

Westernised Chinese in Yu Hua's Chronicle of a Blood Merchant

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Abstract

Yu Hua is one of the most illustrious avant-garde and post-modernist writers in contemporary China, whose chefs-d'oeuvre can be exemplified by a 1995 novel *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*. Notwithstanding widespread accolades, Yu Hua's fiction is excoriated by his peer Han Han for resembling works translated from Western literature. In this research, I scrutinise the language deployed in *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* under the framework postulated by Yu Kwang-chung. I propound that the language in *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* bears similitude to Westernised/Europeanised Chinese, in that it involves conspicuous light verbs, nominalisation, *bei* passivisation, subordinating and coordinating conjunctions, plural forms, as well as pre-modifiers and particles, a considerable proportion of which are redundant and impinged upon by the English language.

Keywords: Chinese literature, Europeanised Chinese, translationese, Yu Kwang-chung

INTRODUCTION

After embarking upon his literary career in 1983, 余华 Yu Hua (1960-) has been adulated as an avant-garde, post-modernist, post-revolutionary and post-New-Wave writer (Zhao 1991, Wedell-Wedellsborg 1996, Liu 2002, Xu 2015). Yu Hua's chefs-d'oeuvre are exemplified by a bildungsroman 在细雨中呼喊 *Zai Xiyuzhong Huhan* 'Cries in the Drizzle' (1990) concerning a morally degenerate and politically suppressed society during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Li 2011: 2, Xu 2020), as well as award-winning novels 活着 *Huozhe* 'To Live' (1992), 许三观卖血记 *Xu Sanguan Maixue Ji* 'Chronicle of a Blood Merchant' (1995) and 兄弟 *Xiongdi* 'Brothers' (2005-2006) (Finken 2003, Shank 2013).

An exemplary paradigm of Yu Hua's chefs-d'oeuvre is *To Live*, in which he paints a vivid portrait of agricultural life in a sympathetic and realistic fashion, expatiating a quagmire of travails and predicaments prior to the Civil War (1945-1949) till the Cultural Revolution (Doll 2014, Shao 2021). Enriched by Confucian,

Buddhist and Taoist precepts, this saga equips the idyllic chronotope with distinct Chinese attributes (Shi 1999, Jennings 2009). In 1994, the narrative was adapted into an award-winning film by a renowned director 张艺谋 Zhang Yimou (Dupont 1994, Rayns 1994, Kermode and Macnab 1996): as 'a sweeping saga of modern China', this 'film possesses both vast scope and intimacy, richness of incident and an awareness of the quixotic role fate plays in all our destinies' (Thomas 1994).

Notwithstanding plaudits for Yu Hua's writings, the language he deploys has attracted animadversions from his peers, exemplified by a writer, painter and art critic 陈丹青 Chen Danqing (1953-), as well as 韩寒 Han Han (1982-), a novelist, essayist, filmmaker and professional race car driver (Lao 2012, Buruma 2016). Chen Danqing regards Yu Hua's fiction with disdain, in that the way he writes is void of attraction; as for Han Han, he castigates Yu Hua's works for bearing resemblance to those translated from Western literature (Liu 2008, Zhu 2012), as in Example (1).

(1) 余华的小说我现在是一本书都没有读下去,我家里有他的书,《活着》电影倒是看了,但是书就像你说的翻开两页,我觉得文笔不是我喜欢的文笔,你能感受到他是用西方翻译小说的语言在写。

So far, I haven't finished reading any of Yu Hua's novels, though I have his books at home. I've watched the film *To Live*, but for his books, as you said, I don't like the way he writes—you can tell that his language is like translation of Western fiction.

