

Acknowledgement

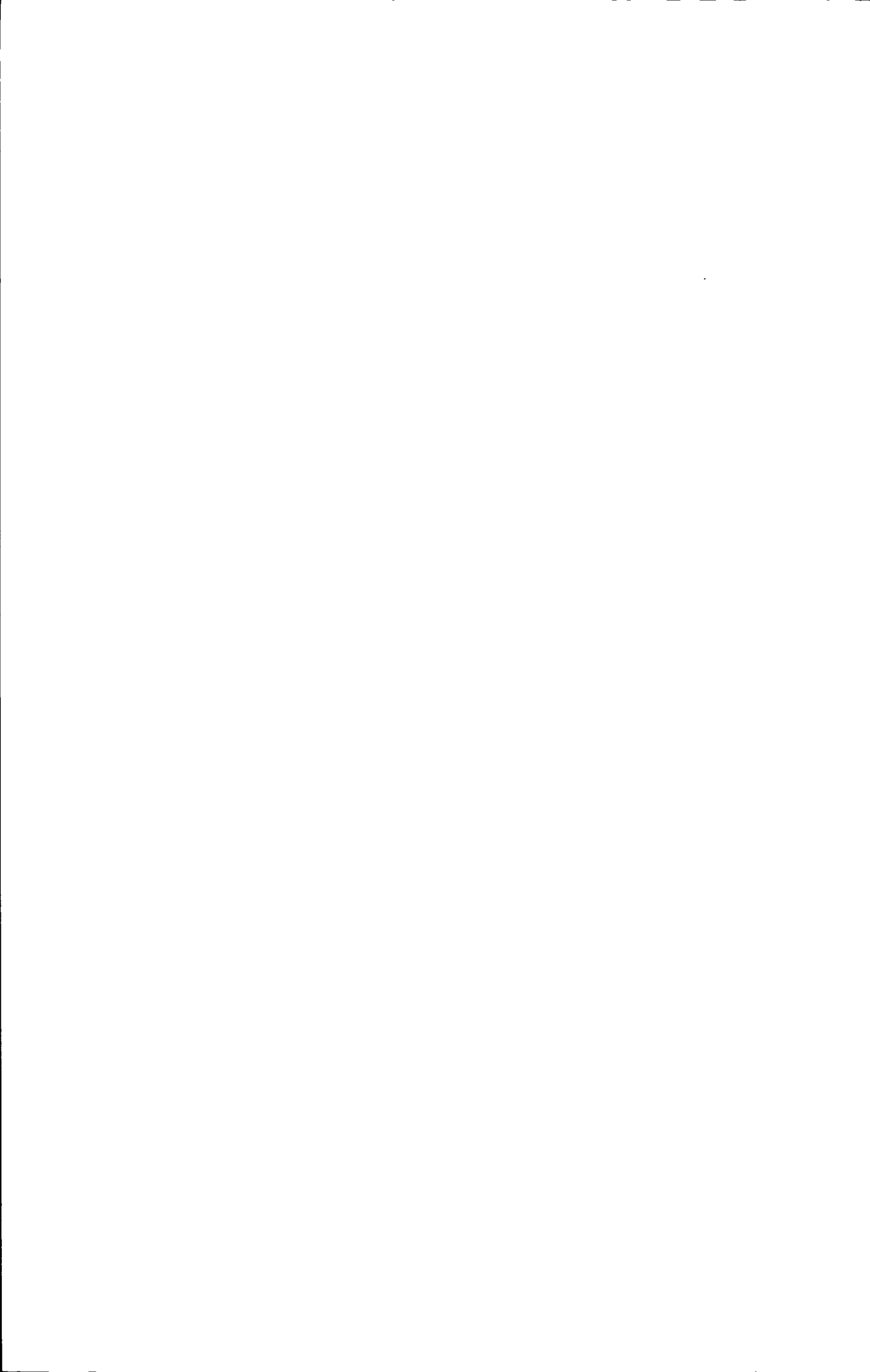
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Abstract

Along with the development of trade and financial globalization, English-Chinese interpreters are playing an ever indispensable role in the world. Numerous academic researches are devoted to the techniques of interpretation while little is attempted in the study of the earliest English-Chinese interpreters---linguists in the Canton trade era. Moreover, most of the historical records and studies of that same period of time have been concentrating upon the closed-door policy of Ch'ing dynasty, opium smuggling and the first Opium War. They are all intricately woven with Sino-British relations, in which the linguists acting as the most direct and close contact between each side should be of dire importance. However, the historical records and academic studies on the linguists are extremely scanty except efforts made by several marginal researchers in recent years. And the major impression left by the linguists on the public is still largely as traitors who assisted the foreigners to smuggle opium into the country or uncultured Canton English speakers. Therefore, this study aims at collecting and organizing the scattered historical documents and studies which are little attended to or studied previously, especially the status and roles assumed by or rather imposed upon the linguists. These two elements were carried by every linguist and could contribute to the elimination of possible inaccuracy and bias resulted from simplifying the linguists as "opium smugglers" despite the lack of historical records to prove that which linguists participated in the smuggling of opium and which stayed away from it. Along with the collection of historical records to describe their status and roles of the linguists at the time, proper analysis of the status and roles were also attempted so as to first look at the Sino-British trade relationship from linguists' perspectives and then attempt to reveal and prove their contribution and limitation both as trade agents and quasi-diplomats. It is hoped that this dissertation may make the due contribution to the study of linguists in the Canton trade era as a whole.

Key Words: linguists, Canton trade, barbarians, Canton English, trade agents, quasi-diplomats



摘要

随着贸易的发展,全球化进程在逐步加快,中文-英文口译员变得越来越不可或缺,对于口译技巧方面的学术文章如汗牛充栋。但是对于在中国最早的英文-中文口译员——广州贸易制度时期通事的了解和研究却很鲜见。另一方面,同时期的历史记录以及学术研究大多集中在与中英关系密切相关的清政府的闭关锁国政策以及后来的鸦片走私与鸦片战争,而广州贸易制度时期的通事作为最直接也是最紧密与英方接触的群体理应是研究的重点。但是,关于通事的历史记录和学术研究都极端之少,在近年来才开始有少数学者关注这一领域。且通事留给大众的印象仍然大多还停留在是协助外国商人走私鸦片的叛贼,以及操着广东英语文化水平不高的群体。因此本篇论文旨在通过对关于通事的零散记录以及其他学者之前的总结进行查找以及再整理,并特别关注之前的研究经常忽略的内容,特别是对于广州贸易制度时期通事所扮演的角色和所处的地位有关的记录整理和研究。角色和地位是每一个通事都必须扮演和承担的,它具有更大的代表性和准确性。这与笼统地表述“通事参与了鸦片走私”有质的区别,原因在于历史记录很少提及哪些通事参与了鸦片走私,哪些没有,笼统的表述难免有将问题过于简单化的缺点。在收集整理并展现通事的社会地位和角色的同时,本文也会尽力做好与之相关的分析,并试图从通事的角度看待中英贸易关系,并揭示通事作为贸易中间人以及准外交人员所做出的贡献以及其形象积极的一面。希望本文能够为广州贸易制度期间通事这一极少被关注的对象的研究做出一点补充和贡献

关键词: 通事, 广州贸易制度, 外夷, 广东英语, 贸易中间人, 准外交人员



Contents

Chapter One	Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two	Literature Review.....	5
2.1	Ji & Chen: a Comprehensive Exploration of the Language Barrier and Its Impact on the Modernization of the Late Ch'ing Period.....	5
2.2	Van Dyke: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast.....	7
2.3	Hosea Ballou Morse: Valuable Literature on Sino-British Trade and Ch'ing Customs.....	9
Chapter Three	Trade Relationship from the Perspective of the Linguists.....	10
3.1	Canton Trade Before the Closed-Door Policy of Ch'ing Dynasty.....	12
3.2	Hong Renhui, the Catalyst of the Closed-Door Policy.....	12
3.3	Trade Relationship from the Perspective of the British Linguist Hong Rnhui.....	17
3.4	The Closed-Door Policy: Specific Regulations and Trade Relationship from the Perspective of the Chinese Linguists.....	23
Chapter Four	Exploration on Linguists in the Canton Trade.....	31
4.1	Canton Trade Has All-----Experience, Geographical Advantage and Linguists.....	31
4.2	Linguists---- Qualification and Source.....	32
4.3	Linguists as Trade Agent and Canton English as the Medium for Trade.....	34
4.4	Linguists as Quasi-Diplomat and Their Vocational Jeopardy.....	39
	Conclusion.....	47
	Works Cited	51
	Bibliography.....	53



Chapter One Introduction

With the booming of globalization pioneered by the trade and financial integration, English-Chinese interpreters are playing an ever increasingly important role in almost every aspect of the world negotiation and communication. In addition to the difficulty of acquiring the competence required by being an interpreter and the rather high but also exaggerated pay, in China, interpreters as a whole gets mystified. Many books and articles are produced concerning the skills of interpretation and a career as an interpreter through field study, experiments and academic research. However, when it comes to the interpreters themselves, especially their origin and historical progress, the studies involved are rather few. Few people know that the first batch of English-Chinese interpreters are the linguists in the Canton trade era which in this dissertation is put in a time frame from 1757 when Canton was designated as the only maritime port for trade to 1840 of the outbreak of the first opium war.

On the other hand, studies concerning the same historical era as the first English-Chinese interpreters emerged in China have been flourishing all the time. Two of the most high profile studies have been undertaken with regard to the closed-door policy of the Ch'ing dynasty and the first opium war, both of which are intricately woven with the intercourse and relationship between China and Britain. Therefore, it seems that the linguists in Canton as the only few people who had close contact with the British merchants who were also the majority of British citizens in China were supposed to be a subject for research and studies of dire importance. Nonetheless, everything about the linguists from the original records to the studies later is few and far between. And another disturbing fact we have to face is that although few people know a lot about the first English-Chinese interpreters, the major impression left by the linguists in the Canton trade era is either a traitor who betrayed China by assisting the foreign merchants to smuggle opium into the country or uncultured people only able to speak pidgin English with no other merits at all or both.

However, historical records had very little details about which linguist took part in the smuggling and which one did not and these firmly established opinions are products of simplified and biased consideration about the linguists.

And it leaves a blank not to be ignored, both in terms of a more thorough search and summary of the historical records about the linguists at the time and the analysis on the linguists as the protagonist rather than just byproduct or something marginal but only relative therefore worth mentioning in a research that deals with other subjects such as the opium smuggling and the following opium war. Last but not least, from a better study of the linguists, some fresh findings and inspirations may be found in the history of the Canton trade era.

This dissertation aims to make a more thorough collection of historical records concerning the linguists in terms of the roles they took and the status they assumed or rather be imposed upon, followed in turn by the analysis of which against the historical backdrop. And from the perspective of the linguists, the dissertation also attempts to probe the essence of the Sino-British relationship in the hope of this fresh perspective being able to contribute to the study of the whole history at the time. With a combination of the work above, this dissertation also sets its objective on providing a new insight about the linguists by displaying their limits, boundaries, responsibilities and credits, which contains the other side of the linguists, not just or always traitors and Pidgin English users at all, but eligible trade agents and quasi-diplomats without the corresponding power. In a word, this dissertation intends to present the role and status taken by every linguist rather than a generalized and simplified reference to all of them as traitors, smugglers or sinners while there are few historical details concerning specific linguists involved in which wrongs and evils. In a positive and honest way, all the collection and analysis developed also attempts to prove that it may be neither reasonable nor fair to impose as magnificent tasks as such to explore and disseminate the advanced and polar-different western culture, technology and ideas upon the linguists whose number steadily stayed at three to five at any time of the Canton trade period, especially when they were limited by the specific social and political environment impossible for them to break through.

