

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Case Study

University: [The Chinese University of Hong Kong |

Unit of Assessment (UoA): [32 Translation |

Title of case study: [Nation and Translation: Translation activities that changed the course of modern Chinese history, with special reference to the Opium War (1840-42) |

(1) Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

[The project highlights the role played by translation in the two Opium Wars, an approach that is very different from the traditional socio-political and economic ones. It is more than an academic pursuit but one that involves public interest, in two aspects. First, it brings about a very different understanding of the two Opium wars, which have long term serious consequence to the two countries, in particular China, politically, historically and culturally. Second, it demonstrates how translation affects everyday life of almost every human being. A different understanding of its functions will change our attitude in interpersonal and intercultural exchanges. |

(2) Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

[When the Westerners came to China and attempted to open its door for trade in the 18th century, they faced an immense language barrier. For a very long time there were not many qualified translators/interpreters on either side. Misunderstandings arose and brought serious troubles, which culminated in the first Anglo-Chinese War, more commonly known as the Opium War, in 1840-42. Because of its importance, there are many studies on these first major hostilities between Imperial China and the so-called modern West. Historians study major historical events mainly from socio-political and economical perspectives, but they pay little attention to the role of translation in providing communication or causing miscommunication between the two parties.

The present case is an outcome of “Translation and the First and Second Anglo-Chinese Wars, 1838-1860,” a GRF grant project of LW for 2013-16. It looks into the translation issues involved in the two Anglo-Chinese Wars. By digging out and digging into first hand original material from both sides, the problems caused by the lack of competent translators/interpreters are identified. It explains the backgrounds and constraints of the translators; the mistakes, deliberately made or not, found in the translations of official diplomatic exchanges; and the implications and consequences on subsequent historical developments of such mistakes.

It therefore represents an approach very different from the more traditional socio-political approach adopted by most historians, but covers an important component of the wars. Without a thorough study of the translation issues, one cannot fully understand the wars and their long-term consequences. In fact, after a comprehensive study of role of translation helps to clarify many important miscommunication issues, and the history of the two opium wars might have to be rewritten significantly.

So far twelve journal papers and book chapters have been published. Presentations have been made at many international and regional conferences. Talks were given at universities and public libraries. LW is at the moment working on a monograph on the topic; hopefully it will be published in 2021.

Very positive comments have been made by the RGC Panel on the project:

“This progress report is excellent. The PI, with the help of assistants, has gathered together a great deal of relevant materials ... The PI has made a great deal of progress on this important project. Not only has he written a major article, he has also attended quite a number of conferences. He is to be commended for his work.” |

(3) References to the research (indicative maximum of 6 references)

1. [“To Cede or not to Cede? – Translation Issues in the Negotiations Between Qi Shan and Charles Elliot over the Cession of Hong Kong During the Opium War” (〈 “給予” 還是 “割讓” ? 鴉

- 片戰爭中琦善與義律有關香港談判的翻譯問題〉), in *Studies in Translation History* (2014) (《翻譯史研究(2014)》) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2015), pp. 26-76.
2. “Lord Palmerston Demanding “Satisfaction and Redress”: A Translation that Affected the Qing Court’s Strategy at the Early Stage of the Opium War (〈英國外相巴麥尊的“昭雪伸冤”：鴉片戰爭初期一條影響道光皇帝對英策略的翻譯〉), *Waiguo yuwen yanjiu* (《外國語文研究》) No. 4, 2015 (August 2015), pp. 49-59.
 3. “‘Consul’ in the Treaty of Nanking” (〈《南京條約》“領事”翻譯的歷史探析〉), *Chinese Translators Journal* (《中國翻譯》) No. 3, 2015 (June 2015), pp. 31-41.
 4. “The Canton City Question”: Discrepancies Between the Chinese and English Versions of the Treaty of Nanking” (《“豈有城內城外之分?”：“廣州入城事件”與〈南京條約〉的翻譯問題》), in *Studies in Translation History* (2016) (《翻譯史研究(2016)》) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, March 2017), pp. 153-189.
 5. “Challenging the Supremacy of the Celestial Empire”: Translating the Official Titles of the Government Representatives of Great Britain in China Before and Around the First Opium War (〈“與天朝均敵”：第一次鴉片戰爭前後英國派華最高官員職銜的翻譯問題〉), *Studies of Translation and Interpretation* (《翻譯學研究集刊》) No. 20 (August 2017), pp. 1-25.
 6. “Mysteries over the ‘Famous Thirteenth Article’: Controversies Arising from the Supplementary Treaty Signed by China and Britain in 1843” (〈“著名的十三款”之謎：圍繞1843年中英《善後事宜清冊附粘和約》的爭議〉), *Bulletin of The Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica* (《中央研究院近代史研究集刊》) No. 103 (March 2019), pp. 1-46。

(4) Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

1. “Linguists of the Celestial Empire: the English of the Compradors (天朝通事：買辦英文),” *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, 17 September 2011.
2. “If the Qing Rulers Realized the Importance of Translation...” (假如清廷能認識到翻譯的重要性), *Nanfang zhoubao*, 27 April 2012.
3. “The Power of Discourse of Translation (翻譯的話語權),” *Apple Daily*, 10 March 2013.