(Zhu 2012. Trans. Mine)

There is no denying the fact that Han Han is a contentious writer anathematised for being recalcitrant and for casting aspersions on his counterparts and modern poetry (Xu 2006, Jiang and Mao 2008, Zhang 2009). Nonetheless, his censure of Yu Hua is not unjustifiable, in that there are similitudes between Yu Hua's early works and translations of Western literature (Wu 2020). Furthermore, I propound that under the framework postulated by 余光中 Yu Kwang-chung (aka Yu Guangzhong), Yu Hua's fiction is featured by Westernised Chinese. In this research, I hermeneutically scrutinise the thought-provoking novel *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* as an example.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The construct of Westernised/Europeanised Chinese is inspired by the ground-breaking May Fourth Movement in 1919 as well as an all-important translation approach, viz. 硬译 yingyi 'hard translation' (Han 2005, He 2008, Zhu 2011, Wu 2014, Zhou 2015), the quintessential construal of which is rigid word-for-word rendering and transliteration (Ye 2013, Shen 2015, Sun 2018). 'Hard translation' is advocated by 鲁迅 Lu Xun (1881-1936), an iconic figure of modern Chinese literature as well as an influential translation practitioner and theorist, who acted as a pioneer of literalism and foreignisation in the May Fourth period (Chan 2001, Harpham 2013, Wang 2020). Lu Xun dubbed the terminology in 1929 in his rendering of *The Death of Tolstoy and the Young Europe* (

托尔斯泰之死与少年欧罗巴 Tuorsitai Zhisì Yu Shaonian Ouluoba) composed by Anatoly Lunacharsky, and he further expounded the ideation in a 1930 article entitled '硬译'与'文学的阶级性' Yingyi Yu Wenxuede Jiejixing "'Hard Translation" and the "Class Nature of Literature"' (Wang 2013, Cheng 2015, Ruan 2020).

Europeanised Chinese leads to the construal of 翻译腔 fanyiqiang or 翻译体 fanyiti (translationese) (Zhou 2015), which denotes 'formal fidelity, with resulting unfaithfulness to the content and the impact of the message' (Nida and Taber 2003: 13); being perceived as a dialect of the target language (Volansky et al 2015), this artefact entails lexical and word order choices impinged upon by the source language (Gellerstam 1986, 1996) as well as employment of more explicit and simplex constructions (Baker et al 1993, Riley et al 2020). Translationese is comprehensively defined as a pejorative terminology triggered by a range of factors, exemplified by an inordinately literal strategy, insufficient understanding of target languages and impact from translators' native languages (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997: 187, Sun 2003: 95-103, Fang 2004: 26). As a consequence, in order to render target text comprehensible and smooth, translationese should be circumnavigated (Newmark 1988: 75, Liu and Chai 2004, Yang et al 2009).

It is noteworthy that neither Europeanisation nor translationese is unanimously regarded as being detrimental to the evolution of Chinese (Zhang 2013, Zhou 2015, Wang 2017). Lu Xun promulgates 宁信不顺 ning xin bu shun 'faithfulness rather than fluency' that gives priority to faithfulness, instead of readability of target text (Wang 2004, He 2009, Yang 2012), as in Example (2). Additionally, according to a novelist and cultural icon 王朔 Wang Shuo (1958-) (Barne 1992), translationese is indispensable to the Chinese language (Example (3)).

(2) 如果还是翻译,那么,首先的目的,就在博览外国的作品,不但移情,也要益智,至少是知道何地何时,有这等事,和旅行外国,是很相像的:它必须有异国情调,就是所谓洋气。其实世界上也不会有完全归化的译文,倘有,就是貌合神离,从严辨别起来,它算不得翻译。

凡是翻译, 必须兼顾着两面, 一当然力求其易解, 一则保存着原作的丰姿, 但这保存, 却又常常和易懂相矛盾: 看不惯了。不过它原是洋鬼子, 当然谁也看不惯, 为比较的顺眼起见, 只能改换他的衣裳, 却不该削低他的鼻子, 剜掉他的眼睛。我是不主张削鼻剜眼的, 所以有些地方, 仍然宁可译得不顺口。

The utmost goal of translation is to allow readers to enjoy foreign writings extensively, not only for entertainment, but also for knowledge. At least readers should be made aware that certain incidents have happened in certain places at certain times. It is like travelling abroad: it must demonstrate exoticism, namely, the so-called foreignness. In fact, a fully domesticised text cannot exist, and even if there is one, strictly speaking, it is too literal to be treated as true translation. Translation must balance comprehensibility on the one hand, but features of original works on the other hand. Preserving the charm of original works, however, often contradicts with comprehensibility, because the translations become alien to readers. However, since it is foreign, of course it is alien to everybody. To make a person more native, one can change his clothes, but should not cut off his nose or dig out his eyes. I oppose cutting off nose and digging out eyes, so I would rather have some unsmooth translations.

