APPRECIATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH TRANSLATING AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CULTURE: A PROJECT-BASED LEARNING APPROACH

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Abstract

This paper is focused on how translation students engaged themselves
in a translation project funded by the Australia-China Council and
came to appreciate cultural diversity through translating two books
on Australian Aboriginal culture. Not only did they practice various
translation skills and techniques related to translation theories, but
also gained an insight into perspectives of Australian Aboriginal
cultural heritage and tradition. After the translation project was
completed, a written questionnaire survey and audio-taped interviews
were conducted about their personal experiences translating the
books. Using Grounded Theory (GT), the author coded the data,
conducted critical analysis of the contents, and categorised the
themes. The results show that the participants gained an
understanding of Australian Aboriginal social practices and cultural
values. Furthermore, they have developed learner autonomy in
exploring the project-relevant learning through different channels.
The students used relevant translation theories, applied translation
techniques, and undertook textual analysis, particularly in dealing
with culture-loaded contents that characterise the richness and

diversity of Australian Aboriginal cultural heritage. It was established
that a project-based learning approach is an effective and engaging
way for translation students to experiment with their translation skills
and different translation theories, achieve linguistic and cross-cultural
understanding of Australian Aboriginal culture while participating
actively in various organized learning activities. More importantly,
they have raised their intercultural awareness and enhanced their
intercultural communication competence. Such a project-based,
reflective, and exploratory learning approach promotes students'
willingness to communicate both orally and in written form as well
as the development of their risk-taking and appreciation of cultural
diversity. Its pedagogical implications are discussed.

Key words: Intercultural translation, project-based learning approach,
Australian Aboriginal culture, student engagement in learning,
English–Chinese translation

1.   INTRODUCTION

Different from the traditional way in which translation
teaching and learning are conducted in a classroom, an
alternative approach can be employed to provide
university students with opportunity to put translation
theories into practice through engaging themselves in a
team translation project as an extension of translation
activity beyond classroom walls. Our experience with the
team translation project shows that this innovative
approach focuses on student engagement learning and the
development of multiple skills.

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In this study, the author first reviews relevant literature in cultural diversity, translation as an intercultural endeavour and exploratory learning (e.g., using library resources, Internet materials, story-telling videos) in the team translation project, then gives a brief account of the translation project funded by Australia-China Council (ACC) and research methodology used. Next, in the body part of this paper, he focuses on developing multiple skills through a project-based learning approach, discusses pedagogical implications, and concludes with an emphasis on the significance of the translation project.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The author will review relevant work in three areas. The first area is concerned with cultural diversity which becomes ever more meaningful as the world is becoming globalised. The second area focuses on theories and practices about the translation of a source language (SL) into a target language (TL) from the perspective of intercultural communication. The third area involves development of associated skills in project-based learning.

2.1. **Understanding cultural diversity in context**

Cultural diversity refers to understanding and appreciating differences reflected in "race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, or geography," and social justice (Saracho & Spodek, 2010, p. 3). In addition to these perspectives, it should also include political, economic, legal, and education systems and language policies that may vary from country to country. Using their research outcomes on child development culture in an undergraduate course, Ganapathy-Coleman and Serpell (2008) argue against the positive stereotyping that white middle-class European American children are treated as normative in developmental psychology and that intercultural education is open to cultural geographical zones, varied instructional strategies, and cultural diversity. Modiba and van Rensburg (2009) emphasize the importance of including cultural diversity and multiculturalism in South African classroom curricula, because there is such a population of diverse language and culture in the country. Research findings show that cultural diversity education and cross-cultural training are essential for university students to become more competitive internationally with ever-increasig economic globalisation when they master more cross-

cultural knowledge and skills, and develop cross-cultural competence and communication skills (Ramburuth & Welch, 2005; Yang, 2015). Cultural diversity provides people from different cultural background an opportunity to observe and analyse the differences, thus to understand them better and approach them positively.

