

The Origin and Development of Chinese Language Studies in Spain from the Perspective of Sinology

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Abstract: Chinese language education and studies in Spain originated from Spanish sinology. Early Spanish missionary is the first group of sinologists and language experts in Europe. In the process of contacting, learning and studying Chinese, they constructed the field of Chinese language research that integrates Chinese and Spanish language studies. Chinese language studies experienced the rise and fall with the development of Spanish Sinology. The research contents, theoretical perspectives and research methods of Contemporary Spanish Chinese tend to be diversified, and Chinese research literature has high linguistic research value. This article reviews the evolution process and key figures of Chinese Studies in Spanish Sinology since the 16th century, and identifies the development context and research fields of Chinese language studies conducted by the Spanish linguists, so as to reveal the important role that Chinese language plays in the exchange and mutual understanding between Chinese and Spanish civilizations, and provide a historical reference for the development of contemporary Chinese education in Spain.

Keywords: Spanish sinology; missionaries; sinologists; Chinese language studies; Chinese language education.

Resumen: La educación y los estudios del idioma chino en España tienen su origen en la sinología española. Los primeros misioneros españoles constituyen el primer grupo de sinólogos y lingüistas de Europa. En el proceso de contactar, aprender y estudiar chino, construyeron el campo de investigación del idioma chino que integra los estudios del idioma chino y español. Los estudios del idioma chino experimentaron un auge y una caída con el desarrollo de la sinología española. Los contenidos de investigación, las perspectivas teóricas y los métodos de investigación del chino español contemporáneo tienden a ser diversificados, y la literatura de investigación china tiene un alto valor de investigación lingüística. Este artículo revisa el proceso de evolución y las figuras clave de los estudios chinos en la sinología española desde el siglo XVI, e identifica el contexto de desarrollo y los campos de investigación de los estudios del idioma chino realizados por los lingüistas españoles, con el fin de revelar el importante papel que juega el idioma chino en la el intercambio y entendimiento mutuo entre las civilizaciones china y española, y constituir un referente histórico para el desarrollo de la educación china contemporánea en España.

Palabras clave: sinología española; misioneros; sinólogos; estudios de idioma chino; enseñanza del idioma chino.

1. Introduction

The history of overseas Chinese language studies is a long and complicated way, documenting the spread of Chinese language overseas from the point of view of China and also the researching and teaching of Chinese language as a foreign language¹. It reflects the language contact process between Chinese and local language in terms of interaction, which results in mutual understanding, learning and the spreading of Chinese languages in different countries. The knowledge acquired by early missionaries through their perception of Chinese has become the well-known episteme in western Sinology, which contains inherent

¹ Yao 2008.

characteristics of Chinese language dissemination in the West since the 16th century. The missionaries' research interests, triggered from learning achieved a deep understanding of Chinese language. These missionaries' exploration of Chinese language in early period is recognized as the foundation of European sinology and modern Chinese linguistics, outlining the general dissemination and cognition process of Chinese language in the west. Missionaries' Chinese language studies writes about the history of sinology studies and cultural exchange between China and the west, which represents the valuable document in the field of Chinese Linguistics and comparative literature. Unfortunately, due to the changes of history, the rise and fall of countries, the barrier of languages, the less use and the limitation of historical exchange, most of the Chinese textbooks and works on language studies have been lost.

Since Zhang (2003) and Yao (2008) put forward the sinology research theories of international Chinese language studies, Chinese domestic scholars have paid attention to Chinese research from the perspective of Sinology development², which emphasizes that Chinese language studies should not only stand in local perspective, namely the researches inside China, but "other domains", the researches outside China, also deserve scholars' attention. These studies expand the academic area of overseas Chinese language studies and provide new theoretical guidance and practical suggestions for the spread of Chinese language internationally. Furthermore, Chinese language education overseas features prominently the uniqueness, integration and dynamics in different countries, which is affected by external factors such as, historical conditions, regional culture, social environment, and international relationship, as well as internal factors such as language discrepancy of language structures, phonetics and graphics. Chinese language studies in Spain, pioneered since the 16th century in Europe; however, the diachronic special research on the spread of Chinese language in Spanish, is still in an academic gap, especially the development of contemporary Chinese language education and studies in Spain. It is essential for scholars in this field to get to know about the basic situation of Chinese language research in the existing overview literature. This study traces the historical origin of Chinese language studies in Spanish Sinology since the 16th century, and summarizes the linguistic topics in the field of Chinese language education and studies in Spain, discusses the basic characteristics of Contemporary Spanish Chinese studies, so as to provide a clear reference for the development of Chinese language teaching and research in Spain.

2. Chinese language research and teaching in the early missionary era

Spaniard's interest in Chinese language and culture originates after the discovery of the new continent in 1492. Missionaries from Portugal and Spain were sent to Asia, along with merchants and envoys came to the East for business and political aim. In the 16th century, the missionaries began to learn Chinese, compiled the first batch of Chinese grammar books and Chinese-Spanish dictionaries with the aim of educating the newly-came missionaries with teaching materials, and practical methods for Chinese language teaching and learning, so as to create communicative convenience for the successors. The missionaries' initiative in Chinese language learning determined that they played an irreplaceable role in the early process of cultural exchanges between China and Spain. At the same time, they also brought a new language type to the European linguistic circle, triggering an alteration of European scholars' perspective to observe world languages in a different way. Spanish missionaries had a profound influence on the development of Chinese linguistic studies concerning the establishment of Chinese language grammatical system, the creation of Pinyin, the expansion of vocabulary and the arrangement of syntactic structure among European early missionaries, which is of great significance in the history of western language science and Chinese language education.

In the 16th century, Bernardino de Escalante (1537-?)'s *An Account of the Empire of China* first describes the pronunciation and meaning of the three characters "穹" (sky), "皇" (sic) (earth), and "城" (town), which are mentioned by the successive missionaries, consequently indicates the dissemination of Chinese characters in the very early time and exemplifies the distinction between Chinese characters and Latin letters³. Martinus de Rada (1533-1578) compiled the first Chinese-foreign dictionary *Arte y Vocabulario de la Lengua China* in Spanish based on Quanzhou dialect (Minnan dialect) in Fujian Province in 1575, which is the first European work that focuses on Chinese language. It is a historical material for the study of the development of Minnan dialect. Unfortunately, the dictionary has not been well preserved till today, however, the earliest comments on the difficulty of Chinese characters (Boxer, 2000) in his later work *Causa que hubo para que los padres fray Martín de Rada y fray Jerónimo Martín, y los soldados que fueron en su compañía, pasasen al Reino de la China*, has a profound impact on the successive missionaries.

Juan González de Mendoza (1545-1618), an Augustinian missionary, introduced Chinese language, characters and writing format to Europe in his *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reino de China* completed in 1585. González de Mendoza's view of Chinese language documents missionaries' general understanding on Chinese language, which represents the highest level of western sinology in this period. In this book, González de Mendoza (1998) claims that Chinese people do not use the same letters as Europeans, but ideographic characters. He introduces Chinese character in his book and insists that each Chinese characters has one special meaning, which will consequently take a long

² Fang - Shen 2017; Yu 2017.