(Lu 1935. Tran. Mine)

(3) 如果我们现在把外来语和外来的语言影响——翻译体、意译及其生造词统统从汉语中剔除, 我们就说不成话了。

Now if we remove all loanwords and foreign influences from Chinese, including translationese, free translation and neologisms, we will not be able to speak.

(Su and Li 2018: 527. Trans. Mine)

Nonetheless, as pointed out by the celebrated poet and critic Yu Kwang-chung, one of the pressing crises of Chinese lies in its Westernisation, which is saliently attributed to impact from the English language (Yu 1979, 1987).

Light verbs

'Light verbs' (Jespersen 1949: 117), alternatively referred to as 'weak verbs' (Barzun 1976: 112), denote verbs of deficient semantic content, so cross-linguistically, they are parallel to auxiliary verbs in terms of their contribution to full lexical verbs (Cattell 1984: 3, Grimshaw and Mester 1988, Guilfoyle 1990, Chae 1996, Shen 2004, Nenonen et al 2017). Light verbs manifest substantial event information (Lin 2018), in that they are 'predicates of aspects of eventualities. Syntactically they are verbs, with or without phonetic realization; semantically they are predicates of aspects that compose eventualities' (Lin 2001: 77). As stated by Yu Kwang-chung (1987), contemporary Chinese abounds with weak verbs, viz. verbal false limbs or operators in the sense of Orwell (1946) (Beatty 1982), which is impinged upon by its English counterpart.

A typical paradigm of weak verbs in Chinese is 作出 *zuochu* 'to make' (Yu 1987). As can be seen in Example (4) extracted from Chronicle of a Blood Merchant, 作出这样的决定 *zuochu zheyangde jueding* literally means 'to make such a decision' (Trans. Mine), yet the expression 这样决定 *zheyang jueding* 'to decide this way' (Trans. Mine) is more concise and consistent with conventional Chinese grammar. Analogously, in the author's preface, Yu Hua employs 做出选择 *zuochu xuanze* 'to make a choice' (Example (5)), rather than 选择 *xuanze* 'to choose'. It is notable that 进行 *jinxing* 'to conduct' in Example (5) is also chastised by Yu Kwang-chung for rendering the Chinese language redundant (1987), and the standard expression for 进行思考 *jinxing sikao* 'to conduct thinking' is simply 思考 *sikao* 'to think'. In addition to *zuochu*, 'to make' in Chinese can be 让 *rang*, as in Example (6).

(4) 许三观是在这天上午作出这样的决定的。

Xu Sanguan shi zai zhetian shangwu ZUOCHU zheyangde jueding de

This was the decision he had made that morning.
(Yu 2008: 75. Trans. Jones 2003)

(5) 这似乎是文学乐意看到的事实, 一个人的品质其实被无数人悄悄拥有着, 于是你们的浮士德在进行思

考的时候, 会让中国的我们感到是自己在准备做出选择。

Zhe sihu shi wenxue leyi kandao de shishi yi ge ren de pinzhi qishi bei wushu ren qiaoqiao yongyou zhe yushi nimende Fushide zai JINXING sikao de shihou hui rang zhongguo de women gandao shi ziji zai zhunbei ZUOCHU xuanze

This seems to be a fact that the literature is happy to see. A person's characteristics are in fact owned by millions of people secretly, so when your Faust is conducting thinking, it will let us in China feel that we are preparing to make a choice ourselves.

