

# 1<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong Baptist University International Conference on Interpreting

& The Interpreter's One Hundred Years of Solitude:  
Between History and Memory Exhibition

Organizers Centre for Translation and Translation Programme  
Hong Kong Baptist University

9-10 March 2017  
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## PANEL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS (In Alphabetical Order of the Surname of Presenter)

### The Humanized Study of a Great Interpreter: Tseng-Tsiang Lou/Dom Pierre-Célestin as Premier/Priest and His Contributions to Interpretation

Andy Lung Jan CHAN      Lingnan University, Hong Kong

In the Bible, Proverbs 18:21 reads "Death and life are in the gift of the tongue, those who indulge it must eat the fruit it yields." Tseng-Tsiang Lou (TTL, 陸徵祥, 1871-1949) was a man of many tongues and was fruitful in many different fields. He was an important historic figure in the late Qing dynasty and in early Republican China. The many roles he played include but not limited to were: a Chinese diplomat to Holland, Russia and Switzerland; twice Premier of the Republic of China; and head delegate to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.

Raised as a Protestant, he went to the School of Foreign Language in Shanghai and later attended the school for interpreters. He became well versed in Chinese, French and Russian and married Berthe-Françoise-Eugénie Bovy, the daughter of a Belgian diplomat. In 1927, after the death of his wife, he studied to become a postulant under the name Dom Pierre-Célestin and was ordained in 1935. Quite obviously, TTL has contributed significantly to two important fields in the history of interpreting: diplomacy and religion.

Based on the principles for a progressive and subjective study of translators as postulated by Pym (2009), this paper attempts to conduct a humanized study of TTL, including his interpreting work and the related actor network in the making of this great diplomat-priest interpreter. The materials to be scrutinized include a Chinese biography written by Shi Jianguo (1999), TTL's autobiography (*Ways of Confucius and of Christ*, 1948) and the archives in the library of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy (聖神修院神哲學院) in Hong Kong. This study aims to highlight the multi-discursive involvement, complex cultural allegiances and physical mobility of TTL as a diplomat-politician-priest interpreter against the backdrop of the fierce power struggle in early Republican China and delicate international politics in the first half of the twentieth century.

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## Interpreters in Conflict Situations in Colonial Taiwan: From the Seventeenth Century till the Early Twentieth Century

Pin-lin CHANG      Chung Yuan Christian University, Taiwan

Taiwan (Formosa), an island off the southeastern coast of China, had been originally inhabited by dozens of mutually exclusive Formosan tribes and some Chinese settlers before outsiders came to colonize it in the 1600s. From then on, it was under the Dutch, Chinese, and Japanese rule, one after another, until 1945. The diverse languages and cultures involved in power struggles resulted in the necessity of interpreters, particularly during military or armed conflicts. The interpreters of the times came from diverse backgrounds and worked under various circumstances. The volatile, dangerous situations often caused these mostly unprofessional interpreters to make expedient decisions or switch loyalty in order to survive. While presenting the profiles of interpreters and the interpreting practices in three of the most famous conflict situations in Taiwan's colonial history, including the Sino-Dutch War (1661-1662), the Rover incident and the Japanese expedition to Taiwan (1867-1874), and the Musha incident and the conflicts in its wake (1930-1931), this paper discusses the roles and status of interpreters and how the interpreters' ideology and identity affected their attitude towards the parties involved and in turn the results of the conflicts. The overview of the prominent interpreters and interpreting practices during these conflict situations in Taiwan's colonial history shows that the interpreters in pre-modern times often played multiple roles and acted alone in conflict situations. Their status and treatment were closely linked with the mentality of their clients towards interpreting. Also, being loyal to the original text was not always correlated with the interpreter's loyalty to his/her clients, and this might be particularly true in colonial contexts where interpreters and interpreting were being used as a tool in power struggles.