In accordance with the objectives stated above, the body of this dissertation will be developed into four chapters. Chapter two mainly explores the three most important literature works concerning the linguists in the Canton trade era from different aspects. Ji and Chen's book *zhongguo jindai tongshi* (The linguists in modern China) is one of the most comprehensive compilations about the linguists in Canton Trade, during the opium war and mostly the treaty-ports period, along with which he posed an inspirational idea that "the Ch'ing government brought forward and retained the closed-door policy by attempting to take advantage of the language barrier." (see Ji & Chen, 2007:65-70) Van Dyke made efforts to give a whole picture of the Canton Trade in his book *The Canton Trade*, in which it tried to give a fair share of description of every element in the Canton trade including a chapter devoted to the linguists so as to "explore the positive side of all the elements working together and therefore to fully address the constant growth of the trade by identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of the structure of the trade so we can begin to explain this phenomenon of growth" (Van Dyke, 2005:1) Last but not least, the great volumes of *the Chronicles of the East India Company: Trading to China 1645-1843* by Hosea Ballou Morse are indispensable reference in every study on the Canton trade. In his five volumes, Hosea Ballou Morse analyzed the records of the East India Company in a year-by-year narrative form centering on the outstanding events and people there. Morse extracts precious material that lay buried in the record of the Canton Factory and the East India Company, which by presenting genuine and ordered historical records does a great favor to every relative study followed. Morse's volumes paint the big environment and the background for the studies of the roles and status of the Linguists in this dissertation.

Chapter Three is devoted to a thorough description of the British Linguist Hong Renhui and the "Hong Renhui incident" as a catalyst of the closed-door policy. Sino-British trade relationship would be examined from Hong Renhui, a British linguist's, perspective and the dissertation tries to reveal that from Hong's point of view, it should be an equal relationship between two paralleled sovereignty. The second half of Chapter Three mainly concerns the specific regulations issued by the

imperial court to constrain the trade and interaction between the Chinese and the foreigners. Along with this detailed presentation of the regulations as a conduct code for the linguists, the trade relationship between the Ch'ing government and Britain also could be looked freshly into from the Chinese linguists' perspective, which in this dissertation attempts to prove that the trade relationship did not dislodge the foundations and traditional way China was used to applying to her foreign policy but quite the other way around.

Chapter Four continues with a collection of records concerning the responsibilities and tasks performed by the linguists that are split into two different functional roles, namely linguists as trade agents and linguists as quasi-diplomats. Different from Ji & Chen, who put the priority upon the linguists in the environment of the opium war and the following treaty port area, this dissertation set its focus upon a very finely defined period of time which is from 1757 when Canton was designated as the sole maritime port for trade in China to 1840 when the opium war broke out. With this time frame, a deeper and fuller analysis of the roles and the status of the linguists are of significant importance for the lack of previous attention and the contrast it poses against the entrenched images like the traitors and marginal Pidgin English losers.

Chapter Five is a conclusion of the dissertation. In it, the significance and innovation of this dissertation is presented and discussed while the limitations and methods for further improvement are explored as well.

Chapter Two Literature Review

Despite the fact that the linguists in the Canton trade era are the first English-Chinese interpreters, there is little literature specifically and independently preserved or produced that concerns the role, identity or events of them. Much of the limited number of evidence is scattered in books and articles written on other historical aspects. These histories have different areas of concern. Many of the major group of interest in research and studies center on a specific ethnic group or company, such as the East India Company; particular kinds of commodity, mostly of tea which accounted for almost up to 60% of Sino-Western trade or silk and porcelain that stood for almost all of the remaining 40% of the trade; the records of Hong merchants who are licensed and allowed by the Ch'ing government to trade with foreign merchants; or one particular geographical site like Macao or Canton. Therefore, it would be of no surprise that much of the previous work done regarding the linguists is the result of scholar's diligent extraction and summary of these other historical records and studies, in which while dealing with their own special focus they may mention linguists when the latter interacted with the subject of concern. Through literature reading and researching, it's obvious that both the historical records and the modern studies about the linguists was too little and too scattered, therefore, it's reasonable to expect that the current and the future work continued also much depends on the further search, extraction and inference. And one of the contributions this dissertation is likely to make lies in its pursuit of the seemingly insignificant records about the linguists by which it attempts to enrich their image in a positive and honest way.

2.1 Ji & Chen: a Comprehensive Exploration of the Language Barrier and Its Impact on the Modernization of the Late Ch'ing Period

Works devoted to the Canton trade are gradually on the rise, but very few of them are specifically dealing with the linguists in that period of time. Information

about the linguists is not mentioned much and only comes up when it serves to prove or complement other parts in the Canton trade, such as the Hong merchants, Hoppo and the foreign merchants. Among all these scattering records and studies, the book *zhongguo jindai tongshi* (The linguists in modern China) by Ji Yaxi and Chen Weimin is a precious comprehensive collection and sorting of records concerning the linguists from the earliest members of Society of Jesus such as Matteo Ricci in the late Ming dynasty in 1583 to the linguists in the treaty ports era after the first opium war. In this book, Ji & Chen devoted most of the space to the linguists in the two opium wars as well as the efforts made by prominent figures from China or abroad to eliminate the language barrier, such as Lin Zexu, foreign missionaries and leaders of the westernization movement. And their main argument lies in the cause-effect relationship between the language barrier and process of modernization of the late Ch'ing period, (see Ji & Chen, 2007:2) which is a new idea complementing the precious studies fraught with the other explanations on the retarded speed of modernization of the same period. Ji and Chen believe that the Ch'ing government took advantage of the language barrier and maintained this obstacle to exclude the westerners, especially the British merchants, from the major part of China and restrict them in Canton. With regard to the efforts of breaking the language barrier, Ji and Chen give the credit mainly to the western missionaries and the British merchants. The former made efforts to learn Chinese since their goal lied in missionary work and the latter although seldom learned Chinese themselves bore a clear realization of the significance of language proficiency which would help them expand their activities and profits in China as well as break the obstacles resulted from the seclusion policy of the Ch'ing government. After the first opium war, the British merchants sponsored a batch of British talents with good knowledge of the Chinese language and they helped Britain grab economic interests and political advantages in the negotiation of the Nanking treaty and other treaties followed.

It's obvious that both the time frame and the content focus of their book are beyond this dissertation, however, Ji & Chen also spend a fair share of the efforts on the study of the linguists in the Canton trade time in which their focus lies in the

shortage of eligible linguists throughout the entire intercourse between the Ch'ing government and Britain. And they mainly centers upon the idea that the language barrier was used by the Ch'ing government to maintain its closed-door policy and Hong Renhui incident brought forward in this part is to prove this point. Nonetheless, different from Ji & Chen, in this dissertation, a different approach is pursued so as to look into the Sino-British relationship from the perspective of probably the only most famous British linguist's perspective. At least Hong Renhui (also James Flint)'s attempt to expand the trade in equal terms and pursue a dialogue with the emperor is almost 40 years earlier than the visit led the famous Lord MaCartney with the same attempt. Moreover, with regard to the Chinese linguists in the Canton trade, except a general description, Ji & Chen also mentioned the linguists' language insufficiency without discriminating differences of language proficiency between the trade and diplomatic situation. Let alone to say a deeper exploration on the reason which may very well justify the insufficiency during diplomatic scene.

With regard to Pidgin English, Ji & Chen attach the importance on the features of the limited vocabulary scale and the severe distortion of the English language. Much of the similar work has once been down by Samuel Wells Williams in his study on Sinology. What's missing is a better explanation on the positive side of Canton English so as to grasp some of its elements contributing to the communication of the 100 years plus Canton trade.

2.2 Van Dyke, Paul A: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast

The Canton Trade by Van Dyke, Paul A. is a most valuable work which deals with life and enterprise on the China coast. In his efforts to examine the operation of the essential factors in the Canton trade including customs procedures, piloting practice, compradors and administrative initiative and shortcomings, Van Dyke tires to "identify both the strengths and the weaknesses of the structure of the trade so as to explain the phenomenon of growth and by understanding how the Canton system operated, people can determine better why it failed." (see Van Dyke, 2005:1)

Among all the factors examined Van Dyke devotes a whole chapter concerning

linguists in that era. He touches upon the number of linguists every year, their pidgin English, what they do after the collapse of the Canton trade system and so on, among which Van Dyke focuses upon the linguists' contribution to the clarity and accuracy of the trade. Because "linguists serviced foreigners from several companies at a time, they were often called on to supply information to their patrons about other traders in Canton. There was nothing foreigners could do to prevent the linguists from passing this information. Linguists had access to all the figures in the Hoppo's import and export book, which was very important to the expansion of the trade." (Van Dyke, 2005:79) According to Van Dyke, the great contribution the linguists did is to keep the transparency of the trade and maintain the market as competitive as possible, especially in the situation unique in Canton that the Hong merchants and the British East Company almost monopolize the whole market from each side respectively.

Another focus of Van Dyke in his book is the linguists' day-to-day tasks and fees they earned in each season. From Van Dyke's careful listing and depiction, we are informed about the multi-tasks and various responsibilities shouldered by the linguists and also it's not hard to see that diplomatic and political concerns are the most essential and pressing responsibilities for the linguists. The fulfillment of those concerns rather than a clear and accurate interpretation was the heaviest thing on their mind. The hard facts provided by Van Dyke are much detailed and systematic, which is a great summary after careful extraction. However, discussions regarding to these facts were little, especially the reason and historical cause for the linguists at that time to assume such. Since this dissertation aims to focus a fair amount upon analysis in addition to the organization of hard facts, Van Dyke's work provide research material in one major aspect. And to sub-classify and explain their choices and behaviors in their work both as trade agent and quasi-diplomat is one serious concentration of this dissertation and hopefully also a useful complement to Van Dyke's painstaking extraction of the numerous historical facts.

2.3 Hosea Ballou Morse: Valuable Literature on Sino-British Trade and Ch'ing Customs

One of the most important and comprehensive extraction and analysis of the trade between the Great Britain and the Ch'ing government before the opium war was done by Hosea Ballou Morse. His five-volume *Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China (1635-1834)* involve a wide range of information concerning the relationship of Britain and the Qing government, the early history of customs administration and the history of the thirteen factories(Hong merchants). This set of books provides pretty authentic and valuable knowledge of Canton trade after researching all of the archives and records left by the British East India Company. Although its backbone relies in the situation of East India Company, it also vividly depicted the interaction of all other parts of interest with the company. For instance, the Hoppo and Hong merchants occupied large space in the five volumes in a systematic way. However, information on linguists was not compact and detailed at all. The linguists seem only visible a little here and there among the Chinese officials, Hong merchants and the British merchants. Therefore, its value stands at its description on the various links and conflicts happened in the frame of the Canton trade system, which provide an all-around perspective for the big picture and contribute to the understanding of the background against which linguists in the Canton trade era operated. However, it should be noted that these five volumes are written from the stand of colonialism to defend the invasion of China by western capitalist powers. Therefore, Morse blamed the collapse the Canton system and the outbreak of the opium war on the corruption of the Chinese officials and the imperial court as well as the not tough enough attitude assumed by Britain before the war. Such perspective makes an obvious bias in his selection of records, speeches and analysis. Therefore, when making quotations in his work, discretion should be implemented to better support the argument in this dissertation.

