Yuanpei as chief-in-editor once carried a series of advertisements to introduce Zhong Guan hao's 钟观浩 translation of Okano Eitaro's 冈野英太郎 *Yanshuo xue* 演说学 (*Public Speech*). The book has been valued as "one that is very beneficial for speech-making beginners with its vivid and illustrated description." However, the libraries at home and abroad only keep its oldest version published in 1920s at Shanghai and Guangzhou. By reading many books and monographs on speech published in China at the first half of the twentieth century, it is clear that speech has been a very important social,

academic and cultural activity in modern China.

5 Speech and Chinese writing style innovation

The rapid development of speech since late Qing is not only a kind of social, academic and cultural activity, but also a channel for spreading knowledge, which has produced a great impact on the Chinese writing style innovation. The concept of Chinese writing style being discussed here encapsulates almost the complete spectrum of writing—from poetry to essay; from fiction to academic monograph. Chen Yuan's 陈源 praise on Hu Shi's textual research papers and Zhu Ziqing's on Hu Shi's long argumentative treatises all capture the tendency of the writing style innovation in modern China.

Chen Yuan listed Hu Shi's *Hu Shi wencun* 胡适文丛 (Collections of Hu Shi) rather than Hu's *Changshi ji* 尝试集 (A Collection of Tentative Works) or *Zhongguo zhexueshi dagang* 中国哲学史大纲 (Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy) as the top one in his *Xin wenxue yundong yilai de shibu zhuzuo* 新文学运动以来的十部著作 (Top Ten Works since the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement). When explaining the reason for his selection, Chen put it this way: "Hu Shi wencun features clearly Hu's writing style—being argumentative and full of textual research." Chen even declared that "Hu Shi wencun is not merely a work promoting vernacular writing. In a long term, it will hold an important position in the history of Chinese literature. Moreover, Hu Shi's *Shuihuzhuan kaozhen* 水浒传考证 (Textual Research on Heroes of the Marshes) and *Hongloumeng kaozhen* 红楼梦考证 (Textual Research on A Dream of Red Mansion) are two unique monographs."⁶⁷ As for Zhu Ziqing, when introducing *Hushi wenxuan* 胡适文选 (Selected Works of Hu Shi) to the young readers, he remarked that "Hu Shi gains more achievements in his prose writings than in his vernacular poetry; in particular, his long argumentative essays display a creative writing style." Zhu further pointed out that "the narrative structure of Hu Shi's argumentative essays written in Vernacular Chinese is greatly under the influence of 'New Writing Style' advocated by Liang Qichao and others. Thus Hu's essays and Liang's essays express their thoughts and feelings alike."⁶⁸ It seems a little disjunction to set Hu Shi's long argumentative essays as a proof of the success of the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement. In fact, such a perspective adopted by Zhu Ziqing shows his remarkable insight.

Li Jinxi 黎锦熙 claimed in his biography on Qian Xuantong that at the

⁶⁷ Chen Yuan 陈源, 1931, pp. 335–336.

⁶⁸ Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, 1988, p. 209; p. 299.

beginning of the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement, Hu Shi's vernacular poems "only made artistic innovation," but his vernacular prose really challenged the traditional Chinese writing style during that period when "most Chinese intellectuals felt reluctant to use Vernacular Chinese in formal contexts."⁶⁹ The journal *Xin qingnian* 新青年 (*New Youth*) with Chinese intellectuals as its target readers did fight with such a reluctance by positively advocating and first widely publishing vernacular writings. Against this historical background, it is possible to understand the significance of the publication of "Shu Xue" 述学 ("On Study") in 1904 by Liu Shiwei 刘师培 in *Zhongguo baihua bao* 中国白话报 (*The Newspaper in Vernacular Chinese*) and the launch of *Jiaoyu jin yu zazhi* 教育今语杂志 (*China Education Magazine*) in 1910 by Zhang Taiyan and others; and it is also easy to understand why the intellectuals participated in the publication of *Xin qingnian* devoted themselves to make speeches around, why Xiongbianhui was established at Beijing University for "improving speaking skills and expanding the mind", and why speech training courses or speech contests were given or held in schools all over China. However, even several years later, not everyone was ready to believe that Vernacular Chinese can be used in tablet inscription and historiographical writings as one written Chinese language although it gained widespread usage "in Chinese newspapers, books and documents."⁷⁰ When it comes to the contribution of the new intellectuals during the Vernacular Chinese Movement, the critics usually work within the argumentative and analytical framework put forward by Hu Shi. Hu suggested that the new intellectuals seldom separated themselves from old Chinese intellectuals completely as did by the promoters of vernacular newspapers and magazines in late Qing or advocators of Zimu yundong 字母运动 (Movement of Chinese Phonetic Alphabet); and they viewed Vernacular Chinese was not only a tool for 'Chinese enlightenment' but also an exclusive tool to create new Chinese literature."⁷¹ Up to now, Hu's general evaluation is still authentic in the main. But it is necessary to note that late-Qing intellectuals not only separated their articles from their predecessors' as "ours" and "theirs," which has been ridiculed and sneered by later generations, but also rigidly categorized articles into "academic ones" (such as argumentative essays on education or politics) and "emotional ones" (such as narrative or lyric prose).

