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譯者的能動性：以台灣譯者劉維人、林蔚昀與尉遲秀為例

Translators' Agency: Taiwanese Case Studies of Liu Weijen, Wei-Yun Lin, and Waits Xiu

王立柔

Rosa Li-jou Wang

指導教授：陳榮彬博士

Advisor: Richard Rong-bin Chen, Ph.D.

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摘要

數十年來，聚焦譯者主體性的學術研究逐漸增加，譯者的能見度也日益提升。然而，當譯者不再是徹底隱形的角色，是否就能提高自身在供應鏈中的地位，並且在世界上發揮影響力？為了考察譯者能如何根據自身意志與價值觀來採取行動、創造變革，本文爬梳譯者能動性、行動主義與副文本理論的相關研究，並採訪台灣譯者劉維人、林蔚昀和尉遲秀，探討他們如何透過翻譯工作與相關活動來改革社會、教育與翻譯產業。本文運用翻譯學與社會學觀點形塑訪談與分析結果，謹盼研究成果能讓譯者在思考職涯時有更多依據，並引發關於「譯者能動性」的進一步研究。

關鍵詞：能動性、行動主義、劉維人、林蔚昀、尉遲秀



Abstract

Over the past few decades, an increasing number of studies have delved into the subjectivity of translators, elevating their visibility and role. However, this enhanced recognition does not necessarily guarantee a higher status in the supply chain or a greater ability to effect change. To explore how translators can maximize their impact, this thesis draws on the research on translators' agency and activism along with the paratext theory. Most importantly, this thesis conducts interviews with three Taiwanese translators—Liu Weijen, Wei-Yun Lin, and Waits Xiu¹—who have leveraged their careers to improve society, education, and the translation industry. Through the lens of translation and sociological studies, this thesis analyzes the data from first-hand interviews, translations, and relevant activities, uncovering how the professional journeys of these translators demonstrate agency and activism. It is hoped that the findings will spark further research on this topic and inspire translators to incorporate the insights gained into their own career paths.

Keywords: agency, activism, Liu Weijen, Wei-Yun Lin, Waits Xiu

¹ Waits Xiu's real name is Jeng Li-chung, though he is better known by his pen name. The transliteration and capitalization of the translators' names are based on their respective preferences and may not conform to any specific romanization system. The same applies to the other individuals mentioned in the thesis, provided that their preferences are available.

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Chapter 1: Introduction




1.1 Research Motivation

The role of translators has become increasingly visible over the last few decades, with a growing body of research focusing on their subjectivity. Esteemed theorists such as Douglas Robinson, Lawrence Venuti, and Theo Hermans have all shed new light² on translators' presence in target texts. Taiwan has also seen a surge of translator-oriented research, highlighted by the landmark publication of *Taiwan's Translation History* (臺灣翻譯史). Outside of the academic world, translators are receiving unprecedented attention as well. In 2012, for instance, Taiwan's online bookstore giant "Books.com" (博客來) established a column³ for translators to share their professional views and experiences, with at least one article published every month. Moreover, the number of translation awards has risen across the world, some provided by prestigious universities.

While translators are given more credit for their work, I have personally felt undervalued and powerless while pursuing translation as a new career over the past few years. I began working as a freelance translator after being admitted to the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation (翻譯碩士學位學程) at National Taiwan University (臺灣大學) in 2020. From my own experience and the information I have gathered, translators often have little wiggle room in the supply chain. Take book translation as an example, translators do not have much influence on the

² Douglas Robinson's pioneering book *The Translator's Turn* was published in 1991, followed by Lawrence Venuti's book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* in 1995, and Theo Hermans' article "The Translator's Voice in Translated Narrative" in 1996.

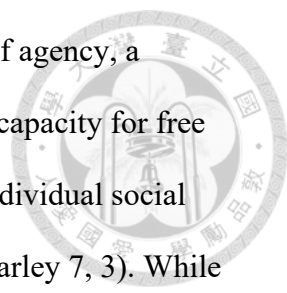
³ The column is "Life as a Translator" (譯界人生). More information: <https://okapi.books.com.tw/list/13>.



decision-making process regarding book selection and marketing strategies. They are rarely consulted about matters beyond text conversion, and are often excluded from book promotion activities. While Robinson's theory suggests that translators are essentially writers who draw inspirations from their own experiences and the world (*Who Translates* 3), the reality is that they are not widely recognized or treated as writers, if at all. Furthermore, while there are arguments stating that translation shapes literature and society by manipulating source texts (Bassnett and Lefevere vii–viii), the extent of rewriting is actually rather limited. Translations are expected to conform closely to the originals and are primarily evaluated by their fluency, which is coherent with Venuti's observation from three decades ago (Venuti 2).

On top of that, translators are often underpaid. Book publishers in Taiwan pay less than NT\$1 per word for English-to-Chinese translations, an average rate that has remained the same for decades despite the rising prices and cost of living⁴. This calls into question whether the remuneration for translation is adequate, especially considering the emphasis of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the importance of a fair income (“Decent Work”). Given the challenges of making a living, translators may hesitate to negotiate their fees or other conditions, for fear of jeopardizing future work opportunities. This, in my opinion, causes a vicious circle in the long run and implies a resemblance between freelance translators and “the precariat” defined by the economist Guy Standing. Similar to the precariat, translators face challenges such as stagnant wages, limited impact on the labor market, and constrained opportunities of achieving higher status (Standing 46–47).

⁴ I have learned about the pay rate from my experience, and confirmed it with professional translators including the interviewees for my thesis and the teachers of the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation at National Taiwan University. A news article in 2017 also suggests the same: <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/06/29/2003673531>.

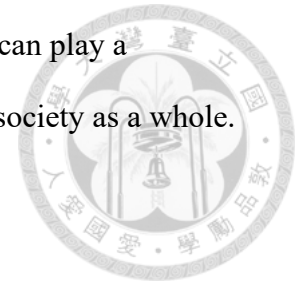


The above phenomena can be discussed from the perspective of agency, a concept commonly used in sociology. Agency refers to “individual capacity for free thought and action,” and action refers to “any unit or sequence of individual social activity that is purposeful and involves deliberation” (Bruce and Yearley 7, 3). While translators generally have a limited level of agency, the unconventional case of Howard Goldblatt (葛浩文) can help us understand the factors that contribute to agency. Howard Goldblatt, acclaimed as the “midwife of Chinese literature,” has not only achieved success in translation but also enriched the field of literary studies with fresh perspectives. Moreover, he has been incredibly proactive in seeking translation opportunities and promoting Chinese literature. His remarkable career has garnered recognition and become a prominent topic in academia, attracting researchers to dig into his work approach that contributes to his esteem and status, which will be further explored in the next section.

However, there are still some research gaps in the agency-related research within the translation field. The translator-oriented studies in Taiwan tend to focus on translators’ skills and personal lives rather than their ability to effect change, such as *The Translator Yu Guangzhong* (翻譯家余光中) by Shan Te-hsing (單德興). Additionally, studies often center around the period of Martial Law instead of more recent decades. Lai Tzu-yun’s (賴慈芸) research investigates the circulating translated books in post-War Taiwan to restore the identities of the “ghost translators” whose names were omitted or changed by the publishing houses due to political restrictions (Lai 64). Similarly, Daphne Qi-rong Chang (張綺容) digs into the translators’ stories in the early years of the Martial Law period (Chang 1–43).

Given the above concerns and discussions, this thesis conducts case studies of three Taiwanese translators who have exhibited a relatively high level of agency over

the past one or two decades. The goal is to explore how translators can play a proactive role in driving changes within the translation industry or society as a whole.



1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Translators' Agency and Activism

In addition to “individual capacity for free thought and action” (Bruce and Yearley 3, 7), agency can also be understood as “the willingness and ability to act,” as concluded in a translation symposium in 2008 (Kinnunen and Koskinen 4). This symposium was organized in response to the increasing incorporation of sociological and translation research in the 2000s (Wolf 8). The conclusions from the event also indicate an intrinsic relation between agency and power, which aligns with Anthony Giddens’ statement that power is the “transformative capacity” facilitating individuals to achieve their intended outcomes (Kinnunen and Koskinen 6, Giddens 88).

Translators, however, have a history of struggling for agency. The research of Lawrence Wang-chi Wong (王宏志) suggests that translators were held in contempt in ancient China as their work involved the “barbarians” (2). They were not trusted by the rulers and were even suspected of treason during wars due to their ability to communicate with enemies (2). Chinese translators held such a low status that they found it difficult to make contributions to society (2), which, in this thesis, can be interpreted as a lack of agency.

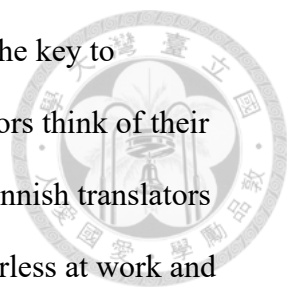
As it entered the late Qing period, some intellectuals started to utilize translation as a tool for political reform (Cheung 237–58). One notable instance was *A Chronicle of the Black Slaves' Appeals to Heaven* (黑奴籲天錄), originally written by the American author Harriet Beecher Stowe as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (湯姆叔叔的小屋)

(252). The Chinese version was translated by Lin Shu (林紓) and Wei Yi (魏易), and also prefaced by them with patriotic appeals for standing up against Westerners (252). The esteemed scholar Liang Qichao (梁啟超) also translated political novels to enlighten the public, achieving a certain degree of success despite the limited number of his translations (249).

Translation became increasingly intertwined with activism, namely the action taken to “challenge the status quo” and “effect change” (Cheung 253, 240). Yan Fu (嚴復), for instance, was viewed as an “activist translator” who pursued goals of “saving the nation, opposing autocratic monarchy, and strengthening the country” (X. Wang 170–85). Translation also played a significant role in various movements outside of China, including the liberation movement in Hispanic America, the Islamic Marxist movement in Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (171).

It is important to highlight that while activism, or the action taken to bring about change, is commonly associated with major social movements or political transformations, it can also take the form of small-scale civic engagement (Okuma 334–48). Civic engagement refers to “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference” and encompasses all the activities of “promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich vi). When individuals begin to address the underlying causes of their “vague sense of discontent or disturbance” with the world (Okuma 336), it leads to civic engagement. Thus, activism can be straightforwardly defined as an individual’s response to their perception of social issues, presented through civic engagement.

In addition, while most of the aforementioned references are related to politics, agency does not necessarily have to involve a political agenda. Agency can be as simple as the “internal powers and capacities” that allow individuals to actively



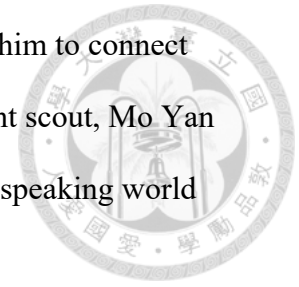
engage in the ongoing events around them (Barnes 25). Therefore, the key to understanding one's action lies in their minds (25). How do translators think of their roles? How does it affect their agency? The interviews with eight Finnish translators conducted between 2005 and 2009 show that half of them felt powerless at work and more than half believed that they were underpaid and undervalued (Abdallah 41–42). These findings are similar to another survey in which 85% of 116 respondents felt unappreciated (26). Translators are often met with a wide range of obstacles at work, such as inadequate information resulting from a lack of direct contact with clients, and they often fail to act on their own terms (19–22, 41).

1.2.2 Key Factors Behind Agency

Translators often encounter challenges that limit their agency, and yet there is the inspiring story of Howard Goldblatt that allows us to explore the opposite. Goldblatt has translated countless works of contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese literature to the Western world over the past decades, and has won critical acclaim for both the authors and himself. He has been incredibly proactive throughout his career, attracting researchers to delve into his background and work approach that contributes to a remarkable level of agency.

As a literary translator, some of his projects were initiated by him, while others commissioned by authors or publishers. In any case, he has demonstrated a strong preference for only working on books that intrigue him (Ji 47). He is picky when it comes to translation, believing that it is not worthwhile to work on a poorly-written book (Goldblatt, "Literature and Translators" 103). For instance, he has translated a significant number of the works of Chinese writers Mo Yan (莫言) and Bi Feiyu (畢飛宇), as he deeply admires them (Ji 47–49). In Mo Yan's case, he actively sought

permission from the writer to translate his novels, and even helped him to connect with a publisher. In hindsight, if Goldblatt had not been such a talent scout, Mo Yan might not have had the opportunity to be introduced to the English-speaking world and win the Nobel Prize.



As for Taiwanese literature, he was determined to translate Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife* (殺夫) right after he finished reading it. He contacted the writer through a mutual friend, and successfully secured her permission to translate the novel (Goldblatt, *From American Military Officer* 164–65). It turned out that the English version made a profound impact, with some American universities starting to use it in the courses. Furthermore, Goldblatt came to read *Notes of a Desolate Man* (荒人手記) written by Zhu Tianwen (朱天文) upon the recommendation of the eminent literary critic David Der-Wei Wang (王德威). He developed a deep interest in the novel and agreed to translate it in collaboration with Sylvia Li-chun Lin (林麗君) (173). Their rendition won the Translation of the Year Award from the American Literary Translators Association in 1999.