³ Dong 2011.

time for the Chinese people to learn these characters. In addition, the order of writing Chinese characters and printing is from top to bottom, and the right to the left, which is contrary to the western way. He also finds that there are different dialects in China. People who use different dialects have to communicate in written language.

The Jesuit missionary Jose de Acosta (1540-1600) published *Historia natural and moral de las Indias* in 1590 in Sevilla on the history and culture of the New America, in which Chinese characters and language are introduced in one particular chapter to compare the relationship of Chinese from Latin as same as the difference of Greek from Latin. He realized the important Chinese language's characteristics of the combination of form and meaning, emphasizing that Chinese official language varies by spoken dialects. He also described that Chinese people express their meanings by playing dots, gestures or words in different places in the language.

The Dominican missionary Juan Cobo (1546-1593, also known as 高母羨 in Chinese) from Toledo, was sent to Manila from 1587 to 1588 for missionary work. He learned Minnan dialect and Chinese characters with local people and classified Chinese characters into four groups: ordinary characters, commonly-used characters, special characters, and independently-unrelated characters. His completion of *Arte de la lengua China* in Spanish was kept in the history of the Dominicans, however was lost without officially publishing⁴. In 1590, Juan Cobo translated his work *Espejo rico del corazón claro*, a collection of mottoes from Chinese sages into Castellano, aiming at strengthening the mutual understanding and respect between the West and the East, which is the first Chinese book translated from Chinese into western language.

In the 17th century, the Spanish missionaries left a large number of historical materials on Chinese language learning and research with their missionary works, along which 182 studies on Chinese language and dialects were completed in this period⁵. Francisco Díaz (1606-1646)'s *Vocabulario de letra China con la Explicación Castellana*, a dictionary contains 598 pages with 7160 Chinese characters, is arranged in the order of Latin alphabet and each character is marked with the pronunciation in the way of Latin alphabet. It was disseminated to Europe and preserved in the national library of Munich, Germany, and was later collected by the Jagielloński Library of Krakowie, Poland⁶. The Dominican Juan Bautista de Morales (1597-1664)'s *Gramática español-mandarina* and *Diccionario Chino-Español* collected in the Vatican Archives is his dedication to the Chinese lexical studies. Francisco Varó (1627-1687)'s *Arte de la lengua Mandarin* studies all the tones in Chinese mandarin and Pedro de la Piñuela's *Arte de la lengua China Sinica en Castellano y en chino* is the first Chinese grammar book printed in China.

The Dominican missionary Francisco Varo y Guerrero (1627-1687, also known as 万济国 in Chinese), worked as a missionary in China for 38 years until his death. His work *Arte de la lengua Mandarin*, completed in 1682, was translated by Pedro de la Piñuela (1650-1704) and printed in Guangzhou in 1703. *Arte de la lengua mandarin* analyzes Chinese Grammar with traditional Latin Grammar Structure, which is the first officially published Chinese grammar book in the world and an important book in the western history of Chinese language⁷. Varo who categorizes and describes Chinese vocabulary with Latin morphology, applies the conception of word classification into Chinese language. The book analyzes the grammatical rules of spoken Chinese language based on Nanjing dialect and documents the official Chinese language in the early Qing Dynasty, which is of great historical value on Chinese dialect studies. Varo also compiled *Vocabulario de lengua Mandarin*, a representative work of early Chinese Spanish dictionary. In order to facilitate missionary work in folk, *Gramatica español mandarína* and *Vocabulario de la lengua mandarina con el estilo y vocablos con que se habla sin elegancia* was completed with both Spanish and Chinese vocabulary listed correspondently, and a collection of Chinese spoken words.

From the late the 17th century to the early 18th century, Spain's global hegemony declined. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom subsequently occupied the entire Asian market. By the 18th century, emperor Kangxi determined to expel Catholic priests in China due to "the Rites Controversy" and new missionaries were forbidden to come to China. Spain was involved in the Napoleon war until 1839 and 30-year civil war which results in the loss of Spain's power of dominating the world since the end of the 15th century. Consequently, most missionaries were forced to move to remote areas of Fujian province, losing the access to the mainstream Chinese society and in-depth study of China. With their integration into Fujian lower classes, the interest in dialects studies aroused during this period and various works on phonetics and dialectology of Fujian province developed⁸.

Due to the war between Spain and the United States in 1898, missionary activities and Spanish sinology were transferred to Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 19th century⁹. Some missionaries, for instance, Miguel

⁴ Zhang 2017.

⁵ Dong 2011.

⁶ Dong 2011.

⁷ The earliest official language grammar comes from Dominican missionaries whose missionary works target on ordinary people who tend to use oral and folk language. Therefore, they put speaking and arguing skill in the first place so as to complete their missionary work. Varo described the modern Chinese language based on Nanjing dialect characterized as Minnan dialect, in which language problem is the center, focusing on speaking and listening. Yao, Xiaoping. (2003). "Chinese Language and Characters in Westerners' Eyes in the 16th to 19th Century". Language Science, Vol. 2, 1, 99-103.

⁸ Zhang 2017.

⁹ Taiwan has become the intermediary place before Spanish missionary came to inland China in 1626-1642 when Taiwan was dominated by Spain. It is also the center for Chinese language teaching and research where many missionaries who came from

Calderón (1808-1883), Cristóbal Plá (1832-1895), Juan Colom (1869-1934), Domingo Palau (1871-1933) and Santiago García (1865-1934) left dictionaries on Chinese southern dialects¹⁰. Their books with missionary characteristics on grammar, vocabulary, question and answers of religious doctrines are completed and used as references for Chinese language learning. In this period, De Aguilar (1861), who worked in the Spanish embassy, Hongkong, completed his worked *El Intérprete chino: colección de frases sencillas y analizadas para aprender el idioma oficial de China* after 13 years' dedication. This book contributed to the transformation of Chinese to modern pinyin, and was published in Madrid in 1861.

3. Chinese language research after the 20th century

In 1899, the member of the parliament and professor of History M. Morayta y Sagrario set a bill before the Spanish Congreso de los Diputados (House of Commons) to create three chairs of oriental languages in the Universidad Central of Madrid. This was the most serious attempt to create a Spanish academic field of studies on Orientalism in the 19th century. In the article, precedents for the creation of a scientific Oriental linguistic discipline in Spain and the causes of its limited presence in Universities are analysed. The author considers that it should be attributed rather to the scarce number of professional historians in the country and to the orientation towards the Magreb of the Spanish colonialism than to the lack of interest on these civilizations. The detail of the bill's text are examined, specially its pretension to instruct young persons in European Faculties to prepare them for organizing a school of Oriental languages when they came back to their posts, and its immediate academic and legislative consequences. As a conclusion it is stated that it is through official academic institutions –and not through private ones– that Spanish Orientalism is sprouting in the last decades in the path pretended by M. Morayta's objectives¹¹.

The frustrated attempt to establish a Chinese language chair at the University of Madrid in 1900 is a significant event highlighting the evolution of Oriental studies in Spain. This episode underscores the delay of over a hundred years for the implementation of Chinese language studies at this academic institution. Currently, thanks to the work of Dr. Consuelo Marco Martínez at the Complutense University of Madrid, progress has been made in this field. The reference to this failed attempt in 1900 at the University of Madrid adds an interesting nuance to the debate about the introduction of Chinese language studies in the Spanish university setting.

