JANUSZ CHMIELEWSKI

The Problem of Syntax and Morphology in Chinese[1]

It has long been customary among Western Sinologists to call Chinese a language without Morphology, a language in which Grammar is reduced to Syntax only. This traditional point of view originated in the early decades of the 19th century — when both the science of language in general and Sinology in the modern sense of this term in particular were at their very beginnings and when no scientific approach to the intricate problems of the linguistic structure of Chinese was possible — and it has had a very long life in Sinology. Among eminent Sinologists of the present century it is probably the French scholar H. Maspero who was the most radical defender of this traditional viewpoint; under the influence of Maspero and other Western Sinologists and linguists this opinion about Chinese as having no Morphology whatever seems to have been adopted by some of the most eminent Chinese scholars working in the field of the theory of their own tongue. Now, in anticipation of what will be said later on in a more detailed way I should like to stress at the very beginning of my lecture that I consider as invalid all opinions to the effect that Chinese lacks Morphology. To my mind such opinions are due to serious misunderstandings, involving both a misconception of what is to be understood under Morphology in general, and also an over-simplified analysis of the linguistic structure of Chinese. The elucidation of these misunderstandings, the putting forward of a viewpoint admitting the existence of syntactic as well as morphological phenomena in both Archaic Chinese and Modern Chinese, and the underlining of some important implications this viewpoint has for historical Grammar of Chinese — such are the main tasks to be taken up briefly in this lecture.

It will be helpful to the discussion of the above-mentioned problems to start by saying a few words on Syntax and Morphology in general. As is

---

known, the distinction between these two domains of the science of language reflects the corresponding distinction between two kinds of linguistic phenomena, viz., on the one hand, phenomena connected with the combining of words in larger linguistic units, word groups and sentences, i.e., phenomena concerning the internal structure of word groups and sentences, and on the other hand phenomena concerning the internal structure of single words. The former belong to Syntax, the latter to Morphology. It must be stressed in this connection that not all combining of structural speech units belongs to Syntax: Syntax, as we have said, is only the combining of w o r d s to make word groups or sentences, while any combining of structural speech units smaller than a word to make words belongs to Morphology. The above may also be formulated as follows: Syntax is that part of Grammar principally concerned with speech units larger than a single word, i.e., word groups and sentences, which are analysed into single words as their component elements, while Morphology is that part of Grammar principally dealing with single words which, in their turn, are analysed into their component elements, i.e., morphemes and alternations. This of course is not to say that there is no internal connection between Syntax and Morphology. On the contrary, these two domains of Grammar are closely dependent on each other, as in many languages the morphological form of single words in a given word group or sentence is generally determined not only by the exigencies of the semantic contents of the idea to be expressed by the word in question, but also by the exigencies of the syntactic relations connecting the words and binding them up in a syntactic whole. It goes without saying that the latter point is particularly important with regard to languages having an amply developed inflectional system, but it must be borne in mind that it cannot be entirely disregarded even in Chinese, which, as we know, lacks Inflection. On the other hand — and this holds good for Chinese as well as for Indo-European languages — the very fact that both Syntax and Morphology are concerned with w o r d s as the speech units with which syntactic analysis stops and with which morphological analysis starts — gives evidence of the specific nterdependence of Syntax and Morphology and makes clear the rôle of the notion of 'word' as the main point of contact between them. The problem of defining the term 'word' is of special importance in Chinese linguistics, where because of specific conditions of language and script in their historical interrelations there has long been confusion between 'words' and 'monosyllables represented in script by single characters'. As is perfectly well known, we lack a generally accepted and generally valid definition of that term and I shall not be so bold as to venture on a resolution of this question from the standpoint of general linguistics, nor shall I even undertake to give a definition of 'word' that will be valid for Chinese alone. Instead of this I think it useful to formulate here the main criteria I have been using in