It is evident that Goldblatt has been highly proactive and achieved great success in various aspects during his career. Past research suggests that this can be attributed to his creation of paratexts, multiple roles, and strong professional networks.

The Creation of Paratexts

The paratext theory proposed by Gérard Genette can be used to discuss Goldblatt's case. While translated texts themselves can be defined as paratexts, they can also give rise to additional elements, such as translators' prefaces (Batchelor 20–22). Translators are typically unnoticeable, but they have the potential to enhance

their visibility or challenge the power structure by creating paratexts for the original texts (Venuti 1, Batchelor 32–34).

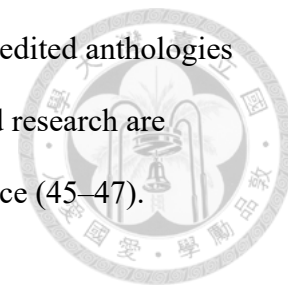
Goldblatt has created a diverse range of paratexts, such as translator's prefaces, literary research, memoirs, and interviews. For instance, as the translator of *The Butcher's Wife* (殺夫), he praised the work as "daring and powerful" in the "Translators' Note," a paratext likely to influence the reader's experience. His large body of research on the late Chinese writer Xiao Hong (蕭紅) inspired a research trend in the academia of China that ultimately elevated the writer's literary status (Jiang 68–71). Additionally, he edited several anthologies featuring his translations and literary critiques, including *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused: Fiction from Today's China*, *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature* (哥倫比亞現代中文文學選集), and *Worlds Apart: Recent Chinese Writing and Its Audiences*. He also wrote articles and participated in interviews on translation and literature, many of which are listed in the appendix of *Translation Studies on Howard Goldblatt* (葛浩文翻譯研究), a representative collection focusing on this influential translator.

These paratexts have made his voice impossible to ignore, and made a profound impact within the field of literature.

Multiple Roles

Other than being a translator, Goldblatt has also been a literary researcher, professor, and editor. His multiple roles are a great advantage for his career (J. Zhang 41). His teaching job ensures a stable income and grants him the necessary time for translation work, and his literary research serves as the foundation for his translation career (43–45). Beginning his study of Chinese literature in the 1970s, his research has equipped him with the necessary skills, motivation, and literary taste, enabling

him to select significant works for translation (43–45). He has also edited anthologies to promote Chinese literature, in which some of his translations and research are collected, showcasing his works and perspectives to a wider audience (45–47).



Professional Networks

Goldblatt has developed a strong personal network that is beneficial for his career (Xie 154). During the time he worked for *The Chinese PEN Quarterly* (中華民國筆會季刊)⁵, *Renditions: A Chinese-English Translation Magazine* (譯叢)⁶, *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series* (台灣文學英譯叢刊)⁷, and the China International Publishing Group (中國外文出版發行事業局)⁸, he established positive relationships with leading figures in the literary community (154).

In summary, the translator's exceptional work and extensive connections has led to his success (Xie 154), highlighting the efficacy of combining cultural capital and social capital. Cultural capital refers to the assets in terms of education and culture, and social capital refers to the connections with others in society or a group (Y. Wang 7–8).

⁵ *The Chinese PEN Quarterly* (中華民國筆會季刊) was established in 1972 by the Chinese P.E.N. Centers, aiming to promote contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese literature to the global audience.

⁶ *Renditions: A Chinese-English Translation Magazine* (譯叢) has been published by the Research Centre for Translation of The Chinese University of Hong Kong since 1973. It is the leading international journal of Chinese literature in English translation, covering over two thousand years of Chinese literature across various genres.

⁷ *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series* (台灣文學英譯叢刊) was founded in 1996 as a biannual journal by the Forum for the Study of World Literatures in Chinese of the University of California, Santa Barbara. The journal aims to familiarize the English-speaking world with the viewpoints of Taiwanese writers and researchers, as well as the recent publications of Taiwanese literature.

⁸ The China International Publishing Group (CIPG) (中國外文出版發行事業局) was established in 1949 by the PRC government with the mission to promote greater understanding of China worldwide through books, magazines and websites. Annually, the CIPG publishes over 5,000 books and 30 periodicals in more than 40 languages, distributing them to more than 180 countries and regions.

1.3 Research Methods



This thesis focuses on the careers of three Taiwanese translators who have demonstrated a significant degree of agency in recent decades. The selection of subjects is guided by the definition of agency as the “willingness and ability to act,” coupled with the realization that activism can manifest as small-scale civic engagement (Kinnunen and Koskinen 4, Okuma 334–48). As for civic engagement, this thesis adopts the definition stated in Ehrlich’s work, which refers to “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference” (Ehrlich vi).

The translators who are suitable and available for this study are Liu Weijen (劉維人), Wei-Yun Lin (林蔚昀), and Jeng Li-chung (鄭立中). Jeng is better known by his pen name Waits Xiu (尉遲秀). To complete the case studies, I conducted interviews with these translators separately through phone calls and in-person meetings, and also collected data from their translations and paratexts, past statements available in their writings, and the records of their translation-related events. In the case of Liu Weijen, one of his regular co-translators also participated in the interviews. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with a publishing editor and an advocate for gender equality, seeking a more comprehensive analysis of the positive impact made by these translators.

Liu Weijen, the first subject selected for this study, uses translation as a practice of civic engagement. As of August 2023, he has translated and co-translated over 70 books in various fields such as history, philosophy, politics, sociology, and natural sciences. One of his notable characteristics is his tendency to create a significant

number of paratexts and to actively participate in events exploring the themes and issues of the original books. He emphasizes this agenda in his own words, “I engage in public discussion on contemporary democracy and other issues through translation” (Liu, “Liu Weijen”).



Wei-Yun Lin, the first Taiwanese who received Cultural Contribution Medal from the Polish Ministry of Culture, has leveraged her role as a translator to establish a “bridge” between different cultures. She not only translate valuable Polish books but also conducts intercultural research, delving into topics such as the historical backgrounds of places in Poland associated with Taiwan, and the importance of culture in shaping a nation’s image.

The French translator Jeng Li-chung, commonly known as Waits Xiu (尉遲秀), is renowned for translating the Czech-French writer Milan Kundera’s (米蘭·昆德拉) novels. However, his contribution go beyond the field of serious literature. He has also translated a wide range of picture books with a positive impact on children’s education. Furthermore, he is the president of the Association Taiwanaise des Traducteurs de Français (台灣法語譯者協會, hereafter Taiwanese Association of French Translators), an organization committed to enhancing the overall translation quality and fostering stronger connections among translators.

As the key to understanding one’s action lies in their thoughts and beliefs (Barnes 25), the interviews are conducted to explore the values and mindsets of these translators. Among the factors in terms of their agency, this thesis places particular emphasis on the paratexts they create, considering that translators’ paratexts can be extremely influential and that they are often shaped by translators’ identity and beliefs. For instance, numerous feminist books in South Korea are translated by women who have a good grasp of feminism and actively participate in political activism (S. Lee 6). These translators frequently add prefaces to the translations,

providing insights into the author's life and feminist perspectives, and sharing their personal stories to inspire readers to engage in feminist activism (6). In recent years, their paratexts have functioned as a form of "feminist (re)writing," contributing to the remarkable increase in the sales of feminism-themed books and South Korea's ongoing transformation into a gender-conscious society (S. Lee 1–2, 12). By creating paratexts that align with their beliefs, the translators

conveyed messages about how Korean women's experiences could be interwoven with the author's feminism. Furthermore, they have acted as feminists by denouncing misogynists and asking readers to join forces to confront the patriarchal reality. (S. Lee 12)

In addition, as action is affected by various forces and agents that are entangled with one another (Latour 44), this research also examines the social connections that the translators possess or establish, including their relationships with editors, fellow translators, or family members.

1.4 Results

Liu Weijun believes that every individual has the potential to bring about change, and he has leveraged his role as a translator to participate in civic engagement. Believing that translation can serve as a means of "knowledge promotion," he employs various strategies, such as creating paratexts and engaging in events, to stimulate discussion on the themes and issues addressed in the books he translates. He has also cultivated valuable professional connections that help amplify his influence and elevate his position in the supply chain.

Wei-Yun Lin has actively exercised agency throughout the creation of a translated book, from book selection, subsidy acquisition, to promotion activities. Her

efforts have helped the Taiwanese audience connect with different cultures and visions, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of the existing issues in their own society. Additionally, she conducts intercultural research from new perspectives, helping to bridge the gaps between diverse cultural, historical, and political contexts.

Waits Xiu has enhanced education by translating picture books that address various important issues, and fostered collective growth among his fellow translators through his involvement in the Taiwanese Association of French Translators. Notably, he has a personal brand, shaped by his activist endeavors outside of translation, unintentionally deepens his influence in matters related to translation.

In summary, these translators are strongly driven to make meaningful changes in society or their professional community, and have achieved a certain degree of success. The upcoming chapters present the case studies of their unique journeys in detail.

Chapter 2: Liu Weijen



This chapter looks into the career of the Taiwanese translator Liu Weijen (劉維人), who plays an active role in civic engagement through his translation work.

The data for this chapter is collected from the interviews I conducted with him on December 8, 2022, and March 27, 2023⁹, during which his regular co-translator Beatrice Liao (廖珮杏)¹⁰ joined as well. Moreover, the data is derived from his translations and paratexts, as well as past statements available in his writings or work-related events. An additional interview was conducted with an editor to assess the effects of his involvement.

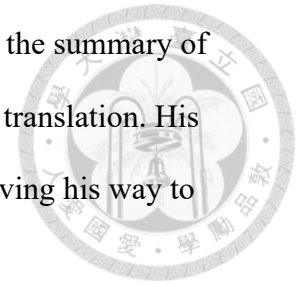
Born in 1984, Liu Weijen majored in life science and studied philosophy of mind courses at National Taiwan Normal University (國立臺灣師範大學), received his master's degree in Creative Writing and English Literature from National Dong Hwa University (國立東華大學), and worked with his father in developing electrical wires for several years. He stumbled upon book translation because of a friend at the age of 32, which has since become his career.

In the early stages of his translation career, he not only translated the assigned books, such as *The Mega Mind* (大玩算數), *The Big Book of Bugs* (蟲蟲大書) and *The Caped Crusade: Batman and The Rise of Nerd Culture* (超級英雄是這樣煉成的：蝙蝠俠崛起與進擊的宅文化), but also took the initiative to recommend books he wanted to translate to the publishing editors. A successful example is *The Dream of Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Philosophy* (被誤讀的哲學家：從笛卡兒、

⁹ I conducted a phone interview with Liu Weijen (劉維人) via Messenger on December 8, 2022, and an in-person interview at Guiren Tearton (桂人、茶、藝所) in Shulin District, New Taipei City, on March 27, 2023. Beatrice Liao (廖珮杏) participated in both interviews as a valuable contributor.

¹⁰ Liu Weijen (劉維人) and Beatrice Liao (廖珮杏) have been working together to translate books, create paratexts, and organize related events over the past few years.

霍布斯到盧梭), for which he prepared a 14-page report containing the summary of each chapter, an analysis of sales pros and cons, and a brief sample translation. His pitch won him the opportunity to translate the philosophic book, paving his way to work on more social science books that resonate with his passion.



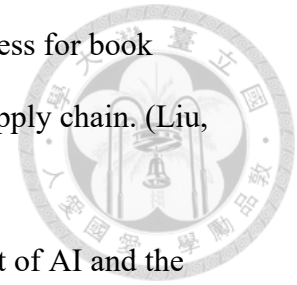
2.1 The Pursuit of Career Growth

While the aspiring translator enjoyed his job, he soon became aware of two major threats to his career growth that prompted him to take action: the rising popularity of machine translation, and the risk of becoming “stuck” on a single project for a considerable period of time (Liu, Interview on Mar. 27).

Given that AI was able to produce unpolished but readable translations of informative texts, Liu came to realize that in order to stay competitive, human translators needed to go beyond mere language conversion and explore ways to distinguish themselves from machines (Interview on Mar. 27). He also became aware of the financial challenges faced by freelancers, especially book translators, who often have to wait for payment after the whole project is completed or the book is published. Alongside these financial struggles, he occasionally had to decline new assignments while working on a book, fearing that it might jeopardize potential long-term and stable opportunities. He felt deeply concerned about missing out on these opportunities, as he intended to develop expertise in specific domains. Similar to journalists who have their own beats, he planned to accumulate knowledge, develop sources, and build connections with experts in certain fields. This, according to him, could potentially enhance both his skills and his position in the supply chain:

If translators have more practical knowledge and know what society needs, publishers are more likely to consider them as “quasi-experts.” As a result,

translators will have a greater say in the decision-making process for book publication, rather than just being in the downstream of the supply chain. (Liu, Interview on Dec. 8)



Therefore, he has developed several strategies to address the impact of AI and the time-consuming nature of book translation over the past few years, striving for more time and freedom to create additional value beyond language conversion.

