



Undergraduate Dissertation coversheet & feedback form

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Supervisor: Professor Chia-Ning Chu		Word count: 983
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English Review of Dissertation

The topic of my dissertation is “The Discussion of the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation 省聲 between <Huilin Yinyi> (《慧琳音義》) and <Shuowenzhu> (《說文注》). In this review, I will share about the process of writing my dissertation, my reflection on writing my dissertation and the outcome when writing my dissertation.

Process of Writing My Dissertation

When I was studying foundation class online, the Provost always advised me to choose a field for my academic research in the future. At that moment, I was always thinking about which fields were more suitable for me to explore in depth. I also tried to look into my interests by writing different types of essays in every lesson. Up till the end of my foundation, I felt that I was engaged with <Shuowen Jiezizhu> 《說文解字注》 by investigating the structures of Chinese characters in the Graphical and Etymological Study of Sinograms field. Thus, I put a lot of effort into reading <Shuowen Jiezizhu> 《說文解字注》 and joined some related classes to widen my knowledge.

The next year, when I was studying in the first year of my Bachelor's in the United Kingdom, some seniors told me to start thinking about the topic of my final dissertation as I could have more time to get advice and teaching from many professors and seniors as well as do some preparation. Other than that, since there were not many assignments during the first year, I also made time to join seniors' classes such as Professor Chu's and Professor Zhou's Writing Method on Final Dissertation and some elective classes. Gradually, since I know a bit of Sanskrit and Pali and adore learning Buddha's teachings, I also became interested in Buddha's Sanskrit translation. Hence, Professor Chu introduced me to a book, named <Huilin Yinyi> 《慧琳音義》 which is a dictionary in the Buddhism field that could have the same value as <Shuowen Jiezizhu> 《說文解字注》 in Confucianism field.

While reading <Shuowen Jiezizhu> 《說文解字注》 and <Huilin Yinyi> 《慧琳音義》, aside from applying those books in my essay in every lesson, I also had discussions with Professor Chu and some seniors about the topic of my final dissertation. Finally, I had a topic of comparing the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of the Chinese characters between <Shuowen Jiezizhu> 《說文解字注》 and <Huilin Yinyi> 《慧琳音義》 during the end of my second year of my Bachelor.

While choosing this topic, I felt that there were two parts which I needed to spend more time and effort to complete. Firstly, I had to sort out all the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters in <Huilin Yinyi> 《慧琳音義》 as well as compare with the explanation of <Shuowen Jiezhizhu> 《說文解字注》 which cause a lot of time to read and list out the details. Secondly, since I need to do a comparison between these two dictionaries, I needed to put more effort into finding out the description and explanation of the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters throughout our Chinese history as well as Western scholars' views in order to understand the determination and definition of the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters.

Reflection on Writing My Dissertation

Since I had two main parts which I expected would take a lot of time and effort to complete, I started to sort out all the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters in <Huilin Yinyi> 《慧琳音義》 initially during my summer holiday of my second year of my Bachelor. However, when listing out and comparing these two dictionaries, I also faced problems such as writing down the accurate details about the explanation of the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters of the two dictionaries and grouping the same types of Chinese characters. Indeed, as I did not do those tables intermittently, when I was writing my appendix, I had to spend more time checking and calculating it again in order to get the correct data.

Other than that, I also faced a difficult task in finding the definitions and explanations of the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters. Since there are a lot of scholars' opinions in every dynasty and I could not understand them due to the lack of my knowledge in this stage, I asked Professor Chu about the problem. Professor Chu provided me a simple definition of the Phonetic Symbol Abbreviation of Chinese characters which could lead me to identify it easily. Besides, Professor Chu also advised me to choose the problems which I could solve at this stage in order not to blow my confidence.

Even though I faced problems when writing my dissertation, I also felt lucky that I could finish it on time. In fact, without Professor Chu's teachings, Dr Xu's guidance, and some seniors' help and encouragement, I thought that I would not follow my schedule to complete it step by step.

Outcome When Writing My Dissertation

Throughout the process of writing my dissertation, I was also unconfident sometimes which caused me sleepless nights as well as lack of appetite. When facing these problems, I would go out to have a walk and sit on the bench to have a meditation. While listening to the sound of the environment, and seeing the blue sky and animals around me, my pressure and bad emotions would be released out. Moreover, my friends would always encourage me when I was down.

However, I really enjoyed when listing out and analyzing the data. Although some problems I could not solve nowadays due to the lack of my knowledge, I also felt excited when I broke through my ability to overcome them. From this experience, I gradually realized my strength in analyzing data research. On the other hand, I also found out that my weakness in understanding scholars' theories.

In summary, I was joyful that I could complete my dissertation, felt fortunate that I could have Professor Chu as my supervisor for my dissertation, and also felt grateful to Dr Xu, teachers, seniors and friends who helped me a lot during the process of writing.