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## Interpreting Practices in the Dutch East Indies

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This paper investigates the role of Dutch interpreters of Chinese in the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the context of Dutch colonizers' control over Chinese immigrants in colonized Indonesia, the task of interpreters went far beyond the oral translation of speech. In this multicultural and multilingual community where misunderstandings and conflicts were common, the interpreters had to serve as mediators and peacemakers as well.

Educated in Leiden and Xiamen, the interpreters were appointed as "Interpreter for the Chinese Language" (later changed to "Advisor for Chinese Affairs") in Chinese districts in the Dutch East Indies. Besides oral interpreting in court, at meetings and on inspection trips with their superiors, they also had to provide written translation of documents including official letters and legislation, and give advice on Chinese matters and the appointment of Chinese officers.

Here, I will focus on their work of oral interpreting, which included simultaneous interpretation between Dutch and Chinese, sometimes into Malay and/or English. The majority of Dutch interpreters learned Hokkien, the most widely spoken dialect in the Dutch East Indies, but some also learned Hakka and/or Cantonese for certain districts. They had to communicate and collaborate with the Chinese officers from the Chinese Council, who had been in charge of Chinese affairs since the seventeenth century.

Based on written accounts of the Dutch interpreters' experiences, I will analyse how they performed and understood their interpreting practices. They were there not only to simply translate, but to solve problems, facilitate communication and prevent unrest or even war. I will compare and refer to other studies on colonial interpreting and explore to what extent the interpreters were able to see the bigger picture, which neither the Dutch nor the Chinese could see from a monolingual or monocultural perspective. Hence, this paper will shed light on the position of the interpreter as a mediator between the Dutch colonial government and the Chinese people.

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## The United Nations Training Course of Interpreters and Translators: The Beginning of Professional Conference Interpreting in China

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Conference interpreting has enjoyed exponential development in China in recent years. It has been a profession that grew with the country's increasing connectedness with the rest of the world. The demand for conference interpreters became evident when the PRC was restored its seat at the United Nations in 1971. To meet the demand for Chinese language conference interpreters at the organization, a training programme at the graduate level was set up to enroll and train interpreters from the Chinese mainland. The programme, financially supported by the United Nations, ran from 1979 to 1993. Its graduates became the main body of staff interpreters at the United Nations' duty stations. Some served as chief interpreters for successive state leaders and high-level national officials. Some graduates pioneered the freelance conference interpreting market in China and were some of the earliest members of AIIC from the mainland. Some have trained and continue to train and contribute to professional interpreter training in and outside of China.

This presentation will trace the history of the UN training programme, which was the beginning of conference interpreter training in China, and describe the wider connection between the development of conference interpreting and China's participation in and connectedness with the outside world in recent decades. The research is based on both primary documentary sources, including UN and Chinese official documents, and secondary materials such as memoirs and news reports. Such documentary information will be supplemented by data gathered from interviews of a variety of participants in the programme, including former directors, teachers and trainees. The presentation aims to fill a gap in the recent history of the interpreting profession in China. It argues that the UN training programme not only played a key role in meeting the demand for high-level interpreting, but also ushered in and contributed to the shaping of interpreting as a profession in China.

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## The Interpreter as *Alter Ego* of the Statesman – the Recollections of Tito's Interpreter Ivan Ivanji

Mira KADRIC      University of Vienna, Austria

Biographies and memoirs of famous interpreters are a valuable source for the history of interpreting. They show that interpreters, even if they tend to serve/work discreetly in the background, are often perceived by the public at large. They often perform functions such as those of secretaries or personal advisors. In addition, their (interpreting) activities are strongly influenced by the respective ideology.

The present paper deals with the possibilities and limits given to Ivan Ivanji, the interpreter of Josip Broz Tito. In the 1960s and 1970s, the young writer Ivanji accompanied Josip Broz Tito, President of Yugoslavia, as an interpreter for meetings with politicians in German-speaking countries. In 2007 Ivanji published the book *Titos Dolmetscher – als Literat am Pulsschlag der Politik (Tito's Interpreter – as a writer at the pulse of politics)*. Ivan Ivanji's recollections are politically and socially embedded in a specific time and under special circumstances. Since then, the world has changed fundamentally. The country, on which Ivanji reports, Yugoslavia, does not exist any more. It disintegrated soon after Tito's death and after civil wars.