Chapter Three Trade Relationship from the Perspective of the Linguists

The closed-door policy undertaken by the Ch'ing government makes a lot of differences in the Sino-British relation which was essentially a trade relationship lasting for the next 100 years and plus. And this policy, known as the seclusion policy as well, also became a line of demarcation in Canton trade that could be looked into from the perspectives of the linguists there.

3.1 Canton Trade Before the Closed-Door Policy of Ch'ing Dynasty

After having quelled the insurgency in Taiwan, in 1648, Kangxi Emperor approved the opening of four maritime ports, namely Canton, Amoy, Ningpo and Yun Tai Shan. There came the time of four trade ports. However, even with four ports available at the same time, much of business with the western traders, especially the British merchants, was done in Canton. According to statistics organized by Huang(2003), during four-port trade periods, customs revenue in Canton exceeded that of the other three ports by a large margin. From 1736 to 1756, customs revenue in Canton stood at 449048.33 taels, compared with 269454.47 taels in Fujian customs house, 89790.235 taels in Zhejiang customs house and 62483.6 taels in Shanghai customs house. Obviously customs revenue in Canton accounted for more than half of all the revenue of four ports together. Not to mention that much of western trade were done in Canton and the other three ports gained more revenue from inner China trade or trade with Japan as well as other non-western countries.

There were serious reasons for Canton standing out among the four ports. Canton was especially favorable as a maritime port for its adjacency to Macao where Portuguese had been trading back to the mid-seventeen century. In addition the tributary trade starting from the Shang & Zhou dynasties had long been preparing Canton for its trade with the outside world. Moreover, Ch'ing government put Canton

and Macao in the same administration system, thereafter, Canton began to establish the most feasible and efficient customs administration and regulation system among the four ports. Practices, network of supplies from local and upper/interior part of the country, experienced merchants and other advantageous factors were already in place as early as the Ch'ing conquered southern China.

In addition to the favorable conditions mentioned above, the availability of linguists for the trade and regulation is as well an indispensable factor. The first linguists of western trade came from Macao and Portuguese is the language for communication with the foreigners. Linguists then were also fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin. The latter is the language of the officialdom. But when it comes to 1730s, with the jump of the trade volume resulting from the British East India Company, "pidgin English had replaces Portuguese as the medium of communication with foreigners, and after that change the three most important languages for all linguist were pidgin English, Cantonese and Mandarin."(Van Dyke, 2005:77). It's not hard to draw the conclusion that along with a functional and experienced customs system in which linguists were available for communication and negotiation, Canton reasonably stood out as the entrepot for the western trade, especially when trade with the East India company increased steadily fast.

3.2 Hong Renhui, the Catalyst of the Closed-Door Policy

The four-port trade period didn't last for long. In 1757, Canton was designated as the only port for western trade. Along with the 'policy to guard against outside barbarians', these two historical events mark the beginning the closed door policy of Ch'ing dynasty, which is very much triggered and expedited by an British linguist, James Flint, also known as Hong Renhui.

There's nothing known about James Flint, an English young man, before he came to China in 1736, not his birth, nor his background, nor his goal of coming to China. What we know is he came to China by a merchant ship named Normanton and he asked the captain Rigby to leave him in Canton, therefore, he could study Chinese. His request was really unusual at that time. Although trade had already begun between

Britain and China, there were very few English people who would like to study Chinese. Five years later, in the instructions given to the supercargoes of the York and the Princess Mary heading for the yearly Canton trade, the council of British East India Company clearly wrote that “ the captain Rigby 【of the Normanton, in 1736】 left a young lad in China, James Flint, to learn the language. If you meet him there you will do well to entertain him in our service, in case he will be of any benefit to you.” (Morse, I 2007:267) It’s clear that the top figures in the British East India Company had foreseen the value of James Flint and planned to recruit him in their company to benefit business in the Canton trade. The Supercargoes of the York managed to reach James Flint and the latter wrote back in November 19th 1734 in which he offered help to the Committee at Canton and showed willingness to work for British merchants in Canton on the condition that they would finance his study until he can proficiently use Chinese (Mandarin) and Cantonese. The chief council of the Committee Richard Oliver was touched by his aspiration and perseverance and along with the consent of the other two councils, they gave him 150 taels. James Flint therefore became the first student studying Chinese translation in British East India Company. In the Canton trade season of 1746, the instructions given by the Committee of British East India Company have further reference to Hong Renhui which is more of an employment contract for him. It wrote that “we have directed Mr. James Flint to take passage on the Tavistock as linguist to all our supercargoes in general, and to assist in our affairs as occasion offers, who must be entertained at our Factories during your stay, and be allowed besides ninety taels a ship.” (Morse, I 2007:287) Until then, Hong Renhui officially became a linguist. He was the very first real British linguist for business on record and he named himself Hong Renhui in Chinese. For the first time, British East India Company had their own linguist and through him, they could voice their opinions fully and clearly to the Hoppo without going through Chinese merchants and linguists as they were required.

On August 4th 1753, Hong Renhui directly presented a Hoppo supervisor Li Yongbiao a translated petition written by the British committee of Canton trade and required to rid linguists and compradors of their duty to gift officials because the

burden would ultimately be transferred to British merchants. This petition written in Chinese immediately sparked disputes and oppositions from the Chinese side. However, at that time, the Chinese didn't know the person who wrote the petition was English and they thought it was some Chinese who dared to translate it for the foreigners. According to Ji & Chen (2007), the request by Hong Renhui was refused by Li Yongbiao but he and the other British businessmen wouldn't let it go and decided to go directly to talk to the governor. The governor Yang Yingju had just taken office and was unfamiliar with the rules and ways to deal with foreigners, therefore, he consented to talk to the group indiscreetly. Although this meeting didn't bring on much of tangible effects, the British merchants were more than appreciative to their linguist Hong Renhui because it was through him, not any Chinese merchant or linguist appointed by the Chinese authority, they directly talked to the governor and voiced their dissatisfactions and opinions. Therefore, Hong Renhui became more and more valuable to the British businessmen. In addition to acting as a linguist for the British East India Company, Hong Renhui became directly involved in business and trade with Chinese people by making use of his language advantage.

However it was in Ningpo where it showed the irreplaceable value of Hong Renhui. On May 22nd, 1755, Hong Renhui along with other British merchants arrived in Dinghai. Hong Renhui told the local official who came to ask their intention that "their ancestors had done business here before and they understood that people could trade fairly in Ningbo" (c.f. Tan 1979:18) Therefore, they came to Ningbo for the purchase of tea and silk. They were received with graciousness and hospitality. And what Hong Renhui meant for the previous business done by their ancestors is that between 1685 and 1736, a total number of 15 ships came to Ningpo to trade in 8 times. The governor of Zhejiang reported their arrival to the imperial court and Emperor Kien-long made no opposition on the visit of the foreign merchant ships. In this way trade in Ningpo was seemingly resumed. The British business circle was so excited about Hong Renhui's first arrival in Ningbo because a new port in addition to Canton means a lot more improvement and progress for foreign merchants. They can purchase tea and silk around their original producing area which eliminated the price

markup by the Canton merchants as agents. Besides, Ningpo was not as systemized as Canton. Lesser tax as well as more relaxed examination and supervision were naturally more desirable for the British merchants. Let alone to say, with one more port, foreign merchants could get more choices and better bargains in the hope of tapping into the vast mainland market. All of these would have never happened without breaking the language barrier first. The value of a linguist shows prominently. With Ren Honghui setting the example, a Chinese linguist Liang Rujun also led foreign merchant ships into Ningpo for trade only a month after Hong Renhui's arrival to Ningpo.

In the next year, Hong Renhui led some merchant ships to Ningbo again, however, this time the emperor got alarmed by the threats of the spread of foreign presence and activities. Emperor Kien-long worried about Ningpo, an important navy base much closer to Beijing, becoming another Macau. Eventually, on December 20th 1757, Emperor Qianlong wrote in his royal edict to the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi Le-She-Yaou "From now on, foreign merchants are only allowed to anchor and trade in Canton; foreign merchant ships are forbidden to enter Zhejiang waters; in this way, there would be no foreign ships coming to Zhajiang and the maritime security of the province is guaranteed; it will also benefit the livelihood of Canton people." (see Ji & Chen 2007:55).

On February 16th 1758, the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Le-She-Yaou officially declared to the foreign merchants that foreign trade was allowed to take place only in Canton. Before this declaration foreign merchants were entitled to choose any port to trade in China since 1684. But most of the foreign merchants had voluntarily headed for Canton because it was the official trade port where they could get their business done with hoppo through Chinese linguists. In other words, the language barrier in Canton is far smaller than that in any other port where foreign trade disappeared automatically when no one could effectively communicate with foreign merchants. Then there came Hong Renhui, an English linguist. All of a sudden, the access to other ports and markets became available. And it seemed nothing could stop trade expansion as the foreign merchants got Hong Renhui and the hope that

more Hong Renhuis were on the way, Chinese or English, as long as their first try a success. However, they were somehow wrong about the whole situation. In addition to the language barrier which stopped trade and communication, the court's desire to retain and use the language barrier also matters a lot. This is to prove and forecast that without linguists, Chinese or foreign, trade wouldn't be possible anywhere, however, Linguists, no matter how decisive they are in the opening of the trade and the possibility of communication, by no means are the final factor to facilitate or debilitate the trade or the Chinese sovereign. It's not proper to impose such grand power or responsibility upon them.

The British merchants thought the policy is induced by local authorities rather than the imperial court, because the officials in Canton would like to protect their interests and the Chinese merchants involved with them. On June 13th 1759, Hong Renhui along with other 13 merchants and seamen left Canton heading for the north. Eventually, their petition reached Emperor Kien-long. On one hand, the emperor attached much importance to the matter. "It concerns barbarians and more importantly it's of great consequence to the country and its dignity. Therefore, it should be fully resolved so as to demonstrate the integrity and holiness of the law of the Celestial Kingdom." (see Ji & Chen, 2007:58) On the other hand, the emperor took offence at Hong Renhui's action that a foreigner with a little knowledge of Chinese dared to file his complaints directly to the emperor. Qianlong believed that "there must be rascals in Zhejiang who wrote the petition for the foreigners and incited them to file it." (see Ji & Chen, 2007:58) In the opinion of the emperor, finding out these "rascals" looms much bigger in his heart than Hong Renhui's action itself. Furthermore, rascals referred by Qianlong emperor could write a petition for the British merchants must have had knowledge of the English language, so it is reasonable to make the inference that linguists back then were of rather low rank with little respect in the society. They were presumably categorized as "rascal".

In view of the emperor's worries and dissatisfaction, the officials below were more than anxious to calm the political turbulence caused by Ren Honghui's petition. Therefore, the enforcement of the emperor's decision was thorough and complete.

Hong Renhui was imprisoned somewhere a league away from Macau and forbidden to write to the British supercargoes except one letter received on March the third 1760. And in his letter he expressed his anguish and pain in a terrible situation.