2.2. **Intercultural translation from theory to practice**

Apart from decoding an SL and encoding a TL, translators process textual information across diverse cultures. Pym (2004) claims that translation proper creates a sense of intercultural communication as the translators need to have expert knowledge and skills of two languages and cultures, and strong intercultural sensitivity. Sharing a similar viewpoint, House (2009) finds that translation deals with cultural similarities and differences, and gives many examples to illustrate how source cultural registers are approached and represented in target culture. The analysis of "text register in translation" focuses on the specific and "immediate context of situation" to ensure the translation achieves cohesion and coherence at the textual level (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 76). Such register is seen in three dimensions such as field, mode and tenor. For example, field can be illustrated in translating the same 'site' into a TL using varied wordings

with business domains like tourism or building industries. Tenor is about the relationship between people in the discourse or the text (Baker, 1992) and can vary with formal or informal writing style, hence wordings used in translation could be formal in one context but informal in another (Pellatt & Liu, 2010).

Intercultural translation can also be reflected in non-equivalence issues. Dynamic equivalence focuses on maximizing linguistic (from SL to TL) and cultural (from SC (source culture) to TC (target culture)) similarities, and on minimizing linguistic and cultural differences, although there is no absolute equivalence (Hatim & Munday, 2004; Nida, 2001). It encourages translators to examine specific linguistic and cultural contexts in which intercultural translation is undertaken. Because of intercultural differences, some words and phrases in one language are not equivalent to those in another, for example, '个人主义' in Chinese is not culturally equivalent to 'individualism' and '个体主义' seems to be a better option because of its attributes (Yang, 2011). Many Chinese learners of English consider 'propaganda' to be semantically equivalent to '宣传' as they are not aware that the former has negative connotations while the latter does not. Some culture-specific words may not be able to readily accommodate to equivalents across

language and cultural borders (Rieschild, 2011). For example, the second 'hung parliament[1]' that occurred at Commonwealth level in Australia in 2010 does not have an equivalent in China due to the different political systems in the two countries.

2.3. **Exploring through project-based learning**

A project-based learning (PBL) approach (Stoller, 2006) is an alternative way of engaging students in learning. Different from traditional classroom-and-textbook-based learning, it further develops and enhances various skills through exploratory learning while students engage themselves in a team project. PBL involves group interaction and teamwork, and is an effective and useful approach commonly applied in language teaching and learning settings. The essence of this interactive learning approach lies in the use of a variety of communication-based activities that engage language learners in pair work and group discussion, with each individual "producing language for genuine, meaningful communication" in oral and written forms (Brown, 2007, p. 54) and working cooperatively with their peers and team members. Such

[1]http://www.abc.net.au/news/2010-08-23/australias-hung-parliament-explained/954880

teamwork centres on meaningful communication with team members actively using their receptive (i.e. input) and productive (i.e. output) language skills. Meaningful communication involves learners using personal experience and authentic information that derive from real social and functional settings. One learner's output can provide input information for their peers to calculate their output. Most task-based learning occurs within the classroom and is based overwhelmingly on textbooks and the teachers' instructions and guidance. This paves way for team work and project cooperation in work placements that provide an opportunity for learners to extend their in-context learning experience beyond the classroom boundaries (Yang, 2013b). This helps motivate learners to engage in further exploration into their topics of interest and projects in the future.

Furthermore, PBL is characterised by exploratory learning and task-based interaction. It encourages learners to explore with curiosity and motivation, and develops their learner autonomy (Harmer, 2007; Stefanou, Stolk, Prince, Chen, & Lord, 2013). Undertaking fieldwork abroad allows learners to make full use of their short-term stay, interact with the host family in a homestay arrangement, and explore more freely and conscientiously in authentic cultural contexts. PBL provides learners an opportunity to experience diverse cultural environments,

making it possible to understand them better in a
multilingual and multicultural context (Jakar, 2006).
Meanwhile, it is through team work that team members
develop team cooperation strategies, become aware of
issues that may arise from task-based learning and group
interaction, and learn to work out solutions, thereby
enhancing their problem-solving skills (Tanaka-Ellis,
2010; Yang, 2014).

