

CHINESE EVOLUTION IN RECENT 150 YEARS:
A DIACHRONIC STUDY OF WORD FREQUENCY
IN *THE GOSPEL OF MARK*

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ABSTRACT


This study quantitatively investigated word frequencies in parallel Chinese texts at three different periods, namely, Classical Chinese (1855), Beijing Mandarin (1908) and Modern Mandarin (2010), attempting to shed some light on the evolution of the Chinese language over the last 150 years. With the evolution of Chinese: both the types and tokens increased diachronically, and sharp changes can be found in the high-frequency function words, vocabulary richness, and the distribution of word classes. The syntactic structure has also become increasingly complex. In addition, although the length of words (measured in character) has increased diachronically, disyllabic words have not always been preponderant in Chinese after the opium war of 1840–1842. The results show that the complication is a crucial trend in the evolution process of Chinese.

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近 150 年汉语的演化——基于《马可福音》词频的历时研究

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摘要

本文通过对文言（1855）、北京官话（1908）和现代汉语（2010）三个不同时期马可福音译本的量化调查，从词汇的角度展示了近 150 年汉语的演化。随着汉语的演化，马可福音中词的种类和数量显著增加；高频虚词、词汇丰富度和词类分布也发生了很大的变化；句法结构变得越来越复杂；尽管词变得越来越长，鸦片战争后复音词并不总是占优势。结果显示，复杂化是汉语演化过程中的一个重要趋势。

关键词

语言演化 汉语 词频 马可福音 定量方法