verifying the nature of Chinese monosyllables and dissyllables in order to determine whether they are words or not. I have taken for granted that we are not allowed to qualify a speech unit as a word except when the following conditions are fulfilled: (1) the speech unit in question must be directly intelligible to the hearer if spoken aloud without any context; (2) it must be capable of playing by itself the rôle of a definite syntactic element in a sentence, i.e., the rôle of subject, object, predicate etc., according to the semantic value of the speech unit in question; (3) it must be non-analysable into component parts all of which fulfill the conditions (1) and (2). As is easily seen, the first two conditions are meant to prevent the qualification of speech units smaller than words (i.e., morphemes) as words, the third one is meant to prevent the taking of speech units larger than words (i.e., word groups) as single words. I frankly admit that the criteria adduced involve some simplification of the matter and are not sufficient to solve the problem of 'word' in Chinese in its entirety — to say nothing of the problem of 'word' in general — as they leave unconsidered some important questions of detail. Nevertheless I believe that they give a relatively clear — though simplified — idea of what is to be meant by the term 'word' in relation to Chinese, and, consequently, they may be helpful for further discussion of the problem of Syntax and Morphology in Chinese in both its synchronic and diachronic aspect. A few words should also be said about Morphology itself which is n o t confined to Inflection. It is to be remembered — and this is a point often misunderstood with regard to Chinese — that Inflection is only one of the two main subdivisions of Morphology, viz. one embracing the phenomena of nominal declension and verbal conjugation occurring in the so-called inflectional languages. But besides purely inflectional modifications in word bodies due to declension and conjugation, we have to do in various languages, inflectional as well as non-inflectional, with another kind of modifications to which the word bodies are subject, viz. modifications made in order to create derivates, semantically and morphologically related to each other and forming what is called a word family. It is evident that the latter phenomenon — which in contradistinction to Inflection is called Word-formation — is also a morphological one as it concerns the internal structure of words analysed into morphemes and alternations, just as has been the case with inflectional phenomena. Thus to speak about Chinese as a language without Morphology is simply to deny the existence of both Inflection and Word-formation in that language.

So far we have spoken about things widely known in linguistics and it may have seemed unnecessary to recall them here. I think, however, that it is only with the help of the notional and terminological distinctions just spoken of that we can get a clear understanding of the problem of Syntax and Morphology in Chinese. Let us start with Archaic Chinese, i.e., the Chinese language

of the Chou era, amply attested in the invaluable literary monuments of that
epoch and forming the base of what is called 'classical Chinese'. It must be
remembered, however, that from the linguistic point of view — which is
far from being identical with the literary one — only the genuine monuments
of the Chou era are to be considered as documents of the Archaic stage of
the Chinese language, while most literary productions of subsequent epochs
written in the so-called 'classical language' (*wen-yen*) should be excluded
from linguistic investigation, at least as far as Archaic Chinese is concerned.
This seems to be so evident a point that it hardly needs further elucidation.
It must, however, be mentioned in this place since among the many causes
of confusion in works and papers on Chinese an important one is the failure
to distinguish between Archaic Chinese and 'classical Chinese'. The former
is represented in the literary monuments of the Chou era and reflects to
a considerable extent the living linguistic usage of the time; the latter is
represented in innumerable literary or semi-literary productions of subsequent
epochs but with its artificiality and syncretism it reflects no living speech
of any epoch.

Now, after all that has just been said, it seems evident that an investiga-
tion of the problem of Syntax and Morphology in Archaic Chinese should
start with an attempt to give an answer to the preliminary question: What is
to be considered as a w o r d in the Chinese language of the Archaic epoch?
It must be said in advance that among the many traditional statements
concerning the structure of Chinese which are to be considered as erroneous
and due to misunderstandings the following one holds good: in **Archaic**
Chinese words were as a rule monosyllabic, and *vice versa*, in that epoch of
the Chinese language monosyllabic units of speech represented in Chinese
script by single characters were as a rule real words. This may be ascertained
in spite of the fact that it is impossible directly to apply here the criterion
of intelligibility I spoke of in the preceding, i.e., criterion (1) mentioned above,
as we neither know for sure what the Archaic monosyllables sounded like,
nor are we able to judge on personal experience whether they were intelligible
to the hearer if spoken outside any context; there are, none the less, indirect
proofs that they were. First, the very Chinese script itself shows that definite
semantic values were associated with single monosyllables — which, then,
must have been understood by those who invented and used characters
as written symbols of the monosyllabic speech units. Second, there is the
undeniable fact that Archaic monosyllables were as a rule much richer
in their phonetic garb, much more differentiated in sound and much less ho-
mophonic than they are in Modern Chinese, and consequently c o u l d
be intelligible to the ear of the hearer if pronounced in isolation. But the most
positive proof is furnished by criterion (2), for it is perfectly well known by
anybody dealing with Archaic Chinese texts that the overwhelming majority