3. TRANSLATING AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CULTURE

In this section, the author will first describe the team
translation project and research methodology, including
participants, data collection, data analysis, and analytical
tools used.

3.1. Translation project

It has come to our attention that most Chinese speakers'
knowledge about Australia is largely limited to its recent
history of a little over 200 years and mainstream Anglo-
Saxon culture affiliated with its origin. They may know
something about Captain Cook and his first fleet
discovering the massive continent in the southern
hemisphere, but may have little idea about Australian
Aboriginal people who have been the first traditional

occupants of Australia for more than 50,000 years (Hinkson, 2013, p. xviii). It is not surprising that most Chinese speakers know little about Australian Aboriginal history and culture as there has never been a bilingual (English and Chinese) book about it despite the fact that the inclusion of Australian Aboriginal history and culture in the Australian secondary school curricula is a recent phenomenon. This has motivated us to look for an opportunity to fill this gap by working on a translation project on Australian Aboriginal culture.

In May 2011, leading the team, the author and his colleague succeeded in applying for an Australia-China Council (ACC) grant, which was nationally competitive across Australia, after being advised by ACC to lodge a full application preceded by a written expression of interest. Our successful application was supported by the author's colleagues and Aboriginal Studies Press based in Canberra. Our research project, "Understanding Australian Aboriginal Culture through Translation", was funded by the Commonwealth through the Australia-China Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and UWS School of Humanities and Communication Arts (2011–2012). Consistent with the goals of ACC, this project aims to increase awareness and understanding of Australian society and culture, and Australian Aboriginal history and cultural heritage in

particular, in China through translating *Aboriginal Sydney: A Guide to Important Places of the Past and Present* (2010, 2nd ed.) (hereafter *Aboriginal Sydney*) and *Aboriginal Darwin: A Guide to Exploring Important Sites of the Past & Present* (2006) (hereafter *Aboriginal Darwin*) into Chinese.

Different from those books specialised in Australian Aboriginal history and culture, *Aboriginal Sydney* and *Aboriginal Darwin* introduce major historical themes and events, and cultural practices from the perspectives of Aboriginal speakers for tourists and visitors to Australia. They are tour guides with concise information about key historic sites and events, and strive to make the tour interesting and fun via a see-and-think approach. Through more than 300 images (black and white or colour), maps and illustrations, the two books give a brief description of what was happening in old Sydney and Darwin during the periods of pre-colonisation and post-colonisation in particular (after Captain James Cook's arrival in 1788). They mainly describe the different kinds of interaction between the British colonists and the traditional landowners. Some interactions were mutually friendly and beneficial while others were deadly and contentious due to differences in culture and social practices, and above all the European invaders' ambition to dominate the country owned by the Aboriginal groups. It can be

summarised as major cross-cultural communication between these two different racial groups, and many other racial groups, such as the Chinese and Japanese, also involved in the interaction. Some of the interactions were successful intercultural communication experiences while others turned out to be failures. What is significant about their interaction with the European explorers and colonists is that the Australian Aboriginal people have been fighting for their land and human rights ever since, and not only have they secured their right to vote, but have also had some of their land recognized and returned to their custody. The successful aspect of this cross-cultural communication between the traditional owners and the "invaders" can be seen in the reconciliation and the national "Apology[2]" issued 13 February 2008 by the former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to all Australian Indigenous and Aboriginal people, "the Stolen Generation" in particular. However, much work still needs to be done.

In May 2013, *Aboriginal Sydney* and *Aboriginal Darwin* were published in bilingual editions (Chinese and English) by Aboriginal Studies Press. This was the first time English books about Australian Aboriginal history and culture were published in both English and Chinese

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[2] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKWfiFp24rA

in Australia. The two bilingual books provide the broader Chinese speaking community with an opportunity to learn about Australian Aboriginal history and culture, and also add to the language learning resources for Chinese speakers learning English as a foreign (second) language as well as English speakers learning Chinese as a foreign (second) language.