(Yu 2008: 5-6. Trans. Mine)

(6) 它们都在阳光下闪闪发亮, 风吹过去, 先让瓜藤和瓜叶摇晃起来, 然后吊在藤叶上的瓜也跟着晃动了。

Tamen dou zai yangguang xia shanshan faliang feng chui guoqu xian RANG guateng he guaye yaohuang qilai ranhou diao zai tengye shang de gua ye genzhe huangdong le

The fruit sparkled brightly in the sunlight. When the wind blew, first the leaves, then the vines, and finally the melons themselves began to sway in the breeze.

(Yu 2008: 16. Trans. Jones 2003)

Apart from 'to make', the category of light verbs in English also comprises 'to become', the Chinese equivalent of which is 给 *gei* (Tang 2008). Moreover, the literal meaning of *gei* is 'to give', whereas 'to give' is a light verb in English (Wittenberg et al 2014), which further justifies that *gei* is a light verb in Chinese. In Example (7), the expression 给我吃耳光 *gei wo chi erguang* is constituted of the light verb *gei* and 吃 *chi* (Lit. 'to eat') that entails metaphorical meanings 'to suffer', 'to obtain', 'to destroy', etc (Wang 2000, Yang 2007, 2010). That is to say, the word-for-word translation of *gei wo chi erguang* is 'to give me suffer a slap' (Trans. Mine), which can be revised into 打我耳光 *da wo erguang* 'to slap me' (Trans. Mine).

(7) 我一说你就给我吃耳光, 我的眼睛被你打得昏昏沉沉, 我的牙齿被你打得又酸又疼, 我的脸像是被火在烧一样。

Wo yi shuo ni jiu GEI wo chi erguang wo de yanjing BEI ni dade hunhunchenchen wo de yachi BEI ni dade you suan you teng wo de lian xiang shi BEI huo zai shao yiyang

As soon as I say anything, you'll slap me again. You hit me so hard I can't see, and my teeth hurt, and my face feels like it's on fire.

(Yu 2008: 38. Trans. Jones 2003)

Nominalisation

There is an increasing overuse of nouns as subjects in contemporary Chinese, attributed to the influence of English grammar (Yu 1987, He 2008). To be more specific, English is disposed to employ noun phrases to achieve a static status, yet Chinese tends to deploy verbs in a dynamic fashion (Lian 2010: 133); consequently, in stark contrast to their English equivalents, Chinese clauses tend to be shorter in length (Liu 2006: 262, Tang and Xu 2019).

Example (8) acts as a typical paradigm illustrating the conspicuous nominalisation in *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*. The latter sentence in Example (8) contains two noun phrases converted from a verb phrase and an adjective respectively, i.e. 她在大街上的行走 *ta zai dajieshang de xingzou* 'her strolls through the streets' and 她的漂亮 *tade piaoliang* 'her beauty' (Trans. Mine). Although these two noun phrases appear to be natural in English, they fail to comply with linguistic norms of the Chinese language. Similarly, 因为身体的肥胖 *yinwei shentide feipang* in Example (9) does not accord with conventional Chinese grammar: its literal meaning is 'because of fatness of the body' (Trans. Mine), yet an idiomatic way to convey the same meaning is 因为身体肥胖 *yinwei shenti feipang* 'because (she is) fat' (Trans. Mine).

(8) 她的衣服并不比别人多, 可是别人都觉得她是这座城镇里衣服最多的时髦姑娘。她在大街上的行走, 使她的漂亮像穿过这座城镇的河流一样被人们所熟悉, 在这里人们都叫她油条西施...

Ta de yifu bing bu bi bieren duo keshi bieren dou juede ta shi zhezuo chengzhen li yifu zuiduo de shimao guniang TA ZAI DAJIESHANG DE

XINGZOU shi TADE PIAOLIANG xiang
chuanguo zhezuo chengzhen de heliu yiyang
BEI remen suo shu xi zai zheli renmen dou jiao
ta youtiao xishi

In truth, she had no more clothes than anyone else, but everyone thought of her as the girl with the most extensive and fashionable wardrobe in town. Her strolls through the streets made everyone feel as if her pretty face were as familiar as the stream that flowed across town. And almost everyone in town knew her as the Fried Dough Queen.

