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### *Teaching Translation in Higher Education in Taiwan- A Needs Analysis and Action Research Approach*

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

In language classrooms, while experienced teachers use their accumulated hands-on knowledge to develop curricula, novice teachers normally spend a lot of time trying to 'guess' what their students might need or want to gain from the course. Developing curricula for language courses is a daunting task when the teachers do not know what the adequate components for their syllabi are. As Tarone and Yule (1989:10) point out, an individual teacher's ability to choose appropriate materials lies in his or her experience and depends highly on the 'local needs'. Thus, the premise of teaching is to find out what the learners need. As one class is never the same as another in reality, therefore, even if the teacher has drawn up a curriculum for one particular class, it is logical that certain modifications must be made in order for the curriculum to be used for another. That is to say teachers should adjust their methods and materials according to learners' different levels and kinds of needs when teaching the same course/subject to different classes. Today, the significance of needs analysis in the development of language for specific purposes (LSP) is well recognized by specialists in the fields, with its merits and limitations, and has been for the last two decades or more (e.g. Brindley, 1994; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Long, 2005; West, 1997; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995).

### **1.1. Needs Analysis Used to Investigate English Teaching in Taiwan**

As Goslin (2003) claims, identifying learning needs and then responding accordingly is important in the higher education context. Moreover, studies have proven that needs analysis is critical when investigating effectiveness or performance in higher education.

In the higher education settings in Taiwan, needs analysis has been used by scholars to understand difficulties encountered in their practice for curriculum planning in order to provide suggestions for course design. The literature shows that many studies such as that of Tsao & Lin's (2001) have been conducted to investigate English for General Purposes (EGP) teaching in Taiwan by using a needs analysis approach. On the contrary, in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching and learning, the literature is relatively limited. In practice we see that most studies have placed their interests on EGP courses instead of ESP courses.

Moreover, although the importance of needs analysis for course design is generally recognized by academics, in practice we find that teachers in most Taiwanese technological universities need to have their curricula ready and put them online before the semester begins. This is to say, teachers usually have to design the course before being given the opportunity to consider students' needs. Even when needs analysis is well-recognised as a 'must' in developing language courses, many teachers, including some colleagues from the university where the researcher teaches, still bypass the process and go on to teach what they *think* is needed for the students. Are the teachers imposing their opinions on the students by doing so? How do students react to it if that's the case?

Unlike the vast majority of the studies in and beyond Taiwan that focus on the ESP courses end simply by discussing the results from the needs analysis (Stocker & Reddad, 2013), this study will go further to the course design stage and to investigate the learners' feedback towards a curriculum designed from needs analysis.

## **1.2. Translation Teaching in Taiwan**

With globalisation as a trend, ESP courses have been promoted by the academic institutions and the government in Taiwan hoping to strengthen the nation's competitiveness. Among them, 'Translation' or translation-related courses are regarded as the 'key' to reach out to the world of communication and information. Translation studies as a discipline has developed considerably in the past two decades to answer the call of globalisation and to strengthen the nation's competitiveness.

In a research project carried out by National Science Council in 2003 on the professional competence needed by students at Departments of Applied Foreign Languages, competence of foreign language speaking, competence in translation, and adequate professional attitude towards translation were identified as the top 3 of the 15 indicators (Huang, 2003). Moreover, according to a study reported by Lin (2002), which involved 7 technological universities in Southern Taiwan, with 23 teachers, 278 students as well as 62 organisation executives, developing English communication and translation abilities were reported to be the basic requirements to enter a workplace. Lin further points out that curricula should be designed according to students' language abilities and their interests to meet their needs. It should be noted that Lin's study as well as most other studies in the field were conducted from the employers' or scholars' perspectives by focusing on the workplace or target needs. Other studies that investigated translation courses (e.g. Ho, 1999; Dai, 2003) also focused on future or workplace needs. In other words, most studies have a target-oriented approach. Again, there are very few studies that address learning needs from the learners' perspectives, not to mention to 'act' on this. There is certainly a lacuna in the literature and in practice about using needs analysis in planning Translation as an ESP course by focusing on students' needs in higher education settings.

### **1.3. The Significance and Structure of This Study**

Given the fact that translation is considered as an important skill for workplace and 'English Translation' is a compulsory module that all students from the Department of Applied English at Taiwanese technological universities have to pass in order to graduate, the researcher as a teacher of such a module was concerned when she realised that the students were struggling with the course. She then strived to find ways to help the students improve their learning by understanding what students had to say. The research question was hence formulated through interacting with the students: **Will students learn effectively or perform better if their 'wants' and/or 'needs' are satisfied?**

After a group discussion was conducted to understand students' difficulties in learning, the researcher decided to introduce a needs analysis to further identify students' learning needs. After designing a curriculum that was based on the students' needs, the researcher then further implemented such a curriculum in the class and investigated students' thinking and performance by using an action research approach.

#### **1.3.1 Significance of this research**

The significance of this study can be viewed from the following aspects. Firstly, this study is significant to the researcher personally for as a teacher she hopes to help her students through improving her own teaching. As we will see later, the approach she employed is an action research approach which is based on her teaching experience.

Also we shall see in the next chapter in more detail that even though Translation is a common course widely taught in many universities that there is very little research on

translation curriculum design and even less research which is empirical and focused upon Translation-related courses taught at technological universities; thus this study is significant for developing and improving education in Taiwan.

Furthermore, as a case study with an action research approach, this research adds another example to the limited literature in the field of Translation teaching. The fact that it is the only case from Taiwan so far, marks its contribution to the general literature out of which further researchers can draw their conclusions.

### **1.3.2. Organisation of this thesis**

This thesis comprises seven chapters. Chapter One briefly introduces the overview and the purposes of this study. How the research question was formed and its significances are also presented.

Chapter Two presents the background of the study with a detailed description on the context for the work.

In Chapter Three, the researcher will analyse existing literature both general and specific to Taiwan. At the end of the chapter the researcher will demonstrate that although there is a small amount of empirical research, nonetheless there is a gap in the research which needs to be filled.

Chapter Four presents the methodology used to carry out this research. The action research design will be described and the approaches to analyse data collected will also be explained.

Chapter Five will be a presentation of the data collected from the students with analyses of their views and their responses to the action research project that was introduced in the study.

Chapter Six will be focused on the teacher, and similarly will present the perspectives of the teacher seen from the perspectives of the researcher even though that both roles are shared by the same person: the teacher-researcher. To keep a distance between these roles, the author of this thesis will refer to herself as ‘the researcher’ instead of using the first person, and as ‘the teacher’ when describing her activity in this role.

In the final chapter, Chapter Seven, the researcher will draw conclusions from the findings and discuss implications for future teaching and curriculum elements as well as future research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **English Education in Taiwan**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Being the first nation to embrace democracy in Asia, Taiwan rose from poverty and changed from an agricultural to an industrial economy after the Second World War. From the 1960s to 1990s, Taiwan outperformed other Asian nations with its fast growing economy and technology power (Gold, 1986; Lin 2003; Liu & Armer, 1993) and became one of the ‘developed’ countries (Amsden, 1979). Its phenomenal development in terms of economy is called ‘Taiwan’s Economic Miracle’. (Amsden 1985; Chu, 2009; Lucas Jr., 1993; Nelson & Pack, 1999; Simon & Kau, 1992). Its striking growth drew international attention, and due to its fast industrialisation, Taiwan was praised and named the leading nation of ‘the four little dragons’- Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore (i.e. Chen 1997; Chen et al, 2008; Vogel, 1992).

Without natural resources but only ‘the energy, ambition, and talents of its own people’, this ‘barren rock in a typhoon-laden sea’ (Friedman, 2006: 344) with its remarkable economic achievements had the third-largest financial reserves in the world in the early 2000s. However, in the 2013 global competitiveness rankings by IMD (International Institute for Management Development, Lausanne, Switzerland) (Common Wealth, 2013; Focustaiwan, 2013), Taiwan was ranked 11th among 60 countries, down five notches from 2012. In another ranking reported by WEF in the same year, Taiwan ranked 12th among 148 countries (Tang, 2013). In both cases, Taiwan was outranked countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. Evidently Taiwan had been

gradually losing its competitive advantage to the other three 'little dragons' (Chou, 2008; Lu, 2006) in the past two decades.

The setback in the nation's competitiveness is seen as such a critical issue that institutions and organisations, such as 'The Taiwan Competitiveness Forum', a think tank formed by 60 scholars from government and private sectors, were founded to address the causes and find ways to strengthen the nation's competitiveness. At the same time numerous studies have investigated all possible problems and provided suggestions to help restore Taiwan's glory. The results from the studies showed that 'education', being one indicator employed by institutions such as IMD and WEF to determine a country's competitiveness, is a major factor that influences the nation's competitiveness (Chen, 2000; Chuang, 2002; Huang, 2012; Wang, 2002; Wu, 1998). Researchers believe that by elevating education quality, citizens' competitiveness can be strengthened, and hence the nation's competitiveness.

The government therefore came up with educational reform policies for all education levels (MOE, 2000). In order to enhance educational efficiency and quality in the technological and vocational sector, it is suggested that colleges must focus on strengthening students' abilities of independent thinking, life-long learning, creativity and foreign languages skills (Wu & Lin, 2005). In the 'Introduction to technological and vocational education in Taiwan' published by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2012: 39), promoting 'International Cooperations and Elevating Student Language Capabilities' is explicitly stated as one of the eight primary goals of technological and vocational education in Taiwan. Each year the MOE spends immense efforts and budget on projects aimed at elevating students' foreign language ability, as well as establishing professional English ability indicators and producing teaching materials

for students in the technological and vocational sector to improve their language skills.

To further illustrate the research background, this chapter begins with a discussion on the status of English as an international language and its significance in Taiwan, including perceptions from the general public and the government. Section 2.2 briefly introduces how English education is emphasised by the government in the technological and vocational universities sector. The third part of this chapter discusses how ESP courses are taught in technological and vocational colleges in Taiwan and the factors which impact the outcomes of learning. After that, 'Translation' as an ESP course and the context in which this study is located is presented, followed by the final section which comprises the research question and the significance of the study.

## **2.1 The status of English as an international language and its significance for English learning in Taiwan**

According to Crystal (1997), an international language or global language has to be an official language, a second language, or a priority in a country's foreign-language teaching in most parts of the world. As an official language in over 70 countries and a second language or most taught foreign language in over 100 regions, English is the only language that fits these criteria. By the late 1990s, approximately 1/4 of the population in the world were fluent or competent in English. The globalisation and glocalisation of English had made impacts on language education and government policies across the world.

In Taiwan, English has been the only foreign language included in Taiwan's compulsory education curriculum since approved by the Legislative Yuan in 1967. It has been regarded as the 'must learn' language by the government attributing to the prestigious status of English being established in the Taiwanese society.

### **2.1.1 From the general public's perspective**

Although a few practitioners have argued that English with its prestige status in Taiwan as a symbol of neo-colonialisation (Chuang, 2002; Liu 2004), learning English has become a national trend in Taiwan in the past two decades (Chang, 2006; Liao, 2004). As discussed earlier, Taiwan's economy has shifted from agricultural to industrial and service-based. It is clear that the market is no longer regional but global. To expand commercial activities globally requires communication capability with customers and business associates who speak different languages. In the 2013, at 'The Future of Global English' forum held in Taipei (Hsieh, 2013), Professor A.W. Harzing indicated that 3/4 of the multinational enterprises worldwide are facing challenges of managing over 20 overseas operation areas, and among them language is the major barrier between headquarters and branch companies which causes extra cost and deficiency in operation, especially in Asian enterprises. In the same forum professionals, such as David Graddol, also pointed out that the service industry is a communication industry; when facing colleagues of various races and nationalities one often needs to use the most commonly used language, English, to communicate. The significance of English is stressed in the workplace and so inevitably employees need to strengthen their English ability to maintain their values to the enterprises.

Apart from the industry sector, government officials as well as private institutions also tend to recruit candidates with English proficiency tests scores such as TOEIC,

TOEFL or GEPT (General English Proficiency Test). Hence going to English cram schools to learn English is very popular in Taiwan. As for those who are in academia or research, English proficiency is needed for reading articles and publications as well as attending conferences and seminars to exchange ideas and disseminate research.

From a pragmatic point of view the fast development of internet communication via computers, smart phones, tablets and other gadgets has brought a time of globalisation of information. The rise of international social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn also reinforce the importance of effective communication.

### **2.1.2 From the government's perspective**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, English proficiency, being one critical factor to the nation's competitiveness, is officially promoted in Taiwan by the government's policies. For example, in March 2002, President Chen suggested openly that English should be Taiwan's second language, followed by a government announcement in 2004 indicating that all officials with a certain level of English proficiency will be awarded extra credits when looking for promotion.

On the other hand, since English proficiency can be quantified by test scores such as TOEIC and TOEFL, these test results are often used to compare with other Asian countries. In the 2012 TOEIC ranking, Taiwan scored the lowest since 2009 with a total of 539 and ranked 37<sup>th</sup> among 46 countries, outranked by Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea. In the 2012 TOEFL ranking, Taiwan ranked 17<sup>th</sup> among 30 countries in Asia, down 3 notches from 2011, and again outranked by Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea (Chang, 2013). From these English proficiency tests results, people started to panic and were convinced that English education needed to be changed. Criticism

from academia, the media and the general public forced the government to reflect on their policies and hence educational reform policies were introduced.

In the next section the policies concerning technological and vocational colleges, the context of this research, are discussed in more details to better illustrate the background of this research.

## **2.2 English education in the technological and vocational colleges and universities in Taiwan**

The technological and vocational education sector in Taiwan is comprised of professional high schools, technical and technological colleges and universities. In contrast to the general education sector, the English teaching studies in the technological and vocational sector is extremely marginalised. The technological and vocational sector is commonly regarded as ‘secondary’ education in Taiwan, but not only do they receive less grants from the MOE, but also less attention from professionals and scholars. Students from senior high schools tend to prefer enrolling at general universities over technological and vocational universities (Hu, 2007). Traditionally technological and vocational colleges and universities are seen as alternatives for vocational high school graduates who failed to compete with general high school graduates in the university entrance examination (Cho, 2008).

According to research and evaluations conducted by the MOE as well as local language teaching studies, students from the technological and vocational sector generally have inefficient English language competence in comparison with general university students (Chang, 2006; Chen, 2009; Chou, 2005; Yu et al, 2000). The 2007 GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) results showed that only 18% of the

students from technological and vocational colleges and universities in Central Taiwan passed the listening section and 10% passed the reading comprehension section of the exam. Results from Northern and Southern Taiwan are similar to the Central Region (Chen, 2009). Foreign language skills, especially the English skills of these students are less competitive than those from general colleges/universities.

There are various factors that lead to the low achievement of English proficiency among students in the technological and vocational universities. Many believe that apart from the students' personal abilities, the government and the scholars are responsible. Statistics show that technological and vocational colleges/universities have successfully educated both basic and advanced graduates who perform well in local workplace with good skills, high efficiency and positive attitudes (Tsao & Lin, 1998). As cradles for technological professionals, it is suggested however, that technological and vocational colleges should improve their education quality and standards in order to cultivate students with the necessary skills and knowledge so that they can perform well not only in the local, but international workplace (Chen, 2000; Kuo, 2012; MOE, 2012; MOE, 2013) as well. In the era of globalisation and internationalisation, English language ability is regarded as an important tool to reach out to the world, not only by academics but also the government and the public (Chen, 2013; Lee 2012).



The above poster spotted on the hallway of JinWen University of Science and Technology essentially expresses the attitude technological universities have towards English learning. How to enhance English ability in the technological and vocational sector has become a desperate and present issue to the technological and vocational colleges and universities as well as the MOE.

Looking at the guidelines and regulations implemented by the MOE, there are three main themes that are directly linked to the English Departments in technological and vocational sector, which is the focus of this research, namely English graduation threshold, national English ability competition, and projects to elevate English proficiency.

### **2.2.1 Setting the English graduation threshold**

Technological universities began to set up the English ability graduation threshold in 2002 and now all technological universities have their own versions of the threshold to ensure all graduates have efficient English competency before they enter the workplace. In the beginning the regulation was criticised and questioned by students, parents and many teachers from non-English departments (Wu, 2013). They were afraid that while institutions are concerned with students' performance with graduation threshold examinations such as TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, and GEPT, English teaching would become 'graduation-oriented'. Teaching approaches and contents would be limited and less creative. In addition, scholars worried that the aim of English learning would be to pass the examination in order to graduate, and whether student's language competency is actually improved by implementing such thresholds or whether learners are motivated by such regulation would be arguable.

While this top-down regulation has been questioned because of its neglect of the learners' needs, statistics show that the students' passing rate of the basic level of General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) increased from 14% in 2003 to 50% in 2007 (Chang & Tu, 2007). Therefore, setting up English ability graduation thresholds has had its positive impact on elevating English proficiency among technological universities students.

### **2.2.2 Encouraging general English ability competitions**

The MOE provides over NT\$ 1,000,000 budget on inter-school competitions each year, mainly on English ability and workplace English. Students are encouraged to participate in these competitions to broaden their horizons and interact with other

students through English exchange. Even though setting a graduation threshold is a top-down regulation, encouraging students to compete in English is a bottom-up approach which impacts on students' mindsets.

From students' participation rate, it is believed that the efforts have paid off (Wu, 2013). Students have increased their confidence on English proficiency tests and are more willing to use English in their daily life.

### **2.2.3 Projects to elevate English proficiency**

In order to enhance students' English ability, the MOE has introduced a series of policies since the late 1990s. For example, in the "Challenge 2008: Six-Year National Development Plan" published by the government in 2002, 'building an internationalised living environment and elevating general English ability' is listed in the first of the 10 individual plans: the 'e-Generation Manpower Cultivation Plan' (The Executive Yuan, 2002:7). The objectives are to cultivate a new internationalised generation of creativity, which is a new generation of people who can master information as well as English. Policies including establishing English teaching centres, developing core English learning courses, encouraging dual-lingual environments in technological and vocational institutions have also been introduced.

In 2009 the MOE set up three English teaching/learning resource centres for technological and vocational universities and colleges in Northern, Central and Southern Taiwan. In addition, grants of over NT\$ 100,000,000 are provided by the MOE each year to elevate students' foreign language ability in the technological and vocational sector.

In the vocational sector there is a tendency to put emphasis on English for Specific Purposes and this is the focus of the next section.

### **2.3 ESP at the Departments of Applied-English in technological universities in Taiwan**

The first Department of Applied Foreign Languages was founded in 1996 in Chaoyang University of Technology and soon after that all other technological universities followed and founded their foreign language-related departments. The objectives of these applied language departments are language ability, business knowledge, and ability of accessing information, which are different from those of traditional foreign language departments in general universities. Therefore English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses were developed in addition to English for General Purposes (EGP). General English departments emphasise developing knowledge of the foreign language itself (and literature and linguistics) and Applied English departments tend to focus on the competency of applying English in the workplace. After the obligatory 'Freshman English' taken in the first year, ESP courses such as 'Business English', 'News English', 'Business Writing', 'Translation' and so on are available to the students in the department of Applied English who have already had some years of general English learning experience. These courses are usually taught two hours weekly.

#### **2.3.1 Factors in the effectiveness of ESP learning in Taiwan**

Given the needs in workplace and academia, ESP is one of the most popular topics at academic conferences in Taiwan. As more and more scholars have become dedicated to researching ESP related issues in Taiwan, the development of ESP education has progressed rapidly in the past decade. Associations affiliated to ESP, such as TESPA

(Taiwan ESP Association), have also been founded to promote ESP education. However, critical issues which influence the effectiveness of ESP education have been identified (Su, 2005).

### *Learner factors*

Although some believe that ESP courses are the solution to the students' low achievement (Chang, 2011; Chia et al, 1999), one of the difficulties concerning ESP education in Taiwan is the student factor. As discussed in 2.2, students in the technological universities tend to have a lower English proficiency levels than those in general universities. Therefore the learning outcomes are likely to be less satisfying. Employers have criticized that even after years of learning English, the graduates from technological and vocational colleges and universities do not possess adequate English competence needed in the workplace (Hsu, 2005).

Apart from the needs in the workplace, learners' needs should be taken into account in language learning as has been established in the general development of needs analysis over the last decades (Dudley & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Richards, 2001; Richterich, 1972; West, 1994; 1997, Young, 2000). However, learners' needs are reported to be neglected in previous studies in Taiwan (Chang, 2007; Tsao et al, 2008)

### *Teacher factors*

With the rising popularity of ESP courses to address the issue of students' competitiveness in the workplace, the demand for ESP teachers has increased dramatically. Whether ESP should be taught by general English teachers or professionals in that particular subject is still a controversial issue. The majority of

teachers who teach ESP courses in technological and vocational universities are teachers who come from teaching English as a foreign/second language background. Many question the effectiveness of ESP courses taught by these teachers (Shih et al, 1998; Tsai, 2000).

Although the MOE has developed training programs to address the lack of training among ESP instructors issue, many argue that the supply is much less than the demand of such training programs. Previous studies suggest that team-teaching (as in Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1990) or obtaining advice from the subject specialists (as in Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) can be a strategy to tackle the problem, but it is not feasible in the technological and vocational university context due to the cost and policies of the institutions (Taso et al, 2008).

### *Curriculum design*

In a learner-centered classroom, ESP curriculum design should be based on the understanding of the students' needs. By investigating their perceptions towards learning, a curriculum aims to enhance their motivation and learning attitudes as well as strengthen their learning interest and then confidence can also be developed. In practice, however, ESP curricula are often designed from the perspectives of the institutions and manipulated by the instructors (Jasso-Aguilar, 1999).

As discussed earlier in this section, ESP instructors are normally from the EGP discipline and how to choose the 'right' materials to teach ESP courses has been seen as a difficulty for them. Thus, publishers produced textbooks with titles such as 'Business English', 'English for Tourism and Hospitality' etc to help the teachers

with this issue. Nonetheless, these textbooks are still developed from the publishers' or professionals' perspectives. The students' needs are not addressed.

Having given this description of the situation in Taiwan in general, the researcher will briefly explain her own experience of the situation and the problems found in her teaching context in the next section.

#### **2.4 'English Translation' as an ESP course in the research context**

In a research project carried out by the National Science Council in 2003 to investigate the indicators of professional competence for students at the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at vocational colleges and universities in Taiwan, the competence of foreign language speaking, the competence in translation, and the adequate professional attitude towards translation were identified as the top 3 of the 15 indicators of significant factors (Huang, 2003) by both students and teachers.

Translation courses have commonly been included in the curricula of foreign language studies in higher education in Taiwan (Lee, 1996) with two main learning goals: language capacity and translation capacity. The former is to enhance the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of students, whereas the latter aims to equip students with knowledge of translation theories, written translation, simultaneous interpretation, and visual translation (Lin, 2009). Under the umbrella term of 'translation' or 'translation studies', courses have been divided into specific areas of written translation, interpretation (spoken translation) and other areas according to the orientations of the schools/departments, hence the learning content as well as learning focus of courses vary from one to another.

In the research context of this study, there are two translation courses offered at this particular technological university. One is the 'Translation' courses which concerns only written translation and is compulsory for Year 3 and an advanced level is optional for Year 4 students. The other is 'Simultaneous Interpretation' which is an optional course for Year 4 students. The 'Translation Course' focused on in this research, has been taught with different names since the Department of Applied English was founded in 2002. At first it was called 'Translation Basic Theory and Practice' (翻譯基本原理與習作), then 'Chinese-English Translation'(中英翻譯), and after that 'English Translation' (英文翻譯) which is what it is referred to at the time when this study was conducted. One can easily speculate about the logics of the evolution of course names; the focus of teaching content has shifted from theory-oriented to practical-based ability.

The researcher started teaching EGP courses as well as ESP courses at this particular technological university in 2002. She was new to the department so she was assigned to teach the subjects which were believed to be more time-consuming. The translation course itself was taught two hours weekly and in addition to lecture time, she had to correct and comment on students' work which usually took hours longer than giving lectures. However, as a translator who has translated more than ten English novels, the researcher accepted the task with confidence. In 2008, the second year of her teaching 'English Translation', she was not satisfied with the students' performance. Not only did she find a lack of interest in learning among the students but she also discovered from students' feedback that they were not satisfied with the teaching contents. She then conducted two group discussions in which she invited students to express their thinking, hoping to find a way to motivate students and improve their learning outcomes.

There was a lot of information gathered in the group discussions and that turned out to be the beginning of the research which will be briefly illustrated below.

## **2.5 About the Research**

The researcher had tried to seek advice from previous studies; but there were very few studies done in regard to Translation curriculum development in Taiwan. Even if there are general studies done concerning ESP curriculum, the vast majority tended to end at the needs analysis stage (Stocker & Reddad, 2013)

Given the limited research on Translation curriculum development and taking into account the students' interests, the researcher decided to carry out a research to address her students' needs, hoping to provide insights for teachers who are in the same situation.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Literature Review and Analysis**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Translation studies did not gain recognition as an educational discipline in Taiwan until the first Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies was founded at Fu Jen Catholic University in 1988. Before then, translation studies had been a sub-discipline under linguistics in foreign language departments and it has long been neglected and repressed in Taiwan (Ho, 1999; Lai, 2008; Sun, 1997; Wu, 2010). It was after the first Department of Translation and Interpretation Studies was established, due to the increased demand of translation professionals, at Chang Jung Christian University in 1996, that the numbers of translation-related departments and translation courses at technological universities increased sharply. To date, there are six translation departments at general universities and 44 applied English/foreign language departments at technological universities that offer translation courses. Accordingly, translation studies as a discipline has developed considerably in the past two decades due to the demand for professionals with language skills to answer the call for globalisation (Liao, 2007; Sun 1997) and regaining the nation's competitiveness.

As outlined in Chapter Two, cultivating professionals with adequate language skills in the international workplace in order to strengthen the nation's competitiveness has become one of the primary concerns of the public and the government. A survey on the needs of enterprises for English or foreign language professionals indicates that competence in translation and interpretation in the 1990s was recognised by 43.3% and 47.9% of the enterprises respectively (Shih, 1998). In addition, competence in

translation and an adequate professional attitude towards translation were identified as the second and the third important indicators to professional competence by both students and teachers of applied English departments in a survey conducted by the National Science Council (Hung, 2003). From these surveys, it is apparent that translation studies have gained attention in academia.

However, in practice there are challenges and difficulties in teaching approaches as well as curriculum development for translations courses in Taiwan (Ho, 1999; Liao, 2011; Liao & Chiang, 2005; Shih, 2001; Wang, 2014), especially in higher education settings in which this study is concerned with. As the research questions of this study are guided by the translation class the researcher teaches at a Taiwanese technological university, and given the fact that the class was an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, a discussion of the classification and distinction of ESP and views of the learners' needs in ESP is outlined in 3.1. Since this research is derived from a needs analysis survey, discussion on needs analysis is presented in 3.2. and previous studies on English Translation curriculum development in Taiwan are covered in 3.3. to demonstrate the existing gap between course design and implementation of curricula, which this study is to fill. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

### **3.1 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of English language teaching (ELT) which is often categorised into two branches, EGP (English for general purposes) and ESP (English for specific purposes). In contrast to EGP courses which aim to enhance learners' overall English proficiency, ESP courses are aimed to strengthen learners' English knowledge and skills in one particular subject.

To distinguish ESP from EGP, Sinclair (1979) points out that ESP is not a branch line, nor a specialised interest in language teaching; it is any kind of language teaching in relation to its context. Robinson (1980:11) further states that the learners of ESP should be able to perform properly in the desired future situation rather than pass general proficiency exams in English. In addition, Richards (2001:33) distinguishes ESP from EGP by stating clearly that ‘the goal of an ESP course is to prepare the learners to carry out a specific task or set of tasks.’ All these notions suggest that ESP learning concerns contexts and learners’ needs to perform tasks in those contexts; whereas EGP focuses on the general needs of the learners, ESP courses are designed to deal the specific needs of the learners. The classifications of ESP have also evolved through since then.

### **3.1.1 Definition and Classifications of ESP**

As ESP expanded in different degrees worldwide after the Second World War (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), and approaches towards ESP have been developed in different contexts. It is however rather difficult to define ESP (Robinson, 1991; Strevens, 1980), but various classifications of ESP have been put forward in the last few decades.

The classifications of ESP proposed by the British Council (1975, in McDonough, 1984:6) and Swales (1980) categorised English language learning into sub areas. Yet today, English has much broader usage in sectors that are beyond the categories of these early classifications. One of the commonly recognised classifications is that of Hutchinson & Waters (1987), in which they divided ESP into two categories, EAP (English for Academic purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Proposes). They suggest that it is the ‘awareness’ of the needs (in target situation) that

distinguishes the ESP from the EGP (See Figure 3.1). Scholars such as Robinson (2004) further categorised ESP into three main branches namely EAP, EOP, and EPP (English for Professional Purposes) and Jordan (1997:1) also argues that both EAP and EOP can be further divided into sub categories by the purposes of the language and areas of contexts in which the language learning takes place. Therefore we can conclude that the classification of ESP is mainly based on the nature and purpose of language learning.

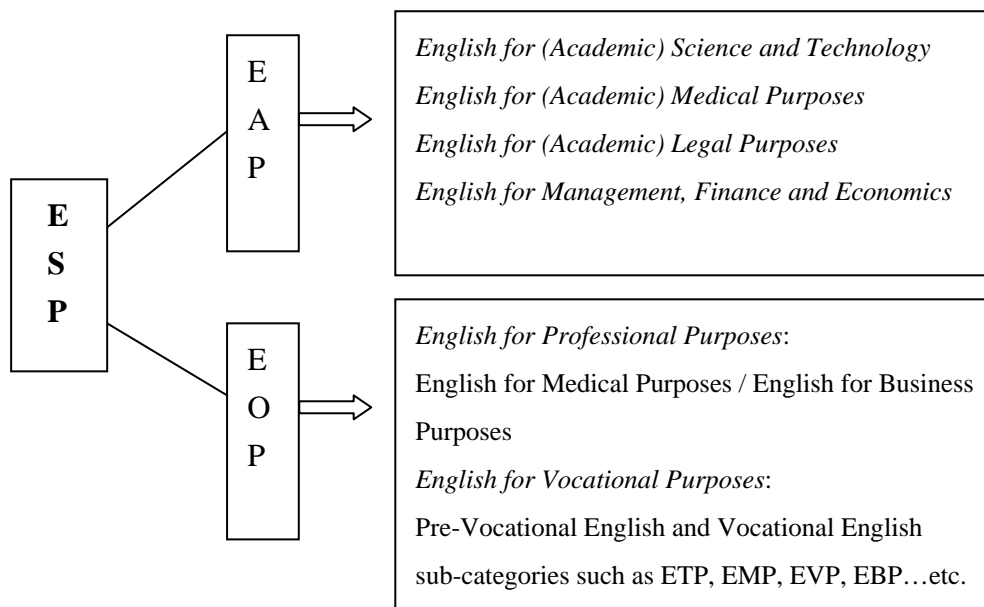


Table 3.1 Classifications of ESP by fields of study, adapted from Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:6

### 3.1.2 How are translation courses different at general universities and technological universities

Generally speaking, EAP aims to enhance learners' capacity and knowledge of English in studying or conducting researches in academic contexts; whereas EOP aims to strengthen learners' language proficiency in the workplace. The fact that

translation courses are often called 'Translation theory and practice' at general universities and 'English (and Chinese) Translation' at technological universities, shows how the nature of the courses are distinguished. That is to say, the translation courses offered at the general universities are supposed to be EAP courses, while those at technological universities should be more EOP oriented (Ho, 1999).

Although it is argued that the translation-related courses at general universities should be academic-based, whereas in the technological universities the focus of the courses should be practice-based, there are very rare investigations reported on whether the teaching approaches and the learning goals are varied. Shih (2001) tried to point out the differences in the course designs at the two types of institutions according to the ineffectiveness in learning outcomes. However, her claims are based on Tyler's (1949) principles of curriculum and instructions instead of the voices from the classroom. In a survey by Ho (1999), it is argued that although the course teachers agree that translation courses at technological universities should be taught with different approaches from those at general universities, the reality is they are both taught with similar curriculum contents and teaching approaches which are basically teacher-centered and text-centered.

Regardless of the categorisation of EAP and EOP, translation is nonetheless regarded as an ESP course in Taiwan; hence one should be able to find the main characteristic of ESP in translation courses.

### **3.1.3 The distinctiveness of ESP**

Despite the different classifications outlined in 3.1.1, one fundamental characteristic of ESP they all share is the emphasis on learners' needs. In any ESP classroom, there

is always a purpose for the learners to learn that specific language or subject. That is to say, the learners are conscious of their 'need(s)' for learning a language and the need(s) should be addressed in the process of learning.

Yet instead of focusing on the learners' needs, early English language curricula were based upon aspects of the language itself and approaches towards course designing neglected the voices of the learners. One example of the reaction to this is Schutz & Derwing (1981:30) who criticised that 'most language planners in the past have bypassed a logically necessary first step: they have presumed to set about going somewhere without first determining whether their planned destination was reasonable or proper.' However, with the development of ESP studies, needs analysis is now regarded as the necessary step to effective language learning by scholars (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Nunan 1988; Robinson, 1991; West, 1994/1997).

Given its significance as one distinctive characteristic of ESP, the next section will discuss needs and needs analysis in detail to better illustrate the issues concerned.

### **3.2 Needs and Needs Analysis**

As Tarone & Yule (1989:10) point out, an individual teacher's ability to choose appropriate materials depends highly on the 'local needs'. The learner's needs are brought to attention of language experts and soon became the centre of language syllabus designing.

Approaches to language teaching and learning had a turning point after the significance of 'needs' was widely accepted by academics. Today, the significance of

needs analysis in the development of language for specific purposes (LSP) is well recognized by specialists in the fields, with its merits and limitations. (i.e. Brindley, 1994; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Long, 2005; West, 1997; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995)

### **3.2.1 The origin of Needs Analysis**

Needs analysis, also known as needs assessment, was first conducted by Michael West in India in the 1920s to develop practical information about reading in English (West, 1994; White, 1988:12) and through which he advocated two main ways to improve reading materials for children in Bengal. Although the theoretical background of early needs analysis approaches are derived from ESP movements (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:30; West, 1994:2), it is now carried out worldwide as a useful instrument to evaluate performance in many fields, e.g. training, management, industry, medical and education sectors.

### **3.2.2 The definition of Needs**

Defining 'needs' is an essential procedure in needs analysis implementation, but the task is somewhat difficult due to the ever evolving and broadening perceptions of 'needs' within ESP. As scholars attempt to define needs from different perspectives, the definitions of needs have developed into a more complex and multifaceted matrix over the past few decades. Diverse conceptions are implied by various scholars and hence 'need' has "never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous" (Richerich, 1983:2) and 'needs' is often seen as an 'umbrella' term (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 55)

In regards to language learning, a number of ways to conceptualize learning needs and organizing the fields of study exist. For example, Hutchinson & Waters (1987) come up with a more specific distinction by suggesting that needs can be divided into two types: the target needs and the learning needs. Their definitions have been cited and often referred to in literature, and therefore, beginning with the distinction framework of Hutchinson & Waters (1987), the researcher will summarise systematically the most acknowledged meanings of needs in literature despite the fact that the definition of needs has broadened much beyond their descriptions over the years.

Hutchinson & Waters see *necessities* as the type of need determined by the *demands* of the target situation. (p.55). They define the target needs as necessities (what the learner needs to know), lacks (what the learner does not know) and wants (what the learner wants to know). On the other hand, they also suggest that needs are the “route” from the starting point to the target situation; namely “how the language is learnt”. However, there are distinctions between necessities and demands from different viewpoints.

