



The Feasibility and Value of the Research of Vocabulary Evolution From the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States

ZHANG Yang^{[a],*}

^[a]Southwest University, Institute of Chinese Language and Literature, Chongqing, China.

*Corresponding author.

Supported by “the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities”, China (SWU1409263).

Received 24 September 2014; accepted 19 November 2014

Published online 26 December 2014

Abstract

The research of vocabulary evolution from the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States is an important part of the history of Chinese language, there are restrictions and limitations with some vocabulary evolution research that have been done because they had not traced back to the Shang Dynasty, which is the source of Chinese language. There are some unearthed literature and literature handed down from the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States, which have the characteristics of trustworthiness and reliability, enormous quantity and rich in content, so the study of the evolution of vocabulary of this period is feasible, and has important value.

Key words: Vocabulary; Evolution; Feasibility; Value

Zhang, Y. (2014). The Feasibility and Value of the Research of Vocabulary Evolution From the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 9(3), 218-224. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/5979> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/5979>

INTRODUCTION

Chinese vocabulary develop and change constantly with the development of society, the Shang period is the origin of Chinese history, and it is feasible to study the evolution of vocabulary from it. Through the analysis of the past

research which has been reviewed, we think that the paper would be significant in the development of Chinese history.

1. REVIEW OF LEXICAL EVOLUTION RESEARCH

The study about Chinese vocabulary is more undeveloped than other studies about Chinese and it is reflected prominently on the comprehensive study of the lexical system in a particular historical period. It goes without saying that the status of the lexical evolution research about ancient Chinese is very important. Chinese lexical evolution comprises part of the history of Chinese, and in this field excellent achievements have been made, including: *The History of Chinese* (Wang, 2004) explores the development of six kinds of Chinese lexicons, especially in Chapter Four of this book, basic nouns are discussed, such as names of natural phenomena, body, location, season, relatives, production (fishery, husbandry, agriculture), physical culture (imperial palace, clothing, furniture); *The History of Chinese Vocabulary* (Part II) (Xiang, 1993) classifies the oracle bones inscriptions into nouns, verbs and adjectives, and they are further divided in terms of meaning standard. After sorting and investigation, it is discovered that the oracle bones inscriptions in the Shang Dynasty have a wide vocabulary but limited quantities with more monosyllabic words and less polysyllabic words, and in terms of part of speech, nouns comes first, verbs second and adjectives third, with a word playing multi-roles; *The Vocabulary History of Chinese in Ancient Ages* (Xu, 2003) makes a description of the changes of frequent words in the Shang Dynasty to the Spring & Autumn Period-Qin Dynasty and Han Dynasty, illuminating the development of basic words; *An Evolution Study of Frequent Chinese*

Words (Li,1999) has carried out a monographic study on evolution manners and reasons of common Chinese words as well as the exploration of research methods, research significance and the existing problems with case studies, such as *The Diachronic Relationship of Ji, Bian and Shi*, *The Substitution of Jin for Ru*. Based on vast literature research and after a thorough, careful and objective description, taking frequent words as starting point, analyzing frequent words from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Sui Dynasty from the perspective of noun, verb and adjective, *the Evolution Study of Frequent Words from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Sui Dynasty* (Wang, 2000) makes a reliable and convincing conclusion.

In the study of Chinese vocabulary and lexical evolution, the great accomplished achievements provide us with new ways of thinking and methods. Some studies of Chinese vocabulary and some semantic field evolution in recent Master's papers and doctoral dissertations can also be used as reference. We state them in several ways as follows.

1.1 The Study of General History About Chinese Lexical Evolution

An Evolution Study of Frequent Chinese Words (Li,1999) points out that "the study of general history refers to the investigation on the evolution of study object from ancient times to the present." Generally speaking, the research takes the pre-Qin period as a starting point, not including the period of Shang Dynasty.