of monosyllables are attested in those texts as speech units capable of performing by themselves and according to their semantic value the functions of subject, object, predicate etc. in sentences. All this of course does not mean that I am unaware of the fact that in the Archaic language there were, too, dissyllabic words. The latter are, however, mostly of onomatopoeic character and, consequently, may be left out of consideration as they are lexical formations lying outside the very morphological system of the language. On the other hand, non-onomatopoeic dissyllabic words in Archaic Chinese are comparatively few and what is still more important they are — in some cases at least — to be considered as primary syntactic word groups (composed of two monosyllabic words) early lexicalised and morphologised to dissyllabic words; still more insignificant in number seem to have been dissyllabic formations having come into existence through dimidiation of primary monosyllabic words, but considerations of time and space do not allow me to enter upon particulars here. Thus it is to be taken for granted that the bulk of Archaic Chinese monosyllables — except for the cases just mentioned — were real words in the language of the epoch, and *vice versa*: words were as a rule monosyllabic units of speech. From this it follows that in Archaic Chinese dissyllabic complexes were, as a rule, simple word groups composed of two monosyllabic words, i.e., the simplest syntactic formations bound up into a whole by some sort of syntactic relation between component monosyllables.

It is obvious that if statements about the fully amorphological character of Archaic Chinese were true, the bulk of Archaic Chinese monosyllables should be as many unrelated monosyllabic words, each one standing by itself and for itself, incapable of being subject to internal modifications, whether inflectional or word-formative. Now, it will be recalled that even the complete lack of Inflection in Archaic Chinese has been called in question by the well-known hypothesis of case-inflection in Archaic personal pronouns. I must say, however, that I am now inclined to explain the phenomenon in question in a way leaving no room for the 'inflectional' hypothesis, and I willingly concede that there was no Inflection whatever in Archaic Chinese. But as far as word-formative phenomena within monosyllabic words are concerned — it is hardly possible to deny their existence in the Archaic language. Indeed, they are directly attested even in Modern Chinese by some relics preserved in the living language up to this day. As such cases are, however, comparatively few in number and have nothing to do with the structural system of Modern Chinese, they have been treated as mere exceptions or simply overlooked. It was not until the huge work of the last decades had been accomplished by Western and Chinese scholars in the field of Chinese historical phonetics that the problem of Word-formation in Archaic Chinese could be placed in an entirely new light. It has become clear that Chinese

monosyllables, considered in the light of the reconstructed phonetic system of Archaic Chinese, were by no means isolated speech units morphologically independent of each other; on the contrary, they formed families of mutually related monosyllabic words, direct or indirect derivates of one and the same monosyllabic root-word, word-formative modifications being carried out inside the monosyllables mostly by means of phonematical alternations. It is perfectly true that we are largely handicapped in investigating this Archaic system of Word-formation by the very fact that it has been entirely obliterated by the subsequent evolution of Chinese and that but slight and practically insignificant traces of it survive in the Modern language. On the other hand, with regard to the written monuments of the Chou era as reflecting the living Archaic language characterised by the morphological (word-formative) system we are speaking of — we are handicapped by the peculiar nature of the Chinese script, the characters having hidden the nature — and the very existence as well — of morphological relations between monosyllables cognate to each other. Having only the reconstructed Archaic word forms at our disposal — which after all are charged with all the uncertainties involved in any reconstructional procedure — we are often unable to give a satisfactory answer to many a question of importance and, consequently, there are considerable lacunae in our knowledge of the Archaic Chinese system of Word-formation. In this connection let it be sufficient to say that even the very important question whether the word-formative processes in Archaic Chinese were exclusively carried out by means of alternations (phonematical and tonal, the reconstruction of the latter, however, being entirely beyond our reach) inside the monosyllabic words or also by means of asyllabic affixes attached to the monosyllabic root-words cannot be definitively answered as yet, although comparison with other Indo-Sinic languages — Tibetan in the first place — seems to indicate that there must have been asyllabic affixation in Chinese too. It is evident that all the difficulties involved in the problem of Word-formation in Archaic Chinese do not mean that the problem itself is non-existent.