It is now three months since our parting, I hope you have recovered of the fright of that day, but for my part I have not had one hours rest with the thoughts of those Fellows, and being shut up in four small Rooms, with Bars before the Doors and Windows so much like a Cage, and locked up at Nights with the beating of four or five Gongs and Bamboos from Seven at Night until Six in the Morning, and two Men sleeping in the Room for fear I should make away with my Self: The Mandarin is very civil, and gives me great comfort of my getting out by the latter end of the year, He made a Representation in my favor to all the great Men, and the Tsongtous answer was very civil, a few days ago the Act of Grace for the benefit of Prisoners came down, and the Mandarin has made a general Representation for me to take the benefit of it, as I am within the Act, and he has desired me to lend him Eight Secret, for if any body should know of it He would be turned out of his Place---You may pay it to the bearer, he has been very good to me, He does not understand any English, You will get it ready for him, put up in small parcels to take away as soon as he comes, for he will come the next day for it, and you must send your China Servant out of the way, that he may not see Him. A few days ago I sent Atchan to you for 150 Dollars and some things, as I am to have a Cook and to buy my own Provisions. It was a long time before I could get Atchan to come to me, to get me some things from Macao, The Mandarin heard of it and was very angry with him, and would have kept him ten or twelve days in the Guard room if I had not spoke for him, but when he came to me, He told me they had put a Chain about his Neck. I would have you order him, or for his people to send me any things that I should send for, and to get my Linnen washed better at Macao---I have heard that you are upon some Scheme in which I hope you will succeed.

Gentlemen
Your most Obedt Humble Servt
JAMES FLINT
(Morse, 2007 V: 88-89)

When he had served his time in this rather miserable condition, he was deported immediately. And the Chinese person, Luopintchu (Liu Yabian), who had helped Hong Renhui transcribe the petition was decapitated as soon as Hong Renhui was imprisoned.

British merchants again had to suffer from the lack of linguists who could and would translate Chinese writings and English petitions. Hong Renhui intended to get more ports open and relax the restrictions on the trade by lodging a complaint before the imperial court. However the much worse consequence than his failure to his goal

was the implementation of a nearly 80-year closed-door policy of Ch'ing dynasty. On January 29th 1760, Emperor Kien;long approved "Regulations to Guard against outside Barbarians" brought forward by Le-She-Yaou.

3.3 Trade Relationships from the Perspective of the British Linguist Hong Renhui

The fact that Hong Renhui learned Chinese and then worked for the British East India Company actually reflected in one way the rise of the merchant class in the early modern Europe. The pursuit of profits was well justified for the westerners. And the attempt made by Hong Renhui and the British East India Company that hire him could be first and primarily seen as a request for bigger market and more lucrative trade. Hong Renhui saw the unavailability of linguists in the other three ports and tried to solve that problem by leading the British merchants there as a linguist. However first of all it's what he did not know that make his desire and action doomed. The trade relationship with the Ch'ing government they were experiencing and the direction they were hoping it would go was different from what it was really were or at least what the Ch'ing government would like it to operate in their mind. They had fallen victim to the traditional Chinese idea of I (barbarians) outside the Celestial Kingdom in one dynasty after another. This appellation was designated to the people and nation outside China in the Inner Asia area. They were underdeveloped in terms of wealth and technology as well as uncivilized regarding to culture and art. In that millennium China as the Middle Kingdom had absolute dominating influence over the Far East and the barbarian people there. Nevertheless, in spite of China's superiority over the barbarians concerning wealth and culture, it can not avoid being conquered by the barbarians so they have called. Besides, unlike the early modern Europe where nationalism was established and recognized, in China, the royal throne was always succeeded by different dynasties rather than a stable or interconnected bloodline. The historical repetition of power taken by the coming dynasty gradually and eventually became an expectation which is a dangerous political awareness that everybody knew but almost no body would dare to say. No wonder it inevitably weighs heavily on the

mind of the Ch'ing conqueror. This expectation and the experience of the barbaric conquest over the Chinese are two very important factors in political life. The alternation between the Chinese and barbarian domination of the empire could be seen in the table below by Wittfogel and Feng:

Dynasties of Imperial China

I. Typically Chinese Dynasties	II. Dynasties of Conquest (and "Infiltration")
1. Ch'in and Han (221 B.C.---A.D.220)	
2. The Chinese dynasties during the period of disruption (220---581)	
	3. Wei (T'o-pa) (386---556) and other northern barbarian dynasties
4. Sui and T'ang (581---907)	
5. Sung (960---1279)	
	6. Liao (Ch'i-tan) (907---1125)
	7. Chin (Jurchen) (1115-1234)
	8. Yuan (Mongol) (1206---1368)
9. Ming (1368---1644)	
	10. Ch'ing (Manchu) (1616---1912)

(Wittfogel and Feng, 1949: 64)

From the table above, it's obvious that from the year 221 B.C. to A.D. 1912, nearly half of the time passed by when the empire and the Chinese people were dominated by barbarians. Factually, the Chinese people did not cripple the alien dominations or constantly revolt against it in any considerably large scale, which actually proved that the expectation of dynasty alternation actually was easy to be taken over and manipulated by the barbarians. And alternating alien dominations became an integral part in the Chinese history and politics.

The Ch'ing government, as a barbarian dominator and new comer, also held this kind of fear for being replaced by another dynasty, whether it's Chinese or other Barbarians. Therefore, "In politics the Manchus' first policy, as an alien dynasty on the defensive, was to champion the established order. They took over the Ming government almost as it stood, merely inserting themselves at the top." (Fairbank 1964:40) And the Ch'ing government was especially alert at the arrival of foreign ships keeping coming back to Ningpo, especially when they had just done with the insurgency in Taiwan and still had a fresh memory that the Dutch used to help the insurgents there against the Ch'ing government which was badly compounded by the fact that the coastal people helped the insurgents a lot at the same time.

The Ch'ing government perceived the westerners as the traditional barbarians who were low, brutal, sly and sneaky around trying to jeopardize the empire. And their accomplice was, like always, someone from inside, which was also true in things happened in Ming dynasty when Chinese merchants and pirates also took part together with the barbarians mostly Japanese pirates in the breach of the royal boycott policy. Hong Renhui who helped the British East India Company with expanding trade in Ningpo was seen as such an accomplice. Before it was known he was not Chinese, the emperor used to clearly think him of a native rascal who serviced the foreigners by giving them information about the empire and abetting them to defy the rules of the local and central government. So there is no doubt that the linguists were potential threats and suspects responsible for the unruly behavior of the foreigners and the loss of the empire if there's any. Therefore they should be monitored closely. Moreover, as Ji and Chen suggests, as early as the 16th century, there came a trend of pan-politicalization concerning interaction with the foreigners. An decree issued by the governor-general Guo Yingpin then wrote that "It's known that crimes committed here in Macau increased recently and this is all because the fault of She Ren (a derogatory appellation to mostly the linguists and a few people who knew something about a foreign language) hired by the foreigners. They abetted the foreigners and leaked out information about our people. One of the most serious actions of this kind was well known by the government: She Ren encouraged some foreign missionaries

to learn Chinese language both in the written and speaking form. The missionaries with knowledge of some Chinese were asking to live permanently in the city so as to build up churches and private residence. This decree is to make it clear that the actions above would hurt the interests of the empire and to accept and work for the foreigners is by no means a desirable pursuit. If the Ren do not stop such behaviors, they would face severe punishment and even death penalty. (Guo, 1989:156-157) This decree is strikingly like the regulations to guard against the barbarians as well as the several supplementary followed.

The Ming government once adopted a maritime boycott policy against pirates while in power and now the Ch'ing government undertook the same one in nature when it felt itself confronted by outside barbarians. All of these make it fair to say that the Ch'ing government actually took a wholesale of the long-lasting Chinese ideas and practices as well as the policies of its most recent preceding dynasty Ming at least in terms of the understanding and treatment of barbarians as well as the defense policies in coastal frontiers which the Manchus had no experience at all before its conquest.

The characteristics of rules of Ch'ing government could be understood as a total inheriting of the Chinese traditions, culture and administrative practices established, reinforced and passed by the preceding dynasties, and at the same the Ch'ing government itself as a barbarian conqueror was both aware of and willing to admit, maintain and take advantage of the excellent heritage befallen their hands spontaneously upon their conquest. They even began to imitate the way Chinese court and life in their capital long before their invasion in 1644. Therefore, it's reasonable to say that they had no incentive to change the nature of these complicated system so institutionalized and advantageous to the ruling class. Their priority lied in learning and taking over all of the superiority of the Middle Kingdom so as to manipulate and spin it to their advantage. Busy with their priority of consolidating their ruling for the ultimate purpose of preserving their power and domination, the Ch'ing government would not see the seclusion policy of any harm to its rule at all. Therefore, although it seemed to Hong Renhui that his idea and action of attempting to make trade possible

in Ningpo and probably other trade ports along the coast should have benefitted both Britain and the Ch'ing government by making the whole market more competitive and efficient and it may hurt the wealth of the officials in Canton but it will also bring revenue to Ningpo and China as a whole at least wouldn't suffer any considerable loss at all, he didn't understand that his failure of trade expansion in Ningpo and all the safeguards against them are actually derived from the idea that "there was no use in any measure which might benefit the country but destroy the dynasty." (Fairbank, 1964:42)

Another incurable misunderstanding or rather differences in essence is that from Hong Renhui's perspective, the relationship between Ch'ing government and Britain should be an equal one with both countries firstly taking the economic profits into account. However, the emperor of the Ch'ing dynasty like all his precedents in all the other preceding dynasties naturally assumed himself the Son of Heaven and his empire the Middle Kingdom. So Hong Renhui's action of defying the local authorities of the Middle Kingdom and pressing petitions to the emperor for direct conversation and fair treatment was both unbearable and unbelievable for the emperor of the Celestial Kingdom.

Such request for Ch'ing's recognition of equal status and the ignorance of being unlikely to be responded with the desirable answer did not stop after Hong Renhui was imprisoned and deported as well as Canton was left as the only maritime port for trade. Even in 1793 when the famous Lord Macartney's embassy paid their visit to China, the British still placed themselves of the equal status with the Ch'ing government. The letter from King George III to the Emperor of China clearly demonstrated this idea of equality taken granted by the British. Especially in the last part of this latter, King George III demanded free and fair trade as interactions between two equal powers.

...and conducting themselves with propriety a secure residence there, a fair access to Your Markets, under such laws and regulations, as Your Majesty shall think right, and their lives and properties shall be safe under Your Imperial protection: that one Man shall not suffer for the crime of another, in which he did not participate, and whose evasion from Justice he did

not assist, but that every measure shall be taken on the part of Your Government as Our Ambassador is instructed strictly to direct to be taken on the part of Our People to seize and bring to condign Punishment, any of Our Subjects transgressing the laws or good order of Your Empire, or disturbing the Peace and Friendship subsisting between Us.

We have particularly instructed Our Ambassador to take every method in his Power to mark Our regard and friendly disposition to Your Imperial Majesty, and it will give Us the utmost satisfaction to learn that Our wishes in that Brethren in Sovereignty, so may a Brotherly affection ever subsist between us.”

May the Almighty have you in his holy protection!

Given at Our Court at St. James’s in London the

and in the 32nd Year of Our Reign.

Imperator Augustissime

Vester bonus frater et Amicus

GEORGIUS R

(Morse, 2007 II: 246-247)

In the letter, the King of Great Britain nicely presented his requests and declared Britain and China interacted with brotherly affection. Obviously, on the basis of equality, both Great Britain and China were “such great and civilized Nations.” (Morse, 2007 II: 245) However, the answer by Emperor Kien-long glittered with the confidence and superiority of the Middle Kingdom. He declined two of King George III’s requests for the lack of linguist outside Canton which in a way proves the argument of Ji and Chen in their book *zhongguo jindai tongshi* (The linguists in modern China). Besides, in Kien-long’s letter, he also wrote “Convinced of the Rectitude of your intentions, O King, I commanded my Grandees to introduce your Ambassador to me, and I received him at my Table. I delivered to him also my Letters to you, together with costly and magnificent Presents for your Majesty consisting of Jewels and other Articles, nor was I wanting in Proofs of the kindness I felt for your People who came to this Country from the furthest extremities of the Earth---In the mean Time, O King, your ambassador has requested my minister, to lay before me some Proposals relating to the Trade of your Subjects: but these Proposals, having a Tendency to alter that whole system of European commerce, so long established here, I cannot therefore assent to them. Let us however examine this Business impartially.---Your Merchants, and those of all the European Kingdoms who trade to China, have been used for a time immemorial, to repair for that Purpose to Canton.