The researcher could have started from Hutchinson and Waters’ types of approaches to needs analysis but then that would be very confusing due to the concepts of ‘approaches’ being rather vague. Instead, she will modify their claims by placing the approaches separately while still using their framework in Figure 3.2 below, which acts as an overview of different approaches starting from the meaning of needs and how they are put into operation. Some key writers are listed with different approaches. Some approaches may be listed more than once due to the overlapping areas of approaches. Although this is natural since the concepts of needs could have come

from the same point of view. In addition to the table, a thorough discussion on the definitions of needs is also presented in this section.

areas of needs	Approaches	scholars
1 a. necessities	target-oriented approach goal-oriented definition or objective approach language audit	Munby, 1978 Chambers, 1980:29/32 Richterich, 1980:32 Mounford, 1981 Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 Berwick, 1989 van Els & van Hest, 1990
b. demands		Robinson, 1991
2 a. wants	subjective approach learner-centred approach objective approach	Bowers, 1980 Berwick, 1989: 55
b. wishes	language audit	Clark, 1978 Nunan , 1988
c. desires	target-oriented approach	Richterich & Chancerel, 1977/1980 Mounford, 1981
3. lacks	process-oriented approach deficiency/discrepancy approach	Allwright & Allwright, 1977 Abbott, 1978:99

	language audit	Robinson, 1991:8
4. Gap	deficiency/discrepancy approach process-oriented approach the language audit	Packwood & Whitaker, 1988 Berwick, 1989:52 Brindley, 1990:65 Witkin & Altschuld, 1995 Kaufman, 1995 Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:74
5. a. means      b. routes	goal-oriented approach process-oriented approach with learner-centred (culture) learning-oriented approach means approach strategy approach language audit	Widdowson, 1981:2 Holliday & Cooke, 1982 in Holliday, 1984:32-33 Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985 McKillip, 1987 Altschuld & Witkin, 1995  Hutchinson & Waters, 1987
6. culture of the learners/classroom	present situation approach with 'culture' being a factor means approach	Richterich & Chancerel, 1977/1980 Holliday and Cooke, 1982 in Holliday, 1984
7. constraints	target situation approach process-oriented approach the language audit	Munby, 1978 Chambers, 1980:30 Holliday & Cooke, 1982 (in

		Holliday, 1984:32-33) White, R. V., 1988:84
8. requirements	target situation approach the language audit	Widdowson, 1981:2 Robinson, 1991
9. what learners need to know	subjective approach	Tarone & Yule, 1989

Table 3.2 Areas of definitions of needs

Having categorised definitions of needs outlined by different approaches put forward in previous studies, it is worthwhile to have an in-depth discussion to further identify their similarities and differences.

### 3.2.3. Discussing the definitions of Needs

As stated in 3.2.2., due to the ambiguity of the term ‘needs’, various terms may have been used to identify the same claim. On the other hand, different claims may have been described with the same term. In this section, the researcher will compare these definitions of needs from the areas they emerged to better illustrate these conceptions.

#### Area 1: a. necessities b. demands

These perceptions are basically target-oriented. They are ‘determined by the demands of the target situation, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation’ (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 55) Hutchinson & Waters make no distinctions between the two hence they are grouped together to indicate what learners have to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. Mountford (1981:27, in Robinson, 1991:7) also described needs as necessities by stating that they are ‘necessary or desirable to be learnt from a programme of

language instruction'. In some cases, necessities can be viewed as short term learning goals (Frankel, 1883: 123; Morrow, 1983:105-106) or learning aims (Richterich, 1980:32). Moreover, van Hest & Oud-de Glas (1990:7) define necessities as *key assets* which are used to get access to new possibilities. As for demands, Robinson (1991:7) describes them as 'student's study or job requirements'. This definition echoes with 8. 'requirement'.

A clear distinction between necessities and demands has not been established, but from the definitions above, the researcher would like to distinguish the two by saying that necessities tend to indicate the necessary linguistic skills learners need to acquire in order to perform in the target situation, whereas demands tend to indicate all sorts of requirements (not only necessarily language proficiencies) that the institution or organisation imposes on the learners.

Area 2: a. wants    b. wishes    c. desires

Group number 2 represents some subjective views of needs (except for Mounford, 1981, who regards needs as what the institution or society regards as necessary, as in Group number 1, or **desirable** to be learnt by the learners.), namely 2a. wants, 2b. wishes, and 2c. desires. Wishes are related to learners' motivations in learning (Clark, 1978; Nunan, 1988). Clark (1978)'s and Nunan's (1988) definitions are similar to that of Bowers who suggests that learners learn best when they **want** to learn and less well when they **need** to learn. Other researchers view needs as "wishes" (Clark, 1978) or "desires" (Berwick, 1989) when a learner has personal aims in addition to the language or course requirement.

While Hutchinson & Water identify 'wants' as 'what learners feel they need', Berwick (1989:55) makes no distinctions between wants and desires by describing needs as 'what learners want to gain from the course, (they) can be wants *and* desires'. Thus, other than Richterich & Chancerel (1977/1980) who specifically identify 'learning and using a language fast' as one desire among adult language learners, the definitions of needs as wants, wishes, and desires basically overlap with each other.

#### Area 3: lacks and Area 4: gaps

When discussing area 3 in Figure 3.2, it is necessary to discuss area 4 in parallel since the definitions of needs as 'lack' and 'gap' are in many ways similar. One of the earlier views of "lacks" is Allwright & Allwright (1977)'s suggestion that things learners can not achieve in English are their lacks. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) define lacks as 'gap between what they need to know and already know'. The two definitions hence overlap with each other in the sense that the gap is a kind of discrepancy (see also Altschuld & Witkin, 1995; Berwick, 1989:52; Brindley, 1990:65; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:74; Packwood & Whitaker, 1988). To sum up these identical claims, needs is a lack or gap which represents a measurable discrepancy between the present state and the desired future state. Despite the similarities of the definitions above, Robinson (1991) identifies needs as lacks that symbolise the lack of language knowledge, namely what the students do not know or can not do in English. On the other hand, Kaufman (1995) holds a different view by claiming that needs should be regarded as a process to identify the gaps, instead of the gaps themselves.

#### Area 5: a. means    b. routes

Hutchinson & Waters' view of needs as 5b. routes is derived from that of 5a. means. By routes, Hutchinson & Waters refer to the way language is learned from the starting situation to the target situation. As early as 1981, Widdowson defined needs as 'the means of learning'-- what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language. It is a process-oriented definition of needs and relates to transitional behaviour. Adding on to Widdowson's process-oriented view, other scholars also came up with similar definitions of needs. For example, Stufflebeam & Shinkfield (1985) proposed that needs are evaluations. Witkin & Altschuld (1995) identify 'need' as something required to fill a gap or a set of solutions or means to a desired situation.

Although Holliday & Crooke (1982, in Holliday, 1984) and McKillip (1987) also suggest that needs are means, their definitions vary from the scholars mentioned above. McKillip's (p.10) views are different in the sense that he points out four areas of concern that need to be considered—values, target, population, problem and solution in the definition of need. Moreover, given the broad definitions of needs as in 5a. means, Holliday & Crooke and Holliday (1984) proposed the approach of 'means analysis', which mainly focuses on the culture of the classroom (as in area 6). Thus it is worth pointing out that although the term 'means' might suggest various areas of needs, among them, the definitions of 5a. means and 6. culture of the classroom are identical in the claims of Holliday & Crooke and Holliday (1984).

#### Area 6: culture of the learners/classroom

The concept of considering the culture of the learners was first put forward by Richterich & Chancerel (1977/1980) in their Council of Europe project. However, not much attention was drawn to the perception at that time. Due to Holliday's (1984) experience of practicing in various cultures, for instance the Arab world, he suggests

that a methodology which works in one culture will not necessarily work in another because all learner groups have their uniqueness in classrooms. He suggests that in classroom culture research, a means analysis, and the traditional needs analysis should be juxtaposed to investigate variables concerning culture (such as appropriate methodology, and styles of learning and teaching).

#### Area 7: constraints

As for constraints which hinder language learning, Munby (1978) classified them into socio-political, logistical, psycho-pedagogic, and methodological factors. He suggests that these factors should be addressed after the needs analysis and the development of curriculum. Yet Munby (1984:64) later modified his own work by allowing the political factors which affect the context of the target language and the homogeneity of the learner group to be considered in the needs analysis, while still regarding the other factors as 'non-needs'. With respect to regarding needs as constraints, Chambers (1980:30) agrees with Munby that constraints, usually money and time in his view, interfere with the aims of ESP. Although he disagrees with Munby that the learners are the main source of information, coherently he further claims that *constraints* and *intermediate objectives* are not *real* needs: constraints will hinder learning and intermediate objectives will change over time. Whereas both Munby and Chambers hold similar views towards needs as constraints, White (1988:84) defines constraints as a kind of means, 'a construction system, by which the ends will be reached'. Furthermore, *constraints* are regarded as limitations of the institution, such as materials, culture or attitudes, and should be taken into account (Holliday & Cooke, 1982; Holliday, 1984). This particular view is hence identical to 5a. *means*.

#### Area 8: requirements

Job requirements are considered as needs in early needs analysis, such as that of Widdowson (1981), who refers to needs in the target-oriented approach by stating requirements are what the learners have to be able to do at the end of a language course. This perception is identical to that of Robinson (1991).

#### Area 9: what learners need to know

This broad definition which relates to determining the learner's aims in learning the language was put forward by Tarone & Yule (1989). They believe '*the communicative behaviour (real or hypothesized) of fluent speakers of the target language is taken as a sort of measure by means of which we can establish what the learner needs to know about the language*'. (p.33) In other words, the need in learning a language is to equip learners with the skills to perform like a native speaker in the target situation. Instead of identifying needs in specific terms, Tarone & Yule's rather vague suggestion merely points a direction for some scholars to refer to and to follow as they see fit.

In summary these definitions are often overlapping and similar. Although needs are often regarded as a kind of language deficiency at the early stage of the development, scholars have underpinned the definitions of needs in different ways with different categories. In reality it is worth mentioning that course planners, teachers, learners, employers, parents, schools, management etc. would perceive needs from different point of views, and therefore, the definition of needs depends on a certain group's judgments and interests (Richards, 2001) In this study, as the term 'needs' (需求) indicates both 'needs' and 'wants' in Mandarin, and given this fact that various definitions were identified by the students in the data under the term of 'needs', the

researcher will use 'needs' in its primary mean with exceptions of where wants, lacks, wishes, interests, etc. were particularly identified by the participants.

### **3.2.4 Approaches to Needs**

Other than defining needs by perceptions as presented in Figure 3.2., needs are also classified into various approaches according to their natures. Some well known sets are:

- goal- oriented needs vs. process-oriented needs

Widdowson (1981:2) defines the means of learning as process-oriented needs. On the other hand, Robinson (1991) gives a 'goal-oriented definition' or 'objectives' (see below) view of needs. She defines needs as the student's job requirements; the necessary or desirable skills the individual has to learn in a particular language context. In her view, a 'process-oriented definition' which relates to transitional behaviour (p.7) is given to identify the actions the learner needs to undertake in order to acquire the language

- perceived needs vs. felt needs

Berwick (1989:55) distinguishes needs as 'felt' needs and 'perceived' needs. Felt needs are 'those which learners have' and they can be sometimes referred as 'expressed' needs, 'wants' or 'desires' according to the analyst's preferences. Dudley-Evans & St John (1998:123) further explain that objective needs and perceived needs are derived from 'outsiders from facts'. These needs are something observed and can be verified, whereas subjective and felt needs are derived from the 'insiders and correspond to cognitive and affective factors'.

- objective needs vs. subjective needs

Brindley (1989:66) places needs into 3 categories: 'language proficiency', 'psychological-humanistic', and 'specific purposes', but he also, like Berwick's

(1989:57) 2-category classification of perceived and felt needs, suggests that there are 2 types of needs: the **objective needs** concerns learners' personal data, patterns of language use, language proficiency and problems; subjective needs concerns affective and cognitive factors, wants and expectations, learning styles. On the other hand, Richterich (1980) concluded the **subjective needs**, which concerns learners' feelings, are somehow indefinable.

- product vs. process (Brindley, 1989) / product and process (Robinson, 1991)

Brindley (1989:70) refers to the actual language which learners had to use as the end product. Thus product-oriented needs derive from the target language situation or goal, process-oriented definitions. Robinson (1991, see above) also proposes that both product and process must be taken into account in conducting needs analysis.

We can conclude that the definitions of needs have evolved from early target-oriented areas to a broad aspect which include elements from different perceptions. One must choose the criteria or definitions according to the aims of the curriculum. The current trend seems to treat the culture of the classroom as a significant factor. Yet, in practice, the learning needs as well as the culture of the classroom and teaching methodology would differ from one situation to another. Thus the learners also need appropriate methodologies as well as teaching materials/contents, as Holliday suggests, to help them to get to their target situations. Holliday also points out that the process is not the same in every context; learners are trained in most cases without a standard methodology. In some countries such as in the Arab region, learners have different ways of learning to what is assumed by communicative language teaching. Therefore the teachers need to work out a good communicative language teaching methodology for process-oriented approach. However, this good teaching methodology might not work in a different culture. In order to identify learning needs,

one has to consider the circumstances in which the language is learnt, such as the learner's background, the reason for taking the course, the way the learners learn, as well as the time and place where the language course take place.

To tackle the definitions and categories of needs discussed above, scholars have proposed various methods to analyse learners' needs in ESP classrooms. One well known example is that of Dudley-Evans & St John (1987) in which they categorised needs analysis approaches into target situation analysis (TSA) that concern objective, perceived and product-oriented needs, present situation analysis (PSA) which concerns language skills and learning styles, and learning situation analysis (LSA) which deals with subjective, felt and process-oriented needs. These methods are discussed in the next section.

### **3.2.5. Methods of Needs Analysis**

Before the late 1990s, needs analysis had been categorised into two main areas in general —Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA).In addition to these two traditional approaches, Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) proposed the third approach, the Learning Situation Analysis (LSA). In this section the researcher will outline these three main categories by including the claims of the key authors.

#### **3.2.5.1 Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

The term 'Target Situation Analysis (TSA)' was introduced by Chambers (1980) who described TSA as a top-down, target-oriented approach. This type of needs analysis focuses mainly on the desired level of language performance at the end of a language course, that is, in the target situation. Derived from the definitions of necessities or

demands, TSA are often designed and conducted according to the instructor or course designer's view.

Influenced by the work of David Wilkins (1976), Munby (1978) formulated a very well known framework with communicative needs processors (CNP) to transfer learners' linguistic needs into lists of language skills and functions which served as the basis of a target syllabus development (Alderson & Clapham, 1992:151; Brindley, 2000:439). This model was directed towards ESP contexts (Hawkey, 1979:8, in White, 1988:87), with the perceptions of 'need' as:

- target needs must be identified before designing the course.
- communicative skill is emphasized.

Munby's (1978) framework is well known for being a systematic and comprehensive model which outlines the factors needed to be considered when designing a language course at that time. Despite the fact that later he modified his model by allowing political factors to be a variable, his framework is not without flaws as we shall see below. The communicative target needs that the Munbian model focuses on are categorised into nine different headings as participant (learners' personal information); purpose (why the language needs to be learned); setting (in which the learners will use the language); interactional (communication usage in learners' context); instrumental variable (medium, mode and channel); dialect (languages required); target level (the proficiency required); communicative events (what activities the learners will be engaged); and communicative key (attitude factors). The profile derived from these nine components serves as a base upon which a list of specific language skills the learners need to acquire is then drawn. The language skills can be further divided into approximately 300 sub-skills in 54 categories. Munby's 'systematic and detailed'

(West, 1994:9) work has brought forward the issues linked to effective learning because he came up with a set of objective procedures to identify the communication variables to discover learners' linguistic requirements in the future situation (Brumfit,1978, in Robinson,1980) and then develop a syllabus based on the data collected.

In spite of its influence on ESP syllabus design and proficiency testing, the Munby's Needs Analysis model was soon under strong criticisms for it sets constraints on the findings by using the structured framework under which the significant factors were unlikely to emerge. It is not surprising that a group of specialists from British Council took a two-day training session to try out Munby's model to profile the needs of imaginary students and commented, 'there was no evidence that groups would have been better off using live informants' (in Robinson, 1980:30). Moreover, since the model collected data *of* the learner, not *from* the learner, many scholars disagree with Munby's belief that learners should not be the main source of information (West, 1994). Also, conducting such an *accuracy-based* syllabus (Chambers, 1980:187) could be pedagogically difficult to be carried out (Brumfit,1979) because it is too demanding on the teachers, time-consuming, complex, and inflexible (McDonough, 1984; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; West, 1994).

Despite the flaws identified, Munby's model has served as a foundation from which many scholars formulated their versions of TSA. For instance, Hutchinson & Waters (1987) developed their TSA framework upon Munby's model by stating that TSA is a process of 'asking questions about the target situation and the attitudes

towards that situation of various participants in the learning process' (p.59) From the questions proposed by Hutchinson & Waters, the connections between their work to that of Munby's since many of the questions are clearly driven by Munby's claims.

### **3.2.5.2 Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

Whereas TSA tries to identify what the learners should be like at the end of the language course, Present Situation Analysis (PSA) focuses on what learners are like at the beginning of a course. It aims to identify what students' language competence is in the beginning as well as their weaknesses and strengths (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1988:125). Richterich & Chancerel (1980) suggest that the information should be collected from the students, the language-teaching establishment, and the students' place of work. Other factors such as respective levels of ability, their views on language teaching and learning, resources such as financial and technical, surrounding society and culture are to be taken into account as well.

As McDonough (1984) suggests, PSA should be conducted before TSA for it identifies the fundamental variables which must be taken into consideration. Current needs analyses often is comprised of both approaches in order to identify learner's needs in a wider scope.

#### Deficiency analysis

Derived from the definition of needs as lacks and wants, Deficiency Analysis is regarded as a type of PSA by scholars such as Allwright (1982), Robinson (1991) and Tudor (1996). The lacks in question indicate the gap between the present situation and the target situation (Annott, 1978; Allwright & Allwright, 1977) or 'what the students do not know or cannot do in English (1991:7). On the other hand, learners' wants

indicate ‘what the learners want or feel they need’ (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:57) or ‘what the students would like to gain from the language course’ (Robinson, 1991:7). This bottom-up approach is rather subjective and process-oriented, hence may sometimes come into conflict with the teacher’s or course conductor’s view; but it is possible to incorporate learners’ lacks and wants to form a solid base of the syllabus (Jordan, 1997) if negotiated by learners and instructors.

### **3.2.5.3 Learning Situation Analysis (LSA )**

Besides investigating the needs in the target situation and the beginning situation, the concept of learning needs is put forward to determine the needs during the learning process (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Hutchinson & Waters’ framework for LSA is formed by a set of questions concerning the learners, the learning and the context of learning to complement what the TSA does not cover. Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) further suggest that TSA, PSA and LSA are the three elements for a comprehensive needs analysis.

Taking the learning environment into account leads to further approaches discussed below.

#### Strategy analysis

Allwright (1982) and Widdowson (1983) defined the learning needs by ‘*strategy analysis*’. It should be noted that they argue that learners may not be motivated by the target situation where ESP is concerned. Therefore a strategy of learning process and activities would help to provide a basis of options concerning learning strategies for teachers and learners; especially when there is a big difference in cultures or educational traditions of the two parties. A detailed strategy analysis instrument called the ‘Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)’ is illustrated by Oxford

(1990:283-291) and aims to identify learners' preferences with respect to class activities. Through such analysis, teachers and learners can exchange their opinions and compromise on learning means and approaches.

Conflicts do unavoidably appear in classrooms as teachers and learners have different perspectives (as in Brindley, 1984:103-112). However, as Tarone & Yule (1989:9) suggest, the solutions are – 'fight 'em, join 'em or channel 'em'. Strategy analysis serves as the instrument to the goal.

### Means analysis

Means analysis relates to contextual factors, which Munby regards as 'constraints', and are the focus of means analysis. In the book 'Communicative Syllabus Design', Munby (1978) points out that there are variables which have to be addressed after the needs analysis is conducted for these variables would hinder the implementation of the syllabus. These variables are socio-political, logistical, administrative, psycho-pedagogic, and methodological variables. His approach to these contextual factors is opposed by other scholars such as Holliday (1984).

For Holliday (in Swales & Mustafa, 1984:49), means analysis, more accurately 'means research', emphasises the culture of the classroom, with culture being 'what can be observed within a given classroom at any given time in terms of its social dynamics.' (p.34) It is part of the learner-centred approach; an essential element of which is classroom culture research into the target situation. Not only the interaction between all parties, but in a wider sense, the social and institutional variables are all relevant to the classroom culture. Holliday says his approach is similar to that of Hutchinson and Waters' learning situation needs analysis but it is broader in terms of what should be observe and the social scope. It is essential for those who are involved

to have some expertise in classroom culture research, although there was still a debate about who would be better to do the research. Furthermore, the *constraints* of the institution, such as materials, culture or attitudes, should be taken into account. This is known then as *means analysis* or *the ongoing ecological approach* (Holliday & Cooke, 1982; Holliday, 1984).

Besides those discussed above, other methods such as language audits, discourse-based analysis, genre-based analysis, task-based analysis, and computer-aided corpus analysis have also been suggested to understand learners' learning needs.

Although there may be different views about which method(s) should be conducted to identify learners' needs, most researchers regard 'fundamental variables' as significant factors that need to be addressed first in order to construct an ideal needs analysis (Munby, 1984; McDonough, 1984). One conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis above is that needs analysis has changed considerably over time. There is a degree of confusion and overlap in the terms used. As a consequence of this any researcher should be aware of the developments and approaches – and the criticisms and refinements – but in the final analysis one will have to decide for his/her own situation and learners what kind of needs analysis should be conducted – rather than seeking to apply what others have done or to apply a method on which there is consensus.

### **3.3. Research Trends and Approaches towards Translation in the Taiwan Higher Education Sector**

There are four major journals which focus on translation studies in Taiwan, *Journal of the National Institute for Compilation and Translation*, *Studies of Translation and Interpretation*, *Compilation and Translation Review*, and *Guang Yi: Lingual, Literacy, and Cultural Translation*. The research trend towards Translation Studies in Taiwan can be seen directly from the articles published in these four journals (Lan, Dong & Chiu; 2009, cited in Wu, 2010). They reported that scholars tend to 'give an account of research achievements in translation studies but in journal format rather in the book format' (p9). There were only 214 articles published in these journals from 1996 to 2009. Evidently studies on translation studies are relatively few compared to other language disciplines in Taiwan (Liao & Chiang, 2004-2005; Davis & Liao, 2009; Liao, 2011).

Earlier studies have a tendency of stressing the importance of theory learning in a translation curriculum. For example, Chen (1996) identified translation from theories proposed by Plato and Aristotle and introduced the process of translation by referring to approaches proposed by scholars such as Buhler, Newmark, Nida, Catford and so on. Chen (1998) also claims that translation courses need to be founded on the basis of theory to develop a 'correct' translation process and points out the perplexing problems of translation as well. Besides theory analysis, another trend of early research was the analysis of curriculum design. Researchers such as Lee (1996), Ton (1996) and Yang (1996) discuss curriculum designs and give suggestions on curriculum construction based on questionnaires distributed to students and/or teachers of Interpretation courses offered at general universities. On the other hand, how translation courses were taught at institutes, what the students' and teachers' perceptions were, were of no interest to the scholars at that time.

Looking back on these trends, Wu (2010) finds three main categories of research topics published in Taiwan: those related to ‘translation teaching and curriculum construction’ (32.71%), ‘translation strategies and aids’ (18.23%) and ‘terminology translation and theory discussion’ (10.28%). Of all these articles, those on translation are fewer than those on interpretation/simultaneous interpretation in number. The majority of studies which aim to investigate students’ needs neglect the learners’ views. These studies are usually conducted from the instructors’ and/or the enterprises’ points of view when trying to identify issues concerning teaching (Lee & Liao, 2010; Shih, 2001; Wang, 2007; Wang, 2014). However, as the communicative language teaching approach emerged, the classroom focus shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered; academics finally developed their research interest in students’ needs.

The researcher would like to point out here that the purpose and goals of the courses offered at language departments at general universities and technological universities are different, as presented in Chapter Two. Ho (1999) proposes that the learning goals of translation courses at general universities and at technological universities should be distinguished. Echoing her claim, Liu (2002) also identifies the main purpose of translation courses at technological universities as to enhance students’ English ability instead of learning translation theories or techniques. Moreover, Lee & Liao (2010) suggest that translation courses at applied language departments at technological universities should emphasise the training of English abilities in the workplace. From these findings one can conclude that as the orientations of translation as ESP courses at these two separate institutions vary and the characteristics and curriculum constructions of such courses therefore vary accordingly (Shih, 2001). With that being said, due to the lacuna of studies on translation courses in Applied English/foreign

languages departments, the findings of this study may be compared with studies on English departments in the discussion chapter if applicable.

### **3.4. Research on the Needs of Translation Classes at Applied English/Foreign Language Departments**

Translation courses at technological universities are named differently according to the distinctive nature of their course orientations. The common course names include 'English Translation', 'English-to-Chinese Translation', 'Chinese-to-English Translation', 'Translation, theory and practice', 'Translation Studies', 'Media Translation', 'Business Translation' etc. In this study 'translation' is used as an umbrella term to represent these courses. In the context in which this study took place, the course was called 'English Translation' and aimed to enhance students' ability in translating English to Chinese. It was a one year course offered to the Year 3 students at an Applied English Department at a technological university.

As presented in Chapter One, the research question mainly focuses on the perceptions of needs for this particular translation class, and research on both teacher's and students' perceptions will be analysed here in some detail since an overview of research in Taiwan is also useful for future researchers.

#### **3.4.1. What are needed from the teachers'/scholar's perspectives**

Where the technological university setting is concerned, there are only a few studies specifically investigating the needs of translation courses at applied English/foreign language departments (Wang, 2007; 2008).

One most cited work is that of Ho (1999). Ho identifies teaching difficulties from the view of 22 course instructors at technological universities/colleges with applied English/foreign languages departments. Ho (1999) used a questionnaire with 18 questions. Among the questions, 16 were multiple choice questions. The data Ho collected was about both translation courses and interpretation courses offered at an applied foreign languages department which include applied German and applied Japanese departments. By associating definitions of needs with lacks and constraints (as categorised in Chapter 3), she concludes that finding suitable teaching materials is the most difficult task for instructors who teach translation for the first time, whereas the instructors who teach translation for the second year regard the time-consuming issue of marking students' work as their main concern. Also, the need for teaching resources such as information on teaching translation is identified by the instructors.

However, the purpose of her questionnaire mainly focused on collecting information about/of the teacher. Only one question (Question 15) collected information about the students' learning difficulties but also from the teachers' perspective. A second problem is that the questionnaire was not piloted and its validity is thus in question. Furthermore, her findings on translation courses were based on only 12 valid questionnaires in 1997. It should be noted that there were only 17 technological universities/colleges which offered translation courses at the time she conducted the research. As the number has increased to 55 and translation courses have been developed rapidly, the status quo of teaching and learning may have changed since then. Despite these problems, her work is one of the few that investigates translation teaching in technological university settings and is often cited in the few studies conducted in the same field, such as Dai (2003).

Dai (2003)'s study investigated the teaching situation, including curriculum design, teaching materials and approaches, teaching goals, teaching difficulties, learning difficulties, and exercise and assessment (p.5), at both general English departments and applied English departments. In addition, she also attempted to distinguish the similarities and differences between translation courses offered at English departments and applied English departments. Dai distributed an unpiloted questionnaire based on that of Ho with 31 questions concerning translation curriculum design and content, teaching and learning difficulties, exercises and assessment, and teaching staff issues to the 63 instructors of 60 translation-related courses at 43 universities in 2001. The questions asked on the questionnaire showed that Dai expanded the definitions of needs as necessities/ demands, wishes/desires, and constrains/difficulties with a goal-oriented approach (see 3.2.3). 25 of the questionnaires were returned and among them 2 were invalid. Therefore the number of valid questionnaires was 23 and the return rate was 36%. This is about the usual rate for a postal questionnaire (see e.g. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

As the two studies mentioned above addressed the needs of translation classes from the teachers' perspectives, the researcher will now categorise and discuss issues they discovered in detail, along with Shih's (2001) work which analyses curriculum design of translation courses offered at 40 institutes in Taiwan. Shih's research involved translation courses offered at 15 general universities and 25 technological colleges/universities. It should be noted however that her analysis which focuses solely on investigating the needs in sense of 'lacks' of translation programs was conducted by analysing the course information illustrated on the web pages of these schools in 2000. No other methods were employed to collect information about the

curricula in question and no results from previous studies were mentioned in her study.

Ho's study was on the teaching of translation and interpretation at applied English, German and Japanese departments. Shih, on the other hand, focuses on translation as well as interpretation curriculum design at applied English departments. Dai's work was on translation courses at both general English and applied English departments. None of these studies aimed to investigate the learning process of students at applied English departments as this study will do. However, due to the scarcity of literature, their findings are presented below to help understand the perceptions of translation teaching in higher education in Taiwan.

#### **3.4.1.1. Curriculum and Materials Needs**

##### *Curriculum design*

In terms of curriculum structures, Shih (2001) identifies flaws in both translation and interpretation courses at English departments as well as applied foreign languages departments. She points out that applied English/foreign languages departments should not be extensions of traditional English departments at general universities. They should have their own characteristics and status. Shih also advocates that multi-media or translation software should be employed in language training. As indicated above, Shih's work is based only on website analysis, and as such is of limited quality and use, but needs to be considered here because it is the only one which comments on curriculum.

##### *Textbooks*

As Ho (1999) claims, finding suitable teaching materials has been identified as one of the difficulties teachers face. Scholars have been trying to identify 'good' textbooks. In addition to some book reviews such as Chen's (2003) recommendation on Mona Baker's 'In Other Words: a coursebook on translation' as an ideal textbook for translation learners, Liao, Lin, Chu, Chang, Chang & Ou (2011) published a course book on translation syllabus, which explicitly stated on its cover that it is 'the nation's first book on translation syllabus'. The book employs 15 step-by-step lesson plans to be taught in 15 weeks. The contents of these lesson plans were developed based on the authors' personal teaching experiences, following a social constructivist teaching approach. This book thus aims to solve the translation teachers' problem of finding suitable teaching materials. In October 2013, Liao and his co-authors published another course book on English-Chinese Translation by introducing basic theories and methods along with translation exercises (Liao, Ou, Lee, Wu, Chen, Chang, Yu & Liu, 2013). The contents of this book, similarly to previously published books on translation, are based on a social constructivist teaching approach and the authors' own teaching experience. The authors also point to the lacuna of translation textbooks in Taiwan and conclude that the reason for the lacuna is because translation teachers devote themselves to research or journal publication instead of writing textbooks. Since 'good' or ideal textbooks based on the Taiwan culture or contexts are difficult to come by, textbooks from China are usually used for translation classes in Taiwan.

Problems with textbooks are also reported by Dai (2003). She identified three characteristics of the textbooks used. The first was that the textbooks seem to emphasise English-to-Chinese translation, and Chinese-to-English translation was neglected. She pointed out that the reason was that Chinese-to-English translation textbooks were scarce. Another characteristic with the textbooks was that they tend to

provide exercises translating sentences instead of translating paragraphs. The students would encounter difficulty in understanding and identifying the correct meaning of the sentences without context. Finally she points out that most of the textbooks were published decades ago by scholars from China or Hong Kong; textbooks such as Si's 'Translation Studies' (翻譯研究) which, published in 1972, were still used by the instructors. In addition, due to the language usage or cultural differences some teachers found these textbooks difficult to understand.

Difficulty in finding the ideal textbook is prominent in Ho and Dai's studies and though none of the studies specifically focuses on translation classes at applied English departments of technological universities. Therefore textbook usage in that particular setting is still unknown. As for the two textbooks designed by Liao (2011; 2013), they are not specifically designed for the students from applied English/Foreign languages departments.

#### *Teaching contents*

Dai's (2003) study shows that the foci of translation courses at general English departments were translation exercises and skills (53%), translation example analysis (24%) and translation theories (19%). One would expect that practice-based applied English departments would put less emphasis on theories, but the foci of translation courses at applied English departments were similar: translation exercises and skills (56%), translation theories (23%) and translation example analysis (17%). It is a rather interesting finding. Dai points out that the academics seem to agree that translation theories should be included in university translation curricula although there has long been a debate. As for what proportion of application and theories to be taught in classrooms, Dai suggests that it is the teacher's decision as long as the teacher does not ignore either of them.

### *Exercises and activities*

It is also reported by Dai that students tend to perform better in take-home exercises than in in-class exercises which usually had to be done within specific time limits. Furthermore, translation exercises done in group work were reported to be better than those done individually. Students think they can learn things from each other and benefit from the discussions taking place, Some even stated that they have learned communication skills and gained emotional satisfaction from group work. As for the number of students in each group, Dai suggests that the ideal number is 4.

Dai's study also shows that individual exercises are also supported by students, although they tend to make more mistakes in doing them. Her conclusion is that both group and individual work should be employed in classrooms.

### *Assessment*

According to Dai, 90% of the translation teachers at applied English departments use examinations to assess students' performance. They think that it is a way to identify students' difficulties in translation, understand students' translation ability, make students study by presenting the pressure of exams, train students' speed in translation, asses how hard students work, and just to give grades.

## **3.4.1.2 Teaching and Learning Needs**

### *Teaching goals*

Ho (1999) suggests that enhancing basic language skills is the goal of translation courses. Dai (2003) also reports enhancing Chinese/English writing ability is regarded

as the teaching goal by 90% of the translation teachers at applied English departments.

Ho (1999) also questions the ambiguity of the teaching goals of applied languages departments by pointing out the lack of studies on translation teaching and identifying teaching goals.

### *Teaching difficulties*

As discussed in 3.4.1. Ho regards marking students' work as a challenge for teachers as it is rather time-consuming. In addition, she points out that teachers tend to think that teaching resources centres or teaching workshops are needed in order to gain necessary information to accessorise students with the skills they need in the workplace or market. Similarly, the lack of teaching resources and further studies is also identified by Dai. She suggests that teachers can improve themselves by looking for resources online such as finding dictionaries or guidebooks, or by referring to the teachers' experiences in other regions.

Similar to Ho's claim, Dai also suggests that teachers find large-size classes challenging because they have to spend a large quantity of time on marking students' work. In order to ease pressure, some teachers would reduce the frequency of assignments. However, this action may lead to insufficient practice and result in hindering students' learning.

Another teaching difficulty identified both by Ho and by Dai is that the students do not possess enough context knowledge. Ho thinks that students' insufficiency in understanding English texts creates problems for teachers. Dai suggests that it could

be solved by first identifying the nature of the problem(s) and then applying strategies such as guiding students to use dictionaries or Internet resources.

### *Learning difficulties*

Translation students' learning difficulties were not identified in Ho's study, whereas according to Dai, students' insufficient foreign language ability is identified as a learning difficulty in English-to-Chinese translation classrooms. The same issue has been identified as a teaching difficulty as mentioned previously. However, Dai argues that the standard of 'sufficiency' is difficult to define. She suggests that the misunderstanding of texts might have been caused by difficult teaching materials. She proposes that by adjusting the level of difficulty in teaching materials, cultivating students' ability in identifying errors, and enhancing students' language ability, this problem may ease.

In addition to insufficient foreign language ability, students' ability in using Chinese appropriately is another challenge raised by Dai. Teachers reported that students experienced problems mastering Chinese language. Moreover, students were found to use Chinese grammar in composing English sentences. The lack of English grammar knowledge is another learning challenge in Chinese-to-English translation classrooms.

### **3.4.1.3. Teacher issues**

Whether or not translation teachers are qualified to provide instruction on translation has been an issue reported on by Ho, Shih and Dai. By pointing out the lack of professional knowledge among translation teachers in Taiwan, Ho further argues that the majority of the teachers have only vague concepts of translation and they do not possess sufficient knowledge in developing teaching materials and approaches.

Although most translation courses are taught by full-time teachers, Ho's study shows that 1/3 of the teachers have no practical experience in translation. Shih (2001) also comments on the problem of the lack of translation teachers in applied English/foreign languages departments. She proposes offering adequate training to the teachers of other subjects at the departments a solution to the problem so that these teachers would be able to teach translation courses.

The fact that there are only a few translation studies graduate schools and none of them offers translation degrees at a doctoral level is regarded by Dai as one critical reason for the lack of translation teachers in Taiwan. Besides advocating the need for more translation studies graduate schools, she also questions the teaching content at applied English departments for not being practice-oriented as they should have been. She suggests that as the majority of the translation teachers are from language or arts disciplines, they tend to create curricula with contents related to their disciplines instead of developing practice-based curricula which are needed at these departments.

#### **3.4.2. What is needed from the students' perspectives**

Taking into account the overlapping and similar definitions of needs discussed earlier, this section discusses the aspects of needs as seen from the students' perspectives.