To sum up: contrary to what has been maintained by many, Archaic Chinese possessed not only Syntax, but also Morphology, the latter being confined to Word-formation. Word-formative modifications resulting in forming derivates were mostly carried out by means of alternations inside monosyllabic words, but the rules governing the mass of alternations unveiled through reconstructional research are hardly clear to us as yet. It is an extremely important, and at the same time extremely difficult, task of the scientific grammar of Archaic Chinese — as distinguished from the traditional grammar of 'classical Chinese' which is one of c h a r a c t e r s, not one of the Archaic l a n g u a g e — to penetrate the veil of characters concealing the true nature of the Archaic Chinese language and to master as far as possible

the particulars of the morphological (word-formative) system of Archaic Chinese. In this respect much help is to be expected not only from further research on Archaic Chinese itself, but also from comparative research on languages akin to Chinese. Among these the first place seems to be held by Tibetan which conserved its old morphological system better and longer than Chinese did and which was put to writing in a phonetic script at a comparatively early date.

One question more deserves to be answered in this connection: how is it to be explained that so many Sinologists up to this day have been unable to get rid of the traditional point of view with regard to Chinese and in evident incompatibility with facts just spoken of have been continually repeating the statement that Old Chinese was a language without Morphology, its Grammar being reduced to Syntax alone? The answer, I think, is clearly implied by what has been said in the preceding. It is because they have been victims of more than one confused notion with regard to the principal concepts and distinctions necessary for proper interpretation of the facts in question. That is to say: first, they wrongly considered Morphology as equivalent to Inflection, overlooking that the latter is but one subdivision of Morphology comprising Inflection and Word-formation; second, they made no clear-cut distinction between words and characters, the former being actual monosyllabic units of the living Archaic Chinese speech, showing morphological (word-formative) variations in their internal structure, while the latter are but conventional written symbols of words, reflecting no morphological variations in the words proper and giving the impression that the words corresponding to them were as many isolated and unrelated units; third, they overlooked the very important difference between Archaic Chinese and 'classical Chinese', the former being the living speech of the Chou era attested in its written form in the literary monuments of the epoch and having a grammatical system comprising both Syntax and Morphology, the latter being but an artificial written medium whose peculiar 'Grammar' is reduced to some sort of 'Syntax of characters'.

Proceeding to the discussion of the problem of Syntax and Morphology in Modern Chinese I should like to start with an example in the hope that it will illustrate my line of reasoning in this respect better than any abstract argumentation could do. If, e.g., I ask an English-speaking Chinese what the Chinese equivalent of the English word group 'wooden furniture' sounds like, he is likely to answer: mu^4-$k'i^4$, which, of course, is written with two characters of the Chinese script: 木器, the first character — read mu^4 — symbolising, as everybody knows, 'wood, timber', the second — read $k'i^4$ — symbolising 'implements'. Western and Chinese scholars defending the traditional point of view about Chinese — both 'classical' and 'spoken' as they say instead of the proper distinction of Archaic Chinese and Modern Chinese —