The productions of our Empire are manifold, and in great Abundance; Nor do we stand in the least Need of the Produce of other Countries. China in particular affords Tea and fine earthen Ware, Silk and other Materials. All these are in great request, both in your own and other Kingdoms of Europe. From a Propensity to oblige you, I have directed that public Warehouses of these divers Commodities, should be opened at Canton.” (Morse, 2007 II: 246-247) It’s easy to perceive his idea of categorizing the trade relationship with Britain in the same slot of any previous tributary practice. The empire was rich in every production and had no need to trade with outsiders at all. Actually, it’s a boon granted by the Middle Kingdom to allow barbarians to come and trade in China.

In a word, the trade relationship between China and Britain was never what was pictured by Britain. On the contrary, with Ch’ing government viewing the British as barbarians as always and recruiting trade with them into the long-standing tribute system, there always existed a serious imbalance upon the nature of the trade. For Britain, the trade was so important to be elevated at a height of national matters. For Ch’ing government, the trade was so trivial compared with a large empire to be tamed and retained so as to preserve their power and domination for as long as possible.

3.4 The Closed-Door Policy: Specific Regulations and Trade Relationship from the Perspective of the Chinese Linguists

“Hong Renhui incident” was not just some random happening. It gravely interlined with its historical backdrop. From the analysis above of the trade relationship from the British linguist Hong Renhui’s perspective, it’s understandable that explanations for this incident between Chinese and British sides are of polar difference. East India Company believed that it’s an outburst of some most serious and accumulated disputes concerning their demands for more trade ports with less tax and better linguists and the clash of interests with the local officials in Canton in the process of wanting and pursuing these demands. However, to the Chinese officials “Hong Renhui incident” reminded them of reconsidering the system concerning foreigners’ management to better observe the rules and concerns of the imperial court,

which must be well attended. The governor of Guangdong and Guangxi believed that “the foreign merchants dare to pilot north and arrived in Tianjin, all because they are abetted by some rascals. Hong merchants and Chinese linguists didn’t do enough to restrain and supervise the foreigners.” (Liu & Zhang, 1989:634) From his opinion, it is not difficult to discern that the authority blamed this incident mostly on the negligence of the Chinese linguists for doing too much interpretation while making not enough efforts to balance the interests between the Hoppo and foreign merchants, especially not doing their part in fulfilling the concerns of the Chinese officials. The linguists termed as the rascals should know better which side they were on rather than which side they were willing to be on.

Therefore, on January 29th 1760, Kien-long Emperor approved “Regulations to Guard against outside Barbarians” which was brought forward by Li She-yaoe in 1759. The specific regulations in this policy are presented as follows:

1st. He represents the Residence of the Foreigners at Canton in the Absence of the Ships, and demands that it may be forbid.

2nd. He represents the necessity of Ordering the Hongists to watch the Foregners who live in their Hongs with the Strictest Attention.

3rd. He represents, concerning the money lent by Foreigners, and the Chinese who are in their Service, And He demands that these abuses be forbid.

4th. He represents that the Foreigners hire people to carry Lettrs into the Country, and demands that this Abuse be totally forbid.

5th. He represents that some Mandarine of War should be stationed to watch and keep the Foreign Ships in Order.

(Morse, 2007: V 94-97)

“Regulations to Guard against outside Barbarians” was the first official decree concerning management and control over foreigners. Except a very much limited number of Hoppo, Hong merchants, linguists and compradors, no Chinese commoners had any access to foreigners in any way, or vice versa.

Hence, although the Ch’ing government and Britain had started the contact with each other, Ch’ing’s “Regulations to Guard against outside Barbarians” made the Middle Kingdom pretty much unchanged from this new contact. Before the British

merchants and their ships voluntarily reached out to China, China was surrounded by its tributaries in all frontiers. Geographically, China was isolated from Europe by the large area of Central Asia and prevented from contact and knowledge of any settled and fast growing power in Europe. And this isolation and ignorance continued by keeping the foreigners only in Canton and restricted this relationship only to a trade relationship.

Since the first policy designed to exclude foreigners from the vast area of China until the outbreak of the first Opium War, a series of other supplementary policies followed its path introduced by successive general-governors and all approved by the imperial court. These policies are organized and tabulated as follows:

Title	Year	General-governor
“Five Regulations to Guard Against Outside Barbarians” (《防范外夷规条》五条)	1759	Le-She-Yaou
“Regulations Between Chinese and Barbarians” (《民夷交易章程》)	1808	Du Bailing
“Eight Regulations to Guard Against Outside Barbarians” (《防范夷人章程》八条)	1831	Li Hongbin
“Eight Supplementary Regulations to Guard Against Outside Barbarians” (《酌增防夷新规》八条)	1835	Lu Shen

“Regulations between Chinese and Barbarians” was designed to better manage foreigners in Macau. “Eight Regulations to Guard against Outside Barbarians” also best known as the Eight Regulations is another big step forward to keep the foreign merchants under control. The specific regulations are presented as follows:

- 1st. Foreign merchants must not remain over the Winter at Canton.

2nd. Borrowing foreign Merchants money---it is right to eradicate the contracting debts.

3rd. The original interdict was to prevent foreign Merchants having Natives to serve them.

4th. After the foreign Merchants enter the port and anchor, let there be at that place as heretofore Military Officers and soldiers appointed to search and examine. In the Hong Merchants factories where foreigners live---let them be under the restraint and control of the Hong Merchant, to prevent disturbances.

5th. Foreigners clandestinely taking foreign females to dwell in the factories, and at Canton, their ascending to sit in shoulder chariots (sedan chairs) must both be interdicted.

6th. It is right to make it a duty of Custom house Cruizers officers and soldiers, with more strictness and care to interdict and prevent foreigners from conveying muskets and guns to Canton.

7th. In case of English Company's Captains going backwards and forwards in boats; and foreign Merchants cargo vessels receiving clearances to quit the Port, it is right to obey the standing regulations.

8th. It is necessary to make arrangements concerning foreigners presenting Petitions: Whether a distinction would not be made in Affairs of importance, and it be settled when they must be presented for them and when they themselves may present them.

(Morse, 2007: IV 295-300)

“Eight Supplementary Regulations to Guard Against Outside Barbarians” added extra attention and focus on the security merchant system of personal responsibility-management structure between Hong merchants, foreign merchants, linguists and compradors. It also reemphasized that any foreign petition must be delivered and presented through Hong merchants. Foreign military ships are forbidden to sail into the inner ocean. The navy was responsible for the examination of foreign ships so as to prevent opium and other smuggling trade.

All of the regulations specified above actually very well equals to a whole set of code of conduct of the linguists. From the perspective of the Chinese linguists (since no foreign linguists was ever recognized or approved by the Ch'ing government until the collapse of the Canton trade system), we may be able to avail ourselves a fresh vision of the newly-born Sino-British trade relationship.

First of all, for the linguists the regulations specified above at least reveal one important thing that is social hierarchy and status which the Sino-Britain trade

couldn't change or even dislodge but only eclipsed and overwhelmed by. According to the regulations, the linguists were to service the Hong merchants who in turn secured lawful and proper behaviors of the linguists. The same principle also goes between the linguists and the compradors. And the linguists also knew clearly that both themselves and their direct supervisor the Hong merchants were subject to the control and order of the Hoppo and must steer the trade in the way the imperial court approved. Thus, the linguists must first assist the Hong merchant to trade with the foreigners and collect presentable amount of duties while at the same time put surveillances on the foreigners and make peace in Canton, hence ultimately with the Hong merchants to make the Hoppo look good in Beijing. From their point of view, the top priorities never went to the foreign merchants or the Sino-British relations, upon which they formed their understanding through both the related regulations and practices.

According to Van Dyke (2005), linguists were expected to handle all matters concerning trade with foreigners. In particular, they must be able to effectively negotiate, persuade and pacify, which is true since all these regulations to some extent derived from Hong Renhui incident more or less has something to do with the linguists. Except the obvious part of conveying the requests to the foreigners, a much more significant job for the linguists to do is to make sure that the foreigners observe these rules through linguists assisting Hong merchants to deal with their responsibilities and at the same time fulfilling the concerns and cares of the Chinese officials. Previous academic research focusing upon the Hong merchants approach the trade relationship in the aspects of their management of the foreigners and Canton trade in addition to the popular topics like the insolvency of the Hong merchants, the goods traded between both sides and etc. However, the security merchant system in the Eight regulations was not new but newly emphasized. It is a practice turning into an official regulation after being long and well practiced. It seems that the Hong merchants took responsibility for what the linguists did wrong. But if we look closer, it's not hard to find that everything the Hong merchants took responsibility for is also impossible to be eluded by the linguists. After all, everything going on between the Hong merchants and foreign merchants is handled by the linguists as a medium and/or

a mediator. If Hong merchants failed his task, the linguists would be deeply implicated. Therefore, the linguists were the group more inclined to be punished for what the Hong merchants did improperly. Since it's the linguists who mediated between merchants of both sides, if discrepancy came up, the first blunderer must have been the linguists incompetent in conveying the "right" meaning. At the same time, since linguists were below the Hong merchants in the social rank, they had to deal with many unpleasant tasks that should have been in the hands of the Hong merchants. For instance, According to Staunton (2006), in October 1783, merchants from Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Netherland, and France decided to file against the extortion imposed upon them on their course back and fro Macau and wanted their petition to be presented to the Hoppo through their Hong merchant Pangua. The Hoppo asked Pangua to return the petition to the foreign merchants which was a sign of dismiss and dissatisfaction. Pangua, neither daring to defy the Hoppo nor willing to risk his business relationship with the foreign merchants, pushed the linguist to return the petition for him. The latter had no other choice but plead with the foreign merchants to take back the petition on order to play down the whole situation.

Moreover, linguists do not only service Chinese and foreign merchants, a bulk of their mind and energy focused on the Hoppo and other Chinese officials of interest, who were cautious and eager to look good in the imperial court. For instance, the regulation concerning filing a petition makes it clear that any appeal or petition to the authority from the foreign merchants must be delivered and presented by Hong merchants; if Hong merchants refuse to deliver, then the foreign merchants can deliver it by themselves. However, on one hand, foreign merchants could never deliver a petition by themselves if without help form a Hong merchant or a linguist since foreigners were denied any opportunity to work as a linguist in China. On the other hand, the petitions filed by the foreign merchants were mostly complaints about the Co Hong system and Hoppo extortion, which in the first place cornered the linguists in an impossible position to interpret or translate the petition while knowing the petition would be inevitable rejected by the Hong Merchants. And it would leave the linguists alone to deliver it for or with the foreign merchant and this is a request

that linguists were reluctant to accommodate for fear of compromising their relationship with the Hoppo, and sometimes even their life. From what happened to Hong Renhui, it's not hard to expect that if any linguist failed to stick to any of the regulations explicit or implicit, they were subject to usual civil penalties, including public humiliation, physical punishment, banishment and other forms of risks. Therefore, instead of interpreting with accuracy for both parties, the linguists should first interpret the royal edicts as well as the real situations with a clear mind. Moreover it's not unusual if the threats and dangers come from the foreigners rather than the Chinese officials. In 1747, for example, "the Dutch supercargoes threatened to hold their "old linguist Jaqua" under house arrest until he wrote a complaint against one of the Chinese merchants for them." (Van Dyke, 2005:78). Most of the times, they had to choose the lesser of two evils. Lower rank comes with less power and greater fear.

