

I, together with other three students from Higher Diploma in Applied Translation Studies, joined this September a one-semester exchange programme to Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) with the assistance and arrangement of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. This golden opportunity gives me not merely a deeper understanding of language, but also a more profound insight into cultural difference.

The unique experience, from the perspective of academic study, strongly enhances my language proficiency and translation competence. Firstly, I am immersed in Mandarin-speaking environment, thus having myriads of opportunities to practice my Mandarin verbally. English is the second language in class, which compels me to practice English whenever possible and to keep focused in class to follow the teaching. Under such circumstances, my communication and language abilities can be elevated significantly. Secondly, it gives me a more thorough understanding of translation. In class, various examples and exercises are distributed, ranging from lyrics, news, literature to political documents. Out of class, language-related talks are frequently held in the campus, and are always open to anyone who is interested. The breadth of the courses and the support from the school can help to hone our translation skills in a comprehensive way. However, “no pain, no gain”, as the old saying goes. With the workload much heavier than that in Hong Kong, I have devoted much more effort to achieve a fruitful outcome.

In addition, this journey to Shanghai allows me to experience different culture and broadens our horizon. Having made friends from various provinces of China, I gain more understanding of their lives, cultures and languages while they gain that of mine. One case in point is that our roommate, a Taiwanese studying Russian, has taught me some useful phrases in Hokkien and Russian. For instance, “milu” stands for “beauty” in Hokkien while “yaponimayu” means “I get it” in Russian. In exchange, I have also taught her some pragmatic Cantonese words. Travelling together, we have experienced Shanghai and the nearby cities, like wandering in the gardens of Suzhou and strolling in the historical streets of Shanghai. I have even tasted the difference among the mooncakes of Shanghai, Taiwan and Hong Kong! Forging friendship with people from elsewhere is indeed an interesting and invaluable experience.

Last but not least, the programme enlightens me through our daily lives. Surprised at the demanding schedule unimaginable in Hong Kong, I have never heard of grumbles from my SISU peers, instead, they participate actively both in class and in extracurricular activities, which truly inspires me to go all out to improve myself.

All in all, this unforgettable experience offers me an in-depth understanding of multitudinous aspects.

**By Lee Wing Yan**