All three articles cite extensively from LW’s two pieces and highlighted the importance of the arguments made by LW. Prof. Lau’s three articles have been repeatedly included in many websites, blogs and Facebook discussions since they were published in 2013. Most of these websites are for the general public, making impact on society. The most common heading for these posts is “Academics points out that Chinese were in a complete passive position because they were disadvantaged in one aspect (有學者稱，第一次鴉片戰爭中清朝完全被動，是吃了這方面的虧).” Discussions in these websites generally follow the arguments raised by LW that the fate of a nation is closely related to the importance attached to translation.

LW was interviewed several times by some newspapers in Mainland China to talk on the relationship between translation and modern China, one of which appeared in the influential 《中華讀書報》. He also gave a public talk at the Shanghai Library.

More importantly, the case possesses great potential for making further impact. There are two recent developments. First, a special column entitled “Casual chats on translation and the Opium War (漫談翻譯與鴉片戰爭)” has recently been set up in the WeChat Public Account (微信公眾號). LW will write, in a casual manner, on issues relating to translation and the Opium War. The purpose is to share the research results with more general readers who are interested in translation, history and societal issues. They will be posted on the Public Account on a regular basis. The first piece was posted on 29 March 2019 and in a couple of days it was read by over 2000 people.

Second, contact has been established with the Culture, Broadcasting, Tourism and Sports Bureau (舟山市定海區文化和廣電旅遊體育局) of the Dinghai District, Zhou Shan, Zhejiang. Dinghai was the place where the Opium War between the British and the Chinese first broke out in 1840. The Chinese government has identified the city as a base for historical and cultural education for the entire country.

The Zhou Shan Opium War Museum was built and opened to the public in July 1997, to mark Hong Kong's return to China. The first meeting between LW and the Director and Deputy director of the Bureau, Ms Sun Yanqing (孫艷青) and Mr Fu Yong (傅勇) has built up a strong tie between the two. LW was informed that the Bureau and the District was drawing up ambitious plans to establish Zhou Shan as *the* centre for commemorating and promoting the understanding of the First Opium War. LW has agreed to help the Bureau on developing the contents of their further initiatives in historical, cultural education and tourist programmes of Zhou Shan in relation to the Opium War. This will generate long term and large scale impact for the general public on the understanding of the Opium War.

Another thing that should be mentioned is the public lecture by LW given at the China Foreign Affairs University, Beijing on 23 November 2018. Although it is academic in nature, one cannot underestimate its societal impact because the audience were undergraduates and postgraduate students of the China Foreign Affairs University, which specializes in training the nation's diplomats and diplomatic translators/interpreters.

(5) Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Prof. Lau Shiu Ming's articles published in local newspapers citing LW's works extensively:
 - <http://www1.hkej.com/dailynews/culture/article/582773/%E5%A4%A9%E6%9C%9D%E9%80%9A%E4%BA%8B%EF%BC%9A%E8%B2%B7%E8%BE%A6%E8%8B%B1%E6%96%87> (“Linguists of the Celestial Empire: the English of the Compradors (天朝通事：買辦英文)”, published on 17 September 2011)
 - <http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/supplement/apple/art/20130310/18189883> (“The Power of Discourse of Translation (翻譯的話語權)”, published on 10 March 2013)
2. Prof. Lau Shiu Ming's articles included in non-academic websites, with follow-up discussions on LW's views:
 - “If the Qing Rulers Realized the Importance of Translation (假如清廷能認識到翻譯的重要性)”
 - <http://magazine.sina.com/bg/nfweekend/20120427/20120426/1802117953.html>
 - <https://www.douban.com/note/206816006/> (posted since 26 March 2012)
 - http://www.mingjenglishi.com/2012/04/blog-post_5315.html (posted since 28 April 2012)
 - http://news.ifeng.com/history/shixueyuan/detail_2013_05/03/24896691_0.shtml (posted since 3 May 2013)
 - “The Power of Discourse of Translation (翻譯的話語權)”
 - <https://www.douban.com/note/265754071/>
 - <http://sensdesmots.blogspot.hk/2013/03/languagepowerbyliushaoming.html> (posted since 17 March 2013)
 - <http://www.xinyifanyi.com/news.asp?id=4105> (Part I, posted since 9 May 2013)
 - <http://www.xinyifanyi.com/news.asp?id=4190> (Part II, posted since 16 May 2013)
 - <http://www.oktranslation.com/news/twininfo36151.html> (Part II, posted since 16 May 2013)
 - http://www.sohu.com/a/235005714_176673 (posted since 11 June 2018)
 - <https://kknews.cc/history/n9rb4j8.html> (posted since 12 June 2018)
 - <https://new.qq.com/omn/20180710/20180710A1AGDB.html> (posted since 10 July 2108)
 - http://www.sohu.com/a/240345952_577803 (posted since 10 July 2018)
 - http://sh.qihoo.com/pc/9eb1952f5ade00caa?sign=360_e39369d1 (posted since 10 July 2018)
3. LW's articles on the Opium War and yi (barbarians) cited by the renowned economist and journalist Lin Shan Muk (林山木 [林行止]) to talk about the Opium War and future Sino-American relations in local newspaper and non-academic websites:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/blackclothesclub/posts/208803549283007> (posted since 22 August 2013)
 - <http://www1.hkej.com/dailynews/commentary/article/1532272/%E4%B8%AD%E7%BE%8E%E9%A6%96%E8%85%A6%E6%89%AD%E5%85%AD%E5%A3%AC+%E8%B2%BF%E6%98%93%E5%8F%96%E5%90%91%E9%9D%A0%E6%AD%A6%E5%8A%9B> (posted since 5