All of these compromises in addition to the historical contempt held against them make the incentive of the linguists to climb up the social hierarchy and work up to first become a merchant. And their motive was not all about profit while a large part of it is to elevate their social status because guild of the Hong Merchants was an institution of the state and the merchants became merchant-bureaucrats. The linguists perceived that the Canton trade would not change the status of the merchant class with an anti-commerce attitude permeated the whole tradition and empire. Let alone to say that of the linguists which was always and generally held in greater contempt and despise. The linguists also saw and knew despite the emergence of Sino-British trade relationship, the path of social advancement was still conventional. For the linguists, they first got into the merchant class, then escape from it into the scholarly or landed gentry class. To achieve this, they took the methods the Hong merchants did by purchase of land and official titles. Either official bureaucrats or landlord gentry the linguists desired was one of the two sides of an ally which dominated the whole country with the former in the court taking over the powers in the bureaucracy and the latter dominating directly the peasant masses in the countryside.

Therefore, From the perspective of the linguists, Sino-British trade relationship

was no better than commerce between Chinese merchants at all. What made it worse is that along with a long-standing anti-commerce attitude, the Ch'ing government was on the defensive. Therefore, even though the linguists responsible for servicing the foreign merchants and foreign trade were indispensable, they were deeply despised and alerted against. No wonder even as the only group of people with direct contact with the foreigners, the linguists are more motivated to escape from the trade rather than devote to it or be willing to make it more significant and sophisticated. Besides, in the Canton trade era, there were linguists working up the social ladder and becoming a merchant without any records suggesting any linguist got downgraded and became a comprador. This situation is just the opposite to that in the treaty port period when the appellation for the linguists and compradors did not change but their statuses were fundamentally different. Actually in the 1850s, the compradors had replaced the linguists and become the main mediator in the trade with foreigners.

Chapter Four Exploration on Linguists in the Canton Trade

4.1 Canton Trade Has All -----Experience, Geographical Advantage and Linguists

Since Canton was designated as the only trade port in 1757, canton trade continued to develop for nearly a hundred year before its collapse in 1842. Canton made use of its 150-year experience of controlling trade in Macao when dealing with the Portuguese, hereafter it's no surprise that most of the rules designed to guard against the barbarians above were brought up by successive governor-generals of Guangdong and Guangxi, who familiarized themselves with how to effectively address the concerns of the imperial court by controlling the foreigners so the trade and commerce could go on. Canton's experience facilitated the precedence quickly to become regularized procedures which formed stability and consistency to the trade and in turn, promoted efficiency. Besides historical precedence, the geographical condition of Canton also made it the perfect choice for the only trade port.

First of all, Canton is furthest from Beijing compared to the other ports available. Moreover, Canton is a "major inland river port, which gave it access to inland supplies of provisions, naval stores, and packaging materials."(Van Dyke, 2005:9). It was able to offer good lumber and other raw materials for the repair of merchant ships and packing goods. Last but not least, Canton had linguists who had come into being during trade with the Portuguese and continued when the trade with the East India Company began to gain momentum and accounted for the large part of trade overall. Other ports had some of these advantages. Take Ningpo for instance, Ningpo was more close to the original product place, which made cost less and profits more, but the imperial court would not allow Ningpo, such an vital naval position to be packed with foreigners who were very likely to master the coastal reality geographically or culturally. Besides the foreigners were unruly, instead of observing the royal order commanding them to leave Ningpo, they pressed their petition up to the imperial court

without taking heed of the requests and warnings from the emperor's local officials. Moreover, Canton as an inland river port also makes it easier for the experienced Hoppon to supervise and control the trade as well as the action of the foreign merchants and their ships which relieve the imperial court's worry about safety better than any other possible ports. In Canton, the foreigners were restricted to a "foreign quarter" (fan hang) with Co-Hong system in place to keep the foreigners in very limited reach with the Chinese people. In addition to the will of the imperial court, it should be reemphasized that Hong Renhui incident had already made it clear that without the work of the linguists, the trade between Chinese merchants and British merchants were almost impossible. With these valuable legacies derived from its nature and its people, Canton provided the most comprehensive and favorable conditions for a smooth, regular trade which if not satisfied everyone but at least were tolerable for all. The other Chinese ports shared some of the advantages enjoyed by Canton, but Canton had them all. Eventually, there came the time when Canton trade proceeded and reached its pinnacle, in which the linguists were there all the time and worked as an indispensable part as long as the trade was to go on.

4.2 Linguists---- Qualification and Source

Before the establishment of the Canton Trade, the Chinese government assigned officials like *tongzhi biaoqing*(同知标兵) to take the post of a linguist despite their little knowledge of the foreign language or whatever degree of their awareness of the trade procedures. However, one of the responsibilities of the linguists is to serve to fill the gap of communication between foreigners, Chinese officials and Chinese merchants. Linguists must speak the foreign language involved and they must develop good knowledge of the essence and procedures of foreign trade. It's obvious that not any one can work as a linguist. Therefore, the government had to use the linguists already involved in foreign trade into the official system and let them do interpreting. But it's no easy job to attain the qualification of a linguist. In the Canton Trade system, linguists are licensed and appointed by the Hoppon. And it makes one of the most distinctive characteristics of the linguists in the Canton Trade, i.e., the affiliated

official identity.

With regard to the sources of the linguists, the information was very much limited. According to Ji & Chen(2007), there could be three kinds of people being linguists: people who did business or once lived in the south sea area; people who were brought overseas by the foreigners and then came back; Chinese people who lived in Canton and Macao for long. However, the nature of Canton English and the affiliated official identity granted to the linguists made it most possible that the main source falls into the last slot.

According to the specific regulations to guard against the foreigners and the research upon the qualification as well as the source of the linguists, it's not hard to notice that with all parties' (the Hoppos, Hong merchants and foreign merchants) interests on their mind, the linguists need to practice a wide array of tasks with multiple responsibility imposed upon them.

Since no one except linguists and the Hong merchants was allowed to involve in the trade with foreign merchants and the position of the linguists is below that of the Hong merchants, the linguists would inevitably take more responsibilities and risks and have to consider the interests of more parties above them. Although the linguists possessed higher rank than the compradors' in the Canton trade period, the latter knew very little or no English at all, therefore, the linguists had no way to count upon his inferiors to share or assume any demanding task or grave risk.

In conclusion, within the framework of the Canton trade system, the linguists assumed two roles---trade agent and quasi-diplomat.

4.3 Linguists as Trade Agent and Canton English as the Medium for Trade

What linguists did remains obviously a most essential question to be explored and analyzed so as to reveal and learn about this specific professional group. What linguists did in the Canton Trade period is miscellaneous and complex. It's a lot more than just interpreting. The linguists should be responsible for a wide range of jobs including going through customs formalities, interpreting, informing, monitoring and even running all sorts of errand. Paul.A.Van.Dyke contributes a fair amount in his

book *The Canton Trade* to exploring in detail the various responsibilities the linguists in the Canton Trade period must take. Ji & Chen also described tasks the linguists must perform for the trade. Along with other information among different documents and through careful extraction and summary, it's safe to say that the linguists are required to deal with everything as long as it has something to do with Sino-Western trade. In one primary aspect, they function as trade agents who handled everything necessary between two parties to make the trade happen.

But linguists are actually not often labeled as agents since this appellation usually goes to the Hong merchants who formed the Co Hong system and with whom foreign merchants are only allowed. But if we look deeper and fuller into the tasks performed by the linguist, it's fairly safe to say that linguists dealing with the trade from beginning to the end involved and served as agents in every aspect indispensable to make the trade possible.

First of all, the linguists must obtain documents from or required by the officials on time. They scheduled a date for the Hoppon to measure the ships arriving in Whampoa Roads, of which they informed the officials concerned and Chinese merchants for their proper preparation. When the customs officials were measuring the boat, linguists must be there to provide him with information concerning the category and quantity of the goods to be unloaded or loaded. This information was acquired by linguists from the foreign merchants beforehand before the linguists could proceed to apply for a permit and continue other formalities. Imported goods could be unloaded as soon as the measuring was finished, and the linguists had already ordered the chop boats to standby beforehand.

Secondly, when it comes to shipping, linguists had to "work closely with Hong merchants to plan the shipping of all goods." (Van Dyke, 2005:80). Most of the cases are that the foreign merchant would do most of his business transaction with the Hong merchant who acted as his security merchant, by which it means that Hong merchant will take responsibility to endure the foreigners' proper behaviors and timely payment of duties and other fees. Similarly, the linguist who worked for a foreign merchant from the beginning usually stayed that way until the trade was done.

In addition, linguists should also take care of the trade records forms and financial matters including the import and export duties and customs fees and that requires great exactness and sufficient care. The linguists first need to supervise the examination of the goods to be imported and exported and make a detailed list so they can accurately do the calculation of duties and fees because if there's any discrepancy in the number, they had to pay for it from their own pockets. After measuring the ships, it is the linguists that are responsible for delivering the results of the port fee calculations. Since the foreigners did not read figures in Chinese characters, "The original numbers were recorded in Chinese characters, and, therefore, unintelligible to most foreigners, so a basic skill required of all linguists was an understanding of Arabic numerals" (Van Dyke, 2005:80). Before the foreign merchant ship left Canton, linguists need to present all the receipts and accounts to the Hoppo to prove that all the duties and fees are cleared.

All these trivial details and calculations both in Chinese and English were painstakingly taken care of by the linguists. Their conscientiousness before, during and after the trade contributes to the wholesomeness of the entire Canton trade engine. And the success of the latter in turn contributes a large sum of money to the treasury of the imperial court. Some of this year-after-year money followed to Peking were used upon the Yellow River conservancy other than just enriched the officials and indulged the extravagance of the royal family. And linguists should be remembered for their fair share of contribution in this. Let alone to say there were only 3-5 linguists on record for the trade of such magnitude at any time of Canton trade era.

And amid these business transactions, Canton English was a reliable and sufficient medium for communication and dealings back at that time. This could be confirmed by the steady increase of trade volume during the Canton trade period.

Before the Canton Trade started, most of the trade happened in Macau and those first linguists communicated with the foreigners in Portuguese. Besides Portuguese and "their native language Cantonese, they also needed to be fluent and literate in Mandarin, the language of the officials." (Van Dyke, 2005:77). Therefore, a "language" combined Portuguese and Cantonese first came up and some people called

them” Pidgin Portuguese”. With Canton being the only maritime port since 1757, especially upon entering the 18th century, Canton replaced Macau as the biggest and most important trade site in China. Along with this change, Britain caught up quickly in the trade and finally accounted for more than 50% of the gross volume in the Canton Trade. Trade with America, another English-speaking country, was also growing fast. Since much of the trade was involved with Britain and America, English quickly replaced Portuguese to become the foreign language the linguists must know. By the 1730s, Pidgin English had replaced Portuguese as the medium of communication with foreigners, and after that change the three most important languages for all linguists were Pidgin English, Cantonese and Mandarin. However, the linguists did not master the English language, because almost none of them learned or used Standard English. The English prevailed in the Canton Trade was called Canton English, which was a kind of English for business and contact only at that time. Moreover, Canton English should be more properly and deliberately distinguished from the Pidgin English used in Shanghai during the treaty port period. The latter is actually found on the basis of Canton English by the presence of linguists from Canton in Shanghai. And it does no harm when people think of Canton English as a medium of communication as a bastard offspring of Chinese, English with a lot of Portuguese influence and Cantonese additions. The detailed words and phrases were studied by some brilliant scholars in this field, such as Samuel Wells Williams in *A Tonic Dictionary Of The Chinese Language In The Canton Dialect* and Ji and Chen also mentioned some of these examples in their book of *zhongguo jindai tongshi*).