Since the late 1950s, and in particular in 1973, diplomatic relations between China and Spain which had been broken off were resumed, during this period, Spanish sinologists has to work under very difficult conditions. In order to have a clear understanding the situation of Chinese language studies after 20th century, this article uses bibliometric method to analyze the number of literatures, annual trends of publications, research topics, important researchers and their achievement between 1972-2021 based on Spanish database, *Dialnet*. Descriptive analysis of literatures is applied to reveal the process of development, research focus and researcher distribution in Spain. The study provides an effective quantitative basis for the further reference of the theory and practice, and academic trends of Chinese language research in the provided field¹².

3.1. Data collection

Using *Dialnet*, a web-based statistical database developed by Universidad de Rioja in Spain as a source, the author puts in keywords “*lengua china*”, “*idioma chino*” and “*español y chino*”, in order to find out the characteristics, research topics, key researchers, and trend of Chinese language study as a whole. The literature was collected from 1972 to August 31, 2021. Data collection includes the following steps. Firstly, after obtaining the literature retrieval data in *Dialnet* database, those which are not related to Chinese language studies is manually eliminated through reading, and a total of 782 studies are obtained. Among them, journal article (48%), monographs (10%), editorial and book articles (14%), doctoral thesis (28%) are collected, 85% published in Spanish, 12% published in English, and 3% published in other languages. Secondly, download the information including the title, author, affiliation, and keywords. An analysis of annual trends, research topics, researchers and prolific authors is conducted based on the data collection in order to find out the characteristics of Chinese language research in contemporary Spain.

3.2. Findings and analysis

3.2.1. Annual trends in the publication of “Chinese language studies” in Spain

The number and changing trend of scientific papers can reflect the development level and speed of a discipline or research field in a certain period of time. At the beginning of the birth of a discipline, the number of publications is in unstable growth stage and the number of publications reaches an exponential stage means the development of this discipline comes. The number of publications to some extent reflects the development of the discipline and the annual publication reveals the developing trend of this discipline.

Philippine was trained to adapt to Chinese life and language before they went to inland China. Zhang 2017: 221.

¹⁰ Ramón Álvarez 2007.

¹¹ Molinero Polo 2011.

¹² Molinero Polo 2011.

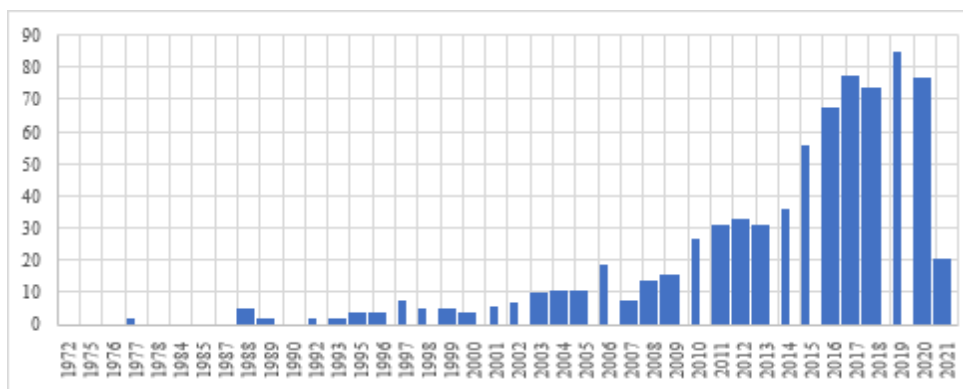


Figure 1. Annual trends of publications. Author's own work

Examining the number of the published literatures as shown in the figure1, it is found that until the end of the 20th century, the number of results on Chinese language studies remains stably low. The figure of research increases significantly after 2010. In recent five years, the number of publications shows a double growth trend and the annual publication on average is 19.25. In 2019, before the Covid 19 pandemic, the publication reaches to the peak through 50 years. The linguists¹³ from Taiwan, first describe Chinese phonetics in a Romanized way that have been documented in Dialnet, including the description of Chinese consonants, vowels, tones and syllables. A clear result shows that Chinese language studies as an academic area is relatively a new academic area in Spain, has not been paid enough attention to only since the 2010s, however, shows a rising trend and rapid increase in the publication amount in recent five years. It develops with the revival and reestablishment of China studies or new Spanish sinology¹⁴.

3.2.2. Research topics in Chinese language studies

Research topics are the those discussed jointly by a certain discipline or field for a period of time. Keywords are the core of the article, is the high generalization and concise analysis that define a discipline or a field. Through the analysis of data collected, the hot topics of Chinese language studies in Spanish databased is discovered as shown in table 1.

No.	Keyword	Frequency	Centrality	No.	Keywords	Frequency	Centrality
1	chino	231	0.51	6	extranjera	85	0.41
2	español	202	0.49	7	idioma	70	0.17
3	comparativo	192	0.47	8	traducción	65	0.32
4	enseñanza	90	0.22	9	Contrastivo	42	0.11
5	lengua	89	0.22	10	estudio	30	0.09

Table 1. Keywords with high frequency in Dialnet on Chinese language studies (1972-2021). Author's own work.

The keywords with high frequency indicates five main topics in Chinese language studies: teaching Spanish as foreign language (*enseñanza de español como lengua extranjera*), Chinese language study (*estudio lengua china*), Chinese-Spanish translation (*traducción chino-español*), teaching Chinese as foreign language (*enseñanza de chino como lengua extranjera*), comparative study of Chinese and Spanish language (*estudio comparativo chino-español*), not only reflect the topic of Chinese language research, but also reflect the hot issues of Chinese language research, among which, the proportion of teaching Spanish as foreign language is the highest.

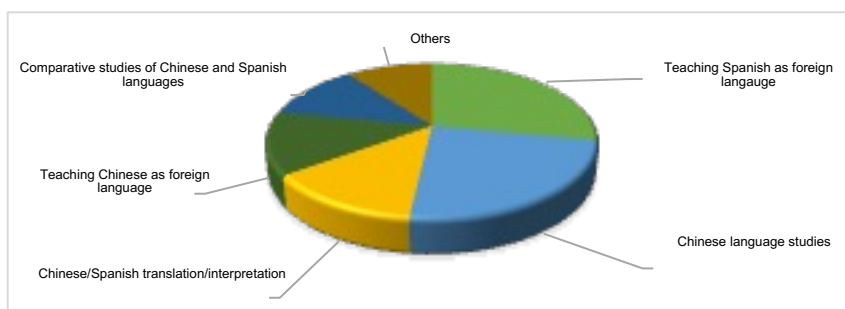


Figure 2. Research Topics in Chinese language studies in Dialnet. Author's own work.

¹³ Wang 1972; Fernando 1975.

¹⁴ Li - Ramírez-Ruiz 2019.

The practice and research on Language teaching concerning teaching Spanish as foreign language study is obviously the most important area in terms of research topic, which as shown in Figure 2, accounts for 28%. The studies on Chinese language (24%) and teaching (13%) accounts for 37%. After the 21st century, with the increase in the number of Chinese overseas students in Spain, the scope and depth of Spanish language teaching studies, especially for Chinese students, have been continuously strengthened in the world of academy. Understanding the main problems of Chinese students' learning Spanish language in all aspects cannot avoid the analysis and studies of Chinese language and culture, thus results in the fact that the publication proportion of teaching English as foreign language is the highest. These achievements include both empirical studies from Spanish scholars in teaching practice and a large number of Chinese scholars who have overseas experience of learning and working in Spain.

