

## Can You Tell Me Why: Two Extreme Cases in Translation Learning Results

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**Abstract.** While conducting an experiment in translation teaching methods between 2013 and 2014, the researcher found two participants especially distinctive. One who seemed rather likely to fail turned out to do quite well in the posttest beside his mid-term examination, while the other who ranked on top in the pretest ended up ranking at the bottom in the posttest. To find out the reasons why, the researcher invited them both for in-depth interviews, which were respectively conducted in May 23 and 31, 2014. The former explained the reason why: He made up for the skipped periods by taking extra effort to study on his own, utilizing the library of National Formosa University and the online files uploaded by the lecturer at the e-3 Campus Digital Learning System. The latter said, just trying to do something different for a change, he adopted another strategy in the posttest. Both regarded two factors conducive to their achievements in learning English-Chinese Translation, namely, pleasure reading and influences from supportive parents and Chinese teachers in their earlier education. Beside the approach of case study, part of the research findings will be presented in the form of narrative inquiry, for both cases are information-rich and inspiring.

**Keywords:** translation learning results; case study; narrative inquiry

### Introduction

Between the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, the researcher conducted an experiment in translation teaching methods, employing the traditional approach of “repositioning components” in the control group in contrast with a more innovative approach of “mental images portraying” in the experimental group (Wen, 2014a). From the results of pretest and posttest, two extreme cases stood

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out. To the surprise of the researcher, one participant (referred to as Tom in the following discussions) in the control group, who was not supposed to do too well, did make it nevertheless, while the other (referred to as Bob in the following discussions) in the experimental group who got the highest score in the pretest got the lowest score in the posttest. These two cases were too distinctive to be ignored. The reasons behind these phenomena are worth further exploring and, if figured out, are likely to be conducive to translation learning and education in general as well.

In fact, Tom did not show up for two consecutive weeks right after the beginning of the semester; that is, he missed 4 periods of classes. Therefore, the instructor did not expect him to get a high score in the mid-term examination. Yet he outdid 14 of his classmates in it. In his class of 27, hardly any students had ever skipped classes. In other word, half of his class who, without fail, attended all periods before mid-term failed to get a score higher than he did. As for Bob, he ranked on top in the pretest. After the pretest, the instructor showed participants their test results and explained how the pretest was scored. With these explanations given, two more weeks of treatment in the control group, and his success right at the start, Bob should have done better than the rest of his class. How come he ended up ranking at the bottom in the posttest? There must be a reason. The researcher decided to explore all possibilities as to the reasons why these two cases took place: why Tom did better than his classmates who hardly ever skipped a class and why Bob succeeded at first and failed at last. Therefore, she invited both of these two participants to receive an in-depth interview respectively.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to find as many probable reasons underlying the outstanding translation learning results of the two participants as possible. The interest of the researcher lies mainly in finding more things behind the extreme phenomena and describing them rather than verifying a hypothesis. The approaches of case study and narrative inquiry were adopted, while unstructured interviews remained the major research tools among others. Case study can help the researcher understand the unique experiences of the participants for the reference of other learners and instructors. Since many stories of the interviewees are information-rich and inspiring, the researcher had the interviewees tell their own stories in the first person narrative in a latter part of this paper. Narrative inquiry also helps the participants make sense of the experiences which they have gone through.

### **1. Case Study**

The earliest use of case study research can be traced to Europe, predominantly to France; in the United States it was most closely associated with The University of Chicago Department of Sociology, where the Chicago School was preeminent in the field and the source of a great deal of the literature from 1900's to 1935 (Tellis,

1997). As Stake (1995) points out, each case of interest in education and social service is unique in many ways, and we seek to understand every one of them and would like to hear stories of each case.<sup>2</sup> According to Patton (1990), case study is

particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information – rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question (p. 53).

This happens to coincide with the situations of the two cases in focus. The two students are special and unique in a sense that they can be considered as extreme cases. Therefore, case study is appropriate for looking further into these cases. Stake (1995) declares that “Case study is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases (p. 4),” for sometimes an unusual case helps illustrate matters we overlook in typical cases. This point further endorses the use of case study approach in this study: These two special cases are certainly extraordinary and cannot be taken light of in a business-as-usual manner.

Merriam (1998) does not think that the sampling statistics in quantitative research apply to qualitative research. The sampling method most often taken for case study is purposive sampling (Lin, 2000). Cases are in the limelight instead of variables now. Interpretations and explications can be complicated and described around a person or an event; insights and rich details take the place of statistics in quantitative research (Neuman, 2008). Hopefully, the researcher will find insights that is conducive to others’ learning (Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, 2003).

Though case study appears to be a poor basis for generalization, these cases studied at length revealed some activities, problems, or responses coming up again and again none the less; therefore, certain generalizations can still be drawn in some cases as Stake (1995) suggested. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) also agree that a certain amount of generalization is possible in a case study. However, Stake (1995) had it that they are not to be thought of as generalizations and may need some label such as “*petite generalizations*” (p.7) which regularly occur all along the way in case study. Nevertheless, Stake (1995) considered the real business of case study to particularization rather than to generalization. For him, the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself; that is, the first objective of a case is to understand the case (Stake, 2006).