What should be paid more attention was that although the words of Pidgin English were different from those of Standard English, but the deep structure of Chinese and English agree with each other most of the time when the sentence is simple and the context mostly related to commerce is well known by both sides. Deep structure could be defined as “the abstract representation of the syntactic properties of a construction, i.e. the underlying level of structural relations between its different constituents, such as the relation between the underlying subject and its verb, or a verb and its object.” (Hu, 2001:132) That is to say that the word order and inherent

logic do not differ much between the two languages, In addition, with the inherent limited language skill of the linguists and the major function of Canton English for being enough for business transaction and daily errands of the time, most complicate and long sentences were neither possible nor necessary for the time and circumstance. Thus, with individual Canton English words used mostly to tackle with everyday communication, sentences were actually assembled by these words according to the word order of the Chinese which didn't cause any additional trouble to the already limited language. Hence when the linguists tried to interpret for Hoppos and Hong merchants, an English native speaker might very well be able to figure out the meaning by taking advantage of this same deep structure and also same word order feature of the two languages. If the relevant theory is applied here, this feature of the same deep structure could be seen as stimuli for optimal relevance achieved between Chinese and English. By presumption of optimal relevance, it means that " a set of assumptions {I} which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus. The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate {I} ." (Hu, 2001:265) The relevant theory could be seen as an underlying proof of how interpreters manage to achieve the best balance between effort and effect. With the same deep structure, and the inherent request for optimal relevance in every single language as well as interpretation between two languages, the linguists and the foreigners in Canton trade could communicate in Canton English (neither Chinese or English) and this process involved much less pain and more convenience than if any of them was to seriously learn the standard form of the other language. In the book *Jargon Spoken at Canton* Samuel Wells Williams listed several completed dialogue in Canton English within a context of a small business transaction, one of which is as follows:

Chinese: chin-chin, how you do, long time no my has see you.

Foreigners: ican secure hab longtime, before time myno has come this shop.

Chinese: Hi-ya, se, eh! What thing wantchee?

Foreigners: Oh, some litty chow-chow thing. You have got some ginger

sweatmeat?

Chinese: Just now not got, i think Canton hab got velly few that sutemeat.

The dialogue above demonstrates that although Canton English is by no means even close to Standard English, it emerged from the communicative need of Sino-British trade and the context is limited to almost everything about commerce, which combined with the same deep structure and the relevance theory, made both anticipation and inference more convenient and reliable.

Thirdly, when an emergency like ship wreckage arises, the linguists became an indispensable element in the rescue work. They worked closely with others in the rescue team and “kept track of all expenses. They made sure all parties (including themselves) were properly compensated so there was no cause for complaining from any of the Chinese officials, soldiers, sailors, divers or sampan men. The Hoppo and supercargoes in Canton needed to be constantly updated on the progress of the rescue operations, so the linguists and compradors’ boats were kept busy delivering ‘express letters’, miscellaneous messages and general information to and from Canton.” (Van Dyke, 2005:87). This description unfolds a picture with the linguists being not only the communication bridge but also a co-operator and even an executive for the rescue work to be done. In addition to ship wreckage, fire was another frequent crisis in Canton and it presents problems and perils on the trade. When a fire broke out, the linguists would be called to assist. “Foreigners and Chinese worked together to put out the flames and linguists were on hand to monitor developments and help police keep order.” (Van Dyke, 2005:88). Sometimes the linguists had to do the opposites by which it means they should ensure the foreigners did not show up in the crisis to help but stay where they were required to, mostly indoors. And Van Dyke gives us an example of fire crisis in which the foreigners didn’t come to help because “the Hoppo had closed trade and restricted them to their factories, owing to an incident a few days earlier.” (Van Dyke, 2005:88). In a word, in the time of such stressful crisis, every party was anxious to prevent things they cared going from bad to worse. Misinterpretation and misunderstanding in the communication would definitely throw lives and profits in a more dangerous plight. All in all, “In all emergencies that

involved foreigners, the linguists were on the front line doing what they could to prevent things from spiraling out of hand.” (Van Dyke, 2005:80)

With regard to whose hand it is, the foreign merchants concerned most about their goods for trade or export, Hoppo about the security, stability of the maritime port and what kind of hearsay landed in the imperial court. And the linguists as emergency liaison agents joined the two if not opposite but obviously different priorities together, which as a result facilitated better trust even compassion between the two parties whether the linguists intended this or not. All in all, the linguists did help to make the crisis pass as smoothly, quickly and economically as possible.

4.4 Linguists as Quasi-Diplomat and Their Vocational Jeopardy

In addition to being trade agents for the foreign merchants in the entire business transaction, linguists were also part of the official system of the Canton Trade, therefore there's no surprise that the linguists got involved into dealing with many official affairs for the government. They assumed a diplomatic role mainly in the area of informing, disciplining, negotiating and pacifying.

First of all, the linguists, as the official interpreters, on behalf of the local authorities should inform the foreigners about the foreign policies of the Ch'ing court, especially when there were royal edicts from Beijing. For instance, the linguists then repeatedly stressed the point to the foreign traders that every business transaction must take place through the Hong merchants otherwise nothing was allowed to be brought on shore. Moreover, regarding to how well the foreign traders observed the rules and policies, the linguists must gather the information concerned and file it to the Hoppo. For instance, the linguists should make sure that the foreigners wouldn't hire Chinese employees illegally. “The foreign merchants have already brought enough crew along to service them. In addition, Chinese linguists and compradors were also within reach for them. There are greedy rascal locals willing to be servant of the foreigners, which is totally against the Kingdom's system. Therefore, the linguists and Hong merchants are responsible to inspect and prohibit such behaviors. In case of negligence or indulgence, both the rascal locals and the linguists along with

the Hong merchants will be subject to punishments. ” (c.f. Liu & Zhang, 1989: I 635)

In addition to making sure the foreign merchants would not hire more Chinese people than they should, the linguists must also watch out for the foreigners’ in other aspects. One important job is that the linguists were responsible for the behavior of the foreigners, including the supercargoes, Captains, sailors, merchants and the officials. No matter when the foreigners went out for the purchase of goods for trade or just to wander about, they must have the company of their linguists, which is designed not only to prevent any scuffles between the foreigners and the local people, but also to keep the foreigners under the linguists’ surveillance.

All the official duties for the linguists to take from preparing beforehand for the commencement and progress of the trade, collecting the duties for the Hong merchants and also for the Hoppo, informing the policies of the imperial court for the local authorities to the foreigners and following the foreigners’ movement to ensure peace and stability were in need of much carefulness, patience, and intelligence. However, the most stressful and dangerous tasks, the linguists were expected to accomplish actually come when the linguists were sandwiched and sometimes besieged or even ambushed by all the parties of interest who has more say in their own requests and demands as well as expectations from the linguists. Therefore, negotiating and pacifying are two most important capabilities and responsibilities for the linguists.

Just as Van Dyke (2005:89) puts it that “there were normal gatherings with both foreign and Chinese officials in attendance that the linguists had to handle, which also help to show the many concerns of the Hoppo and governors-general.” Here, what he meant by the many concerns of the Hoppo and governors-general is the decent welcome and farewell ceremonies carried out to honor the dignitaries. What the linguists did in these ceremonies was to translate the speech of the officials and “the exchanges on the spot” (Pomeranz, 1999:87). This is rather stressful for the linguists because of their very limited knowledge about the English language except trade terms and simple daily words. On the other hand, the linguists must make sure that the foreigners would do in the way they were told to with proper protocol and hope that

no intrusion and unexpected incidents may happen in such occasions. Take this for instance, in the early years of the trade, the Hoppo would grant an audience to the foreigners and it is the linguists who were counted on to teach the foreigners the correct protocol such as how to exchange bows and greetings before being seated. Linguists are also responsible for making sure they arrived at the Great Hall on time to meet the Hoppo where foreigners introduced themselves and stated their reason of coming to China to the Hoppo while the latter reply with an official welcome from the emperor and all these communication were done via linguists. While in this meeting “the foreigners read out a list of their demands, which the linguists had already translated and forwarded to the Hoppo. The Hoppo then address the foreigners’ concerns and laid out the stipulations of trade. Most of these matters had already been negotiated with the foreigners via the linguists before the meeting.” (Pomeranz, 1999:80). The conclusion we could draw here is that linguists were responsible to go through all the formalities so as the pave the way leading to a legitimate and possible trade. All these formalities are of so much importance because they reflected the dignity and superior of the Middle Kingdom. The emperor was so indignant about the Hong Renhui incident, not only because he was concerned about the safety of his maritime frontier, but also it had a lot to do with the defiance of the foreigners by continuing trade in Ningpo when they were told not to and even pressing ahead to crash the gate of Tianjing and file an complaint directly to the emperor himself. All these actions proved a total ignorance and disrespect of the Middle Kingdom’s administrative order and the majestic presence of the emperor. After the enactment of the Eight Regulations and the royal edict making Canton the only maritime port for trade with the western merchants, especially the East India Company, there came the Co Hong system. Although the Hong merchants were responsible for the management of foreigners, it’s the linguists who were actually able and responsible to make the foreigners understand what were expected from them. Moreover, in addition to assist the Hong merchants with their business transactions with the foreign traders, the linguists below the Hong merchants did many field work on the management of the foreign traders on their behaviors and maintain the order. As far as the Hoppo

concerned, the proper observation of all the formalities was a demonstration of the foreigners' recognition of Hoppo's authority and their willingness to cooperate and obey. Therefore, one of the linguists' important responsibilities is to make sure that the foreigners not only behave themselves but behave themselves right in all formal and official occasions, such as honorable ceremonies and meetings which were inevitable during the trade process. Most of the time, the foreigners were cautious when meeting with high rank officials in this situation, they mostly behaved themselves as they were expected to because they were also "anxious to satisfy local officials in Canton and impress the honored dignitaries. Good performances would help them build goodwill with the Hoppo and governor-general, which might stand them in good stead in time of need and difficulty."(Pritchard, 1929:71). However, there were times when foreigners were determined to present their requests and complaints, which they would ask the linguists to deliver for them and that put the linguists in an almost impossible dilemma. According to the Eight Regulations, the petition should be delivered through the Hong merchants and the linguists. However, since the Hong merchants were above the linguists, therefore, without their assent first, the linguists were in no position of presenting, even interpreting this petition for the foreign traders. On the other hand, the Hong merchants wouldn't deliver most of the complaints for the foreign traders for fear of disfavor of the Hoppos and other senior officials while the linguists were asked to turn down the request of the foreign traders for the Hong merchants by negotiating and pacifying, even personal pleading. However sometimes the foreigners might discard all these precautions and efforts for reconciliation and try to make use of these occasions to present their requests and petitions by directly approaching to an official of a higher rank. No matter the foreign trader was doing this via a linguist or not, it inevitably would compromise the linguists' relationship with the Hong merchants and the Hoppos. The latter were directly above the linguists and to mess with them by failing to pacify the whole situation beforehand would not do the linguists any good. And the linguists were well aware about this from the day they were appointed to their post.