(Yu 2008: 20. Trans. Jones 2003)

(9) 林芬芳提着篮子走在街上, 因为身体的肥胖, 她每走一步都要摇晃一下, 在街上走得最慢的人都会超过她。

Lin Fenfang tizhe lanzi zou zai jieshang
YINWEI SHENTI DE FEIPANG ta mei zou yi bu
dou yao yaohuang yixia zai jie shang zou de zui
man de ren dou hui chaoguo ta

When Lin Fenfang walked down the street with her basket, her body swayed with each step because of her weight, and even the slowest pedestrians were always able to pass her by.

(Yu 2008: 88. Trans. Jones 2003)

Bei passive constructions

As a substantially concise written language, Classical Chinese does not demonstrate grammatical distinction between active voice and passive voice, in that verbs with passive connotations do not have to be explicitly marked (Pulleyblank 1995: 35-38). As a consequence, contextual clues and speakers' interpretations play a preponderant role in distinguishing between active and passive structures (Norman 1988: 101, Sun 1996: 23-37). In modern Mandarin, passivisation can be realised via explicit markers, and passive voice is prominently marked by 被 *bei* that first appeared in the Late Archaic (5th-3rdc BC) period (Peyraube 1989, 1996, Li 2007). Despite the fact that *bei* has evolved into the most frequently used passive marker in the contemporary era and acts as the only one deployed in all registers of spoken and written language use (Wang 2006: 19, Xiao et al. 2006), *bei* is non-obligatory and even restricted (Li and

Cheng 2008: 475-476, Liu 2010: 262). Moreover, passive constructions explicitly marked by *bei* predominantly entail verbs borrowed or introduced into Chinese during the contemporary age, and both the quantity and frequency of *bei* constructions have been prodigiously increasing (Li and Thompson 1981: 497, Zhang 2013, Tian 2019).

According to my observation, *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* is replete with *bei* constructions, exemplified by Examples (7-8) above and Examples (10-12) below. As prescribed and/or described by the vast majority of grammar references, the preferable use of *bei* is to precede verbs of adverse or disposal meanings and hence intentional and forceful implications, e.g. 打 *da* 'to hit', 骂 *ma* 'to scold', 批评 *piping* 'to criticise', etc (Chao 1968: 703, Li and Thompson 1981: 493, Wang 1984: 488, Cook 2019). Although passivisation entailing *bei* should be limited to inauspicious emotions and undesirable events, by virtue of the language contact between Chinese and European languages, modern Mandarin has witnessed the occurrence of *bei* in propitious episodes (Wang 1984: 488, 2014: 96, 405-406, Zhang 2013). For instance, in Example (10) extracted from *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*, it is appropriate to use *bei* in the former sentence to depict a tragic accident, whereas in the latter sentence auguring well, the employment of *bei* is unjustifiable.

(10) 方铁匠的儿子被丝厂许三观的儿子砸破脑袋了...方铁匠的儿子被陈医生救过来了。

Fang tiejiang de erzi BEI sichang Xu Sanguan de erzi za po nao dai le Fang tiejiang de erzi BEI Chen yisheng jiu guo lai le

Blacksmith Fang's son was beaten so badly by Xu Sanguan's son that he broke his head right open...Dr. Chen saved Blacksmith Fang's son's life.

(Yu 2008: 55-56. Trans. Jones 2003)

Given the fact that *bei* passivisation is correlated with negative emotions, when the subject is an inanimate object without volition or mentality, it is conventional to substitute *bei* with other passive markers, or to resort to active constructions (Han 2005, Wang 2014: 97-98). Nevertheless, as can be seen from Example (11), the inanimate subject 'his chest' is accompanied by *bei* constructions.

(11) 这时的许三观解开棉袄的纽扣, 让冬天温暖的阳光照在胸前, 于是他被岁月晒黑的胸口, 又被寒风吹得通红。Zheshi de Xu Sanguan jie kai mianao de niukou rang dongtian wenuade yangguang zhao zai xiongqian yushi ta BEI sui yue shaihei de xiongkou you BEI hanfeng chuide tonghong

Xu Sanguan unfastened the buttons of his cotton-padded jacket, letting the wintry sunlight shine onto his chest. His time-bronzed skin flushed a deep red in the cold wind.