By definition, the prime referent in case study is the case, not the methods by which the case operates (Stake, 2006). For Patton (1990), a case can be “a person, an event, a program, an organization, a time period, a critical incident, or a community (p. 54).” Yet Tellis (1997) considered the unit of analysis in a case

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<sup>2</sup> In this research, most of my data collected took the form of stories and remain this way.

study is typically a system of action rather than an individual or group of individuals. Stake (1995) in reflections figured out what it is not: “The case is something special to be studied, a student, a classroom, a committee, a program, perhaps, but not a problem, a relationship, or a theme (p. 133).” As was pointed out, cases are special. Yet Tellis (1997) had another viewpoint. He found that case studies tend to be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental to understanding the system being examined. For Stake (2006): “A case is a noun, a thing, an entity; it is seldom a verb, a participle, a functioning (1).” However, the case can be used as an arena or host “to bring many functions and relationships together for study” (Stake, 2006: 2).

As for the total number of cases to be studied, it is up to the researcher’s design. Single or multiple cases are both rightful situations to be covered (Yin, 1993). If a single case is chosen, the case can serve exploratory, descriptive, or even causal purposes provided that it is a “critical case,” in which the empirical data are used to test an important theory (*Ibid.*). If multiple cases are involved, the logic bringing these cases together should be considered a *replication logic* rather than *sampling logic* (Yin, 1993).

Stake (2006) regards that the single case is meaningful, to some extent, in terms of other cases; in other word, any case would be incomprehensible if other somewhat similar cases were not already known. Therefore, he considers that, even when there is no attempt to be comparative, the single case is studied with attention to other cases. The cases categorically bound together somehow are members of the same group or examples of a phenomenon. Stake (2006) calls this group, category, or phenomenon a “quintain (p. 6),” an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied. Stake (2006) also claims that the researcher may study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the “quintain” better and that the researcher may give proportionate or disproportionate attention to the quintain and individual cases.

I agree with Creswell (2013) when he said that case study research, as a methodology, is a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry. Though most teachers, graduate students, and researchers in education have encountered cases studies in training or work, Merriam (1988) thinks there was little consensus on what constitutes a case study. Quoting Smith (1978; quoted in Merriam, 1988; See also Stake, 2006), Merriam (1998) defines “a bounding system” as the focus of the investigation. She also defines “an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group (p. 9)” as case study. Just like Stake (1995), Merriam (1988) also finds it helpful to point out what case study is not in addition to what it is while defining case study: She thinks that case study research is not the same as casework, case method, case history, or case record. In the definition of Merriam (1998), the qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit and it relies heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources. Merriam (1998) is not the only person who finds

the significance of multiple data sources. Creswell (2013) in his definition of case study also mentions this; he considers case study to be a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (multiple cases) through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports and then reports a case description and case themes.

## **2. Use of Multiple Data Collection to Ensure Reliability and Validity**

As Earl Babbie (2005) points out in the ninth edition of his classic *The Practice of Social Research*, there is a certain sort of interactive dynamic between validity and reliability. Taking factory workers for an illustration, he says that in an effort taken to understand the morale of a factory it is scientific for the researcher to calculate the total number of workers' complaints, yet the validity of talking to workers on the assembly line is even higher though it is hard to do so without compromising the reliability. That is a dilemma the researcher often faces in choosing research methods: When the validity increases, reliability declines. You cannot have your cake and eat it.

### **a. Research Tools**

As aforementioned, Creswell (2013) and Merriam (1998) both state multiple data collection in their definition of case study; furthermore, Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009a, 2011a) also recommend the use of multiple sources of data collection so as to address such issues as trustworthiness in narrative research, which is one of the two research methods taken in this study.

Tellis (1997) also said that, case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. For Stake (1995; Tellis, 1997), triangulation comprises the protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations. As a result of the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes, triangulation arises (Tellis, 1997). In case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 2001). Therefore, to best encounter the criticism against narrative research as fictitious, romanticized versions of school life, the researcher decided to employ alongside the major research tool of unstructured interviews in this research multiple sources of information, including the research tools of test results, survey questionnaires (Wen, 2014a), semi-structured interviews, and videos from the mother research (Wen, 2014b).

Besides, in-depth interviews of the two cases were videotaped, and the researcher's own classroom observations were taken into consideration, too. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009b, 2011b) deem tapes as convenient and reliable research tools, for they ensure the availability of the original data anytime. Videotapes, which contain not only sound but also images, are even more helpful. Interview videotapes are especially good for analysis and exploration, for they can be stored and played back for many times (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). This way of data collection is more effective in that it keeps the researchers from losing sight of meaningful non-verbal details that are happening simultaneously

during the interviews. Moreover, since one triangulation method recommended by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) is to have results checked by the interviewees, the results of this study were sent to the interviewees to see if the information is correct.

#### **b. Unstructured Interviews**

For this study, open-ended interviews were respectively conducted on 23 and 31 in May, 2014. In this type of interview the interviewees give their in-depth opinions about some key events or facts (Stake, 1995; Wu, Hsieh, Huang, & Chen, 2006). As one of the data collection tools in narrative inquiry, these “unstructured interviews” are normally conducted with open-ending questions. Such dialogues go on back and forth between the interviewer and interviewee (Henning, Stone, & Kelly, 2011). As researchers raise questions to find meanings, interviewees are allowed to take up most of the time in the conversations. Such unstructured interviews can be deliveries of life story, narrative history and biographical interviews (*Ibid.*).

Unstructured interviews are either non-directed or focused, yet education researcher prefers focused interviews to non-directed interviews so as not to waste time (Lin, 2012). But Krathwohl (1998) says it is the non-directive interviews that are especially important for interviewers to master. For one thing, they keep the interviewees instead of the interviewers at the center of attention; for another, they decrease the risk of missing the unexpected, which may open up new opportunities to significant findings.