With translation learners' needs as the centre of the research question in this thesis, the researcher looked for studies conducted concerning the needs of translation classes at technological universities in Taiwan. Despite the fact the use of several search strategies with different key words to search various Chinese and English databases (see Appendix 1 for example), the results were unsatisfactory. She then turned for professional help and booked a session with Miss Huang, the librarian at

the technological university where she teaches, to help her with the search. There were only a couple articles by Wang (2007; 2008; 2014) directly addressing the learning needs of applied English-majored students in technological universities setting. By pointing out that all previous studies have been conducted based on students' objective needs instead of subjective needs, Wang (2014) claims that 'no studies in students' needs have been explored for translation course design' (p.76). Evidently there is a prominent lacuna in the literature and in practice on using needs analysis in planning translation curricula in technological settings.

In the three articles published by Wang, she employed the same methodology by distributing a questionnaire to students at the applied foreign languages (English) department at a technological university. The questionnaires (in English) were piloted and explained in Chinese when distributed to students. All three studies were conducted at the end of the school year when the students have had experience of learning. One advantage is that according to Long (2005), experienced learners would have clearer ideas of what they need. The details are illustrated below.

	Participants	Methodology	Aim of questionnaire
2007	90 juniors from applied foreign languages (English) department	Year end questionnaire with 71 items	To explore students' learning needs on Chinese to English Translation
2008	90 juniors and 83 sophomores from applied foreign languages (English) department	Year end questionnaire with 54 items	To compare students' learning needs between English-Chinese Translation course and Chinese-English Translation course
2014	90 juniors from two Chinese-English Translation courses	Year end questionnaire with 44 items	A questionnaire of EFL college students' needs for student-centred translation

	from an applied foreign languages (English) department		course
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Table 3.3 Participants and themes of Wang's three studies

With students' learning needs as the focus, Wang's 2007 and 2008 questionnaires are similar except that in the 2008 questionnaire included items concerning whether the translation courses have or in what degree met the goals listed, items on how often students made the errors listed on the questionnaire, and on teaching materials used in class were removed. The length of the questionnaires were 3.5 (in 2007) and 2 pages (in 2008) with the same 7 themes: personal profile, curriculum, learning goals, learning material and content, learning activities, instruction, and evaluation. As the designs of these two questionnaire were structured mostly with rating scales items generated by Wang, the data gathered tended to be limited to her own assumptions of needs. For examples, there were only 3 questions under the theme 'curriculum' in each questionnaire and there were only 6 items generated by Wang under the heading 'learning goals' for students to rate the importance level of each goal. As no open ended questions were employed in these two questionnaires, the data collected may be insufficient to illustrate the real situation. The 'needs' being investigated in these two studies cover definitions of needs as necessities/goals, interests/preferences, and lacks/difficulties.

Wang (2014) conducted another study specifically to analyse learners' needs for translation course design and the data she collected with a 2.5 pages questionnaire were under the following headings: learning goals, course planning, instructional materials, teaching and learning, and evaluation to analyse student's 'felt needs, process oriented interpretations, and subjective needs' (p.79). On top of the

definitions of needs portrayed in her previous two studies, she employed questions with needs as wants/desires, requirements, and means in her questionnaire. However, again with no open-ended questions, the students may not be able to express what they actually needed in the translation course.

### **3.4.2.1. Curriculum and Materials Needs**

#### *Curriculum and Course planning*

In general, Wang's (2008) findings show there are differences between the needs of English to Chinese translation and Chinese to English translation learners.

With respect to curriculum, according to Wang, students unanimously believe translation courses to be necessary for English-majors. 49% of the students think they should start translation courses in the first year of university and 38% of the students think they should start in their second year (2007; 2008; 2014).

There was rather little information on curriculum and course planning as there was only 1 yes/no question (Do you think English-majored students need translation courses?) and 2 multiple choice questions (one on the timing to start translation course and another on the ideal number of students in a class) asked regarding this topic on the three questionnaires.

#### *Textbooks*

Due to cultural differences, textbooks from Hong Kong or China do not appeal to Taiwan learners (Wang, 2008). Wang points out that students regard learning of 'language structure', 'translation skills', and 'language knowledge' (i.e. slang and idioms) to be valuable and should be included in textbooks. In addition, although the

use of textbooks is preferred by English-to Chinese translation learners, they show less interest in the learning of translation theories.

Though students prefer the use of a textbook, 60% of the learners think a textbook is not needed in a translation course (Wang, 2014). Similar to Wang's (2008) claim, students seemed to prefer textbooks from Taiwan or Hong Kong to those from Mainland China (Wang, 2014).

### *Learning contents*

It is suggested that both interest-oriented and work-oriented materials should be included in the course contents, and a balance between these two directions is expected. Students prefer materials related to 'conversations', 'songs', 'stories', and 'schedules' (Wang, 2008; 2014). Students also show interest in 'fashion', 'travelling', 'living' and 'culture and art'. Wang (2008; 2014) provided a list of life-related and work-related genres in multiple choice questions questionnaires for students to rank their preferences over the teaching materials. It should be noted that as students were not given an 'others' options in answering the questions that the data collected might not be able to accurately reflect students' preferences.

### *Exercises and activities*

In regard to activities in class, students prefer 'group work' (Wang, 2008; 2014) as well as 'training of language skills' and 'discussion on translation' (Wang, 2014). 'Individual in-class translation' and 'group presentation' ranked the lowest. Wang's results resembles that of Dai's (2003, see 3.4.1.1.).

### *Assessment*

Dai (2003) puts forward that 90% of the teachers use examinations to evaluate students' performance. Yet, students prefer 'in-class group translation tasks', 'take-home translation exercises' and 'tests of language knowledge' as assessment tools as shown by Wang (2007; 2008; 2014).

### **3.4.2.2 Teaching and Learning Needs**

#### *Learning goals*

'Improving English ability' has been identified as the priority learning goal (Wang, 2008). Further study shows that students think 'sharpening real working skills of translation' is the most important goal in learning translation (Wang, 2014).

#### *Learning difficulties*

As discussed in 3.4.1.2., the problem of large classes has been identified by teachers as one teaching difficulty (Ho, 1999; Dai, 2003). Similarly, students hold the same perception by saying that the ideal number of students in one class should be limited to 15-25 (Wang, 2007; 2008; 2014) in order to learner effectively.

### **3.4.2.3. Teacher's Instructions**

Wang (2008; 2014) suggests that students expect teachers to correct the errors they make and to teach translation skills. 'Common translation errors', 'translation skills' 'group meeting and discussion', and 'students' translation errors' were regarded as important in teachers' instruction. Due to the scope of the question design, there was no other information concerning teachers' teaching approaches.

## **3.5. Chapter Summary**

By analyzing these empirical works in Taiwan, it has been shown that there is a gap to be filled in regard to students' perspectives towards translation learning. The studies discussed above all ended with a needs analysis and no further investigation was conducted to investigate how students felt towards a curriculum which was designed specifically to satisfy their needs. Furthermore, there are some significant flaws in some of the research. For example, problems in respect to piloting and sample size exist. This highlights the significance of this current research and makes it the first to explore students' needs with a needs analysis and action research approach in Taiwan. In the following chapter, the design of this current research will be presented and an attempt made to ensure that weaknesses identified in previous research are overcome.

## Chapter Four

### Methodology

#### 4.0 Introduction

##### *The Research Question*

Many researchers conduct their studies with philosophical assumptions and hypotheses in minds about ‘how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry’. (Creswell, 2003: 6) However, in this study, the researcher did not have assumptions to test before she began her work, nor did she try to prove a theory. The research question emerged from her teaching and as a teacher, she felt obligated to investigate further into the problem.

##### *Developing the research question*

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the module ‘English Translation’, which the research is concerned with, is a mandatory subject in the researcher’s department. All students from the Department of Applied English need to pass the module in order to complete their studies. The course is aimed to prepare students from the department with basic translation skills before they enter the workplace. The module is also designed to introduce translation theories/techniques and to employ efficient actual practice in class in order to enhance students’ abilities in translating texts.

The curriculum objectives, as well as elements which are to be learnt in this module were designed by the department. The textbook or teaching materials used in class are chosen by each individual teacher. The teachers are also responsible for designing lesson plans and the course content that students are to be tested on in examinations. However, being appointed to teach the module for the very first time and not

specifically trained for translation curriculum development, the teacher decided to follow the syllabus drawn up by the teacher who taught the course in the previous year in the first semester.

When 2/3 of the students failed the mid-term examination in the first semester, the teacher felt it was her obligation and duty to find out if there were any problems with the teaching and learning in the classroom. Although there were possibilities that the problem could lie in other aspects such as the examination not being sufficiently valid, as a teacher, she decided to focus on the teaching as a first stage before trying to make sure the examination was valid. It was such a frustrating experience for both the teacher and the students. For weeks she reflected on her own teaching content and processes, trying to find out if there was something she could have done better. Finally, she decided to hear what the students had to say.

At the end of the class on the last day of school in the first semester, the teacher asked the students if any of them could spare 10 minutes to talk about what they felt towards the course. 5 students volunteered to stay behind and a group discussion was conducted. This particular event not only generated the research question, but also formed the first step of the research process. It was then that Stenhouse's (1975:143) claim was brought to the teacher's attention. In his work he argues that 'that the uniqueness of each classroom setting implies that any proposal—even at school level—needs to be tested and verified and adapted by each teacher in his own classroom.' The teacher was inspired by his argument and then began to reflect on the curriculum and her own teaching in the classroom.

The logic of how the research question was formed is as follows:

Students are not passing the module, they can not graduate. → Why are they not passing the module? Is there anything wrong with the learning or teaching? → Let's hear what the students have to say. → They said they are not learning what they 'want' to learn. → **Will the teaching and learning improve if students are taught what they want to learn?**

The second phase of the research was to analyse relevant literature about 'wants' and/or 'needs' in order to give insight into understanding the problem and help to clarify the issues and operationalise the concepts in the questions, and this was done in Chapter 3. As discussed in the previous chapter, 'needs' can be defined into nine areas, according to their nature. (see Table 3.2)

The consequences of that include the introduction of the distinction of wants and needs so that a more precise question begins to appear:

**Will students learn more effectively or perform better if their 'wants' and/or 'needs' are satisfied?**

The question then arose as to what approach to research the researcher should take and action research seemed to be appropriate. With teaching generally regarded as a professional practice as well as an educational process, the purpose of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge. (Elliot, 1991: 50) That is to say, the aim of action research is to improve 'teaching' as 'process' in class, instead of fostering 'learning' outcomes. However, without quality in teaching, one can hardly expect quality learning outcomes. Therefore, in terms of 'learn more effectively', the researcher would observe changes (if any) of students' translation skills when doing in-class or take-home exercises which also act as evidence towards whether students

perform better after changes were introduced in the curriculum and teaching methodology.

This chapter now presents the process and design of the research, as well as the techniques for data collection and analysis. It explains how the action research was chosen and conducted to investigate whether satisfying students' learning needs would influence any learning behaviour or lead to the improvement of their performance.

The research design is discussed first, followed by an introduction to the instrument implementation and the strengths and weaknesses of the instruments used in both the teaching and the researching stages. How data was analysed is briefly discussed in the third section, followed by a discussion on issues of trustworthiness. Ethical issues are presented in the next section, before a summary of the chapter concludes the chapter.

## **4.1. Research Design**

Research is usually defined as either 'qualitative' or 'quantitative' by scholars, depending on the sort of data collected and how they were analysed. However, other than the usual distinctions made between these two categories, research can be distinguished as 'analytical' and 'advocacy' (Byram, 2008).

### **4.1.1 Analytical and advocacy research**

Educational research can be categorised under three types: research that looks for cause and effect, research that tries to understand the experience of the people in a specific context, and research that tries to bring change into a context (Byram, 2008:

91). 'Analytical' research tries to define 'what is' in a context, it explains a problem or phenomena. On the other hand, 'advocacy' research tries to define 'what ought to be' in a context (ibid), this type of works may carry different purposes, looking at things from different perspectives.

'Analytical' and 'advocacy' approaches do link to each other, and they do not necessarily exclude one another in a research project. In this study, the researcher first analyses by trying to understand a phenomenon (why students are failing the course) from the views of the people involved (the group discussion), then proposes / advocates a new approach to improve the situation/create change and to investigate whether this is successful by investigating cause and effect and also by the understanding the experience of the participants from their perspective. In this research, data was collected and analysed by multiple instruments - an interpretative, explanatory, and a mixed-method research design is used.

#### **4.1.2. Action Research approach**

Within the analytical type of research, while interpretative research tries to understand the participants' experience from their perspectives, explanatory research tries to find the factors behind a situation and their consequences (Byram, 2008). Action research is a form of advocacy research, which may also use explanatory and/or interpretative approaches to discover whether what is being proposed/advocated is feasible and effective.

Advocacy research can be designed in various ways. It is possible, for example, to carry out experiments with innovations, with control groups or random controlled

trials on a large scale. These approaches are however difficult for an individual to operate and action research has become a frequently used approach for teachers as well as professionals in many other fields.

#### **4.1.2.1. Characteristics of Action Research**

A useful and straightforward illustration of educational action research was done by Zeichner (Reason & Bradbury eds, 2001: 273). In his work the 5 different traditions of educational action research movements is discussed very explicitly, namely the action research tradition in the USA that derived from the work of Kurt Lewin, the teacher-as-researcher movement emerged in the UK in the 1960s, the participatory action research supported by Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart in Australia, the North American teacher research movement in the 1980s, and the self-study research tradition by teacher-researchers in the 1990s. Drawing on Carr and Kemmis' work, action research is categorised into three models according to different concepts by McKernan (1991: 31), Zuber-Skerritt (1992: 12) and others as: 1. scientific action research; 2. practical-deliberative action research; and 3. critical-emancipatory action research.

Along with the traditions and models, some case studies in educational action research, especially in curriculum development, have been presented by Stenhouse (1979). Typical definitions of action research have also been conceptualised by scholars such as Carr & Kemmis (1988: 5), Cohen & Mansion (1994: 186), Elliot (1991), Kemmis & McTaggart (1992: 10), Zuber-Skerritt (1992). Among these strands the most well-known model would be the 'spiral format' first illustrated by Lewin (1946, cited in McKernan, 1991: 16) and later elaborated by scholars such as

Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) and Elliot (1991), was referred to widely in educational settings as a cycle of planning, implementing, evaluating, reflecting and re-planning.

Drawing on the characteristics of action research defined by researchers, we can conclude that action research focuses mainly on the process of practice with planning, acting, observing and reflecting as the common characteristics. With 'reflecting' being the most significant element, action research is a form of small-scale self-reflective inquiry conducted by practitioners in a particular social setting in order to improve practice and understanding. However, action research being an ideal approach to educational settings is not without boundaries. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000: 231-234) explicitly discussed these models in details and point out some problematic issues.

Action research often received criticisms on not being real research due to the lack of validity in the data collected and analysed. Moreover, the fact that the findings of action research can not be generalised often raises questions about the value of using such an approach. A further issue is the Hawthorne effect'. As Cohen, Manion & Morrison say (2000: 127) 'Hawthorne effects threaten to contaminate experimental treatments in educational research when subjects realise their role as guinea pigs'. This is a perhaps inevitable aspect of action research and cannot be counter-acted by the use of control groups or other techniques. With respect to generalisation, Capobianco & Feldman (2006) outline a possible set of guidelines that practitioners should be aware of. They emphasise promoting 'quality' action research by pointing out the issues of trustworthiness and triangulation in action research. This issue will be discussed further in 4.3. As for the latter, since action research is conducted within a specific situation to improve practice and generate knowledge in that context, the

value of such an approach lies in the fact that the participants in that context can benefit from implementing actions.

#### **4.1.2.2. Rationale for using Action Research in this study**

In educational settings, action research has been applied widely in curriculum reforms.

It is

a form of learning from experience, a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning, that provides the opportunity for teachers to be involved in data gathering both local information and curriculum developing, reflection on the action as it is presented through the data, generating information, and making claims to knowledge based on conclusions drawn from validated information (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002: 16)

As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, the research question emerged from the teacher's reflection on teaching this particular module. Teaching is regarded as a professional activity, but unlike professionals in other fields, elements such as 'research' and 'theories' are often neglected, or as Carr & Kemmis (1990: 14) claimed, 'ignored' by teachers. Curriculum development requires technical as well as practical skills and due to the lack of research or theory training, teachers tend to either use curricular designed by others instead of developing their own, or at times develop curricula which are inadequate for learners.

Although it is not the researcher's intention to discuss curriculum development in detail for this study, it is worth mentioning that studies also show that inadequate curricula which have become irrelevant to the daily lives of learners, or failed to incorporate knowledge of real life, could result in ineffective learning or teaching

(Sahasewyon, 2004). An adequate curriculum should answer to the needs of the participants and consist of opinions from those who are involved in the context. In this study where developing a specific curriculum for the module is concerned, the implementation of action research is an essential means not only to bring curricular changes to improve students' learning, but also generate more knowledge and understanding in the teacher's practice as it is fundamentally the essence of action research.

Following the 'teacher as researcher' principles, the researcher will discuss this action research project from two perspectives; and therefore refer to herself sometimes as the teacher and sometimes as the research in order to give a clearer picture of the scenario and to distinguish processes undertaken by these two roles. There have been times that the researcher found herself using 'I' to document both the teacher's and the researcher's activities and thoughts. She then decided to use 'the researcher' instead of the first person 'I' so that it not only distinguishes the separate roles clearer, it also keeps a distance for the researcher to remain as objective as possible so that the 'self' involvement, as Denscombe puts it, (1998: 208) in interpreting qualitative data is minimised.

The researcher also acknowledged that fact that by bringing in her own beliefs, background and experience, the research may be shaped (Cohen, Mansion & Morrison, 2000). As Hammersley (2007) points out, the nature of data can only be appreciated when the reflexivity is secured. That is to say, only by acknowledging the subjective and reflexive nature of her dual-roles, can the data presented by the teacher-researcher will be appreciated. One prominent aspect the researcher acknowledged was the possible 'authority over participants' (Creswell, 2008) issue at

the time when all class members agreed to participate in the research and signed the consent form regardless the fact that they were told that they could opt out. Again, when the questionnaire was distributed in class, the fact that all students chose to fill out and return the questionnaire had impact on the researcher hence she decided to conduct the interviews after the final examination- when the course was completely over. 4.2.3.5 will further explain why this decision was made.

The researcher realised that the choices she made in collecting and interpreting data would evidently influence the outcomes of research. How she tackled the issue of possible bias and how she secured the trustworthiness of data will be discussed in 4.3. That being said, the researcher was also aware that in naturalistic research issues like this were somehow insuperable. In addition to 4.3., Section 4.4 will further discuss the validity and reliability in collection and analysing data.

## **4.2 Introduction to the instruments and their implementations**

Data was collected by different instruments in this study; namely a needs analysis questionnaire, examination scores, an attendance record, students' exercises, teacher's journals, students' self-reflection reports and interviews.

### **4.2.1 The Participants**

The teacher chose her own context because it was in which the problem emerged and it was her primary concern to improve teaching practice in this particular module. It was also convenient for her since she was the teacher, hence she had access to conduct research in her own classroom.

The Year 3 Students from the Department of Applied English were divided into two classes by the school upon enrolment into the university. This potentially provided the option of an experiment with a control group but this was not pursued because it would not have been possible to keep a balance in activities nor possible to offer something different for the control group whilst maintaining the usual way of teaching and learning. The cohorts were different in size. The number of the students in the 3 Ching class, the research participants, was 38. However, not all students in the 3 Ching class are Year 3 students because the department allowed students from Year 4 to take this class if they failed the same subject in the previous year. The students in this group were all from the same department – Department of Applied English. The average age of the class was 22.12.years old, the majority (32) of the participants was female students, among all the students 7 were from Year 4.

#### **4.2.2. The Teaching – planning new teaching strategy**

The teacher was very concerned with the fact that the students were having difficulty passing the module. Therefore she decided to seek for students’ opinions and suggestions to improve the learning and teaching effectiveness in class.

The pedagogic dimension was conducted in 2008, the processes of the planning of the teaching were:

**Group discussion → Piloting Questionnaire → Modifying Questionnaire →**

(January 2008)

(February 2008)

(February 2008)

**Questionnaire distribution → Planning and Implementation of New**

(February 2008)

(April –June 2008)

## **Curriculum→ Final Exam**

(June 2008)

### **4.2.2.1 Needs Analysis Questionnaire**

Gathering data by a questionnaire is probably the most commonly used method in educational research. However, constructing a questionnaire needs careful consideration as McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead (2003: 122) point out. The researcher must bear in mind guidelines to avoid questionnaires being ‘dangerous’ or ‘misleading’.

As indicated in the introduction, the teacher had identified the problem being the poor examination results. Thus she decided to focus on investigating the teaching first. In Chapter 3, the researcher is aware of the issues related to ‘local needs’ (Tarone & Yule, 1989:10) and she realizes that although the curriculum was originally drawn for this particular module, it is logical and inevitable that modifications must be made to include the voices of the learners from each individual group to be effective. Owing to the fact that the definition of ‘needs’ has never been commonly defined and remains a term which hosts various definitions as outlines in the previous chapter, the teacher decided to seek for answers from the students.

#### **4.2.2.1.1. Use of Group Discussion for developing the Questionnaire**

At the end of the first semester, the teacher asked for volunteers to discuss how they think of their performance. The discussion was carried out in Mandarin. It took place in the classroom where the students used to have the module, and was recorded with students’ consent. They were encouraged to talk about what they felt about their

learning in class. The teacher asked prompt questions to encourage students to express their opinions.

The prompt questions were:

‘Is there anything you would like to talk to me about the module?’

‘Are you satisfied with your performance in this course?’

‘I heard that some classmates are not happy with the examination results, what do you think about it?’

‘Do you have any comments on the teacher’s teaching in class?’

Given the broad definitions of needs described by researchers (see Table 3.2), the teacher decided to use a needs analysis questionnaire to find out the ‘wants’, ‘wishes’ and ‘desires’ prompted by students in the group discussion. Taking a step further, she intended to develop a curriculum which not only employs students’ voices, but also the ‘lacks’, ‘requirements’ and ‘what learners need to know’ from the teacher’s perspective.

The comments and feedbacks emerging from the group discussion later became the basis to formulate a ‘proto-type’ needs analysis questionnaire to investigate students’ needs for this module. The teacher carefully avoided placing leading questions in the questionnaire and her own subjective judgments were not the only impressions or measures to initiate questions asked in the questionnaire. The stages of defining the problem, conducting a ‘needs assessment’, developing hypotheses, acting, implementing, evaluating and making decisions in this research echoes with those in the first action cycle described by McKernan (1991: 28).

#### **4.2.2.1.2. Piloting Needs Analysis Questionnaire**

Piloting questionnaires is recommended by researchers. The purpose of piloting the questionnaire was to avoid any pitfalls students might encounter in answering the questionnaire and to minimise the ambiguity of the questions asked and to improve the preciseness of the questions. The teacher piloted the questionnaire with 7 students in the classroom a week before the distribution of the final version.

#### **4.2.2.1.3. Modifying the Pilot Questionnaire**

Several problems were found and modified during this process; the most significant problem being the language used. For example, the pilot questionnaire was in English, it took the students more than 40 minutes to complete it because they had to look up words in the dictionary all the time. While they were filling out the questionnaire, students kept asking questions about the terms used in it. It took up a lot of time for the teacher to explain meanings of some questions. One student said afterwards, ‘It was an exhausting experience!’ The other said, ‘Please can we do it in Mandarin?’ Considering the difficulty the students had in English knowledge, the teacher decided to translate the questionnaire into Mandarin.

#### **4.2.2.1.4. Questionnaire distribution**

A modified version of Needs Analysis Questionnaire was distributed to the students to be completed in class in February 2008. The students completed the questionnaire at the beginning of the class after the teacher explained the aims of the questionnaire; students were given opportunity to ask questions before and during the process. The teacher explicitly answered and explained all questions students raised. 6 students were absent on the day when the questionnaire was distributed, but with their consent the teacher then distributed the same questionnaire to these students to be complete the following week during concession following the exact procedures of distributing

the questionnaire in the previous week. The ethical issues regarding the consent form and questionnaire distributing will be further discussed in 4.5.

#### **4.2.2.1.5. The format of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was constructed by both closed/fixed response questions and open-ended questions which were grouped into 4 parts (see appendix 2). Each section focuses on a particular aspect of the information which is connected to the research question. All of the questions asked in Part B and C were developed from the earlier group discussion.

Part A contains 5 questions which were to find out basic information about the participants, including their department, the year of study, their sex, age and whether they would like to participate in further interviews.

Part B consists of 12 questions which focus on the analysis of students' needs for language situations and skills illustrated by students in the group discussion. In order to discover to what extent the other students agree or disagree with these situations or skills. The first 10 questions were Likert agreement (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) type of questions which tried to find out what language situations or skills that the students wished to achieve by taking the course and whether they thought the course provided sufficient preparation for that particular situation or skill. Question 11 consisted of 7 sub-questions which aimed to discover students' analysis of their own strengths and weaknesses in relation with language aspects of the course, namely professional terminology, knowledge of English grammar, understanding texts you read for pleasure, understanding newspaper/magazine contents, understanding information texts, knowledge of English

sentence structure, and any other aspects that the students wanted to tell the teacher. In order to collect information falling outside the range specified in the questions, a space is left under each sub-question for students to write down their comments or anything they wished to elaborate further. Based on the language elements which students said they wished to require from the course in the earlier group discussion, Question 12 is a closed question which contained 10 elements suggested by students. The students were invited to indicate their own language abilities at present and their desired abilities with respect to knowledge of translation techniques, knowledge of the different contexts in which words are used in English and Mandarin, knowledge on sentence orders of English and Mandarin, understanding English idioms, understanding English slang, translating articles from newspapers/magazines, translating literature, knowledge and techniques on simulation translation, terminology on political issues and translating films/movies/TV programs.

The focus of Part C is the analysis of students' expectations for the course, this part starts with an open-ended question, 'What are your expectations for the course?' Question 2 then follows up with 'Do you think the syllabus fits your expectation(s)?' After students indicate 'yes' or 'no', they are invited to express the reason(s) in a space provided under the question. Instead of asking what the students 'want' or 'need' to learn, Question 3 is another open-ended question— 'What aspect (if any) is lacking in the present syllabus?' Question 4 consists of 20 sub-questions which focus on the students' opinions towards the present syllabus. First the students are asked if they are satisfied with a particular aspect of the teaching, such as the translation techniques included in the textbook (Question 4.1) or the pace of the class (Question 4.3) with Likert scale questions. Then again they were invited to comment on that

particular aspect and give suggestion on the ways or method to enhance their level of satisfaction.

The theme of Part D was 'Reflections and suggestions for the course'. There were only 3 opened-ended questions in this part. The first question was 'What aspects of the course were most satisfying to your learning needs?' On the contrary, Question 2 was 'What aspects of the course were least satisfying to your learning needs?' The last question was a general question on other suggestions or comments they wish to make.

#### **4.2.2.1.6 The strengths and limitations of Questionnaire**

Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire have been outlined by many professionals. The ones that are relevant to the context of this study will now be considered. The advantages of distributing the questionnaire are: 1. it elicits direct information from all students involved in this study, 2. it collects large amount of information in a short time, 3. it is relatively easy to administer, 4. it collects data which are quantifiable, 5. it effectively gathers initial attitudes and perceptions that need to be followed.

On the other hand, there are limitations of using such an instrument in the setting: 1. it was rather time-consuming to analyse the data due to the large amount of questions asked in the questionnaire, 2. it is possible that students would still produce answers that they think the teacher wants to hear although the questionnaire was conducted anonymously, 3. it is difficult to explore issues emerged from the questionnaire in depth hence other follow-up instruments are needed, and 4. it is possible that the teacher would interpret the data subjectively.

#### **4.2.2.2 Planning and implementation of New Curriculum**

It would be helpful to briefly demonstrate how the new curriculum was planned and what aspects were employed in it at this stage to show differences from the old curriculum. Hence a sample lesson plan which includes 'desired' new elements of teaching emerged from the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 7 to show how a lesson was proceeded and what was taught in that sample class.

Acting on students feedbacks, the teacher introduced the two themes mentioned above to be part of the new curriculum. Neither of them was included in the old curriculum which focuses solely on the approaches and techniques of translation. The reasons for choosing the themes for the classes will be explained further in a later chapter.

At the end of the semester, students were given another examination (final examination) to indicate their degree of achievement in this module. Therefore, the midterm examination (before the implementation of the new curriculum) and the final examination (after the implementation of new curriculum) act as pre and post tests of achievement for the researcher as well as being examinations for the teacher and students as required by the institution as explained in the next section. The results of these two tests are compared to see if there is any change in the process.

#### **4.2.2.3 The Examinations**

The 'English Translation' module was a one year course which lasted two semesters. The action research was conducted in the second semester. Following the university's regulation, a midterm examination and a final examination were conducted in each semester.

It is required by the institution that the teacher provides a mid-term exam score sheet for each class. The midterm scores would be combined with the final exam score and the class participation scores to make the 'semester score'. However, the institution does not exercise a regulation on the forms of assessments. The so-called 'midterm' or 'final' examinations could be in the forms of traditional written exams, assignments, oral presentations, written reports or any form that the teacher prefers.

The researcher is aware that gender, racial, social and other factors might influence the assessment outcomes (Gipps & Murphy, 1994: 259). However, it is not the researcher's intention to investigate whether these factors are relevant nor is she trying to establish valid and 'sound' tests. Instead, she focuses on testing students' performance by written tests to investigate whether there is a relation between students' needs and their learning. Therefore, the researcher wishes to state that the exams were not standard tests. Although using standard proficiency tests is a good way to ensure validity and credibility of the assessment, if proficiency tests were used here, students wouldn't be tested on what they have learnt in class.

Both the midterm examination and the final examination in this study were in written forms, thus the exam papers can be seen as documentary evidence for the researcher to evaluate students' performance in this study and therefore the success of the curriculum development. As indicated in 4.2.2., the midterm examination took place in April 2008. The planning and implementation of new curriculum began soon afterwards and lasted for 10 weeks. After that there was the final examination which took place at the end of June 2008.

#### **4.2.2.3.1 The Midterm Examination as test of achievement**

The module 'English Translation' being a subject concerned with both English and Chinese writing is appropriate for students to demonstrate their abilities in written forms. In order to investigate students' strengths and weaknesses in this module, the teacher decided that written examinations were necessary to assess students' translation skills and learning outcomes.

The midterm examination consisted of three parts. The first part of the examination was constructed by 5 true-or-false questions. The second part contains 5 sentences, which students were asked to translate from English to Chinese using specific skills learnt in class. In the final part of the examination, students were to translate 2 paragraphs of text from English to Chinese.

#### **4.2.2.3.2 The Final examination as test of achievement**

It was also the teacher's decision that a final examination was needed in this module due to the same reasons mentioned above. Furthermore, since the examination is in a written form, they are used by the researcher to further evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum innovation.

The teacher therefore designed the examination questions following the exact format of the midterm examination, which is to begin with 5 true or false questions, followed by sentences translation and paragraph translation. Some results from these assessments cannot really be compared since students are not tested by exactly the same set of questions. However, for the purpose of assessing the differences in performance before and after the new curriculum, a particular set of 5 questions from part 2 and part 3 in the midterm examination were placed again in the final examination. The tests were therefore used, both to measure attainment of the

teaching objective for each part of the semester and to act as pre and post-tests for the innovation in the second half of the semester.

#### **4.2.2.3.3 The strengths and limitations of Examination**

In addition to the question of using standard tests mentioned above, there is the possibility of the teacher not being able to be consistent in marking. Another factor is that it is likely that the teacher did not keep the criteria throughout the marking process thus the validity of the examination might be hindered.

Having said that, the researcher can still refer to the examination papers as qualitative data to investigate into any significant changes which surfaced from students' work.

#### **4.2.3. The Researching – evaluating the effectiveness of the new teaching strategy**

Other than the requirement of teaching, the researcher decided that she would need more information in order to answer the research question. Although it is common practice for teachers to give examinations at the end of the semester, the researcher purposely designed the final examination to investigate whether students' translation skills improved on certain aspects of the translation principles where innovative teaching had taken place. In addition, the teacher kept a record of attendance and a journal throughout the course, which she could then analyse, as a researcher, once the course was completed. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted in groups and individually from June to August 2008. The instruments used in this phase will be further discussed below.

#### **4.2.3.1 The Examinations – as the pre and post-test**

As discussed in 4.2.2.3.2., a written final examination was helpful in evaluating students' performance. In terms of the contents of the examinations, the researcher might prefer standardized tests (e.g. proficiency tests) but the teacher needs achievement tests which test what has been taught in the module. A 'compromised' version of final examination which carried elements from the midterm examination was used to give comparison.

The researcher compared the examination scores of the midterm and final examinations to identify the differences which may have been caused by the innovations in the action research teaching. Other than the examination scores, the translation skills and techniques students demonstrated in the written examination were regarded as qualitative data and were then also analysed to see if anything (such as issues concerning curriculum, attitude to learning or teaching etc.) has had changed during the process which might explain changes in achievement.

#### **4.2.3.2 Attendance Record**

It was the teacher's habit to keep students' attendance records for her classes. In this research, the attendance record also acted as data to investigate how often students attended class and whether they came to classes more often after the implementation of the new curriculum. Although the teacher is also concerned with this particular issue, this action is part of the research action because the researcher specifically keeps the attendance record for each class, because the teacher might not have done so.

#### **4.2.3.3 Teacher's Journals**

To understand the experience from the participants' perspective the teacher kept a record which included aspects observed in classroom on a continuous basis throughout this study. Although such records have been given different names such as diaries, field notes, journals, logs, and were defined into different types of documents accordingly (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 134), the researcher regards the teacher's records as 'self dialogues' journals. In contrast to Bell's (1993: 102) claims that diaries "are not records of engagements or personal journals of thoughts and activities, but records or logs of professional activities", the teacher's journals in this study contain observations, experiences, feelings, reflections, understanding and any other crucial events that the teacher felt or thought in the classroom.

The teacher had a notebook opened on her desk during lessons so that she could quickly write down some points about her thoughts or significant events which occurred in the classroom. Due to the time restriction when teaching in class, she usually completed the journal after the class was dismissed based on her notes taken in class to minimise any misunderstandings or blurs of the memory caused by time lapse. The journal was written mostly in Chinese, however, occasionally some students' names and special terms were written in English (for a sample diary please see Appendix 3). This journal-keeping process was not one which the teacher normally carried out and in that sense it is particular to the research, a 'request' from the researcher, but simultaneously it is an enhanced version of the record which the teacher would normally keep of lessons and is a reflection of the teacher's thinking at the time rather than the researcher analysis.

It is commonly regarded as useful to keep a diary and a range of techniques as well as guidelines have been offered by researchers as early as Allport (1942: 95, cited in

McKernan, 1991). In Action Research in particular, others such as Kemmis & McTaggart (1988: 50-51), Elliott (1991: 77), Bell (1993), McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead (2003: 114-115), Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 229), Koshy (2005: 97), Creswell (2005: 214) have argued that diary/journal keeping is an important part of the process and in general, there are more advantages than disadvantages in using this instrument.

Of all advantages advocated in the literature, the researcher finds the journal most helpful in the way that it keeps records of events which occurred during lessons, and how it reflects the teacher's opinions and impressions at those moments as evidence for later data analysis. Nonetheless, the researcher/teacher did come across some difficulties in jotting down her thoughts while teaching. One major difficulty was that the teacher had developed a habit of walking about the classroom during lessons, which made it difficult in getting back to the desk to put down her thoughts on the notebook in time. Another challenge was difficulty to record conversations in real-time. It was possible that significant remarks were not recorded. In addition, due to the time-consuming nature of keeping journals, there were times that the teacher could not recognise her own writing later when she tried to complete the journals because it was done in such a rush that some words or phrases were unrecognisable.

#### **4.2.3.4 Students' Reflective Notes (sent to the teacher by email)**

It is common that researchers rely on students' journals to interpret issues in action research, and the data be used as a source for triangulation. Having said that, the teacher felt it was ethically inappropriate to add more workload onto the students by asking them to keep a journal on a regular basis although it would have been a helpful instrument to gather direct feedbacks from students and identify any problems right

away. The researcher did recognise other ethical issues involved with students' journals in research such as asking permissions for using them or double checking the contents with the participants before using them and others. Another concern was that due to the fact that the participants are grown-ups who would try to impress the teacher by writing down more compliments instead of criticism whether the journals were kept anonymously or not, the trustworthiness of the data would then remain in question.

