



Undergraduate Dissertation coversheet & feedback form

PLEASE COMPLETE THE TOP SECTION OF THIS FORM AND SUBMIT ONE COPY WITH YOUR DISSERTATION

For completion by student:

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<i>Module code:</i> SICH6019	<i>Student ID number:</i> 2016148	<i>Educational support needs:</i> No
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Dissertation title:

Research on the Old Chinese Initials of Huang Kan
-from the Perspective of the History of Phonology
論黃侃的古聲紐——以聲韻史為視角

Supervisor: Prof. Chia-Ning Chu

Word count: 10850

I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism.

Signed Kehan Dong

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Comments:

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The Reflective Review

After studying undergraduate modules for three years, I believe the graphic and etymological study of sinograms, phonology, and exegesis are the keys to sinology. Therefore, I hope that I can master these three historical linguistic subjects. Why did I choose phonology in the end? Because phonology is regarded as the hardest subject, I thought that if I could handle phonology, then I would be able to catch the graphical and etymological study of sinograms as well as exegesis. Despite my good idea, I did not have a sufficient phonological basis. So, I went to my supervising professor, Chu, to discuss the matter, and he suggested that I study the old Chinese initials of Huang Kan from the perspective of the history of phonology. Through this study, I could not only master philology but also linguistics. I thought it met my expectations for mastering phonology, hence I chose this topic.

At first, I thought this topic would be easy to complete, because I knew the rules of old Chinese initials that I had learnt in class very well. As the process of writing my dissertation progressed, I came to recognise the complexity and challenges associated with the undertaking. Firstly, I was not familiar with Huang Kan's theory of the old Chinese initials, and there are many controversies over his theory. Secondly, the studies of old Chinese initials extend far beyond the ten rules of old Chinese initials learnt in class. Therefore, the main challenges encountered during the research process were my weak foundation in Phonology, how to sort out the extensive amount of material, and how to select appropriate material for my dissertation. In the process of writing, I think the key to overcoming these challenges is a great mindset, the correct approach, and knowing how to listen supervising professors' instructions.

About the mindset, I rushed to read the monographs of various scholars at the beginning instead of addressing the issue of a lack of foundational knowledge, because I knew that I needed to sort out a lot of material. However, I did not make much progress in my dissertation in this way. Because I worried that I did not have enough time to finish my dissertation, I was in a hurry to read each article. Hence, I could not concentrate on reading due to my worries. Moreover, my foundational knowledge was weak, so it was hard for me to understand an academic article. As a result, although I spent a lot of time reading and sorting out resources, I did not get a satisfactory outcome. Subsequently, I reflected on my problems and told myself that it was impossible to reach the sky in a single bound. It was useless to be in a hurry. Hence, I began to read basic books on phonology that were related to my topic to lay the groundwork for writing. While reading academic articles, I stopped thinking about

how many tasks I had left or how difficult the article was. I just read it. If I did not understand the content, I read it over and over again. Through repeated reading, my mind calmed down. I became more and more focused, and I was able to understand about 80 to 90 per cent of the content.

When it comes to the approach to writing, I found it is important to record my understanding as I read. Before this, I used to read resources without recording it. When I felt that I had an idea, I began selecting and sorting out the material I had read. This method can be used for the short papers I wrote before, but it is not appropriate for this long paper. Firstly, I found reading without recording is time-consuming. There is a lot of material to read for writing a long paper. If I did not begin to write my dissertation until I had finished reading all the material, half of the writing time has already passed. It means that I have a tight schedule for asking the teacher and correcting my dissertation. Furthermore, because I did not take notes when I was reading resources, when I wanted to use the resources later, I had to spend time finding them again in a lot of resources. Secondly, it is not conducive to the collation of thoughts. Because a long article means more resources should be collated than a short article, when I do not make notes in time, I miss some resources. For these two reasons, I changed my writing pattern. I recorded my understanding as I read. Moreover, I found that I could become clearer in my thinking if I took notes while reading. This approach improves the efficiency of writing.

Besides these, knowing how to listen to supervising professors' instructions also helped me to overcome the challenges I faced while writing my dissertation. I found that, when listening to the professors, it is important to focus on the logic behind their words. It means that we should not only understand the answers the professor gives to our questions, but also why the professor answers the questions in this way. After finding out the logic of the professor's answer, I revised my dissertation from the professor's perspective. Through this method, I can learn from my professor a method of study that I can apply to my future research, rather than just knowing the answer my supervising professor gave me.

All in all, I enjoyed the process of sorting out resources and asking teachers for advice. In this process, I have accumulated knowledge and seen my improvement. I come to believe that as long as I work hard, I will have the ability to conduct academic research like my supervising professor, Chu. This has given me a lot of confidence for my future research. However, this study has also given me a warning that I should start preparing my dissertation early.