Unstructured interviews are little more than a casual conversation that allows the qualitative researcher to inquire into a certain thing that presented itself as chance to learn about something at the research setting; their goal is not to get answers to predetermined questions but rather to find out where the participants are coming from and what they have experienced (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009b). In these informal interviews, the researcher respects the interviewees’ feelings and interpretations of their own experiences, trying to interpret the behaviors or attitude of the interviewees from their own perspectives (Fan, 2004). Patton (1990) also said that the interviewers are to understand the feelings, thinking, and intentions of the interviewees and to describe the events.

In the interviews going on between researchers and participants, transcripts are made, possibilities for further discussions are kept, and these interviews become part of the ongoing narrative record (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The interviewer may start from talking about the current events and then depart from here to the past or the future (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2011). Unstructured interviews are spontaneous: Both the interviewer and the interviewees are to freely talk about issues in which they are interested so that they have a grasp of each other’s thinking and make comparisons among their different perspectives (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

### 3. Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, or narrative research, is applied in part of the descriptions of the two cases studied here, because both the interviewees' stories in this study are information-rich and inspiring; they can be best understood in the words of the speakers themselves from the first person's point of view. According to F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin (1990):

The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general conception is refined into the view that education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers as storyteller and characters in their own and other's stories.

A relatively new qualitative methodology, narrative inquiry is a way in which narrative inquirers think narratively about experience throughout inquiry, following a recursive, reflexive process of moving from field with starting points in telling or living of stories to field texts to interim and final research texts (Clandinin & Huber, in press). Since it is a research method and way of thinking at the same time, it is not easy to define (Ho, 2005). It is used when willing individuals are available to tell their stories and the researcher would like to report their stories (Creswell, 2012). For educators seeking personal experiences in actual school settings, narrative research offers practical and specific insights; as a literary form of qualitative research with strong ties to literature, narrative inquiry provides a qualitative approach in which the researcher can write in a persuasive literary form (*Ibid.*).

Narrative Inquiry is easily confused with narrative. Wiebe (2009) tells one from the other by pointing out that narrative inquiry is a methodological approach that investigates narrative and/or employs narrative to present a view of phenomena, whereas a narrative is often a story about a significant event or experience in an individual's life. In fact, the origin of the word "narrative" can be found in Aristotle's *Poetics* (Eliott, 2005), in which a narrative is said to be a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. A narrative has a plot and is not just a chronicle that offers no explicit links between events in the sequence (Foster, 1979). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) thinks that narrative inquiry can be traced to not only Aristotle's *Poetics* but also Augustine's the *Confessions* (Ricoeur, 1984) and that narrative inquiry may be said to have various adaptations and applications in a variety of areas including education. Unlike event-centered research, narrative research is meaningful experience-centered, distinguishing personal narratives from other representations as sequential in time (Squire, 2008). It is characterized by the following elements (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2009a): a focus on the experiences of individuals, a concerns with the chronology of individual's experiences, a focus on the construction of life stories based on data collected through interviews, restorying as a technique for constructing the narrative account; inclusion of context and place in the story; a

collaborative approach that involves the researcher and the participants in the negotiation of the final text; a narrative constructed around the question, “And then what happened?” It does not attempt to describe cultural images as ethnography does; nor does it try to establish abstract theory as grounded theory does (Wang & Wang, 2012).

For some authors, internal validity is to be improved by the use of narrative, for participants are empowered to provide more concrete and specific details about the topic discussed and to use their own vocabulary and conceptual framework to describe life experiences; however, other researchers considered storytelling to be a sense-making activity in the process that individuals are forced to reflect on those experiences, to select the salient aspects, and to order them into a coherent whole (Elliott, 2005). A further important issue in the validity of narrative interview is the question of whether narratives are produced specifically for the researcher in a qualitative interview or whether the narratives told in interviews are closely related to those which occur spontaneously in conversation and other aspects of daily life (*Ibid.*). To decide whether an interviewee is telling the truth, the researcher need to consider what questions or topic are being addressed in the research, and what type of truths or insights are to be obtained from an interview (*Ibid.*). If the research focus is more on the meanings attached to the individual’s experiences and/or on the way that those experiences are communicated to others, then narratives provide an ideal medium for researching and understanding individuals’ lives in social context (*Ibid.*). That is why narrative inquiry is appropriate for presenting part of the research findings of this study: The researcher conducted this narrative inquiry with a view to finding meaningful experiences of the interviewees. With the words right form their mouth, the interviewees communicate directly their personal experiences to the reader who may have a better understanding of what they went through.