(Yu 2008: 210. Trans. Jones 2003)

Furthermore, under circumstances when it is unnecessary or impossible to mention agents of acts, the passive marker *bei* is inclined to be omitted (Li and Cheng 2008: 475-476, Wang 2014: 97). I posit that the agents of actions in Example (12) have been implied in the previous context, so *bei* needs to be deleted from the three clauses in Example (12).

(12) 为什么有人被吊在了树上、有人被关进了牛棚、有人被活活打死?

Weishenme youren BEI diao zai le shushang youren BEI guanjin le niupeng youren BEI huohuo dasi

Why some people have hung themselves from trees, and some people are locked up in 'cow sheds' and beaten half to death?

(Yu 2008: 161. Trans. Jones 2003)

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are constituted of subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions: the former link subordinate clauses to independent clauses, while the latter connect words and phrases of the identical grammatical type (Coghill and Magedanz 2003:135-140, Anderson 2013, Beadle 2014: 50). Subordinating conjunctions are alternatively referred to as subordinators, and they can be further categorised into simple subordinators (e.g. *if*, *when*, *since*), complex subordinators (e.g. *in spite of*, *because of*, *in order to*) as well as historically complex subordinators (e.g. *because*, *until*, *although*); as for coordinating

conjunctions, they can be divided into simple conjunctions (e.g. *and*, *but*, *or*), complex conjunctions (e.g. *later on*, *and then*, *so later on*) as well as historically complex conjunctions (e.g. *however*, *moreover*, *furthermore*) (Givón 1993: 78).

The Chinese language abounds with subordinating conjunctions, yet they are non-obligatory (Wang 2014: 415). Moreover, omitting subordinating conjunctions can render the text concise, in that Chinese substantially relies on context to imply logic, in stark contrast to its English counterpart that places more emphasis on explicit expressions (Yu 1987, Han 2005, He 2008). As can be seen from Examples (13-14), the cause and effect relation has been illustrated by subordinating conjunctions *由于* *youyu* 'because' and *因为* *yinwei* 'because', whereas deleting the conjunctions does not impede comprehension.

(13) 许玉兰这时候的哭诉已经没有了吸引力, 她把同样的话说了几遍, 她的声音由于用力过久, 正在逐渐地失去水分, 没有了清脆的弹性, 变得沙哑和干涸。

Xu Yulan zheshihou de kusu yijing meiyou le xiyinli ta ba tongyangde hua shuo le jibian ta de sheng yin YOUYU yongli guojiu zhengzai zhujiande shiqu shuifen meiyou le qingcuide tanxing biande shaya he ganhe

By now Xu Yulan's litany had lost much of its interest for the spectators. She went through the changes several more times, but her voice had begun to weaken with fatigue and, lacking its original bite and elasticity, became dry and gravelly.

(Yu 2008: 66. Trans. Jones 2003)

(14) 从现在开始, 你们都叫她许玉兰, 别叫她妈, 因为这是批斗会, 开完了批斗会, 你们才可以叫她妈。

Cong xianzai kaishi nimen dou jiao ta Xu Yulan bie jiao ta ma YINWEI zhe shi pidouhui kai wan le pidouhui nimen cai keyi jiao ta ma

From now on you have to call her Xu Yulan. You're not allowed to call her Mom at a struggle session. You can't call her Mom until we're finished with the meeting.

(Yu 2008: 172. Trans. Jones 2003)

Similarly, *所以* *suoyi* 'so' in Example (15) is optional, and its logical implication overlaps with *就* *jiu* 'then' in the posterior context.

(15) 他另外三个叔叔还活着,可是另外三个叔叔以前对他不好,所以他也就不去想他们了。

Ta lingwai sange shushu hai huozhe keshi lingwai sange shushu yiqian dui ta buhao SUOYI ta ye jiu bu qu xiang tamen le

His other three uncles were still alive, but they almost never occurred to him, because they had never been good to him or paid him any mind.