Secondly, on the study of Chinese language, it is found that in addition to the ontological studies of Chinese linguistics, the sub-topics like minority languages, dialects, the contact of Chinese-Spanish history in related to Spanish missionaries in China, and studies of language studies from cultural perspective, which are in relation to language issues in Spain has also aroused researchers' attention. And these topics tend to be more attractive in the perspective of comparison. For instance, Spanish scholars are interested in minority language and dialects in China due to the similar situation that multilingualism and multiculturalism are highly encouraged in Spain. Mutual historical integration between the two countries promotes the language studies from the perspective of sinology.

Thirdly, in essence, the number of Chinese-Spanish translation studies include literature translation, cultural translation and language comparison has far gone beyond the data that has been shown if examined from the perspective of translation independently. The 13% of translation studies in related with Chinese language studies has been found in this study only in terms of those publications that are closely related to language issues.

Fourthly, in terms of teaching Chinese as foreign language, language policy, minority language and the standardization of Chinese in relation to teaching are mainly examined. Furthermore, the proportion of comparative studies of Chinese and Spanish language is basically the same as translation studies and education studies. The young researchers and doctoral candidates from China, who achieve their development with the establishment of discipline and Bachelor degree of Spanish language and literature in scores of Chinese universities in recent ten years, have become the main force in the field of studies on comparative study of Chinese-Spanish language, translation, and language teaching. Furthermore, Spanish is officially included in college entrance exam by the Ministry of Education since 2018 has also strengthened the significance of Spanish language research and teaching in China. A cross-disciplinary research trend on Chinese language studies in combination with linguistics, translation, culture and teaching is conspicuous and conductive, is now being fulfilled by more and more scholars in both China and Spain. Finally, the 10% of the result of other languages with Chinese studies, such as English, Japanese, Russian, Vietnamese, which account "others".

3.2.3. Authorship of Chinese language studies

Publication on Chinese language studies in Dialnet does not only contain the author from Spain, but also from China and other countries, some co-worked by the authors from the two countries, which has indicated the internationalization of academy in research area. Cooperative research is an important way to knowledge and literature sharing and exchange, playing a prominent role in the interdisciplinary study and problem solving. International scientific cooperation giving consideration to multi-countries' situation, promoting quality, influence and quantity of scientific research, is especially beneficial for comparative language studies among countries.

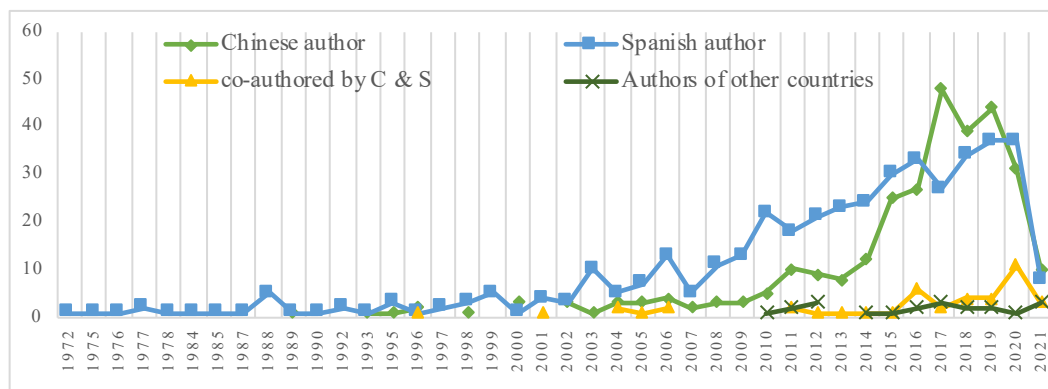


Figure 3. Authors of Chinese language studies in Dialnet. Author's own work.

In terms of the authors of Chinese studies in Dialnet database, they are mainly divided into four categories: Spanish authors account for 54%; Chinese authors 38%, the cooperative publication of Chinese and Spanish authors account for 6%, another 2% are authors from other countries. From the data collected from Dialnet database every year, the number of Chinese and Spanish scholars' publication results shows an upward

trend. After 2010, the number of publications by Chinese and Spanish increases dramatically and reaches the highest value in 2017 and 2020 respectively. Chinese scholars publish more papers than the Spanish correspondents for the first time in 2017. This result shows that, on the one hand, with the internationalization of China's academy, the research on China issues, specifically, Chinese language studies have aroused the international academic attention. Thus, Chinese language study is an unavoidable topic in language research. More and more Chinese scholars' research have been recognized by the academic world of Spanish-speaking countries. Second, more overseas students in Spain, especially doctoral candidates, make their contribution on Chinese language studies, such as Sino-Spanish comparison, teaching Spanish as foreign language, Chinese-Spanish translation, and teaching Chinese as foreign language. Furthermore, Chinese and Spanish scholars tend to cooperate in recent years, which indicate that the exchanges and international studies between China and Spain are moving in a positive direction in the field of Chinese language studies.

Scholar's research interest and direction are generally fixed; therefore, the researchers with fixed academic directions in a certain field play an indispensable role in the research of this discipline, and their research content win extensive attention from other researchers in the field. Certain factors are investigated in this study to find out the academic influence of these key scholars in Chinese language studies, such as the number of papers published by authors, the citations, the knowledge area, the publication period, the institutions they work for, and the cooperation among them and so forth.

	Publications	Citations	Knowledge area	Period	Institutions ¹⁵
María Querol Bataller	42	24	Language Study and teaching	2005-2019	UCVVM
Sara Rovira Esteva	39	18	East Asia studies	1998-2020	UAB
Pedro San Ginés	33	3	Linguistics	1988-2020	UG
Javier Martín Ríos	32	1	East Asia studies	2001-2020	UG
Mireia Vargas Urpí	28	26	Translating and interpreting	2010-2020	UAB
María Consuelo Marco Martínez	26	5	East Asia studies	1987-2020	UCM
Helena Casas-Tost	25	7	Translating and interpreting	2007-2020	UAB
Juan José Ciruela Alférez	22		Language Study and teaching	1999-2020	UG
Gonzalo Miranda Márquez	11		Linguistics	2013-2021	US
Isabel María Balsas Ureña	6		Language teaching	2018-2020	UG

Table 2: Prolific authors of Chinese language education and studies based on Dialnet. Author's own work.