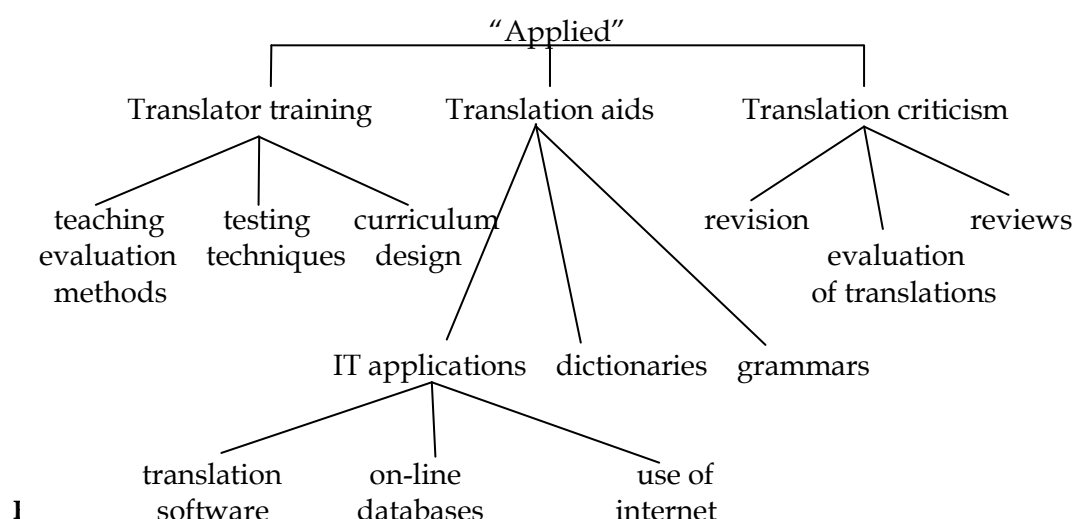
### **Research Background**

As Susan Bassnett (2002) stated in the introduction to her *Translation Studies*, translation studies is a young discipline. In an interview, Leo Tak-hung Chan (Shan, 2015) said that translation studies have been conducted for thirty years. Yet over the last three decades translation studies have developed into a fledgling discipline (Zhang & Lee, 2014). Currently, questions generally accepted as relevant and important enough to be asked in the field of translation studies are very different from what they were; it has now come to mean something like “anything that claims to have anything to do with translation,” whereas in the past it meant only “training translators” (Bassnett & Levevere, 1998). For example, history is one of the things that happened to translation studies since the 1970s (*Ibid.*). Geoge Steiner (1998) identified 4 stages of translation development and listed famous translators with their works of different phases. In his classification, we are now in the modern current. Posen Liao (2013) sorted out



six stages of translation history based on the six peaks of translation development in sequential order. Yet Lefevere and Bassnett (1998) themselves discussed the historical divisions by means of “models” rather than time sequence. Another change observed by Lefevere and Bassnett (1998) is the strategies employed to serve the different functions of four types of texts: to inform, to entertain, to do both, or to translate texts that belong to the cultural capital of a given culture (*Ibid.*); however, functionalists tend to regard texts as informative, expressive, or operative (Reiss, 2001; quoted in Liao, 2013). As for the field coverage, in *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, Munday (2001: 10) presented a chart displaying the applied branch of translation studies based on the Holmes/Toury “map,” in which the three subfields translator training, translation aids, and translation criticism belong to the categories of applied translation (See Fig. 1). It can be seen that translator training has been an important issue of translation studies for years and still remains a significant one.

Today, in the twenty-first century, boundaries are less constraining than any other time in history and movement of peoples across boundaries is increasing because of the advanced Internet technology. This also has its influence on translation studies. Since 1990s interest generated by corpus-based translation enquiry opened distinct lines of research that continue to flourish (Bassnett, 2002). For example, Dr. Chung-ling Shih (2006) proposed machine translation and translation memory tools as a possible route to modify current translation teaching so as to achieve the goals of practicability, authenticity and relevance. Yet machine translation is missing in the above figure by Munday (2001: 13), whereas Posen Liao (2013: 5) in his quote of Toury’s depiction of Holme’s analysis includes machine translation in the diagram.



Globalization is another trend that enters into the field of translation studies in the twenty-first century. When he was asked by Teh-Hsing Shan (2015) about types of research he has done in an interview, Leo Tak-hung Chan said that

translators should have unique viewpoints concerning the issue of the globalization of the English language and he admitted that he has published articles on that. Another example is a paper on student expectation of translating and interpreting training programs in graduate institutes in Taiwan was conducted by Chen and Liao (2014) from the perspective of globalization, too.

Translation pedagogy, or translation teaching, from which this study derived, is considered by some to be drowned out by the endless debate over theory versus practice today: Translation theory is typically criticized as at best irrelevant to the professional translator and at worst distracting and misleading (Baer & Koby, 2003). But it may not be the right way to look at the relationship between theory and practice. Colina (2003) said when models and hypotheses are isolated in need of empirical validation, the application of theoretically based methods to the classroom is a useful source of data to test validity and instructional effects while these data can in turn be used to revise models and hypotheses. The researcher is in line with Pym (2016) when he says it is not right to segregate theory from practice. On the one hand, theories may be of help to solving conflicts that arise in discussions of the translation classes. On the other, teachers may introduce terminology when students are in need of such theoretical supports in their debate. The results may be fruitful when theory is introduced into the translation classroom in such cases. And the knowledge produced in classroom teaching may also be conducive to the field of translation studies.

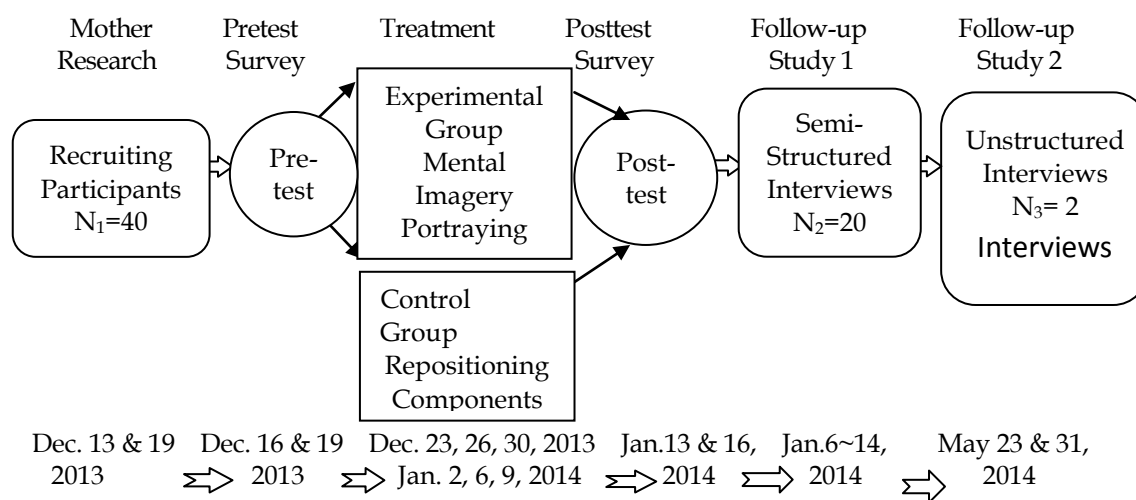
Among all these controversies between theory and practice, the target audience of translator education, the translation learner or student is a good subject to take into consideration. Echeverri (2015) said that helping students to take better control of their own learning is an aspect that can be influenced by knowledge produced in educational research. This is verily so, and the researcher proposes here that learners' own personal experiences may also shed some light on translation teaching in return and open some more possibilities in future educational research in translation studies. For example, Liao (2016, 2007) has done a certain research on college students' translation strategy use, which is a learner-centered study. He also conducted another research on the relationships between students' learning styles and their translation competence (Liao, 2011), which is also an example of learner-centered study. Understanding students' way of learning can be a route that leads to productive findings that helps researchers figure out how to advance their learning.