(a) The academic dissertation such as the master degree dissertation of Inner Mongolia University named *Historical Evolution of Semantic Field Of Chinese, wash type Verbs* by Yan Chunhui (2006), the doctoral dissertation of Zhejiang University named *Study On The Development Of Lexical Systems In Conceptual Fields Of Displacement Of Objects In Ancient Chinese Language* by Guo Xiaoni (2010), the doctoral dissertation of Shanghai Normal University named *On the Research of Conceptual Field Lexical System and its Evolution* by Gan Xiaoming (2012), and so on.

(b) Some single papers, such as *The Investigation of Several Groups of Common Vocabulary Evolution* (1998), *How did Ancient people to eat* (2011), *How did Ancient People to Live* (2012), The above three papers are all published by Wang Weihui, *Replacement about Chinese Useful Words: a Case Study of Chinese Characters of Dian (店) and Si (肆)* by Liu Hongni (2007), and so on.

The above papers studies general history of Chinese language from ancient to modern times. No matter what angle we choose to do the research, like doing research from the semantic field's angle or starting with the diachronic evolution of individual words, they are all important and valuable foundation work, which are indispensable and important components of Chinese

history lexicology. The research is a necessary reference for us to study the history of the Chinese language systematically and comprehensively.

1.2 Studies of the Evolution in a Certain Historical Period

(a) Some monograph, such as *The Evolution Study of Frequent Words from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Sui Dynasty*(Wang, 2000), *The Conceptual Field of Body Movement Vocabulary System and Its Evolution in YiJing's Translated Sutras* (Tan, 2008), and so on.

(b) Some dissertations such as the master degree paper of Hebei Normal University named *A Study on the Semantic of Verbs Which Mean "Taking with Hands" In Ancient Chinese Language* by Li Huifang (2010), the master dissertation of Sichuan International Studies University named *The Study of the Evolution of "Falling" Vocabulary System from pre-Qin in Medieval Ages* by Zhang Chunmei (2011), the doctoral dissertation of Zhejiang University named *A Study on the Semantic Field of Verbs of Sense in Sutra Version* by Zhu Fahu by Jiang Xinglu (2011), the master degree paper of Sichuan International Studies University named *The Study of the Evolution of "Binding" Vocabulary System from the Ancient Ages to the Middle Ages* by Xie Jiayan (2013), and so on.

(c) Some single papers, such as *Verbs Related to the Mouth in Bai Juyi's Poetry* by Jiang Shaoyu (1993), *the Historical Evolution in the Perfect Tense Verbs of Modern Chinese* by Zhong Zhaohua (1995), *the Research Notes in the Field of Common Word for Replacement* by Wang Weihui (1998), *The Development of Adjective, Noun, Verb about pre-Qin Chinese* by Guo Xiliang (2000), *the Development and Change of the Speech and Function of pre-Qin Chinese Characters of Zai(店)* by Rao Guiping and Yu Mei (2010), *The System Principle of Word Evolution Based on the Semantic Fields of Sleep and Lie-down* by Yang Jianjun (2011), and so on.

There are also some theory works and thesis which interpreted the evolution of the vocabulary theoretically, *An Evolution Study of Frequent Chinese Words* (Li, 1999), single papers, for example *Internal and External Causes in Revolution of Vocabulary* by Wang Xijie (2004), *Preliminary Exploration of the Evolutional Model of Chinese Common Words* by Ding Xixia (2013).

The starting point of the above work and thesis is not the same, some start with the pre-Qin period and some the Eastern Han Dynasty. Their researches are all intense and careful thorough, no matter to explore the development and change of semantic field, or study of replacement and evolution of individual words. The choice of the corpus and the application of research methods are all useful and helpful for the future work, therefore the research has laid a solid foundation for the research of history of Chinese language.

However, after giving the brief review of those accomplishments, it is discovered that most of those

studies belong to dynastic research, e.g. the pre-Qin period to the Wei-jin, the pre-Qin period to the Southern & Northern Dynasties period. Even the study of general history is often from the pre-Qin period to modern times, and used corpus is the handed down literature, among which involved corpus of the Shang Dynasty is limited, and exhaustive and enclosed evolution studies have not yet been found. There are limited papers using the oracle bone and bronze inscriptions and bamboo and silk of the Shang Dynasty as research materials, and the papers can not research exhaustively, just giving a few examples.

