



UNIVERSITÀ  
di VERONA

Dipartimento  
di LINGUE  
E LETTERATURE STRANIERE



Centre  
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de l'Asie orientale

## International Workshop

### Dynamics of knowledge transmission and linguistic transformation in Chinese textual cultures

Hosted by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Verona (Italy),  
**September 17-18, 2020.**

The circulation and the dissemination of knowledge rely in essential ways on forms of linguistics transformation, alteration and manipulation. An apparently simple act such as adding a lexical gloss next to a term can potentially reveal the complex interpretative and translational processes that are needed in order for a specific verbal structure to continue to operate as a meaningful sign in a new setting. Furthermore, it can encapsulate the individual and contextual factors and constraints that might affect the way those processes are carried out.

Historically, practices of linguistic transformation and manipulation, from the writing of glosses and paraphrases to the elaboration of full-fledged commentaries and rewritings, have served as important vehicles for the transmission and dissemination of knowledge. They have contributed to the development of a rich body of secondary literature in a wide range of new scholarly and popular genres and textual formats, aimed at catering to different audiences and for different needs.

In a similar way, nowadays, the ever-increasing specialization of language use within large sectors of knowledge (e.g. in the fields of law, medicine, science, technology etc.) is often counterbalanced by efforts to make the language more readily understandable and to improve textual comprehensibility, for example in the case of mass communication texts. On the other hand, a certain opacity of language still maintains an indisputable relevance in many situations (cf. e.g. the presence of classical forms in the standard language). Such asymmetries in the field of communication and usages have a pragmatic relevance in terms of education, popularisation, audience empowerment, and they imply questions on aspects of language variation and identity.

In engaging with the dynamics of knowledge transmission within Chinese textual traditions, this workshop aims to address the specific question of language use in a variety of textual practices that can enable or hinder transfer processes. It invites theoretical and descriptive contributions on all periods of Chinese textual tradition.

Topics of interests include but are not limited to the following:

- Notions of popularizing discourse, language simplification, intralingual translation, textual comprehensibility, and the correlated view of language obscurity and opacity, in different textual traditions;



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- Investigations on language features, discourse strategies and textual practices related to notions of 'simple' language (i.e. simple literary Chinese, popular literary Chinese, plain language, traditional discussions on categories like su 俗, wen 文, ya 雅, qian 淺 etc);
- Practices of language transformation and textual modes of transmission in relation to genre categorization and to the emergence of new genres;
- Agents, networks, media engaged in practices of knowledge transmission and linguistic transformation;
- Digital tools for the investigation of textual transmission and linguistic transformation.

According to the workshop format, papers presentation should be 30 minutes long with 15 minutes for questions and discussions. The language of the workshop is English.

Please send title and up to **500 words abstract** to Barbara Bisetto (barbara.bisetto@univr.it) and Rainier Lanselle (rainier.lanselle@ephe.psl.eu) by **March 31, 2020**.

Notification of acceptance will be sent through e-mail to the submitting authors by **April 30, 2020**.

The international workshop is organized by Barbara Bisetto (University of Verona) in cooperation with Rainier Lanselle (Ecole Pratiques des Hautes Etudes, Paris), and it is supported by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature of the University of Verona and by CRCAO (Paris, [www.crcao.fr](http://www.crcao.fr)).

Participants are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses. The organizers may provide limited financial support to cover travel expenses depending on funds.