(Yu 2008: 112. Trans. Jones 2003)

In terms of coordinating conjunctions, the excessive employment of 'and' (和 he, 与 yu, 及 ji and 以及 yiji) is the embodiment of Westernised Chinese—disparate from English, the Chinese language does not require obligatory clause-internal connectives (Yu 1987, He 2008, Wang 2014: 412-414, Wu 2014). Therefore, coordinating conjunctions 还有 haiyou 'and' and 和 he 'and' in Examples (16-17) are redundant elements triggered by the impact from English.

(16) 他看了看远处农家屋顶上升起的炊烟,拍了拍屁股上的尘土,然后双手伸到前面去摸胀鼓鼓的肚子,里面装满了西瓜、黄金瓜、老太婆瓜,还有黄瓜和桃子。

Ta kan le kan yuanchu nongjia wuding shang shengqi de chuiyan pai le pai pi gushang de chentu ranhou shuangshou shendao qianmian qu mo zhanggugu de duzi limian zhuang man le xigua huangjinzhao laotaipogua HAIYOU huanggua HE taozi

Gazing toward the smoke curling up from the farmhouses, he patted the dirt from his rear and started to rub his stomach, which was swollen with watermelon, Golden, Old Ladies, cucumbers, and peaches.

(Yu 2008: 17. Trans. Jones 2003)

(17) 她告诉何小勇,一个名叫许三观的人请她吃了小笼包子,吃了话梅、糖果还有半个西瓜,吃完以后她就要嫁给他了。

Ta gaosu He Xiaoyong yige mingjiao Xu Sanguan de ren qing ta chi le xiaolongbaozi chi le huamei tangguo HAIYOU bange xigua chiwan yihou ta jiu yao jia gei ta le

She told He Xiaoyong that someone named Xu Sanguan had treated her to steamed dumplings, preserved plums, candied fruit, and half a watermelon, and how, when it was all over, she had found herself obliged to marry him.

(Yu 2008: 26. Trans. Jones 2003)

Plurality

As suggested by Yu Kwang-chung, the marker 们 men should be omitted under circumstances that plurality is implied in the context, so as to circumvent redundancy (Yu 1985). As can be seen from Example (18), the noun phrase 我的儿子们 wode erzi men 'my sons' precedes a determiner 全 quan 'all', which means the plurality is self-evident, so the presence of the plural marker men defies the convention of Chinese.

(18) 你胡说八道,我堂堂何小勇怎么会上你家倒插门呢?以后我的儿子们全姓许?不可能。

Ni hushuobadao wo tangtang He Xiaoyong zenme hui shang nijia dachamen ne yihou WODE ERZI MEN quan xing xu bu keneng

What the hell are you talking about? Do you think a man like me would actually agree to take on someone else's name? And let our sons be named Xu? Impossible.

(Yu 2008: 26. Trans. Jones 2003)

Analogously, Example (19) contains the plural marker men, yet owing to the preceding numerical expression 两大片 liang da pian 'two big chunks' (Trans. Mine), the presence of men is unnecessary. Additionally, Example (19) reflects the overuse of the third-person inanimate pronoun 它 ta 'it' and its plural form 它们 tamen 'they; them', which is also caused by the language contact between Chinese and English and hence should be circumvented (Liu and Chai 2004, Shen 2011, Wang 2014: 422-424).

(19) 林芬芳的腿看上去扁扁的两大片,它们从一条又红又绿的短裤衩里伸出来,让许三观看得气喘吁吁。

Lin Fenfang de tui kanshangqu bianbian de liang da pian TA MEN cong yitiao youhongyoulü de duankucha li shen chulai rang Xu Sanguan kande qichuanxuxu

Her powdery white flesh spread out across the mat, and the way her legs protruded from her undershorts left Xu Sanguan breathless.

(Yu 2008: 91. Trans. Jones 2003)

Pre-modifiers and particles

According to Yu Kwang-chung, post-modification, rather than pre-modification, appears more frequently and naturally in Classical Chinese, while long pre-modifiers preceding a particle 的 *de* embody the Westernisation of modern Chinese (Yu 1987). The linguistic phenomenon of long pre-modification can be shown by Examples (20-21).