2. THE FEASIBILITY OF THE RESEARCH OF VOCABULARY EVOLUTION FROM THE SHANG DYNASTY TO THE SPRING-AUTUMN & THE WARRING STATES

Based on the unearthed literature and the literature handed down from ancient times, we can do research on the evolution of the ancient Chinese vocabulary. Specifically we can use the document literature of oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, bamboo slips and silk manuscript, eleven books of literature handed down from ancient times.

2.1 The Unearthed Literature and the Literature Handed Down

2.1.1 Oracle Bone Inscriptions

The literature of oracle bone inscriptions includes documents of the Shang Dynasty and that of the Western Zhou Dynasty, which is known as the earliest form of Chinese literature. Therefore, it is first-hand information of researching on the history of the Shang Dynasty and the Western Zhou Dynasty.

The documents provide valuable historical materials for the study of politics, economy, and culture of the Shang Dynasty and studies on the ethnic relationship between the Shang Dynasty and other nations such as the Western Zhou Dynasty and some ethnic groups.

Since the oracle bone inscriptions were found, a large number of outstanding achievements have been made in the aspect of literal research and annotation by the researchers, for example, *Tie Yun Cang Gui* by Liu'E, along with *Tie Yun Cang Gui* publication, the study has demonstrated the beginning of Oracle. Sun Yirang has left many works including *Examples of Inscriptions on Shells*, which are the earliest writing of its kind. There is literature summary of books like *oracle Literature collection* contains 40copies, *Collection of Oracle Proofreading and Explanation* in 20 volumes. On the grammatical studies, There are such books as *The Grammar Study about Oracle Bone Inscriptions of the Shang Dynastys* by Guan Xiechu, *The Grammatical Review Article of Oracle Bone Inscriptions of the Shang Dynastys* by Chen Mengjia, and

the syntax research of the shells and bones such as *The Research of Transformation of Sentence Pattern about Symmetry Oracle* by Zhu Qixiang.

Some foreigners also conserve some oracle bone fragments, and record books of the bone by foreigners are *The Inscriptions of Yin Ruins* by Ming Yishi, *The Inscriptions on Animal Bones and Tortoise Shells* by Lin Taifu, and so on.

Yin Dynasty ruins oracle dispersed abroad by various routes, but there are some relevant records, such as *The Record of Oracle Inscriptions in Paris* by Rao Zongyi, *Oracle inscriptions Kuramoto in Kyoto University Institute for Human Sciences* by KAIZUKA Shigeki, *Scattered Oracle Collected in Japanese* by Matsumaru Michio.

2.1.2 Bronze Inscriptions

Bronze inscriptions is middle tache between oracle bone inscriptions and small seal script. Research on bronze inscriptions started in the Han Dynasty in the aspect of collection, reservation, recording and making textual criticisms and explanations, flourished from the Northern Song Dynasty, the Song Dynasty people collected bronze and attached great importance to the inscriptions, such as *Archaeological Map* by Lü Dalin. Some were exceptionally copied from bronze inscriptions, for example, *Collect Ancient Record of Xiao Tang* by Wang Qiu. Some achievements have been gained in the respect of compiling dictionaries of bronze inscription, such as *The Rhyme Seal Character on Ancient Bronze Objects* by Wang Chu and Xue Shanggong. The bronze inscriptions are the main materials to do reseach on ancient scripts of the Shang Dynasty, the Western Zhou Dynasty and the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States.

Studies of inscription have been achieved later, such as *The Rhyme of Bronze Inscriptions about Western Zhou Dynasty and Eastern Zhou Dynasty* by Wang Guowei, *Inscription Photo Gallery and Explanations about the Western Zhou Dynasty and the Eastern Zhou Dynasty* by Guo Moruo, and *Selected Inscriptions Materials at Shuang Jianyi* by Yu Xingwu.