As a consequence of the ethical issues mentioned, the teacher invited students to write comments whenever they wished and the students' reflective notes used in this study were sent to the teacher voluntarily by those students who were not able to participate in the interviews. They were sent through email before the end of semester at the students' convenience. Instead of answering the questions in the interviews, the students were invited to express freely their reflections on learning and teaching of the course. By doing so, the possibilities of leading questions would be minimised, but the fact that the reflective notes were not sent anonymously might raise doubts in its reliability for students might deliberately say things which they thought the teacher wanted to hear. Moreover, the researcher found that one student wrote an A4 page of reflective notes in which half of the contents was about her personal life that was irrelevant to the teaching or learning.

#### **4.2.3.5 The Interviews**

Being one of the most widely used research methods (Murray & Lawrence, 1999), various guidelines and procedures of interviewing have been explicitly described in the literature. Interviewing in action research can be unstructured or semi-structured. In unstructured interviews, the interviewer may use a set of prompts to initiate a

dialogue or discussion in which the interviewee is encouraged to express his or her own opinions freely. The interviewee will naturally focus on things or events which they think are significant to them and the interviewer then encourages them to elaborate on that particular issue.

The teacher felt interviewing was necessary for following up issues found in the previous needs analysis questionnaire. She also realised that many students were not keen to provide their thoughts in writing even when enough spaces were left under open-end questions on the questionnaire for students to put down their comments. Some students actually answered open-ended questions with a simple 'yes' or 'no', without providing further explanation. As Opie (2004: 111) points out, interviewing would enable the researcher to explore the reasons behind issues and adds richness and value to a research.

The type of interviews conducted in this study is semi-structured. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer would have a set of questions or specific topics or directions which are often referred to as 'interview guide' that needs to be addressed (Bryman, 2004: 321). Moreover, the flexibility would allow the interviewee to lead the research direction, or even shape the research question; therefore the unstructured interview format is considered the 'best' tool in the initial stages of action research (Elliott, 1991: 80). Questions in semi-structured interviews are open-ended and they do not necessarily have to be asked in a specific order so that the interviewee is given space to develop or elaborate significant points of interests. Also, questions not listed on the interview guide can still be asked to further investigate issues arising from the responses.

The teacher carefully chose the wordings of the questions so that the meaning of each question was very clear to the interviewers. In addition, not just the participants with known characteristics (also see Kvale 1996: 126; Scheurich, 1995 for more) are included. She was also aware of potential problems such as ‘leading’ and ‘sampling’ when interviewing the participants.

In educational settings such as that of this study, the notion of authority over participants (Creswell, 2008) also needs to be considered—the students might give answers that they think the teacher wants to hear. Luckily this issue was minimized by the fact that the students were interviewed during the summer vacation when they were no longer in the teacher’s class. Logically the students were likely to be more open and frank in discussing their thoughts when they knew the teacher no longer had power over their grades. They would be relatively more willing to identify any flaws or dislikes concerning the course, if any, and the researcher believed that they would provide true opinions and comments on the course.

#### **4.2.3.5.1 Strengths and Limitations of the Interviews**

Like other instruments used in research, interviewing has its limitations and boundaries. Table 4.1 outlines some of the most mentioned advantages and disadvantage in using semi-structured interviews from the literature. However, the strengths and weaknesses of using group and individual interviewing in the study are discussed separately in the next section.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the interviewer is able to collect data directly from the interviewees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● interviewing is time-consuming</li> <li>● transcribing is time-consuming</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● problems can be followed up immediately when they arise by shifting the sequence or adding new questions</li> <li>● information is collected in a relaxed context, interviewees would feel less stressed</li> <li>● transcripts can provide rich materials for data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● interviewing young children is difficult in terms of getting them to express their opinions</li> <li>● bias could be difficult to avoid</li> </ul>
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Table 4.1 Advantages and disadvantage of semi-structured interviews

#### **4.2.3.5.2 The Design and Format of the Interviewing**

The interview acts as a follow-up to the survey which aims to investigate how students react towards a possible change of curriculum. The participants are those who agreed to be interviewed in the previous needs analysis questionnaire in which they were invited to put down their names if they would like to participate in the survey. This too is a means of understanding the experience from the participants' perspective.

##### **4.2.3.5.2.1 The Interview Questions**

The interview consists of questions that intend to investigate students' perceptions and attitudes towards the following topics:

1. The Examination Scores
2. The Motivation
3. The Needs Analysis Questionnaire

4. The Curriculum
5. The Reflections
6. Other Comments

Topic	Sample Questions
1. The Exam Scores	<p>1. Some people told me they got lower scores in the final exam (comparing to the midterm exam). Let's talk about it.</p> <p>2. Are you satisfied with your own scores? Why or why not?</p> <p>3. Is there anything we can do to enhance the level of satisfaction?</p>
2. The Motivation	<p>1. Many people seldom show up for classes (according to teacher's attendance records), what might be the reason?</p> <p>2. Many people say they didn't feel any difference in the curriculum. How do you respond to that? Do you think there is any difference?</p> <p>3. Would it (the difference, if any) make you feel more willing or less willing to come to class?</p>
3. The Needs Analysis Questionnaire	<p>1. Remember I asked you what you needed in class? We discussed what materials were to be included after the midterm exam. Do you think the questionnaire was helpful? In what way you find it helpful/unhelpful?</p>
4. The Curriculum	<p>1. Remember your expectations for the class? Did the</p>

	<p>‘new’ curriculum meet your expectation?</p> <p>2. Some people mentioned about translating film/movies/TV programs; understanding English Idioms; translating articles on newspaper/magazines..., and so the teacher included these elements in the curriculum, did you find it helpful? In what way you find it helpful/unhelpful?</p>
5. Their Reflection	<p>1. Are you happy with the progress you made during the course?</p> <p>2. Are you happy with the overall improvement made in translation?</p> <p>3. Now that it’s 4 months later, what are the needs you think might be for the future? Are there any differences from your previous needs?</p>
6. Comments	<p>1. Is there anything you would like to talk about in terms of how the lectures were carried out or how other classmates perform in class?</p> <p>2. Is there anything you would like to talk about in terms of the teacher’s teaching approach or teaching contents?</p> <p>3. What did you expect to learn from this course? Have you learned anything from the course?</p> <p>4. Is there anything I haven’t asked that you want to tell me?</p>

Table 4.2 Sample Questions asked in each topic

These questions are structured to investigate students' opinions in areas with which the action research was concerned. In addition, open-ended questions were formulated for students to comment on their experience.

However, as this is a semi-structured interview mode, the order of the questions asked may differ from interview to interview as it was unpredictable what the interviewees would like to talk about. In many cases, the researcher would allow the freedom for the interviewees to jump from area to area, talk about things that came up in their responses. Occasionally the researcher had to ask other questions to encourage and prompt the interviewees to answer the questions.

Due to the time restriction and difficulty in locating students during the summer vacation, the interviews were conducted both in groups and individually. The researcher first provided a calendar with interview time and dates for students to put down their names under slots (30 minutes/each slot) indicating when they would be free for an interview. Students who put their names under the same slot were interviewed together as a group. Other students whose name appeared on the calendar were interviewed individually. There were 3 students absent on the day and the researcher approached them by telephone or through emails. One interview was then conducted over the phone. The other two students sent in their thoughts by email. The interviews were transcribed into word files and then following the themes that emerged from the data, were grouped onto an excel file according to the theme (for example see Appendix 4 for 'group work').

#### **4.2.3.5.2.2 Group Interviews**

Three group interviews were conducted in this study. The students participated in the interviews were grouped in 3 or 4 according to their availability. This group size is ideal for small ‘friendship grouping’ as it is recommended to be more productive (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 161). The researcher first explained what the interview was about, and then asked for their permissions to record the interviews as well as to use the information they provide in this research. The students were also aware that they could withdraw themselves from providing information at anytime during or after the interviews. All 3 interviews were conducted and recorded with a MP3 device in the classroom where the lessons used to take place. The researcher deliberately chose the venue which the students were familiar with to minimise the sense of uneasiness from the students.

A total number of 10 students participated in 3 group interviews. The researcher kept the conversations going by using some ‘prompts’ from time to time during the interviews to encouraged the students to comment on the statements or remarks provided by their peers in the Needs Analysis questionnaire. The interviews were carried out on the group level; the students interacted not only with the researcher but also amongst themselves.

Some strengths in interviewing students in groups in this study were: 1. the students seemed more relaxed when with their peers. 2. They reminded each other of some details of the curriculum, memories were refreshed by interacting with their classmates. 3. Issues appeared from the group interviews could be followed immediately by asking further questions and collecting multiple views from the students. 4. Group interviewing saved time for the teacher.

However, the teacher also found that certain students tended to dominate the conversations while some students chose to remain silent. The teacher had to prompt those ‘silent’ students to express their thoughts from time to time. Under such circumstances, it is possible that students who hold different views would moderate their opinions when they were invited to speak. Moreover, although researchers such as Lewis (1992: 413) and Taylor, Wilkie & Baser (2006: 38) claim that group interviews may generate richer responses or develop a wider range of discussion from the interaction among interviewees, the teacher found that the interviewees in this study would rather agree than disagree with their peers’ opinions. Another difficulty the teacher encountered was the transcribing of group interviews, which is seldom mentioned in the literature. Since students interacted with each other in group interviews, the conversations would be interrupted or redirected by other students at times; or on occasions multiple students would answer the researcher’s questions at the same time. It was difficult to recognise students’ voices from the recording and when transcribing, the teacher had to pause to distinguish the owners of the voices from time to time, and sometimes she had to consult the interviewees for confirmation.

#### **4.2.3.5.2.3 Individual Interviews**

Also known as one-to-one interviews, interviewing informant individually is the most common form of semi-structured or unstructured interviews (Denscombe, 1998: 114). 22 students were interviewed individually in this study to express their thoughts and feelings towards the change of curriculum.

The teacher found it relatively easy to manage individual interviews. Deeper responses were able to be elicited from individual interviews, as the interviewees tended to

express their thoughts in details and hence rich materials were produced for data presentation.

Nonetheless, the teacher also found that some students seemed to be nervous when they were placed in a face-to-face situation with the teacher/researcher. A few students were also more aware of the presence of the recording device for they would look at the device from time to time.

#### **4.2.4. The Analysis of Research Data**

Although there is not a 'correct' way to analyse data, numerous valuable general guidelines have been advocated in the literature, among them Miles & Huberman (1994:61) put forward some useful principles including organising codes in analysing qualitative data. They also divide the process of data analysis into three stages, namely data reduction, data display and concluding and verification.

As discussed in 4.1.2., action research is a form of advocacy research which may contain qualitative or quantitative data to determine factors behind a situation and their consequences (Byram, 2008). It is worth noticing that it is the way in how data is treated in research that allocates data into the categories of 'qualitative' and 'quantitative'.

In this study, data collection began with the needs analysis questionnaire. The evidence arising from the questionnaire is what convinced the researcher that she needed to collect more. Therefore she decided on the following stages of data collection. Although the majority of data collected by using methods discussed in the

previous section is text (qualitative data), numbers (quantitative data) are also used as evidence to support the researcher's claims in later chapters.

The researcher would like to state here that when analysing and interpreting text/words, the researcher does acknowledge the danger of taking a fragment of words for their face value. For example, quoting words from a comment on a questionnaire question without looking into the meanings behind such a comment to arrive at an inappropriate conclusion. Another issue that the researcher needed to bear in mind throughout the process of data analysing and interpreting is the 'self' involvement. Denscombe (1998: 208) claims 'that the researcher's self plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of qualitative data'. The researcher is aware that she has to be as objective as possible to suspend her judgement and detach her own beliefs and values from the data collected, although in practice total elimination is impossible.

Bearing in mind issues discussed above, how the data collected were analysed will be explained in the following section.

Instruments	Data collected	Time conducted
Needs Analysis Questionnaire	Responses of questions Statements from open-ended questions	March, 2008
Teacher's journal		April-June, 2008
Attendance Records		September 2007-June, 2008

Midterm Examination		April, 2008
Final Examination		June, 2008
Students' Reflective Notes		June-July, 2008
Interviews		June-August, 2008

Table 4.3 Data collection procedures

#### 4.2.4.1 Methods and Procedures of Data Analysis

It is explained in 4.1.2.2. that the action research project was undertaken from both perspectives of the teacher and the researcher; therefore all data collected is allocated into two parts: the data collected in the teaching role and the data collected in the researching role. Some data collected was analysed before the collection was completed. That is to say, data collection and analysing in this study is an on-going process throughout the research. There is no a distinguishing point of when the data collection ends and data analysing begins. Sometimes both data collection and analysis from different sources was undertaking at the same time. This echoes with what Hitchcock & Hughes's (1995: 296) claim that 'that data analysis is not together a separate process in qualitative research' and what Burns (1999: 154) argues that 'in practice it is difficult – as well as unnecessary – to separate the processes of data collection and analysis in action research'.

Having referred to the literature such as Tesch (1990), Strauss (1998), Burns (1999), Wellington (2000), and Bryman (2004) for procedures in data processing, the researcher conducted the data collection and analysis in the following sequence which was logical as well as practical to the researcher: 1. collecting data, 2. organising and

transcribing data, 3. reading and coding data, 4. investigating and interpreting data, and 5. presenting data.

In terms of coding, the researcher is looking for linkage, patterns, and consistencies between codes. Methods and procedures used to analyse the data collected are explained below.

#### **4.2.4.2 Data Collected in the Teaching Role**

##### *The Needs Analysis Questionnaire*

The data collected from the needs analysis questionnaire were analysed first before determining the direction of the next stage. Since questions in the first 2 parts of the questionnaire were mostly closed-ended questions, the amount of the database collected in this stage was not too big. These data were analysed by hand.

All questionnaires were numbered according to the sequence upon their return. For example, the first questionnaire returned onto the teacher's desk was numbered 1, the second one was numbered 2....etc. The purpose of numbering the questionnaire was to be able to check if the respondent was consistent in answering questions within the questionnaire and in other sources of data. By doing so, the credibility of a questionnaire then can also be examined.

The responses and comments gathered from the needs analysis questionnaire were organised into an excel file and a word file. All responses from the close-ended questions on the questionnaire were arranged into an excel file which contains mainly numbers, such as the number and the percentage of students who gave a specific answer. Such a file gives a clear overview of the students and therefore it was easier

for the teacher to locate students' areas of needs when deciding which elements were to be included in the new curriculum (See Appendix 5 for one example). In addition to the contents on the excel file, the researcher typed up all comments from the open-ended questions and created a comprehensive word file for her reference.

Such a word file is an ideal format for coding what students described as their needs, and also enabled the teacher to investigate deeper into individual student's thoughts from his/hers perspectives.

#### *Data From The Midterm Examination*

Two kinds of data were obtained from the midterm examination, the examination scores and students' answer sheets.

The teacher manually calculated the scores and worked out the class's average score for the midterm examination. It is used to compare with the final examination average score later to see if students performed better in the final examination.

As explained earlier in 4.2.2.3.2., some sets of questions were placed in the midterm and the final examinations deliberately to assess the differences in students' performance. Therefore, the teacher also kept the students' answer sheets from the midterm examination for future comparison with the final examination.

#### **4.2.4.3 Data Collected in the Researching Role**

##### *The Attendance Record*

The teacher usually gave writing exercises in class and the students were expected to finish the exercise and hand in their work with their names on it before leaving the

classroom. Since it was not a big class and it was the second semester, the teacher already knew all of the students by their names. Thus she was able to do the ‘head count’ while students were busy doing their work.

On some occasions when the teacher was occupied by students’ questions and did not have time to do the roll-call. She would refer to the student worksheets which had their names on them for attendance record because the in-class exercise scores make part of the ‘semester’ score so the students were aware that they needed to hand in their work to get credits. Those who did not hand in the exercise would be considered absent and so they could not get any credit from the in-class exercise on that particular day.

By looking at the attendance record which contains information of dates and the names of the students, the teacher was able to find out if students came to class more or less often after the implementation of the new curriculum and the reason(s) behind it.

### *Teacher’s Journals*

It is perhaps useful to outline some principles the researcher followed to analyse qualitative data in this study at this point. All text was carefully read and studied several times to understand the meaning on or under the surface before being divided into units. Taking into account that the context in which the remarks were undertaken does play a significant role (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 93), the units were then grouped under different codes by using ‘word by word’, and ‘sentence by sentence’ approaches. They were compared and contrasted constantly to identify any linkages

between units throughout the data analysis process. The same procedures apply to analysing all text collected in this study.

In practice we find diary extracts which contain elements of the context and records of the events taken place in the context often act as valuable pieces of data in research. (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 2003: 169) Taking this claim into account, the teacher kept a journal throughout the research on a weekly basis. All data were text originally written in a notebook, however, for coding purposes the contents of the journal were organised after the teaching was completed by re-typing them into a word file with separate pages with different dates which contains thoughts and reflections of the teacher.

#### *Data From The Final Examination*

Two kinds of data were also obtained from the final examination as in the midterm examination. They were treated the same way as explained above.

#### *Students' Reflective Reports*

The reports were analysed in word files in which form they were originally sent to the teacher. The data were analysed in the same procedures as the teacher's journal.

#### *Interviews*

All interviews were recorded and transcribed soon after each interview. They were also sent to the participants by email to be audited before being placed into the database.

Drawing on the distinctions Strauss & Corbin (1990) made on different levels of coding, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding, interview transcripts

were coded accordingly. Despite the fact that the transcripts were in Mandarin, translation is provided when quoting the interviews in the data analysis chapters.

Some researchers suggest the use of computer software to help organize the data (e.g. Creswell, 2002: 235), but computer software can not do the work by itself. At first the researcher did use Nvivo to help categorise data collected from the interviews. However, the danger of taking a fragment of words for its face value is presented in the process. For example, when it comes to various definitions of ‘needs’, there were times that the researcher found what Nvivo sorted as ‘needs’ were actually ‘wants’, ‘lacks’, ‘interests’ or something else. Given the ambiguity of perceptions on ‘needs’, the researcher decided to use ‘word by word’, and ‘sentence by sentence’ approaches to identify what the participants meant by what they said in those particular contexts. It is prominent in this case that when it comes to analyzing and interpreting the interview data, it is better done by the researcher herself rather than a computer program.

#### **4.3. Trustworthiness in Collection and Analysis of Qualitative Data**

Although some researchers continue to use the term validity and reliability for qualitative data, Lincoln & Guba (1985) have argued that it is more appropriate to establish a different way of thinking about qualitative data analysis under the general term of trustworthiness, in which the concepts of traceability, transferability, and credibility are embedded.

Early definitions of validity, with ‘measuring certain characteristics’ as a primary purpose as Campbell & Fiske (1967: 277) and Hammersley (1987: 77) propose, can not be applied to qualitative research as they were unable to indicate the quality of the

research. Validity within qualitative research should be referred to with other alternative terms to detach itself from quantitative research and distinguish different characteristics in the nature of such research as a wide range of data in different forms can be used to ensure the quality of research.

Aware of the criticisms of action research (See 4.1.2.1) as not being real research due to the lack of validity, or in this case, trustworthiness, in the data collected and analysed, the researcher applied triangulation, respondent checking and auditing techniques to ensure the trustworthiness in this study. These approaches have been explicitly conceptualised by various researchers (i.e. Burns, 1999: 163-166; Creswell, 2002: 252; Hopkins, 2002: 133-136, Manson, 2002: 246) and are referred to as the three primary commonly used techniques by qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2002).

In terms of triangulation, a technique which was advocated by John Elliot and Clem Adelman (Hopkins, 2002:133), the researcher used data from different sources which were collected on different occasions (see Table 4.3 ) to investigate the research from various perspectives to assure the quality of this study. Secondly, where trustworthiness in the interviews is concerned, a clear audit trail is established in the fact that all questions asked in the interviews were derived from the earlier needs analysis questionnaire. Interview transcripts were sent to the interviewees to be audited before quoting any statements or remarks. Finally, whereas the reliability of coding and interpretation is difficult with qualitative data, the researcher was aware of the pitfalls of individual interpretation therefore a 'critical friend' who is also a researcher in the field was invited to audit the coding done by the researcher to check if the codes were appropriate and sound. By doing so, the interpretation is credible and trustworthy, as well as traceable.

#### **4.4. Validity and Reliability in Collecting and Analysing Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data collected in this study were from the needs analysis questionnaire and the examinations.

In terms of the needs analysis questionnaire, the researcher was aware of the importance of validating the questions asked in it. Therefore a piloting of the questionnaire was undertaken to ensure validity of the questions before distribution to the students.

Regarding the reliability and validity in testing, Brown (1987: 220-224) proposes some guidelines for researchers. However, the reliability of the examinations in this study was unable to be tested as they were midterm and final examination which practically could not be repeated. Apart from that, since the majority of the examination questions required answers in written forms, it is difficult to define the degree of the scorer reliability due to the fact that they were graded by the teacher manually instead of computer programs. It was possible that the teacher's criteria would change in different contexts in which she graded the papers.

In the discussion on the examinations in 4.2.2.3., the researcher has explained the reasons of employing achievement tests instead of proficiency tests, and the validity of the examinations resides in the fact that the students were tested on what they had been taught in class.

#### **4.5. Ethical Issues**

Despite the fact that the teacher has always treated ethical issues in her classroom with extra considerations even without conducting any research, she was aware that being a classroom teacher for more than 10 years, her values, background and cultural perspectives could inevitably influence the decisions she makes. However, it is her belief that as a teacher that the interests of the students should be regarded as the primary concern in her teaching above all. It was for that reason she decided to listen to and answer students' needs. This piece of research was originated from the same belief, as discussed in the introduction of this chapter. It was inspired and conducted not upon the teacher's own judgements, but the voices of the students.

The fact that principles of ethical issues can be found in almost every educational research textbook and associations, for examples the British Educational Research Association (<http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2008/09/ethica1.pdf>) and that the American Educational Research Association ([http://www.aera.net/publications/Default.aspx?menu\\_id=46&id=1409](http://www.aera.net/publications/Default.aspx?menu_id=46&id=1409)) published some codes for the researchers to follow indicates that ethical considerations are an important issue in all research. However, these guidelines are to be interpreted upon one's morality or in ways that fit the purposes of the specific study the researcher is undertaking due to the fact that they are usually intentionally vague. (Hopkins, 2008: 201; Smyth & Williamson, 2004: 10). Whereas researchers such as Diener & Crandall (1978) categorise ethical considerations into four areas: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception , Burns (1999: 71) suggests that ethical principles implies responsibility, confidentiality and negotiation as important codes. Creswell (2003, 62-67) further illustrated other ethical guidelines to be considered in different stages of the research process. From the examples above, one

can conclude that there are no explicit or universal rules on ethical issues in social research.

The University of Durham School of Education has its own ethical clearance procedures and these were followed and agreement to the research was obtained.

With students' interests in mind, the critical concept in conducting the research is that of 'informed consent'. After the teacher verbally explained the purposes and possible outcomes and effects of the research as well as the changes in the curriculum, a written consent form (Appendix 6) which the teacher adopted from the University was signed by the 38 students in February 2008.

The teacher made it very clear that students' interests were not to be affected in any way by the fact that should they choose to participate in the research or not. Also, the students were informed of the fact that they could withdraw themselves from participating in the research anytime they wished without giving any reason. They were then given a week to consider and therefore the consent form was distributed to the class a week later to be signed. Nonetheless, a written consent form does not automatically grant the researcher the permissions to do whatever she believed was necessary. The teacher was aware that it was her obligation to respect students' privacy and to protect them from any harm that might have occurred by the research.

Students were informed at every stage throughout the process of the research. Apart from the written consent form, the researcher also obtained permission from the students for participating in the interviews and using the data they provided in her study.

By looking at the scores alone, it is possible that a couple of students seemed to have suffered from the research due to the fact they got lower grades in the final examination. However, it was not the teacher's intention to harm the students. She conducted the research by using a teaching approach that was suggested by the students and with which she believed would benefit students' learning. This assumption is proven to be true in many aspects as shown in the next data analysis chapter.

#### **4.6. Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduces the concepts upon which the research question was originated and shaped. Why the research question was approached with action research, as well as how the research was designed is discussed in this chapter in details. The rationale of implementing the instruments for data collection and how data was analysed is emphasised. Furthermore, the researcher wishes to demonstrate how she considered the issues of trustworthiness and validity throughout the research. Last but not least, the ethical implications were brought to attention and concluded the chapter.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Students' Perspectives**

#### **5.0. Introduction**

As presented in Chapter Four, this study first investigate and explains 'what is' going on in practice, and then investigates and defines 'what ought to' in that context (Byram, 2008). The researcher's assumption, which was developed from 'what was' - proposed by the students from the group discussion - was that the technological university needed to develop a syllabus that accommodates students' needs.

Bearing the concepts of 'analytical' and 'advocacy' research approaches in mind an advocacy type of research—an action research—was undertaken in order to investigate the research question:

**'Will students learn effectively or perform better if their 'wants' and/or 'needs' are satisfied?'**

From what the researcher observed and the information she gathered in the context, the belief is that when we take into consideration students' needs then they will perform differently, and hopefully better. In this chapter the researcher will first explain the phenomenon by looking at cause and effect in the context. In order to test and support this belief, the researcher will present the data gathered from different sources and then present the data that helps to analyse the participants' perspectives in the process, to understand how the people involved perceive that process and whether/why they think it is successful.

This chapter will focus only on students' perspectives, while the next chapter – Chapter 6 will discuss the Teacher's thoughts in depth.

There are 3 parts to this chapter. 5.1. analyses data gathered from students' midterm and final examination scores and the translation exercise they were requested to do. 5.2. focuses on understanding the participants' perspectives, where the researcher evaluates whether the AR is successful in the views of participants by analyzing the data collected by interviews. Finally, 5.3. concludes and summarises the agreements or disagreements among the students, and between students and hypothesis testing results.

### **5.1. Analysing students' examination scores**

In this part of the explanatory research, with the cause being taking into consideration being defined as the students' needs and the attempts by the teacher to satisfy these, the researcher seeks to explain the effect caused by such an independent variable first by analyzing students' examination scores.

#### **5.1.1 Examination results**

Two sets of examination scores are being investigated in this section. One being the midterm exam as the pre-test i.e. before students' needs were used in the teaching process; the other the final exam as the post-test after a series of lessons where the teacher took the students' expressed needs into consideration. As 4.2.2.3 states, the researcher is aware of the fact that these exams are not validated standardised tests. There are various factors which might influence the examination results. In order to explain cause and effect relation, the scores of the exams are used in this section as

one form of quantitative data to investigate whether students' needs are relevant to their learning.

<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Midterm Examination</b> (number of students)	<b>Final Examination</b> (number of students)
0-10	1	1
11-20	0	0
21-30	2	1
31-40	2	0
41-50	7	1
51-60	9	3
61-70	10	13
71-80	6	16
81-90	1	3
91-100	0	0
<b>Total number</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>

Table 5.1 Students' Examination Scores

The above table shows the score ranges and the number of students falling into each range. With every 10 marks as a score range, the data is also converted to a bar chart in Fig. 5.2 below. The passing mark for both the midterm and the final exams is 60. The researcher would like to point out that it is the same student scored 0 mark in both exams as she failed to show up on both examinations. It was the department's regulation to give a zero mark if a student fails to attend examination without a proper cause.

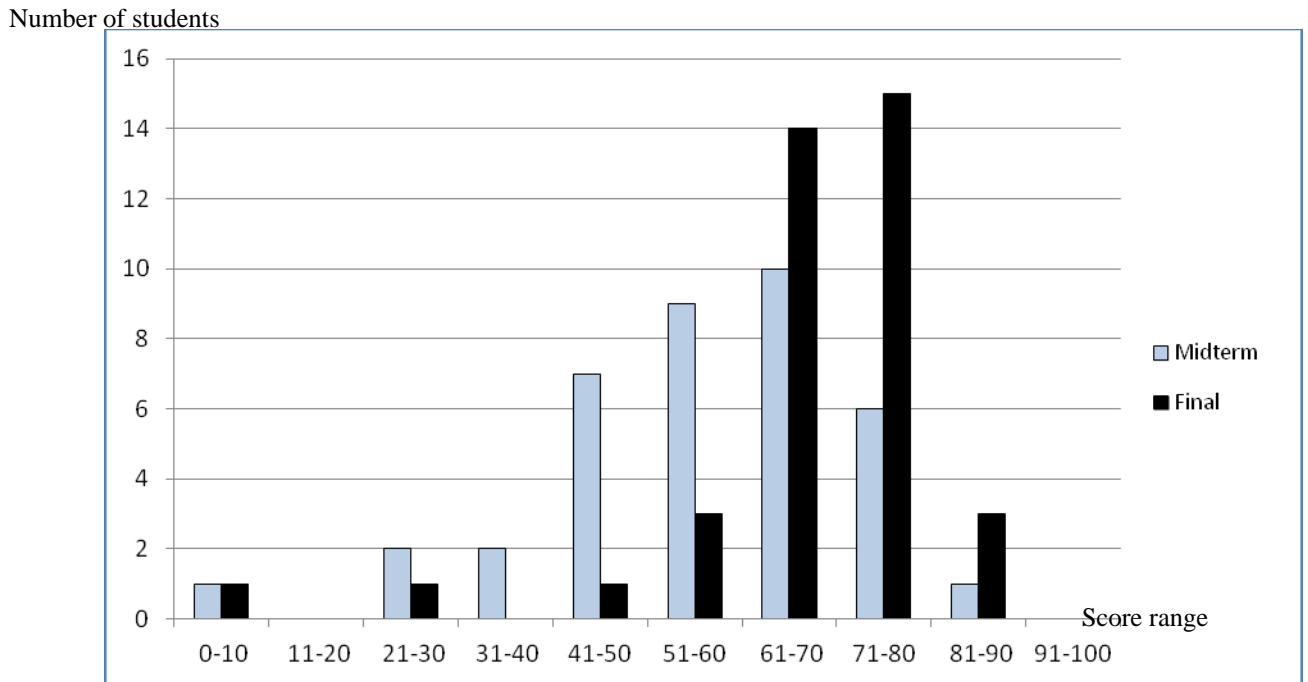


Figure 5.2 Students' examination results

#### 5.1.1.1 The Midterm Examination Results

By looking at the diagrams, we can see that the mean of the midterm exam falls on the score range of 51-60. None of the students scored exactly 60 marks in the midterm examination. A total number of 21 out of 38 students failed the midterm exam, only 17 students managed to pass.

#### 5.1.1.2 The Final Examination Results

In comparison to the midterm exam scores, 4 students failed and 34 students passed the final exam. The mean of the scores is in the score range of 61-70. From the changes in figures we can conclude that students performed better in terms of exams.

It would have been ideal to have a control group being taught by the same teacher in the existing ways with which to compare the scores and the changes in scores, but it is

in the nature of Action Research that the researcher focuses only on the group being taught.

### **5.1.2 Summary of the Examination Scores**

As indicated in Chapter 4, the examinations scores are the results of action research instead of so-call ‘true’ experiments and it is not possible to demonstrate absolutely the ‘cause’, which is the implementation of the new curriculum in response to ‘needs’, leads to the ‘effect’, which is the improvement in the students’ scores in the final exam.

Within the limits of the data we have for explanation, we can say that there is an obvious tendency for the group to improve by looking at the exam scores. The data presented above has supported the researcher’s assumptions in a certain degree.

Now the researcher will move on to the next type of research which is the interpretative/understanding type of research that seeks to understand the participants’ experience and their own thinking about the effect of the innovations on their learning and teaching by interpreting the data gathered from the perspectives of the participants, both learners and the teacher.

## **5.2. Understanding Students’ Perspectives**

Based on the evidence collected, the researcher will present the participants’ own experience and their own explanations and theories about what they perceived in the process and why they improved in their performance.

「翻譯課對我來講是個很心驚膽戰的科目，這對我來講真的很困難.....但是這學期開始老師有用一些像文章、電影、歌曲啊，這類的東西反而會讓我覺得比較容易.....

其實我自己還滿喜歡這樣的方式上課，這樣的上課方式會比較融入，不會像說很呆板、很無趣。」 (SR-01)

“To me translation was a **very frightening and intimidating** subject; it was **really difficult** for me..... but Teacher used things like articles, movies and songs etc. this semester, I **feel easier**.... actually **I myself quite like this way of learning**, I feel **more involved, not rigid or boring.**” (SR-01)

Above is a quote from a student who spoke of the changes she noticed, and what she thought about the materials introduced and how she felt about the lessons. This quote represents an opinion commonly shared by the students who participated in this study. More examples of how they students experienced the process and how they thought about it are presented and grouped in this section under the following themes:

1. Activities in class
2. Materials and Contents of the lessons
3. Motivation
4. Examination results and Performance
5. About the Teacher

The above themes identified from the interviews were based on the close and repetitively identifications of the data. As the students were interviewed with the topics explained in 4.2.3.5.2.1., namely the examination scores, the motivation, the needs analysis questionnaire, the curriculum, the reflections, and other comments, students' feedbacks logically fell under similar themes. There were some combination or division of themes, however, as some particular themes unexpectedly showed themselves in the process. For example, the themes Activities in class and Material and contents of the lessons of the lessons were emerged from the interview topics- the Curriculum, the Reflection, and Other comments, however, in attempt to further

investigate in details the students' thoughts, the researcher decided that the massive amount of data collected was better to presented under two different themes. Another example is that the theme- About the teacher, with only one question concerning the teacher under the topic of Comment (See Table 4.2.) emerged unexpectedly with rich data that could not be ignored. It was hence logical that the feedbacks should be discussed closely under a theme.

Quotes or examples introduced in this section are from the interview transcripts, students' reflection logs, and the teacher's journals where the students' direct responses or remarks are recorded. It is possible that some quotes may be discussed more than once as they contain multiple themes. For instance, 'activities' might link to the theme 'about the teacher'. When such situation applies, these two themes will be comment upon separately under different headings.

The original sources of the quotes and the anonymous identification of interviewee(s), are indicated by ( ) brackets at the end of each original and translated quote. In order to fully understand the meanings, [ ] are used to supplement the topics or subjects mentioned or omitted by the speakers to make the quotes more comprehensible. The words or phrases in **bold** represent students' views or thoughts towards that particular element in the new curriculum, highlighted by the researcher in the analysis.

## **5.2.1. Themes emerged from students' perspectives**

### **5.2.1.1 Activities**

Based on the information gathered from the needs analysis questionnaire and the teacher's judgment, the following activities were either added or reintroduced with

different approaches into the new curriculum. For instance, Going to the board/Presenting work on board was chosen as a new activity that would, in the teacher's opinion, aid to students' learning. On the other hand, group work, in-class translation and take-home exercise remained in the curriculum for they have received positive comments from the students, but were reintroduced with increased quantity.

All the activities were included in the new curriculum based on students' suggestions and comments found in the responses of the open-ended questions in the needs analysis questionnaire. In this section we shall see therefore how students experiences these attempts to meet their needs and whether they thought this was successful.

#### *Going to the board or Presenting work on board*

Going to the board or Presenting work on board had not been done in the course previously. In the new curriculum students were encouraged to come to the board to translate a sentence in class, or to present their take-home exercise to the class. At times when there were not volunteers, the teacher would randomly choose some pieces of exercise from the previous week and discussed them with the students in class without revealing the names of the students who did the particular exercise. This type of activities was new to the students. Of all 38 students who sent in their reflective logs or were interviewed, 17 students commented on this particular feature and all of the remarks were positive. In a group interview, students said:

學生 1: 我覺得拿上去還不錯啊。

學生 2: 對，會說：『耶，這是我寫的。』

學生 3: 我覺得這樣很好啊。這樣會讓同學會緊張然後會聽。

學生 1: 所以我知道什麼地方應該改進一下。這樣印象會比較深刻。(SG-01)

Student 1: I think showing my work on the board is **quite good**.

Student 2: Yeah, I would say ‘Yah, I did this!’

Student 3: I think **it’s very good**, it **would make students nervous and they would listen** [to the lecture].

Student 1: So that **I know where I can improve**. This will **give [me] deeper impression**. (SG-01)

It is clear from these statements that students saw the value of coming to the board and doing presentations to be in the pressure that motivated them to pay attention and they realize that this will make them improve. They thus recognize the relationship between an activity which creates pressure and their own improvement.

One student supported the activity by suggesting that the teacher should ask students to present every week. He further elaborates on his thought:

「每個禮拜都要做個作業，這個作業就是你自己去找一篇新聞，然後翻譯出來，...下一次上課每個人都要上台報告，還要上台報告說這篇在講甚麼 ... 然後老師再做個講評」 (SI-09)

“**Every week [we] should do an assignment**, this assignment is that you have to find a news article by yourself and then translate it..... everyone has to present of news article the following week, need to tell the class what the article is about...then Teacher can comment [on our work]” (SI-09)

What is interesting is that the student suggests that this activity would also lead them to work more independently, having to find and translate newspaper articles by themselves - and that this should be evaluated by the teacher.