as a language having no Morphology whatever, and a language whose Grammar is reduced to Syntax alone, are sure to consider the dissyllabic complex in question mu^4-$k'i^4$ as a syntactic word group composed of two monosyllabic words mu^4 'wood' and $k'i^4$ 'implements', the syntactic relation between these words being that of determination. But except for the last statement concerning the relation of determination between mu^4 and $k'i^4$ which holds good — although not without some reservation of which we shall have to speak later — all this is to my mind plainly erroneous. First of all it is necessary in the discussion of our problem to avoid drawing any deductions from the fact that the English equivalent of the Chinese expression in question happens to be a syntactic word group. It is perfectly well known in linguistics that semantic equivalence is far from being the same as structural equivalence and that, consequently, the semantic equivalent of what is a word (i.e., morphological formation) in one language may well be a word group (i.e., syntactic formation) in another, and *vice versa*; moreover, even in one and the same language there frequently occur parallel formations, morphological and syntactic, having precisely the same semantic content. The above requirement of the exclusion of any external suggestion in the linguistic analysis of Chinese expressions is so evident that it may have seemed unnecessary to formulate it here; it seems, however, that among the many factors hindering the proper interpretation of the linguistic structure of Chinese we must also include the influence exercised by European languages upon some Sinologists, at least as far as Western scholars are concerned. Secondly, it must be emphasised that our problem concerns the synchronic system of contemporary Chinese and, consequently, it belongs to the synchronic plane of linguistic research; hence not only are suggestions derived from other languages to be excluded from the discussion, but also all suggestions likely to come from the diachrony of the Chinese language itself. In other words: linguistic phenomena in contemporary Chinese — in spite of having their origin in some phenomena of the remote past of the Chinese language and in those of Archaic Chinese in particular — belong, after all, to the synchronic system of contemporary Chinese and from the descriptive point of view they are to be interpreted in the light of this system, not in the light of the linguistic system of Archaic Chinese. In spite of the evident necessity for all these requirements they have not been respected by many scholars, and the confusion of the two aspects, synchronic and diachronic, is certainly one of the main reasons for the traditional statements about Modern Chinese which must be considered as erroneous. One remark more is to be added in this connection: it is to be borne in mind that what I protest against is only the confusion of synchrony and diachrony with regard to Modern Chinese, and not the recognition of the very important fact that Syntax and Morphology in Chinese are diachronically (historically) interrelated in a specific way — a problem to which I shall have

to revert later on. In anticipation let it be said at once that I consider strict observance of the distinction between synchrony and diachrony with regard to the contemporary Chinese language not only as a necessary prerequisite for the proper interpretation of the linguistic structure of Modern Chinese from the descriptive point of view, but also as a necessary prerequisite for the proper understanding of the diachronic aspect of the problem of Syntax and Morphology in Chinese in general. Thirdly, it is to be remarked that in analysing the linguistic structure of Modern Chinese we must be free from all suggestions arising from the Chinese script, for — let it be said once more — language and script, and quite especially Chinese language and Chinese script, are two different things. Strange as it may seem, as far as Chinese is concerned it has long been customary in linguistic practice to confound words with characters and characters with words. With regard to Archaic Chinese, as we have seen, the confusion of words and characters is largely responsible for the wrong conception of the Archaic words as isolated monosyllables unrelated to each other. In the grammatical theory of Modern Chinese it is the same confusion which — seconded by that between the synchronic and the diachronic aspects of the problem — accounts for the equally wrong conception of the monosyllabic speech units written with single characters as words, whereas in Modern Chinese the units in question as a rule have become something less than words: simple morphologically indecomposable component parts of words, i.e., morphemes. After all these remarks, which constitute as many warnings to the linguist interested in the structural analysis of Modern Chinese, we are now ready to return to our example, the dissyllabic complex mu^1-$k'i^1$ 'wooden furniture', and ask what its linguistic status in the structural system of contemporary Chinese is like.

It goes without saying that if the dissyllabic complex in question were a syntactic word group — as will probably be maintained by many — its component parts, i.e., mu^1- and -$k'i^1$, should be real words of the contemporary Chinese language, that is, speech units having semantic and syntactic autonomy in accordance with the criteria (1) and (2) formulated above; but this proves contrary to the facts. It is clear to anybody acquainted with the contemporary Chinese language — to say nothing of Chinese themselves — that if mu^1 or $k'i^1$ is pronounced alone (without any spoken context) and is heard by somebody knowing Chinese as perfectly as possible, it is n o t associated in the mind of the hearer with any definite sense. Or — to state it more correctly — the monosyllabic speech units in question, if heard outside any spoken context, may be associated with so many different senses that in practice they are associated with none at all and, consequently, are n o t intelligible to the hearer. It may be objected by somebody that homophony is not an obstacle against qualifying speech units as words; it is a phenomenon to be met with in all languages, and it will not be difficult to find in any language

