

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: Lingnan University

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 32 - Translation

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 6

(1) Context

The unit's research streams are (i) studies on the **history and culture of translation** and (ii) work to find **practical purpose** for the historical and theoretical aspects of translation, **to serve** different causes in society. For example, study on the translation of languages of ethnic minorities has made impact because it facilitated the understanding between the society and the ethnic minorities.

The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the unit's research and impact are charity organisations and the general public, **specifically disadvantaged groups**. These groups include the visually impaired and the hard of hearing and the unit had translated materials and films for these groups and organizations, made an impact by improving their living standard and the society's awareness of them.

(2) Approach to impact

For translation to have a **positive impact** on people's lives, it must be **functional**. A successful translation is not simply accurate, but one that serves its original purpose. The unit's approach to impact uses this as a **guiding principle** in its interactions with users and audiences: a message should be phrased in a way that **people can understand**.

Translations of texts for governmental and non-governmental bodies

For example, unit member Liping Bai has made an impact by translating texts for the charity Yan Oi Tong. One of the aims of this charity is to let more people learn the importance of protecting the environment and the historical buildings in Hong Kong. Bai, with the help of students, provided translation services to Yan Oi Tong and translated the introductory articles (from Chinese into English) about some places of interest in Tuen Mun. The translations are published on the charity's Facebook account and mobile apps. By 1 March 2019, these translations had reached 8,611 people according to the record from Yan Oi Tong.

Several unit members, including L. Chan, A. Chan and Sterk have **organised or adjudicated** on numerous translation competitions and exams for the general public. These play a central role in Hong Kong and Taiwan society as they provide a tangible way to use the unit's research to help student translators improve the quality of their translations. This has included co-organising an Annual Translation Competition (2010-2018) hosted jointly by the Hong Kong Translation Society, the Peninsular Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Home Affairs Department. Unit members have adjudicated for translation competitions for young people and university students, and have also helped to raise the quality of translation in Taiwan society by marking Chinese-English translation examinations for the Language Training and Testing Centre.

Enhancing local communities' understanding on various topics through translation

Building on the interest in such efforts and the topic of translation, L. Chan has organised **public forums, symposia and talks**. For example, a Meet the Masters forum in December 2017 that drew an audience of **more than 150 people**, and a symposium on Translation and the Professions in November 2016 with an **audience of over 200**.

One high profile project was A. Chan's Let's Kick it with Cakes, which disseminated bilingual information about the nutritional value of Chinese and English snacks. This had a positive impact on eating habits. Specifically, it changed the attitudes of 237 people who went on to consume desserts differently after they saw the products of the project published on Instagram which emphasized natural, low-sugar and no-additive ingredients.

The unit employs media engagement as a pathway to impact on public understanding. Bai has written a regular column in the Mingpao Monthly since 2016, promoting a functional approach to translation. L. Chan discussed the difficulties of Chinese to English translation in a 2015 television appearance on "The Big Idea" (RTHK3), followed by four interviews in print media. Sterk's 2017 translation of Wu Ming-Yi's *The Stolen Bicycle* was longlisted for the Booker International, leading to him being interviewed for a newspaper article.

L. Chan was the President of the Hong Kong Translation Society until June 2018. He was Director of Research and Publications for the Association of Asian Translation Industry, and served as Executive Council Member of the Translators' Association of China, and as Executive Committee Member of the Taiwanese Association of Translators.

Y. K. Cheung is currently Vice-President (Internal) of the Hong Kong Translation Society.

Support for staff in approaching impact

The unit has **supported and enabled** staff to achieve impact from their research by providing administrative and logistical **support**. For example, when they apply for knowledge transfer funds and when they meet with external stakeholders. One **success was the unit's winning** of the university's Innovation and Impact Fund, for the project Transgelism: Promoting the Concept and Good Practices of Chinese-English Translation in Chinese-speaking Communities. Please refer to Part 3 for further details of the project and how it achieves impact.

(3) Strategy and plans

The unit is **expanding our impact beyond Hong Kong and reaching out to mainland China, first in Greater Bay Area and beyond it afterwards**. We are using our research on translation to promote English learning through translation in mainland China which will improve the English proficiency of the people in mainland China. Unit research staff are working with the Translators Association of Shenzhen to identify and contact different organisations in mainland China about possible projects. On 12 June 2019, we organized a public seminar relating to translation and language learning in Shenzhen Polytechnic which was attended by over 50 audiences from all walks of life. A new series of public talks will raise awareness among translation professionals and the general public in mainland China – a second public seminar is **planned** for Heilongjiang in June 2020. This will have the impact of improving the English proficiency of mainland Chinese people and its impact will be measured by the number of people attending the seminars.

(4) Relationship to case studies

The unit aims to put the historical and theoretical aspect of translation into practice so as to **serve different causes in society**, to increase public awareness of the function of translation in society and to **give voice to disadvantaged groups**. The case study **exemplifies this approach**, applying a functional approach to translation for disadvantaged social groups by addressing their needs through translation and raising awareness about specific issues they face. The unit has used translation as a tool to facilitate the society's understanding of different disadvantaged groups to support our underpinning research to achieve the impact of empowering the disadvantaged through translation.