3.2. **Research methodology**

Ten native speakers of Mandarin Chinese participated in the team translation project, two of them being teachers and eight being students studying translation and interpreting at university level. Shortly after the translation project was completed, eight members completed a questionnaire with both close-ended and open-ended questions. In addition, five members participated in audio-recorded interviews in which each of them was interviewed for 20 minutes. This provided each interviewee an opportunity to give a detailed account of their individual experiences with the translation project. Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1999) was used to guide the detailed analysis of the audio data. The author focused on contents relevant to the themes emerging from the narrative, rather than making any hypotheses or predictions about the interviewees' experiences. The analytical tool used is Nvivo 10, which allows the author

to import the audio-recoded interviews and transcribe
while listening to and examining the audio data. After the
author coded the audio data, studied the contents critically
and categorized the themes, two broad points of interest
emerged. Instead of quoting the participants' audio-
recorded interviews, the author will collate relevant
information, summarise key themes, and discuss key
findings in the following section.

4. DEVELOPING MULTIPLE SKILLS THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING APPROACH

4.1. Developing intercultural translation skills

The team members practiced and improved their
intercultural translation skills in the course of the
translation project. The project was completed within
approximately twelve months. The learners gained an
understanding of various intercultural differences and
learned how to put this understanding into intercultural
translation practice with reference to relevant translation
theories. This involved interpreting words with cultural
meaning, translating non-equivalent wordings and using
functional grammar theory (Halliday, 2013) in achieving

translational adequacy. These points will be discussed further in the following sections.

Many common and everyday words and phrases they were familiar with took on special and in-context meanings in *Aboriginal Sydney* and *Aboriginal Darwin* when translated into Chinese. Hence, we devoted some special time for further reflection and group discussion on cultural meanings in context. This motivated the students to examine the embedded cultural meanings while practicing relevant translation skills and techniques with reference to intercultural differences, situational context, textual register and orientation to target readers. Let us look at some examples.

> Example 1: This is the site where Governor Phillip had a hut built for Bennelong, the most renowned Aboriginal mediator of the early colonial period. The main feature on this site is the Sydney Opera House. Although considered one of Australia's most iconic buildings, there is little on the site that honours Bennelong. (Hinkson, 2013, p. 14)

Although the Chinese translation of "mediator" (调和人) was straightforward, a detailed account was given about Bennelong. He was a young Aboriginal man who spoke excellent English and maintained close connection with the British colonists, Governor Philip in particular. "In a

sign of their deep affection for each other, Bennelong and Phillip exchanged names, Bennelong calling Phillip Biyanga (father) and the Governor in turn addressing Bennelong as Durung (son). Phillip was missing the same upper front tooth removed from the mouths of young men during the tooth avulsion ceremonies practised by some Aboriginal groups of Sydney" (Hinkson, 2013, p. 28). The site where the Sydney Opera House now stands used to be occupied by a hut built for Bennelong as a reward by Phillip because the Aboriginal man, despite his initial abduction to act in this role after training (ibid., pp. 39–40), was willing and able later on to help the colonists communicate with his own people. He demonstrated his capacity to adapt to different cultural practices and social interaction (ibid., p. 49). He turned out to be a more successful and effective cross-cultural communicator and go-between in making peace than his peers, although he died in dire poverty later.

'The Black Watch' is another instance with a meaningful story. When Darwin was first bombed by Japanese planes in February 1942, "a de facto Aboriginal military unit was formed to protect Darwin's perimeter, providing early warnings and rescuing service teams" (Bauman, 2013, p. 113), hence the Black Watch (黑人预警队). "Permanent watching posts were set up with food parcels for pilots who may have been shot down. Aboriginal people were well suited to searching for crashed aircrafts and survivors, having an intimate knowledge of the landscape and climate and the skills to live in the tropical terrain" (ibid.). The Aboriginal people played an important role by

using their field skills and working together with the colonists to protect their own land.