examples of homophonic words which, none the less, are considered as words. It is to be remembered, however, that these are only exceptional cases, and with contemporary Chinese the situation is just the reverse: as far as monosyllabic speech units of the Modern Chinese language are concerned homophony is not an exceptional, but a regular phenomenon to which the overwhelming majority of monosyllabic units are subject — the number of monosyllables semantically different in a homophonic series amounting in some cases to twenty odd. Thus it must be clear to any unbiassed linguist who is fully aware of the communicative function of language that the very numerical proportions of the instances of homophony in Modern Chinese prevent us from qualifying the bulk of monosyllabic speech units of that language as words. This statement holds good in spite of the fact that the monosyllabic units in question have, after all, some semantic value and play a specific rôle in the structural system of the language; it equally holds good in spite of the fact that the monosyllabic units of speech by themselves practically unintelligible to the ear become as a rule intelligible to the eye if they are written with Chinese characters. Indeed, it is the Chinese script which creates the misleading impression that all Modern Chinese monosyllables are as many words. But from the linguistic point of view it does not matter that the script unit 木 — corresponding to the speech unit mu^4 here in question — is by itself understandable to the eye of anybody acquainted with the Chinese script; it is only the fact that the s p e e c h unit mu^4 is by itself practically unintelligible to the ear which is important to the linguist and which according to our criterion (1) decides against qualifying the speech unit in question as a word. The above is corroborated in a decisive manner by the test of criterion (2): as is perfectly well known, the speech unit mu^4 is n o t capable of being used by itself as a subject or an object in a sentence about 'wood, timber'. If, e.g., I want to say to a Chinese that 'There is wood' I cannot say *yu^3 mu^4 *有木, but only yu^3 mu^4-$t'ou$ 有木頭, and it is only the dissyllabic complex mu^4-$t'ou$ 木頭 — not mu^4 木 alone — which is a real word in the contemporary Chinese language. In the light of criteria (1) and (2) just the same must be said of the second monosyllable of our complex mu^4-$k'i^4$, i.e., $k'i^4$ which is neither intelligible to the ear if pronounced alone nor capable of performing by itself any syntactic function in a sentence and which, consequently, — just like mu^4 and the overwhelming majority of monosyllabic units — is n o t a word of the contemporary Chinese language. We must not be afraid of drawing the necessary conclusions from all this: if both mu^4 and $k'i^4$ are not words in the contemporary Chinese language — and I hope to have demonstrated that they are not — it must be clear to anybody that the dissyllabic complex mu^4-$k'i^4$ is n o t a syntactic word group. Strange as it may seem, from the point of view of the structural system of Modern Chinese mu^4-$k'i^4$ 'wooden furniture' is but a single word — although not a simple

one — which fact may be easily proved by the test of the criteria adopted: (1) it is intelligible to the ear if pronounced alone, (2) it is capable of performing by itself a syntactic function in sentences, (3) it is not composed of units fulfilling the conditions (1) and (2). On the other hand, the word in question is not a simple one, as it is composed of two distinct non-decomposable speech units each playing its specific rôle in the given word structure; these may be interpreted as monosyllabic morphemes bound up into a single word — that is a morphological whole — by some sort of morphological relation. In this case the relation is evidently that of determination, as the first morpheme determines the second, but it must be borne in mind that from the point of view of the synchronic system of Modern Chinese the relation in question is realised in the morphological plane, not in the syntactic one as will probably be admitted by many. The above may be illustrated by the comparison of the morphological formation (word) mu^4-$k'i^4$ 木器 'wooden furniture' with the syntactic one (word group) mu^4-$t'ou$ $k'i^4$-$kü$ 木頭器具 'wooden implements'. As easily seen, the relation uniting the morphemes mu^4- and -$k'i^4$ in the word mu^4-$k'i^4$ cannot be considered as identical with that uniting the words mu^4-$t'ou$ 木頭 and $k'i^4$-$kü$ 器具 in the word group mu^4-$t'ou$ $k'i^4$-$kü$ 'wooden implements'; it is true that in both cases we have to do with determination, but in the first case the relation belongs merely to the morphological plane (being realised between morphemes composing a word), while in the second case it does belong to the syntactic plane of the structural system of the language (being realised between words composing a syntactic word group). Let it be remarked that the very existence of words morphologically analysable into morphemes clearly implies the existence of Morphology in Modern Chinese, although only one confined to Word-formation.