From late Qing on, the Chinese academic writing innovation is made through two channels. The first is to enrich and enlarge Chinese expression by introducing new terms, new grammar and new writing style with Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei 王国维 and other reformists as active participants. This

⁶⁹ Cao Shujing 曹述敬, 1986, p. 171.

⁷⁰ Qian Mu 钱穆, 2004, p. 97.

⁷¹ Hu Shi 胡适, 1988, p. 153.

channel has been studied in detail for it is in accordance with the steps of China's modernization. The second channel has usually been ignored in comparison, which lays emphasis on the refinement and polishment of Vernacular Chinese used in academic writings. Zhang Taiyan, Liang Qichao, Liu Shipei, Cai Yuanpei, Lu Xun and Hu Shi all made efforts to transform Vernacular Chinese that essentially modeled after the spoken language to be a well-qualified written language by using it in writing and teaching Chinese culture and literature.

Back up a few years and look again at academic criticism and researches on the Vernacular Chinese Movement, the new views or amendments can be gained. First, when the scholars and intellectuals who participated in the publication of journal *Xin qingian* promoted vernacular writing, they usually set up Ming-Qing vernacular novels in *zhanghui* 章回 style (a type of traditional Chinese novel divided into several chapters with each chapter headed by a couplet giving the gist of its contents) as examples. They traced back to *Shuihuzhuan* 水浒传 (*Heroes of the Marshes*, a Chinese novel of the early Ming dynasty by Shi Nai'an 施耐庵) when talking about "Chinese literature." Therefore, they mainly studied vernacular novels but ignored vernacular academic writing. Then, the full utilization of Vernacular Chinese in modern Chinese literature as well as in Chinese academic writing, especially in the long argumentative essays marked the success of the Vernacular Chinese Movement. Third, speech and its texts (including the original, recorded and revised speech texts, even some of speech-like articles), originated in late Qing and gained popularity after the May Fourth, did produce a positive impact on Vernacular Chinese Movement and Chinese writing style innovation. Fourth, "the vernacular writing with elegance" is a new form of writing. It is a mixture of "spoken language" as a foundation and "borrowed Western words, literary Chinese language and various spoken varieties of Chinese"⁷² as the ingredients. But "spoken language" here refers to both the everyday spoken language and "speech," kind of spoken articles.⁷³

Some scholars regarded Zhou Zuoren 周作人 as an exceptional figure among the new intellectuals participated in the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement. They indicated that Zhou's distinctive opinions on Chinese writing style innovation can be found in his *Guoyu gaizao de yijian* 国语改造的意见 (*On Modern Chinese Innovation*) and *Guoyu wenxue tan* 国语文学谈 (*On Chinese Literature*). Zhou stated that "Today's intellectuals prefer classification as did the late-Qing intellectuals: Classical Chinese for self-cultivation while Vernacular Chinese for popularity." Zhou's statement sounds reasonable but is untenable when comparing to Liu Shipei's ideas in his *Lunwen za ji* 论文杂记 (*Miscellanies*) or Zhao Qilin's 赵启霖 in his *Xiang qi zou she cun gu xue tang*

⁷² Zhou Zuoren 周作人 1929, p. 256.

