

Dean's Outstanding Internship Award – Certificate of Merit
院长优秀实习生獎表扬状 (2024/25)

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2023/24 学年三年级生

My Experience of Editing “Cantonese Dictionary”
<https://words.hk/>

1. Introduction

In the summer of 2024, I had the opportunity to complete a 3-month internship at Hong Kong Lexicography Limited, an organisation dedicated to the research, recording and preservation of the Cantonese language. The company publishes the “Cantonese Dictionary”, which contains a large amount of detailed information about the Cantonese language.

I was particularly excited about this internship because it allowed me to gain hands-on experience in the professional field of lexicography—the practice of compiling and editing dictionaries and other reference works.

During my internship, I contributed to various aspects of dictionary development and management. This includes carefully reviewing existing items, researching and proposing new vocabulary items, and providing input on the overall organisation and presentation of content.

Through this experience, I gained a deeper appreciation for the rigour and attention to detail that goes into high-quality lexicographic work. I have always been impressed by the team's commitment to ensuring that the dictionary reflects the latest and most authoritative understanding of the Cantonese language.

While the internship presented some challenges in terms of the expected self-directed, proactive approach, I ultimately found it to be a valuable opportunity for growth. By taking better control of my learning and development, I was able to expand my language analysis skills and deepen my knowledge of Cantonese in meaningful ways.

2. Activities

2.1 Main Responsibility

One of my main responsibilities was to thoroughly analyse existing entries in the Cantonese Dictionary to ensure that definitions, examples, and other information accurately reflect modern Cantonese usage. This involved a meticulous line-by-line review of the content to ensure definitions, example usage and other information remain accurate, relevant and reflect contemporary Cantonese. It also involved carefully

identifying areas where the entry could be improved, such as providing more nuanced explanations, updating outdated examples, or clarifying ambiguous points.

Whenever I encountered information that was outdated, unclear, or incomplete, I researched the issue thoroughly, consulted other sources, and suggested changes to the article. This might include updating definitions, replacing outdated example sentences, clarifying the meaning of nuances, or restructuring the overall presentation of the article.

2.2 Research and Propose New Vocabulary Projects

In addition to improving existing content, I also helped research and propose new Cantonese terms, idioms and expressions for inclusion in the dictionary. This required keeping abreast of the dynamic evolution of Cantonese and monitoring emerging vocabulary, language innovations and changes in usage patterns. I then researched the origins, meanings, and context of these new words before drafting detailed dictionary entries.

The research process involved reviewing a variety of sources such as academic publications, online forums, social media, and interviews with native Cantonese speakers. I carefully analysed the data collected and drafted comprehensive dictionary entries that included detailed definitions, example sentences, and notes on grammatical attributes, register, and cultural connotations.

Throughout my internship, I was impressed by the rigour and attention to detail of the team's lexicographic process, as well as the organisation's strong focus on ensuring that dictionaries reflect the most up-to-date and authoritative understanding of the Cantonese language.

While the self-directed, proactive approach expected of an intern posed some initial challenges, I ultimately found it to be a valuable growth opportunity as it allowed me to take greater control of my own learning and development in this professional field.

3. Impacts

The internship experience at Hong Kong Lexicography Limited had a significant impact on my professional development in several key ways:

3.1 Deepen Language Expertise

1. Through immersion in the professional field of lexicography, I gained a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities of the Cantonese language.
2. The practical experience of researching new vocabulary, analysing existing dictionary entries, and proposing revisions challenged me to hone my language analysis skills.

3.2 Develop Research and Analytical Skills

1. The internship required me to take a proactive, self-directed approach to research, which pushed me to become a more independent and effective learner.
2. The process of identifying, evaluating, and documenting new Cantonese vocabulary has improved my ability to conduct thorough, evidence-based research.
3. The meticulous work of reviewing and revising old dictionary entries further developed my analytical skills, attention to detail, and critical thinking skills.