The linguists had to balance the concerns and interests of all parties, namely the

Hoppo, the Hong merchants, and the foreign merchants right and well. The linguists were obliged to service all of these three parties but at the same time, they must know whenever there were clashes, what priority went first. To sum up, the linguists had diplomatic function and responsibility but no political power to assist them or even justify their role. What they could count on is primarily their natural awareness of politics and traditions as well as their own wisdom and experience accumulated throughout their practice during the Canton trade.

And their limited English language proficiency as well as the fact that no further improvement ever achieved or even attempted is a very special means for the linguists to both make use of their limited language knowledge to make the trade progress as smoothly as possible and protect themselves from the foreigners' request of interpreting their complaints and demands. Therefore, even with the strict qualification grant and the magnitude as well as the diversity of responsibilities, the linguists almost knew nothing about reading and writing except speaking of Canton English which is crude indeed and some foreigners even complained that the Chinese linguist knew nothing about the English language, although it's obvious that if the linguists really so incompetent in their language job, there would be no way for the trade to be conducted and progressed. These linguists with their crude Canton English lasted through the entire Canton Trade period and even in the early years of the new treaty port period, Canton English continued to be the major medium for communication. And the study for the Pidgin English in Shanghai are so abundant that many people get the wrong idea that pidgin English originated from Shanghai during the treaty ports period. But it's still the truth that these linguists in the Canton Trade got a fair amount of complaints from the foreigners. These complaints were mostly launched not for the insufficient communication in commerce but the incompetency and unwillingness of the linguists to accommodate their requests in diplomatic matters, such as accusing the corruption of the Hoppo or demanding more rights in Canton and etc.

The linguists were reluctant to interpret or translate what the foreigners want to speak out. And without a second Hong Renhui, the foreigners got even more

frustrated and helpless in these circumstances. The reasons that the linguists would rather bear the complaint of the foreigners than comply with their requests actually reveal the great risks the linguists assume in their profession.

The historical study makes it clear that Linguists were expected to handle all matters concerning trade with foreigners, but that did not mean they were to be 'experts' in anything foreign. In the Canton trade era, the whole communication with the foreigners is restricted to nothing but commercial. If a linguist was too fluent or eager to polish his English or learn about the culture and tradition of the foreign country, then he would arouse the suspicions of the authority. Besides that, it was also a crime incurring death penalty to teach any foreigner Chinese.

For the linguists, they were not supposed to translate anything that would offend or cause problems. Failed to do so always entails great vocational jeopardy. But otherwise, the foreigners had to depend on them for what the linguists could provide at their best. And foreign merchants acknowledged that the linguists' work and most possible flexibility often made it more convenient in both trade and daily life. In *Bits of Old China*, Hunter used to describe Old Tom, the chief linguist as "one of the shrewdest, most impassible of men, besides being primed (in virtue of his office as Government interpreter between the authorities and foreigners) with official reticence and economy of the truth as a case required." (Net.1) This also demonstrates that the foreign merchants were well aware of the patience and compromise so common for the linguists.

Whenever the Hoppo was in conflict with the foreigners, the linguists were supposed to preempt the problem by reasoning, begging and pacifying with the latter in every way possible to make them compromise so the trade could go on again. If the linguists failed to do so, they were suffering consequences pretty badly. They were most likely to be used as examples of public humiliation to pressure foreigners into compliance. And this practice to make the linguists the goat and victim of the conflicts was traditionalized and lasted for the entire Canton trade era until the 1840s. Evidence shows that this practice could be traced back to the Ming dynasty and that might even not the furthest it can go. The first European delegation from Portugal led

by Tome Pieres designated by the Portuguese emperor arrived in Canton in the October 1517. They refused to kneel before the Chinese officials. The first consequence of their action was that their linguist was flogged twelve strokes. The Ming emperor, like his precedent and successive counterparts, believed that the ignorance and disrespect of the foreigners was first due to the negligence of the linguist, therefore, the linguist must be punished.

Chaining and flogging were two usual means often applied to the linguists with the former designed for visual threat and the latter for use of force. "Linguists compradors and others would be paraded past the factories in chains to show the foreigners what would happen to them if they do not comply." (Van Dyke, 2005:90). Although this kind of visual threats did not incur much pain physically, at least compared with that of the flogging, but they inevitably cast shadow on the esteem of the linguists, concerning both how they see themselves and how other people view them, let alone the discomfort and business trouble resulted from these visual threats. A lot of records in the *Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China (1635-1834)* prove that the Hoppo often tried to make the foreigners comply by threatening and punishing the linguists working for them. The earliest description on record happens in July, 1689. The British ship Defence arrived in Canton, bought and loaded sugar and other products which the British merchants intended to sell in Persia. On the 15th October after the Hoppo having measured the ship, the duties levied amounted to 2484 taels. However, the First Supercargo Yale protested against this amount and threatened to stop coming by to do business with China. And the Hoppo didn't budge at all by telling them that the how the duties were calculated was regulated by the imperial court, therefore no one had the right to alter or reduce it. On the 21st October, the linguist responsible for this business transaction came aboard and begging for their compliance otherwise he would be flogged to death.

To make the foreigners comply by hurting their linguists was effective somehow. The foreigners had no other means but rely upon their linguists to fill in all the Chinese forms as well as link them with almost everything and everyone Chinese.

After looking into the responsibilities of the linguists both as trade agents and

quasi-diplomats, the picture we get is a group of conscientious people doing a wide array of jobs relating to trade between China and the western world. They make their due and fair share of contribution to Canton trade, which in a way indirectly affect the livelihood of Canton people and people across the country positively. And those were things deserve appreciation. As for the dissatisfaction and complaints launched against them, it would be biased to only consider the negative in a negative way. Moreover, rarely remembered and understood is that the linguists disappointed or rather frustrated the foreigners with their Canton English and at the same time protected themselves against the Hoppo, even so, sometimes, the situation was out of their hands and however humble or flexible they may be, they still fell victim to clashes of different interests of different sides. This fact was a major reason for their limited language proficiency and no further improvement as the trade progressed. Canton English was both their livelihood and their protection. It is good enough for the trade and daily errands at that time and not good enough for the linguists to be able to interpret everything the foreigner demanded most of which probably would make the Hoppo unhappy and the linguists themselves suffer. In addition to the language, the risks and humiliations brought about by their profession are also proofs of their lack of means and power. At least the linguists did what they should and could do.

Conclusion

Concluding Remarks

Linguists with most direct and close contact with the western foreigners, especially the advanced British in the Canton trade did nothing to try to understand them let alone learn from them which if happened, may have altered the historical course. However, such accusation or impression was made without taking the status of the linguists into consideration. And this dissertation in turn makes efforts to extract information from historical records and academic research so as to collect and organize as many facts as possible about the status of the linguists back in Canton trade. From Hong Renhui incident to a series of regulations to guard against the outside barbarians, all make it clear that against the historical background, linguists as a group consisting only three to five members on record at any time of Canton trade era were by no means poised up high in the feudal society because feudalism in China was always anti-commerce and what makes it worse is that the linguists were servicing the barbarians (westerners) who were always held contempt and suspect against. According to the analysis of Sino-British trade relationship from the Chinese linguists' perspective, it reveals that the linguists would rather escape their profession to move up the social ladder to gain an official title by means of first becoming a merchant and then purchasing the entry into officialdom. With the traditional social hierarchy and Middle Kingdom belief embedded in their natural disposition, Chinese linguists may never have intended to stay in the trade forever to make it more significant and sophisticated like trade between two equal powers as the British linguist Hong Renhui took for granted or realized the superiority of a different and "barbaric" culture. Therefore, to blame them for their failure of seeing and learning the advanced western powers may be neither fair nor reasonable and it does seem to be too much forced.

Admittedly, linguists in the Canton trade era participated in the smuggling the

opium into China which did a great deal of damage to the country and its people. And it is something not to be overturned or even argued. But there are very little detailed or affirmative records on which linguists did the smuggling and which ones stayed out of it and the confusion is compounded with the fact that a number of Chinese commoners able to speak Canton English also took part in the smuggling of the opium. This leads to another question that it may be not proper or accurate to label the linguists as a whole as traitors and sinners of the county. And this dissertation is determined to reveal the real and positive role taken by every linguist so as to demonstrate the efforts and contribution they made to benefit the Canton trade and indirectly the country as a whole. As many records as possible about their conscientious work as trade agents and quasi-diplomats are collected and listed in this dissertation so as to enrich the image of linguists and make a statement against or rather a complement to the negative and immoral portrait of them. Both their role and their merits are likely to be ignored by the research of the history at that time and left outside the knowledge of the public while the linguists deserve to be better known and appreciated. Moreover, this dissertation also attempts to analyze the tasks the linguists performed therefore also to reveal the limits, concerns and risks imposed upon the linguists which also give an explanation on their behaviors and seemingly sneaky and dishonest manners including their use of Canton English and no further improvement as the trade progress; their reluctance to accommodate the requests of the foreign merchants; their eagerness to satisfy the Hoppo and etc.

Last but not least, as stated several times, this dissertation hopes and tries to relieve the linguists from the responsibility of such magnitude so as to expect that the historical course may have been altered if they behaved otherwise. And this is dealt with an exposure as full as possible of the weakness and powerless of the three to five linguists at any time of the Canton trade.

Limitations

First of all, the collection of historical records in general in this dissertation is not sufficient due to the limited time and space. Moreover, the focus of this dissertation is

strictly upon a time frame between 1757 when Canton was designated as the only trade port and 1840 when the first opium war broke out. And the records concerning linguists in this period of time is really rare and scattered compared with the other subjects in the Canton trade and records about linguists during the opium war and the treaty port era. Therefore, although efforts has been made in search, collection and listing, there must be important records missing in this dissertation and that leaves room for further improvement, which is to continue to complete the compilation of records concerned. The same kind of painstaking extraction and collection of other subjects have been laboring on by many historians and researchers and it is a hope that much of such work will be done about linguists in Canton trade era.

Secondly, I must apologize for my lack of training in historical research. Although I had painstakingly buried myself in the search, reading and collection of all the historical records and works concerning the linguists which scatted in a large sum of volumes about numerous aspects of Canton trade, closed-door policy, Pidgin English, and etc., when it comes to a rigid historical research and academic method, I am still ill qualified. My lack of professional training must sometimes have impeded my research and analysis. And to further enrich this dissertation, I need to acquire several professional historical research methods.

Finally, this dissertation hardly reveals anything negative about the linguists in the Canton trade era for the reason to make visible the positive and meritorious side of the linguists which is seldom known by the public. However, if time and space allowed, the negative side should also be described and discussed in the dissertation and therefore present the linguists in a more comprehensive way. And that requires more hard work on studying the history during the late Ch'ing dynasty, two opium wars and the treaty port era.

However, despite these limitations, I hope this dissertation at least has accomplished its objective which is to not only specifically extract and collect more historical records and previous studies on the linguists in the Canton trade era but also try its best to explore and analyze their status and roles in the hope of revealing the positive and honest side of the linguists, which is totally overlooked until recent years

by a small number of marginal researchers. Hopefully, this dissertation makes its due contribution to the studies upon the linguists as a whole.

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