One more notional distinction proves useful in this connection and will put us a step further along in the discussion of our problem. This is the well-known distinction of root-morphemes or semantemes which are the principal bearers of meaning in words, and formal morphemes or simply morphemes (in the narrow sense of the term) which are but some sort of formal modifiers limiting or specifying in some way the principal meaning of the semantemes. Now, if we apply the above distinction of semantemes and (formal) morphemes to the previously analysed Modern Chinese word mu^4-$k'i^4$, we shall see that it is purely b i s e m a n t e m i c as it is composed of two semantemes without any additional formal morpheme. I should like to emphasise that I consider the bisemantemic structure of words as a characteristic feature of Modern Chinese Morphology (Word-formation), a feature strictly connected with the diachronic aspect of the problem of Syntax and Morphology in Chinese — of which I shall have to speak later on. Monosemantemic suffixal formations, i.e., formations composed of one semanteme and one formal morpheme affixed to the semanteme, are to be named next

as equally typical of Modern Chinese Word-formation. Moreover, various combinations of the two main types, bisemantemic and suffixal, occur quite frequently and it would not be difficult to quote numerous examples of bisemantemic word forms having an additional suffixal morpheme as well as examples of monosemantemic and bisemantemic word forms with two suffixal morphemes forming together what may be called a 'compound suffix'. The careful analysis of all these formations is the principal task of the descriptive Morphology of Modern Chinese and it is clear that I cannot enter upon particulars here. Let it be recalled that the suffixal character of the monosyllables -tsï 子, -t'ou 頭 and the like has long been recognised, and it may seem strange that even those scholars who admitted the existence of the syllabic suffixes in Modern Chinese were not fully aware of the fact that they had to do with a purely morphological (word-formative) phenomenon and endeavoured to put it forcibly into the frames of Syntax. Finally let it be stressed that Morphology in Modern Chinese — in contradistinction to Archaic Chinese — is a syllabic one. This means that morphological (word-formative) variations in Modern Chinese are carried out by means of interchanging syllabic units (syllabic semantemes and morphemes), whereas in Archaic Chinese Morphology consisted in internal modifications within monosyllabic words.

To sum up: in both Archaic Chinese and Modern Chinese there is not only Syntax, but also Morphology, although it is one confined to Word-formation. Furthermore, there is a very important difference between Archaic Chinese and Modern Chinese as far as their morphological systems are concerned: in the former Morphology was an asyllabic one, word-formative modifications having been carried out by means of phonematical and tonal alternations within monosyllabic words, in the latter it is a syllabic one, word-formative processes here consisting in grouping and interchanging monosyllabic morphemes (or, strictly speaking, semantemes and morphemes). It seems to me that the viewpoint just spoken of puts in the proper light many important problems of the descriptive Grammar of Chinese, both Archaic and Modern, which hitherto have often been misinterpreted. What I specially have in view is the problem of Parts of speech in Chinese. According to many scholars Parts of speech neither did nor do exist in Chinese at all, and according to others they may be spoken of in reference to Chinese only as far as the semantic content of the words is concerned (words denoting 'things' are nouns, words denoting 'actions' are verbs, etc.). The existence of purely morphological marks connected with definite word classes (Parts of speech) in Chinese has been denied by many, and it must have been denied by those who deny the very existence of Morphology in Chinese as well. If we admit, however, the existence of Morphology — and precisely of Word-formation — in Chinese, than it should be clear to anybody concerning himself with the problem of Parts of speech in either Archaic or Modern

Chinese that there must be some purely morphological marks of word classes too. As, however, I have tried to discuss this problem at some length elsewhere, I am not going to dilate further on it here, the more so as considerations of time prevent me from entering upon particulars.