2.1.3 Bamboo Slips and Silk

From the aspect of era, the bamboo and slips silk started from the Warring States period and ended in the Wei and Jin Dynasty, including bamboo and silk discovered in Chu, Qin and Han Dynasties, and so on. The content of bamboo and silk ranges over a wide field, providing important materials for the study of the history of Qin and Han Dynasties in politics, economy, culture, and military, the bamboo slips and silk are important cultural relics.

With the unearthed materials on bamboo and silk, the academic circles attach importance to them and deepen our research on them, for the benefit of the development of ancient philology, some high level research of academic works on them have appeared and there are

collection and researches on this document literature, such as *The Yunmeng longgang Qin Bamboo Slips* under Liu Xinfang and Liang Zhu's general editorship, *Qin and Han Dynasties Tomb Bamboo Slips* compiled from Jingzhou city, Hubei province Zhou Liang jade bridge site museum. Some mainly do research in the characters, such as *The Shuihudi Qin Bamboo Slips Character Compilation* by Zhang Shouzhong, *The Baoshan Chu Bamboo Slips Character Compilation* by Zhang Guangyu and Yuan Guohua, some research on the character phenomenon such as *The Bamboo Slips Interchangeability Characters Philology Research of the Qin and Han Dynasties* by Zhao Pingan, *Dailybook Studies of Yunmeng Qin Bamboo Slips* by Rao Zongyi and Zeng Xiantong, some research about the document form, for instance, *The Paleography Survey of the Qin Bamboo Slips* by Li Xueqin, *The Shape and Structure of Ancient Chinese Characters and its Stage of Development* by Yao Xiaosui, etc..

2.1.4 The Handed Down Documents

The handed down documents from the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States must be comprehensive, typical and colloquial, whose version and writing time has features of trustworthiness and reliability. We select the following several literature handed down from ancient times, which are all regarded as books of ancient classic in China, the divinatory language of *The Book of Changes*, some chapters of *Shangshu*, including *Dagao*, *Kanggao*, *Jiugao*, *Zicai*, *Zhaogao*, *Luogao*, *Duoshi*, *Wuyi*, *Junbi*, *Duofang*, *Lizheng*, *Guming*, *Kangwangzhigao*, *Feishi*, *Lvxing*, *Wenhoushiming*, *Qinshi*, *The Book of Odes*, *The Zuo Commentary*, *The Analects*, *The Mo-Tse*, *The Lao Tze*, *The Mencius*, *The Chuang tzu*, *The Xuncius* and *The Han Feizi*.

2.2 The Characteristics of Corpus

2.2.1 The Documents Are True and Reliable

Accurate language material is the essential prerequisite that ensures the research into the history of vocabulary drawing a scientific conclusion. The corpus we selected has the characteristics of precision and reliability. The oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, bamboo and silk buried in the ground for several centuries, capable of reflecting the original condition of the recorded information, which have not been revised or made private copies by later generation, otherwise, the handed down documents may lose its authenticity and fail to save its original appearance in the process of making private copies and collation by later generation.

Professor Yu Suisheng said

the value of oracle inscriptions is providing a large number of accurate fresh corpus without the distortion of the facts, and the era of Chinese history studies extends back more than three hundred years, which enables us to maximize tracing back with the existing conditions. Supplement and correction

of preformation theory in the study of history of the Chinese language would be done, revealing language phenomenon which has disappeared in the pre-Qin Chinese, and shedding light on the study of the history of the Chinese language.

The unearthed documents we mentioned have many similarities in grammar and vocabulary compared with contemporaneous corpora, such as *The Book of Changes*, *Shangshu* and *The Book of Odes*. The oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions and bamboo and silk have been indispensable, no matter for the study of ancient Chinese language or history of Chinese language.