(20) 对, 就是一乐说的那个人, 住在城西老邮政弄, 经常戴着鸭舌帽的那个人。

Dui jiu shi Yile shuo de na ge ren zhuzai chengxi lao youzheng nong jingchang daizhe yashemao DE na ge ren

He's the one Yile was talking about, lives on Old Post Office Lane on the west side, always wears a duck's bill cap.

(Yu 2008: 34. Trans. Jones 2003)

(21) 她笑呵呵地走在别人的后面, 街上的人都知道她是谁, 都知道她是丝厂的林芬芳, 那个城里最胖的女人, 那个就是不吃菜不吃饭, 光是喝水都会长肉的女人, 他们都知道这个一走上街就笑呵呵的女人叫林芬芳。

Ta xiaohehe de zou zai bieren de homian jieshang de ren dou zhidao ta shi shei dou zhidao ta shi sichang de Lin Fenfang nage cheng li zui pang de nüren nage jiu shi bu chifan bu chikai guang shi heshui dou hui zhangrou DE nüren tamen dou zhidao zhe ge yi zou shang jie jiu xiaohehe DE nüren jiao Lin Fenfang

She always walked cheerfully behind the rest, and everybody else knew that she was Lin Fenfang from the silk factory, the fattest woman in town, the woman who would gain weight even if she only ate rice, who could put on pounds just by drinking water.

(Yu 2008: 88. Trans. Jones 2003)

Another function of the particle *de* is to mark adjectives, as in Example (22), whereas its presence encapsulates the Europeanisation of Chinese. Similarly, another particle 地 *de* is deployed in the Chinese language to transform verbs into adverbs, impinged upon by the suffix '-ly' in English (Yu 1987, He 2008), as in Example (23).

(22) 到了八九副, 一乐也有了一件新的线衣...许玉兰要等到精纺的手套满十七八副以后, 才给自己织线衣。精纺的手套, 许三观一年里也只能拿回来两三副。他们结婚九年, 前面七年的积累, 让许玉兰给自己织了一件精纺的线衣。

Daole ba jiu fu Yile ye youle yijian xin De xianyi Xu Yulan yao dengdao jingfang DE shoutao man shiqiba fu yihou cai gei ziji zhi xianyi jingfang DE shoutao Xu Sanguan yinian li ye zhineng na huilai liang san fu Tamen jiehun jiu nian qianmian qi nian de jilei rang Xu Yulan gei ziji zhi le yijian jingfang DE xianyi

Once she had eight or nine, she could sew a sweater for Yile...Xu Yulan didn't sew anything for herself until she had collected seventeen or eighteen pairs of the finer quality gloves. And Xu Sanguan only brought home three or four pairs of the fine cotton gloves every year. After nine years of marriage she decided to use seven years of gloves to make herself a good sweater.

(Yu 2008: 43-44. Trans. Jones 2003)

(23) 他们三个人卖完血之后, 就步履蹒跚地走向了医院的厕所, 三个人都歪着嘴巴。

Tamen san ge ren mai wan xie zhihou jiu bulüpanshan DE zou xiang le yiyuan de cesuo san ge ren dou waizhe zuiba

After the three men finished their transaction, they made their way, step by painstaking step, toward the hospital's public lavatory.

(Yu 2008: 12. Trans. Jones 2003)

Conclusion

In Yu Hua's chef-d'oeuvre *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*, light verbs and noun phrases are frequently employed, whereas their presence renders the language less concise. The novel is also replete with passive constructions explicitly marked by *bei*, which could be substituted by active structures or other passive markers. As for conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions are optional in terms of indicating logic, while coordinating conjunctions should be deleted from idiomatic Chinese texts. Similarly, the plural marker *men* can be omitted, as long as the plurality is implied in the context. Moreover, the tendency of using long pre-modifiers and two particles renders the language less natural, which might be attributed to the influence of English.

Therefore, according to the criteria posited by Yu Kwang-chung, *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* is composed in Westernised/Europeanised Chinese.

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