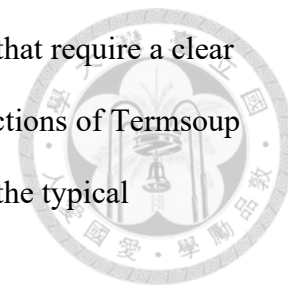
Liu leverages AI and new technologies to maximize his productivity (Interview on Mar. 27). He uses machine translators, including DeepL and Google Translate, to quickly grasp the main idea of a text or tackle the English sentences with overly complex structures. He then employs the Termsoup¹¹ system, a Taiwanese-invented translation assistance software, to facilitate his translation process. He also consults ChatGPT¹², a natural language processing tool powered by AI technology and launched in 2022, to come up with synonyms if needed. Although he continues to primarily translate the texts on his own instead of post-editing machine translations, the technological assistance still makes a great difference, enabling him to have achieved a new record of translating 1,700 Chinese characters from English per hour.

To further expedite the book translation process, he resorts to collaboration with other translators rather than the conventional method of “working his butt off” (Interview on Mar. 27). Thanks to the emergence of new technology tools, collective translation has become a feasible approach. Liu and his co-translators use Termsoup to create shared glossaries, leave notes to discuss translations with each another, or apply “translation memory” to reference previous translations when similar content reappears. Although the software is unable to unite different writing styles, it is still

¹¹ Termsoup is a translation management system software that aids translators in project management, collaboration, and workflow optimization. It was launched by Taiwanese entrepreneurs Joanne Chou (周群英) and Vincent Li (李偉俠) in 2016. For more information, please see <https://termsoup.com/>.

¹² For more information about ChatGPT, please see <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt>.

advantageous for Liu, as he primarily works on non-literary books that require a clear and concise writing style without personal embellishment. The functions of Termsoup allow them to produce coherent and consistent translations despite the typical challenges of collective translation.

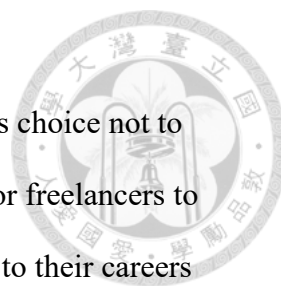


Two of the successful examples are *Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe* (末日：致命瘟疫、核災、戰爭與經濟崩盤，災難對人類社會的啟示) and *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism, and Identity Politics is Destroying American Democracy* (西方的自殺：人性本能如何反噬西方文明). Both of them are co-translated by Liu Weijen, Beatrice Liao (廖珮杏), and Djin Lu (盧靜). Interestingly, their division of work is also unconventional (Interview on Mar. 27). Instead of assigning chapters in sequential order, the division is based on their individual interests and expertise.

Collaborative translation has proven to be highly effective to the extent that they highlight it in their self-introductions in the Chinese version of *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism, and Identity Politics is Destroying American Democracy* (西方的自殺：人性本能如何反噬西方文明). Their self-introductions include the statement, “The three translators have been working together as a translation team since 2021,” and lists their previous joint translations, including three books and several board games¹³. They hope that through this gesture, they can attract more publishers to assign them joint translation projects, as well as expand and strengthen their team by recruiting more translators.

2.2 The Goal of Knowledge Promotion

¹³ The books are *Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World* (後疫情效應), *Difficult Choices: Taiwan's Quest for Security and the Good Life* (艱難的抉擇), and *Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe* (末日). As for board games, they translated three out of the four games in *Chronicles of Crime: The Millennium Series Bundle* (推理事件簿：千年三部曲大全套), and *The Witcher: Old World* (巫師：舊世界).



Following his increased productivity, Liu has made a conscious choice not to proportionally increase his workload. He believes in the necessity for freelancers to allocate time for creative pursuits, which can bring additional value to their careers and yield long-term benefits.

“I engage in public discussion on contemporary democracy and other issues through translation,” says the self-introduction provided by Liu on several websites¹⁴. Liu has been investing his time and effort in becoming “a node or hub of the knowledge network,” working to generate interest and foster discussion on the themes explored in the books (Liu, Interview on Mar. 27). To achieve this goal that he refers to as “knowledge promotion,” he has produced a large number of paratexts, including book prefaces or introductions, commentary articles, and videos. He has also participated in or organized events to do so. His practice of knowledge promotion can be fully illustrated through the following examples.

2.2.1 Promotion of *On Tyranny* (暴政)

This book originated from a Facebook post. A week after Donald Trump won the US presidential election in 2016, the celebrated American historian Timothy Snyder shared his comments on his Facebook (Illing). The post created a buzz and became widely discussed by the media, as the Yale professor implied that Americans were standing on a tipping point, much like the Europeans did during the twentieth century when “democracy yielded to fascism, Nazism, or communism” (Snyder). Urging Americans to protect their democratic institutions, he listed “twenty lessons from the

¹⁴ For more information, please see Liu Weijen’s self-introduction on the website of Commonwealth Publishing Group (天下文化), <https://bookzone.cwgv.com.tw/author/13027>. Accessed Jan. 11, 2023.

twentieth century” and wove his suggestions into them. With these ideas further developed, he published *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (暴政：掌控關鍵年代的獨裁風潮，洞悉時代之惡的 20 堂課, hereafter *On Tyranny*) in the following year (Illing). The Chinese version was published in Taiwan in May 2019.

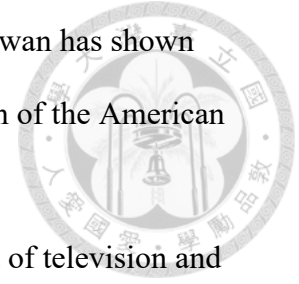
As the translator of *On Tyranny*, Liu has been excited about its significant potential from the very beginning (Liu, Interview on Mar. 27). Believing that Snyder’s insights would prove to be increasingly relevant in the near future, he made a great effort to boost its exposure.

A week before the translation was released, he appeared as a guest on *Formosa TV Taiwan Lecture Hall* (民視台灣學堂)¹⁵ under the arrangement of the publisher. The 30-minute episode was titled “What Contributed to the Creation of *On Tyranny*” (為什麼會有論暴政這本書) and hosted by Ye Hao (葉浩), the associate professor in politics at the National Chengchi University (國立政治大學). In the show, Liu drew on his understanding of psychology to elaborate on Snyder’s perspectives, suggesting that the information environment plays a vital role in shaping one’s mindset. He also reminded that people in today’s Taiwan may also have the “cognitive bias” discussed in the book, meaning that they have a tendency to avoid mental chaos by justifying unreasonable beliefs or actions.

After the Chinese version was released, Liu once again drew parallels between Taiwan and the context of the book. Published on Mingrentang (鳴人堂), an affiliated platform with the United Daily News (UDN), his article “Standing up to Defend the Ordinary Lives is the Greatest Weapon Against Tyranny” (挺身捍衛平凡的小日

¹⁵ *Formosa TV Taiwan Lecture Hall* (民視台灣學堂) is a TV show that has been airing since 2017, featuring discussions that delve into topics ranging from art, history, philosophy to current events within and beyond the scope of Taiwan.

子，就是對抗獨裁暴政的最大武器) explicitly points out that Taiwan has shown signs of democratic regression that are similar to Snyder's depiction of the American society:



As fake news continues to surge, it has infiltrated every aspect of television and the Internet, and has become increasingly sophisticated... The internal conflicts within society have escalated into hatred, and the divisions between groups with opposing opinions have rapidly deteriorated. People have gone from simply disagreeing with each other to becoming irreconcilable enemies, leaving no room for discussion or negotiation.... (Liu, "Standing up to Defend")

His article also delivers passionate messages:

Let's step outside and guard these values... The more we value the simple truth and distrust the grand lies, the more we refuse to trade away our autonomy. The more we reject being represented by anyone else and the more we are willing to give each other the space to think and try, the weaker dictators and authoritarian governments become and the farther tyranny is away from us. (Liu, "Standing up to Defend")

As time went on, the world witnessed a growing number of events relevant to the themes of *On Tyranny*, such as the anti-extradition bill movement in Hong Kong. Starting in June 2019, thousands of protesters took to the streets every weekend, expressing concern over the encroachment of China's central government on the semi-autonomy of the region (Ives). The demonstrations made headlines around the world, followed by China's violent crackdown that drew criticism from part of the international community. By the time Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam (林鄭月娥) finally announced to withdraw the bill in September, it was too late to appease the protesters who had endured several months of police brutality, frequent arrests, and prosecutions (Zhao). Their momentum did not wane but even intensified, propelling

the movement into an unprecedented scale with an anti-authoritarian undertone (Yeung).

Liu, who closely monitored the situation in Hong Kong, used the movement as a reference during the 45-minute episode “Translator Liu Weijen Talks About *On Tyranny*” (譯者劉維人談《暴政》) on the News98 radio channel in November 2019. When the host Yin Naijing (尹乃菁) asked him about the author’s seventh lesson, “Be Reflective If You Must Be Armed,” Liu said that the systemic violence of police and military in modern nations must be perceived and taken seriously. Such violence, he elaborated, could potentially rear its head when police officers and soldiers are assigned missions under the guise of maintaining public safety. The examples include not only the crackdown in Hong Kong but also the shooting of a migrant worker by a Taiwanese police officer¹⁶. In Liu’s opinion, these incidents share a common thread of structural injustice with the Holocaust despite their difference in scope.

It becomes evident that Liu has used the book to address real-world challenges, rather than merely promoting it. His article “Why Did Han Kuo-yu’s Appearance on *The Night Night Show with Brian Tseng* Attract Attention from Young Swing Voters?” (韓國瑜上博恩夜夜秀，為何能吸引年輕中間選民關注?), published on the platform of Mingrentang (鳴人堂), further illustrates this point. The article criticizes the prevalent flippant attitude towards politics in Taiwan. It denounces the production team of *The Night Night Show with Brian Tseng* (博恩夜夜秀), as they played right into the hands of shallow politicians and failed to generate meaningful discussion related to public interest and national security. The article ends with a

¹⁶ On August 31, 2017, 27-year-old Vietnamese migrant worker Nguyen Quoc Phi (阮國非) was shot nine times and killed by police officer Chen Chung-wen (陳崇文) in Hsinchu County, Taiwan. The incident sparked heated discussions about excessive use of law enforcement and the lack of intervening of EMTs. It also inspired the creation of *And Miles Before I Go to Sleep* (九槍), a documentary that won the Golden Horse Award for Best Documentary in 2022.

quote from *On Tyranny*, introduced by Liu's cautionary statement: "No matter who you are, if you cannot use power responsibly, give it up. And no matter who you are, you must know how to tell facts from jokes" (Liu, "Why Did Han Kuo-yu's Appearance"). The quote then serves as a warning against becoming a mouthpiece for those in power and authority, and this incorporation of Liu's own translation gives the editorial article more impact and depth.

2.2.2 Promotion of *Against Democracy* (反民主)

The controversial book *Against Democracy* (反民主：選票失能、理性失調，反思最神聖制度的狂亂與神話) is authored by the American political philosopher Jason Brennan, with its Chinese version published in Taiwan in 2018. It has stirred up heated debate across the world, and Liu, for one, does not fully agree with the author's views. However, he acknowledges that the book provides valuable insights into political and social issues.

Democracy is commonly defined as a rule by ordinary people. However, the book suggests that it would be better if most people stay out of politics, for they are either "hobbits" or "hooligans" (6). The author uses "hobbits" to refer to those with little knowledge or opinion on politics, such as the non-voters in the US, while "hooligans" have strong political views but fail to form persuasive or rational arguments (4–5). Brennan also describes hooligans as "rabid sports fans of politics" because they are highly hostile to different opinions (5). As for the small number of citizens who are neither ignorant nor irrational, the author terms them as "vulcans." This group of people tend to engage with politics thoughtfully, able to respect and understand the perspectives in conflict with their own (5). While most decision makers in a democratic society are hobbits and hooligans, the book contends that they

are likely to cause harmful effects out of ignorance, bias, irrationality, and even immorality (6, 230). The author recommends epistocracy, which means “the rule of the knowledgeable,” as an alternative to democracy in pursuit of just results (14, 230).