From the data collect, students show high interest in participating in the activity although some of them felt a little ‘nervous’ or ‘stressed’. 4 out of the 17 students (23.53%) said they would try even harder to show the teacher that they could do the

task when they felt a bit of ‘pressure’. In other words they associate pressure with learning; they have a belief that learning will be affected and will be more effective if they are put under a certain degree of pressure.

### *Group work*

In order to promote cooperation and interaction between students, group work was re-introduced with higher frequency in class to provide students with the opportunity of discussing work with their peer. The materials for group work were usually more time consuming, for instance, students would be asked to do tasks such as translating a news article or translating the dialogues in a movie clip. A number of 7 interviewees talked about how they felt towards the group work took place in class, 5 of them gave positive remarks:

「我覺得這樣子翻我們自己可以吸收到比較多東西，因為有分組的關係，有各自翻自己的那一部份.....然後課堂大家討論，看自己翻的就是跟同學想的有什麼不太一樣，這樣就會很有印象。」 (SR-02)

“I think by doing so **we could absorb more things**, because of the grouping, we translated our share of the task.....then we discussed together, [we] **could see what’s the difference between my work and those done by other classmates**, it would **leave us with very deep impressions.**” (SR-02)

It is shown here that students think they are able to learn more effectively by discussing work with their classmates in groups instead of doing the work alone.

They feel group work provides them with an opportunity to interact with their peers and see how others do the work. It is implied here that students think they can learn from their group members by exchanging their thoughts. The whole process leaves them with deeper impressions or clearer memories of what they discussed.

However, there were 2 comments about the downsides of working in groups, not because they dislike the activity itself, but because of other members in the groups. It seems that the major element which makes group work effective is the members in the group. One student commented on the negative experience she had when working with someone in her group:

學生: ……然後他就是，通常子句可以翻出來的話就是在前面，他就直接照著翻，唸起來超不順的啊，然後還不會自己加字，快被他氣死了……

老師: 真的喔

學生: 對，然後我就會一直刁！尤他，「難怪你的成績會這麼低」

(SI-11)

Student: .....then he was like, usually we translate the clause and place it at the beginning, but he translated directly, it **was super unreadable**, then he didn't know he should add words [into the sentence], **he drove me so mad that I could die...**

Teacher: Is that so.....

Student: Yes, and **then I would 'diang' [pick on] him**, "No wonder you [the other student] got such low scores"

(SI-11)

This student shows her frustration when she worked with a group member. She thinks she knew how to do the exercise correctly whereas a group member appeared to be clueless. She thinks this particular group member was not only under-achieving because he always got 'low scores', but also a reluctant learner since he was unwilling to participate in discussion. This reluctant or under-achieving group member inhibited her learning and so she does not like doing work in groups. It seems that from the students' view, those with lower achievement (in terms of scores) tend to show less interest in participating in group work.

The other student thought she would have done better by working alone because the team had divided the article they were required to translate into various parts. Each group member was in charge of translating only a certain part of the article, she didn't really have the opportunity to read the complete translated article before coming to class the following week:

學生: ...最好是個人作會比較好, 因為畢竟一整篇的話, 要看前面後面才知道, 整篇翻起來會不會好看

老師: 那你們之後聚在一起討論嗎??

學生: 就大概再看一遍, 但是我覺得是一個人翻的話, 會翻的比較好 (SI-14)

Student: .....**doing it alone is better**, because you have to read the whole article to know [the exact meaning], whether it is readable

Teacher: Do you discuss together afterwards [after each of you has done your part]?

Student: We sort of read it through again together, **but I think I would do**

**better if I did it by myself**

From her remarks we can see that some students do not feel comfortable about the type of learning the group decided on. For example, dividing an article into parts and each student translates a certain part of the article instead of translating the whole article together. Under some circumstances students in the same group may not agreed to certain group decisions or may feel disturbed to comply with those decisions. But since they are a group, they can only accept the majority's decisions on how a group task is conducted.

There is a student who talks about both the pros and cons of working in groups by saying:

「比較喜歡的是給組別下去翻 可是喜歡的部分是說就是可以看別人翻的跟自己翻的差在哪邊， 然後不喜歡的部分就是， 因為整組嘛， 一定有些同學比較懶...然後就大家變成說要去幫他翻這樣子， 就變成說大家要分攤， 就是會有這種情況， 然後我就很不喜歡， 對……就是會覺得很困擾」

(SI-17)

**“I like translating in groups, I like the part that you can see the differences between other people’s work and yours, the part I don’t like is, because we are a group, some classmates were lazy, ..... then everyone had to help him, this would happen, then I really don’t like it, yeah....very disturbing”** (SI-17)

From these remarks we can conclude that the students generally like group work because it was an opportunity to learn not only from the teacher, but also from other students through discussion. The major difficulty revealed here is that learning could be hindered by the other group members if they are ‘lazy’ or unwilling to participate in group work. Students’ opinions here suggest that group member has an important impact on their learning. When being in a group with members who are willing to participate in discussion, students feel benefited and positive. On the contrary, learning will be inhibited if most of the group members are unwilling or passive in discussion.

Students think discussions among group members are the key element for group work to be successful. As stated earlier in this section, group work remained an element in the new curriculum with increased quantity because students felt they wanted to continue doing such an activity in class. Although students did not reveal the reasons for wanting such an element in the curriculum at the time of completing the needs analysis questionnaire, the information gathered in the interviews shows that most

students regard group work as an activity in which they could explore their potential to do thinking independent of the teacher. This seems to correspond to their needs - what they are aware of with respect to factors which will help them learn. By responding to students' needs, group work produces appreciation and interest although their level of satisfaction might differ from group to group.

#### *In-class translation exercise*

In contrast to group work, the materials used for individual translation were usually shorter. Paragraphs from articles, English songs, sample sentences or idioms were the most commonly used materials. Again, in-class translation had been conducted before, but with materials from the textbooks only and with much less frequency before the new curriculum.

Of the 22 students being interviewed individually, 10 students expressed their positive views about in-class translation. It is interesting here to know that the more practice students were required to do the more they realized they need the practice. Students felt they needed in-class exercises in order to learn effectively at the time when they completed the questionnaire in February 2008 (see 4.2.2.1.4); this belief is now confirmed by their experience in the process and a greater need for in-class exercise is developed.

It is also noticeable that when students are required to do translation at the end of the lesson, usually they feel more confident doing it. They think they have learned something from the lesson so they can do translation 'smoothly'. But without sufficient practice in class, they will get 'stuck', in other words, they believe practicing is linked to effective learning:

學生: 我覺得**學生就是要常盯吧**, 對啊, 因為課堂上可能向老師就是那種下課前會練習嗎, 然後可能剛學完當下寫, 就會覺得好順, 就會覺得自己好像會, 可是下禮拜再來…… 就會…… 耶, 卡卡的, 沒有練習

老師: 就是要多練習?

學生: 對, **要多練習, 真的還是要課堂上多練習** (SI-05)

Student: I think **students should be watched constantly** [means that the teacher should always keep an eye on them], yah, because like the exercise we do before class dismiss, then like when you do exercise right after you just learned, you **feel very smooth, feel like I really know** [how to do the exercise], but when you come again next week...you will....hm, **got stuck, lack of practice**

Teacher: So we need more practice?

Student: Yes, [we] **need more practice, really need more practice in class**

(SI-05)

It is also not just a matter of practice but of the size of the task. Students tend to be less intimidated when they were encouraged to do translation individually in short paragraphs. They feel more at ease when given smaller loads of work.

「.....剛開始我想說一開始就要叫我們翻譯一大篇就這樣子, 那**還好只是都是先一小段一小段慢慢增加、慢慢增加我覺得很好**, 所以慢慢的自己讓自己覺得耶這句我會耶, 然後慢慢再多一點...耶, 我也會耶, **成就感還蠻高的**」

(SI-07)

“..... when we started I thought huh [you] wanted us to translate a big long article just like that, **luckily we began with a short paragraph, and another short paragraph, gradually increasing, I think it's very good**, so gradually I felt ‘yah, I can do this sentence’, then after we did more.... ‘yah, this one I can do too’, [I feel] a **great sense of accomplishment**” (SI-07)

By completing the tasks, gradually a sense of accomplishment which reinforces learning is developed. In the beginning of the course students feel anxious about the tasks but at the end of the course this sense of anxiety was replaced with ‘a great sense of ‘accomplishment’.

### *Take-home Exercise*

In addition to in-class translation exercise, take-home exercise was also included in the new curriculum on a more frequent basis although it has been conducted before.

你不是那個最後那個作業是查新聞那個報導嗎？

我翻出來的時候就喔，我真是太厲害了，我拿去給我媽炫耀 .... (SI-11)

Didn't you give us a news article for as our last homework? When I finished I was, oh, **I am so sharp, I showed it to my Mum and bragged** about it.....

(SI-11)

This interesting example from SI-11 implies that self-confidence has been built through the process. Students are proud of their capability of completing the task and they are satisfied with their achievement. They also seek recognition from others by telling people that they are good at their tasks. It suggests that compliments or recognition from families or friends can also motivate students in learning.

Students generally feel their performance is linked to take-home exercise. Of the ten remarks made, five give direct positive responses by saying that by doing more take-home exercises their performance can be improved because they really spend time on their work. Take Interview SI-16 for example:

就是像這學期做很多那個練習，就是回家作業，我覺得很有幫助

因為...就是你會想到說喔自己有個作業然後趕快把它完成，

然後在...因為老師都會檢討阿，所以就會在課堂上知道說喔好

就我寫過這個東西...然後...可能意思偏了或是...對...就會了.....課堂上檢討

是有幫助的.....因為有做過，有做過這樣的練習，你就會想知道說自己翻的

就是跟老師講的有什麼不太一樣 (SI-16)

Like we did a lot of practice, I mean take-home exercise, **I feel it's very helpful**

because, you would think oh, I have homework to do **then you wanted to finish**

**as soon as possible**, then...Teacher [you would] discuss in class, so I would

remember yah, I did this....then...maybe I misunderstood the meanings

or.....right...**then you got the idea.....discussing work in class is**

**helpful**....because you did it already, you practiced, so you **would want to**

**know what's not quite the same between your work and the Teacher's**

**answer** (SI-16)

Students tend to regard take-home exercise as an important task which they feel they have to do. This implies that they do consider it a serious activity of learning and it is clear why students were in favour of keeping take-home exercise as an element in the new curriculum is revealed here. They also look forward to comparing their work to the teacher's answer to see if they have done it properly. Here again in connection with what is usually seen as an individual task, discussions among students is highly appreciated in group work as a factor which aids learning as presented earlier, here students show as much appreciation to teacher's discussing students' work in class. In

other words students regard discussion among students and with the teacher is an important activity influences their learning.

The opinions students reveal here again echo to the findings of the needs analysis questionnaire in which students expressed their favour in having Take-home Exercise as an element of the curriculum.

### **Summary**

As explained in the beginning of this section, the activities discussed here are either added or reintroduced with different approaches/amount into the new curriculum upon students' request in the needs analysis questionnaire. Although students did not indicate why they liked/wanted these activities in the questionnaire, the information collected reveals their reasons.

The activities used in the curriculum can be categorized into two types, the ones conducted in class (such as Going to the board/Presenting work on board, Group work, In-class translation), and that took place at home (Take-home exercise). The former makes positive impacts on students' learning in terms of 'deepening students' impressions', and also helps to build up students' confidence in translation. Since these activities were done in class, students feel doing the activities while their memories are fresh is helpful and effective. The only down side is that some students may be 'lazy' to participate in group works, this may create extra work load for the other group members. Data also shows that students believe the teaching approach plays an important part in their learning. By using different approached in teaching, students were offered the opportunity of comparing and exposing to different learning experiences. Hence they are able to distinguish what factors or elements contribute to

their learning. As for Take-home exercise, students believe that a sense of responsibility and accomplishment emerged by doing such activity. This sense of satisfaction about themselves motivates them in wanting to learn more knowledge.

Apart from the above elements, another key point that keeps appearing in both types of activities is ‘discussion’. Students developed a theory that they have learned a lot through discussions, either led by the teacher or among peers.

It is concluded that not only do the students in general feel positively towards the activities in the new curriculum, through the process they now also believe what are the characteristics embedded in these activities help their learning.

#### **5.2.1.2 Contents of the lessons—materials or contents**

The following new materials were also chosen after students expressed their needs for these contents to be added into the curriculum. As we saw in Section 4.2.2.1, part of the questionnaire concerning new elements which students felt they needed/wanted was measured by Likert-scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) questions. In addition, open ended questions were designed at the end of the questionnaire to encourage students to express their suggestions and comments on the curriculum as a whole. The criteria for choosing appropriate materials are:

1. The elements from Part B of the questionnaire which were supported by the majority (over 50%) of the students.
2. The elements which were suggested by students in the open-ended questions which had to go through a poll in class and gain support by the majority of the class.

## *Movies*

20 out of the 38 (52.63%) students agreed or strongly agreed in the questionnaire that movies should be added into the curriculum as a teaching material. At the end of the course, all of the 13 students who commented on movies said they like learning through movies, no negative feedback was found. The comments are ‘not rigid’, ‘not boring’, ‘interesting’, ‘refreshing’, ‘special’, ‘good’, ‘pleasant’ and ‘attractive’:

像老師就有用一些比較就跟之前教學方式不一樣的，就像現在有新聞啊還有文章阿，還有像上個禮拜還有電影啊，所以這些是比較新的翻譯方法… 因為，老師在做過那些問卷之後，接觸到許多同學不同的反應，然後進而就更讓這課程多樣化覺得這樣會比較普及到其他全部的同學的那個需求，我覺得，而且因為用不同方式，所以我覺得對班上的學生來講的話是有幫助的  
(SI-03)

Like Teacher you **used something different from the teaching before**, like now we have news and articles, like we had movies last week, so these are **new translation ways** ... because, Teacher did the questionnaires, got different feedbacks from students, then you made **the lessons with more varieties**, [I] **feel this covered all other students’ needs**, I think, because [you] **used different ways**, so I think it’s beneficial to students in the class (SI-03)

The quote from SI-03 suggests that students realise something ‘different’ and ‘new’ was taking place in the class. They also understand the changes were aimed to ‘cover’ their needs. They come to a conclusion that their needs brought the changes of lesson contents; and these changes satisfies their learning needs and were ‘beneficial to students’:

「譬如說影片好了，其實是蠻有趣的，因為上學期好像還沒，就是還沒這麼多東西，所以等下次教學弟妹的時候，就可以開始就是有我們那些影片啊…」

(SI-14)

“Take movies for example, actually it’s quite interesting, because **last semester we didn’t seem to have**, I mean not so many things, so when you teach year three again, [you] can start lessons with the movies we had…….” (SI-14)

It is shown here that students realised that they were exposing to something that was very different from their previous experience. They notice certain new contents that were introduced into the curriculum and they can distinguish what and why it is different. By suggesting the teacher to use the same material for her class next year, it reveals the fact that not only do they think their needs were satisfied by adding movies into the new curriculum, they feel these new materials are beneficial to learning.

### *TV programs*

TV programs were also one of the majority needs which students portrayed in the needs analysis questionnaire. Over 50% of the students indicated that they wished to achieve knowledge in translating TV programs, therefore clips from TV programs such as ‘Friends’ were included in the new curriculum. During a group interview conversation, students talked about how they thought their needs have been met:

學生 1: 有啊，我有寫說就是希望比較生活化一點，然後就有加入‘六人行’的對話那些，是在期中考過後才開始改成那些，生活上就應該會有用。

學生 2: 我覺得還蠻有趣的耶。

學生 3: 是比較有趣啊，就比較實用。

老師：你覺得這個有沒有幫助，就把那些東西帶進來有幫助嗎？ ....對你的整體翻譯的方面。

學生 1&3：有啊，有幫助。 (SG-01)

Student 1: Sure, I wrote **about I wished we could be more daily-life** [means close to real life], then we had things like the dialogues from ‘Friends’, **the changes** after the midterm exam, **should be useful in daily life**

Student 2: I think it’s quite interesting

Student 3: Really more interesting, [it’s] **more practical**.

Teacher: Do you think it helped, I mean adding these element?...In terms of your translation skills?

Student 1&3: Yes, it did help. (SG-01)

No negative comments were given on using TV programmes as material in the curriculum while 8 students were impressed by such a new material in the curriculum. They commented positively by saying that their translation skills improved when the needs for TV programmes have been met. Students think the TV programmes is close to everyday life and the learning was a more ‘practical’ and ‘interesting’ learning experience.

In other words, they believe that learning is improved by materials which are close to their every day life, TV programs being one.

### *News articles*

21 out of 38 students (55.26%) expressed their thoughts about learning translation skills through news articles. The news articles used in the curriculum were from newspapers and news websites such as BBC, CNN and Yahoo. When asked about the

contents of the new curriculum, 16 students commented on how they thought about using news articles as translation material:

「就是期中之後就是比較偏向於新聞報導的然後比較生活化的東西那種就是...還不錯，就是畢竟就是知道發生在我們週遭而不是為了學習而學習，不是為了讀書而讀書，所以上課會比較想來，比較有趣呀...」 (SI-04)

“After the midterm [we] tend to have more news articles and then more daily life stuff...quite good, then we know [those things that] **happen in our real lives instead of learning for learning’s sake, or studying for studying’s sake**, so [I] **like to come to class more often, [it’s] more fun....**” (SI-04)

By using news articles, students think what they did in class was more than just rote learning. They see themselves learning something which can be used in their lives and in addition – as mentioned in the earlier themes of movies and TV- they also feel this type of learning is ‘more fun’. They think they are having fun while learning through news articles. This way of learning also reinforces their willingness to come to class for the motivation is more than just learning, but learning with fun. In other words, not only their need for news article is satisfied, students are also motivated by the content of the lessons:

我記得之前應該有寫像一些新聞，我覺得那個量可以再多一點，對，我覺得像...上一次不是在期末考之前有交一份那個作業啊...我有找到一個... 我找到 CNN 那個網站，我就有去看啊，我看到那個什麼洪水那種的，我是覺得就是有些字就還蠻有會幫助.... 就會覺得比較喜歡，然後表現比較好，就覺得自己有進步啊 (SI-13)

I remember [we] did some news articles, **I think [we] could have more**, yes, I think...like the assignment we did last time before the final exam.... **I did look it up and found it on CNN’s website**, and I read it, I read about the flood, I

think the vocabulary is helpful..... **I like [news articles] more, so I performed better, I feel I have improved** (SI-13)

This statement directly links improvement to motivation. Students are clearly motivated by the news articles so that they go on to the websites to look up more news related to what they have read in class. By providing students with what they want/need, an interest in the topics of the news articles they read in class is developed. They are curious and eager to know more about the stories, and hence they are willing to learn more vocabulary than they already have in class. Learning does not take place only at school, but continues outside of the classroom.

In short, it can be seen here that the students recognized in the questionnaires their need of such material and then, once they had experiences it, believe that everyday useful material improves their motivation and that motivation leads to improved learning.

### *Magazine articles*

Introducing magazine articles into the curriculum was also supported by the majority of the class in the questionnaire results. Considering the different interests students might have, the magazine articles were chosen from various topics such as sports, beauty, travelling, fashion, people, movies and pop culture. For each assignment, students were provided with three to five articles from different sources and they could decide on which article they wanted to translate. All 9 students commented on the element express their appreciations by saying it is ‘practical’, ‘helpful’, ‘interesting’ and ‘fun’, all phrases which are linked with their ideas about motivation:

老師: 因為有一些人認為說他想要看一些雜誌上面的東西，所以我們也有把它包括進來。同學們認為？

學生 1: 就翻完雜誌之後很想去那裡。馬德里，我還記得我翻馬德里。

學生 2: 我是波士頓。

老師: XX 是波士頓。妳咧？

學生 3: 雅典。就是我覺得蠻有趣的，比較符合現在的年輕人。

學生 1: 這還不錯，滿好玩的……印象深刻一點比較會學到東西。 (SG-02)

Teacher: Some people said they wanted magazine articles, so we included those in our lessons. What do you think about it?

Student 1: I really wanted to go there after [translating] the magazine [article].

Madrid, I remember I translated [an article about] Madrid.

Student 2: I did Boston.

Teacher: XX did Boston. How about you? [asking the third student]

Student 3: Athens. **I found it quite interesting, more suitable for the young generation.**

Student 1: That was quite good, quite fun....**when you have deeper impression you learn more stuff** (SG-02)

The fact that students still remember what they did in that particular lesson many months later indicates that the contents of the lesson made certain impact on their learning. Not only students indicate that they think learning is fun and interesting by using the new material, also they think the lesson was ‘suitable for the young generation’:

「……有幫助，當然會有啊，因為像報章雜誌的話我覺得報章雜誌都是時事的東西的話 那些常常會用到，很有用啊，只是我覺得那個量可能比較不夠多… 」 (SI-13)

“.... it did help, of course it did, **such as articles from news and magazines these current materials, we can apply often, [they are] very useful**, only that I think maybe the quantity was not enough...” (SI-13)

Students appreciate the articles used because they think these materials are ‘useful’.

It is clear here that students believe their interests and expectation for learning is fulfilled by the new element which made ‘deeper impression’, and this ‘deeper impression’ leads to the result of ‘more stuff being learned’. By using magazine articles as a material, students think their learning is enhanced.

### *English Songs*

「…就突然覺得一陣很美妙的歌曲在在播放我就突然醒過來…」

(SI-06)

... suddenly I heard a beautiful song playing then **suddenly I woke up**....

(SI-06)

English songs were included in the curriculum based on the suggestions made by 3 students at the end of the questionnaire. The teacher then consulted the students about their opinions in class, 34 students supported the idea of including English songs in the curriculum. No negative opinion was found. This element turned out to be one of the most successful materials used, many positive remarks were found in the interviews.

Wang (2008; 2014) suggests that students prefer life-related genres such as ‘songs’ as learning contents, however she did not give much information as to what reasons or how students respond to this element. Whereas in this study, ‘refreshing’ is the term 2 students used to describe how they feel when using English songs as a material. Again, the motivation terms such as ‘pleasant’, ‘fun’, ‘great’, ‘good’ and ‘devoting’ were the adjectives used by 7 other students to described their experience. The quotation above is an example that shows students’ attention was effectively focused by using such material.

SI-06 then talks about how students became interested and interacted with each other in class when they heard a song being played:

「因為我覺得那個歌很好聽... 然後後面也會跟著唱... 前面那個同學，她就轉過來問我，你知不知道那個字叫什麼？ 然後我就跟她講... 我就在那邊唱，也是就小聲的在那邊唱... 然後她就又有問我...對...」 (SI-06)

**I think the song was pleasant** ....then I sang along....**the classmate** in front of me, she **turned and asked**, do you know what that word? [a word in the lyrics] **then I told her**.....I was singing along, softly with the song...**then she asked me** [another word] **again**....right..... (SI-06)

From this quote we can see how students become focused on what is taking place in class; they automatically pay attention to the lesson when they are drawn to what they feel they want/need in learning. Besides focusing on the lesson, they are motivated to learn more about the contents. They spontaneously initiate discussions with their peers. The interactions among students naturally take place:

「另外一個就是用歌詞... 從來不會想說雖然英文簡簡單單的幾個字，而翻出來的卻是這麼的不一樣，當自己翻的再看看高手翻的真的是很不一樣，而且自己看著那歌詞會突然就說出，為什麼可以這麼的有感覺、為什麼自己在翻的時候沒有想到，會有好多個為什麼出現在自己的腦中，我覺得這樣也是可以學到一些東西...」 (SR-01)

Another thing is the lyrics of the songs..... I never thought just a few simple English words, could seem **so different** (by using different translation approaches), I looked at my own translation and looked at those done by the professionals, they were **so different**, and when I looked at the lyrics suddenly I realized, they were **full of feelings**, why haven't I thought about it when I did the

translation, there were **so many whys appeared** in my mind, I think **I also learned things** from this... (SR-01)

This quote is part of a student's reflective log. It portrays here that besides seeing learning is fun or interesting, students do reflect on themselves about what they have been taught and how they were inspired to tackle translation using different approaches. By asking themselves questions, they develop deeper thinking about the contents of the lesson and the desire to improve learning is promoted.

The evidence here proves that using English songs as a genre of translation material are highly appreciated by the students. Learners enjoy learning at a high degree therefore they become highly motivated and focused in class. Students believe this is what helps them to learn better.

### *Idioms and slang*

Idioms and slang were suggested for inclusion in textbooks by Wang (2008), in this study they were taught as a unit on handouts instead of textbooks. Over 42% of the students agreed that understanding English idioms is one of the skills they wished to achieve by taking the course in Part B Question 4.1. 6 other students suggested that slang should be included in the new curriculum, after a poll both elements were introduced as a unit in the curriculum. After the course, 5 positive remarks are found in the interviews about including idioms and slangs into the contents. Students who were in favour of idioms and slangs think they are beneficial to their translation knowledge:

「還有成語這部份其實就是，**就是可以多運用啦，就是放進去**…你又在翻東西，你放進去，雖然說就是，**感覺上很多東西，就會覺得，耶，你好像真的很有學問一樣**」 (SI-10)

And the part about idioms actually, [you] **can use it more, [by] putting [idioms] into** [the translation text].... when you do translation, you put [idioms] in, although **it seems a lot of work**, but [you] feel, yah, **seems you are really intellectual** (SI-10)

This comment indicates that satisfaction is gained by working hard to accommodate idioms/slang into their translation. Learning idioms/slang leads to performance achievement that makes them feel ‘intellectual’:

「…一開始以為它很難很恐怖，對呀，但是我覺得至少老師就是上課很認真… 成語啊，就是這樣一步一步慢慢下來累積的話就會變成自己的東西了… 」 (SI-16)

At the beginning I thought it was **very difficult very horrifying**, right, but at least I think Teacher was very enthusiastic in class... idioms, gradually **step by step accumulated and became mine** [my own knowledge], right... (SI-16)

Here students express their anxiety about learning idioms at the beginning of the course. However, it is the ‘step by step’, or consistent approach to idioms and slangs that eases students’ tension and at the same time helps their learning. It is through such an approach students feel that they have acquired knowledge of idioms and slangs. In other words, it is indicated here that students believe that not only the contents, but also the teaching approach used by the teacher have improved their learning. Whether idioms and slang were taught from textbooks did not matter as long as they were included in the curriculum.

Moreover, data shows that students think there is a link between the accumulation of knowledge and teacher’s enthusiasm; this belief will be discussed in details in 5.2.1.3. and 5.2.1.5.

### *Textbooks*

Although Wang (2008) indicates that the using of textbooks is preferred by English-Chinese Translation learners, in another study Wang (2014) shows that over 60% of the learners think a textbook is not needed. Since the results from the questionnaire show that students in general dislike using textbooks in class; this feature was eliminated from the new curriculum in order to accommodate students' needs. Sections of the Textbook were still included in the curriculum based on the Teacher's own judgements which will be discussed in the next chapter. Instead of using the 'book' form, sections from the textbook were modified by the Teacher to produce handouts for the students. Of the 14 students who talk about how they think of the change in the interviews, 13 expressed their approval by saying that textbooks are too rigid.

老師: 你認為是我們這個課程變動之後，你有比較喜歡嗎?還是比較不喜歡?

學生: 有...有比較喜歡，就可能比較**多樣化**，不是就課本，因為課本可能看...感覺有些用語我們平常不會...就沒看過，就看不太懂.....就因為課本太死，你就會不想看，**想看一些生活上啊最近發生什麼事**，就剛好學那個單字，就印象很深刻，讓你記起來

(SI-14)

Teacher: After the changes in the curriculum, do you like it more? Or like it less?

Student: Yes....I like it more, maybe [because we have] **more varieties**, not just textbooks, because maybe when you read the textbook.... [I feel] some of the phrases we don't use generally....not seen before, so don't get it.... the textbook is **too dead** [rigid], so you don't want to read it, [you] want to **read about things happened recently**, then you happened to learn the vocabulary [about recent events], it impresses you deeply, then you remember it

(SI-14)

Students regard textbooks as a rigid material because textbooks are not up-to-date with recent events that interest students. On the contrary, they show greater interest in learning the new materials that concern every day life and they find it easier to memorise new vocabulary if it concerns recent events. This is to say that learning vocabulary depends on their interest in the topic and is made easier – recent topics create interests, and these interests facilitate learning.

Despite 14 positive feedbacks, 1 student talks about how he thinks textbooks should still be included in the curriculum by saying:

「內容上面的話我覺得課本的還是要啊，我是覺得喔，需要再增加，就是上課的速度可以再快一點，對，然後就是東西啊，可以丟多一點出來沒有關係」

(SI-13)

Regarding the contents **I think textbooks are still necessary**, I think, need to **speed up the lessons** a bit, yes, then things, [you] can give us more no problem

(SI-13)

Clearly this particular student is highly motivated, not only does he think a textbook was necessary, he also suggests that the teacher should speed up the lessons and add more contents into the curriculum.

Whereas most of the students embrace the change of eliminating textbooks from the curriculum, one interviewee still expresses his preference in using textbooks. From the opposite remarks we can see that when adapting to the majority's needs, the minority's needs inevitably would be neglected. Since there is no 'perfect' curriculum for all students in the same class, one has to compromise while bearing the majority's needs in mind. It is worth mentioning here that although students supported the

elimination of the textbook in the curriculum, the Teacher did use sections adapted from the textbook as handouts in class. This will be further explained in the Chapter Six where Teachers' perspectives are discussed.

Instead of textbooks which focus mainly on (in students' opinions) 'rigid' or 'dead' theories with out-dated examples, from students' remarks we can see that they prefer materials that contain 'recent' events. By 'recent', students mean 'the things happened recently'. A conclusion drawn from these feedbacks is that textbooks, which are not 'rigid' or 'dead', are appealing to the students. They think using textbooks as a material is applicable or 'necessary', provided these textbooks are updated with the latest information.

To sum up, students think that better learning outcome is related to using recent events that concern their everyday life. They dislike using textbooks in class mainly because most of the textbooks are unable to provide up-dated or most recent information since they are not revised or printed on the monthly or yearly basis.

### **Summary on curriculum innovation**

Most of the new materials or contents of the lessons introduced in the new curriculum involved updated information such as current movies, TV programmes, news articles as well as popular topics in focus. These changes were 'interesting' and 'useful' to the students and they regarded these updated information as stimuli which reinforced their interests in learning.

23 out of 38 students (60.53%) responded positively on changes regarding materials/contents by saying that they believe their knowledge in the course was

improved by these changes made. Many of them commented positively on more than one certain aspect or change made. This ratio shows that students in general recognised these changes and supported them because they felt they have benefitted by the new curriculum. Many think they were motivated by these new aspects in the curriculum. The comments on motivation will be discussed further separately in the next section.

From what was observed in this section, students indicate that they like the 'interesting', 'updated' and 'useful' materials as well as the 'new' teaching approaches. They are expressing their 'likes' which represent their 'wants'. In correspond to the previous section, students believe their learning is improved by learning through these practical everyday materials/contents which they felt they wanted/needed. In other words, students feel their 'likes' or 'needs' in the course have been fulfilled in a certain degree by the changes in curriculum and these changes lead to their improvements in the course.

### **5.2.1.3 Motivation/being motivated**

Following Materials and Contents of the Lessons, another major category that students mostly commented on is Motivation. The interviewees were invited to comment on whether there was any change in their willingness to participate in the lessons. 16 students talked about how their learning was motivated by the new curriculum. The following factors are those identified by the students:

1. Teacher as a motivator
2. No-stress learning
3. Desire to 'understand deeper'
4. The interesting changes were what they needed

## 5. Systematic and helpful learning

### *'The Teacher uses her heart' –teacher as a motivator*

Although there was a set of questions concerning motivation discussed in Chapter 4 (Table 4.2), those open-ended questions were not deliberately designed to prompt the students to comment on the teacher. It is worth noticing that of the 26 students who commented on The Teacher as a motivator, 19 of them specifically pointed out that the teacher herself was crucial to their decision of participating in lessons.

「老師你的課算是我去過最多次的一堂…因為上課方式吧，…比較會…一些…用比較有趣的文章或者是有趣的那種電影其實…因為我蠻喜歡這一方面的，就是覺得蠻有趣的，比較符合現在的年輕人…因為以前那些東西也不是說不喜歡，可是只有大概全班同學大概充其量應該只有三分之一的人去喜歡，…比如第一堂課可以做些什麼特別的事情去吸引學生…那他可能下一次就會來，那他就覺得還是不錯的話，他可能就會來會來，然後就…就會專心的去聽，然後就會來」 (SI-06)

Teacher I attended your lessons the most often.... **because of [your] teaching ways [you] use... more interesting articles or interesting movies** actually... because I kinda **like** these things, [they are] **more interesting**, more suitable for the young people.... Not that [we] don't like the stuff before [the new curriculum], but maybe only one third of the class like them,... if [you] do something special in the first lesson to attract students ...then he would come the next time, then **if he still feels quite good, he would come and come**, then...[students] **would pay attention**, then [they would] keep coming (SI-06)

It is shown here that students are clearly motivated by the teaching approach and the contents of the lessons because the students came to class more often, in comparison to all the other courses they took. Students also expressed in their feedbacks that they liked the new contents which were more 'suitable' and 'entertaining' to the young generation. It indicates here that students 'liked' or felt 'good' about the lessons, and through these 'interesting' lessons learning can, and will be motivated. It is to say that when students' needs/likes for 'interesting' contents or teaching approaches were fulfilled, their willingness in participation was enhanced and gradually they became more focused and motivated.

As Student SI-06 stated, the students didn't think that they disliked the old curriculum. But it was after they experienced the new curriculum that they felt they liked the latter better. Another observation here is that as much as students did not have negative feelings about the previous contents and teaching approaches, it was after experiencing and comparing both curricula that students began to realise what materials and teaching approaches they were in favour. This corresponds with some comments found in the needs analysis questionnaire in which some students said they did not know what they wanted/needed/liked at the beginning of the course.

In the following comment which focused on the Teacher particularly, a student demonstrates what they appreciate or like about the Teacher,

學生: 老師其實我覺得你教的滿好的耶!

老師: 真的喔, 謝謝

學生: 就是, 脾氣好.....我不會講耶....老師我說所謂教的滿好是..... 你上一個老師的課你就是會感受到那老師用不用心, 如果那個老師用心你就會想來上課。如果那個老師不用心你就會覺得說你上課...這是互相的...所以就是說

學生的態度也會影響到老師上課的那個動力.....所以就是我覺得一個老師有教學熱誠是很重要，你如果沒有那個熱誠，你根本....你就算再會讀書學問再好，你也沒有辦法教的好 (SI-22)

Student: Actually I think you teach very well Teacher

Teacher: Really, thanks

Student: It's... [you have] good temper...I don't know how to say....what I meant by teaching very well is... when you attend a teacher's class you would feel whether the teacher **teaches with his heart**, if the teacher uses his heart you would want to come to class. If the teacher didn't use his heart you would feel attending classes...**it's mutual...so students' attitudes also influence the teacher's inputs**....so I think it is important for a teacher to have **enthusiasm in teaching**, if you don't have it, you actually..... even if you are well educated or knowledgeable, you can't teach well (SI-22)

Another student who was taking the course for the second time compares his experiences of being taught by different teachers and indicates that the teacher is the reason that determines his degree of participation in class:

學生: 我喜歡老師的方式...因為我之前上的...修的前一個老師，他教學的方式就是其實我不是很喜歡，所以也是我就是大學以來第一個感到很反感的一個老師...應該說他的教法...感覺很制式...很不喜歡那樣 (in the next 5 minutes he talked about his previous unpleasant experience) .....因為有時候去上課就是...可能會這樣就是...會看老師啊... (SI-06)

Student: **I like your style**...because the teacher ...in my previous year, I don't like his teaching style, so he was the first teacher that I dislike since college...his teaching ways...were very formatted...[I] **disliked it a lot**...(in the next 5

minutes he talked about his previous unpleasant experience) ...**because**

**sometimes going to class [or not]...may be...depends on the teacher** (SI-06)

From these claims we can see that motivation is enhanced by the teacher's inputs to a great extent. They recognised the teacher's enthusiasm and they returned her efforts with the same enthusiasm by attending her classes. Students think a mutual understanding or appreciation can influence their learning. When efforts are made from both sides, each party is motivated by the other and learning becomes dynamic and effective. They also think that enthusiasm is more important than knowledge for a 'good' teacher. In their opinions teachers are unable to teach well without having enthusiasm. From these observations, it is indicated here that the contents of the lessons, teaching approaches and the teacher's efforts are the key reinforcements for students' motivation. It is also revealed here that students have certain beliefs about the competences needed for teaching. Students think enthusiasm is the key to competent teaching ability. These beliefs will be discussed further in a later section in this chapter.