We select unearthed literature and the literature handed down from the Shang Dynasty, the Western Zhou and the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States as the research object. They had been regarded as classic for thousands of years, and would not easily be changed. Take the Confucian classics for example, after rejecting all kinds of theoretical schools but Confucius, the emperor Han Wudi did not only find Taixue, but also establish election system of Han Dynasty. This religious reform involved absorbing the Confucian classics, establishing court academician of Confucian classics and reestablishing sacrificial rites of the state. The feudal authorities attached great importance to the Confucian teaching materials, elevating the status of the scriptures, listing *The Book of Changes*, *Shangshu*, *The Book of Odes*, *The Book of Rites* and *The Spring and Autumn Annals* as the state-run schools, and so on.

2.2.2 The Corpus With Certain Age

With the confirmation of the fact that the oracle bone inscriptions was found at Xiaotun and the study of oracle bone inscription content in depth, the research on oracle bone inscriptions by scholars such as Luo Zhenyu, confirmed the time shall be the Shang Dynasty basically through the oracle bone content and Wang Guowei settled some specific time of the oracle bone inscription. With the efforts of Luo Zhenyu, Wang Guowei and other scholars, the oracle's age was concluded which has no objection in academia. Chen Weizhan said in the book named *Summary of Oracle* that

discovering the unearthed oracle at Zhouyuan is of great significance. At least, it proves that oracle is not unique to the Shang Dynasty or the Yin ruins. Some of the oracle bones were contemporary with the 5th issue oracle of Xiaotun in the period of emperor Yi and Xin.

Bronze inscriptions will be diverse in content and writing style in different age. The technical progress of the archaeological excavations and modern science provides ample evidence for the inscription age. Senior scholars have made great achievements in the research, providing us reference and assistance with the bronze inscriptions study. Some reference books such as *The Bronze Inscriptions Index and The Collection of Inscriptions on Bronzes in Yin & Zhou* which attribute detail information about the era even the period of the emperor, ensure the

clarity of the data, also the country and the record source accurately about the inscriptions. In addition, the bronze inscriptions research works and papers by the academic circle are beneficial reference for us, such as *Generational History Demonstrates in The Western Zhou Dynasty Bronze Inscription* by Tang Lan, *Bronze Engraved Inscriptions Chronological Overview in Chu State* by Liu Binhui, etc..

The era of bamboo and silk slips is determinate, the Qin and Chu bamboo and silk belong to the corpus of the Warring States period. The Shuihudi bamboo slips was written in the late warring states and Qin period. According to *The Eleven Tombs Excavated Presentation of Qin Dynasty's at Hubei Yunmeng Shuihudi* which has been recorded by the Cultural Relics, we can safely infer that the era of the tombs and the group of bamboo would not be later than 217 BC, 30th years of the first emperor of Qin, by other historical cultural relics, the content and several phenomenon of avoiding the name of the emperor in the book. A few documents were written after the foundation of Qin Dynasty and the writing era and content are of the same string, so we consider *The Bamboo Slips of Shuihudi* as the object of investigation.

The era of the literature handed down from ancient times is also certain, *The Zuo commentary*, for instance, details the important events and important people of all countries during the period of the first year of the reign of Yin princes to the twenty-seventh year of Ai princes.

2.2.3 Literature With Characteristics of Huge Quantity and Rich in Content

Up to now, more than one hundred and fifty thousand pieces of oracle bone inscriptions unearthed have been excavated, which is enormous. *The Summary of Oracle* by Chen Weizhan states that “nearly one hundred thousand pieces of unearthed oracle bones have been excavated at Anyang Xiaotun in recent 80 years, providing extremely abundant research data for us.” The gradual exploitation oracle bone provides us a rich underground information to do related research. It exploited gradually, the researchers’ organizing and classifying on the oracle bone pieces provides us the convenience for study. Oracle is the main material of Chinese language study about the Shang Dynasty. Oracle bone inscriptions involve a wide range of vocabulary, including various aspects such as the natural phenomenon, productive labor, material culture, social relationship, daily life, ideology and so on.