⁷³ Chen Pingyuan, 2005, p. 243.

wen 详请奏设存古学堂文 (*On Saving Traditional Private Chinese Schools*).⁷⁴ Being one of new intellectuals during the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement, Zhou truly viewed Vernacular Chinese as the most popular style of writing. But Zhou's concept of "Vernacular Chinese" was opposite against that of his contemporaries, who referred Vernacular Chinese to be absolute "spoken language," "popular saying," or "folk language," which, in Zhou's eyes, failed to "relate complex stories or express subtle emotions with its poor and simple power of description." Zhou, therefore, suggested refining and polishing modern Vernacular Chinese as standard written Chinese by borrowing Classical Chinese language, regional vernaculars, and new expressions into it. Obviously, Zhou's idea of "borrowing Classical Chinese into modern Vernacular Chinese" is different from Liu's and Zhao's suggestions that left Classical Chinese behind for a full reading comprehension of "studies of Chinese culture" and classical texts.⁷⁵

The argument on Vernacular and Classical Chinese almost lasts for the whole twentieth century.⁷⁶ The term "Modern Standard Chinese" is not only related to national imagination of a modern China but to China's regional cultures, mass media, education system and literary genres as well. The growing popularity of speech in this period is also based on the widespread of Vernacular Chinese, for it is much suitable to record speeches.

The lectures given by Zhang Taiyan at Shanghai in 1922 have three different text records: the summarized one by *Shenbao* 申报 (*Shanghai Newspaper*), Zhang Mingfei's 张冥飞 in Classical Chinese and Cao Juren's 曹聚仁 in Vernacular Chinese. The serious comparison between the last two will make us get a glimpse of the pros and cons of these two written Chinese language. Zhang Mingfei not only made serious mistakes and omission but also added his own notes and comments randomly and casually in his record of Zhang Taiyan's lectures. He even wrote on the cover of his published record that "the lectures have been annotated by Zhang Minfei from Changsha and Yan Boliang from Zhejiang." It is no wonder that Zhang Taiyan was exasperated by these words.⁷⁷ By contrast, Cao's record won the commendation of Zhang Taiyan, the great Confucianist at that time. When explaining the reasons for his success, twenty-one-year-old Cao Juren mainly mentioned two. The first is that "only a person, having no problem in full comprehension of Zhang Taiyan's Yuhang 余杭 dialect like him," can make a full record of his lectures. The second is that Cao was familiar with Zhang Taiyan's academic thoughts because he has read

⁷⁴ Luo Zhitian 罗志田, 2003, pp. 276–278.

⁷⁵ Zhou Zuoren, 1931, p. 165.

⁷⁶ Chen Pingyuan, 2004, pp. 121–146.

⁷⁷ Shen Yanguo 沈延国, 1997, p. 394.

Zhang Taiyan's works like *Guogu lunheng* 国故论衡 (*Discourses on Chinese Cultural Heritage*) and *Jian lun* 检论 when being a student in First Normal School of Hangzhou. Cao also "knew well the intense arguments during that period on Vernacular and Classical language from his teacher Shan Bu'an 单不庵," which made him possible to record correctly "any quotations, or names of people and places" mentioned by Zhang Taiyan.⁷⁸

An additional reason for Cao's success is that he noted down Zhang Taiyan's lectures in Vernacular Chinese, which vividly displayed Zhang's flesh-and-blood speaking manner and expressions. While, Zhang Mingfei's record in Classical Chinese lost Zhang Taiyan's genuine, specific and excellent expressions. Even if Zhang Mingfei can understand Zhang Taiyan's Yuhang dialect perfectly, he would still fail to convey Zhang Taiyan's ideas and thoughts by using Classical Chinese.

It's true that speeches or lectures given in Vernacular Chinese can be recorded in elegant and abstruse Classical Chinese. But the charismatic mystery and enchanting grace of lively speaking will not be transmitted unless Classical Chinese has a fundamental change. Otherwise, Classical Chinese is definitely not suitable to record the on-the-spot teaching or meeting. Of course, sometimes, there is an exception. Luo Changpei 罗常培, for example, once got some shorthand training; he "took notes of Liu Shipai's spoken lectures on Middle Chinese literature and its history quickly. After being home, Luo rewrote his shorthand notes in Classical Chinese"⁷⁹ In his second year at Beijing University (CE 1918). Luo's notes in Classical Chinese are finally published as *Han wei liuchao zhuan jia wen yanjiu* 汉魏六朝专家文研究 (*Research on Six Dynasties Prose*) and *Wenxindiaolong jianglu* 文心雕龙讲录 (*Notes on The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragon*, classic work of literary criticism by Liu Xie 刘勰 CE 465–532 of the Liang dynasty, one of the Southern Dynasties.) However, such a successful "rewriting," has more or less lost the speaking essences. To a great extent, modern Chinese scholars and intellectuals improve and perfect Vernacular Chinese as a written Chinese language with their knowledge and wisdom embodied in their speeches and published speech texts, no matter whether they promoted Vernacular Chinese or not. In other words, they did "advance modern Vernacular Chinese literature." Speech, accordingly, plays an important role in this process with its growing popularity since late Qing.⁸⁰