Case study has been a research method for translation studies for years. For example, Zhang Rui and Lee Tong-King (2014) has conducted a case study on the methodological issues in translation research in China. They examined the unjustified claims made by Yan Fu, Lin Shu and Lu Xun, analyzed possible reasons, and made recommendations to enhance methodological awareness in translation research and teaching. In an interview conducted by Bo Li (2014), Prof. Douglas Robinson mentioned that he used case study as his research method once when theorizing practical applications, looking at one specific problem of a single translator, namely Alex Matson, who was Finnish born but

raised in England and translated both ways from English to Finnish and Finnish to English. Besides, he also conducted a case study by taking a close look between two English translations of Dostoevsky, in which he found them to be very similar. Shahhoseiny (2015) also presented a case study of first-year translation students at a university of applied science and technology in Iran. From the above cases, it is not too far-fetched to infer that case study is already an accepted method of research for translation studies.

### Research Process

In the unstructured interviews conducted, the interviewees were given the freedom to talk about whatever that came to their mind in the beginning, while near the end of the interviews they were asked which people or events in their earlier education were considered helpful or relevant to their current translation learning results. In the interviews, the two participants were making sense of their past learning experiences and trying to find their relevance to their present translation learning experiences. These interviews were conducted respectively on 23 and 31 of May in 2014 as the second follow-up study of the mother research (Wen, 2014a; See Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2 Research Process.** This figure was adapted and translated from the mother research (Wen, 2014a) and the first follow-up study (Wen, 2014b). This research is Follow-up Study 2.

### Research Findings

#### I. Tom's Case

The first participant interviewed was Tom, who, in the mother research (Wen, 2014a; See also Fig. 2), was in the control group, that received the more traditional training of repositioning components as their major method of translation. In the very beginning of the semester, Tom skipped classes during

the second and third weeks. In other word, he missed four periods while almost all of his classmates had never missed any. Yet in the mid-term examination he got a score higher than 14 classmates in the class that totaled 27; that is, he outdid more than half (51.85%) of his class.

In the mother research (Wen, 2014a; See also Fig. 2) from which this study is originated, the perfect scores for both pretest and posttest were 55. Tom got 23.5 in the pretest while the average of his classmates was 13 and the standard deviation was 6.69. He came the second in the pretest; his score was higher than 20 (90.9%) of his group members (n=22). In the subsequent posttest, he got 42 while the average of his group members was 25.3 and the deviation was 9.25. He still maintained his silver medal in the posttest.

In the first survey of the mother research conducted before pretest (i.e. pre-test survey; See Fig. 2), Tom said that he read the handouts but did not finish doing it, neither did 13 (33.33%) of the participants (N= 40) in the mother research. Only 3 (7.5%) participants said that they finished reading the handouts for sure. One of those in the control group won the gold medal in both the pretest and posttest. Although Tom did not finish the assigned reading of handouts, he was still one of the best. In the interview conducted on May 23, 2014, Tom disclosed that he had a part-time job on weekends; Saturday and Sunday are his work days. He was exhausted every weekend. That is the reason why he overslept for two times and did not come to the class that was scheduled on Monday morning. When asked how he made it in the mid-term examination and the posttest, Tom explained the way he made up for the missed lessons: Firstly, he asked his classmates what was taught and borrowed notes from them; secondly, he downloaded the electronic versions of handouts from e-3 Campus Digital Learning System of National Formosa University, which are in PowerPoint format, rearranged them in his own order, and went over the handouts on his own; thirdly, and finally, he went to the library, checked out the reference books listed in the handouts, and read not only parts that were quoted but also those that were not.

The researcher was overwhelmed by Tom's hard work, for such painstaking effort was hardly taken by any students, and she asked Tom why he was so highly motivated. Tom revealed that, after he had skipped classes for two consecutive weeks, he was warned by the researcher teacher that he was on the verge of being flunked. He was told that, if he was absent again without any justified cause, he was sure to fail this required course, Chinese-English Translation I.<sup>3</sup> After that he never dared to skip any class. Apparently, the researcher teacher's warning, or threatening, worked: It spurred Tom to work harder than most of his classmates subsequently.