Ivanji's memoirs help us to examine the relationship between Tito and Ivanji, and in particular how the interpreter Ivanji negotiated his working conditions and possible freedoms. For this, the situations described by Ivanji are analyzed with regard to his relationship to Tito, and to the politicians and diplomats met by Tito. Special focus is put on Ivanji's conformist and nonconformist actions.

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## Interpreting the Interpreter's Life: From Biographical Data to *Biographie Croisée*

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Autobiographical texts can be a valuable source to fill in the “blank spaces in translation history”, as Julio-César Santoyo calls it. In this contribution, I will present methodological approaches and conceptual tools for the analysis of autobiographical material as historiographical sources. After a few remarks on the relationship between historiographical and (auto) biographical writing, the approach of *histoire croisée* developed by Werner / Zimmermann is presented. *Histoire croisée* combines the findings of cultural transfer research as developed by Michel Espagne with the historical comparative approach to an interdisciplinary, multiperspective framework. Based upon this, the *biographie croisée* is developed as an analytical instrument to capture the complexity of the interpreter's life with its transnational biographical interrelations and intercultural contacts. Using this methodology, the life of Hiltgunt von Zassenhaus, will serve as an example. Zassenhaus worked as a prison interpreter in Nazi Germany, and succeeded in saving 800 Scandinavian prisoners from being executed at the end of the war. To describe the agency of the interpreter, Giorgio Agamben's main opus *Homo Sacer* is used. In this study Agamben describes the various mechanisms by which people are excluded from and included in political-legal society. Agamben's concepts of “bare life”, “state of exception” (to which Moira Inghilleri refers in her study of interpreters in Guantánamo), and the “zone of indistinction” offer a theoretical framework for the analysis of interpreters in totalitarian regimes.

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## The Shifting *Field* and Dynamic *Habitus* of Korean War Interpreters

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The role of interpreters in violent conflict situations has garnered considerable attention from scholars of translation and interpreting in recent years. Research on this subject with respect to the Korean War (1950-53), however, remains limited. This might partially be due to the fact that the Korean War is often dubbed the "Forgotten War," having taken place following the euphoric victory of the Second World War and before the searing defeat of the Vietnam War. The fact that the Korean War took place directly after an era of colonialism and at the beginning of the Cold War makes it unique, however. Important decisions regarding the war were made within a Cold War framework while at the same time influenced by opinions formed during the earlier half of the century. Interpreting practices during the Korean War bore the baggage of this history.

This paper will demonstrate how the linguistic landscape of the region, formed during Japanese colonialism and U.S. military occupation, conditioned interlingual exchanges during the war. It will discuss the roles played by interpreters during the Korean War, a conflict in which a multinational military coalition of twenty UN member states came to the aid of South Korea against North Korea and its allies, China and the Soviet Union. Due to the fact that both sides were composed of military personnel from diverse linguistic backgrounds, the service of interpreters was required throughout the conflict to facilitate communication between enemies and allies alike. I will present various cases in which interpreting took place during the war, providing a rich pool of examples from which the role of the interpreter can be investigated. Borrowing from diverse data sources including official military records of the war, memoirs, journalistic reports, and interviews, I use a Bourdieusian theoretical framework to locate the shifting fields and habitus of interpreters during the Korean conflict in order to demonstrate the dynamic nature of interpreting during warfare.

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## Taiwanese as Military Interpreters in the Second World War

Shichi Mike LAN National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Under the Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945), the people of Taiwan were mobilized to support Japan's war efforts throughout the Second World War. One of the key functions of the Taiwanese during the war was serving as interpreters. As Japan expanded its military occupation in China after 1937, the need for interpreters suddenly surged in the newly occupied Chinese territories. As a result of their unique language abilities of speaking Chinese dialects, the Taiwanese soon became useful and convenient as interpreters for Japan's military operations and occupation throughout Asia-Pacific.