Contemporary Spanish scholars engaged in Chinese language teaching and studies begin from University of Granada in 1978, followed by Autonomous University of Barcelona ten years later¹⁶. Since 2000, the number of undergraduate degrees offering China-related studies in Spain has increased and diversified, providing multidisciplinary programs closely associated with social science than language, such as Autonomous University of Madrid, Complutense University of Madrid, University of Seville, and Catholic University of Valencia. María Querol Bataller has most of her works published in language study and teaching, followed by Sara Rovira-Esteva, Pedro San Ginés, María Consuelo Marco Martínez, Helena Casas-Tost, Juan José Ciruela Alferez, Gonzalo Miranda Márquez and Isabel María Balsas Ureña, they are the representative figures of current Chinese language studies in Spain. It can be seen from Table 2 that nine authors with more than five papers, indicating that there are few scholars in this field, among whom, María Querol Bataller has the most achievements and the highest citation rate, who is currently focusing on pragmatic studies of Chinese language with modern linguistic theory. The representative scholars of Chinese academy in Spanish have experienced the process from attaching importance to the study of Chinese ontology in the early stage of their studies, and gradually combining the field of Chinese-Spanish language comparison, Chinese language acquisition, Chinese language teaching and Chinese-Spanish translation. As can be seen from table 2, even the authors occur in the top list of Spanish researchers in the field of Chinese language studies; some of them may not only constrain their research within language study, but also extend to a broader sense of East Asian studies. This vision has indicated that on the one hand, language studies is always the basis of sinology

¹⁵ UCVVM: Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir; UAB: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; UCM: Universidad Complutense de Madrid; UG: Universidad de Granada; US: Universidad de Sevilla.

¹⁶ Casas-Tost 2008.

studies, China studies in relation to language, translation, culture and literature studies are the academic extension of paradigms.

4. Research and publications in Chinese language

4.1. Lexicography

Chinese-Spanish dictionaries compiled in the 20th century have become an important tool to promote the cultural exchange and spread of Chinese language in a wider Spanish-speaking world. In the first half of the 20th century, the Jesuit missionaries published 33 dictionaries in Chinese-Latin, Chinese-French, Chinese-English, Chinese-Hungarian and Chinese-Spanish with the help of Chinese experts from different countries. Many Spanish scholars devoted themselves to Chinese lexicography, such as Francisco Piñol y Andreu *Diccionario chino-español del dialecto de Amoy*, published in 1937 in Hongkong; Ramón Colomer (1865-1906)'s *Diccionario tónico sínico-español*, and Jaime Masip (1865-1906)'s *Gramática del idioma mandarín*. Carmelo Elorduy (1901-1989, also known as 杜善牧 in Chinese), among all the missionaries, has the most prominent achievement in lexicography. He began to learn Chinese when arrived at Wuhu in 1926 and moved to Taiwan in the 1950s. Carmelo participated in dictionary compilation, including *Dictionnaire française de la langue chinoise* (1976), and *Diccionario español de la lengua china* (1977), which was awarded as “Premio al libro mejor editado en España” (Best Publishing in Spain) in 1978. He also translated a series of ancient classical works into Spanish when he went back to Spain in 1959 for the sake of health, like *Tao Te Ching*, *Zhuangzi*, *The Book of Songs*, *The Book of Changes*. Another Jesuit, Fernando Mateos, the chief-editor, was responsible for revision and typesetting for *Diccionario español de la lengua china* (1977). *Diccionario chino de la lengua española* (1986) was completed by Fernando Mateos with his editorial team composed of Chinese and Spanish native speakers. Fernando Mateos also assisted Carmelo Elorduy for preface writing, editing and publication of his last translation work *Mozi*.

Since the late 1950s, especially after the resumption of diplomatic relations between China and Spain in 1973, Spanish Sinology comes to a new era. Before the 19th century, the books on language learning and dictionary compilation which provide basic grammar rules and daily vocabularies for the newly-arrived missionaries were very important; while after 1950, more books published are for the Chinese students to study Spanish or Spanish speakers' learning Chinese in recent years. These dictionaries include Antonio López's *et al.*'s *Nuevo diccionario español-chino* (1982), José Ramón Álvarez's *Diccionario manual español-chino* (1984), Sara Rovira's *Diccionari de Mesuradors Xinesos* (1998), Sun Yizhen's *Nuevo diccionario chino-español* (1999), Zhou Minkang's *Diccionari Català-Xinès/Xinès-Català* (1999), Wang Liushuan's *Pequeño diccionario de términos científicos y técnicos español-chino* (1999), Ni Huadi & Rafael E. Solá's *Diccionario de argot español-chino* (2000), and Sun Xianshun's *Diccionario de americanismos* (2001).

Spanish contemporary linguists in Chinese language studies also present their research interest in lexicography studies. Consuelo Marco (1991; 1992) demonstrates morphological characteristics of Chinese language in her early studies. Starts from deverbal nouns (2008; 2009) in Spanish language, María Querol (2010) identifies the nominal meaning and the different interpretation in nominal phrases by Chinese and Spanish speakers from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. She did further comparative studies between the two language and extended her interest lexical-pragmatic-discourse studies. Helena Casas-Tost (2007; 2008) starts from Chinese and Spanish onomatopoeia, Chinese verbs teaching and transferred to Chinese-Spanish translation and Chinese language education in Spain in a more practical field.

4.2. Phonetics Studies

Jose Ramón Álvarez (also known as 雷孟笃 in Chinese) from Fu Jen Catholic University, completes his *Pronunciación del chino hablado (putonghua) para hispanohablantes* (2000), introducing Chinese phonetic system and clarifying the difference of phonetic system between Chinese and Spanish language. The books provide phonetic references for the Spanish native speakers to learn Chinese language with a large number of examples. Maximiliano Cortes's *Fonología China* (2009) describes the phonetic problems encountered by Spanish native speakers in learning Chinese, and sorts out the statements, questions and emphatic meanings of Chinese vowels, consonants, syllables, tones and stresses by means of comparison. Fisac (1985) from Eastern Asian Studies Center, Autonomous University of Madrid in her article *La estructura fonológica de la lengua china: introducción al estudio de los tonos* illustrates the Chinese tones.

4.3. Grammar studies

María Consuelo Marco Martínez (also known as 马康淑 in Chinese) starts her research with *La categoría de aspecto verbal y su manifestación en la lengua china*, classifying Chinese into imperfective aspect and perfective aspect, and describes the aspect characteristics of Chinese verbs. Her early studies on morpheme and aspects in Chinese language (1988; 1989; 1990; 1991) reflect that the first batch of contemporary researchers in the field of Chinese language studies in Spain tend to adopt structural analysis when describe Chinese grammatical characteristics, by comparing with European, American and Asian languages. Later on, Spanish linguists study in a more comprehensive way, such as Fisac (1993)'s *Aproximación al análisis sintáctico y semántico de la oración simple en la lengua china*, Consuelo Marco and Wang-Tang Lee's

Gramática de la lengua China (1998), Xu Zenghui and Zhou Minkang's *Gramática China*, Liao Yanping and Li Jie's *Introducción a la gramática China* (2007).

4.4. Character studies

Pedro San Ginés *Guía del trotamundos de China* (1997) published by Gaesa in Madrid unifies all the Chinese place names in pinyin, solving the problem of previous name confusion between Roman alphabets and Chinese. Paloma Fadón's *Breve historia de la caligrafía China* (2001) and *Manual práctico de caligrafía oriental* (2005) introduce the historical changes of Chinese character and calligraphy. Consuelo Marco and Wang-Tang Lee's *La Escritura China y sus Duendes: 214 Claves o Radicales para Comprender el Mundo de los Caracteres y el Espíritu de China* (2000) summarizes the semantic meanings of all Chinese radicals. Alicia Relinque' *La escritura china y las mujeres: del origen del mundo a la sumisión* (2005) argues the relationship between Chinese character writing and change of Chinese women's social status from the perspective and history and sociology.

