CHAPTER FOUR
TRANSLATING THE GREEK PERFECTIVE,
IMPERFECTIVE, AND STATIVE ASPECTS
IN THE INDICATIVE MOOD INTO MANDARIN

4.0. INTRODUCTION

4.0.1. Greek Grammatical References in Chinese

Grammatical references of New Testament Greek first became available in Mandarin in 1917, when the American missionary John Leighton Stuart (APMB) translated Huddilston’s *The Essentials of New Testament Greek*.\(^1\) Basing his translation on nineteenth century European comparative philology, Stuart merely outlined Greek grammar; nevertheless, his objective to train native Christian preachers in China was unprecedented. Stuart is also credited with his innovation in coining several Greek grammatical terminologies in Chinese.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) For example, the names of several cases (zhǔgé 主格 “nominative,” shǔgé 屬格 “genitive,” hūgé 呼格 “vocative”) and grammatical categories (wèiyǔ zhī wèi 謂語之位 for the predicate position, xíngróng zhī wèi 形容之位 for the attribute position, jiǔwǔdòngzì 及物動字 for the transitive verb) are still in use today. Other terms are obsolete: e.g. the names of Greek moods (qíngtǐ 情體 for the indicative, xuànní 懸擬 for the subjunctive, qiówàng 期望 for the optative, shìlìng 使令 for the imperative, jiānmíng 兼名 for the infinitive, jiānzhuàng 兼狀 for the participle) and tenses (shǐtǐ 時體: yǐwǎng 已往 for the aorist, jīnhéng 今恆 for the present, xíchéng 昔成 for the imperfect, jīnhéng 今成 for the perfect, xīchéng 昔成 for the pluperfect, jiànguī 將來 for the future). See Stuart, *Greek-Chinese-English Dictionary*, xii. Some of Stuart’s renderings of certain categories, e.g. dòngzì 動字 for verb and zhùmíngzì 語字 for adjective,
The current selection of Greek grammars available in Mandarin is limited mostly to translations of beginner-level English titles. Commonly adopted as textbooks in Christian seminaries (Catholic and Protestant) in Hong Kong and Taiwan, they include beginning Greek grammars by Machen and Mounce, and an intermediate grammar by Greenlee. While there have been a few Greek grammars by native speakers in recent decades (e.g. Wong), not only do they lack originality, these new titles continue to treat Greek and Chinese in terms of tense-based categories and Aktionsart. Hence, they offer little insight into either our understanding of Greek verbal syntax and semantics or the practice of Chinese Bible translation. A comparative or contrastive study on verbal aspect in ancient Greek and Mandarin Chinese simply does not exist in any language.

4.0.2. Nishiwaki’s Comparative Phonological Study

The only linguistic study available to connect Greek and Chinese is Nishiwaki Junzaburo’s Notes on Comparative Studies of Greek and Chinese. Although Nishiwaki’s thesis may appear unfounded, his work is nevertheless unprecedented and, thus, deserves special notice here. In

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are clear indications of direct influence from the works of Morrison, Gützlaff, and Ma. See Morrison, Grammar; Gützlaff, Notices; Ma 马建忠, Grammar.