After Liu finished translating the book, he wrote two articles on Mingrentang (鳴人堂) to discuss Brennan’s ideas: “Translator’s Note on *Against Democracy* (Part I): Can Epistocracy Make Society More Just?” (《反民主》譯後記(上)：知識菁英投票制讓社會更正義?) and “Translator’s Note on *Against Democracy* (Part II): The Plight of Epistocracy and New Direction for Democracy” (《反民主》譯後記(下)：知識菁英制的困境與民主制的出路). While aiming to boost the book’s sales, his articles adopt a critical approach to the author’s arguments:

Even if we accept the author’s philosophical arguments, it does not necessarily mean that we have to accept his recommendation, namely that the epistocracy would be better than democracy. Overall, I believe the book’s critique of democracy is valid and sound, but most of the ideas about epistocracy we have seen so far would likely lead to worse outcomes than democracy. (Liu,

“Translator’s Note on *Against Democracy* (Part I))

In addition to cautioning against the risks of epistocracy, Liu’s articles indicate that the book fails to thoroughly explore the causes of democratic issues or propose possible remedies, and that it overlooks the potential harm to vulnerable groups under epistocracy. Instead of placing hopes on an untested system, Liu’s own suggestions are presented in the articles:

We might as well promote civic, social science, or philosophy education, and gradually change the authoritarian culture in schools, cultivating democratic literacy from an early age. We can also examine how information is disseminated and what hinders public trust in current democratic societies. We can encourage reporting on the decision-making process of public affairs, which

may make this process more transparent.... (Liu, “Translator’s Note on *Against Democracy* (Part II))

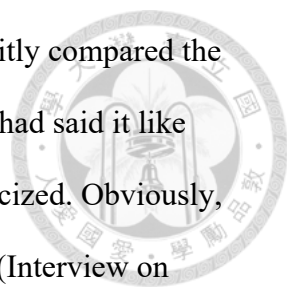
Given the above excerpts, Liu’s paratexts are clearly a form of social commentary rather than mere book reviews. His paratexts inspire the audience with the combination of his insights and the author’s perspectives.

Apart from writing articles, Liu participated in public gatherings organized by the publishing house to promote the book. As an invited speaker, he engaged in a discussion on global political issues with the politics professor Ye Hao (葉浩) at Café Philo on August 17, 2018. He had another conversation that focused more on Taiwan with Zhu Jiaan (朱家安), the founder of the Simple Philosophy Lab (簡單哲學實驗室), at Satoyama Café¹⁷ on August 30, 2018.

It is worth noting that during the period, Taiwan happened to be confronted with a series of challenges that might prompt people to question the essence of democracy. For instance, the Happiness of the Next Generation Alliance (下一代幸福聯盟), a group opposing same-sex marriage and gender diversity education, had proposed a referendum to maintain the limited definition of marriage. This referendum, though, provoked doubts about its legitimacy (P. Liu), as the legal failure to allow same-sex permanent unions had already been ruled unconstitutional and must be remedied by legislation no later than May 24, 2019¹⁸ (Hunt). Given the illegitimacy of the referendum, coupled with the illogical and biased discourse of the anti-gay-marriage groups (J. Huang), Liu subtly implied a connection between Brennan’s arguments and

¹⁷ Café Philo (慕哲咖啡) and Satoyama Café (里山咖啡) were both located in Taipei City and well-known for frequently hosting events where participants engaged in public discussions. Café Philo changed ownership and transformed into TouatBooks (左轉有書) in 2016, while Satoyama Café ended its business in 2020. Event information: Linking Books Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/linkingbooks/photos/a.246247482124/10156921266832125/?type=3&source=57&locale2=es_LA&refid=52) and Phiphicake Blogspot (<https://phiphicake.blogspot.com/2018/08/830.html>). Accessed May 1 2023.

¹⁸ Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage by passing the Enforcement Act of Judicial Yuan Interpretation No. 748 on May 17, 2019.




these phenomena (Interview on Mar. 27). However, he never explicitly compared the conservatives to “hobbits” or “hooligans” in open discussions. “If I had said it like that, I would have become one of those hooligans that Brennan criticized. Obviously, I wanted to be a vulcan. Why would I ever want to be a hooligan?” (Interview on Mar. 27). Liu clarified that using such labels in real-world situations would only escalate conflicts between different groups and thereby make himself a “hooligan.” In other words, his translation work had a dual impact on his political perspectives and action, reinforcing his assertive yet inclusive attitude during public discussions.

2.2.3 Promotion of *The Nordic Model of Social Democracy* (北歐不是神話)

In 2021, Liu’s translation of *The Nordic Model of Social Democracy* (北歐不是神話：一套打造永續幸福國度的方法論) was published in Taiwan. The book analyzes how the Nordic countries have built a strong economy without sacrificing social equality and environmental sustainability. These nations are often ranked as the happiest in the world, and their citizens enjoy a robust social welfare system, short working hours, and high incomes.

Aside from providing a translator’s note¹⁹ in the Chinese version, which elaborates on the possible methods for Taiwan to transform into such a utopia (Liu and Liao 30–31), Liu was invited to organize and host a course based on the book at Yu Dian (與點堂), an online school established in 2021. Collaborating with Beatrice Liao, Liu designed a four-week course that took place in December, 2021, with a two-

¹⁹ While Liu is the credited translator of *Nordic Model of Social Democracy* (北歐不是神話：一套打造永續幸福國度的方法論), he maintained close discussions with Beatrice Liao (廖珮杏) throughout the translation process and co-wrote the “Translator’s Notes” with her. They also worked together in designing the course at Yu Dian (與點堂).




hour class once a week. The course was taught by Wu Qizhen (吳啓禎)²⁰, the expert reviewer of the book, and Hong Jingshu (洪敬舒)²¹, one of the recommenders of the book. The course aimed to provide an understanding of the social and economic systems of advanced Western countries, and encourage students to propose solutions to the existing challenges in Taiwan (Yu Dian, “Course Introduction”). A total of 16 students enrolled in the course, with each student paying a tuition fee of NT\$2000. The tuition fees were divided between Liu and the online school as remuneration, turning his practice of knowledge promotion into not only an expression of values but also a financially rewarding endeavor.

2.3 Analysis

Liu leverages his role as a translator to participate in public discussions and motivate others to do the same. While he refers to his actions as “knowledge promotion,” it can also be viewed as a form of civic engagement, which, as mentioned before, is defined as “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference” (Ehrlich vi). Furthermore, as activism can be summarized as an individual’s response to their perception of social issues, his strong attempt and proactive efforts to address real-world challenges can be interpreted as a high degree of activism.

²⁰ Wu Qizhen (吳啓禎) is the director of Foundation for Future Generations. He has a PhD in Economics from the School of Oriental and African Studies at University of London.

²¹ Hong Jingshu (洪敬舒) is the director of the Taiwan Labour Front (台灣勞工陣線), a non-profit organization that advocates the rights and interests of workers. He also serves as the chairman of the Tainan Sprout, an association committed to fostering civic participation in politics.



As for the impact of his actions, based on my interview with Liang Yen Chiao (梁燕樵)²², a former editor at the Business Weekly Publishing (商周出版) from May 2019 to April 2023, translators' efforts can indeed play an effective role in enhancing the readability and appeal of certain books in translation. Although numerous books from abroad hold significant value, Taiwanese readers may need appropriate guidance or introduction to the themes rooted in unfamiliar cultures and societies (Liang). Publishing editors, though, often lack the time and budget to promote every book, and they face particular limitations when it comes to foreign books. Since inviting authors to events in Taiwan is expensive, editors have to find alternatives that are more affordable or even free. They often send book excerpts to media outlets to see if they would be interested in publishing them, or send books to key opinion leaders (KOLs) to see if they would recommend them on their platforms. Other methods include creating captivating belly bands for the books, or collaborating with bookstores to present them in unique ways. Considering the limited marketing strategies for translated books, Liu's approach appears to be a godsend for publishers.

In summary, Liu's involvement in translation work and related activities has had a positive impact on both society and the publishing industry. The factors that have shaped his mindset and strengthened his actions are analyzed as follows.

2.3.1 Multidisciplinary Background

Liu's multidisciplinary background and wide range of interests allow him to color outside the lines. In today's world, success is no longer achieved by merely possessing knowledge of a specific field, but by asking the right questions about the

²² Despite not having been Liu Weiren's editor, Liang Yen Chiao (梁燕樵) can provide a comprehensive and objective analysis from the viewpoint of a major diversified publishing house.

core concepts that shape society (Epstein 72). Talented people usually thrive thanks to their extensive learning, and a non-linear career can be an advantage (26–27).

Furthermore, multidisciplinary skills are an ability that some experts believe humans have that AI lacks. Humans are exclusively capable of thinking beyond the surface, analyzing the underlying rules, developing strategies for complex problems in everyday life, and understanding the true needs of others (Lee and Wang 168–69).

2.3.2 Embracing Technology

The age of AI is upon us, whether we like it or not. Despite the many concerns raised about the impact of AI technologies, it is important to acknowledge the significant potential they hold to free humans from repetitive and strenuous work, allowing us to pursue roles that are more creative and fulfilling (Lee and Wang 281–86). While many people worry about widespread unemployment, human jobs will not “disappear” but only “transform” (195). Therefore, it is crucial for us to keep learning and start collaborating with machines in the future (366). Confronting the new challenges is inevitable, because technology is our own creation, a creation that is inseparable from the existence of humanity (Li 372).

From the illustrations presented in this thesis, it is evident that Liu’s openness to new technologies has granted him greater flexibility, enabling him to dedicate more time and effort to discussing with readers about translation and the themes of his translated books. In our interview on December 8, 2022, Liu emphasized the importance of this adaptability, stating that engaging in translation-related or knowledge promotion activities can enrich the readers’ understanding of the art of translation. Without such engagement, “human translators might be undervalued,

leading to various issues such as reduced remuneration and less wriggle room” (Liu, Interview on Dec. 8).



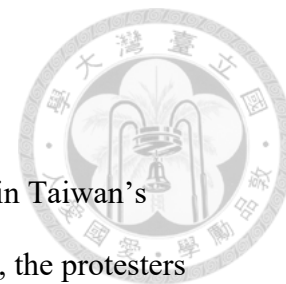
2.3.3 Business Thinking

When it comes to business models, differentiating “key activities” and “value propositions” is crucial in pursuing professional growth (Clark 65). Key activities are the skills and tasks required in a job, while value propositions refer to the value that can be provided or created for customers (60, 64). Take legal translation as an example, the key activity is translating the documents from one language to another, while value proposition is creating persuasive documents that help the clients to win their lawsuits (65). Liu seems to have employed this kind of business thinking, with his key activity being book translation and value proposition being knowledge promotion.

In addition, developing core values can lead to sustainable profit, as there is a rising trend among customers to buy from the companies whose goals and attitudes match their own (128–34). In Liu’s case, having core values has proven to be effective. Today, his incomes not only come from book translation, but also from various activities he has developed, such as writing articles, giving talks, or hosting courses. He has experienced an increasing number of invitations, asking him to recommendation articles or speak about certain books, even if they were not translated by him or his team (Liu, Interview on Mar. 27).

The evidence above demonstrates that his goal of becoming a “hub” of the knowledge network can yield profits by attracting those who approve of his goals, thus supporting him to continue on his chosen path.

2.3.4 The Influence of the Sunflower Movement



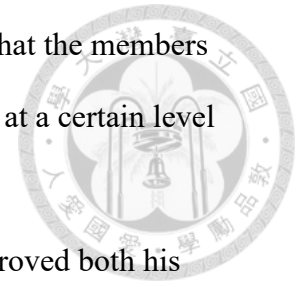
The 318 Sunflower Movement, the largest student movement in Taiwan's history, serves as a moment of political awakening for Liu. In 2014, the protesters occupied the Legislative Yuan (立法院) to express their concerns about the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) between Taiwan and China, as they viewed the agreement as a potential threat to Taiwan's economy, democracy, and sovereignty. The movement has inspired a form of democracy that features civic engagement and brought together a joint community under the framework of self-governance, sharing a common destiny. (C. Huang 294–96). The younger generation has developed a sense of shared responsibility with the “strange others” whom they originally believed unrelated to them (Peng 364). As a result, they continued to address diverse issues through action in their daily lives after the movement ended (360–61).

Liu, for one, came to realize that the government was not as unshakable as he had imagined. He began to believe that everyone was able to change the world after witnessing a wide range of grassroots public events during the movement, such as open discussions. The eye-opening experiences challenged his past notions, allowing him to have faith in the power of both individual and collective action. Since then, he has become more proactive in his efforts to create positive changes.

2.3.5 Collaboration and Connection

Liu's story highlights the importance of social connections. Engaging in social activities—even if they are just lunch breaks with coworkers—can be highly beneficial, as these occasions provide the opportunities for networking, self-contemplation, and information exchange (Epstein 375). Also, belonging to a certain

group or community helps in building a meaningful life, provided that the members share similar values and mindsets, and truly care about one another at a certain level (Burnett 242–44).