One of the language differences found between Chinese and English is that while the former can be characterised by typically having one wording for something derogatory and another for something complimentary, the latter tends to have words with both derogatory and complimentary meanings. The derogatory and complimentary wordings in Chinese news reports are clear-cut and strikingly different (Sorby, 2008). In Chinese, derogatory and complimentary wordings are self-evident and do not depend on any context, whereas those in English become apparent only when used in a given context of situation (杨平, 2012). Taking the Chinese phrase "关系" as an example, 刘和林 and 熊力游 (2013) reflect the specific linguistic and cultural context in which this phrase may take on something derogatory or complimentary. Context plays an essential role. Example 2 is a case in point.

> Example 2: To the right of Manly Cove are two smaller coves. The one on the far right is Spring Cove or Collins Beach, known to local Aboriginal people as Gayumay. This is the place where Governor Phillip was speared by an Aboriginal man, Willemering, in July 1790 (see pp. 49–50). The area along this foreshore, where such violent early interactions between Aboriginal people and the British took place,

> is now home to some of the most expensive real estate in Sydney. (Hinkson, 2013, p. 38)

Regarded as intruders to the country owned by the Aboriginal people, the British colonists not only took over their land, but also plotted to transform or get rid of the traditional landowners. Although the two parties initially had some friendly encounters and helped each other, they found it hard not to show mutual hostility as time went on (ibid., p. 39), leading to violent confrontations, for example Captain Cook's gunfire wounding an Aboriginal man (ibid., p. 99), Philip's speared collarbone (ibid., p. 50), and his order to build a redoubt or small fort at Parramatta (ibid., p. 126). The word "interactions" (冲突), as seen in the context in which the violence occurred, took on derogatory meaning consistent with the violent events so that it became relevant to what was being conveyed in the story. However, there was also mutually friendly interaction and co-operation between the two groups (ibid., p. 50), for example intercultural marriage (ibid., p. 123). Such a change from friendly to hostile interaction was also described in *Aboriginal Darwin*, where the two parties willingly exchanged tools and goods, but later distrust and "mounting tension finally erupted" resulting in armed conflicts (Bauman, 2013, p. 25). Having read the full-length article entitled "Google's interactions with antitrust regulators" (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 April 2014[3]), the project members

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[3] http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-technology/googles-interactions-with-antitrust-regulators-20110409-1d86i.html

knew from its context that the word "interactions" (互动)
was meant in a complimentary sense as Google had taken
a series of positive actions to work cooperatively with the
antitrust regulators.

As to expressive meaning, Baker (1992, p. 13) claims that
it "relates to the speaker's feelings or attitudes rather than
to what words and utterances refer to" and that they have
"widely differing degrees of forcefulness" and intensity
(ibid., p. 14). For example, "Helen Liddy (OBE), was born
in a remote area near Brocks Creek into the Wagiman
tribe. Widowed early, Helen moved to Pine Creek with
her five children, and over the next 20 years took in more
than 20 children who were in need of care. At the Pine
Creek Clinic, she was a much respected Aboriginal Health
Worker until her retirement in 1996. Helen is recognised
for her work in health and community development"
(Bauman, 2013, p. 38). The word 'recognise' means no
more than 'to thank someone officially for something s/he
has done' and only seems to convey some neutral feeling.
However, as the project members knew that Helen was an
OBE (Order of the British Empire) (不列颠帝国奖章获
得者) and 'recognised' was used in this context, they
translated the last sentence as "海伦在保健和社区发展
方面工作表现突出，<u>受到表彰</u>"。The   underlined
Chinese translation had more forcefulness and intensity
than '表扬'and it better fit the contextual meaning and
conveyed the intended meaning.

Textual register (Halliday, 2013), tenor (Baker, 1992; House, 2001) in particular, was another point given special attention by the translation project team. To put tenor into application, they chose wordings appropriate to the person's identity and occupation so that they matched the context in discussion. This is what is generally called "appropriateness" by Chinese translation scholars because "the status of the speaking voice in the source text" needs to be faithfully and suitably presented in the target language (Huang, 2004, p. 130) as can be seen in the following passage.