A few words more must be added concerning the diachronic, i.e., historical, aspect of the main problem. Indeed, I think that the importance of the viewpoint discussed above is not confined to the proper interpretation of the synchronic systems of Archaic Chinese and Modern Chinese. I am also convinced that it is only in the light of what has been said in the preceding remarks that the proper interpretation of the main line of the linguistic evolution of Chinese is possible. Let us first draw deductions from what has already been said. If we admit — on the one hand — that in Archaic Chinese words were monosyllabic and that dissyllabic complexes were as a rule syntactic word groups, while admitting — on the other hand — that in Modern Chinese we have to do with syllabic Morphology and with mono-syllabic speech units reduced to semantemes and morphemes, it follows from this that the syllabic Morphology of the Modern Chinese language has grown up on the ground of the Archaic Syntax. In other words: phenomena which are to be considered as morphological from the point of view of the synchronic system of contemporary Chinese are historically syntactic, that is to say they are syntactic from the point of view of the synchronic system of Archaic Chinese. It is precisely this specific historical interrelation of Syntax and Morphology in Chinese which may easily lead one astray in the investigation of the structural system of Modern Chinese. If one is not careful enough in distinguishing the synchronic plane of Modern Chinese from the diachronic one, he is sure to misinterpret as syntactic those linguistic phenomena of Modern Chinese which w e r e syntactic in the remote past of the Chinese language (viz. in Archaic Chinese) but have long become morphological. Let us revert to our example *mu⁴-k'i⁴* 木器 which we have qualified from the point of view of the structural system of Modern Chinese as a bisemantemic word. Now, according to K a r l g r e n's reconstructions which I follow here the two monosyllables must have sounded in Archaic Chinese something like **muk* and **k'iɛd*, and we have direct proofs according to our criterion (2) that they were real words of the Archaic Chinese language as they frequently appear in Archaic texts as syntactic units performing by themselves the functions of subject and object in sentences; cf. e.g. *T'an kung*: **muk pwət ḍiĕng tŭk* 木不成斲 (S. C o u v r e u r: 'lignea non perfecte sculpta') — where **muk* 木 is subject — and *Sün-tsï*, chapter XXIII: **tŭk muk ńiəg ḍiĕng k'iɛd* 斲木而成器 (H. D u b s: '...hews a piece of wood and makes a vessel') — where both **muk* 木 and **k'iɛd* 器 are objects. What is more, the very dissyllabic complex **muk k'iɛd* 木器 is attested in *Sün-tsï*, chapter XIX, in the passage **muk k'iɛd pwət ḍiĕng tŭk* 木器不

成斷 (H. D u b s: 'The wooden articles should not be completely carved out') which, of course, is an allusion to the *T'an kung* passage just quoted. It goes without saying that in Archaic Chinese the dissyllabic complex ***muk k'įɛd* 木器 attested in *Sün-tsï* was a syntactic word group, but this does not by any means invalidate the statement that in Modern Chinese the corresponding complex *mu⁴-k'i⁴* (< Arch. ***muk k'įɛd*) is no more a syntactic word group but only a bisemantemic word, i.e., morphological formation. The conclusion to be drawn is this: from the diachronic point of view the formation *mu⁴-k'i⁴* used in Modern Chinese is an Archaic syntactic word group ***muk k'įɛd* subsequently morphologised into a bisemantemic word. This phenomenon which I call morphologisation of primary syntactic word groups is to be considered as one of prime importance in historical Chinese Grammar and I think that much of the historical evolution of the linguistic structure of Chinese should be interpreted in this light. It is evident that morphologisation of primary syntactic groups composed of two words — which, as we have said, is the very basis of the syllabic Morphology (Word-formation) of Modern Chinese — must have resulted in bisemantemic formations which, in fact, are very common; on the other hand, the linguistic development has led in some cases to suffixal formations which, in their turn, owing to the well-known process of analogical assimilation have become equally common in the Modern Chinese language. It is one of the major tasks of historical Chinese Grammar to elucidate the nature of these formations as far as possible, and it is to be remarked that in many cases — just like in the one discussed above — the origin of word forms, both bisemantemic and suffixal, common in Modern Chinese may be traced directly back to the early epochs of the Chinese language when they were but syntactic word groups. On the other hand, the very phenomenon of progressive morphologisation of primary word groups as well as that of morphemisation of primary monosyllabic words may be traced to some extent in Chinese texts of the post-Archaic period, especially in the early postclassical commentaries and literary productions written in a language not far removed from the colloquial. This, however, is a topic which deserves to be dealt with in a special paper and it must be left out of consideration in this place.