The next thing by which the researcher is much impressed is that Tom checked out the references books in the library and went over the original literature from

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<sup>3</sup> Though the name of the course is "Chinese-English Translation," it includes translations of both ways.

which the handouts were adapted. The researcher remembered that at one point he even offered a journal article to the researcher and recommended that she use it in students' oral presentations of mock conferences.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Tom has his own organization of the downloaded PowerPoint files. That means he has a unique way of arranging these teaching materials. The researcher responded to Tom by saying that most schoolmates who passed the qualifying examination in her PhD program in the University of Taipei had their own arrangements of materials, too.

Tom's second point also reminded the researcher of one of her own journal articles (Wen & Wang, 2008): Students reported that, when they, for whatever reason, missed a period or two, they found it helpful to have a second chance by visiting the virtual classroom online, where they were able to make up for their loss by downloading the teaching materials available online and view their classmates' discussions on classroom activities.<sup>5</sup>

Tom's case showed that a certain warning in time can motivate a student. In his case, he took tremendous effort to make up for the missed course content and eventually outdid not only most of his group members in the experiment but also more than half of his classmates in the mid-term examination. However, this may not be the only reason. Based on the classroom observations, the researcher found that Tom obviously has a better command of the language in reading and/or vocabulary. At one point the researcher gave the group a translation assignment to do in class. Most of Tom's classmates had a hard time doing it, yet he finished doing it in no time. When his classmates were still struggling with it, Tom went to the toilet and returned to the classroom where not too many of his classmates were enjoying the freedom as he was. This is not the end of the story, either. In the interview, Tom also admitted that attending applied foreign language program in his senior high school days helps him procure a solid base of vocabulary, whereas many of his classmates said in the semi-structured interviews of Follow-up Study 1 that vocabulary is their Stumbling Block Number One in doing translations (Wen, 2014b). Among the 7 types of translation strategies they offered in the semi-structured interviews, 5 (71.43%) were those dealing with new words they didn't know (*Ibid.*). Twelve (60%) out of the 20 interviewees in the first follow-up study directly or indirectly mentioned their difficulties in vocabulary. It is not far-fetched to make an inference that Tom's vocabulary knowledge to a certain degree gained ground for him. Therefore, his senior high school education with specialization in English can be another significantly favorable factor for his performance.

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<sup>4</sup> From the fall semester of Academic Year 2009 to winter 2014, the researcher accommodated "mock conference presentations" in the curriculum as part of students' oral report/peer teaching.

<sup>5</sup> Students in this class were asked to write weekly learning logs online onto the discussion areas in the e-3 Digital Learning System of National Formosa University, offering their reflections on what was learned in class.

## II. Bob's Case

Bob was in the experimental group and received the treatment of mental imagery portraying as the major method of translation. In the pretest of the mother research (Wen, 2014a; See also Fig. 2), he got 26.5 and ranked on top in the pretest. The average score of his class was 16.06 with the standard deviation of 7.45. After the pretest, the instructor showed participants their test results and explained how the pretest was scored. With these explanations in mind, two more weeks of treatment, and his success in the pretest, he should have done much better. Yet he failed in the posttest and got only 12 in it; the average of his class reached 23.08 with the standard deviation of 8.68. He lost his crown in the end and, even worse, he ranked precisely at the bottom. How come he who won the championship at first ended up ranking at the bottom?

On May 31, 2014, Bob was asked this question in the last quarter during the one-hour interview. From his pretest result, it can be easily seen that he already mastered the translation technique. The researcher asked him why he used another strategy and did the posttest in a rougher way. Since the teacher explained how the pretest was scored and what those scores meant after the pretest, he should have already known that his former strategy did work. Why did he not just do the same in the posttest as he did in the pretest? Why did he change his strategy and use another method of translation? His answer came all too instantly and curtly. He said that he wondered whether the posttest would be evaluated in a rather different way. If the posttest is scored in exactly the same way as the pretest, then they were just two sets of questions to be solved in like manner. For him, it would not be so interesting to repeat that same way of translation in the posttest; therefore, he decided to make a change. He was not in a hurry, nor was he rushed through the posttest. He was not tired, either. He told the researcher it is not that there were new words. There are always new words whenever translation is to be done, he said. In his posttest, he simply took another strategy. In short, it was not for any mysterious reason that he failed in the posttest, he just did not want to repeat himself by doing translations in the old way. He wanted to try something different to see if it will be more interesting.

## Narratives of the Participants' Learning Experiences

In the interviews that last for one hour, both interviewees were free to talk about their learning experiences from childhood up to now besides asking the interviewer questions concerning their learning. Inspiring stories came along here and there all the time. The researcher decided to let them tell their own stories in this section. The researcher not only raised questions [represented by "Int", shortened from the word Interviewer], while the participants took up most of the time talking about their own experiences. These narratives were not rearranged; they were numbered in the original order with a subheading as well as ellipsis in between narratives. The original interviews were in Chinese. The narratives offered here are the researcher's translations. They were checked by

the interviewees and were confirmed of their accuracy.

## I. Tom's Narratives

### 1. Tom is a Lover of Literary Works of Art.

Int: Let's start from your childhood. Has your Mandarin Chinese always been good ever since you were in the primary school?

Tom: Mme. My Mandarin Chinese was not especially good when I was in the elementary school. I should be grateful to my junior high school Chinese teacher.

Int: Why?

Tom: She paid a lot of attention to our handwriting and pronunciation.

Int: Does that mean you are not supposed to miswrite a word?

Tom: That's right.

Int: Well, is it like a floating that comes to the surface of the water, since your learning results come to the fore after so many years?

Tom: Yes.

....

Tom: She told us the backgrounds of the articles in the textbook in great detail.

Tom: The next time when something similar came up, she would tell us those backgrounds of these articles all over again. And she raised questions to see if we still could remember. Then we had to try very hard to think of these background story once again.