The general practice of speech in China helps the perfection of Vernacular Chinese and the establishment of "Modern Standard Chinese." It also exerts a profound influence on the writing styles of many modern Chinese authors. A

⁷⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 1986, pp. 55–56.

⁷⁹ Luo Changpei 罗常培, 1998, p. 268.

⁸⁰ Chen Pingyuan, 2002, pp. 135–184.

reader full of reading experience always understands that eloquent speaking is not the same thing as ingenious writing. What is suitable for making a speech may not be a good material for reading. Sometimes, a well-received speech will lose its charisma when being off away from its specific given time and place; and a well-written essay, narrative story or academic paper may not be ear-pleasing even if being read aloud by brilliant actors or actresses. In fact, Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* has already explained the differences well: "Compared with those of others, the speeches of professional writers sound thin in actual contests. Those of the orators, on the other hand, are good to hear spoken, but look amateurish enough when they pass into the hands of a reader. This is just because they are so well suited for an actual tussle, and therefore contain many dramatic touches, which, being robbed of all dramatic rendering, fail to do their own proper work, and consequently look silly." Although Aristotle made a distinction between "written speeches" like ceremony speeches and "spoken speeches" like political or lawsuit speeches, he pointed out that speech at actual contests is much more suitable to show one's characteristics and emotions.

Unlike the academic monographs full of thoughts and ideas, a speech needs sparkling wit, sense of humor and unforgettable words and phrases. An excellent speech can be described by these basic features: To use free and smooth spoken language; to make arguments apparent with sensational words and phrases; to make alive communication with the audience; to be limited by the audience's taste and educational level; to emphasize common sense; to avoid literary quotations and allusions. The features of speech, in turn, produce an important impact on Chinese literary and academic writing style.

When speech is borrowed into writing, the modern Chinese writing style begins to change towards two tendencies: one is to be more logical and the other is to be more emotional. The traditional Chinese literature characterized by its vague, involved expressions and heavy use of literary references and allusions is slowly replaced by modern Chinese literature featured as being clear, plain and direct. Also, along with the growing popularity of speech, the vernacular writing in books in that period begins to be exaggerated, ironic, or peculiar for drawing readers' attentions. In effect, the success of a speech lies in the good interactions between speaker and the listeners. A speaker needs to use his spoken and body languages to arouse listeners' enthusiasm; in turn, the listeners influence the speaker's mood with their direct responses, such as giving warm applause or stamping feet, hissing or leaving the spot. Sometimes, a speaker even has to cater for the listeners. A lively atmosphere of a speech, therefore, is created by both speakers and listeners.

As for speakers, the lively atmosphere is a great pressure. A speaker needs to handle and adjust his or her speech flow, loudness, intonation, intensity of overtones and gestures differently before several, hundreds, thousands, or

millions of audience. Generally, the more audience there are, the more exaggerated signs or gestures will be made and the shorter sentences will be used. For example, long sentences change to be short ones, and the shorter ones to single word or phrase (the effect of last syllabic sound of a word becoming loud and obvious with a microphone needs to be concerned). At a mass gathering, a speaker seldom speak coolly and mildly but adopting a high-pitch expression instead. Such a strong emphasis on creating robust atmosphere and audience's response will probably penetrate into the writing style.

On the inaugural meeting of Xiongbianhui at Beijing University on 16 December 1917, Zhang Shizhao 章士钊 delivered a lecture on the special topic: "the merits and demerits of mild arguments:"

The extreme arguments on any topic are interesting but the mild ones are less attractive....Any one who prefers mild arguments always try to avoid so-called abnormal or prejudiced language, which, in effect, is the essences of making extreme arguments. So it is really hard to remold extreme arguments into mild ones.