Based on materials published in Taiwan and Japan between 1937 and 1945, this paper analyzes the background, recruitment process, and deployment of Taiwanese as military interpreters during the Second World War. It finds that in the first half of the war, from 1937 to 1941, while the number of Taiwanese military interpreters was small, most of them were highly-educated professionals and deployed in southern China; and during this period, the percentage of Hakka Taiwanese serving as military interpreters was noticeably high. In the second half of the war, from 1942 to 1945, as Japan expanded militarily into Southeast Asia, the need for interpreters rose further across the newly occupied territories. Subsequently, Japanese authorities in Taiwan undertook much more aggressive action to recruit ordinary Taiwanese as military interpreters. Toward the end of the war, Taiwanese could be found serving as interpreters in places as far away as the Indian Ocean and Papua New Guinea. In addition, from the experiences of Taiwanese military interpreters, this paper finds that the "risk" facing interpreters was rather significant. Throughout the war, reports of the deaths of Taiwanese interpreters continued to appear, amidst wartime propaganda of military victory. Furthermore, as contingency in the battlefields evolved, Taiwanese interpreters were ordered to perform non-interpretation duties, such as guarding POWs (prisoners of war) and the interrogation of local residents. After the war ended, a significant number of Taiwanese interpreters were arrested and put on trial as war criminals by the Allied authorities; overall, Australia, the Netherlands, the Republic of China (ROC), and the United Kingdom convicted and executed a total of 14 Taiwanese military interpreters for war crimes.



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## Revisiting the Interpreting Service of Truth Reconciliation Commission

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1994 was in more than one instance a watershed year within the recent history of South Africa. The move to a democratic South Africa also had implications for language policy and language implementation. The first major multi-lingual encounter was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which was in itself a historical event but also played an invaluable role for interpreting practice in the country. The mandate of the commission was to bear witness to, record and in some cases grant amnesty to the perpetrators of crimes relating to human rights violations, reparation and rehabilitation. Despite some flaws, the TRC was a crucial component of the transition to a full and free democracy and is generally regarded as very successful.

There was consensus that speakers who were to narrate or disclose sensitive, emotionally charged experiences could hardly do so in any other language than their first language. Consequently, the interpreting service rendered became a focal point during the 1990s, primarily because of the indispensable and highly visible role it played during the TRC.

The TRC started the process of setting up public hearings across the country where simultaneous interpreting services would form a critical part of the requirements. This employment of interpreters took place against the backdrop of the view that interpreting was still in its swaddling clothes. This paper revisits the role of the interpreters during the hearings of the TRC but also considers the effects that it had on the interpreting profession and service as a whole in the country. The methodology involves re-examining this historical event and reflecting on the interpreting service (including its strengths and challenges) and the experiences of the interpreters.

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## Rhetorical Patterns in Ancient Chinese Texts on Interpreting

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Textual archival references to linguistic mediation are crucial sources for studying the cultural meanings and significance of interpreting in ancient times. Rare even in the Chinese archives, these earlier texts cast light on the agents and act of interpreting during a time when written records were scarce. This talk presents data culled from classical writings about interpreting in China's standard histories and political treatises. An examination of 192 passages pertaining to interpreting shows that eight display an interesting similarity: They all depict 'diplomatic visits to Sinitic China through relay interpreters' as an event validating or corroborating an auspicious sign in nature observed years earlier. In these texts, 'relay interpreting' is documented not because of its practical communicative function in diplomatic contexts. Instead, the documentation has an unmistakably auspicious connotation, which goes beyond its linguistic purpose. The elevation of an interpreting act to a cultural icon is unique in the Chinese tradition.