*'No-stress'*

21 students express their views on their learning process. 14 of them use the word 'like' to describe their learning experience. The rest of 6 student do not use the exact word 'like', but they express similar opinions by describing the lessons as 'active', 'vivid', 'no-stress', 'not boring', 'relaxing' and so on:

學生 1: 就是很輕鬆的上課方式。

學生 2: 很輕鬆, 感覺啦。

學生 3: 就是很輕鬆的上課方式。不像跟有些老師比較不能溝通...

學生 1: 不像 xx ..., 我覺得可以溝通。 (SG-02)

Student 1: It's a **very relaxing** way of learning

Student 2: **Very relaxing**, I think

Student 3: It's a **very relaxing** way of learning. Unlike some teachers who can't communicate...

Student 1: Unlike xxx [a teacher's name]... **I think [we] can communicate**  
(SG-02)

Here students make a comparison with their previous learning experience and talk about the differences. By giving positive remarks students express their preference of the new learning.

Below is another typical comment that students make about the process:

「我覺得這個課還滿...滿活潑的 然後很生動我不會覺得很無聊」 (SI-15)

“I think the course is quite...**quite lively, very vivid**, I don't feel boring at all”

(SI-15)

Students believe that the state of tension is linked to the effectiveness of learning. When they feel no stress in the learning process, they learn 'better'. However, as much as the students say they prefer 'no-stress' type of learning atmosphere in the classroom, this particular belief tends to contradict with the voices concerning the sections on Going to the Board in 5.2.1.1.1 and Textbooks in 5.2.1.1.2. whereas students think appropriate amount of stress or pressure could actually aid to their learning.

*The desire to “understand deeper” helps in strengthen their weakness/lacks in learning*

Data shows that students feel some weakness or lacks as needs have been met through the learning process. In the interviews 22 students used 'interesting', 'fun' and 'good' to describe their learning experience. This is similar to what we noted in 5.2.1.2 in

which students articulated their opinions towards the new contents of the lessons. By looking at some of the responses mentioned by the interviewees in the earlier sections of this chapter, it is without doubts that the ‘interesting’ or ‘fun’ parts of the lessons also formulated the motivation of coming to class. There are remarks that revealed how the motivation helped to fill up the elements they felt they lacked in the needs analysis questionnaire.

For instance, 27 students (71.05%) expressed that they felt a weakness in ‘Understanding Information Texts’ in Question 11 in the needs analysis questionnaire. Below is an example of someone uses interesting and good to describe his experience and further elaborates on how motivation helps in his learning something he thought he lacked:

「其實我覺得老師講很多翻譯的一些例子，那這些例子會讓我們感覺翻譯很有趣，就是很多很多句子都和我們想的完全不一樣，會讓我們提起那個興趣想要了解說翻譯的內涵…去真正了解裡面的資訊內容，可以學到東西…」

(SI-12)

Actually I think Teacher discussed a lot of translation examples, these examples made us feel interesting, many many sentences were different from what we thought, **[it] interested us so we wanted to understand the inner meanings of translation.... to really understand the information carried inside**, [we] can learn things...

(SI-12)

Students state that a stronger interest of learning is developed once they have better/deeper understanding of the lessons. In that case they were motivated by the contents of the lessons, and hence they desired to learn more. This desire resulted in fulfilling their needs/lacks. We can see that students’ motivation is again reinforced

when they feel their needs/lacks are met. This stronger motivation leads to further successful learning, the more they learn/understand- the more they want to learn.

*The Interesting Changes satisfied their needs*

Another common finding is that many students acknowledged the changes in curriculum. Of those 33 students being interviewed, 26 commented on the changes and all feedback was positive. Not only did they find these changes interesting, they also came to lessons more willingly. Below are two typical remarks made by the interviewees:

老師： 後來你會比較想來還是不想來？

學生： ....有趣當然會比較想來， 就覺得這門課沒有什麼好翹的啊 (SI-17)

Teacher: Afterwards (after the changes in curriculum), did you want to come to [class] more or less?

Student: **[It was] interesting so of course [I] wanted to come more often**, there was no reason for me to skip the lessons

(SI-17)

老師： ....妳覺得變動完之後的課程妳有比較喜歡嗎或是不喜歡嗎？

學生： 有啊， 比較喜歡， 就是比較有趣。

老師： 那比較想來上課嗎或是比較不想來上課嗎？

學生： 對啊， 我們都會想來啊 (SI-18)

Teacher: ....did you like the curriculum better or less after the changes?

Student: Yes, **I liked it better, [it was] more interesting.**

Teacher: So did you want to come to class more or less?

Student: Yeah, we all wanted to come (SI-18)

In the needs analysis questionnaire over 55% of students suggested that they felt they would like to have more training on translating articles from newspapers/magazines,

thus this element were reintroduced in the new curriculum. The following example shows that current events in newspapers and magazines were highly appreciated by the students.

老師：…就是同學們寫的那個問卷，根據同學們的需求來做內容… 你覺得對你有幫助嗎？… 你的需求有達到嗎？

學生：有，當然會[有幫助]啊，因為像報章雜誌的話我覺得報章雜誌都是時事的東西…那些常常會用到，很有用啊… (SI-13)

Teacher: ... the questionnaire you did, and [I] designed the curriculum according to your needs... you think it was helpful? .... Have your needs been met?

Student: **Yes, and of course [it did help]**, take articles from news and magazines these current materials for example, we can apply often, very useful... (SI-13)

From these examples we can see that students' level of satisfaction was enhanced and they felt like coming to class more often. Students believe that they liked the lessons better because of the interesting changes in curriculum had satisfied their needs. We can then see that a clear link between fulfilling their needs and motivation is explicitly identified here.

*Through Systematic and helpful learning students recognized that they have learned what they lacked*

Following the findings above, 19 students further elaborate on the curriculum changes and say the learning was very helpful or beneficial, whereas the other 7 think it was helpful or beneficial to a certain extent. Comments are made specifically on the fact that they recognized that they have learned what they thought they lacked in the beginning of the semester.

「...就像就是，比較有一個系統性的學習，對，就是老師可能也會根據我們考出來的成績或者是我們翻譯比較缺乏的東西給我們一些練習，那是最基本最...怎麼講，最實際去接觸的啦」 (SI-17)

”...it was, a more systematic learning, yes, Teacher gave us some exercises to do **according to our performance and our lacks in translation**, it was the most fundamental most how can I say... [so] we had first-hand experience (SI-17)

「我比較喜歡，說真的，比較喜歡，是真的有在學東西，而不是上課就是只是看課本..... 我們現在的學生可能比較缺乏什麼，就先教那些.... 對，我覺得這樣比較好」 (SI-17)

“I like it more, honestly, [I] like it more, [we] really were learning things, not just reading textbooks... **what the students lacked, [you] taught us first...** yes, I think it's better this way” (SI-17)

By making these remarks apparently students are aware that the elements they felt they ‘lacked’ (for example, Question 11 on the Questionnaire) were introduced into the new curriculum. In their view the ‘lacks’ turned out to be what they now realised as what they ‘needed’ in order to make their learning successful, and these lacks as needs were filled by the changes in the new curriculum.

The examples not only indicate that students believe that the learning which took place in the classroom had made positive impacts on their learning; they further relate their successful learning to the fact that their lacks/needs were accommodated by the new curriculum. In other words they are expressing their recognition of lacks which they now realise are their ‘needs’. This realisation/satisfaction motivated them to pursuit deeper understanding and they were willing to further devote themselves in

learning. The more they think this particular way of learning accommodates their needs, the more they are willing to learn.

### **Summary of issues of motivation**

The above discussions indicate that students are in favour of the new curriculum due to the fact that they believe their learning motivation was affected positively by the different experience. They acknowledged that they were motivated by the following factors:

1. The teacher was enthusiastic, the students recognised the efforts she made in teaching and were motivated.
2. There were substantial bilateral communications taken place in the classroom, the students felt relaxed or 'no-stress'
3. The learning was 'fun' and 'interesting' so they spontaneously developed the desire for deeper understanding which made them wanting to learn more
4. The new materials used were practical and helpful; they were also related to students' daily life. Not only the changes in contents were interesting to the students, they believe their needs were satisfied.
5. The students think the learning was systematic in the way that it accommodated their needs. This type of learning was what they thought they lacked.

Besides the positive feedback, there are also other remarks concerning motivation. For instance, one specific student said his coming to class or not would depend on his 'mood' and the weather on that particular day. 3 other students said that they would attend the classes with or without the changes in the new curriculum; these students are clearly motivated by themselves no matter what type of learning they experience.

It is worth noticing that the students' perspectives of their needs before the new course shifted during, and after the course. How students recognized their needs in these different stages will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

#### 5.2.1.4 Examination Results and Performance

In the interview, students were also invited to share their opinions regarding two examinations- the midterm examination and the final examination - as well as their overall performance in the course. In contrast to Wang's (2007; 2008; 2014) claims that students prefer 'in-class group translation tasks', 'take-home translation exercises' and 'tests of language knowledge' as assessment tools, students in this study show no objections to examinations.

##### *Midterm examination and scores*

Only 6 out of 38 students commented on the midterm examination. 5 of them thought they did not do well enough. When being encouraged to talk about the reasons why they thought they got lower or higher scores than in the final examination, 2 students admitted that they did not study for the midterm examination while saying they knew they could have done better if they have attended the lessons given most of the questions in the midterm examination had been discussed before in class.

「成績喔，OK 啊，可以接受因為…嗯…怎麼說…沒有… 沒有去看啊 …就是因為沒有去… 是有印象可是沒有再復習過，然後就是靠它的印象…大部分在課堂上都有講過」 (SI-06)

Scores... Ok ah, it's acceptable because...erm...how can I say... [I] didn't... didn't study...**because I didn't [go to classes]... I have the impression [that we have done them in class] but [I] didn't review**, so [I] relied on the

impression [to do the midterm exam]...most of them were discussed in class  
before (SI-06)

Another student also delivered similar remarks after saying that he didn't do well in the midterm exam:

老師: 你覺得...那你期中考為什麼考的比較不好呢?

學生: 期中...可能就是...前面是什麼我忘記了, (老師: 長句翻譯)長句翻譯.....那可能就是...那...那種就比較...好啦, 期中考我之前我沒有讀 ...我在想說要怎麼講比較...就是基本上題目如果之前上課都有來的話應該可以啦

(SI-15)

Teacher: ...so...why do you think you didn't do well in the midterm?

Student: Midterm... maybe could be...**I forgot what questions we had [for the midterm]**, (Teacher: Long sentences translation.) long sentences translation...then maybe...those...then...those were more....**ok, I didn't study for midterm examination...** I was thinking how to put it in a more.... basically [I think] **I would have done alright with the questions [in the exam] if [I] had attended all the lectures** (SI-15)

Students reveal here that their lower scores in the midterm examination resulted from lack of studying or reviewing. They recognize the fact that most of the questions which appeared in the midterm exam were discussed in the lectures prior to the examination and if they had attended the lessons they would have been able to answer the questions in the exam paper.

The reason for their absence from the lessons or reluctance in studying for the midterm examination is unclear here because none of them elaborates their feedbacks despite the interviewer's efforts in inviting them to comment further, except for some

remarks such as ‘I overslept’, ‘I had to go to work’, ‘I can’t remember’ and ‘I don’t recall why’. These remarks were not directly linked to their thoughts about the course. However, by analysing and comparing their feedback about the final examination presented below, we might be able to distinguish the changes in students’ behaviours and beliefs.

### *Final examination and scores*

In contrast to the midterm examination, 16 out of the 22 students who commented on the final examination stated that they were extremely satisfied with their scores by saying that they felt ‘contented’, ‘great’, ‘happy’, ‘accomplished’ and ‘superb’.

老師: ....對這一門課的成績啦 ...你覺得你滿意嗎? 不管是期中考還是說期末考等等?

學生: 有啊, 比上次有進步... 我覺得學習的成果有反映在成績上 (SI-11)

Teacher: .... about your [final exam] score in this course, you think you are satisfied? In terms of midterm and final etc.?

Student: Yap, **more improvements than last time...I think the score reflects learning outcomes** (SI-11)

The above is one of the examples which show that students think their learning outcomes correspond to the scores they got for final exam.

老師: 講一下你的分數滿意嗎?

學生: 超滿意的啊 (笑聲) 因為以前都沒有考及格耶, 那個誰教的時候.... 上課覺得比較有趣當然會比較想來, 就覺得這門課沒有什麼好翹的啊, 所以大概有一些印象, 寫起來比較快一點.... (SI-02)

Teacher: Let’s talk about your [final exam] score, are you satisfied?

Student: **Super satisfied** [laughs] I’ve never passed before, when that what’s his name taught us [this student was taking the course for the second time]... **the**

**lessons were more interesting of course I wanted to come more often**, feeling no reason for me to skip classes, **so I had some impressions** [of what we learned], so I did faster this time.... (SI-02)

Corresponding to the previous discussions in 5.2.1.1.2 and 5.2.1.1.3, students believe that the reason for their improvement was that they were motivated by the ‘interesting’ lessons which made them attend classes more often. The new curriculum accommodated their needs/likes. By coming to class more often, they developed ‘impressions’ of what they have learnt from the lessons and these impressions then help them to perform better in the final examination. The following example demonstrates this belief:

老師: 那對於這次考試你有沒有什麼感想? 就是有沒有簡單還是比較難啊?

學生: 難是還不會啦, 就是有點多吧...就是感覺就是雖然很多, 但是都是喜歡的東西....上的東西很有興趣就有印象啊... (SI-18-)

Teacher: So what do you think of this exam? Do you think it’s easier or more difficult?

Student: Not difficult, but a bit too much... [I] feel there were many [questions], but **they were all stuff that I like.... what we learnt in class was interesting so we had impressions...** (SI-18)

3 students said they were satisfied to a certain degree whereas 2 said the scores were acceptable, close to their expectations. Most felt they didn’t put enough efforts into studying due to personal reasons and they realize that the reason for not being able to get a higher score lies in the fact that they didn’t study hard enough:

「對於成績來講是覺得說喔...這樣應該是跟期望差不多.... 對啊, 還想要更好, 不是我的意思是說可以更好但是自己沒有用功啦, 不是說老師給太低什麼, 不是...」 (SI-22)

As for the scores I feel...**it's close to what I expected**...right, [I] **hoped for better score**, no I mean I **could have done better but I didn't study hard**, not that Teacher gave me too low or something, no.... (SI-22)

It is interesting here that students are aware of the fact that if they had studied harder they could have performed better. They realize that there was still room for improvements, as much as they 'hoped' for better scores, somehow they still didn't or couldn't put more efforts into studying.

Apart from personal reasons, students generally were satisfied with the progress they made. The students had certain explanations about their learning; they theorised that attending lessons is an independent variable which is linked to the dependent variable of success. First of all, they believe that they have learned more knowledge by attending classes which contains new, interesting elements which accommodates their likes/needs. Secondly they attribute their learning outcomes to the new, interesting contents of the lessons. They believe they perform better because their needs were met by the changes in the new curriculum. In other words, by changing the curriculum according to students' needs, their performance was enhanced.

#### *Improvements /Accomplishments*

In addition to students' comments on the final exam, 23 students mentioned improvements or accomplishments in the interviews; they felt positively towards the new curriculum. 15 students think they have made tremendous improvements after

using the new curriculum, whereas 3 say they noticed some improvements. Students think they perform better when the contents of the lessons are more to their liking.

A direct link is found in the following comment:

學生: 我覺得修我們這一門課比較有進步呢!

老師: 對哪些方面?

學生: 就是這個啊, 新聞類的...你就會覺得比較喜歡內容, 然後表現比較好, 所以你就覺得自己有進步。 (SI-02)

Student: I think **I made better improvement taking this course.**

Teacher: In what aspects?

Student: ... such as the news articles.... **you liked the contents better, so you performed better, you feel you've made improvements.**

(SI-02)

Students also tend to focus on what's going on in class when they think the curriculum is 'more interesting':

老師: 像哪些方面幫助比較大?

學生: 就是比較有趣你就真的會去做嘛, 就上課就是聽老師講, 對呀, .... 而且你給我們的作業沒有到很多, 沒有到讓我們壓力很大, 所以還...如果每一堂都這樣的話那一個學期下來還滿多收穫的 (SI-15)

Teacher: .....In which ways did it help a lot?

Student: Because **you actually practised when it's more interesting, listening to the teacher in class**, yes... and you didn't give us too much workload, didn't give us lots of pressure, so it was.... We kept doing it every lesson so **after a semester it was quite fruitful** (SI-15)

From these examples we can see that students express their favour in the new curriculum which accommodates their needs. Also we can see that a cause-effect

relation between the new changes and a better performance is developed. Students show their recognition of what has contributed to their successful learning in these remarks. In their views, their improvements resulted from the new curriculum which contains elements such as doing the activities, participating in the discussions, practicing translation, and the stress-free atmosphere.

Although 5 other students did not use the exact word 'improve' to describe their learning, they indicated that they felt 'accomplished' in the later stage of the course.

「就可能會的單字可能比較多，啊還有那個...可能比較快，容易了解這樣...就是感覺就是雖然很多，但是寫完就覺得，哇!很有成就感耶」

(SI-14)

Maybe I may have known more vocabulary by now, and that..... might be faster, easier to understand...[you] feel it's quite a lot of work, but **when finished you feel...wow! so accomplished**

(SI-14)

Other students believe that their competence has improved by using explicit examples telling how their needs have been fulfilled:

「有有有... 翻譯需要的有些技巧也有學到啊...在日常生活中會應用啊...去書店就想要看一下英文的東西我也不怕啦，全部都英文的那種...就是全部都英文書的那種也敢翻」

(SI-04)

“Yes yes yes.... [we] **learned some translation skills we needed....** [and things we can] apply to every day life...when going to the bookstore I am not afraid of reading English stuff anymore... stuff that are all in English.... even if they are all in English I also dare to translate”

(SI-04)

It is interesting to see how their perspectives towards learning shifted. By saying that they have learnt what they needed and are now capable of doing something they were

‘afraid’ of or uncomfortable doing before the implementation of the new curriculum, it is obvious that they think they have improved their learning by using the curriculum they need/like/lack.

The above examples prove that not only are students aware of their needs/wants/lacks have been fulfilled in the process, they also understand how and why their learning is gradually improved in the process. They feel confident and accomplished by the end of the course.

### **Summary of issues from examinations**

By looking at the performances of the pre- and post- tests (the midterm and final examinations) and listening to the students’ opinions, we can clearly see how students’ perspectives towards the two curricula changed.

For the midterm exam, only 1 student said that she did well while most students had nothing or little to say about the midterm examination other than that they didn’t perform well. The reason was that they barely remembered what was taught in class and/or they didn’t study hard enough. Having said that, they did recognize the fact that they could have done better if they had had studied harder.

For the final exam, on the other hand, 19 students said they performed better. Mostly due to the fact that they found the questions were relatively easier to answer because similar examples were discussed in class prior to the final exam. Elements such as news articles and video clips were ‘interesting’, ‘stuff they liked’ or ‘what they needed’, and so students paid more attention in class. They are more focused and motivated when learning things they want/like.

Apart from their examination performances, a significant discovery is that students also recognized that the things they learned have brought changes into their daily lives. From the facts that they can understand and translate English faster, and that they are now more confident in reading English articles, students in general are very satisfied with their improvements. They noticed that after the course some skills and knowledge in translation are enhanced. This realization surfaces only after the course is completed. It is not until then that they realized they have learned something they needed/lacked.

#### **5.2.1.5 About the Teacher**

As noted in Section 5.2.1.3 the students believe that The Teacher is a motivator to their learning and they commented a lot on the topic in the interview. As pointed out in Chapter Four, we have to be aware here of the possible effects of the teacher-student relationship when collecting data as a researcher.

In addition to the example given in 5.2.1.1.3 where students think they are motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm in teaching, they also use the followings to describe the Teacher and/or her teaching approaches: nice, dedicated, gentle, vivid, kind, relaxing, interactive, fun, different, likeable... etc. These opinions are inducted in two categories: Personality and Teaching Approaches.

#### *Personality*

When being prompted to comment on the course in general, 26 out of 38 students expressed their opinions of the Teacher's personality. The majority of the students (22 out of 26) think they are motivated by the Teacher. 1 student holds a neutral opinion,

while 3 students think the Teacher was 'too nice'. The positive remarks received are like the following:

學生: ...那我當然會推薦說，這個老師很有教學熱誠，對，就是很負責，然後上課很輕鬆，但是是可以學習東西。對啊，我感覺是這樣 (SI-09)

Student: ...then I would recommend that, this teacher **really has enthusiasm in teaching, yes, very responsible, then [it's] relaxing in classroom, but [you] can learn things too**. Right, I think it is like that (SI-09)

學生: ....就覺得...就是可以讓我們加分(有回答問題)，我們講話(回答問題)又幫我們...一個互動我是覺得這就還不錯，就是大家比較會專心....又可以加深在課堂上的東西，比較有互動 (SI-10)

Student: ...[I] think... [you] give us extra points (when they answer questions in class), **when we speak you help us too...the interaction I think is quite good, all of us would be more focused...and we can have deeper impressions of what [we learn] in class**, [we had] more interaction (SI-10)

A student who didn't show up in class often for her personal reasons describes how she feels guilty when she thinks she didn't put enough efforts in the course:

學生: ... 就是我覺得蠻對不起你的耶，因為剛開始就是三年級下學期剛開學的時候我不是很常沒有出現嗎? ...所以就沒辦法啊，可是我真的覺得我對不起你耶，因為老師就是上課很認真我又沒來上課...對啊，然後就是...我喜歡你啊 (SI-11)

Student:...just that I feel sorry, because at the beginning of the semester I didn't show up often right?.....so I couldn't (come to class), **but I feel really sorry because Teacher was so dedicated in teaching, but I didn't show up for classes....right, then I... I do like you** (SI-11)

Another comment further indicates how the students noticed and appreciate the Teacher's hard work, and in return they also made efforts:

學生: ....我覺得老師為了我們花了那麼多精神和時間，對啊....設計新的課程，內容... 又聽我們的意見，用我們....就是喜歡的東西加進來..... 老師好辛苦耶，所以我有用功喔，哈哈 (SI-20)

Student:... I think Teacher spent so much time and efforts for us, yes....  
**designing new curriculum, and the contents.... based on our opinions**, use our....added things we like...Teacher worked so hard, so I did work hard too, haha (SI-10)

As pointed out in Chapter Four, we have to be aware here of one of the problems in all experimental work – the Hawthorne effect – which is perhaps particularly prominent in Action Research. The students are aware that they are in some new ‘experimental’ or ‘innovative’ teaching and learning situation and make an extra effort which may not be sustained when the experimental becomes the ordinary.

Bearing the Hawthorne effect in mind, however, from the above comments it is concluded that the Teacher's personality traits have made impacts on students' motivation. Students are more focused in class when they like the Teacher's personality; their appreciation for the Teacher's efforts leads to motivation in learning.

Although it is clear that the Teacher's personality traits are highly appreciated by the majority (84.62%) of the students, student SI-04 expresses his neutral opinion while still showing appreciation by saying that the Teacher is ‘so nice’:

老師: ...英文翻譯是怎麼樣的一門課?...你有沒有心得跟分享建議還是怎麼樣?

學生: 就...**都不錯啊** (笑)

老師: 都不錯是什麼意思?

學生: 就**老師那麼好**

老師: 蛤? 好是指哪方面? 是不嚴呢還是怎麼樣?

學生: (哈哈) **就是嚴跟不嚴之間吧**, 置中 (SI-04)

Teacher: ...How would you describe the course 'English Translation'? ...do you have anything to share or something?

Student: Just ...**not bad ah** (laugh)

Teacher: What do you mean by not bad?

Student: That **Teacher is so nice**

Teacher: Huh? Nice in what way? You mean not being strict or what?

Student: (Hahaha) **Between strict and not strict bah**, in between (SI-04)

The remaining 3 students also think the Teacher is 'nice' or 'gentle', however they do not think this character has strong positive impacts on their learning:

學生: 因為翻譯老師給我們的感覺是很溫和的感覺...會有一點鬆懈 (SI-05)

Student: Because Translation **Teacher gives us a feeling of gentleness... [the students] would be too relaxed** (SI-05)

老師: 那對老師的教學方式或是教學內容有沒有什麼感想或是建議?

學生: 內容很好, 可是老師你太溫和了

老師: 真的, 要兇一點嗎?

學生: 你不覺得學生很不怕嗎? (SI-15)

Teacher: Do you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding Teacher's teaching approach or contents?

Student: **The contents are good, but Teacher you are too gentle.**

Teacher: Really, [I need to be] meaner?

Student: Don't you think they are not afraid [of you]? (SI-15)

These three students think they might become too relaxing in learning if the Teacher is too 'nice' or 'gentle'. Having said that, another interesting example connects the relaxing/gentle characteristics to effective learning by saying:

學生: …老師教的方式也不會讓我們覺得壓力很大

老師: 喔~我正要問說我的教學方式這件事情，你認為我的教學方式有沒有什麼你想要建議的，或是有什麼感想等等?

學生: 感想喔...應該是這樣子同學們會比較喜歡...溫和比較喜歡.....如果你真的在講，講一些東西我還是會停下來聽啊... (SI-15)

Student: ... Teacher's style **was not too stressful**

Teacher: Oh, I was going to ask you about my style, so you think there's anything you want to suggest, or any thoughts?

Student: Thoughts...**this way students like it better...like gentleness**

**better**...if you were really lecturing, I would stop and listen to you.... (SI-15)

### **Summary of Teacher factors**

Although some remarks from the questionnaire already indicate that the Teacher was popular among the students, in the interviews students show even greater appreciation on what the Teacher has done to accommodate their needs in order to improve their learning. Students' feedback suggests that they are motivated by the fact that the Teacher was concerned about what they needed, and her willingness to devote herself in designing a new curriculum based on their needs. In other words, the reorganization that the Teacher has taken their needs into consideration in developing the lessons is found among the students.

In corresponding to Sections 5.1.1.2 and 5.2.1.3 in which students talk about their positive and negative views about stress or pressure, contradicting views about ‘relaxing’ are also found here. From the discussions above we can see that although the vast majority is in favour to the Teacher’s personality, 3 students still hold different opinions on one of the Teacher’s personality traits—‘being too nice’. With that being the only characteristic that may raise controversial opinions, we can conclude that the Teacher’s personality traits, especially her consideration on their needs are valued positively by the vast majority.

Although students might not realize what they really needed/wanted at the beginning of the process, they believe that their learning is reinforced by the Teacher’s understanding of their needs and the efforts she put into accommodating these needs.

In the next chapter, the Teacher’s beliefs about how she arrived at the conclusion of what the students needed/wanted based on the questionnaire and other indicators will be discussed.

### *Teaching Approaches*

In terms of teaching approaches, students describe how and why they think their learning benefitted from some changes in the teaching approaches through out the process. For instance, idioms as a new element, may seem difficult or intimidating at first, but by using a different approach the lesson contents may not seem as ‘horrifying’ as they thought.

The following example shows about how student' impressions toward idioms at first changed by the end of the course because of the different teaching approach used:

「... 就是老師有分很多部分啊..然後或是一些什麼...成語啊,就是這樣一步一步慢慢下來累積的話就會變成自己的東西了,對...我喜歡這樣...」

(SI-16)

“... Teacher divided them up...like...idioms, gradually **step by step accumulated and became mine** [my own knowledge], right...I like it this way...” (SI-16)

It is worth noticing that students also realise that in order to enhance their learning the Teacher used different teaching approaches to deal with different contents. For instance, echoing the 'step by step' approach mentioned above, an interesting feedback indicates that the Teacher's 'from-short-to-long' approach in teaching long sentence translation appeals to the students:

「...我覺得喔,就是老師都還蠻善良的,因為就是會先用短句讓我們去翻,因為長句可能你東西就是還沒有了解到那麼多,然後你一下子要接出這麼多的文章,然後會有點手忙腳亂...」 (SI-17)

“...I feel that, Teacher was always kind, because **at first would give us shorter sentences to translate**, because if translate long sentences you haven't had enough understanding [of the skills], if you were asked to translate an long article right away, then you would be clumsy...” (SI-17)

By giving the above remarks, SI-17 shows the fact that she realised the Teacher has taken into consideration their needs and hence used a different approach in that particular lesson. In addition to these explicit examples, students also comment positively on the teaching approaches the Teacher applied in general:

「…那一方面老師剛開始上課的時候大家都蠻有興趣…再加上老師上課的方式其實是有一點讓我們自發性主導的，然後調整…那這都很好…」

(SI-12)

“…… also we were all very interested when Teacher started the lessons… and Teacher’s **teaching ways actually initiated us to think independently, then [Teacher] adjusts [her ways of teaching]…these were all very good…**”

(SI-12)

Student SI-12 elaborates on the belief that the teaching approach was to his liking and was ‘very good’ because the Teacher adjusted her teaching approaches according to the situations.

### **Summary on teaching approaches**

Although students do not reveal much about their thoughts on the Teacher’s previous teaching approaches, by commenting on the changes they observed in the process they show their agreement on the teaching approached used in the new curriculum.

Students in general recognized how and why the new teaching approaches were introduced. Students notice several approaches were used to help their learning in different elements of the curriculum. Not only the approaches applied are to their liking, students also report these new teaching approaches are beneficial to their learning.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

The research question, as discussed in the Introduction of this chapter is to investigate:

Whether the students believe that there is a casual relationship between the satisfaction of their needs and their improved performance.

This has been addressed by considering three aspects of their beliefs:

1. Are students' 'needs' (as an umbrella term) satisfied through their learning process?
2. Does their learning become more effective? Is their performance better?
3. How do students perceive their learning experience? Do they think it's successful?

In general we have shown that students do in fact believe that the changes in the curriculum, in the teaching approaches, and in their motivation had an effect on their learning and their examination performance. In this sense there is a clear relationship between the experience of the students and their interpretation of it and the analysis of the examination results in section 5.1.

In conclusion to this chapter it is interesting to ask a further question about needs, one which is also linked with the question of the Hawthorne effect mentioned in Chapter Four: Is there any shift of students' needs occurred throughout the process?

Discussions in this chapter suggest that students' opinions on their needs before and after the course have not changed in general; the vast majority agrees that their needs are satisfied. Not only their final exam scores as well as in-class and take-home exercises indicate their performance is improved, also students believe their learning becomes more effective. Comments from the interviews indicate that they have gained deeper and clearer understanding on the cause-effect relations of what they experienced/learned and their learning outcomes.

Being involve in the research, for instance, filling out the needs analysis questionnaire or participating in the interviews makes them reflect on their learning from different

angles. As a consequence of involvement in the research, the students become more conscious of their learning styles and they gradually developed the ability to distinguish their lacks to come up with a learning style that accommodate their needs..

The 'pedagogical' nature of this research brings impacts on all participants, not only the students, but also the Teacher as researcher. How the Teacher perceives the changes will be investigated in the next chapter, followed by a comparison with students' perspectives to show whether the Teacher shares same beliefs with students.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The Teacher's Perspectives**

#### **6.0. Introduction**

The research question in focus in this chapter is:

‘Will students learn effectively or perform better if their “wants” and “needs” are satisfied?’ and the purpose of this chapter is to examine the experience and views of the teacher about this question.

Several needs were discovered from the previous needs analysis questionnaire, acting on these feedbacks, activities and materials were introduced into the new curriculum. As discussed in 5.2.1.1., all activities added were based on students' preferences shown in Part C of the needs analysis questionnaire, except for Going to the board/Presenting work on board, which was based on the teacher's experience and judgement. Also, all new materials added was based either on the data collected from Part B of the needs analysis questionnaire, where they were supported by the majority (over 50%) of the students; or from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, where they were supported by the majority (over 50%) of the students through a poll in class as described in 5.2.1.2.

Focusing on the Teacher's perspective, this chapter analyses the materials collected by the Teacher to investigate from the researcher's perspective if the research question is answered from the Teacher's point of view. These materials include one attendance record, 19 teacher's journals, and students' exercises.

This chapter consists of five main sections. 6.1 illustrates the Teacher's concepts and beliefs in teaching. 6.2 investigates the themes which emerged from the Teacher's data on the lesson planning stage, including the Teacher's preliminary perceptions and concerns over meeting the needs and wants of the students with the expectation that it would lead to more effective learning and therefore better performance. 6.3 discusses themes which emerged from the Teacher's data in the teaching stage that reflect effects apparent to the Teacher (i.e. not the measured effect from the quantitative data nor the effect as reported from the students' perspective). Focusing on the changes beyond classroom learning and teaching, 6.4 discusses impacts observed by the Teacher that influenced students' and the Teacher's behaviour and beliefs. Finally, 6.5 summaries and concludes this chapter.

There are 19 Teacher's journals, 9 from the preparation stage, 9 from the teaching stage and the last journal is a reflection on the process. Each journal is marked with the month/day on which they were commenced. Please note that the original journals were jogged down informally on a notebook at different slots of time thus sentences and paragraphs are not usually compliant with grammar rules. Some phrases and statements contained both Mandarin and English-- a translation of Mandarin is provided. When quoting in Mandarin, the sources of the quotes are indicated by ( ) brackets at the end of each original and translated text. In order to fully understand the meanings, [ ] are used to supplement the omitted terms to enhance the readability of the quotes. The words or phrases in **bold** were highlighted to stress the meanings or thoughts.

## **6.1 Understanding the Teacher's Perspectives**

Unlike the students' perspectives which mainly focused on their thoughts and reflections about the process, the Teacher's own experience was documented in her journals as early as the preparation stage of the research. By following the journals we can see what concerns her in each different stage and how she perceived the process.

It is not the researcher's intention to discuss approaches in conceptions of teaching (such as Dall'Alba, 1991; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996) and learning (such as Marton et al., 1993), however, this privileged researcher (i.e. the researcher is also the teacher) knows that it is the Teacher's belief that the nature and purpose of education is to deliver knowledge and at the same time help students to see things from different perspectives, rather than learning by rote.

In terms of learning, the Teacher was influenced by the concepts of Anderson & Krathwohl (eds. 2001) on promoting creative and productive learning. Also she agrees with Watkins' (2002: 4) views concerning effective learning outcomes, in which he describes and measures outcomes in the following aspects: 1. knowledge - of things, people, action 2. skills - with things, ideas, people 3. action 4. feelings and emotions such as success, satisfaction 5. ideas and strategies about learning 6. affiliation to learning 7. a sense of oneself, including self as a learner 8. a sense of others and interacting with them 9. a sense of membership of a community. It was upon these criteria the students' learning outcomes were measured.

## **6.2 Themes Which Emerged From Teacher's Perspectives: The Preparation**

6.0. has explained as on what criteria elements were selected to be included in the new curriculum. Therefore, instead of discussing the selecting methodology, this

section will focus on how the Teacher perceived the process from one stage to another by looking at her journals.

Although the Teacher was glad to know students' thoughts about the contents of teaching, the selecting process for suitable elements to include in the new curriculum was not without self-questioning and doubts.

### **6.2.1 Teacher's preliminary perceptions on understanding students' needs and wants**

#### *Students' affirmation encouraged the Teacher*

When analyzing the needs analysis questionnaire, it was surprising and comforting for the Teacher to know that the students thought some elements from her old curriculum were what they needed, or liked, as they said in the questionnaire. She was open to students' suggestions on what they thought they needed; also she intended to refer to these suggestions as much as possible when designing the curriculum because these needs were the core of the research:

…問卷發現同學肯定了某些教學內容，滿開心的… 還好有作 questionnaire，  
可以知道同學的反應… (TJ 02/20)

... through the questionnaire [I] find that **certain teaching elements are supported by the students, [I] am quite happy**...good thing that I did the questionnaire, so that I know students' reactions.... (TJ 02/20)

#### *Students' needs were on the practical side*

From the needs analysis the Teacher noticed that students tend to be interested in learning things that are 'practical' or related to their daily life:

…同學想要學的東西好像很多，大多是實用方面的，像是平常生活會用到的… (TJ 02/27)

... there seems to be a lot of things students want to include in the curriculum, [they] **tend to be on the practical side**, like things [they] **can use in daily life**.... (TJ 02/27)

The Teacher noticed students were more interested in learning knowledge which relates to their daily life and the society. She reflected on these views and felt it was logical to construct the curriculum taking into account the students' opinions.