4.5. Teaching Chinese as foreign language

4.5.1. Establishment of Chinese language course and rise of sinology

In early 20th century, all levels of education in Spain are seriously affected by Catholicism. The Church regards foreign language learning in higher education as “dangerous and ridiculous, untimely destruction of authority”¹⁷. Until 1934, with the implementation of education reform in the Second Republic of Spain, French and other foreign languages began to enter the Spanish education system, and modern linguistics disciplines were created in colleges and universities. However, Spanish foreign language education in this period did not receive enough attention. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) stalled the study of modern Spanish language that had just been established. Until the end of the war, Chinese language teaching was first incorporated into the Spanish foreign language teaching curriculum in 1965. Spanish public universities set up East-Asian research center and provided the bachelor, master and doctoral programs for China studies until the late 1970s. Since then on, a change from “Spanish sinology” to “China study” has become an irreversible disciplinary turn, when the setting up of research direction of Chinese language and culture and Chinese-Spanish translation has been realized. As early as 1978, the University of Granada opened the first Chinese course in School of translation, establishing an important foundation for the development of sinology in this university (Li & Ramírez-Ruiz, 2019). In addition, master programs in translation studies, including the courses of “Chinese character writing and language studies”, “modern Chinese vocabulary and Chinese language teaching methodology”, “Chinese literature and culture” were provided in East-Asian research official program. In 1989, Autonomous University of Barcelona first offered Chinese-related Bachelor program, involving Chinese language as compulsory course in translation studies. The university also offers bachelor, master and doctor's degree in the field of East-Asian studies. Autonomous University of Madrid founded the East-Asian research center in 1992, aiming at enhancing the studies and teaching in the social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and political fields of East-Asian countries, China included (Li & Ramírez-Ruiz, 2020). Moreover, University of Valencia, University of Basque Country, University of Pompeu Fabra initiated China studies as first-level discipline, separating China studies from the framework of East-Asian Studies. Pontifical University of Comillas, University of Granada and Autonomous University of Barcelona offer master degree in Chinese language education. 16 universities, such as Complutense University of Madrid, University of Sevilla, University of Málaga and University of Salamanca offer bachelor and master degree in Chinese language studies.

4.5.2. Studies on Chinese language teaching

The studies on teaching Chinese language as foreign language, due to the foreign language education policy, started relatively late in Spain. These studies are based on the description of Chinese language, and the comparison between Chinese and local language. Consuelo Marco dedicated in Chinese language teaching since 1990s, publishing her works *Gramática de chino para hispanohablantes I & II* (2007), *Chino para españoles* (2007). In order to find the corresponding level of *Chinese Shuiping Kaoshi*¹⁸ (HSK) and adapt to the common reference framework of European languages in concerning with Spanish learners, She engages in exploration of adaptability of Chinese language teaching in the aspects of content, textbooks, syllabus, curriculum design in combination of Spanish context in her works like *Chino para españoles: adaptación del léxico y de las situaciones comunicativas del HSK al Marco Común Europeo* (2007) and *Objetivos lingüísticos de la enseñanza del chino. Nivel B1 dentro del MCER* (2013). In *La lingüística no tiene quien le escribe o 10 años de soledad. Condiciones para la investigación en lingüística china en España* (2007), *La estructura temática en chino y español* (2016), *Mapping Chinese language pedagogy from 1966*

¹⁷ Zhang 2001.

¹⁸ “Chinese Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK)” translates to “Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK)” in English. It is an internationally standardized exam designed to assess and certify proficiency in Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language. The exam is divided into six levels, from HSK 1, which evaluates basic Chinese communication skills, to HSK 6, which assesses advanced comprehension and expression abilities in the language. This certification is globally recognized and useful for individuals seeking to study or work in environments where Mandarin is required as the language of communication.

to 2013 (2015) and *Chinese linguistics in Spain: Encyclopedia of Chinese language and linguistics* (2015), Sara Rovira compared Chinese language with Spanish, proposing their teaching methodology concerning the similarities and differences of the two languages. *New models, old patterns? The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for language for Chinese linguistics and education* (2014), co-worked by Helena Casas-Tost and Sara Rovira-Esteva and *La adaptación de Chino al MCER en España* (2018) argues that CEFR guided by the Eurocentrism does not take the basic characteristics of East Asian languages, especially Chinese language into consideration. Chinese language learners in Spain show difference on acquisition of Chinese language from acquiring other European languages in terms of character, phonetic and cultural basis. There are clearly discrepancies in terms of standards or even linguistic forms of Chinese between newly developed syllabus, teaching materials and exams. These relate to organic development of the learning and teaching of Chinese language locally, often referred to as localization, which is in fact critical in mainstreaming the Chinese language learning and teaching in the local formal education system, and important step towards the ultimate goals of international Chinese education. The researchers put great emphasis on how important CEFR has to be consistent to the localization of Chinese language in Spain.

Moreover, University of Granada, as the first university set up Chinese courses in Spain has made distinctive achievements in Chinese teaching and research. Isabel María Balsas Ureña's *40 años de enseñanza de chino como lengua extranjera en España* (2018) introduces the evolution of teaching methodologies in Chinese teaching in Spain on the basis of reviewing Chinese language teaching history. Gonzalo Miranda Márquez's *Características representativas de la escritura china y estrategias para su aprendizaje y enseñanza* summarizes the uniqueness of Chinese language and the relationship between the Chinese philosophical and cultural factor in classic translation, pointing out that Chinese language learners' writing, information reception and understanding, and utilization of memory should be taken into account. Antonio Pamies Betrán' *La Fraseología a través de su terminología* summarized a glossary of linguistic terms in Chinese, defining and illustrating those rare phrases, proverbs and idioms, which provide a basic tool for the beginners to acquire Chinese language. Juan Jose Ciruela's *El uso de radicales en el aprendizaje de la escritura china* introduces the methods of Chinese characters teaching, examining the acquisition sequency of Chinese character's shape, pinyin and writing for Chinese native children, which provides an important reference to Chinese characters learning and teaching.

4.6. Discourse studies and others

Three aspects concerning relationship between discourse and social practice are included: (1) Interpreting services for Chinese immigrants; (2) Standard Chinese and dialects; (3) Chinese language policy and minority language protection and cultural diversity.

First, the studies concerning interpretation in Chinese community include Francisco Raga and Enric Sánchez's *La problemática de la toma de turnos en la comunicación intercultural* (1999), Mireia Vargas Urpi's *La interpretación en los servicios públicos para el colectivo chino en el contexto catalán* (2010) and *La traducción escrita en el ámbito de los servicios públicos: análisis exploratorio de los materiales online para la comunidad china de Cataluña* (2011).