Originally, Zhang Shizhao wanted to discuss the "merits of mild arguments." But from the incomplete published part of his lecture, the "merits of extreme arguments" have been emphasized instead. Such a gap between what speaker means and what listeners understood can also be viewed as one speaking pleasure.

Speech needs to be smart, humorous rather than be too reasonable, serious and meticulous. In a sense, the style of speech is like satirical essay, being firm and vigorous and seizing on some incidents to expatiate and ridicule, even sometimes having "language violence."

No matter a speaker is leftist or rightist, no matter whether he or she is disgusted with "propagandist's expression" or not, the speech has to be passionate and extreme only if he or she gives public speech to common people or young students. So when the vigorous, even extreme style of speech makes influences on modern Chinese literature, it is not hard to know what kind of challenge and clash it has made to the traditional Chinese writing style which inclines to be gentleness, kindness and an expression of emotion with restraint.

6 Speech and Chinese academic writing

The growing popularity of speech in modern China exerts a significant influence on modern Chinese literary as well as academic writing. How to write research papers and academic articles? The academic writings should be in specialized

depth or in simple popularity? Who are their target readers—scholars and researchers or common people? These huge questions need to be answered through a careful study.

During the May Fourth Vernacular Literature Movement, some Chinese University Presidents like Cai Yuanpei, Zhang Jin 张谨, Chen Baoquan 陈宝泉, and Tang Er 汤尔 once sighed with grief that the declining Chinese academic field marked the society's moral degeneration and deterioration of the manners. Then they initiated the founding of Xueshu yanjianghui 学术演讲会 (Academic Speech Society) with a hope for arousing a sense of responsibility within the academic field:

In view of the tough situation, we decide to organize this society by following the example of the foreign public universities and colleges. Series of speeches in specialized academic field will be given regularly by the staff of national universities or colleges with a hope for arousing people's interest in academic researches and advancing national development.

This society held speeches mainly at three assembly halls: that of Ministry of Education of the Republic of China, of Beijing Normal University and of Department of Law at Beijing University. According to its original notices or advertisements, the first speech was once planned to be Zhang Shizhao's "On Confucian School of Idealist Philosophy of the Song and Ming Dynasties." But owing to Zhang's unexpected going out on business, the first speech was finally given by Chen Daqi 陈大齐 on "Modern Psychology." In the following three months, the society held series of speeches on different topics such as on society and education (by Tao Lügong 陶履恭), fuels (by Wang Xingong 王星拱), Mohism (by Hu Shi), astronomy (by Gao Lu 高鲁), radioactive chemistry (by Yu Tongkui), education studies (by Deng Cuiying 邓萃英), biology and philosophy for life (by Li Yuying 李煜瀛), society and ethic (by Kang Baozhong 康宝忠), electronic relativity (by He Zhijie 何智杰), politics (by Chen Qixiu 陈启修), and horticulture and studies on pest (by Xia Shuren 夏树人). Such a huge scale of academic speeches made "speech," the new oral art form in China, shoulder the responsibility of spreading advanced knowledge by connecting higher-educational institutions with the society.

The professors and scholars put more efforts to spread their specialized knowledge in academic fields instead of making remarks only on the social problems. Consequently, how to successfully deliver an academic speech became a key problem discussed within and beyond academic circle over the half of the twentieth century. The professors and scholars also consciously began to borrow speaking style into their writings, which definitely helped the transition of Chinese academic writing style. It is easy to take a record of one's speech if it

centers on reading and explaining China's classical and influential books in the traditional Chinese lecturing style (like *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 [*Lectures at Fuxing Academy of Classical Learning*]) or if it introduces basic academic knowledge (like *Cai Jiemin xiansheng yanxinglu* 蔡子民先生言行录 [*Records on Words and Deeds of Mr. Cai Jiemin*]⁸¹). In comparison, it is hard to note down a speech on erudite scholarship by transferring “voices” into “words.”