> Example 3: William Dawes was a scientist with the First Fleet who spent most of his three years in Sydney recording local language. He had a special relationship with a young Aboriginal woman, Patyegarang, or Patye, who taught Dawes her language. He, in return, taught her to speak and read English. Dawes lived and worked in the Observatory, in relative seclusion from the rest of the colony, and refused to participate in the first retaliatory raids against Aboriginal people ordered by Phillip (Hinkson, 2013, p. 15).

Through the exploratory learning approach, we came across *Notebooks on the Aboriginal Language of Sydney* written by William Dawes[4] from 1790 to 1791. It is the

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[4] http://www.williamdawes.org/dawes.html

first written record with detailed descriptions of Indigenous languages spoken in Sydney. Although William was an astronomer and set up an observatory in Sydney, he became a pioneer in documenting the Aboriginal languages. He engaged in his field research project of documenting Aboriginal languages. As he was a scholar who dedicated all of his time to work, in this context, the Chinese translation of the verb 'worked' appropriate to his language research would be '研究'. However, the same word in the following passage would be a different case.

> Example 4: When she married Robert Lock at St John's Cathedral, Parramatta in 1824, Maria became the first Aboriginal woman to legally wed a European man. Lock was a convict carpenter who had worked on the construction of the Native Institution and other buildings in the area known as 'the Black Town' (Hinkson, 2013, p. 144).

Robert Lock[5] was 21 years old when he was sent to Sydney as a convict for stealing a pig and a goose. He was a labourer and the word 'worked' appropriate to this specific context would be '干力气活' in Chinese. This translation is appropriate because it takes register-tenor

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[5] http://www.convictrecords.com.au/convicts/lock/robert/91281

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into consideration (Baker, 1992; House, 2001) as it successfully translates the specific context of the construction site and Robert's occupation as a carpenter.

4.2. **Appreciating cultural diversity through exploratory project-based learning**

The translation project members benefited from the team translation experience. PBL provided them with a great opportunity to come to appreciate cultural diversity through engaging in intercultural translation and learning via group communication and exploration of the multilingual and multicultural heritage that makes today's Australia.

While walking around Sydney or Darwin, people will find many place names are of Aboriginal or foreign origin. First, there is Woolloomooloo in the city of Sydney. It is derived from an Aboriginal origin. Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians were the first and traditional occupants of the vast continent and have more than 50,000 years of history (Hinkson, 2013, p. xviii). It was during this period that Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians formed their unique and complex language systems, social practices, ritual ceremonies, and cultural values. For example, there used to be "around 250 distinct languages at first (significant) European contact in the late

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eighteen century" (Walsh, 1993, p. 1), but 64% of them
became extinct due to the European settlement and the
previous governments' discriminatory policies where
"Aboriginal cultural practices and language were
discouraged" (Bauman, 2013, p. 119). Second, there are
place names of European origin. For example, Silver
Beach is where James Cook first landed, thus called
Captain Cook's Landing Place[6]. James Cook University,
in Queensland, is another example. An additional
example can be seen in La Perouse, which is a beach area
named after a French explorer. It is situated at the south
end of Anzac Parade about 14 km from the centre of
Sydney.

The participants' understanding of Australian history and
culture deepened when they learned the stories behind
some of words and expressions affiliated with the
Aboriginal and Indigenous people. To avoid confusion,
they found it necessary to distinguish between
'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal' in Australia, because the
two terms refer to native people living in different
geographical areas of the vast continent. The former refers
to "both Aboriginal people and to Torres Strait Islanders
from the Torres Straits off the east coast of northern

[6] http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/Kamay-Botany-Bay-National-
Park/Captain-Cooks-Landing-Place/historic-site

Queensland" (Bauman, 2013, p. xii) while the latter refers
to the Aboriginal people living in Darwin or Sydney. Not
only is European settlement mirrored in the place and
institutional names but its discrimination is also reflected
in some of the words and phrases labelling Aboriginal
people.