In Liu’s case, the collaborative work approach has indeed improved both his working conditions and mental health. He successfully secured a pay raise from a publishing company thanks to collective negotiation. He also discovered that working with others made it easier to stay enthusiastic about his work. Collaboration has helped him avoid the feeling of numbness or isolation that is often experienced in the translation projects he independently carries out. “Having someone who can fight together is really important,” Liu exclaimed in our interview on March 27, 2023. Thanks to co-translation, he and his teammates are able to inspire and support each other both professionally and personally.

Furthermore, Liu’s narrative shares similarities with the characteristics associated with the N generation, a group born between January 1977 and December 1997, who tend to join forces and create innovative forms of education instead of following the established rules or conventions (Tapscott 48, 474). In this context, Liu’s work approach, goals, and experiences resonate with the values and qualities of the N generation, to which he belongs, underscoring again the importance of collaboration and connection.

Chapter 3: Wei-Yun Lin



This chapter delves into the career of the Taiwanese translator Wei-Yun Lin (林蔚昀), who serves as a “bridge” between cultures, promoting deeper understanding among diverse communities through her Polish-Chinese translation and intercultural research.

The data for this chapter is collected from my phone interview with her via Messenger on December 10, 2022, along with her translations and paratexts, intercultural research, and past statements available in her writings or media interviews.

Born in 1982, Lin grew up in Taiwan, received her bachelor’s degree in the UK, and lived and worked in Poland for 11 years. After she became a Polish-Chinese translator, she exercised her role to promote Polish literature in the Chinese-speaking world, which ultimately made her the first Taiwanese to receive Cultural Contribution Medal from the Polish Ministry of Culture.

In 2016, Lin returned with her husband and son to Taiwan, where she settled down and welcomed her second child. She also started to view the role of translators through a new lens in recent years, and evolved from solely being a translator to also encompassing the role of a researcher, leveraging her translation expertise and cultural literacy. She was admitted to the Graduate School of Taiwanese Culture at National Taipei University of Education (國立臺北教育大學) in 2021, committed to studying Taiwan’s literature, history, and international relations.

3.1 Connecting Books with Taiwanese Audience

From the beginning of her career, Lin has dedicated herself to selecting and translating books that she believes will resonate with Taiwanese readers:

When I find an awesome book that I think should be introduced to Taiwan, I go find a publisher to make it happen. I write articles to recommend the book, and I help the publishing house to look for subsidies. As a translator, I've done much more than just translating. I also participate in promoting the books. (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10)

As a result of her proactive attitude and discerning taste in books, readers in Taiwan have greatly benefited. The following are the books she has translated from Polish to Chinese, making them available to the Taiwanese audience. She has her own reasons for translating each book, and further enriches the translation by adding paratexts that help Taiwanese society gain new insights.

3.1.1 *Czarna Piosenka* (黑色的歌)

Although not published in Poland until 2014, *Czarna Piosenka* (黑色的歌, hereafter *Black Song*) is the first poetry collection of the esteemed Polish poet Wisława Szymborska (辛波絲卡) (1923–2012), who was honored with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1996. The Chinese version, rendered by Lin directly from the Polish original, was released in Taiwan in 2016. Through the translator's efforts, these early poems are interwoven with Szymborska's later works, along with the notes written by the translator to offer insights into the poet's journey from youth to old age. The notes also give additional information about Polish culture and history.

Lin selected this book for translation with the intention of showcasing a different side of Szymborska's work:

Taiwanese readers tend to consider Szymborska as very wise, and expect every poet to be as wise as she was. So, when some poems are perceived as raw or immature, people would judge them as not being good enough. But the thing is, the Szymborska that we admire for her wisdom was once young and also made mistakes. Why can't we embrace that? (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10).

The translator's preface describes the book as evidence of the evolution of the poet's writing, explaining that it contains many works that can be understood as the embryonic forms of Szymborska's later works (Lin Wei-Yun, "Looking for Words" 14). The preface also delves into the intricacies of translation, shedding light on the limitations of language and communication (16–17). It points out that poetry translation is a challenging task, and translators must constantly search for new methods of expression, even though it is never possible to produce an exact replica of the original work (18–19).

In summary, the Chinese version of *Black Song* gives the audience a fresh pair of eyes to contemplate the complexities and struggles that come with the pursuit of art. Lin's rendition, accompanied by her paratexts, provides valuable insights into the author's literary journey and the intricacies of translation.

3.1.2 Janusz Korczak's Books on Children's Rights

The legacy of Polish educator Janusz Korczak (柯札克) (1878 or 1879–1942) has had a profound impact on the world. He established a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, implementing an innovative educational approach that prioritized the well-being of children. For instance, he created the famous "children's court" with the focus of children's self-discipline and governance. He aimed to foster a sense of responsibility and independence among children by involving them in the decision-

making processes (Zeng). Although he and the children under his care are believed to have been killed by the Nazis in an extermination camp during the World War II, Korczak's vision has contributed to the rise of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that was adopted in 1989 (UN, "Poland and the Convention on the Rights").

Taiwan enacted an implementation act to adopt the UNCRC in 2014, but it was not until 2016 that Taiwanese readers had the opportunity to directly learn about the essence of children's rights through the writings of this esteemed educator. The opportunity came with the publication of Lin's translation of Korczak's *Jak kochać dziecko* (如何愛孩子, hereafter referred to as *How to Love a Child*). Before then, one of the available books in Taiwan related to Korczak was *The Champion of Children: The Story of Janusz Korczak* (好心的國王：兒童權利之父—柯札克的故事), which was a picture book about the educator, but not written by him. In 2019, Taiwan welcomed another publication of Korczak's works, *Prawo dziecka do szacunku & Kiedy znów będę mały* (當我再次是個孩子, hereafter *When I Am Little Again & The Child's Right to Respect*), once again translated and supplemented with an introduction by Lin.

These introductions not only give a concise overview of the author's perspectives but also share Lin's own feelings and experiences. For instance, the introduction to *How to Love a Child* says:

As a Taiwanese mom who has lived in Poland for eleven years, raised my child there for five years, and constantly faced cultural conflicts in my daily life (my husband is Polish), I believe that Korczak's experiences can engage in a meaningful dialogue with my reality.... (Lin, "Introduction: Loving Children" 25)

Similarly, the introduction to *When I Am Little Again & The Child's Right to Respect* reveals:

As I read on, the second feeling emerged, and it was incredibly intense. The childhood traumas that I had forgotten all came rushing back: being neglected, humiliated, disregarded, scolded, misunderstood or not understood, distrusted, or beaten (a passage in this book vividly portrays the trauma caused by teachers' corporal punishment). Those painful and lonely moments all returned to me. Being a parent, my pain was twofold, as I had made almost every mistake just like the adults in the book, and I had suffered from almost every piece of such mistakes during my own childhood. (Lin Wei-Yun, "Introduction: Revisiting Childhood" 20)

Lin's efforts in seeking the approval of publishers are also recounted in the paratexts (Lin Wei-Yun, "Introduction: Loving Children" 22), providing readers with an opportunity to recognize and appreciate the contribution of translators. Her most recent endeavors in bringing Korczak's works to the Taiwanese audience are the translation and preface of the book *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta* (柯札克猶太隔離區日記：兒童人權之父最後的回憶錄與隨筆), which is commonly viewed as the diary and final notes left by the respected educator in the Jewish ghetto.

3.1.3 *Tańczące niedźwiedzie* (跳舞的熊)

Tańczące niedźwiedzie (跳舞的熊, hereafter *Dancing Bears*) employs the metaphor of "dancing bears" to symbolize the people in post-authoritarian countries. Some Central and Eastern European nations shifted from authoritarian to democratic regimes, yet their people have not fully adapted to the transformation. Similar to the "dancing bears" that are no longer enslaved by humans, those who have experienced a

shift in political systems often find themselves disoriented due to the sudden arrival of freedom.

This narrative resonates with Lin, as it reminds her of Taiwan, where people have been grappling with social and political challenges since the lifting of Martial Law in 1987 (Lin Wei-Yun, “Lessons from the Bears” 340–42). At the end of the Chinese version, the explanatory afterword provided by Lin sends a somber but optimistic message that encourages Taiwanese people to proceed with their unwavering pursuit of the lifestyles they desire:

This freedom not only comforts us but also brings us anxiety, pain, and unease. Even so, we still yearn for it, and even must yearn for it. Just like democracy, it is not something that will take care of us; rather, it is something that requires our care. Having freedom and democracy doesn’t guarantee joy and happiness, but without them, we would be far away—even farther over time—from joy and happiness. (Lin Wei-Yun, “Lessons from the Bears” 343)

3.1.4 *Sezon na słoneczniki* (向日葵的季節)

Published in 2015, *Sezon na słoneczniki* (向日葵的季節, hereafter *Season for Sunflowers*) focuses on Ukraine’s complex history and current situation, delving into the lives and perspectives through extensive interviews with those affected by armed conflicts in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

Lin’s translator’s preface sheds light on her motivation for translating this book. Just like many others, it was only after the Euromaidan protests²³ at the end of 2013

²³ Ukrainians took to the streets to peacefully protest the then-President Viktor Yanukovich’s refusal to sign an agreement with the European Union (EU), an agreement that was believed could foster a closer relationship between Ukraine and the EU.

that she started to educate herself on the history, culture, and diverse dynamics of Ukraine (Lin Wei-Yun, “Translator’s preface: Ukraine, Another Sunflower” 8–10). She also voluntarily translated the Ukrainian writer Jurij Andruchowycz’s open letter and some other writers’ poems, which she shared with her Taiwanese friends on Facebook, in order to raise awareness about Ukraine (10–11). However, following the Sunflower Movement that started in Taiwan in March 2014, she noticed that some of the comparisons being circulated between Taiwan and Ukraine were overly simplistic and inaccurate:

For example, the Crimea Referendum was a result of Russian intervention, but some people perceived it as an embodiment of national self-determination, and compared it to the appeals for Taiwan’s independence. But the situation was actually the opposite. If one day Taiwan were to hold a referendum to integrate itself into China, that would resemble the case of Crimea. (Lin Wei-Yun, “Translator’s preface: Ukraine, Another Sunflower” 11–12).

Driven by her belief that meaningful insights and lessons only arise from thorough comprehension (14–15), the above observations and reflections are included in the preface of the Chinese version of *Season for Sunflowers*, serving as an effort to help Taiwanese readers gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences between these two contexts.

3.2 Intercultural Research

Over the past few years, Lin has expanded her role and become not only a translator but also a researcher, focusing on Taiwan’s culture, history, and its image and reception in foreign contexts. She has published a series of articles looking into the connection between Taiwan and Poland, and the promotion of Taiwanese

literature in Poland. Her research is disseminated through publications on news websites, her personal blog, and academic seminars, and it will also be included in her upcoming book²⁴.

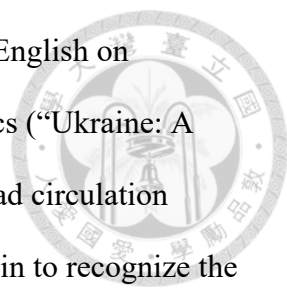


For instance, her research examines the historical backgrounds of the places in Poland that bear names associated with Taiwan or Formosa, allowing readers to gain more knowledge about the history of both countries (Lin Wei-Yun, “Looking for Taiwan in Poland”). In addition, part of her research is based on the concept of “cultural diplomacy” (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10). According to Lin, cultural diplomacy involves a nation’s literature functioning as its image, thereby enabling outsiders to develop appreciation and support for the nation (Lin Wei-Yun, “We Must Establish Our Own Image”). However, her post on Medium points out that, while certain works of Taiwanese literature receive acclaim in Poland, the presentation and discussion of these works have not effectively distinguished Taiwanese literature from Chinese literature (Lin Wei-Yun, “Moving Beyond Visibility”). The article elaborates on this issue:

The way that Taiwanese literature is presented and discussed in Poland has not been fully separated from the context of Chinese literature. Plus, Polish readers have limited knowledge of Chinese-language literature, which has led to confusion between Chinese and Taiwanese literature. This situation hinders the recognition of the subjectivity and uniqueness of Taiwanese literature. (Lin Wei-Yun, “Moving Beyond Visibility”)

In addition, Lin’s belief in the significance of culture diplomacy has been further reinforced by various factors, one of which is *Ukraine in Histories and Stories*:

²⁴ According to Lin, the upcoming book will be titled *Searching for Taiwan in Poland* (在波蘭尋找台灣). For more information, please see <https://www.twreporter.org/a/opinion-formosa-taiwan-in-poland>.



*Essays by Ukrainian intellectuals*²⁵, an online anthology written in English on Ukraine's complex dynamics in terms of culture, history, and politics (“Ukraine: A Book of Essays”). The fact that this anthology had gained widespread circulation following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 inspired Lin to recognize the potential for translators to contribute to “cultural diplomacy” (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10). She suggests that it is important to cultivate individuals who possess not only translation skills but also the ability to effectively promote Taiwan's image and narrative (Lin Wei-Yun, “Ukraine Prepared for Eight Years”). These insights have continuously driven her to explore intercultural research from unique perspectives, seeking to uncover the underlying intricacies of cultural interactions and their impact on shaping narratives.