*Students hoped to see changes in curriculum*

The Teacher realised that the students set high hopes on the Teacher for teaching them what they needed in the new curriculum. They were interested and motivated by the fact that their voices were being heard and they were the centre of the research:

…今天下課後 J 來跟我說：「老師，妳這樣很棒耶！那妳會教我們想學的嗎？」其他經過的幾個學生也上來問。我說：「會盡量啊。」大家都很有興趣，還問我那問卷分析完了沒，對這個研究很關心的樣子… (TJ 03/05)

.... J came to me after the class was dismissed and said, 'Teacher, you have been great doing this! **Will you teach us what we want to learn?**' Other few students also came forward. I said, 'I will do my best.' **They were interested**, and [they] asked me if I have finished the questionnaire analysis, [they] **seem care a lot about it**... (TJ 03/05)

From the students' reactions and curiosity the Teacher felt their concerns and interests for the research. The students anticipated that the Teacher would teach what they wanted to learn.

*The Teacher was encouraged to create better changes in learning*

While working with the students, the Teacher felt a greater responsibility in designing an ideal curriculum to satisfy the students' needs as much as possible:

…我要盡力依照學生的需求來設計教案，不能讓他們失望，但該教的基本功夫也要帶進來，…要讓學生真的藉由這樣提升學習意願學到東西，可以更進步… (TJ 04/02)

... I want to do my best designing the curriculum upon students' needs, **can't let them down**, but [I will] also introduce basic knowledge [on translation].... [I] want students **really learn things through enhancing their willingness in learning, [so that they] will improve...** (TJ 04/02)

The students' trust reinforced the Teacher's determination in developing a curriculum that accommodates students' needs. She felt that not only the students participated in the research; many were devoted and looking forward to see changes. It was a drive for the Teacher to continue the research and strive for an appropriate learning structure for the students. Her sense of commitment is clear from the phrase 'I can't let them down'.

### **6.2.2 The Teacher's concerns**

At the initial preparation stage, the Teacher was overwhelmed by students' feedback. She found herself encountering difficulties in responding to all the needs requested by the students. There are two issues that the Teacher was especially concerned about in the process of developing the curriculum.

*The Teacher's concern over adapting needs into curriculum*

It was not easy for the Teacher to select what to include in the new curriculum when designing the new curriculum. She found it difficult to accommodate all the elements students required in a 10-week teaching period:

… 很高興看到同學有這麼多回響，可見他們真的很認真，但是同時提出這麼多需求要在短時間裡擠進去[教案]太多了… (TJ 03/12)

… I am so happy to see so many feedbacks from students, meaning they are really into [this research], but at the same time the needs and wants that students mentioned [in the questionnaire] may **be too many to squeeze [into the curriculum] in such a short period**.... (TJ 03/12)

The more she came to understand the students' needs, the more she realised that a responsible teacher should take into account students' opinions in curriculum developing and revise her lesson plans from time to time:

…要符合每個同學的需求真的滿難的，只能從多數人的意向來著手…感覺老師的判斷決定一切，確實應該要知道學生要甚麼，不能只想要省事，自顧教自己想教的，數年不換教材… (TJ 03/19)

… **really difficult to fit every student's needs**, [I] can only comply with the majority's wishes... [I] feel decisions are made by Teacher's judgments, should know what the students want, [teachers] shouldn't teach whatever they want to teach and never made adjustments in their curricula for years.... (TJ 03/19)

The sense of there being too much to 'squeeze' is evident in both the above two extracts.

*The Teacher's concern over enhancing learning effectiveness*

As the Teacher tried her best to accommodate as many needs as possible into the new curriculum, she realized that she was too optimistic about allocating all the needs in a period of 10 weeks:

… 這麼多想學的東西要怎麼分配時間真的很傷腦筋, 只有十週… 一個主題只有一兩週的時間, 這樣會 **effective** 嗎? (TJ 03/05)

... **how to allocate so many things into time slots is really giving me headache**, only 10 weeks [of teaching]... each topic could only spend one or two weeks, **will this be effective?** (TJ 03/05)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Teacher selected specific needs to include in the new curriculum according to the criteria, one being the majority's opinions. Although the Teacher selected only the needs that were requested by the majority, nonetheless, the number of needs included in the curriculum was still quite many. The Teacher was constantly concerned about the quality of effective learning.

The same thought appeared again in the Teacher's journal when the curriculum was almost completed:

… 我真的很擔心每個主題的比例, … 我想只能走一步算一步, 看狀況來調整[教學內容], 只希望學生學習會有收穫… (TJ 04/02)

... I am really **worried about the proportion of each element**... I guess I will have to see how it goes, and adjust [the lesson contents] according to the situation, just **hope students can learn things**... (TJ 04/02)

By looking at these thoughts we can see that the Teacher was anxious about whether students would benefit from the new curriculum. She wanted students to learn what they wanted as much as possible but at the same time was afraid that the effectiveness of learning would be sacrificed as there was not enough time for her to teach so many

elements. Later the Teacher's concerns became reality in the teaching and inevitable deviation from lesson plans occurred. The deviation problem will be addressed in the next section.

### **Summary**

In the curriculum preparation stage, the Teacher felt the students were motivated by the fact of participating in a research project that meant to help their learning. The students' devotion and expectation also motivated the Teacher in developing an appropriate curriculum that anticipates effective learning.

The Teacher was glad to see students responded to the needs analysis questionnaire enthusiastically so that it was clear for the Teacher to adapt new elements into the new curriculum. But at the same time she was overwhelmed by all the needs prompted by the questionnaire. She was afraid that adapting so many elements in a short period of 10 weeks would hinder students' learning. The Teacher had ideas of what to teach due to the clear and detailed needs analysis results; however, she was very stressed and concerned over how to teach these contents, and how to fit these contents into the new curriculum while trying to raise effectiveness in learning.

### **6.3 Themes Which Emerged From the Teacher's Perspectives: The Teaching**

In addition to the discussions on the preparation stage in 6.1., this section focuses on the changes that the Teacher's observed in the teaching process.

#### **6.3.1 Changes in attendance rate**

It was the Teacher's habit to keep an attendance record throughout the course for her own reference. After a few weeks with the new curriculum, the Teacher's stated in her notes that:

… 學生比以前較會來上課了，可能喜歡內容的變動… (TJ 5/14)

.... the students come to class more often now than before, **maybe (they) like the changes in contents....** (TJ 5/14)

Based on her observations in class, the Teacher relates students' attendance to the changes in curriculum. She thinks students came to class more often because they were interested in the lesson contents. In the following week, the Teacher stated in her journal:

…今天點名，發現來上課的人真的有比較多，[我]隨口問了一句：「你們最近比較少翹課喔，這麼給我面子啊？」聽到幾個學生回答：「上課滿好玩的啊」「是還滿想來的」 (TJ 5/21)

.... I took roll-call today, noticed that **more students come to class now**, [I] casually asked, 'You guys tend to skip less classes lately, giving me so much face?' Heard a couple of students replied, 'Classes are quite **fun**' '[I] kinda **like to come**' (TJ 5/21)

The above extract confirms the Teacher's earlier observation that not only did the students come to class more often, the students 'liked' to come because the changes in contents were '*fun*'. At this point, they did not refer explicitly to the question of 'needs' but to the atmosphere more generally, which may have been due to other factors too.

The changes in attendance were so obvious to the Teacher that in her final log on 6/18, she checked and documented the increase on the number of students who came to

class on the attendance sheet: the number of students who came to class before the new curriculum ranged from 24 – 30, however the number went up to 28-35 after the new curriculum was implemented.

This specific observation echoes with that of the students' in the previous chapter - Chapter 5.2.1.3 It is concluded that both students and the Teacher acknowledged that the change of teaching contents enhanced students' willingness in coming to class. In addition to this observation, the particular contents that contribute to the changes will be discussed in detail later, along with students' reactions and feedbacks.

### 6.3.2 Improvements in exercises

The improvements in students' exercise were also noticed by the Teacher as she stated in her journals that:

「…今天同學們練習做的不錯，有幾個人注意到這是上學期做過的。XX說：『這次做起來比上次簡單耶！…也做的比較快…』」 (TJ 04/30)

...students **performed quite well when doing exercise** today, a couple of them realized that it was an exercise from last semester. XX said, '... **this time [it] is easier to do now then last time**.... also it was faster to finish ...' (TJ 4/30)

Below is another observation in the following week:

今天發作業給學生時，一個應該是記得這是上學期做過作業的學生對她旁邊的說：「好像有印象有討論過…我分數有比上次高喔，哈哈…」學生也覺得作業有進步，跟我想的一樣… (TJ 5/07)

...When handing exercise back to the students today, one student who apparently remembered that it was the same exercise from last semester said (to her classmate sitting) next to her, 'seems we have discussed in class.... And I got higher marks than last time, haha...' **Students also think there is**

**an improvement in [doing] exercise, [it] corresponds with my view....**

(TJ 5/07)

The theme on take-home exercise is already discussed in Chapter 5.2.1.1, where students think conducting activities through discussions helps them to learn. The above two examples from Teacher's journals express again that students were happy about their improvements in the exercise performance, and that the Teacher notices this. Also echoing the findings in Chapter 5, the students think that the practice/discussion in class was helpful to their doing exercise on their own. However, whether students' perspectives here are linked to their needs being satisfied is not clear from these statements since here the focus is on the level of achievement.

Having said that, from the Teacher's views it seems the improvements in exercise were the results of students' focusing on what's going on in class:

... 最近作業改起來比較輕鬆, 同學們大多做的比較順...好像是對討論的東西比較有興趣所以上課比較認真...有聽進去的樣子 (TJ 5/14)

... It was easier to grade homework, students are doing more smoothly... **seems [they] were more interested in what we discussed [in class] and more focused...** like they did take in [class contents].... (TJ 5/14)

Based on the above statement, clearly the Teacher believes that the materials introduced in class were more to students' liking, they were more interested and focused in class and so they did better in doing exercises.

### **6.3.3 Reflections on new teaching approaches**

The Teacher's ideas of applying new teaching approaches were partially elicited by the group discussions and the open-ended questions from the needs analysis instrument which took place at the beginning of the semester; in which the students

expressed their opinions on their likes and dislikes on some of the Teacher's approaches. Besides keeping those the students were in favour of, the Teacher also initiated other approaches in introducing new lesson contents. She constantly adjusted her teaching based upon her classroom observation and students' reactions throughout the process.

*Students were more focused in class*

In addition to the previous section where the Teacher concludes that students' improvement in exercise was due to the changes made on lesson contents which made students more interested and focused in class, the followings are the examples of exactly which elements contributes to the improvements. First of all, the Teacher noticed the students' enthusiasm in discussions, even in intermission:

是分組討論的關係嗎? 同學們滿專注的, 一整堂大家討論的很熱烈, 幾乎沒人打瞌睡, 連休息時間都還有很多人繼續討論... (TJ 5/21)

Is it because it's **group work**? Students were quite focused, **they were so into discussing** throughout the class, almost no one dozed off, lots of them kept discussing even during the break time... (TJ 5/21)

From the Teacher's previous experience, many students would take a nap or go out of the classroom to relax a bit during the break time. But on May 21st she noticed that the discussions were still ongoing among the students even in intermission. She believes that the reason for the change was because more group-work was introduced in the new curriculum. This finding echoes that of Dai's as discussed in 3.4.1.1. where she points out that students learn things from each other and also benefit from the discussions take place.

The following is another example that shows students are more focused when participating in Going to the board/Presenting work on board (see 5.2.1.1.):

… 還滿多人自願上去[把自己的答案寫下來大家討論]，很高興看到同學不會不好意思[讓其他人評論自己的作品]，**我想我用的方式不錯**，先稱讚… 評論時也很客觀委婉… (TJ 04/30)

... many volunteered to go to the board [to present their answers for discussion], I was surprised to see they didn't feel embarrassed [to let others comment on their work], **I think the approach I use is good**, [I] compliment on something first, ... [I am] objective and polite when commenting [on their work]... (TJ 04/30)

Apart from that, the students were also attentive in many contexts (such as translating news articles in groups) even though translation was a more traditional exercise they knew from previous course. They appeared to be focused, attentive and initiative; those are signs of effective learning to the Teacher:

… 要同學分組翻譯新聞報導時他們還滿認真的，討論時也很投入，有幾個人和同組的意見分歧時還主動來詢問我的看法… (TJ 05/07)

... students were quite attentive when I ask them to translate the news article in groups, **the students were focused and quite into discussions** that many of them **took initiation and came to ask my opinions** when they had disagreements with their peers.... (TJ 05/07)

### *Students were having fun in learning*

Informal conversations between students and the Teacher occurred spontaneously every week. Thoughts and opinions were exchanged through these occasions. Quite

often the Teacher heard students used ‘fun’ and ‘interesting’ to describe their experience of leaning the course.

In 6.2.1. where the change in attendance rate was discussed, the second quote shows that students wanted to come to class because they thought it was ‘fun’. Another activity documented by the Teacher supports the observation:

… 今天做電視節目，我讓大家選要自己做還是要跟同學合作，大家都選第二種… 一開始我以為是想偷一下懶，不過下課前大多數都做好交出來了… 感覺大家心情不錯，一起討論字幕時還有說有笑… (TJ 5/14)

… today we did TV programs, I gave students choices of doing the exercise on their own or discuss with your peers, they all voted for the latter ... at first I thought [they just] wanted to slack a bit, but most of them finished and turned in their work before the class dismisses.... **seems they were in good mood, they were talking and laughing when going over the subtitles...** (TJ 5/14)

And when the semester was approaching the end, the Teacher surprisingly received statements from the students in the other translation class:

今天 L 進教室後走過來對我說：「老師，另一班的同學說他們很羨慕我們喔。」

老師：「是喔？為什麼？」

L：「他們覺得他們班老師也應該這樣。」

老師：「意思是？」

L：「…有很多互動然後我們常常笑的很大聲…好像很好玩啊…他們很羨慕…」 (TJ 5/28)

L came to me as he walked into the classroom today, ”Teacher, my friends from the other class said they envy us.”

Teacher: “Really? Why?”

L: “Yes, they think their teacher should [teach] like you [do].”

Teacher: “Meaning?”

L: “... [there are] lots of interactions and **we often laugh loudly ... looks like we are having fun in class...**they envy us...” (TJ 5/28)

This incident suggests that not only the Teacher’s own students, but also outsiders, in this case the students from another class, believe that students are having fun in learning. After hearing such comments, the Teacher wrote down her thoughts on the same journal:

… 聽到這個我還滿開心的，應該是學生的一些需求有顧到，而且也用他們喜歡的方式，**感覺學生很滿意**，也許要繼續用這樣的方法[教學]… (TJ 5/28)

... I kinda feel good after hearing this, maybe [I have] **covered some students’ needs**, and with the ways they like, **seems students are satisfied**, maybe I should carry on with the same teaching [approach]... (TJ 5/28)

The Teacher thinks that the students are ‘satisfied’ and she takes the description of the class as ‘fun’ and as having laughter to be an indicator that she has successfully in a certain degree accommodated students’ needs/likes as seen in the extract below:

… **氣氛很輕鬆自在**… 同學在這樣的學習環境**很開心**，我也跟著開心…[他們]**學得較好較快**… [和同學]有更多合作…不像以前有時會不情願[作練習]… (TJ 06/04)

... the atmosphere is relaxed and easy... students are having fun in this environment and I am happy because of this... [they are] learning better and faster...there is more cooperation[with peers].... unlike before sometimes [they were] reluctance [in practicing]... (TJ 06/04)

She was reinforced by these incidents and believed that her new teaching approaches were what the students liked/wanted because the learning environment was relaxed

and easy. Based on her beliefs in effective learning mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, she was convinced that students were learning better and she decided she would continue using such approaches to keep students motivated so that their learning would be more efficient.

*Practice makes a difference*

Sufficient practice on translation was emphasized in the new curriculum, and these practices included in-class and take-home exercise. The Teacher noticed from students' classroom performance as well as their exercise that practice did make a difference in learning outcome:

… 給學生多點時間[練習類似性質的東西], [他們]回家作業就會做的比較順, 課堂作業花的時間也比較短… 以後我要盡量給他們時間練習…

(TJ 06/04)

... **when students are given more time** [to practice over similar text structures], [they] **tend to do better in their take-home exercise**, and spend less time on in-class exercise... in the future I will leave time for practicing where possible...

(TJ 06/04)

Based on the performance in exercise, the Teacher regards practicing as a factor to students' better learning outcomes; also she thinks that students have improved as she identifies the progress they made in her final reflection log as:

… 最近同學在課堂練習時都很專注, 從作業可以看到他們的表現比以前好, 在[翻譯的]了解、轉達, 以及呈現的方面都有進步… (TJ 06/18)

... lately students have been attentive in practicing in class, from their assignments [I can see] **they are performing better than before, there are improvements in understanding, delivering and presenting meanings [in translation]....** (TJ 06/18)

The Teacher recognized that students have made improvements in many aspects. She also concluded that spending more time on practicing is the reason that students performed better in exercise and assignments.

*Teacher's dilemma: keeping up with needs or keeping up with time?*

Although the Teacher believes that students tend to learn more effectively in the new approach, echoing with the Teacher's concerns about the effectiveness in learning in 6.1.2., a difficulty with allocating time to each topic/need/want students required was found.

Although Dai (2003) points out that students tend to perform better in take-home exercises than in-class exercises which usually had to be done within a limited period of time, in this study it is shown that students can perform equally well when given enough time and practice to do exercises in class. However, the Teacher had to struggle to keep up with her lessons plans from time to time; one reason being students would spend a lot of time discussing certain lesson contents which they were particularly interested in. This is an issue which she had in a sense anticipated in her preparation notes as we saw in 6.1.2.: the discussion of the tension between bringing in the material needed and the question of effective learning. The teacher often had to make decisions to push the classes forward in order to keep up with the teaching schedule, and she sometimes wondered whether she made the right selection for the amount of lesson contents. The following is an example of her experience:

… 今天一直在討論電影，學生討論太熱烈，一下子一堂課就過了，而原本要教的新聞完全沒時間教，下次要趕了… (TJ 04/30)

... been discussing movie clips, students were so into it, the class flew by, didn't have time to introduce the news [article] that was to be taught today, **need to rush next time**.... (TJ 04/30)

Later she found herself in the same situation and she jotted down on her journal:

... 今天沒教完諺語及成語, **怎麼我總是在趕**? ... 是我的時間管理還是對於放這麼多東西我太樂觀了? ... (TJ 06/11)

... didn't finish teaching idioms and slangs today, **how come I am always rushing?** .... Is it my time management or am I too optimistic in introducing so many elements? .... (TJ 06/11)

Earlier in section 6.1.2. the Teacher has shown her concerns about 'squeezing' too many elements in a limited period of time. The quotes discussed above proved that the Teacher was right about her predictions. Nonetheless, the Teacher still went along with her original thoughts of including as many elements as possible in the new curriculum to satisfy students' needs. When she realized that she was behind schedule, the Teacher had to adjust her lessons contents from time to time. In her last lesson she was really falling behind and she was not able to cover her lesson plan. She had reflected on this issue in her note that:

... 今天是[期末考前]最後一堂...我只剩 30 分鐘可以講成語和諺語, 我幾乎只是唸過去, 完全沒時間給問問題或討論...下課鐘響時我才唸了一半吧, 所以就告訴他們可以留下來問問題... 唉, **如果時間夠的話我一定可以教得更好, 學生也能學得更好...應該要用多些時間[來教這些東西]的**... (TJ 06/11)

... today was the last lesson [before final exam]... I had only 30 minutes on teaching idioms/slangs, I only read it through and allowed no time for questions or discussions... when the bell rang I was only half way through [what was to be

taught], I said they could stay behind and ask questions, then I explained that what was not taught would not be in the exam, but those interested could come get the rest of the handout... [sigh] **if I had more time I would definitely teach better, and students would learn better... should use more time [to teach all elements]**... (TJ 06/11)

The problem of squeezing too many things had been in the Teacher's concern from the preparation stage. In order to cover as many needs as possible, the Teacher had decided to put aside her worries and include the needs requested by the majority of the class in the new curriculum. Therefore she was constantly falling behind schedule in her teaching. At the end of the semester she realized that the students' would 'learn even more' if given more time. The time-consuming issue with large-size classes was also noted by Ho (1999) and Dai (2003) as shown in 3.4.1 and 3.4.1.1 as one of the teaching difficulties.

*Teacher's frustration: Teacher, what is the correct/standard answer?*

Despite her efforts, to the Teacher's disappointment some students were still trapped in their traditional mindsets. Even though the Teacher had used new approaches and hoped to generate new ways of thinking, occasionally a few students found it difficult to adapt to something that they have never come across in their previous learning experience.

... [學期]一開始我就講, 翻譯沒有絕對的對錯, 只有好和不好...今天有學生要我講一個正確答案, 我又再講一遍... 學習並不能死背...知識應該要活用, [老師]應該要鼓勵學生 be productive and creative 才對... (TJ 04/23)

... I said it from the beginning [of the semester], there is no right or wrong in translation, just good or bad.... A **student wanted me to give a correct**

**answer** today, I said that again... learning should not be rote [learning]...  
knowledge should be used lively; [teachers] should encourage students to be  
productive and creative... (TJ 04/23)

Frustration occurred when the same situation happened again one month later:

... 討論完[黑板上同學的]答案之後，突然有學生問我：「老師，那正確答案是甚麼？」 我又再講一次**翻譯沒有絕對的對錯**，只有好和不好，所以沒有所謂標準答案，但他還是很迷惑的說，以前老師有給標準答案，而且不照老師的[答案]就算錯... 這下換我迷惑了...**難道我的教學方式要改變?** ...  
(TJ 05/21)

.... After finished discussing [the work on board], suddenly a student asked me, 'Teacher, so what is the correct answer?' I repeated again that there is **no absolute right or wrong in translation**, just good or bad, so there is no so-called standard answer to it, but still he said in puzzlement that his previous teacher gave correct answers, and if they didn't follow the answers [their answers] would be considered wrong... it was my puzzlement then... **should I change my teaching approach?**.... (TJ 05/21)

From these extracts clearly students found the Teacher's teaching approaches were different from what they experienced with previous teachers, and some of them had difficulties in understanding the way the Teacher tried to introduce new conceptions and to prompt them to see things in a different way. Although students were exposed to a different learning contexts for months, their previous experience of learning still dominated their ways of thinking. It was a major setback for the Teacher and somehow she wondered if she needed to adjust her teaching approaches.

## Summary

Teacher's observations, students' feedback and reactions on new teaching approaches mostly are very encouraging and affirming, especially on creating pleasant classroom learning atmosphere. She thinks that students found the learning process 'fun' and 'interesting', and the atmosphere was relaxed and easy. Through sufficient practicing in class the learning outcomes are 'better'. Also she noticed some changes in students' learning behaviours which are positive indicators to their reactions towards new teaching approaches. She thinks these outcomes are results of her using 'good' and 'motivating' teaching approaches which from her perspectives clearly satisfied students' needs.

The Teacher also encountered a couple of setbacks in her teaching experience. The problem of 'squeezing too many things into the curriculum' occurred inevitably as she anticipated in the early preparation stage, despite her efforts in keeping up with the teaching schedule she still found it an obstacle to teaching and learning. Another major disappointment for the Teacher was that some students still clung onto old learning habits that were too rooted to be changed. As discussed in 6.1, the Teacher hoped to bring new light to students' conceptions and encourage them to understand the world from different perspectives. However she realised that her approaches were not suitable for all students, despite her efforts in meeting students' needs.

#### **6.3.4 Reflections on new teaching materials and contents**

Before the new curriculum, apart from students those who were self-motivated, many students would slack when doing exercises in class. On more than one occasion the teacher found students chatting with friends or doing their own things. The following extract is an example of students' behaviour in class before the new curriculum,

… 學生不太專心，一些人在聊天而且後排幾個在打瞌睡！我故意說：『昨晚有些人出去混太晚所以現在來補眠嗎？』… 後來就有人叫醒睡覺的同學… 今天的內容是不是像之前討論中說的讓同學興趣缺缺？ (TJ 02/13)

… **students were a bit unfocused**, some were chatting and a couple of them in the back rows were dozing off! I said intentionally, ‘Some of you went clubbing too late last night so need to catch some sleep now?’… some student then woke up those who were taking nap.... **is today’s content failed to attract students’ interests like they said in the previous discussion?** (TJ 02/13)

The Teacher had assumed that students’ underachieving was related to the curriculum because in the group discussion at the beginning of the research the students had told the Teacher they were not learning what they wanted to learn. Therefore besides reflecting on her teaching approaches as presented in 6.3.3, in this section the Teacher discusses the new teaching materials and contents introduced in the new curriculum.

The seven items which students think they needed are: movies, TV programs, news articles, magazine articles, English songs, and Idioms and slangs. On what criteria they were selected was discussed in Chapter 5.2.1.2 The followings are topics to be introduced each session in the 10-week curriculum. A sample lesson plan can be found in Appendix 7.

Week 1 (04/16): Introduction Basic Theories and Translation Techniques

Week 2 (04/23): Movies + Newspaper Terms A

Week 3 (04/30): Movies + Newspaper Terms B

Week 4 (05/07): News Article + Newspaper Terms C

Week 5 (05/14): TV Program+ Newspaper Terms D

Week 6 (05/21): TV Program+ Newspaper Terms E

Week 7 (05/28): English songs+ Newspaper Terms F/G

Week 8 (06/04): Magazine Article + Newspaper Terms H/I

Week 9 (06/11): Idioms and Slangs+ Newspaper Terms

Week 10 (06/18): Discussion+ Final Exam

Apart from basic theories and translation techniques introduced in Week 1, other techniques were also introduced in the following weeks when applicable. Theories were not emphasised as much as techniques/skills in this study, although Dai (2003) claims that theories were regarded as one focus of the translation teaching in technological universities by teachers. The proportion of theories employed here was less than 20% due to students' lack of interest in learning theories.

### *Addressing and satisfying students' needs*

#### *Movie clips and TV programs*

A reaction from the students was recorded in the Teacher's journal on the very first week the new curriculum was applied,

今天告訴學生下次我們要上什麼時，聽到有人歡呼：「耶，今天要看影片耶…太棒了！這樣就對了！」…反應這麼大！好像等很久了似的…學生看起來很喜歡而且很开心需求被注意到…今天大家看起來都很認真… (TJ 4/16)

When I told the students what we are doing next week, heard them cheer, 'Yah, We are watching movie today... **Great! This is the right thing [to do]!**'... such a big reaction! As if they have been waiting for it for long.... looks like **students like it a lot and they are happy that this need is addressed**... they all seemed very diligent today... (TJ 4/16)

The Teacher takes students' reactions as clear indications on favouring this new element. She was quite surprised to see students' joy and at the same time glad to have fulfilled this specific need. She also observed that by introducing this element, students became diligent in class.

Another conversation in the following week indicates that not only the Teacher has successfully captured the students' interest, the learning experience that students had was so 'fun' that they asked for more of this content. The Teacher regards this as a sign of satisfaction and motivation:

今天我一走進教室就有幾個學生過來，

學生：老師，我們今天要不要再看電影？

老師：幹嘛問？

學生：因為翻那些很好玩，可不可再看啊？拜託...

似乎對新的教學內容很喜歡，還要[學]更多... 不錯，態度很正向...他們更 **motivated** 了

(TJ 4/30)

As I walked into the classroom, a few students approached me,

Students: Teacher, are we going to watch movie clips again today?

Teacher: Why ask?

Students: Because **it's fun** to translate those. **Can we have that again?**

Please ....

... seems **students quite like the new content, they want[to learn] more....**

**good, attitude is positive, they are more motivated....** (TJ 4/30)

This view was further elaborated by S who came to talk to the Teacher during the break time. When the Teacher casually asked S her opinions about the new teaching contents, she replied:

… 「最近教的東西還滿有用的。」我問：「那些東西啊？」她說：「那些最近教的新的東西啊，像電影、電視…之類的，我們周圍[日常生活裡]的…」

(TJ 06/11)

… ‘Recently **the things taught are quite useful.**’ I asked, ‘Which things?’

She replied, ‘**The new things we have been doing lately, like movies, TV...etc, around us [things that in our daily lives].**’ (TJ 06/11)

From the Teacher’s observation, students’ learning behaviours changed very positively. And in addition to movies, the Teacher also noted differences on using TV program as a new content:

… 電視節目我是用‘六人行’，學生反應很好，討論對白很熱烈，看得出還他們有喜歡… 有些學生還來[跟我]討論他們不懂的地方… 看來他們覺得，對話在日常生活裡很有用，因為一直在背誦… 以前比較沒這樣… (TJ 05/14)

… for TV programs I used ‘Friends’, **reactions from students are good,** discussions about the dialogues were quite enthusiastic, can see that **they liked it...** some students also came to discuss [with me] about things they didn’t understand... appeared that they think some expressions **were useful in daily life** because they were memorizing them... **before it rarely happened...** (TJ 05/14)

Here the Teacher makes a comparison between her observations before and after the new curriculum. She thinks students are satisfied with their new learning experience by having a positive attitude and taking initiation in learning as noted in 6.2.3.

### *English Songs*

Due to the shortage of time, only one English song was introduced in the curriculum.

The reactions from students were encouraging:

… 英文歌我用 Westlife 的‘My Love’，音樂一開始學生臉上就有恍然大悟的表情，一些人就跟著唱… 我是故意挑不快，而且歌詞不難懂也不難翻的… [音樂]是個不錯的轉換，我看學生都很開心又專心，有幾個人都搖起來[身體]了… (TJ 05/28)

... for English songs I used ‘My Love’ by Westlife, when the music began to play, the students had an expression of ‘oh I know this song’ on their faces and some began to sing along.... it was my intention to choose a song that’s not quick, also the lyrics aren’t difficult to understand and translate... [I think music] **was a nice change, I saw students were having fun while paying attention,** a few were swinging [their bodies].... (TJ 05/28)

The Teacher was careful and thoughtful when choosing an appropriate song. She deliberately chose a pop song which was not difficult for the students. From the Teacher’s opinion, not only the students were paying attention, they were also enjoying the content as they sang and swung their bodies along with the music.

#### *Newspaper and Magazine Articles*

In addition to students’ comments on TV programs as ‘useful in daily life’, similar feedbacks are found in materials such as Newspaper and Magazine articles. Below is an example on how student reacted on learning newspaper terms. Judging by the students’ behaviour, the Teacher thinks they were very keen in learning:

…時間不夠，有些新聞用語來不及教完，我解釋沒教的不會考，不過有興趣的人可以來拿完整檔案，好幾個人來要，我隨身碟只有電子檔所以就給一個人，她再轉給其他人… 看起來大家學習的意願很高喔… (TJ 5/07)

... time was not enough, some newspaper terms were not taught in time, I explained that things not taught in class would not be tested on but those interested can come get the complete file, many came to ask [for it] but I had

only one file in my pen drive so I gave it to a student who then would pass on to others... **seems they were quite willing to learn...** (TJ 5/07)

To the Teacher, the fact that many students wished to learn extra-curriculum materials which students were not to be tested on, means they were motivated to learn. She feels the new contents are popular among students; both their learning performance and their behaviour in class had improved as seen in the following example:

... 我覺得新教材很受歡迎，因為學習狀況很好，學生表現也較專心... 今天 A 交作業時對我說，現在[的東西]比較好...老師用的教材有幫到我耶，很有用，我和外國朋友交談時有用到耶... (TJ 5/28)

... I feel **new teaching materials are very popular, because learning condition is good and students are more focused...**A said to me when she handed me her work today, 'Now **[the new contents are] better...the teaching materials** Teacher used **helped me, [it is] very useful...** I used it when talking with friends from overseas...' (TJ 5/28)

In the extract above Student A addresses the new materials as helpful and useful. This correspond with the Teacher's reflection in her log on June 11:

... P 說因為上了[雜誌的]文章，他對國外更有興趣，更想去了解那裏... 會主動上網查資料，是以前沒有的經驗... 幫助他們拓展視野是有幫助的，我覺得很好... (TJ 06/11)

... P said because we had [magazine] articles, he became more interested in overseas [countries], wanted to understand more about the place... [he] **automatically surfed on the net for information, [it] was an experience he never had...** I think it's good that it helps to expand their horizon... (06/11)

From these examples it is concluded that the Teacher believe the new contents are useful to students and both the students and the Teacher think they help and benefit their learning.

## **Summary**

The students had expressed their needs in learning daily life materials in Chapter 5. In this section it is clear that the Teacher thinks she was successful in addressing students' needs by introducing those new elements. Not only it was a pleasant teaching/learning experience for both the Teacher and the students, there are positive changes in students' learning behaviour, such as enthusiasm and willingness in learning, taking initiation/motivation in learning, and involvement and performance in classroom.

By summing up the discussions in this section, it has come to the Teacher's awareness that students tended to respond well when the lessons were introduced by means of popular media such as movies and TV program, songs, newspaper and magazines...etc. Students tend to regard these as 'daily life' materials; things that they can use in their daily contexts. Also the forms and approaches to introduce them are different from that of 'traditional' contents; both the Teacher and students found it very interesting and helpful.

### **6.3.5 Reactions and feedbacks on 'old' teaching materials and contents**

Although the Teacher designed the new curriculum to address students' needs, however, there were elements she valued and decided to include in the curriculum regardless of the fact that students did not appear to need these elements in the needs analysis questionnaire.

*Textbook sections: Translation Techniques*

The Teacher believes from her experience that certain basic techniques, such as addition, omission, sentence reversion...etc. are basic knowledge to good translation. Although only a few students expressed their needs for these skills in the needs analysis instrument, the Teacher decided to include these contents in the new curriculum. Instead of following the contents, only sections from the Textbook previously used were used to introduce translation theories and techniques in class.

The Teacher commented on her decision in the preparation stage that,

… 大多數學生不認為有必要，但我真的覺得他們需要學[基本的翻譯理論和技巧]，沒有基礎是沒辦法的… 只有少數人覺得這個重要，不過我相信對他們未來會有幫助… (TJ 03/26)

... the majority didn't think it's a must, **but I really think they need to learn** [basic theories and techniques in translation], they can't do without a foundation... only a few realized its importance, but **I think it will help them in the future....** (TJ 03/26)

By observing students' reactions on learning translating theories and techniques later in the teaching stage, the Teacher concluded that the lesson was 'ok':

… 雖然不能說學生有喜歡，不過好像也不會覺得排斥… 還是有一兩個人有問問題，許多人還有抄筆記… 還是照我說的做課本上的習題… 反應算是差強人意吧… (TJ 04/16)

.... **can't say they like it, but students didn't seem to repel** ... still there were a couple asked questions, many of them did take down notes... they still followed my instructions to practice on the exercise in the textbooks.... **reactions were ok....** (TJ 04/16)

Although there was no strong evidence to show that students appreciated such content, the Teacher had come to a conclusion in her final teaching log that it was a necessary decision to include this element in the new curriculum. She felt that basic skill training contributed to the difference students made in learning:

… 我覺得一整個課程下來基本技巧的訓練還是有差的… 有時在課堂上我會提示他們用某個技巧[來翻譯]，所以他們就會做比較快…練習這些技巧對提升翻譯能力各方面而言是有助益的… (TJ 06/18)

... I think **the basic skill training throughout the course did make a difference**... in class I sometimes gave them tips on using certain techniques [in doing exercise], so they did quicker.... **practicing these techniques is beneficial in enhancing translation ability in every aspects**.... (TJ 06/18)

#### *Textbook sections: Exercises*

The Teacher believes that practice is important when learning techniques or skills in translation. Therefore a few exercises from the Textbook were used mostly in class for practicing purpose so that students would become skilful in applying these techniques.

The Teacher regards this as a ‘necessary’ content in curriculum, and when considering adding exercises from the textbook into the curriculum, the Teacher had carefully gone through exercises in the textbook:

… 練習技巧是必須的，不然學了之後沒馬上練習很容易就忘了… 課本還滿好用的，雖然有些習作已經過時… 要仔細挑適合的才行… (TJ 03/26)

... It is **necessary to practice over techniques**, otherwise [students] will forget easily without practicing right after learning... the textbook is quite handy to use,

although some [exercises] are quite outdated... need to select those appropriate... (TJ 03/26)

Although the Teacher did not comment particularly on exercises from the textbook in her teaching logs, from the previous section on Textbook as well as in 6.2.3 where she commented on the teaching approaches, she thinks practicing exercises in general does contribute to better learning.