> Example 5: Terms like 'half-caste', 'part-
> Aboriginal' and 'part-coloured' are used in
> history have been used in historical literature
> to refer to 'mixed descent' – Aboriginal people
> with European and/or Asian ancestry as
> opposed to those referred to as 'full bloods'.
> These terms can be offensive to Aboriginal
> people and contemporary non-Aboriginal
> readers alike since they reflect the racially-
> based government policies of the past.
> (Bauman, 2013, p. xii)

Although the first National Sorry Day was established on
26 May 1998, the Australian Government did not make an
apology until former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd did so to
all Australia's Indigenous peoples on 13 Feb 2008. That
was a significant moment for Australian authorities to
officially acknowledge the injustice and suffering imposed
on the Stolen Generation (Petchkovsky & San Roque,
2002; Young, 2009) and the first traditional occupants of
the country. It can be seen from the following example that
when Cook and his men arrived in Australia in 1788, they

could not wait to take over the country and wanted to
enslave the traditional land occupants.

> Example 6: Over the next 150 years, further
> disruption of communities and forced
> movement of Aboriginal people occurred
> across New South Wales, as successive
> governments tried to deal with what they saw
> as 'the Aboriginal problem'. Initially white
> authorities thought that Aboriginal people
> were destined to 'die out', and from the late
> 1880s a policy based ostensibly on their
> 'protection' was introduced. The centrepiece
> of this policy was the establishment of
> segregated Aboriginal reserves. From the
> 1930s, once it had become clear that such
> predictions were false, and that rather than
> dying out the Aboriginal population was in
> fact growing, a new policy of 'assimilation'
> was introduced, geared towards the
> absorption of Aboriginal people into
> mainstream society. (Hinkson, 2013, p. xxvi)

However, Australian Indigenous cultural heritage is deep-
rooted, and Indigenous peoples have been so adaptable
and intelligent that they succeeded in surviving for so
many centuries. They used their field survival skills and
local knowledge of various resources (e.g. water and food
sources, and herbal medicine) to help guard their country
and kept off the Japanese invasion during World War II.
They also worked together with non-Aboriginal

immigrants, such as Japanese, Chinese, Fijian, Siamese,
Malayan, and Cingalese, fighting for their livelihood,
democracy, and equal human rights. Many men and
women of different ethnic backgrounds got along so well
that they got married and raised children together.

Exploratory learning has been educational and its
outcomes can be seen in our efforts to have regular group
discussions and scheduled seminars. For example, at one
of the seminars, we focused on a 51-minute SBS online
video "Who do you think you are?"
(http://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/11731011530)
and learned much about Aboriginal people's multicultural
life. All our translation team members and guests watched
a special episode about the family history of the Sydney
2000 Olympic gold medal winner Catherine Freeman.
Freeman came from an Aboriginal family. After travelling
to many regional areas to trace her family roots, she was
moved and proud to find that her grand-grandmother,
Annie Ah Sam, was a woman of Chinese heritage.
Australian government records show that the Chinese
arrived in north Australia for trade purposes in the 1750s[7],
nearly 40 years before Captain James Cook who made it
in 1788. Furthermore, the translation team members
consulted the two experts on Aboriginal culture and asked
them relevant questions they had collected during the
translation project. For example, one of the questions was

[7] http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/chinatowns-
across-australia

about the interpretation of 'occupation site' in *Aboriginal
Sydney* (Hinkson, 2013, p. 31). After discussion, it became
clear that the 'occupation site' at Balls Head referred to the
place where Aboriginal occupants lived, rather than one
occupied or conquered by the British settlers.

5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The team translation project was successfully completed
with our translations of the two English books, *Aboriginal
Darwin* and *Aboriginal Sydney*, being published by
Aboriginal Studies Press in 2013. PBL was proved to be
an effective way of engaging students to develop in-
context practice of translation theories and appreciation of
dynamic cultural diversity through exploratory learning.