Int: It makes all the difference. When you think it over, you will be much impressed.

Tom: (Nodding.) And I am especially interested in literature.

Int: Do you get high marks in Chinese compositions?

Tom: Compositions? (Nodding.) Ever since childhood, my Mandarin Chinese compositions have been good. But I am not good at sciences such as physics and chemistry. I got low scores in them.

Int: Did you read many famous literary works of art since you were a child?

Tom: I did read some, but not too many.

Int: Of what kind?

Tom: When I was in the elementary school, I read things like folk tales. When I went on to junior high school, I read translated modern Mandarin versions of ancient Chinese novels like *Journey to the West*.

Int: Right! Right!

Tom: And then.... I am interested in poetry, too.

Int: Children's?

Tom: Yes. I also read novels. Modern novels mostly, such as Lung Ying-tai's.

Int: Lung Ying-tai never wrote a novel. She wrote essays instead of novels.

Tom: Essays, essays, essays....

Int: Collections of essays.

Tom: In senior high school days, my Chinese teacher started to teach us literary works of art.

Int: Have you ever been persecuted for reading these "outside" readings other than your textbooks?

- Tom: I like to read. My mother encouraged me to read more literary works of art.
- Int: You have a great mom. My mother is a Chinese teacher, yet when I read modern Chinese literary works of art, she persecuted me.
- Tom: She bought many books for me to read.
- Int: Really? I was scolded for reading such books.
- Tom: [Gesturing a pile.] She bought sets of folk tales in Taiwan for me, and she made me read them. She said those tales were very important.
- Int: It makes all the difference. It makes all the difference. It makes all the difference. I borrowed children's version of world-famous literary works of art from the library. They are pollution-free; if you read grown-up's versions translated from the original, there are pollutions in the translations.
- Tom: So, then.... I read mostly essays. I also read some novels, but not too many.
- Int: So, you yourself are a lover of literary works of art.
- Tom: (Nodding.) I like to read.
- Int: So do I. Would you tell me your mother's background? Why did she encourage you to read?
- Tom: There is nothing special in her background. She is just an ordinary woman, not too well-educated.
- Int: Most parents would like their children to focus on schoolwork. My mom wouldn't allow me to read any other books.
- Tom: She is concerned about my academic achievements; and she also knows that I like to read literary works of art.
- Int: She makes you who you are.
- Tom: Yeah. She makes me who I am.
- Int: Your mother is so great!
- Tom: (Nodding.)
- Int: She spends a lot of money cultivating you. I went to the library to borrow books, and actually there were not many books in my parents' house.
- Tom: (Nodding.)
- Int: Then I grew up and started to buy books for myself.
- Tom: That was when I was a child. Now I am an adult. She tells me to borrow books for myself.
- Int: Yeah, you are a grown up now. You know how and where to get them.

## **2. Pleasure Reading and Influences from Junior High School Chinese Teacher**

- Int: Now what kind of books do you borrow from the library?
- Tom: Later on,... Later on,... I borrowed those related to what I study.
- Int: Course-related.
- Tom: Yes, course-related. For example, I took Children's English in my sophomore year and I borrow children's books from the library.
- Int: In Mandarin or English?
- Tom: English. [I read] English picture books. I even bought some very famous ones as part of my collection.
- Int: Oh, Huh-huh....



- Tom: Such as those by Dr. Seuss.
- Int: When I took my daughter to coffee shops with picture books, I read them together with her. It was fun.
- Tom: They are interesting. What is taught in class is limited; therefore, I look for more information in similar fields.
- Int: With no limitations, your world grows much wider.
- Tom: Yes.
- Int: Were you always like this before, looking for more books to read by yourself?
- Tom: Yes.
- Int: Since when? How old were you when you started to look for books by yourself?
- Tom: Since I was a junior high school student. And my teacher is the facilitator. She shared her own collection of books with us, putting all the books she had in the classroom.
- Int: She was not afraid of losing them?
- Tom: No, she was not. Every year she did the same: she asked students to read her books.
- Int: Oh, she sows many seeds. I wonder how great the harvest she may reap? So you see the influence of a good teacher may become obvious 10 years later.
- Tom: Mme. (Nodding.) She's my Chinese teacher.
- Int: How interesting a teacher can be! When I asked my Mom a question in Chinese literature, she took it for a challenge.
- Tom: An inspiring part of her teaching is that she raises questions and asks students to do brainstorming. When no one replied, she went to the back of the classroom and said, "Call me when you find the answers." And the class was stalled.
- Int: She forced you to think, to use your brain?
- Tom: The class was stalled, and she took a break. And I always was the first one to call her back, for I considered waiting for an answer a waste of time.
- Int: What kind of questions do you answer, something she already taught you or the brainstorming?
- Tom: Both.
- Int: Then you become a thinker, because she forced you to be one.
- Tom: You have to come up with some kind of an answer.
- Int: I think I need to interview her. Huh-huh.
- Tom: So was my senior high school Chinese teacher.
- Int: It's a grace. Not everyone has such great Chinese teachers.

### **3. Influences from Senior High School Chinese Teachers**

- Int: Can you tell me how your senior high school Chinese teacher taught you?
- Tom: Chinese teacher?
- Int: Yes, you said your senior high school Chinese teacher taught in a similar way to your junior high school one. But how? What did she do exactly?
- Tom: Exactly.... She.... There are introductions to the writers in the Chinese textbook, and there are notes and many other things.
- Int: Yes, yes.