This paper aims at identifying the symbolic and ideological significances in this conceptual link, so consciously drawn in the rhetoric of these archives, between diplomatic interpreters and a promising upbeat future for the host country. The present study is significant in three regards. First, it examines the epistemology and values of classical textual references to 'interpreters' and 'interpreting'. Second, it explores the ideological significance of interpreting in ancient China, which in turn casts light on the characteristics of its interpreting tradition. Third, it identifies a rhetorical pattern denoting the link between auspiciousness and interpreting across the eight examples. These results can then be taken as points of reference for comparative studies of the conceptualization of 'interpreting' within other cultural traditions.

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## The Birth and Evolution of Simultaneous Interpreting in Hong Kong

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It was during Sir Murray Maclehoose's term as Governor of Hong Kong (1971-1982) that the Simultaneous Interpretation (SI) section was created under the then Chinese Language Division of the Hong Kong Government. As a British colony, Hong Kong's sole official language was English until 1974 when Chinese was added to the list. The overwhelming proportion of Chinese in the population and the likelihood of a return of sovereignty to China no doubt prompted the addition.

The setting up of the SI section was to serve the needs of the Legislative Council, the then Urban Council, and from 1982 onwards the District Boards. This 'three-tier' structure formed the regular clientele of the SI section, which occasionally also served the needs of other statutory bodies.

The first batch of simultaneous interpreters was trained by Mr. A.T Pilley, a linguist and a conference interpreter, and one of the co-founders of AIIC (Association internationale des interprètes de conférence). The training lasted only one week.

Recruitment of full-time SI's was difficult, as capable ones usually had their own careers and less capable ones did not qualify. There were only a handful of full-timers in the beginning, and part-time SI's were recruited to meet the needs as well as to offer flexibility as demand for SI service fluctuated. Later recruits were trained by the first batch of interpreters. Today, the number of full-time SI's is around 15.

The SI market has now widened significantly, especially after 1997 when Hong Kong was returned to China. Putonghua is now widely used and more SI's are needed to serve clients speaking three different 'languages', as Cantonese and Putonghua, though both 'Chinese', are not mutually intelligible. Even after the change in sovereignty, English continues to dominate the fields of international trade and commerce. So as long as Hong Kong remains on the world stage the future of the SI profession looks bright.

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## A Historical Review of Court interpreting in Hong Kong

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Court interpreting in Hong Kong has a history of over 170 years and was necessitated as a result of the British colonization of Hong Kong in 1843. In the early colonial days, bilinguals competent in both Cantonese and English were a rare species, let alone professionally trained court interpreters. Therefore, during the first twenty years of the British administration, the question of interpretation caused the greatest embarrassment to the colonial government. Very often courts either could not sit because no interpreters were available or had to adjourn because of problematic interpretation. Yet in those days, the interpreter, competent or not, was usually the only bilingual in court and as the court record was kept only in English, it was difficult to verify the accuracy of the interpretation or to substantiate any claim about an interpretation mistake.

This is in stark contrast with the status quo in the present-day Hong Kong courts, where interpreters, more often than not, have to work with other court actors who share their bilingual knowledge. Besides, court proceedings at all court levels are nowadays all audio recorded. Any mistakes allegedly made by the interpreter can be either challenged by bilingual participants in court or subsequently verified against the recordings or the transcripts.

Moreover, with the increasing use of Chinese in court in recent years, court interpreting is no longer an indispensable service in some trials, especially in lower courts. In the High Court, however, English retains a highly significant role to this day, and court interpreters continue to play a vital role in bridging the communication gap between English-speaking legal professionals and Cantonese-speaking lay participants.

This paper presents a historical review of the practice of court interpreting in Hong Kong from the early colonial times to the present day. It illustrates with authentic court data the challenges presented to interpreters in the present-day Hong Kong courts and discusses their implications for the role of the court interpreter.