The record of speech is related to another new thing in late Qing—shorthand. Edwin O Reischauer's political novel *Japan: The Story of A Nation* is finished as a verbatim record of a dictation, which was once praised highly by Liang Qichao. Reischauer also introduced the shorthand to his Japanese reader in his article, “On Shorthand” appended to the book. Liang Qichao felt proud of the introduction and translation of the book in his *Qingyibao* 清议报 (*Qingyi Newspaper*). Liang praised it especially in *Benguan diyibai ce zhuci bing lun baoguan zhi zeren ji benguan zhi jingli* 本馆第一百册祝辞并论报馆之责任及本馆之经历 (*Congratulatory Speech on the Publication of the Hundredth Newspaper of Qingyibao, on the Responsibility of All Newspaper Offices, and on the Development of Our Newspaper Office*). One year later, Liang wrote in Chapter One of *Future of New China*:

Since that day on, there are some shorthand clerks assigned by Society of History Studies to take notes of Mr. Kong's lectures on *Zhongguo jin liushinian shi jiangyi* 中国近六十年史讲义 (*Lectures on the Last Sixty-year History of China*) word by word; and the recorded lectures are telegraphed to Yokohama New Novel Press to publish in time.

Obviously, Liang's emphasis on shorthand is inspired by Reischauer. Of course, it is a bit exaggerated to describe the shorthand clerk could note down Zhang's lectures word by word without omission. But the usage of shorthand does add more possibilities for the transition of speech-to-text.

The Chinese written shorthand begins from Cai Xiyong 蔡锡勇. When being a counsellor in the Embassy of the Qing dynasty in the United States of America as a graduate from Jingshi tongwenguan 京师同文馆 (Beijing Imperial Translation College), Cai became interested in the popular American shorthand system at that time. After returning home, Cai Xiyong published *Chuan yin kuai zi* 传音快字 in Wuchang 武昌 in the 22nd year of the Guangxu reign period (CE 1896), which was based on Lindsley's phonetic shorthand. Then the royal government of the Qing dynasty established the Consultative Council when it carried out new policies. During the meeting sessions of the Council, a great deal of shorthand clerks was needed in urgent. As a result, Cai Xiyong's son, Cai Zhang 蔡璋 was

⁸¹ See Chen Pingyuan, Zheng Yong, 1997, pp. 32–36; pp. 287–290.

invited to run shorthand schools in Beijing. He also revised his father's *Chuan yin kuai zi* into *Zhongguo suji xue* 中国速记学 (*Chinese Stenography*) published officially in 1913.⁸² After that, different Chinese shorthand systems came into being, which played a significant role in collections of academic and cultural studies and knowledge spread.

However, professional stenographers still need to face the difficulties in understanding speakers' different dialects and their specialized knowledge background. It is easy to make notes in shorthand of speeches on general motivation or widespread knowledge, but it will be a different story when noting down "academic speeches." Zhang Taiyan, in his later years, refused to publish the recorded texts of his speeches without his own revision because he was afraid of his speaking messages would be wrongly spread with stenographers' erroneous records.⁸³ Speakers' personal revision of the texts of his or her recorded speeches is not unnecessary. Take Cai Yuanpei's letter to the editor of the journal *Xin qingnian* from Issue No.1, Vol. 3 as a prime example:

To whom it may concern,

Since returning from abroad, I occasionally gave impromptu speeches in public. Owing to my busy schedule, I failed to revise your texts of my recorded speeches. From time to time, I noticed there were small mistakes in your published texts. And because of the small scale of circulation, I did not get into trouble of asking your correction. However, recently, I found that my speeches given at Society of Religious Freedom (Xinjiao ziyou hui 信教自由会) and Society of Politics (Zhengxue hui 政学会) have been wrongly carried by your journal, which were even totally opposite to my original meanings. I am afraid that these erroneous records may mislead readers; thus I have to request a full correction in time.

Sincerely yours,
Cai Yuanpei

Cai Yuanpei claimed in person that he believed in law of gravitation and evolutionism; but his speeches given at Society of Religious Freedom were carried by *Xin qingnian* as "Religionists reject the evolutionist views." As for the

⁸² See Ge Jisheng 葛继胜, 1996, "Zhongguo suji yingyong de lishi, xianzhuang, wentji ji jianyi—jinian zhongwen suji chuangshi yibai zhou nian" 中国速记应用的历史、现状、问题及建议—纪念中文速记创始一百周年 "The History, Status quo, Problems and Suggestions on the Application of Stenography in China—In Memory of 100th Anniversary of Invention of Chinese Stenography", *Guangxi daxue xuebao* 广西大学学报 (*Journal of Guangxi University*). No. 4.

⁸³ Chen Pingyuan, Du Lingling, 1997, p. 462.

texts of his speeches given at Zhengxuehui, Cai pointed out “there were omissions, distortions, and big mistakes.” He even rectified the top ten big mistakes in detail to the editor.