Furthermore, standardization of Mandarin also draws attention. José Cuadrado's *La creación de la lengua común (putonghua) en la República Popular China* (2000), and *El proceso de estandarización de las variedades escritas de las lenguas chinas desde la Antigüedad hasta la fundación de la República de China [1912] (2002)*, introduces the concept of "Chinese" and situation of multi-ethnicity and multi-language in China, and standardization history of Chinese language and the formation of Mandarin. Elena Garayzabal and Jianfeng Zhang's *China y España, lengua y dialecto: mismos términos, significados diferentes* (2006) and Helena Casas-Tost and Sara Rovira's *Orientalismo y occidentalismo: dos fuerzas subyacentes en la imagen y la construcción de la lengua china* (2008) analyze the characteristics of Chinese language in the oriental discourse system. *Lengua y Escritura Chinas: Mitos y realidades* (2010) completed by Sara Rovira, analyzes the phonetic, grammatical and lexical characteristics of Chinese, introducing the history and evolution of Chinese standard language, and pointing out the relativity of Chinese standard language, the complexity of written and oral form in Chinese and varieties of Mandarin in different regions. María Querol's *Analógicas y diferencias en la creación del chino y español estándar* (2009) compares the history, selection, standardization and naming differences of standard language between China and Spain, and explains the mutual influence between mandarin and dialect.

Thirdly, Spanish scholars' concerning about minority language policy origins from the fact that Spain faces similar problems with ethnic language diversity as China does. Out of same academic concerns, scholars tend to investigate those similar situations reflected in their own country and target country. Michael Prosser' *La política lingüística en China. Dos casos del suroeste del país* (2006) discusses the relationship of language policy and standardization of language between Chinese and Spanish. His thesis explains the similarity of "multi-ethnicity" and "multi-language" situation between China and Spain, and affirms the policy of language protection and cultural diversity of Chinese minority language. Consuelo Marco (2007) reflects the contradiction between economic development of population aging and language inheritance, and analyzes the reality that some minority languages in China are on the verge of extinction due to the development of social economy.

5. Discussions

5.1. Chinese: the “other” in the western language world

In the past hundreds of years, Spanish sinologists focused on Chinese language studies in the fields of lexicography, textbooks, grammar books, characters studies and language comparison studies. Chinese language entered the horizon of Spanish missionaries for the first time, which brings a new language type to the western linguistics and has a profound impact on the world language research based on the view of Indo-European language. In a sense, it is due to such an “other” language that the world linguists form a more open and comprehensive vision toward the history of world languages¹⁹. Martin Rada’s earliest negative comments on Chinese language: “Their words are the least enlightened and the most difficult because they are characters rather than words. Every word has different character and a person cannot read Chinese even if he has known ten thousand characters.” Although this argument is exaggerating and emotional, it does reflect the early Spanish missionaries’ general views toward Chinese language. Even has been lived in China for many years, Matteo Ricci’s comments on Chinese spoken language is not high and the missionaries’ understanding dilemma relies on the blaming of the unclear pronunciation of Chinese²⁰, emphasizing that learning to read and write Chinese characters also take a lot of time, resulting in the complaint of the language barrier obstacles the understanding of real China²¹. Some of these statements have been repeated and exaggerated in Europe in the following centuries. These views represented the early Chinese view of missionaries in China, but even so, Spanish missionaries continued their exploration and research on Chinese phonology, dictionaries and grammar. From complaining to objective reasoning, although it is difficult to get rid of stereotypes, they are still trying to describe language in a relatively objective way. Varo’s *Arte de la lengua mandarín*, embodies the concepts and methods of early western missionaries learning Chinese²², which was studied, referred and translated into many languages and spread in the west²³. With the deepening of Chinese research and development of western linguistic theories, and social sciences, the Chinese Latin alphabet scheme is widely used in language description. The phonetics, Chinese grammar and bilingual linguistic historical materials are of special value to the Chinese linguistic studies. They promote the exchange of Chinese and western thoughts and language contacts, encountered difficulty in Chinese language learning, identification of Chinese phonemes and the recognition of Chinese character. They acquired and documented Chinese by listening and imitating when there was no modern scientific and technological assistance²⁴.

5.2. Characteristics of Spanish missionaries’ Chinese learning

Early Spanish missionaries’ identity and missions decide that they have to pay equal attention to both “spoken” and “written” forms when learning Chinese. Missionaries acquire fluent spoken and written Chinese, which is conducive to their understanding of Chinese knowledge as well as to deliver their religious thoughts to Chinese people from lower class. In addition, it is essential to find out the base of missionary thoughts from Chinese classics, therefore the acquisition of written Chinese has also been emphasized²⁵. The Catholic missionary goals in China varied among different branches, missionaries’ language learning methods are therefore different. The Jesuit attaches great importance to the missionary work among the Chinese intellectuals in higher class, emphasizing the study of official language and traditional classics, and focusing on the translation and introduction of Chinese classical works. The Dominican, has long been conducted sermons among the lower class in the southeast coast of China, forming a tradition of sermon in local dialects and oral skills, and leaving a great number of dictionaries and grammar books on Minnan dialect²⁶. From the perspective of European linguistics, it is Jesuits who came to East Asia, thus started the history of formal learning and studying Chinese among Spaniards under the background of classical Latin grammar tradition and universal rationalism. Missionaries tried to use Latin a to annotate, spell and write Chinese characters for conveniences. At the same time, the concept, category and framework of Spanish and Latin grammar were used to describe and summarize Chinese grammatical rules, and the framed grammatical system is drafted, thus improving the positive contact between Spanish and Chinese language, producing mutual understanding and influence, and establishing an important stage of the spread of Chinese language around the whole world.

¹⁹ Li 2017.

²⁰ Yao 2011.

²¹ Zhang 2001.

²² Geng 2018.

²³ Breitenbach 1996.

²⁴ Chen – Shao 2019.

²⁵ Yu 2017.

²⁶ Li 2017.

5.3. Valuable materials for southern Chinese dialects studies

Southern Chinese dialects has to some extent reflected the early Spanish missionaries' traces in China. These studies enrich the historical literature of Chinese dialect research, and have important historical value and reference significance for examining the dialect characteristics in the southeast coastal areas of China. Early missionaries did not rigidly adhere to the study of Mandarin, but turned their eyes to the more complex and broad Chinese dialects, such as Martin de Rada's *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua China*, and Pedro Chirino (1557-1635)'s *Diccionario de español y chino*, completed roughly between 1595 and 1602, collects 966 Chinese words with corresponding phonetic annotation in Minnan dialect and explanation in Castellano (Federico, 2005). Varo's *Arte de la lengua mandarína*, based on Nanjing dialect, and Francisco Pinol (1928)'s *Diccionario Chino-español. Del dialecto de Amoy, Chiang-chiu, Choan-Chiu, Formosa*, based on Amoy (Xiamen) dialect, both documented, described and studied the dialects in the coastal areas of China, which even surpassed Chinese scholars and other academic works around the whole world, in the same period in terms of breadth, and depth. They are of great value to the study of modern Chinese and western academic exchanges, Chinese Christian history, Chinese dialectology and dialectology history. These pioneering studies originate from the Spanish missionaries' exploration of southern Chinese dialects, provide materials and important reference for the study of Chinese dialects, and open up a new way for the spread of Chinese in Spain and even throughout Europe. The use and research of missionaries' historical documents establish a new field in the study of Chinese history, providing relatively comprehensive data for the study of regional dialect, and has great reference value for the study of modern Chinese dialects.