On the basis of analysis of oracle’s basic vocabulary, *The Vocabulary of Oracle Bone Inscriptions* (Wang, 1992) fully clarified the oracle bone inscriptions reflecting the various aspects of the highly developed slave society, including agricultural production and living, hunting and fishing, the manufacture of palace vessel and vehicle implements, culture and ideology, etc. In a word, oracle bone inscriptions contain a rich content for our research.

The bronze inscriptions are massive numbers from

the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States. By the 1990s, the bronze inscriptions unearthed had been explored more and more, and all kinds of large record book would be useful reference. *The Collection of Inscriptions on Bronzes in Yin & Zhou* compiled by the Research Institute of Archeology is a comprehensive collection of rubbings for inscriptions on Bronzes, recording 11984 pieces of inscriptions totally. *The Bronze Inscriptions and Image Collection of the Shang and Zhou Dynasty* by Wu Zhenfeng, a total of 35 copies, including unearthed bronze handed down from ancient times and the newly explored inscription of 16,704 pieces, which provide a more complete data for the researchers and the ancient historians.

The content of the bronze inscriptions is mainly about sacrificial rites, rewarding and commanding, imperial edict and hunting units, which are a record of events reflecting social life at that time. The research on ancient bronze inscriptions is mainly to reveal the rules of the development of Chinese characters and to develop the ancient Chinese character theory. Especially it plays an irreplaceable role in correctly describing the history of Chinese, which is a rare important history and culture information about Shang Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty.

According to incomplete statistics, total quantity of bamboo and silk officially published or not yet is more than 240,000. It is a rich data for the study of the Warring States period to the Wei-Jin period. The achievement has been made continuously. 1235 pieces bamboos were found at Hubei Yunmeng Shuihudi, and 2 wooden tablets have been discovered at Sichuan Qingchuan., etc.. Many important bamboos which are in large quantity and rich content have not yet been published totally and still in the finishing. Two famous literatures are the *Chu-State Bamboo-Slip* edition in Shanghai Museum and the *Bamboo Slips of the Warring States Period* at Tsinghua University. These precious materials laid a solid foundation for the research of the bamboo and silk.

Bamboo and silk is rich in content and covered widely, which has important value for the political history of the Qin during the Warring States period, and in the ideological, cultural areas and also significant in academic research fields, for example, *The Guodian Chu Grave Bamboo Slips*, one of the most important unearthed discoveries in recent years, belongs to the early Confucianist and Taoism, which provides two information homologous and complementary materials of the Confucianist and Taoism. The ancient classics enabled us to find the link between Zisi and Mencius which has a very high academic value. At the same time, a large number of unearthed Confucian classics were found in Chu state, suggesting that the southern culture is strongly influenced by central plain culture, not entirely

independent of the developing culture. Here's another example, the Shanghai museum Chu bamboo slips book covers many aspects, such as military commander Confucian and Taoist sage, providing rich and detailed information for historical research.

The literature handed down from ancient times we chose contains 11 literature handed down from the Western Zhou Dynasty and the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States. For example, *The Book of Odes* is the first collection of poetry of China containing 305 poems, which collecting a numerous literary heritage of treasure from the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn period, about five hundred years. It is very broad in its content and divided into three parts, *the Feng* (风), *the Ya* (雅) and *Song* (颂).

The 11 literature handed down from ancient times we surveyed involve various content, and has important research value. They cover many fields of ancient China, such as literary language, philosophy and the social system, etc.. *The Zuo Commentary* is one of the 11 literature works, which is always regarded as the annalistic historical writings, It is the important historical data for people studying the social conditions of the Spring and Autumn period. It is one of *13 Confucianisms*, and is regarded as an important classic by feudal ruler, also a key of the China's imperial examination system and is highly revered. *The Zuo Commentary's* impact on future generations is reflected not only in the history area but also in the field of literature. It also pays attention to ceremony and righteous. In the aspect of ideological and moral, it persuades people to do good things, expounding the essence of the Confucianism.

Through analysis we have deduced the conclusions that the thesis is scientific and feasible based on the achieved academic accomplishments as well as the excavated documents and the handed down data, taking full use of former theories and literature, the paper does exhaustive and enclosed research on the evolution and development of daily action verbs from the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States period to uncover the evolution laws and motivations and compensate for the deficiency of the vocabulary evolution of Chinese.