- April 2017)
- <http://forum.memehk.com/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=232926> (posted since 5 April 2017)
4. 屈文生, Associate Professor in East China University of Political Science and Law, cited LW's article No. 2 several times in Mainland newspaper and non-academic websites:
- <https://read01.com/zh-hk/x28Pmz.html#.WZURTVUjHcs> (first published on 光明網 on 18 June 2014)
 - <http://www.xinyifanyi.com/news.asp?id=7608> (posted since 19 June 2014)
5. LW's article on ceding Hong Kong cited by 梁曉遜 in several articles to talk about the translation of Hong Kong and Tsim Sha Tsui:
- <https://healthylun.wordpress.com/2016/06/01/%E9%B4%89%E7%89%87%E6%88%B0%E7%88%AD%E4%B8%AD%E8%8B%B1%E9%9B%99%E6%96%B9%E8%99%95%E7%90%86%E3%80%8C%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E3%80%8D%E5%92%8C%E3%80%8C%E5%B0%96%E6%B2%99%E5%98%B4%E3%80%8D%E7%BF%BB%E8%AD%AF/> (published on 1 June 2016)
 - <https://thestandnews.com/society/%E9%B4%89%E7%89%87%E6%88%B0%E7%88%AD%E6%99%82%E8%8B%B1%E6%96%B9%E5%A6%82%E4%BD%95%E7%B2%BE%E5%A6%99%E7%BF%BB%E8%AD%AF-%E5%B0%96%E6%B2%99%E5%98%B4/> (published on 30 June 2016)
 - <https://thestandnews.com/politics/%E9%82%A3-%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF-%E7%9A%84%E7%BF%BB%E8%AD%AF%E5%8F%88%E5%A6%82%E4%BD%95-%E4%B8%8A/> (published on 12 July 2016)
 - <https://hk.thenewslens.com/article/45218> (posted since 28 July 2016)
6. LW interviewed by the Mainland media, pointing out the significance of translation in the Sino-British relations in the 18th and 19th Centuries, for example The Opium War; the interview was posted in newspaper and non-academic websites:
- http://epaper.gmw.cn/zhdsb/html/2013-08/07/nw.D110000zhdsb_20130807_1-17.htm (published on 《中华读书报》 7 August 2013)
 - <https://www.douban.com/group/topic/43057290/> (published on 《中华读书报》 7 August 2013)
7. Public talk at Shanghai Library
- Publicity materials of the talk 〈超越文本 超越翻譯——當代翻譯和翻譯研究三人談〉 held on 6 December 2014
 - <http://dlpwd.library.sh.cn/libweb/node2/node99/node101/node107/u10ai9538.html>
 - <http://www.ejtrans.com/mulu/33/3301.aspx?id=1>
 - <https://www.douban.com/group/topic/69714130/>
 - Detailed discussion on the significance of translation in diplomatic exchanges, using “Treaty of Nanking” as an example, in the transcription of the talk 〈超越文本 超越翻譯——當代翻譯和翻譯研究三人談〉.
 - <http://www.library.sh.cn/jiangzuo/stjz/upfiles/1504.pdf> (published in April 2015)
8. “Casual Chats on translation and the Opium War,” Wechat Public Account on Studies in Translation History.
- <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/a0uAWjmIzRZx7itsVeHU3A>
9. Public lecture given at the School of Foreign Studies, China Foreign Affairs University, Beijing on 23 November 2018.
- http://deis.cfau.edu.cn/art/2018/12/3/art_2261_69401.html
 - http://www.cfau.edu.cn/art/2018/12/3/art_2986_69402.html
10. Collaboration with the the Culture, Broadcasting, Tourism and Sports Bureau (舟山市定海區文化和廣電旅遊體育局) of the Dinghai District, Zhou Shan, Zhejiang to develop cultural, historical education and tourist programme in relation to the Opium War.
- Letter from the Deputy Director of the the Culture, Broadcasting, Tourism and Sports Bureau |