In conclusion, with her expertise in translation and a keen perception of culture, history, and geopolitics²⁶, Lin's research implies new possibilities for translators to define and fulfill their role.

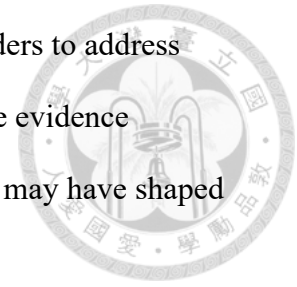
3.3 Analysis

The above evidence shows that Lin has remained committed to utilizing her role to create a positive impact, despite her subtle perception that translators are often undervalued and that their action beyond translation is seen unnecessary (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10). By connecting the Taiwanese audience with different cultures and visions and conducting intercultural research that offers fresh

²⁵ The electronic version of *Ukraine in Histories and Stories: Essays by Ukrainian intellectuals* is an anthology that can be downloaded for free. It was presented on the website Ukraine World in 2019, and was later printed and published by Ibidem Press in 2020. For more information, please see <https://ukraineworld.org/articles/books/essays-intellectuals?fbclid=IwAR1zsPDYgg-6-faoTFq0tVnb2mfQJ1Zw9usei7KFj7O-PaMzY0qIDx1CGQQ>.

²⁶ The People's Republic of China (中華人民共和國) views Taiwan as part of its territory, despite having never controlled it.

perspectives, her efforts in both professional paths have helped readers to address societal challenges with more comprehensive insights. Based on the evidence gathered from our interview and her writings, the following factors may have shaped her mindset and actions.



3.3.1 The Concept of “Bridge”

Lin believes that “understanding is not merely passive reception” (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10), and has put this philosophy into practice through a range of activities. For instance, she translated *How to Love a Child* with the hope of facilitating intercultural communication, which she refers to as establishing a “bridge” (Lin Wei-Yun, “Introduction: Loving Children” 26). Moreover, after the Maidan Revolution in 2014, she voluntarily translated some Ukrainian works into Chinese for her Taiwanese friends to learn about Ukrainian literature²⁷. These works had already been translated from Ukrainian to Polish, and Lin took on the task of translating them from Polish to Chinese. She also translated pieces from Taiwan and Hong Kong that responded to the revolution, and distributed printed copies of them on the streets in Poland (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10).

Through translation and related initiatives, Lin has worked to cultivate mutual understanding between different communities. Her belief in the power of such understanding to foster empathy, friendship, and cooperation (Lin Wei-Yun, “Translator’s Preface: Ukraine, Another Sunflower” 15) reinforces her commitment to building a “bridge” that may help address Taiwan’s challenges.

²⁷ For instance, Lin translated poems by Andriy Lyubka and Oksana Lutsyshyna, and shared the translations on her Facebook page. For more information, please see <https://www.facebook.com/notes/2782175205399452/> and <https://www.facebook.com/notes/1371598986516316/>.



3.3.2 National Identity

Lin was born and raised in Taiwan, and ventured abroad at the young age of 17. She lived in the UK and then Poland for a total of 16 years before returning to Taiwan in 2016. For a very long time she had a vague national identity, until her sense of Taiwanese identity was awakened through her experience working for the Confucius Institute of Jagiellonian University in Poland (Lin Wei-Yun, *A Challenging Journey to Home* 26–27).

The Confucius Institutes (CIs) are non-profit educational institutes funded and run by the Chinese government, purporting to promote Chinese language and culture around the world. However, the establishment of over 500 CIs worldwide since 2004 has been criticized for spreading propaganda, and pressuring host universities to restrict or silence discussions on sensitive topics, such as those related to Taiwan (Jakhar). During Lin’s time working as a part-time teacher at the Confucius Institute of Jagiellonian University, she came to realize the bitter taste of losing freedom, as she constantly found herself suppressing her feelings and self-censoring her words and behaviors (Lin Wei-Yun, “Reader’s Opinion: The Price”). She did so for fear of being labelled as a radical advocate for Taiwan’s independence, a stance in conflict with China’s national policy and could potentially jeopardize her job. While she and her colleagues had a good relationship, she knew that the peace they had was based on avoiding political discussions.

While the experience at the Confucius Institute eventually led her to gain a clearer consciousness of her Taiwanese identity, she discovered with disappointment that many Polish people, including Chinese-language teachers and sinologists, saw Taiwan as an alternative version of China (Lin Wei-Yun, *A Challenging Journey to*

Home 26–28). She was frustrated by the misunderstandings, yet she also came to realize that she did not have sufficient knowledge about her homeland either (27–30).

As a result, she embarked on a journey of rediscovery, making efforts to fill the gaps in her local knowledge and experiences (Lin Wei-Yun, *A Challenging Journey to Home* 224). Part of these efforts are reflected in her translation career. For instance, she translated *Dancing Bears* (跳舞的熊) and vigorously promoted it, as she recognized the post-authoritarian challenges faced by Taiwan and aimed to stimulate thoughts on transitional justice.

This re-learning of history and national identity has been a common experience in Taiwan, with many individuals treading similar paths over the past few decades (Ye 126–31). For a long time, the KMT (國民黨) government's suppression of politics and cultures left many without a strong sense of being Taiwanese. However, encountering different opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of Taiwan's history, languages, and cultures has triggered a “collapse of their knowledge and value systems” (128). As their historical perspectives broaden, political awareness increases, and Taiwanese identity is awakened or strengthened, they often experience a surge of motivation to address the emerging concerns, focusing more on the collective future of their community through a transformed outlook (128, 130–31). In summary, the influence of national identity on individuals is significant, especially for those living in a nation with complex political and cultural backgrounds.

In Lin's case, her rediscovery of national identity has become a process of empowerment, propelling her to expand her role and agenda. In recent years, she has not only kept translating valuable books to Taiwan, but has also taken up conducting intercultural research from a critical and innovative perspective. She especially focuses on how Taiwanese literature, languages, cultures, and history are perceived and promoted abroad. This newfound vocation intertwines with her role as translator,

creating a mutually beneficial relationship in which both careers can enhance and enrich each other.



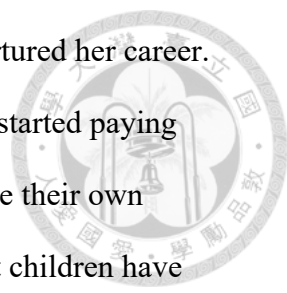
3.3.3 The Influence of the Sunflower Movement

The Sunflower Movement in 2014 left a profound impact on Lin. Even though she was not in Taiwan during the time, she closely followed the unfolding movement and public discussions with deep concern. “At that time, a lot of articles about Taiwan’s history started popping up,” she said in our interview on December 10, 2022, “and I suddenly realized that I didn’t know any of it before.” The articles featuring Taiwan’s history that surged online served as a catalyst for her, prompting her to educate herself on things that she had previously overlooked or had limited knowledge about.

Looking back, she draws a connection between her experience and the story of the Polish poet Szymborska (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10). Szymborska was once a member of the Communist Party of Poland, but began questioning her beliefs when she witnessed the Polish government cracked down on the workers who took to the streets.

Similar to the poet, Lin experienced a personal awakening inspired by the Sunflower Movement (Lin Wei-Yun, Interview on Dec. 10). Since then, she has come to perceive translation through a more political lens, recognizing its potential to facilitate a more in-depth exploration of the complex political dynamics around the world.

3.3.4 Motherhood



As a mother of two sons, Lin's experience of parenting has nurtured her career. Lin once mentioned in a media interview, "After having children, I started paying special attention to children's rights, realizing that children also have their own needs" (S. Zhang). She then quoted Korczak's words to explain that children have different thoughts, needs, and emotions from adults, and that both groups should learn how to coexist although they might not fully understand each other.

Speaking of this important Polish educator, it was actually because of her elder son that she stumbled upon the opportunity to learn about him (Lin Wei-Yun, "Introduction: Loving Children" 19). When her son was four, Lin took him to a cinema in Poland where they saw an animation adapted from *Król Maciuś Pierwszy* (麥提國王, hereafter *King Matt the First*), a teenage novel written by Korczak (19). The story centers around a young boy's journey of becoming a king as he collaborates with other children to find suitable ways to govern their country (20). Lin was impressed by the film's portrayal, which highlighted children's autonomy and the possibility of mutual assistance and communication between adults and children (20).

This serendipity led to her later efforts in translating Korczak's works. Thanks to Lin's endeavors, a series of crucial works by Korczak, including *King Matt the First*, have been translated and published one after another in Taiwan, each accompanied by a preface or introduction written by the diligent translator. These books will always remind readers to reflect on education with genuine respect for children's rights.

In summary, Lin's role as a mother has deepened her participation in shaping the world and inspiring others to embrace a more compassionate approach to children's education. Her story indicates that personal experiences and multiple roles have a profound impact on an individual's values, passions, and actions.

Chapter 4: Waits Xiu



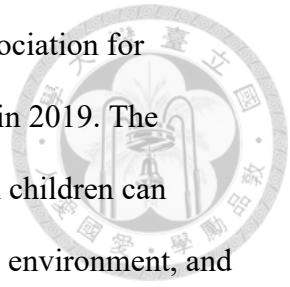
This chapter explores the professional journey of the Taiwanese translator Jeng Li-chung (鄭立中), who is more commonly known by his pen name, Waits Xiu (尉遲秀). While he is best known for translating most of the works of Czech-French writer Milan Kundera (米蘭·昆德拉), this research focuses on his achievement in enhancing children's education and the translation industry.

The data for this chapter is collected from the interviews I conducted with him on December 21 and 22, 2022, and June 20, 2023²⁸. Additionally, the data is gathered from his translations, work-related events, and advocacy activities. I also interviewed an advocate for gender equality who has an expertise in children's literature, seeking to gain valuable insights into Waits' influence.

Born in 1968, Waits has done various jobs in addition to being a French-Chinese translator, including working as a journalist, publishing editor, and consultant at the Representative Office in France of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He currently dedicates most of his time to translation and serves as the adjunct assistant professor in the Department of French Language and Culture at Fu Jen Catholic University (天主教輔仁大學). Apart from serious literature, he has translated numerous children's books in recent years. He also actively contributes to the Taiwanese Association of French Translators (台灣法語譯者協會), helping to improve learning opportunities and professional networks within the translation industry. He was elected as the president of the association in 2023.

²⁸ I conducted a phone interview with Waits Xiu (尉遲秀) via Messenger on both December 21 and 22, 2022, and an in-person interview at Apple Museum Café in Daan District, Taipei City, on June 20, 2023.

Outside of his translation work, he co-founded the Parents Association for Pluralistic Education (多元教育家長協會) with a group of parents in 2019. The association aims to promote an educational approach through which children can learn about gender equality and diversity, human rights, rule of law, environment, and labor rights. Waits was elected as the vice president of the association in 2023.



4.1 Translation of Children’s Books

Waits Xiu became well-known in the early stages of his career for his translation of Kundera’s novels. While maintaining a great passion for serious literature, he has diversified his range of works over the years, translating numerous children’s picture books.

Apart from social and family education, extracurricular books are also an important part of children’s education (Lin Wenbao 60). Children’s books are able to inspire and guide the young minds in a way that is not preaching or lecturing (60–61). By putting readers in the shoes of others through compelling stories, children’s literature can effectively cultivate empathy (173–74).

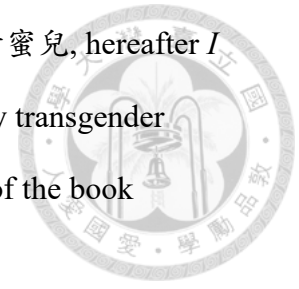
“Picture books can help parents to talk with their children about important issues,” Waits acknowledged the tremendous worth of picture books in our interview on December 22, 2022, “They explain things in a simple manner and go right to the heart of a matter. Even adults will find them inspiring.” In recent years, Waits has fortunately witnessed an unexpected growing demand for French picture book translations, granted the opportunity to leverage his work to help address the issues that he has long been concerned about, such as children’s autonomy, life education, gender equality and diversity, and anti-bullying (Waits, Interview on Dec. 21 and 22).

Translation has become an exciting way for him to contribute to social reform by enriching children's education.