3. THE RESEARCH VALUE OF ANCIENT CHINESE VOCABULARY EVOLUTION FROM THE SHANG DYNASTY TO THE SPRING-AUTUMN & THE WARRING STATES

The study of ancient Chinese vocabulary evolution from the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States is an important part of Chinese language history, taking advantage of the unearthed literature to carry out the research of ancient Chinese is beneficial to the formation of a scientific history of Chinese.

Qin Dynasty unified China in 221 B.C, the eras before this are collectively referred as the pre-Qin in the history of Chinese language study. It experienced the replacement of several dynasties in hundreds of years from the Yin Dynasty to the Qin Dynasty. Society changes would impact on the use of language and characters in people's daily life. We've seen from promulgating standard characters after the Qin Dynasty unified China. Therefore it is necessary to do studies and exploration on vocabulary evolution from the Shang Dynasty to the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States. Chen Weizhan said that:

The study of ancient Chinese through the oracle bones inscriptions and the further promotion of the exploration of the Chinese history make us trace back to the Shang Dynasty from the Western Zhou period, optimize the present reliable literature and intensively explore the grammar, the vocabulary and the speech sounds of the oracles and event-record inscription.(Chen, 1987)

In the light of above mentioned special cases, the present study advances the time of Ancient Chinese research from the pre-Qin period to the Shang Dynasty, attempting to approach the origin of Chinese to sort out the data at hand and make a deeper research on the lexical change during this period to offset shortcomings of the evolution of ancient Chinese vocabulary study. But in some linguistic works and articles the Spring-Autumn & the Warring States period usually implied the era before the foundation of Qin Dynasty and the corpus concerning the Western Zhou period is also finite.

To study the vocabulary evolution from the origin of Chinese enables us to find accurate and early data for collating ancient books and the editing of Chinese dictionaries. It is good for Chinese vocabulary teaching and the research on the source of modern Chinese, which is also a useful work to establish scientific history of Chinese vocabulary.

REFERENCES

- Chen, J. (2006). *The bronze inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou dynasty*. Beijing, China: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
- Chen, W. (2009). *Bamboo slips excavated in Chu of the warring states period 14 parts*. Beijing, China: The Economic Science Press.
- Chen, W. Z. (1987). *Summary of oracle* (pp.10-11, 230). China: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House.
- Hu, H. X. (1999). *Annotations of the great collection of the oracle inscriptions*. China Social Sciences Press.
- Li, Z. J. (1999). *An evolution study of frequent Chinese words*. Shanghai, China: The Great Chinese Dictionary Publishing House.
- Ma, C. Y. (1986-1990). *Selected readings of the bronze inscriptions of Shang and Zhou dynasty* (Volume1-4). Beijing, China: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
- Tan, D. L. (2008). *The conceptual field of body movement vocabulary system and its evolution*. In Y. Jing (Trans.). Beijing, China: Chinese Press.

- Wang, L. (2004). *The history of Chinese*. Beijing, China: The Chinese Publishing House.
- Wang, S. X. (1992). The vocabulary of oracle bone inscriptions. In X. Q. Cheng (Ed.), *The research of pre-Qin* (p.1-21). Jinan, China: Shandong Education Press.
- Wang, W. H. (2000). *The evolution study of frequent words from the Eastern Han dynasty to the Sui dynasty*. Nanjing, China: Nanjing University Press.
- Wang, Y. X., & Yang, S. N. (1999). *The research on oracle bone in one hundred years*. China: Social Sciences Academic Press.
- Xiang, X. (1993). *The history of Chinese vocabulary* (p.365). Beijing, China: Higher Education Press.
- Xu, C. H.(2003). *The vocabulary history of Chinese in ancient ages*. Beijing, China: The Commercial Press.
- Zhang, X. C. (2004). *Bamboo and slips document general philology*. Beijing, China: Zhonghua Book Company.