5.4. Coordinated development of Chinese language education and Chinese studies

After the 20th century, Chinese language researchers in Spain are first and foremost language learners, studying in China or in Europe and America in their early ages, obtaining a doctorate in the field of sinology, and engaged in scientific research in Spanish universities after returning homeland and start their academic research in the field of Chinese language. All of their early Chinese studies focused on systematically description of Chinese from phonetics, vocabulary, grammar or discourse, and in the process of constantly reflecting on the differences between Chinese and Spanish languages, they summarize the basic characteristics and teaching methods for Spanish-speaking students to acquire Chinese. A comprehensive and systematic description and comparison has been widely used which are guided by structural, functional and cognitive linguistic theory. They illustrate the basic features of Chinese language in the frame and reference of European languages, which laid an important foundation for the study of Chinese in the contemporary world.

On the other hand of the issue, the number of Chinese language studies which focuses exclusively on Chinese language studies and education is very limited. Graduate courses in East Asian Studies, Chinese-Spanish translation and interpretation, teaching Chinese as foreign language which aims mainly at professional orientation rather than academic pursuits have been set up through the whole country, resulting in no substantial increase in academic research output related to Chinese language studies in the past decades²⁷. Additionally, the studies of Chinese language, to great extent, depend on local academic interest and cannot be separated from the feedback of local academy, that is, the study of Spanish as foreign language, as shown in the topics research in the above points. A large number of studies in this field are in relation to those reflections on teaching Spanish language to native Chinese speakers. Scholars in Chinese language studies relate their interest to localized language teaching, seeking for methodological and ideological source of research, such as the theories emerged in the west in the 20th century, formalism, structuralism, cognitions, new historicism and deconstruction, are used to analyze Chinese language and culture. Thirdly, similar views have been proposed is that the late start of contemporary Spanish Chinese education and loose connection between theory construction and practical experience Chinese language studies, has resulted in the problems in teaching materials, outlines, methodologies, and teacher training.

Individual scholars put forward suggestions of adjustment to the academy of Spanish foreign language education research, emphasizing the significance of teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language in Spain. The rising characteristics of Chinese education in Spanish higher education, basic education and private Chinese education has demonstrated the great potential driving force in the new era, and has shown an urge to the development of linguistic and empirical studies. Chinese language education, with the influence of historical background and realistic factors such as the rise of China, the closer exchange between China and Spain, the revival of new Spanish sinology, has been included by the national education system in certain communities. Chinese language education in Spain is undergoing a process of disciplinary, institutionalization, multi-level and localization. These studies are out of the comparison of Spanish tradition and local reflection. The occurrence of contemporary Spanish sinologist, as learners, educators, researchers and communicators, constantly apply their research methods of Indo-European languages into the comparative study and translation of Chinese and Spanish languages, introducing Chinese classics into Spanish world. Their research on Chinese language pays more attention to the language teaching, and the tendency of international cooperation is increasingly prevalent.

²⁷ Rovira-Esteva 2015.

6. Conclusions

Spanish sinology is closely linked to the study of the Chinese language from its origin. Not in vain were the missionaries sent by the Catholic monarchy to China who laid the foundations of European sinology and the methods of the linguistic study of the Chinese language in the West. The Spanish missionaries had a profound influence on the development of Chinese linguistic studies, being at the base or the origin of the establishment of the grammatical system of the Chinese language; the creation of pinyin; the expansion of vocabulary and the arrangement of the syntactic structure of the Chinese language. Furthermore, they paid the same attention to the “spoken” forms as to the “written” ones. The Dominicans focused on the lower class and southern dialects, spoken. The Jesuits focused on the upper classes, Chinese classics (written), and the formal language. Its influence is still palpable today, despite the fact that most of the original studies have been lost.

However, the elimination of Spain as a world power meant the disappearance of its sinology. This was reborn in the twentieth century, especially as a result of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1973 and was greatly enhanced by the “Rise of China” after the “Reform and Opening up” process. Standardized Chinese studies in Spain began in the 1970s at the University of Granada; it was followed, already in the 90s, by the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Autonomous University of Madrid. Finally, the universities of Valencia, the Basque Country and Pompeu Fabra were the ones that made Chinese studies independent from those of East Asia.

The data-driven bibliometric study provides a map of Chinese language studies in Spain by offering a general picture of its diachronic development and current trends that can be of value for anyone who are interested in the related field. This article depicted can also constitute the starting point in the design of a more rational and agreed upon research agenda that can help us understand how Chinese language was disseminated and studied, and bridge the gap of this related issue. Based on Dialnet, the dataset is unusual in two aspects: the long period of time it covers, which spans nearly 50 years (1972-2021), and the fact that make up the corpus has been both systematic and comprehensive. A mixture of both quantitative and qualitative research methods has been used, including the number of publications in the time span, identification of research topics, and the authorship in the Chinese linguistic field, so as to draw a comprehensive map on research lines, angles and trends of Chinese language studies in Spain, thus, to have clear comparison between the origin of Chinese language studies through the 16th to the 19th century in Spain, and the its contemporary situation.

As shown in this article, the continuous expansion of Chinese language studies in Spain reached its peak in the second decade of the 21st century (as of 2010) with a spectacular five-year period between 2015 and 2019. The theme around which the articles related to the Chinese language revolve also expanded along with this increase in interest in China. This article highlights that the main topic of interest of Spanish academics in their publications is the “teaching of Spanish as a foreign language” (28%). In second place, there are studies on the Chinese language itself (24%) that would go to first place if we add the 13% of academic texts dedicated to teaching Chinese (37% in total). In Spain, compared to other countries, the attention given to studies of the situation of minority languages in China stands out. Expanding the focus on the study topics covered by Spanish academics, we carried out an adjusted analysis of the different fields of study of the Chinese language, we verified that practically all of them are represented in the studies of the Chinese language from the Spanish academic field, from the lexicography up to character studies, through phonetics or grammar.

Regarding authors, we note the increase in their number around 2010, as well as the incorporation of Chinese academics and transnational collaboration throughout this second decade of the 21st century. Spanish authors are the majority but the constant increase in Chinese authors led to the fact that, in 2017, Chinese authors surpassed Spanish authors. We highlight which are the 10 most prolific authors who, significantly, belong to only 5 universities. Today academic experts on the Chinese language in Spain are characterized by learning the language as students (often in China), doing a doctorate and starting their careers as teachers and researchers in Spain from public institutions to teach Chinese to Spaniards.

The local or national conditions of Spain have a great influence on the teaching of the Chinese language and its research. For this reason, it is necessary to point out that in Spain the teaching of the Chinese language was late, this led to a weak connection between the construction of the theory and the practical experience of the study of that language, which has led to problems in the didactic materials, schemes, methodologies and teacher training. But today things are changing, the teaching of the Chinese language in Spain is going through a process of standardization of teaching and learning methods, institutionalization, diversification and roots. This will undoubtedly strengthen the Spanish sinology and facilitate a greater rapprochement and mutual understanding between the peoples of China and Spain.

This study could be further developed in the future to provide a more comprehensive picture by collecting data from a wider range. The analysis could be extended in many ways. The unusually long time-Spain and quantity of data mined opens up a variety of possibilities, such as tracking the evolution of individual scholars to map out the changes of research interests. Citation analysis to investigate the weight of research paradigms, net-works and co-authorship can also be studies as the evolution of Chinese linguistics into a deeper level. And journals with high citation and the publication focuses worth being investigate to find out how Chinese language studies were carried out through a long time-span, thus to indicate the academic trends on Chinese language study in Spain.

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