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## From Engineers to Language Specialists: Some Insights into the Development of the Professional Interpreter in the Balkans

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Although rarely acknowledged in the history of conflicts and their resolution, interpreting has been an indispensable skill in conflict situations since ancient times. Alexander the Great sent young boys to learn the languages of the enemy forming the so-called "caste of interpreters" (Roland, 1999: 11). During the Ottoman Empire, Dragomans were important figures in the diplomatic relations and peace negotiations between the Sultan and the West, "much more than diplomatic secretaries" and usually kept this 'title' in the family for generations (Berridge, 2009: 49-50).

Interpreting has gained even greater significance in recent military crises such as the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN peacekeepers were deployed to secure the ceasefire. To achieve its mission UNPROFOR employed local civilians in every office, and every battalion. These were often engineers and medical doctors who knew the language and served as interpreters:

Some were professionals in other fields, such as a physician who worked as an interpreter for the British general Michael Rose (Rose claimed that this doctor, a Croat, was not allowed to work at the hospital in Sarajevo because of his ethnicity) and more were students, engineers or children of engineers... (Baker, 2010: 158).

In the aftermath of conflicts, interpreters have also been needed throughout Balkan history for building peace. Highly skilled language specialists, often university professors teaching languages, were used to interpret during peace negotiations in Kosovo and Macedonia (Todorova 2016). The International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia also used language specialists, frequently literary translators and university staff, to interpret testimonies (Bursac 2015).

Finally, only a decade ago the succeeding countries of former Yugoslavia started developing university departments specializing in interpreting which have in turn started producing the first professional interpreters in these countries.

This article will give an overview of the use and the role of interpreters during conflicts in the territory of the Balkans, especially in terms of ethics and impartiality. It will look at how their social status has influenced the development of the role of the interpreters in the overall profession.

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## The First Years of Conference Interpreting in Poland (1944-1956)

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The emergence of conference interpreting in Poland is linked with a series of events of great political significance, which took place in the post-war period. The aim of the present paper is to highlight those events from different points of view: linguistic, ethical, technical and professional. It is based on archival sources of the Institute of National Remembrance - Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation and presents for the first time the identities of the interpreters recruited for the task.

First, I will discuss the topic of interpreting during the trials of Nazi criminals before Polish courts of general jurisdiction (Special Criminal Courts) and in particular before the National Supreme Tribunal established by a Decree of State National Council in 1946 to judge Nazis for the crimes perpetrated on the territory of occupied Poland during the years of World War II. I will examine the interpreting practices during 7 multilingual and multicultural trials which took place between 1946-1948, during which simultaneous interpreting in 4 languages was introduced for the first time in Poland. The paper will also raise the issues of recruitment, trust and control over the interpreters involved in war crimes trials. The second opportunity to bring the attention of a large international community to conference interpreting was the organization of two international Congresses of Intellectuals in Defense of Peace, which took place in Wrocław in 1948 and then in Warsaw in 1950. These two meetings constitute an important stage in the professionalization of conference interpreting in Poland. In this part I will focus on some technical aspects of interpreting which were raised by the organizers. Finally, I will present some pioneers of interpreting of this period. A special attention will be given to one of the first Polish conference interpreters, Irena Dobosz, who was recruited to be an interpreter within the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission established by the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953.

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## The Han-Chinese Interpreters' Role in Making Taiwan a Heterogeneous Colony under Dutch Rule

Li-Fen WANG      National Chiayi University, Taiwan

When Taiwan was ruled by the Dutch from 1624 to 1662, interpreting activities were at their peak. Nonetheless, Taiwanese translation and interpreting (T&I) researchers overlook this time period when Taiwan was home to the indigenous Formosan nations, the Han immigrants from China and the European missionaries and personnel deployed by the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC), i.e. the Dutch East Indies Company. In such a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural context, the Han-Chinese immigrants played a significant role in engaging in economic activities with various parties as well as politically mediating between the Dutch colonists and the colonized indigenous nations. These interpreters, such as *Dan Li* and *Zhilong Zheng*, have not gained much attention from academia, at least not from the perspective of T&I studies.