### **Summary**

It should be noted that the use of Textbook sections is the only 'old' content to be included in the new curriculum solely by the Teacher's personal judgment. The Textbook used was published in 2004 by a Chinese author which contained cultural differences as Ho (1999) and Dai (2003) point out in 3.4.1.1. The Teacher has used it before and was aware of the cultural differences so she carefully selected adequate sections of the books or exercises to be included in the curriculum. The Teacher believes there was a 'need' for the students to learn some basic theories and techniques of translation although they were not aware of such need. By the end of the course she sees better outcomes in learning and she thinks learning and practicing these skills is beneficial for students in the long-run.

## **6.4 Beyond the Classroom**

Apart from changes related to teaching approaches and the curriculum, the Teacher also documented comments and thoughts that concern other changes she had observed.

### **6.4.1 Impacts Created by the Teacher**

In Chapter 5 students expressed their recognition of the Teacher's efforts and in return they felt obligated to show their appreciation by making extra efforts in learning. Corresponding to that of the students' views, the Teacher had similar observations in both the preparation and the teaching stages.

The interactions between the Teacher and the students had always been good. The Teacher had interacted and communicated with the students so that the students would speak their minds in many aspects. The fact that many students participated voluntarily in the group discussion before the research indicates the relationship between the Teacher and the students was very friendly. The following incident occurred when the Teacher was preparing for the new curriculum:

… 幾個學生跟我說：「老師妳這麼認真做這個就是為了我們啊？… 妳跟其他老師都不一樣… 妳真的關心我們耶…」真的很開心他們看到我的努力，我感到和學生感情更緊密了… (TJ 04/09)

.... A few students said to me, 'Teacher you work so hard to do this for us?' ...**you are so different from other teachers**; we see that you do care for us...' I am **so glad that they appreciate my efforts, and I feel there is a stronger bond between us** ... (TJ 04/09)

It is seen from the extract above that the Teacher felt an even closer teaching-learning relationship was being developed by conducting the research in collaboration. There are also other similar examples that illustrate how students reacted to the Teacher's efforts. Below is an extract from the Teacher's log on June 4<sup>th</sup>:

… M 下課後跟我說：「老師，抱歉我因為兼差有好幾次沒來，看妳為我們做這麼多我覺得沒來上課很不應該…我保證每一篇作業我都會交然後考試會用功念書…」她這樣說其實我很感動… (TJ 06/04)

... M said to me after class, ‘Teacher, sorry I have been absent many times because I have a part-time job, **I feel bad not attending the classes seeing you did so much for us...I promise I will hand in every assignment and study hard for the exam...**’ I know she often needs to work shifts in order to pay her tuition fees, actually I am really touched by her words... (TJ 06/04)

M is a student who needs to finance herself for college tuition. She sometimes needed to work shifts so there were times she couldn’t make it to class. She felt she should come to class if she could because she could see how much effort the Teacher has made. It is clear that students recognized and appreciated the Teacher’s work. The research had an impact on their attitudes of learning; their mindsets were also influenced by the process.

#### **6.4.2 Impacts on the Teacher**

By looking at the Teacher’s log chronologically, not only have the students undergone changes in learning, the Teacher’s attitudes and beliefs have changed along with the research process.

Although the Teacher was the one who originally initiated and conducted the research which created changed in students’ learning, in the process she later unexpectedly found herself undergoing a transformation. At first it was observed that she had a sense of accomplishment in what she has achieved:

... 他們好像很樂在其中耶，臉上的表情有喜歡有開心，看他們滿意的樣子我也開心，我覺得這成就感很棒... (TJ 05/14)

.... they seem really enjoy the lesson, [from] their expression I see enjoyment and fun, **I feel happy that they are satisfied, my accomplishment makes me feel good...** (TJ 05/14)

The Teacher felt 'good' in keeping students contented. She indulged herself in such accomplishment that she sometimes got carried away into spending too much time on keeping students satisfied instead of moving on with what was scheduled to teach:

… 我一直在給學生想要的以及他們要求的… 現在想起來我也有改變原本計畫好的進度教法來迎合他們的需求… 例如給他們多些時間在他們感興趣的主題…這可能也是我[進度]落後的原因… 這樣其實也會妨礙學習吧？要注意了… (TJ 5/28)

... I tend to give the students what they like and what they require ..... [I] realized now that **I did change my teaching schedule and approaches to accommodate students' wants....** such as giving them more time to linger on the topic of their interests...this **could be a reason to my falling behind [schedule]... it might hinder learning** too? [I] should be cautious... (TJ 5/28)

From the example above it is seen that in order to adapt to students' demands, the Teacher at times changed her original teaching schedule and lesson plans and gave students more time to discuss topics they found interesting. She thinks this might be a reason contributing to her always falling behind schedule, and an obstacle to learning.

Despite all the difficulties the Teacher encountered, teaching was still a joy for her. She looked forward to each lecture. Teaching was not just a job, but also her interest:

… 最近教書真的很開心，跟學生關係很好，每次來學校我都很期待… 我想是因為學生反應普遍很好吧…教書已經不是工作而是興趣了… (TJ 06/04)

... recently **teaching is really fun**, the relationship with students is pleasant and I look forward coming to school... I think it's because the positive feedbacks from the students in general.... **teaching is not a job to me, it is my interest now.....** (TJ 06/04)

Besides having ‘fun’ in teaching, the Teacher felt her efforts were also rewarded by students’ affection:

… 考完試了，一些同學留下來聊天，有人說：「老師，上你的課很有趣又可以學到東西耶，那妳明年還會教我們嗎？」我說可能不太會時他們好失望的樣子… 還說：「老師如果不是你教我就不’想來了…」這對我是一種肯定，我感受到他們真的很喜歡我，我覺得[教的]很成功… (TJ 06/18)

… exam was over, some students stayed behind and come over to said to me, ‘Teacher, **it is very interesting attending your lecturers, at the same time we also learn things**, will you be teaching us again next year?’ When I told them it’s unlikely, they were all very disappointed… some said. ‘**If it’s not you that teach [us], I don’t want to come [to classes] anymore…’it’s an affirmation to me and I feel they really like me, I have done successfully [in teaching] ....** (TJ 06/18)

In the above extract, students also expressed that if it weren’t for the Teacher, they wouldn’t want to come to class. In this case, the Teacher herself was also a motivator for learning. At the same time, the Teacher was motivated by the students:

…這次做研究，其中一個大收穫就是重拾了對教書的熱忱，教書教了十多年了…到後來就是麻木的過一天是一天，也不會很積極的作一些改變讓教學和學生學習品質更好…這次的經歷對學生有利，但其實我也獲益不少…感覺我是沒電的電池重新又充滿了電，可以用滿滿的經精力再出發了… (TJ 06/18)

… in doing this research, **one of the rewards is to regain the enthusiasm I had for teaching**, [I have been] teaching for over 10 years… lately it was day after day in numb, [I] didn’t actively make changes for better teaching and learning… **this experience is good for students, actually it benefits me a lot as well… seems I am a battery that was flat but now fully recharged, [I] can start freshly with lots of energy…**(TJ 06/18)

The substantive sense of affirmation and rewarding reinforced the Teacher to pursue better learning and teaching, it further led to the Teacher's awakening and inner growth.

### **Summary**

The Teacher's reflections indicate that changes made by the Teacher eventually led to changes brought upon the Teacher. Her perspectives and attitudes on teaching in general were transformed through the process of research.

Realising the Teacher's efforts in considering their learning needs, the students in return expressed their recognition and affirmation that refreshed the Teacher's enthusiasm in teaching. It was rewarding for the Teacher to know students' views about her. She felt good and contented for what she has done. Teaching was not merely a job, but an enjoyment and an interest to her. Her reactions indicate that students' compliments also fulfilled her needs of being recognised a successful teacher.

### **6.5 Conclusion on Teacher's perspectives**

At the time the research was first conducted, both the students and the Teacher all hoped for better changes to enhance learning. In this chapter the Teacher concludes from her observations that not only changes are found in students' learning behaviours, also there are changes in their perceptions and behaviours.

In the early preparation stage the Teacher was encouraged in her views by the students' recognition of the changes in teaching and learning so that she tried her best

to develop an appropriate curriculum to address students' needs. As the teaching proceeds, the interactions between the Teacher and the students grew closer and based on the mutual understanding and appreciation, a win-win teaching-learning cycle is formed through the research process as seen in Fig. 6.1.

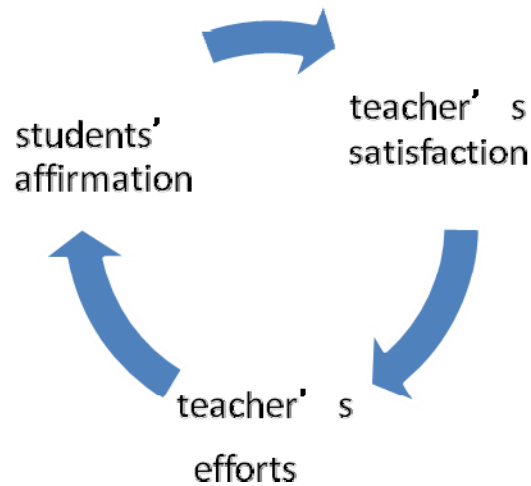


Figure 6.1 A teaching-learning cycle

The Teacher also concluded from these observations that students think a good teacher is an important key to motivate learning; they would perform differently if it weren't for the Teacher. In other words, a good teacher is what students like and need in order to learn effectively. However, the researcher is aware that these phenomena may well be the 'Hawthorne effect' as discussed in Chapter Four, which has often been noticed in action research. A further study will be needed to determine whether, or how long the improvement will last once the novelty disappears, or whether the approach can be transferred to other situations and used by other teachers.

This chapter started with the research question **'Will students learn effectively or perform better if their "wants" / "needs" are satisfied?'** Although the changes noted in this chapter are evidence of effective learning- judged by the Teacher's

beliefs illustrated in 6.1 – some difficulties also surfaced through the study. First, to squeeze seven elements in a 10-week curriculum was rather too idealistic; the teaching schedule was too tight to ensure sufficient practicing and discussion which is needed for quality learning. The Teacher believes that students could perform even better if given sufficient time. Also, it was a disappointment for the Teacher to know that a few students were unable or reluctant to change their learning approaches despite the efforts from the Teacher. In this sense the answer to the research question is not totally positive.

Having said that, the Teacher thinks she has gained and grown through this experience along with the students. The research process was enjoyable and ‘fun’ all the way for all participants. It can be concluded that a needs-based approach also has an impact on the Teacher. The influence of this impact and teacher’s needs are not sufficiently noted in the literature.

## Chapter Seven

### Conclusion

#### 7.0. Introduction

As explained in the beginning of this thesis, translation studies as a discipline in Taiwan has developed considerably in the past two decades to answer the call of globalisation and to strengthen the nation's competitiveness. This thesis has been written against that background but also as a result of the researcher-teacher's experience of difficulties in the classroom. Given the fact that 'English Translation' was a compulsory module that all students from the particular Applied English Department had to pass in order to graduate, it was clear that they needed a new approach. With the students' help the researcher set out on her journey seeking for answers for the problems encountered. By addressing and developing a curriculum that accommodated the students' needs, the purpose of this study is to improve Translation learning and teaching in Taiwan based on the Teacher's experience over this project.

This has been done as an action research project, and in the analysis so far the students' perspectives and the Teacher's perspectives have been analysed and discussed in detail in Chapters Five and Six respectively. However, in order to answer the research question,

**Will students learn effectively or perform better if their 'wants' and/or 'needs' are satisfied?**

it would be helpful to introduce a recapitulation of the general findings from these two chapters to see the similarities and differences on how the students' and the Teacher's

perceived their experiences and their views the success of the changes made during the project..

Section 7.1. briefly reviews the results from the data analysis chapters to clarify whether the students and the Teacher had similar or different perceptions of the teaching and learning process and its outcomes. Section 7.2. then discusses the contribution this study made more generally to the field of study. As this study is a case study with an action research approach, 7.3. also outlines the limitation of this study. Finally, a section on implications for future studies concludes this chapter.

### **7.1. A Recapitulation of the Findings**

From looking at the midterm examination and the final examination results in 5.1., it is clear that students performed better after being taught with a curriculum that accommodated their needs and from this types of data the answer to the research question is clearly positive. This is a perspective on the outcome or ‘product’ of the project.

Another perspective on the success of the project can be taken from the way in which the students and the Teacher talked and thought about the ‘process’. Each had their own emphases and themes in the data focussed on the process, and the themes emerging from the students’ and the Teacher’s perspectives in both chapters are summarized in Table 7.1.

<b>The Students</b>	<b>The Teacher</b>
<b>1. Activities</b>	<b>1. The Preparation</b>

<p>Those conducted in class: going to the board, group work, in-class exercises</p> <p>Those which took place at home: take-home exercises/assignments</p>	<p>The Teachers' preliminary perceptions on understanding students' needs</p> <p>The Teacher's concerns</p>
<p><b>2. Materials and contents of the lessons:</b></p> <p>Movies, TV programs, News articles, Magazine articles, English songs, Idioms and slangs, Textbooks</p>	<p><b>2. The Teaching</b></p> <p>Change in attendance rate</p> <p>Improvements in exercises</p> <p>Reflections on new teaching approaches</p>
<p><b>3. Motivation</b></p> <p>Teacher as a motivator</p> <p>No-stress learning</p> <p>Desire to 'understand deeper'</p> <p>The interesting changes were what they needed</p> <p>Systematic and helpful learning</p>	<p>Reflections on new teaching materials and contents</p> <p>Reactions and feedbacks on 'old' teaching materials and contents</p> <p><b>3. Beyond the classroom</b></p> <p>Impacts created by the Teacher</p> <p>Impacts on the Teacher</p>
<p><b>4. Examination results and performance</b></p> <p>Midterm examination and scores</p> <p>Final examination and scores</p> <p>Improvements/ accomplishments</p>	
<p><b>5. About the Teacher</b></p>	

Personality	
Teaching approaches	

Table 7.1 Themes which emerged from the data collected

To include all the contents/elements prompted by the needs analysis questionnaire in a 10-week curriculum was rather idealistic. Both the students and the Teacher think that the learning would be even more effective if given more time. The issue of keeping up with the teaching schedule surfaced in the process, although results show that in general this project was regarded as a success from the students' and the teacher's perspectives,

With sufficient discussion and practice in class, the activities conducted are considered effective by both the students and the teacher. Also the Teacher noticed positive changes in students' learning attitudes and their performance in exams and exercises.

However, one concern raised by the Teacher is the time-consuming nature of conducting group work in class, which resembles the findings of Wang (2007; 2008, 2014) that the ideal number of students in a class should be 17-25 because large-size classes cause teaching difficulty. As observed in 6.3.3, students were focused, motivated, and having fun in learning. But the time spent on discussions among group members was more than expected. The Teacher had the dilemma of keeping up with the needs of sufficient practice/discussion in class or keeping up with the teaching schedule. Analysis of the reflections of the Teacher indicate that she thinks this teaching difficulty may be resolved by extending the period of learning, in other words not to 'squeeze' too much contents in a limited period of curriculum.

Where teaching materials and contents are concerned, the use of textbooks was perceived differently by the students and the Teacher. Whereas the majority of the students opposed the use of textbooks, the Teacher had managed to make use of the textbook in the form of handouts. By adapting and rewriting selected sections from the textbook, the Teacher introduced translation techniques and exercises into the curriculum without raising any objections from the students. Although it may require extra efforts and time, what the Teacher did may be a solution to the lack of adequate textbooks in the technological university settings in Taiwan.

Locating the findings in the wider literature, one can first consider how this study has added to what has been done in Taiwan and then consider if the theory of needs analysis was helpful or might itself needs some refinement. Before this study in Taiwan the research knowledge can be summarised as the followings,

1. Needs analysis approach has been conducted mostly in the EGP instead of ESP classrooms.
2. Only a few studies with needs analysis approach have been carried out in translation classroom.
3. All studies with needs analysis approach all ended at the stage of identifying students' needs; no further research has ever done to address or act on those needs.

As for the question of the theory of needs analysis, one point which became very evident in this study was the difficulty of using a translation of the word 'needs'. As explained in Chapter Three, the students understood this particular word in different ways because of the difficulty of translation. This is an issue in all international and

cross-lingual research as has been highlighted recently ([www.researchingmutlingually.com](http://www.researchingmutlingually.com)) but the research has revealed a particular problem which, although needs analysis has been done in non-Anglophone countries before, has not been discussed

The implications for research methodology, again as revealed by the need to analyse interview data by hand rather than using Nvivo , is that a mechanical analysis is sometimes inadequate and that, with respect to questionnaires, the researcher needed to be sensitive to the possible ambiguities when analysing; there could be no mechanical calculation of results.

### **7.1.1 Summary of similarities between Teacher and students**

Despite the differences on the time management issue and the use of textbooks, similarities can be found in other aspects such as the teaching materials and contents, teaching approaches, and the Teacher factor.

#### *Teaching materials and contents*

The changes in the curriculum are ‘interesting’ and ‘useful’ to the students and they are reinforced to perform better. Both the students and the Teacher agree that ‘updated’, ‘close to everyday life’ elements are needed in effective learning. Students considered their needs are satisfied by using the materials and contents they liked/wanted.

#### *Teaching Approaches*

From the increase in attendance rate and the interview feedbacks, it is evident that the teaching approaches employed were interesting to the students; they had fun learning

and were more focused in class. The data also reveals that by using teaching approaches which were systematic and 'step-by-step', both the students and the Teacher realised that the learning improved.

### *The Teacher factor*

By constantly adjusting her teaching based upon her classroom observation and students' reactions throughout the process, the teacher successfully motivated the students. Both the students and the Teacher were motivated by the other party and felt encouragement and affirmation. In short, the process had impacts on both the students and the Teacher. Unlike previous studies in which the Teacher factor has been neglected, this study shows that the Teacher plays a crucial role in the success of the project.

In summary, the research question has been answered: not only did the students tend to learn effectively in terms of the examination results, exercise performance, and in-class activities; their attitude and motivation are also enhanced when their needs are satisfied.

## **7.2. Reflections and Limitations of the Study**

The researcher wishes to put forward at this point that by doing this action research project she realised why there had been no such studies in the field of translation in Taiwan. The task of conducting a needs analysis questionnaire, designing a curriculum and implementing it with action research approach was extremely challenging and demanding. Just the marking of exercise/homework for a class of 38 students took up all her time, not to mention the task of teaching and researching. If it

wasn't for her concerns over students and her enthusiasm in teaching, she would have given up already.

With that being said, the Teacher is pleased to see that by using a needs analysis and an action research approach, this study was able to not only identify and understand students' needs in a deeper sense, but also to address and answer those needs. Her efforts paid off when the students responded to her with the same enthusiasm and appreciation as presented in 5.2.1.5. It is noteworthy that the students and the Teacher have grown and developed in learning and teaching through this study. Having acknowledged these limitations, it is important to highlight the significance of the study.

### **7.3. Significance of the Findings and Advocacy**

As pointed out in Chapter Four, this action research project was derived from the Teacher's own teaching context. The significance of this study, as put forward in Chapter One, is to help the students by improving her own teaching. By looking at the findings in Chapter Six, it is proven that teacher's professional development is enhanced. Although this was not the focus of the research question, it is a significant effect of the project. As no curriculum has ever been designed from the students' perspectives to address the learning needs of translation students in Taiwan, the results from this study also have implications for curriculum development in the future.

It is usually argued that the findings of case studies like this one may not be generalisable (e.g. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), nonetheless, as an action research project which is the first and only case study on addressing translation

learners' needs in Taiwan, it is hoped that other practitioners' own practice will be stimulated by the this study.

Although the literature shows that some elements, such as group work, are considered by students as curriculum 'needs', no studies in Taiwan have ever investigated the reasons nor tried to find explanations behind the scene. Given the scope and limitations of the questionnaires used in previous studies, students had not been given an opportunity to express the reasons of their liking or disliking of such items. Therefore the original contribution of this thesis is to have done a case study with rich description which goes beyond anything that has been done in Taiwan.

The distinction between research focused on analysis and that which advocates is discussed in 4.1. Action research, as well as being a means of improving the teacher's own practice, a point we shall return to below, also has the advantage of being based in a context which is shared by other practitioners. Even if case studies cannot be generalised, action research has the authenticity which might persuade other teachers, and perhaps those who design curricula and policies. It is hoped therefore that this thesis will be noticed by others and will be the basis of further developments and changes.

For, as indicated earlier, one achievement of this study is that not only the Teacher's own teaching development has improved, but also the students have also benefited through this study. The students have been given an opportunity to find out for themselves what they needed in a translation curriculum. It is hoped that by referring to the results of this study, other translation teachers in Taiwan will be able to apply to

their teaching or find this case interesting and stimulating and therefore have some impacts on their teaching.

In short, it is hoped that this study could recommend to teachers that although it requires extra time and efforts, a needs analysis could be considered as a tool to understand learners' needs in order to develop an adequate curriculum that elevates students' learning performance. A deeper understanding of the relation between a curriculum that accommodates learners' needs and the outcomes of learning hopefully will be established by the accumulation of knowledge by future studies.

As learners' needs can change over time depending on the changing characteristics of the specific groups and contexts, policy makers and stakeholders in institutions could encourage such research to be carried out in their own settings in order to improve teaching and learning situations. Also, it is hoped that curriculum developers will find this case a useful starting point for how curriculum should be developed in the future.

As far as the researcher is concerned, a further development from this thesis is to design a translation course/curriculum book for the students at the Applied English/foreign languages departments in Taiwan. For as pointed out earlier in Chapter Three, books written by Taiwanese authors are very rare, not to mention one that is based on the students' needs which, as the findings in Chapter Five and Six show, will be welcomed by translation learners in higher education in Taiwan.

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## Appendix 1 Search results examples

### Search 1: (In Chinese)

Databases: TAO 台灣學術線上電子期刊庫 (25)  
華藝線上圖書館 Airiti Library (12)  
臺灣期刊論文索引系統 PerioPath Index to Taiwan Periodical Literature System (13)  
HyRead journal 台灣全文資料庫 (14)  
臺灣博碩士論文知識加值系統 (11)

Key words: <Translation> in Title; <curriculum design> in Any field

Results: 75      Relevant articles: 0

### Search 2: (In English)

Databases: EBSCO-ERIC(教育學索摘資料庫) (0)  
Ericdata 高等教育知識庫 (1087)  
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses - A&I(PQDT 博碩士論文索引資料庫) (495)  
ProQuest-Education Journals(教育期刊全文資料庫) (210)  
TAO 台灣學術線上電子期刊庫 (6)  
華藝線上圖書館 Airiti Library (19)  
HyRead journal 台灣全文資料庫 (18)  
JSTOR (Arts & Sciences I Collection) (24)  
臺灣期刊論文索引系統 (20)  
臺灣博碩士論文知識加值系統 (27)

Key words: <Translation> in Title; <curriculum design> in Any field

Results: 1906

Refined search:

Key words: <Translation> in Title; <curriculum design> in Any field; <needs analysis> in Any field

Results: 15      Relevant articles: 2

### Search 3 : ProQuest British Education Index

Key words: <Translation> and <curriculum>

Results: 30      Relevant articles: 0

### Search 4: ERIC, WorldCat, WorldCatDissertations (kw: Translation and kw: curriculum) and ((kw: needs and kw: analysis)).

按資料庫: [ERIC](#) (12) [WorldCat](#) (25) WorldCatDissertations (6)

Results: 43      Relevant articles: 1

## Appendix 2 The Questionnaire

### 「英文翻譯」問卷調查

這份問卷的目的在了解同學對於「翻譯」這一門課的學習需求(NEEDS)，藉以改進課程設計、提昇學習效果，並做為以後教學的參考。問卷調查的結果及數據可能會出現於我的博士論文 'What do students need in translation courses in Taiwanese institutes of technology?' (to be confirmed,暫定)。

所有同學提供的資料一定受到保護，只用於學術用途，並在研究完成後銷毀。

希望同學可以抽空填寫，非常感謝你(妳)的幫忙。

### 請填入或圈選你(妳)最認同的答案

#### Part A: 基本資料

1. 請問你(妳)是否為應用英語系的學生？  
Are you a student from the Department of Applied English?
  - a. 是 Yes
  - b. 不是，我的科系是\_\_\_ No
2. 請問你(妳)是那一年級的學生？  
Your year of study?
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
  - e. 其他 Other
3. 請問若未來有需要，你(妳)是否願意接受後續的訪問？  
Can you participate in further follow-up interviews if applicable?
  - a. 同意 Yes
  - b. 不同意 No
4. 請問你(妳)的性別？  
Are you a
  - a. 女 Female
  - b. 男 Male
  - c. 其他 Other
5. 請問你(妳)的年齡？ \_\_\_\_\_ 歲  
What is your age?

#### Part B: 同學需求之分析

#### Part B: Analysis of Students' Needs

1 =	非常贊成	strongly agree
2 =	贊成	agree

3 =	中立	neutral
4 =	反對	disagree
5 =	非常反對	strongly disagree

藉著修這門課，你(妳)希望學習到什麼樣的語言情境或技巧？

What language situations or skills that you wish to achieve by taking the course?

1.1 **翻譯技巧**的知識

Knowledge on Translation Techniques

1.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

2.1 關於某些英文詞句在**不同的語言情境**所代表的**意思會有所不同的**知識

Knowledge of the different contexts in which words are used in English and Mandarin

2.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

3.1 **中英文詞序**的知識

Knowledge on sentence orders of English and Mandarin

3.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

4.1 了解**英文成語**

Understanding English Idioms

4.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

5.1 了解**英文的俚語**

Understanding English Slang

5.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

6.1 翻譯**報紙和雜誌**上的文章

Translating articles from newspapers /magazines

6.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

7.1 翻譯**文學作品**

Translating literature

7.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

8.1 在**同步翻譯**方面的知識和技巧

Knowledge and Techniques on Simulation Translation

8.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

9.1 有關**政治議題**的用語

Terminology on Political issues

9.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

10.1 **翻譯影片/電影/電視節目**

Translating Films/Movies/TV Programs

10.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

The course provides sufficient preparation for this

11. 這門課中那些方面是你(妳)的**弱項和強項**? 如果有的話請勾選, 其他未列出的項目可以在後面填入。

What are some of your strengths and weaknesses in this course? Please tick

a. **英文專業用語**

Professional Terminology

**弱項** Weakness

**強項** Strength

評語或說明

b. **英文文法的知識**

Knowledge of English Grammar

**弱項** Weakness

**強項** Strength

評語或說明

c. **了解消遣性英文讀物的內容**

Understanding Texts You Read For Pleasure

**弱項** Weakness

**強項** Strength

評語或說明

d. **了解報章雜誌的內容**

Understanding Newspaper/Magazines

**弱項** Weakness

強項 Strength  
評語或說明

e. 了解資訊性語篇的內容  
Understanding Information Texts

弱項 Weakness

強項 Strength

評語或說明

f. 英文句法結構的知識  
Knowledge of English Sentence Structure

弱項 Weakness

強項 Strength

評語或說明

g. 其他  
Other(s)

弱項 Weakness

強項 Strength

評語或說明

12. 你(妳)的語文能力 (請參照下列級別分析填入阿拉伯數字)

Your Language Ability

1 =	初級	→ 我的語言能力很有限	Beginner level
2 =	基礎級	→ 我具有基礎語言能力	Basic level
3 =	中級	→ 我具有令人滿意的語言能力	Intermediate level
4 =	進階級	→ 我具有一些專業的能力	Advanced level
5 =	高階級	→ 我具有非常專業的能力	Mastery level

翻譯技巧的知識

Knowledge on Translation Techniques

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

關於某些英文詞句在不同的語言情境所代表的意思會有所不同的知識

Knowledge of the different contexts in which words are used in English and Mandarin

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

中英文詞序的知識

Knowledge on sentence orders of English and Mandarin

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

了解英文成語

Understanding English Idioms

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

了解英文的俚語

Understanding English Slang

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

翻譯報紙和雜誌上的文章

Translating articles from newspapers/magazines

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

翻譯文學作品

Translating literature

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular area

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

在同步翻譯方面的知識和技巧

Knowledge and Techniques on Simulation Translation

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

有關政治議題的用語

Terminology on Political Issues

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

翻譯影片/電影/電視節目

Translating Films/Movies/TV Programs

你(妳)估計自己目前在這個科目裡的英語能力級數

Your estimate of your present English level in this particular

你(妳)想要達到的級數

Your target level

**Part C: 同學對本課程之期望分析**

**Part C: Analysis of Students' Expectations for the course**

1. 對於這一門課，你(妳)的期望是什麼？  
What are your expectations for the course?
2. 你(妳)認為課程設計內容符合你(妳)的期望嗎？  
Do you think the syllabus fits your expectation(s)?
  - a. 是 Yes
  - b. 否 No

請說明  
(Comments)
3. 你(妳)認為目前的課程設計內容缺少什麼？  
What aspect (if any) is lacking in the present syllabus?

4. 依照目前的課程設計內容而言，

In regards of present syllabus

1 =	非常贊成	strongly agree
2 =	贊成	agree
3 =	中立	neutral
4 =	反對	disagree
5 =	非常反對	strongly disagree

- 4.1 我認為課本裡的翻譯技巧符合我的需求  
I think the translation techniques included in the textbook fits my needs

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？

Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

- 4.2 我認為課本內容很容易了解  
I think the textbook is easy to follow
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.3 我認為上課的進度符合我的需求  
I think the pace of the class is right for me
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.4 我認為課堂上的即席翻譯符合我的需求  
I think the simultaneous translating in class fits my needs
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.5 我認為雙人分組練習符合我的需求  
I think the pair work fits my needs
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.6 我認為團體分組練習符合我的需求  
I think the group work fits my needs
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.7 我認為講課這種上課的方式符合我的需求  
I think the use of lectures fits my needs
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.8 我認為討論同學的翻譯作品符合我的需求  
I think discussing translation done by peers fits my needs
- 是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法?  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?
- 4.9 我認為老師補充的講義符合我的需求  
I think the distribution of additional handouts fits my needs

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.10 我認為課堂上額外補充的文章(教科書之外)符合我的需求  
I think the additional articles used in class (other than textbook) fits my needs

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.11 我滿意在這門課程的進步  
I think I have made satisfactory progress during the course

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.12 我認為在翻譯方面整體的進步符合我的需求  
I think the overall improvement I made in translating fits my needs

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.13 我認為課堂上的影片教學符合我的需求  
I think using films/TV programs as teaching materials fits my needs

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.14 我認為課堂參與和討論這種評分方式適合我  
I think the mode of assessment – class participation is right for me

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.15 我認為課堂翻譯練習這種評分方式適合我  
I think the mode of assessment – in-class translation is right for me

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.16 我認為翻譯作業這種評分方式適合我  
I think the mode of assessment – homework translation is right for me

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？  
Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.17 我認為期中考這種評分方式適合我

I think the mode of assessment – the midterm exam is right for me

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？

Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.18 我認為期末考這種評分方式適合我

I think the mode of assessment – the final exam is right for me

是否有任何可增加你(妳)滿意度的方法？

Is there any way to enhance your level of satisfaction?

4.19 是否有其它部份也能符合你(妳)的需求？

What are the other aspect(s) that fit your needs?

請說明你(妳)的理由

Please explain

4.20 是否有其它部份未能符合你(妳)的需求？

What are the other aspect(s) that fails to fit your needs?

請說明你(妳)的理由

Please explain

#### **Part D: 對於課程的意見反映與建議**

#### **Part D: Reflections and Suggestions for the Course**

1. 關於這門課的那些部份**最能**符合你(妳)的學習需求？

What aspects of the course were **most** satisfying to your learning needs?

2. 關於這門課的那些部份**最不能**符合你(妳)的學習需求？

What aspects of the course were **least** satisfying to your learning needs?

3. 其它建議或評語

Other suggestions or comments

謝謝同學幫忙填寫這份問卷。

Thank you or filling out this questionnaire.

5/4

今天教 Newspaper Terms D 时觉得多花了一些时间，值得庆幸的是说 Ss 很有兴趣，可以来回问，但是觉得真的很有趣，两个字就弄得很慢，也弄错一些错吧。这栋 30 分钟一下就到了

重读时电视影集用 'friends', 事无不可近他们，还过他们一看引都吓一跳，可见电视电视即目，所以电视即自或自用 '大人' 答应的也很好，对输入回抽热烈，看得出他们有参与，是有看过吧！

有些字还没来订输他们不懂的地方，如有一句 'Each' 说的，'Oh! 啊！' 字都是 '天啊！'，他们觉得好奇为什么这词好用，就另外也弄了一些和原文完全连不到一起的翻译，

例如：'piece of cake' 其实是 '超简单' 的意思，'福来' 他们觉得这种对在口中常常说得很流利，因为一直在背，有人这端起顺口溜了

P1

有些同学是和 'sabbles' 一起做题，同学都不过是重复英文时话，'reply in sabbles' 太多，虽然有些大的话，也知道在说什么，有些句子也知道意思了，令一直自己掉队

同学之间有时相互帮助，还是有进步的，所以比较没有过好

就在课堂做练习，分组进行，同学会聚成一组一组，虽然有些吵，不过也是好事吧，如果改少些吵闹，学生会太沉闷，哈！

有些同学下课后，用词组造句，词组是简单些，同学可以互相比较

有些同学下课后，用 'Newspaper Terms D' 来做，又是一组订价还价，故事款率时想，听过，奇怪字与一德引小字就是过粉，明明就也习惯了这是要哇一下以示

P2



## Appendix 5 Example elements supported by the students to be included in the curriculum

### 4.1 了解英文成語

#### Understanding English Idioms

1	4/38	10.53 %
2	12/38	31.58 %
3	18/38	47.37 %
4	4/38	10.53 %
5	0/38	0.00 %

### 4.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

#### The course provides sufficient preparation for this

1	2/38	5.26%
2	13/38	34.21%
3	18/38	47.37 %
4	4/38	10.53 %
5	1/38	2.63 %

### 5.1 了解英文的俚語

#### Understanding English Slang

1	3/38	7.89 %
2	12/38	31.58 %
3	20/38	52.63 %
4	2/38	5.26 %
5	1/38	2.63 %

### 5.2 這門課在這方面提供了足夠的準備

#### The course provides sufficient preparation for this

1	1/38	2.63 %
2	8/38	21.05 %
3	26/38	68.42 %
4	2/38	5.26 %
5	1/38	2.63 %

### 6.1 翻譯報紙和雜誌上的文章

#### Translating articles from newspapers /magazines

1	6/38	15.79 %
2	15/38	39.47 %
3	14/38	36.84 %
4	2/38	5.26 %
5	1/38	2.63 %

**Appendix 6 The Consent Form**

**RESEARCH CONSENT FORM (學術研究同意書)**

**TITLE OF RESEARCH:**

What do students need/want in translation courses in Taiwanese institutes of technology?

Researcher: Hsiu-Tzu Charlene Shen, School of Education, Durham University

*Please circle as necessary*

Did the researcher explain in full what the research is about? YES / NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study? YES / NO

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? YES / NO

Have you received enough information about the study? YES / NO

Do you consent to participate in the study? YES/NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:

\* at any time and

\* without having to give a reason for withdrawing and

\* without affecting your position in the University? YES / NO

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) .....

## Appendix 7 Example Lesson Plan

**Date:** May 14, 2008

**Theme(s):** 1. Introduction of Newspaper Terms D  
2. Translating a scene from TV program

**Duration:** 100 minutes (a 2-period class)

### **Objectives:**

1. By introducing newspaper terms (alphabet A to Z) D, students should expand their vocabulary capacity in order to translate articles from newspapers/magazines, as well as to enhance ability in simulation translation.
2. By watching and translating subtitles in a scene from 'Friends' as an in-class exercise, it is hoped that students will gain knowledge of the different contexts in which words are used in English and Chinese.

### **Teaching materials:**

1. Newspaper terms D
2. A clip from TV program 'Friends'
3. Handout: subtitles of the TV clip

### **Activities:**

1. Introducing and discussing Newspaper terms (D) – 30minutes
2. Watching TV clip, first time without subtitles, second time with subtitles. – 20 minutes
3. Distributing and discussing subtitle handouts – 10 minutes
4. In-class exercise: translating the subtitles – 30 minutes
5. Wrapping up class (questions and comment time) – 5-10 minutes

### **Homework:**

1. Review Newspaper Terms D for a quiz next week