Cai Yuanpei’s letter did make Chen Duxiu 陈独秀, the chief-in-editor of *Xin qingnian* and the Dean of School of Arts at Beijing University, feel embarrassed. Chen quickly answered Cai’s request in the name of an editor: “We do apologize for our mistakes. We reprinted your speeches carried first by *Daily Newspaper* in the Issue No. 5, Vol. 2 of our journal. During the process, we failed to gain your correctness of the careless omissions and oversights existed in the texts; it is our fault. Meanwhile, we are very grateful for your rectifying the big mistakes existed in our reprint. We were once doubtful whether these views in favor of religion are yours. Now with this letter, our doubts have been dispelled.” Being one of leading journals in China at that time, *Xin qingnian* even made such mistakes; then, it’s not hard to imagine what other newspapers and magazines would be.

The result of this unreliability in these published speeches has been that scholars and researchers of later generations seldom dare to adopt these speech texts. Meanwhile, it is a great pity to give up completely all of dictations and transcriptions. For example, Fang Hao 方豪 edited *Ma Xiangbo xiansheng wenji* 马相伯先生文集 (*A Selected Collection of Ma Xiangbo’s Works*). Fang clarified that the first principle of his selection is that “The works collected in this book are all from Mr. Ma Xiangbo himself. Any text of his recorded speeches, utterances, and interviews carried in newspapers and magazines is not included.”⁸⁴ Indeed, it is better to set boundaries and standards for a selection of one’s works. But for a researcher, like me, it is more beneficial to read Zhu Weizheng’s 朱维铮 *Ma Xiangbo ji* 马相伯集 (*Collections of Ma Xiangbo’s Works*) published half a century later for it is almost a complete collection of Ma Xiangbo’s works.

With more and more modern Chinese intellectuals stepping out of the ivory tower to deliver academic speeches in public, their speaking “voices” began to be slowly transferred into “written words” by taking shorthand, recording and recalling. The detailed evaluation of these works of the great scholar, which are not thought-provoking and scrupulous but full of wit and interest, is deserved.

The surviving shorthand notes of a speech are credible only if the shorthand clerk can get a full comprehension of the speaker’s dialect, have a good literary taste and a good grasp of speech content. Of course, the notes still need to be revised carefully by the speaker before printing. In 1922, Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 (Commercial Press) published the book, *Dongxi wenhua jiqi zhexue* 东西文化及其哲学 (*The Cultures of East and West and their Philosophies*). Its

⁸⁴ Fang Hao 方豪, 1947, p. 325.

cover stated, “This book is a collection of Liang Sumi’s 梁漱溟 speech texts edited by Chen Zheng 陈政 and Luo Changpei 罗常培.” Such a statement is to stress the responsibilities and accomplishments of stenographers and editors. In the *Preface*, Liang Sumin said “The speeches collected in this book were given at the Assembly Hall of Shandong 山东 Department of Education in Ji’nan 济南. Most speech texts are edited and collected by Mr. Luo Changpei; while, its final version is made with reference to Chen Zheng’s notes of my speeches given at Beijing University last year.” Liang further explained that “Some suppose I like doing research, like writing scholarly works. Actually, it is not true. I just like speaking out what I want.”⁸⁵ And it is even more interesting to find that the *Preface* itself is “Liang’s dictation taken by Chen Zheng on 22 October 1921.” However, this collection of Liang’s speeches is still viewed as a classical book in the history the modern Chinese academy. He Lin 贺麟 once spoke highly of it in his *Wushinian lai de zhongguo zhexue* 五十年来的中国哲学 (*The Last Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy*): “Among all the critical works on the Eastern and Western cultures, Liang Sumin’s *Dongxi wenhua jiqi zhexue* published in 1921 is remarkable with its systematic analysis and original thoughts from the standpoint of Confucianism and Eastern culture.”⁸⁶

A successful speech-to-text transition is made by well pre-preparation, good public-speaking performance, high quality speech texts in shorthand, speaker’s cautious revision and readers’ response. Such a transition process can be embodied and proved by the following three examples.