Here are a few examples of picture books that Waits has translated. *La Tache* (艾瑪的黑點, hereafter *The Task*) centers around the life of a full-figured girl who becomes increasingly depressed at school due to the constant jokes that other children made about her body shape. The book addresses the issues of discrimination based on appearance and school bullying, both connected deeply with many children and teenagers. Regarding the pressing problem of school bullying, *Un renard dans mon école* (學校有一隻大狐狸, hereafter *A Fox in my School*) provides a more explicit portrayal by using a fox as a metaphor for a bully. The story vividly depicts the plight of children who are bullied at school, and implies the serious consequences due to the inaction of others. Waits also translated *Edgar* (黑色的豬, hereafter *Edgar*), a story of a pig that stands out from others due to its black color. Through the black pig's experience, the book highlights the importance of self-identity, while it can often be suppressed by the mainstream norms and expectations.

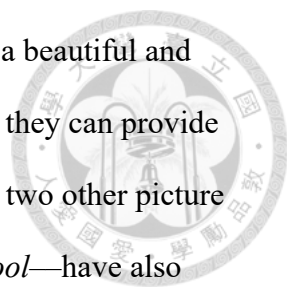
Gender equality is another goal that Waits has long been advocating for. He has been gratified to find that several children's books assigned to him for translation fall into this category. To name a few, both *Valentin de toutes les couleurs* (花布少年：瓦蘭廷的彩色世界, hereafter *Valentin of All Colors*) and *Poka & Mine: Le football* (波卡和米娜：踢足球, hereafter *Poka & Mine: Football*) encourage children to pursue their interests and dreams regardless of gender stereotypes. The Chinese versions of these books have earned recognition and honors. *Valentin of All Colors* is shortlisted for the "Good Books for Everyone" (好書大家讀) program, a prestigious project that has been selecting excellent children's literature for the Taiwanese audience since 1991; *Poka & Mine: Football* is included in the list of "Recommended Reading for Elementary and Junior High School Students" organized by the Ministry

of Culture in Taiwan. Waits also translated *Je suis Camille* (我是卡蜜兒, hereafter *I am Camille*), a compelling story that presents the struggles faced by transgender teenagers in their interpersonal relationships. The original version of the book received the UNICEF children’s literature prize in 2021.



Among these books, *Valentin of All Colors* is particularly popular and widely recommended by experts. The renowned book review platform Openbook (閱讀誌) describes it as thought-provoking with a graceful narrative (“Children’s Book Review #91”). Chen Shu Ting (譙淑婷), an instructor of the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association (hereafter TGEEA) who has a M.A. degree from the Graduate Institute of Children’s Literature at National Taitung University (國立台東大學), has found the book useful in anti-bullying discussions (S. Chen, “Adult Responsibilities”). During my interview with Chen on June 21 2023, she remarked that the open ending of the story inspires children to imagine what they would do if they were in the shoes of different characters (S. Chen, Interview). Chen also suggested that picture books serve as a valuable educational tool, because they equip parents to talk with their children about important issues in a way that children can accept, as well as broaden young children’s horizons beyond the boundaries of their limited family experiences (S. Chen, Interview).

Yantong Chou (周彥彤), the chief editor of children’s books at Linking Publishing Company, also shared her reasons for choosing to publish *Valentin of All Colors* during the “TGEEA Gender Equality Saturday” workshop. According to Chou, the story not only helps children to break free from gender stereotypes, but also encourages them to persevere in their dreams despite an unfriendly environment (TGEEA, “TGEEA Gender Equality Saturday”). It portrays the complex emotions of a bullied child, evoking empathy from the audience and allowing them to understand his experience of suffering, healing, and rebuilding confidence. In Chou’s analysis,

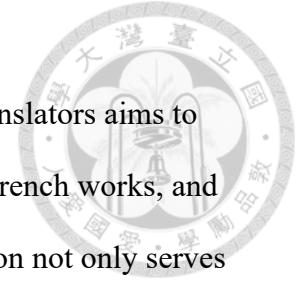


the book uses a good deal of metaphors related to colors, leading to a beautiful and sophisticated narrative. It also stresses the crucial role of parents, as they can provide strong support for their children. Aside from *Valentin of All Colors*, two other picture books translated by Waits Xiu—*I am Camille* and *A Fox in my School*—have also been featured in various discussions, including a picture book event held by TGEEA on June 13, 2023 (TGEEA, “June 13”).

It becomes evident that the books that Waits has translated display a gender-diverse narrative, which is key in fostering a gender-friendly environment according to research. For instance, many American children’s stories since the late 19th century have created a prevalent image of “wild boys” or “bad boys,” constructing a standard of what is considered “normal” for little boys (Wu 135). These recurring depictions have led to an exclusion of alternative narratives, and the boys who are not as vigorous or mischievous as expected have been increasingly marginalized (113, 136). On the other hand, books that challenge gender stereotypes can prompt children to rethink the existing gender frameworks and associations, cultivating a more inclusive attitude towards gender (Lin Wenbao 157–58). It is also crucial for adults with gender sensitivity to discuss the books with them in reflection (157).

Overall, picture books hold significant influence because they communicate with readers in a soul-stirring manner, enabling them to empathize with others beyond the differences of time, place, and experience (Yanagida 24–28, 113). Through translation, Waits has helped parents and experts to make use of these enchanting and thought-provoking stories to promote a more inclusive society. His translation work has become a form of indirect advocacy.

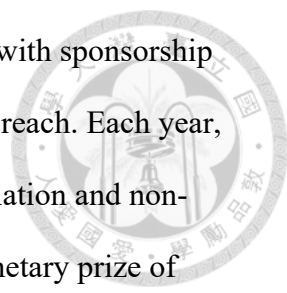
4.2 Participation in Taiwanese Association of French Translators (台灣法語譯者協會)



Established in 2013, the Taiwanese Association of French Translators aims to enhance French-Chinese translation quality, promote outstanding French works, and ensure reasonable working conditions for translators. The association not only serves as a platform for sharing information on French translation and cultural events, but also organizes its own activities for translators to hone their skills and network with each other. As of June 2023, this professional organization has a membership of over 100 registered individuals (Waits, Interview on June 20).

The association curates a series of talks on “The Art of Translation” (翻譯的藝術) throughout the year, inviting senior translators to share with the audience the challenges and strategies behind their latest work. Another signature event is the “Beginners Workshop for French Translators” (法語新手譯者研習營) that has been organized every summer since 2015. The program is designed for aspiring translators who are new to the field. It consists of lectures and workshops that help the participants to hone their translation skills, acquire an overall understanding of the publishing industry, and build professional connections with fellow translators. To enter the program, applicants are required to submit a translation sample, and typically, only about a dozen who pass the review process can attend.

Furthermore, the association holds an annual gathering of members at the end of every year. The gathering, usually attracting dozens of guests, features several talks on translation that offers a valuable opportunity for translators to engage in professional discussions as well as foster new friendships. The association also builds a database on the website for translators to register, so that clients can view their profiles and initiate work projects. Up until June 2023, nearly 60 French translators and interpreters have used this service, having their names, work experience, and contact information listed on the website.



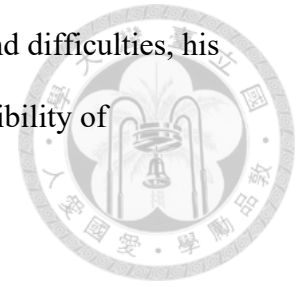
In addition, in 2016, the association set up a translation award with sponsorship from the BNP Paribas, the leading France-based bank with a global reach. Each year, it takes turns honoring the top translator in the field of literary translation and non-literary translation from French to Chinese, giving the winner a monetary prize of NT\$50,000. According to Wu Kun-Yung (吳坤墉), the president who served from 2017 to 2019, the establishment of this award is an effective effort to stimulate discussions about translation quality and cultivate a greater appreciation for translators in Taiwan (Gao).

These events function as an important support for translators. According to Yu-Wen Chen (陳郁雯), a previous participant of the Beginners Workshop, the courses of the workshop have given her a more comprehensive understanding of the book publishing process, including copyright purchase and editing of translated texts (Gao). The workshop is also an occasion where translators can make new friends who share similar interests and goals (Gao).

Since the establishment of the association, Waits has been actively participating in various activities. In the first four years, he served as a board member. He assisted in organizing the Beginners Workshop from 2015 to 2017 and took part in leading exercises and discussions in class. Although he did not participate in the workshop between 2017 and 2021, he resumed his involvement in 2022 by delivering a course on picture book translation. Waits has also been a speaker on multiple occasions of the “The Art of Translation,” sharing his insights related to the translation experience of *Le Sel de la vie* (生命中的鹽) and *Michel Foucault* (傅柯). Additionally, he has been invited several times to serve as a judge for the Translation Award.

In 2023, Waits was elected as the president of the association, starting to serve a three-year term. He looks forward to proceeding with the regular events while incorporating new focuses that keep up with the evolving trends, such as AI

translation (Waits, Interview on June 20). Despite the challenges and difficulties, his passion for French translation motivates him to take on the responsibility of enhancing the profession.



4.3 Analysis

The above evidence shows that Waits Xiu has made a positive impact on the translation industry and society, despite not having originally planned for it. His efforts in picture book translation enriches children's education, and his contribution to the Taiwan Association of French Translators helps foster collective growth for all the members. This analysis explores the factors that have shaped his path and strengthened his influence.

4.3.1 Social Movement Experience

During his university days, Waits participated in the Wild Lily Movement²⁹ and volunteered for the Taiwan Green Peace Association (台灣綠色和平組織)³⁰, an environmental organization advocating for the removal of nuclear waste from the Orchid Island. He supported their demonstrations and took on the role of editor for their member newsletter. Though not at the forefront of these movements, his involvement has still demonstrated his activist inclination.

²⁹ The Wild Lily Movement (野百合運動) in 1990 was the first large-scale student-led demonstration since the lifting of Martial Law in 1949. It successfully pressured the government to adopt a series of significant reforms allowing Taiwan to transit to a genuine democracy.

³⁰ The Taiwan Green Peace Association (台灣綠色和平組織) was founded by Nian Xilin (粘錫麟) in 1989 but ceased operations after some years. It is important to note that the organization was neither affiliated with the Greenpeace International that rose in the 1970s nor related to the Greenpeace Taiwan today.

His proactive nature did not change as he entered middle age. In recent years, he co-founded the Parents Association for Pluralistic Education with the goal of promoting gender equality in education (TGEEA, “Has Education Evolved”). In 2019, he represented the association in a press conference to urge schools to implement gender equality education and protect the rights of LGBTQ+ students. He attended another press conference the next year to protest against religious groups entering schools and teaching students inappropriate content, sometimes involving anti-gay statements (Liao).

While these events may seem unrelated to his career, they actually have an impact on his agency as a translator. Chen Shu Ting (譚淑婷), the instructor of the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association, pays special attention to whom the translators are when selecting picture books for children, especially those related to gender topics (S. Chen, Interview). If a translator’s past statements and actions seem conservative, she worries that their values will hinder the accuracy of translation and weaken the original spirit of the books (S. Chen, Interview). She prefers to choose books translated by someone like Waits, who has been known for his advocacy for gender equality as well as his proficiency in translating directly from French rather than relying on English translations (S. Chen, Interview).

Chen’s concerns are valid, as translations can sometimes twist or miss out on the message of the originals. A gender-related instance is the Chinese version of *Little Women* translated by Huang Wenfan (黃文範). The translation adopts domestication strategies, using as many Chinese equivalents as possible, including names, to closely conform to the culture of the Chinese-speaking audience (Ku 80–83). The character Josephine March is rendered as “馬嬌娜” [Ma Jiaoe], following the Chinese naming rules and using extremely feminine characters that convey a sense of delicacy, elegance, and fragility (82). However, this character actually hates her “girly” name

“Josephine” and changes it to “Jo” for others to address her (82). This translation fails to grasp the character’s personality and the author’s intention to challenge traditional gender frameworks (80). While the exact reasons for this translation choice are unclear, readers may find translators who demonstrate a stronger gender awareness more preferable.

Therefore, Waits’ activist experiences have shaped his personal brand, which positively affects consumer choices and enhances his ability to effect change. This phenomenon aligns with the argument presented in *Company of One: Why Staying Small is the Next Big Thing for Business* (一人公司：為什麼小而美是未來企業發展的趨勢), which notes that more customers are now choosing products that reflect their values and attitudes (Jarvis 128–29). Similarly, *Alles nur Konsum: Kritik der warenästhetischen Erziehung* (不只是消費, *Beyond Consumption*) elaborates on the rise of value-driven companies in the past decades (Ullrich 225). For instance, the old version of The Body Shop, which had not been acquired by L’Oréal in 2006, was known for its campaigns for social change, such as saving whales, addressing the harm caused by oil drilling in Nigeria, fighting against sexual violence, and calling to stop animals testing in cosmetics (226–27). Patagonia, an outdoor clothing and gear company, is committed to environmental sustainability by offering repair services and promoting environmental consciousness among their customers (228).

In conclusion, the growing trend among customers to support brands that share their values has provided Waits with additional advantages to exert influence.