This paper first looks into how possessing local linguistic knowledge may bolster a colonial regime. By referencing *De Dagregisters van het Kasteel Zeelandia* (The Diary of the Castle Zeelandia) – a daily register of the VOC's activities in Taiwan from 1629 to 1662, it explores how the 17th-century Han-Chinese interpreters engaged in facilitating political interaction between the colonist Dutch corporation and the colonized indigenous peoples. Robinson (1997) mentions that imperial conquerors thought it crucial to control the interpreters' loyalty as they needed them to achieve effective communication with the conquered peoples as well as converting them into docile subjects. From historical accounts, however, it seems that the Han-Chinese interpreters during the Dutch occupation flexibly, if not cannily, engaged in political and economic mediation. It is therefore argued that since the Han-Chinese had been transacting business with the Formosan nations and with the European traders along the busy routes in China, Taiwan, Japan and Southeast Asia, they had turned themselves into artful go-betweens and polyglots. This enabled them to establish a niche as negotiators with the colonizer and eventually participated in co-colonizing (Andrade 2007) the indigenous nations while they were also subjects of the Dutch colonization.

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## Images of Former Chinese Educational Mission Students as Interpreters in the United States (1881- 1943)

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During the early 1870s, the Chinese government sent 120 young boys to the United States to learn science and technology, which is alternatively known as the Chinese Educational Mission (henceforth CEM). It was the first time for China to sponsor students to study abroad, hoping that the students would return and make the country great again with their western knowledge. Though the mission came to an abrupt end in 1881 due to various reasons, most of the students eventually proved themselves useful after they were summoned back home. Some of them, around a dozen in number, achieved fame and fortune, such as Jeme Tien Yau, who was acclaimed as the engineer of the first railroad built entirely by the Chinese. Compared with this dozen of distinguished students, another dozen were unsung heroes whose contributions were not any less important. They either refused to heed the call to go back home in 1881 or returned to the US later in their life, starting careers as interpreters at the Chinese legation/embassy in the US. To complete the CEM history and to construct the interpreting history of this special group of Chinese men, this paper makes an extensive use of original materials, including newspaper reports, school records, family collections, manuscripts, photos and gravestones. The first part of the paper is an introduction to the twelve former CEM students who worked as multi-professional interpreters and translators in the US. The second part is a combination of three case studies: Yung Kwai, Wong Kai Kah, and Chung Mun Yew. They left behind dozens of visual images as a heuristic tool to reveal their roles as interpreters in the Sino-US historical context. The discussion of their images and roles will lead to the different reception of interpreters in two distinct cultures: one of the world's oldest and one of its newest. The paper concludes by presenting the legacy of this group of interpreters and acknowledging the place they deserve in the history of interpreting, translation, diplomacy and education.



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## The Evolution of a Culture of Client – Interpreter Partnership at the EU and Europe-based UN bodies

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Europe has been the cradle of simultaneous interpreting ever since the International Labour Conference of the ILO in June 1927 in Geneva, in the era of the League of Nations. Today, the European Union with its Commission, the Parliament, the Council, the Court of Justice, the Central Bank, etc. is the biggest employer in the world of conference interpreters. The European Commission in Brussels has its own Directorate General for Interpretation (DGI), where 558 permanent staff interpreters, supported by their freelance colleagues, work a total of 150,000 conference days per year. The European Parliament in Strasbourg has 380 full time interpreters in their DG INTE. For the European Union, with its strong tradition of multilingualism, high quality interpreting whenever needed is a matter of civil rights and linguistic justice. Furthermore, these and other European institutions have growing demands not only for interpreters for the 24 official European languages, but also for non-European languages including Chinese and Japanese. Likewise, the Europe-based UN bodies such as the ILO have the need for non-UN Security Council languages such as Japanese, Korean and German. And at these institutions, a unique culture of client – interpreter partnership has evolved in the past decades to ensure the high quality of interpreting and professionalism of the conference interpreters. The culture of interaction has shown positive effects on many “small” details such as good sound quality, ergonomic booth designs, timely document distribution, briefing sessions with speakers, interventions by chairpersons to ensure proper speech speed to mention only a few. It also helped create structures of highly effective interpreter training. International organizations and European universities are working together to train future interpreters.