3.3 Gain Practical Lexicographic Experience

1. Working with the experienced team of Hong Kong Lexicography Limited gave me first-hand exposure to the actual process and decision-making of high-quality dictionary compilation.
2. Participating in discussions about the organisation and presentation of dictionary content helped me understand the practical considerations and challenges faced by lexicographers.
3. This practical experience gave me a unique and valuable perspective on the field of lexicography.

3.4 Develop Professional Soft Skills

The self-directed nature of the job allows me to demonstrate initiative, problem-solving skills, and the ability to work independently.

4. Reflection

In conclusion, my internship at Hong Kong Lexicography Limited was a transformative experience that enabled me to gain deeper language expertise, enhanced research and analytical skills, practical lexicographic experience, and valuable professional soft skills. These developments contributed significantly to my growth and provided me with an excellent foundation for future academic or professional pursuits in linguistics and other fields.

Looking back on my internship experience at Hong Kong Lexicography Limited, I can identify several key learning outcomes and plans for future career development:

4.1 Key Learning Outcomes

1. Deepen Language Expertise
 - Gain a more nuanced understanding of the Cantonese language, its evolution, and the complexities involved in maintaining an authoritative dictionary.
 - Develop advanced skills in language analysis, including the ability to accurately identify, study and record new vocabulary words.
 - Enhanced my ability to utilize corpus linguistics tools and methods to support lexicographic work.
2. Enhance Research and Analysis Capabilities
 - Hone my ability to conduct thorough, evidence-based research and synthesise information from diverse sources to formulate informed recommendations.
 - Improved my critical thinking and attention to detail through the meticulous process of reviewing and revising existing dictionary entries.
 - Becoming better at navigating ambiguity and drawing insightful conclusions that will benefit me in my future academic and professional careers.
3. Practical Dictionary Compilation Experience:
 - Hands-on exposure to the real-world processes and decisions involved in high-quality dictionary work.
 - Gained a deeper understanding of the practical considerations and challenges faced by lexicographers, which will inform my future academic and career choices.

4.2 Future Career Development Plan

1. Continue Studying Linguistics

- Consider applying to a graduate program in linguistics, with a special focus on lexicography, corpus linguistics, or language evolution.
- Aims to deepen my expertise in Cantonese linguistics and expand my research skills to contribute to the field in a more significant way.

2. Develop Multidisciplinary Skills

- Recognise the value of combining my language expertise with complementary skills such as data analysis, project management, or technical writing.
- Actively seek opportunities to expand my knowledge and abilities in these adjacent fields to enhance my versatility and competitiveness in the job market.

In conclusion, my internship at Hong Kong Lexicography Limited was a transformative experience that greatly enriched my professional development. The key learning outcomes and future plans outlined above demonstrate the significant impact this internship had on my trajectory, and I am excited to continue to build on this foundation as I pursue my academic and professional ambitions.

粵典

Website of “Cantonese Dictionary”: <https://words.hk/>

「頭」

第 45 條

讀音： *tau4*

詞性： 形容詞

解釋： (廣東話) 最先；最初；最前面
(英文) first; number one; top

配詞 / 用法：
tau4 sap6 ming4
(粵) 頭十名
(英) top ten (people)

例句：
ngo5 faan1 dau3 tai4 tau4 go2 gni2 joi6 hau2 me gwaa3
(粵) 我返到嚟頭嚟幾日好唔慣。
(英) For the first few days after my return, I was not used to the environment.
keoi5 daan6 hoik6 gaan2 si1 zong1 jui5 jin4 hoik6 paan4 dau3 hau2 tau4
(粵) 佢大學揀科將語言學排到好頭。
(英) He listed linguistics among his top preferences when applying to university.

參看： 首名 初戀 最好 上衣 頂端 頂 頭號 top

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Example of vocabulary entry, including the pronunciation, part of speech, explanation and examples