

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Overview Statement

University: Hong Kong Baptist University

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 32 Translation

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 9

(1) Context

Translation as a discipline incorporates a strong applied element, and the Unit has pursued a research agenda that aims to exploit this potential to foster impact beyond the academy through a range of outreach and collaborative endeavours. The Unit comprises three main research clusters: (i) Interpreting, (ii) Literary Translation and Intercultural Studies, and (iii) Intersemiotic Translation, which support its emphasis on social and cultural forms of impact. The Unit has worked with a range of external stakeholders including: medical interpreters and interpreter trainers (**Leung**), filmmakers (**Yeung**), novelists (**Yau**), museum professionals (**Neather**), and Buddhist organizations (**Neather**). Research interests outside the Unit's main clusters also seek to incorporate impact, for instance in advising national education providers (**Liu; Tan; Neather**). A key theme common to the majority of these beneficiaries is the experience of minority social and linguistic groups, as seen in **Leung**'s work with ethnic minority interpreters during the period 2011-17, **Yeung** and **Yau**'s work with the leading Tibetan filmmaker, Pema Tsenden, and **Marin-Lacarta**'s research and translation work in the Basque publishing field. **Pan** has established links with the local Indonesian-Chinese diaspora. Through such activities, the Unit has delivered against several impact goals: improving communication in healthcare environments, capacity building among minority groups, and enhancing cultural awareness and representation of minorities.

(2) Approach to impact

Supported by its research centre, the Centre for Translation ("CTN"), which forms an essential part of our drive for increasing impact, the Unit has approached the development of research impact potential through a composite of strategies that include relationship-building with external stakeholders, and departmental-level financial and resource support. With regard to **relationship-building**, the Unit engages in regular activities including:

(i) *Providing consultancy*. Examples: **Neather** served as a translation advisor (2014) for portions of an encyclopaedia of Buddhist art developed by the Fo Guang Shan monastery in Taiwan. **Liu** and **Leung** provided consultancy to the Official Languages Division (OLD) of the Civil Service Bureau, HKSAR Government, on simultaneous interpreter assessment.

(ii) *Organizing public dissemination events*. The Unit holds public discussion forums to disseminate staff research and to foster public engagement with its key research areas. For example: **Yeung** organized the "Five-cornered Conversation" (2015), bringing together five leading writers from Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland (including an ethnic Uighur) and their translators (audience: >120); **Yeung** also worked with the Asia Society (Hong Kong) in the delivery of a public dialogue on Tibetan minority filmmakers (audience: ~80). **Pan** organized two one-day conferences on collective memory and diaspora with Indonesian-Chinese community organizations. The Unit holds open book-launch events, and showcases work through the media (e.g. **Leung**'s popular-audience book on forensic linguistics, which generated 9 media interviews and led to the delivery of a regular training workshop for the OLD; **Pan**'s Indonesian events (audience: ~200 and ~100), at which community members' publications were launched, and reported on in the local Indonesian press).

(iii) *Building stakeholders into research projects*. Example: **Leung**'s participatory action research projects, which build in participation by ethnic minority interpreters, service users and providers.

(iv) *Building experiential learning opportunities (such as internships) into the RPg curriculum and students' research projects*. For example one RPg served as a tutor of the Medical Interpreter Training Courses during 2014 and 2015, while also collecting research data on the process; another RPg conducted digital humanities research through participant study in an online translation community, nurturing the skills for subsequent community-related research. A third RPg has linked his art-translation research with his curation of and artistic participation in several local and international

exhibitions and arts festivals.

The Unit has provided **financial assistance** (e.g. conference funding) and **administrative and technical support** for these research activities. For example: **Yeung** received funding from the Unit's and CTN's private funds to host "Transgressing Tibet: An International Symposium on the Films, Fiction and Translation of Pema Tsenden" (Oct. 2014), while the Unit provided the administrative support, teaching venues and lab equipment for the development of **Leung's** long-term external collaboration with the Lady MacLehose Centre, Hong Kong, to improve interpreter services. The Unit also works with the University's Knowledge Transfer Office, from which both **Leung** and **Yeung** have received funding. The Unit has also consistently stressed the value of external funding as a means to fund impactful research. **Leung's** research developed from a 2010 Hong Kong Government PPR (Public Policy Research) grant; **Yeung's** ongoing GRF-funded project on minority (Uighur) cinema in Xinjiang Province is expected to generate impact in regard to the framing and public understanding of Uighur cultural identity.

(3) Strategy and plans

The Unit's strategy to support the development of impact includes:

- (a) Deepening existing areas of impact research, particularly those focused on ethnic and linguistic minorities, through the structure and related grant opportunities provided by the Faculty Niche Research Area's subgroups in Minority/Marginalized Population Studies and Framing Public Culture.
- (b) Developing new impact areas and stakeholder relationships. Translation Technology, a field into which the Unit has begun to expand, has been identified as a key area for impact development. The Unit has hired Prof Mark Shuttleworth from UCL as a Full Professor (2018) to lead this work.
- (c) Increasing the emphasis on impact in the staff recruitment and advancement process, by identifying applicants with strong impact potential (e.g. Sept. 2019 recruitment of Dr Catherine Hardie from the University of Oxford as an RAP in Tibetan/Chinese social anthropology), and by including impact as a factor for consideration in staff performance reviews. The Arts Faculty's "Early Career Research Excellence Scheme" provides reduced teaching loads for ECRs, allowing them increased research time, which can be channelled towards producing impact-related work.
- (d) Introducing impact mentoring sessions for Early Career Researchers and continuing to make use of training offered at university and faculty level for all research-active staff.
- (e) Building impact-related training into the RPg student experience, through impact-awareness workshops, a strengthened research-driven experiential learning component, and designing RPg research projects that have impact as an integral component. The Unit will introduce these systematically as part of its transition to a 4-year PhD curriculum from Sept. 2019. The Unit will also explore the possibility of benchmarking with international practices such as those at UCL, in which RPgs are expected to incorporate an impact statement into their PhD thesis.
- (f) Earmarking funding for impact-related projects, from the Unit's private fund, and where possible, from the Centre for Translation's fund.
- (g) Furthering public engagement events and increasing the Unit's visibility, in particular online.

(4) Relationship to case study

The submitted case study, **Leung's** ethnic minority interpreting project, encapsulates the Unit's approach to impact as described above: (i) it grew from relationship-building with stakeholder community groups; (ii) it developed from a Government PPR grant, with logistical support from the Unit's Centre for Translation; (iii) it embedded stakeholders at the heart of the research process; and (iv) it incorporated RPg research training, in turn generating RPg research with strong impact potential (a PhD thesis [2019] on empathy in healthcare interpreting situations). In its community emphasis, it further dovetails closely with the university's policy of research-based community engagement as supported in its *Institutional Strategic Plan*. It represents the most developed example of impact-related work from the Unit's key research clusters, and its receipt of a HK Government Home Affairs Department social enterprise award (2013) provides government-level recognition of its impact in bettering the lives of stakeholders in the local community.