4.3.2 A Mindset of “Thriving Together”

Waits' story demonstrates that a collaborative mindset, rather than a competitive mindset, is more effective in promoting both personal growth and the collective prosperity of a community.



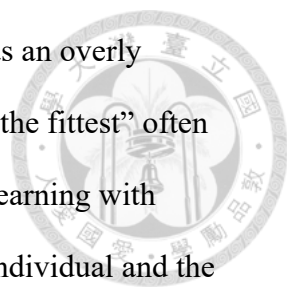
Over the years, Waits has made significant contributions to the Taiwanese Association of French Translators. He has taken on various responsibilities, including serving as a workshop organizer, instructor, guest speaker, and competition judge. He believes that these events can truly enhance the overall translation quality and the visibility of translators, gradually nurturing a greater appreciation for the value of translation in society. He is willing to invest so much time and effort also because he remembers feeling lost and uncertain about his future when he first started his career. Now that he has achieved stability in his career, he is eager to support the younger generation. The positive feedback from the workshop participants further reinforces his belief and inspires him to continue his work (Waits, Interview on June 20):

The feedback from the Beginners Workshops has surprised me and given me even more motivation to get involved. Since the first year, the feedback has been very positive, which is why we continue to organize it. I believe that this initiative is meaningful, and I hope that more people will join forces. (Waits, Interview on June 20)

Another reason for his participation lies in his mindset:

I don't really feel competitive towards other translators. If someone can do something really well, I hope they can do it. I don't feel the need to become the best at everything. I just hope that good works can be connected with skilled translators who can do them justice (Waits, Interview on June 20).

Waits' mindset echoes the increasing emphasis on collective growth in today's world. Rather than solely focusing on his own achievement, he acts as a "positive node," helping those around him to enhance productivity, creativity, and performance (Achor

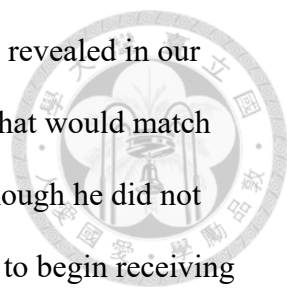


17–18). This approach benefits both communities and individuals, as an overly competitive environment where the prevailing belief is “survival of the fittest” often limits and reduces individual potential (Achor 21–25). In contrast, learning with others generates more energy, resources, and experiences for each individual and the group as a whole, leading to a positive cycle in the long run (25–26). Part of the reason is that, the inspiration gained from learning events, such as conferences, often fades among the mundane tasks of everyday life; however, meaningful discussion can sustain or even transform the inspiration into lasting motivation (204–05). Connections and relationships, be they between individuals or between individuals and groups, are valuable aid in achieving goals (Lederman 24). For example, Fotocommunity, one of the largest online communities for photographers and photo enthusiasts in the world, demonstrates how a group of people with shared interests and expertise can come together and organize various events, resulting in the steady growth of the entire community (Koch and Lockwood 73–75).

In a nutshell, Waits’ experience with the Taiwan Association of French Translators, coupled with the references mentioned above, serves as compelling evidence for the importance of collaborative mindsets in fostering personal and collective success.

4.3.3 Fatherhood

Work and family can often come into conflict and hinder each other’s process, but they can also work together harmoniously under certain conditions (Friedman and Greenhaus 7–8). In Waits’ case, his family life has even benefited his career by expanding his path and enhancing his agency as a translator.



Waits, who has an 11-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter, revealed in our interview on June 20, 2023, that he once wished to translate books that would match their age, allowing his work to keep pace with their growth. Even though he did not actively search for books to make this wish come true, he happened to begin receiving assignments of picture books just when his children were at the age to appreciate them. As a result, he often read his translations to his children, not only spending time with them but also seeking their feedback to ensure his rendition was natural and understandable (Waits, Interview on June 20). Sharing his works with them gave him a strong sense of fulfillment that fueled his passion for this area of translation. “If I had not had children,” he said in our interview on June 20, 2023, “I would have still tried translating picture books if they were assigned to me. However, I might not have had such great momentum to devote myself to it.”

His experience is consistent with the findings presented in *Work and Family—Allies or Enemies?*, where it is indicated that individuals are more likely to excel in both work and family roles if they have adequate resources, involvement, and emotional gratification (Friedman and Greenhaus 8). Resources refer to the support that an individual can draw from one role, enabling them to be more engaging and competent in their other role (8). Involvement means the genuine desire to participate in either work or family, which allows one to more easily “apply the resources derived from one role to the other” (8). In this context, the feedback offered by Waits’ children is a form of support, and the activity of reading with his son and daughter allows him to apply their feedback to his work. Also, the emotional gratification derived from this process reinforces his passion for this type of translation.

In conclusion, although Waits did not purposely branch out into picture book translation, he has expanded his involvement in this area over time, partially because of his role as a father. Given that these picture books cover a wide range of important

issues and serve as a meaningful educational tool, it can be argued that being a father has elevated his agency as a translator.



Chapter 5: Conclusion



History is not (or not only) something that other people do.

My action and yours are the heart of the matter.

—Todd Gitlin, *Letters to a Young Activist*

5.1 Research Findings and Implications

All the translators studied in this thesis have a strong willingness and ability to make positive changes in their industry or society as a whole. Their actions embody the essence of activism, as they respond to the challenges they perceive by inspiring and influencing others through their work and related activities. Their approaches encompass the factors in terms of agency discussed in Chapter 1: creating paratexts, developing multiple roles, and building professional networks. Through the combination or variation of these factors, they have elevated the role of translators.

Liu Weijen has actively engaged in civic participation in the form of knowledge promotion, leveraging his knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make a difference. He creates numerous paratexts to stimulate discussions on the themes explored in the books he translates, collaborates with translators to pursue greater work flexibility to engage in other activities, and works with experts to curate events that spark public discussion on certain issues.

Wei-Yun Lin has connected Taiwanese readers with diverse cultures and visions, enabling them to address the existing issues in their society with deeper insights. She selects books that echo the context of Taiwan to translate, produces paratexts that

share her own experience to strike a chord with readers, and conducts intercultural research offering new and unique perspectives.

Waits Xiu has enhanced education for children and fostered collective growth of the translation community. His efforts in picture book translation serve as a form of indirect advocacy, facilitating parents and experts to cultivate a diverse and inclusive society. His involvement in the Taiwanese Association of French Translators not only creates learning opportunities for fellow translators but also elevates the visibility of translators as a whole.

The three translators exhibit the qualities that would be applauded by Todd Gitlin, the late sociologist and activist well-known for his expertise in social movements. Gitlin once remarked, “An activist is a different sort of -ist, for it’s not your beliefs that make you one but your beliefs hooking up to your activities” (4). These translators not only hold their own values but also put them into action. Furthermore, as they address social issues in interesting and imaginative ways, their activism resonates with Gitlin’s advice to act both “politically” and “playfully” (14). Their journeys can empower other translators to explore innovative career paths, in line with Gitlin’s call to “be original” (17).

In the end, this thesis adopts a methodology focusing on both the personal and professional experiences of translators, which, in itself, accentuates the autonomy of translators. The emphasis on collaboration and connection also underlines the fact that translators are part of a larger community despite the solitary nature of their work.

5.2 Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Given the scope and focus of this research, certain aspects have not been included, leading to potential blind spots in the examination of translators’ agency. To

pursue a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of this topic, future research could take the following advice into consideration.

In Liu Weijen's case, conducting surveys of his regular co-translators would provide a deeper understanding of the impact of collaboration and connections.

Gathering insights from students at the online school Yu Dian would also offer a more specific view on Liu's influence as a translator and knowledge promoter. As for Wei-Yun Lin, analyzing sales figures of the books she has translated and promoted, and comparing them with other books marketed by the same publisher in the same period, would both help assess the effects of her involvement in the publishing process.

Gathering feedback from readers would be a valid method as well. In terms of Waits Xiu, studying the participants of the activities organized by the Taiwanese

Association of French Translators would offer a more detailed examination of his contribution. In addition, it would be beneficial to conduct interviews with a broader range of publishing editors in future studies. To efficiently investigate all the mentioned roles, designing questionnaires would be necessary.

I would also like to present a perspective for future exploration. In my interview with a former editor, she mentioned that as an editor, she would not expect translators to imitate Liu's approach unless the publisher has a suitable budget to compensate the translators for their marketing efforts (Liang). Translators may voluntarily engage in such activities out of passion, but it would not be fair for editors to ask them to do so without providing proper remuneration (Liang). In my opinion, her perspective suggests that the limited involvement of translators in the publishing process does not necessarily mean that they are unappreciated. However, this situation does present a dilemma for translators. While their active participation in the publishing process can indeed enhance their status and agency in the supply chain, it may not be cost-effective for them to go above and beyond, at least not for a certain period of time. In

Liu Weijen's case, even though he has now reached a stage in which these activities can generate profits, there was a time when he was unpaid for some of his book promotion activities, such as going on TV shows. This raises the question of whether translators should invest additional efforts in the activities outside of their core business regardless of the challenges or sacrifices involved, in order to improve their conditions and enhance their agency in the long run. I believe that this predicament of translators is worth exploring in the future.

It should also be noted that the selected case studies are all considered successful examples in terms of agency. However, for a more comprehensive understanding, future research could also delve into the experiences of translators who encounter challenges that limit their agency. Furthermore, as technology, particularly AI, continues to advance, its impact on translators should be discussed with greater emphasis. It would be valuable to examine whether readers develop new expectations for human translators and how translators can respond to the evolving demands.

The current thesis holds the potential to inspire translators to enhance their agency through creative approaches. Nevertheless, due to the limitations of this study and the intricate and ever-changing dynamics of translators' agency, further exploration is required to generate more comprehensive perspectives.

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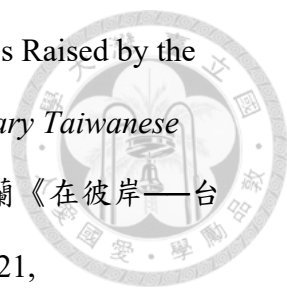
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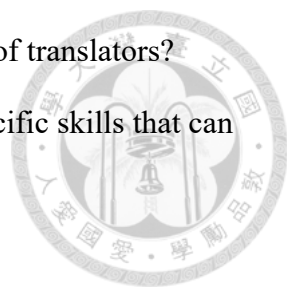
Appendix: Interview Questions



The semi-structured interview method was employed for the three research subjects in this thesis. Whether the interviews were conducted through phone calls or in-person meetings, I strived to strike a balance between structure and spontaneity during the process. In addition to the predetermined questions, I asked follow-up questions based on their responses. The data presented below is a general overview of both my planned and follow-up questions for each subject, with some details excluded due to their scattered nature.

Interview Questions for Liu Weijen

1. How and why did you become a translator?
2. For you, what does “agency” mean?
3. Do you think that translators have agency?
4. How do you think translators can exercise their agency?
5. Why do you actively engage in “knowledge promotion?”
6. What do you do if you are assigned a book with arguments you disagree with?
7. How do you work with publishing houses in promotion activities while incorporating your criticism of the original book?
8. Why do you resort to collaborative translation, and what are the pros and cons of this method?
9. How does collaborative translation increase your agency?
10. How do you perceive the importance of social connection for translators?
11. How did the 318 Sunflower Movement inspire you?

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12. How can we break the vicious cycle of low pay and status of translators?
 13. Have your knowledge promotion experiences nurtured specific skills that can be advantageous for your career?
 14. How do you view and assess your influence?
 15. How do your interdisciplinary interests influence your career as a translator?
 16. What do you think is the value of human translators and the key difference between humans and machines?

Interview Questions for Wei-Yun Lin

1. For you, what does “agency” mean?
2. Do you think that translators have agency?
3. How do you think translators can exercise their agency?
4. How did the 318 Sunflower Movement inspire you?
5. Could you elaborate on the concept of “cultural diplomacy” proposed in your articles?
6. How do you view the connection between “cultural diplomacy” and translators?
7. What do you think about the impact of AI on translation?
8. Do you think that receiving poor remuneration might negatively impact how translators view the importance and worth of their profession?
9. How do you view the effects of social networks and collaboration on translators’ agency and the translation industry?

Interview Questions for Waits Xiu

1. For you, what does “agency” mean?
2. Do you think that translators have agency?
3. How do you think translators can exercise their agency?
4. How did you venture into the field of children’s book translation, and what do you believe is the function of picture books?
5. How do you apply your translated picture books to your children’s lives?
6. Is there a possibility to leverage your translation career to strengthen the advocacy of the Parents Association for Pluralistic Education?
7. What social movement experiences have you had in the past and how did they affect you?
8. What drives your dedication and commitment to the Taiwanese Association of French Translators?
9. What specific activities organized by the association have you participated in, and how do you perceive their value and impact?
10. How do you think this association can contribute to improving the working conditions of translators?
11. As the new president of the Taiwanese Association of French Translators, what prospects do you have for the future?