PBL provides team project members an opportunity to put
their translation skills into practice while working on a
project. Not only did they improve their essential
linguistic competence but intercultural communication
competence as well, through linking translation theories
learnt in the classroom with practicing translation
materials and participating in extended activities (e.g.
peer and group discussion, seminars, expert consultations
(Yang, 2015), and exploratory learning) beyond the
classroom boundary (Elorza, 2008). The project opens a
window for the team members to examine translation
theories that have been established in the West and in

China, and to reflect on their similarities and differences, and especially their applications in different and specific cultural contexts (Li, 2010; Ma, 2007). Whether domestication or foreignisation is applied in translating an SL into a TL, is largely determined by the target-oriented approach which underpins a translator's work (Tian, 2010). To work out which translation strategy best applies, team work and group interaction make it possible for all team members to give their input, compare notes, critically analyse the proposed translations, and then come to consensus (Yang, 2015).

PBL also enabled team members to come to appreciate Aboriginal cultural diversity and traditional practice while using their autonomy to undertake exploratory learning. They searched the libraries and websites for useful and relevant information, including documents, images, and audiovisual materials, which helped them decode and understand some of the texts. The Aboriginal people have their culture-specific tradition, ritual practices (e.g. tooth avulsion, finger joint removal, burial poles, corroboree, etc.), group practices (e.g. woomeras, speak-throwing, hurling boomerang, smoking ceremony, etc.), collectivistic cultural values, and social behaviours such as long conversational silences. This cultural pattern, different from that in the Anglo-Saxon Australian culture, is common and socially acceptable in the Aboriginal

communities (Mushin & Gardner, 2009). Such cultural diversities in Australia can be understood in context because verbal and nonverbal communication appropriate in one culture may be interpreted in a different way in another, possibly leading to intercultural misunderstanding (Yang, 2013a). In this case, it is essential for intercultural communicators to find out more about Australian mainstream culture and the Australian Aboriginal culture as well before successful intercultural communication is likely to occur across cultural groups and cultural borders. Having completed the project, the translation team members are more sensitive to Australian cultural dynamics. It has potential to bring home the message to the average Chinese readers that the Australian Aboriginal people have been the traditional occupants of the country and their tradition and history, which were made absent for a long time, are an important part of Australian culture.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on how project-based learning can be used to help university students appreciate cultural diversity, understand cultural differences, and enhance intercultural communication through engaging themselves in intercultural translation practices and undertaking exploratory learning. Participation in an

ACC-funded translation project created an opportunity for team members to practice translation skills with reference to relevant translation theories, such as reader-orientation, lexical non-equivalence, and text register (field, mode, and tenor) in translation, and regularly join peer and group discussion sessions. Students learned to think critically and also work cooperatively with their team members. This improved various non-language skills, such as time management, personal confidence, and learning effectiveness (Yang, 2013b). Meanwhile, as they do a lot of reading and personal reflection, they also improve their linguistic competence and socio-cultural competence, thus achieving a high level of communicative competence. Furthermore, they have realised that their project-based learning activities could be expanded by, for example, making site visits to some Aboriginal communities and families.

The team translation project was successful in that two bilingual (English-Chinese) books have been published. This will add to the easy-to-understand reading lists for Chinese speakers learning English and English speakers learning Chinese. Furthermore, the two books help build a connection between the Chinese culture and the Aboriginal culture, and promote intercultural interaction and communication between the peoples living in China and Australia, particularly at the time when Indigenous education and curriculum are gaining more attention

(Harrison, 2012) and when *Australia in the Asian
Century*[8] was released and the *New Colombo Plan*[9] is in
full swing. Finally, the two books are essentially tour
guides to the Australian Aboriginal history, culture and
sites, and help attract Chinese visitors to Australia for
tourism purposes and make their tour fun, interesting and
educational.

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[8] http://www.murdoch.edu.au/ALTC-
Fellowship/_document/Resources/australia-in-the-asian-century-
white-paper.pdf
[9] http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/pages/new-
colombo-plan.aspx

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