This paper discusses how such a productive client – interpreter partnership has developed at the European institutions on the basis of author's own experiences as a conference interpreter at such organizations and seeks to specify characteristics of a productive relationship in Europe by describing the important roles of chief interpreters.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong Baptist University International Conference on Interpreting

& The Interpreter's One Hundred Years of Solitude:  
Between History and Memory Exhibition

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## Interpreter's Autonomy and Agency in Negotiations during the First Opium War (1840-1842)

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Wartime interpreters and interpreting practices as academic topics have stimulated considerable interest in recent years. The interpreter's autonomy and agency during wartime historical periods warrant the academic attention of interpreting. In terms of materials, historical diaries or memoirs can be valuable sources of information for this research. For example, Zhang Xi (張喜), a Chinese representative in Sino-British negotiations, gave two first-hand historical accounts on his interactions with the British during the first Opium War. Based on a close analysis of one of these historical texts, I intend to explore the potential autonomy and agency of the chief British interpreter John Robert Morrison (1814-1843) in diplomatic negotiations.

How is the interpreter's autonomy and agency shown in the record? What kind of agency does the interpreter have in the negotiation process? I contend that, more than interpreting, Morrison often initiated independent conversations with Zhang, consciously leading Zhang to realize British technological superiority to China, which manifested his autonomy during the interactions. Besides, Morrison intentionally used certain words in accordance with the Chinese way of thinking during conversations, attempting to curry favor with the Chinese in order to possibly carry out a smooth negotiation with them, which verified his mediatory agency in the negotiations.

The significance of this study rests on two regards: first, it underscores the value of this specific historical record as not only a referential, but also a researchable text for interpreting studies; second, it reveals how the wartime interpreter's potential autonomy and agency are displayed in diplomatic negotiations.

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## **The Search for a Mende Interpreter for African Slaves in the Amistad Case (1839)**

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In July 1839, forty-six Mendi-African slaves forced on the Amistad schooner revolted as they were taken from Havana to Puerto Príncipe, Cuba. Sparing the lives of the two Spaniards who had chartered the boat, the Africans ordered them to sail in the direction of the rising sun back to their homeland—Sierra Leone. However, the Spaniards dismissed their instructions, only sailing towards the East during the day and to the West at night, in hopes of reaching a non-African shore and avoiding being intercepted by the Anti-Transatlantic trade commission. After two months, the Amistad was sighted and captured in Long Island by the United States Navy. One of the Spaniards spoke English, while an American lieutenant spoke Spanish. The Spaniards' version prevailed, hence, the Spaniards were released and the Africans incarcerated.

From the first court hearing, the Christian Abolitionists knew that an interpreter who could interpret the Mendi version was desperately needed. Otherwise, the gallows awaited the Africans back in Cuba. Abolitionists were aware that their antislavery movement needed a spark to ignite it. The Amistad Case provided just this. Quickly, they organized Amistad Committees in various cities to recruit an interpreter for the Mendi-captives through a safe and trustworthy network.

In early October 1839, James Covey, an African-Mende freed slave from England, was found. Yet, the intense search yielded many interpreters of many languages, spoken and signed, before and after, who attempted to communicate with the Africans to unearth the story. While the impact of the Amistad Case and story is well known in the United States, the key role of interpreters and the impact on the availability of interpreting services has not been explored.

This paper explores the multiple tools utilized in researching the recruitment process for court interpreters in the Amistad Case. Initially, research was based on depositions, court records and handwritten letters. Unanswered questions led to an expansion of research tools, such as church archives, interviews, newspapers, works of art and exploratory visits. This paper aims to study the role of the interpreter in this historical case by means of conventional and unconventional tools and to discuss relevant issues pertaining to the history of interpreting in research methodology, in order to unveil the role of court interpreters in past liberation struggles.