In 1932, Zhou Zuoren was invited by Shen Jianshi 沈兼士 to give a series of speeches at Furen University 辅仁大学 (Furen daxue). Zhou delivered his speeches “freely and openly without any prepared lecture outlines and texts.” After reading Deng Gongsan’s 邓恭三 (renamed as Deng Guangming 邓广铭, a well-known Chinese historian) notes of the speeches, Zhou was greatly marveled at Deng’s efforts in “organizing the speeches given at random systematically and logically with few omissions and commissions.” The collection of Zhou’s speeches taken down by Deng was then published by Beiping renwen shudian 北平人文书店 (Beiping Humanities Bookstore). Zhou Zuoren at first remarked humbly that “This book is a collection of my casual talks, which are rough, superficial, incomplete and unsystematic. It reads more like kind of chatting among friends at leisure than the serious academic articles.” However, Zhou’s ambitious expectation for this book became apparent when he said that “the opinions and views I shared in this book are all mine, which have nothing to do with the Westerner or Japanese thoughts.”⁸⁷ Qian Zhongshu 钱钟书 also

⁸⁵ Liang Cumin 梁漱溟, 1987, p. 246.

⁸⁶ He Lin 贺麟, 1989, p. 9.

⁸⁷ Zhou zuoren, 1934, pp. 1–3.

acclaimed that “it is a short but valuable collection. Like any good book, it reads systematically and thought-provokingly.”⁸⁸ Qian’s praise on its systematic narration is a bit far-fetched. But the book does inspire readers’ mind. Until today, it is still read, criticized and cited by many readers.

In 1961, Qian Mu 钱穆 was invited to deliver a series of eight lectures on the methodology of historiography at one academic institution of Hong Kong. Qian Mu stated that “the views I proposed in these eight lectures look obscure and less academic due to the limited lecturing time. Also some arguments are developed not in a pure academic but in a very subject way.”⁸⁹ A collection of the lectures, which were first made by Ye Long 叶龙 and then polished by Qian Mu himself, was printed at Hong Kong in 1961. Qian Mu in his *Preface* to the book’s second version published in Taipei in 1969 wrote that “Recently, in doing research, the researchers paid too much attention to historical materials and techniques but ignored the research significance, which actually is the first thing should be considered.” Evidently, Qian Mu’s arguments aimed at the research phenomenon that the researchers in the mainstream stressed too much on methodologies but failed to care about the cultural significances of the historical materials. For Qian Mu, it was absolutely not an ideal research atmosphere as he expected.⁹⁰

Still in Hong Kong, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 gave three lectures on Chinese philosophy. Mou declared that “it is a hard job to introduce distinctive features of Chinese philosophy to students who are interested in it within 12-hour lectures.” But when the lectures combining into a book, Mou wrote in his *Preface* satisfactorily that:

The collection of my three lectures here had no manuscripts but the one noted down by a student, Wang Yu 王煜. I am sure there are still some gaps to be bridged between what he wrote down and what I lectured. I also believe that the arguments would be developed more seriously and elaborated more carefully in my own writing. But the limited lecturing time pushed me to provide a sketchy but to-the-key-point introduction, which may help me in a way. When I revised Wang Yu’s notes, I found he displayed his own writing style, which added fresh elements into my original lectures but kept my original meaning very well. Then, a work, no matter being scrupulous or being sketchy, does have its own merits, which will be appreciated by readers.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Zhong Shujun 中书君 (1934), “Zhongguo Xin Wenxue de yuanliu” 中国新文学的源流 (Origin of New Literature in China), *Xinyue* 新月 (*New Moon*). Vol. 4, No. 4.

⁸⁹ Qian Mu, 2001, p. 1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁹¹ Qian Mu, 2004, p. 315.

Mou's views that "to be sketchy has its own merits" hit the heart of speech texts and also explain why academic speeches are attractive. As for his "revising others' notes," it clarifies the basic features of speech-to-text transition.

The three collections of lectures given by Zhou Zuoren, Qian Mu and Mou Zongsan are all "short but valuable." The limited space makes speakers or lecturers (writers) leave out some points, which in turn makes the lectures and their texts focused. The easy-to-understand contents "inspire readers to think" and make them "feel like listening to the lectures" while reading. At a time when academic writing becomes more serious and dull in the mainstream, these short but valuable works arouse readers' interest with a distinctive writing style that is vigorous, free, ideal and interesting.

Compared to the image of China in the abundant Chinese writings, an "audible" China has usually been ignored. The study on speech, a new oral art form introduced into China in late Qing, not only centers on its function in Chinese enlightenment but in Chinese writing style innovation as well.

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