- Tom: She started teaching us from the introduction to the article and then she moved on to the introduction to the author. She told us the background of each writer and their style.
- Int: Was it done in a way of storytelling?
- Tom: Yes, and she taught it in a vivid way, never rigid. And she made it fun. She told us what had ever happened to the authors. That's how she raised our interests.
- Int: Yeah, yeah. One of my high school Chinese teachers was like that. She could spend two hours telling us the life story of Tsai Yuen-pei (or Cai Yuanpei). I was overjoyed, for it was storytelling. Students like stories.
- Tom: And anecdotes of the ancient writers are interesting, such as who hated whom and libeled against whom.
- Int: That's funny.
- Tom: Yes, and who befriended whom.
- Int: And your interest grows.
- Tom: She never taught in a rigid way.
- Int: Ancient Chinese scripts could be rigid, but she made it interesting.
- Tom: Yes, in an enlivened way.
- Int: Then students got interested in the text.
- Tom: (Nodding.) And she cared about our handwriting. She did not like simplified Chinese characters. If we write simplified Chinese characters, we would be punished and write correct characters many many times.
- Int: I hate simplified Chinese characters too. Huh-huh.
- Tom: I myself do not like simplified Chinese characters, either. My classmates use simplified Chinese characters, but I don't like it. Movies downloaded always contain simplified Chinese subtitles, and I can't read them. My classmates told me, "If you see more movies with simplified Chinese subtitles, you will get it." But I just don't like simplified Chinese.
- Int: Low-level culture.
- Tom: Low-level culture. We shall never do without traditional Chinese characters.
- Int: No. Never.

#### **4. Use of the Internet**

- Int: How about the library in your senior high school? Were there many books in it?
- Tom: Just so-so.
- Int: You did not borrow many books from your school library then?
- Tom: At that time, I used the Internet more often than the library.
- Int: At home?
- Tom: Yes.
- Int: Well, this is an important piece of information. What kind of information did you look for?
- Tom: Key words.
- Int: For example? Jargons in your professional courses?

- Tom: Yes, this semester you taught us “allocation.” Then I went on line to look for relative information. When I find some pieces of useful information, I save them to “My Favorites.”
- Int: That is, you have the self-learning habit of going on line?
- Tom: Yes.
- Int: Which search engine do you use?
- Tom: Google.
- Int: Do you find Google to be the best?
- Tom: Yes.
- Int: And you save what you find important?
- Tom: Yes. I save them.
- Int: So you look for related information by using Google Search Engine?
- Tom: Yes, but if I find too few pieces of information, I will start looking for books.
- Int: Your priority is the World Wide Web and books are your second choice?
- Tom: Yes. It is more convenient to use the Internet.
- Int: Your order reverses mine. I look for books first. If I don’t find any, then I go online.
- Tom: I get online first.
- Int: When did you start the habit of going online?
- Tom: Since I was in senior high.
- Int: Senior high. But you just said you went home late.
- Tom: I did not work part-time when I was in high school. I went online over the weekends then. But to tell the truth, I did not consult many pieces of information on the Internet when I was in senior high. At that time, teachers gave you a lot of information, so I did not have the need to go on line searching information by myself. In class, could hardly catch up with my Chinese teacher, putting down what she said. I did not need to look for more information. It is in college that you ought to take up responsibility of your own learning.
- Int: Yes. Yes. Yes. But not every one of your classmates thinks so. You really have to take up the responsibility of your own learning. Really!
- Tom: I used to put the blame on others when I was a freshman. I wondered why our teachers taught us so few things. Then one of my classmates who always gets good grades, told me, “You are to look for it by yourself. In college, teachers are not supposed to give you everything.”
- ....
- Int: Can you tell me what kind of books you read other than folk tales in Taiwan that your mother bought you? Did you read detective stories like *Sherlock Holmes*?
- Tom: No.
- Int: How about martial arts novels [or *kung-fu* novels]?
- Tom: No. I am not so interested in martial arts novels as essays.
- Int: How about science fiction?
- Tom: No.
- Int: What you mean by “essays” includes commentaries like those by Ying-Tai Lung?

- Tom: Yes. That was when I was still in junior high. When I was small....
- Int: What kinds of books did you read?
- Tom: I read stories.
- Int: Of what kind? Those in Taiwan or from overseas or...?
- Tom: In Taiwan, folk tales.
- Int: So you read Taiwanese folk tales.
- Tom: Yes, Taiwanese folk tales and children's books, picture books. I read those since childhood.
- Int: And what series of children's books in particular? What's the name of the publishers?
- Tom: Publishers? I haven't noticed.
- Int: Are these all bought by your mother or borrowed from the library by yourself?
- Tom: My mom bought them for me.
- Int: Many of them are children's picture books?
- Tom: Yes. Very many.
- Int: One of the students who ranked on the top in the mid-term exam years ago shares this point with you.
- Tom: There are fewer words in the picture books. Children are not able to read too many words.
- Int: Right. Starting from these picture books, children learn more words little by little. The results can be amazing years later.
- Tom: I am good at Mandarin Chinese. After attending your classes, my sensitivity to Chinese characters is even more sharpened.
- Int: I talked about differences between expressions.
- Tom: (Nodding.) Before attending your classes, I didn't pay too much attention to the details, because I wrote by typing Chinese characters. Since you direct our attention to the structure, now I read what I type after writing a statement or a paragraph to see if my structure is fine. My classmates found me to be....
- Int: Meticulous?
- Tom: Exactly.
- Int: My translation teacher told us one of her friends was told by a net friend that she must be more than 40 years of age for there is no mistyping in her net talk.
- Tom: My classmates say I sound official [or bureaucratic].
- Int: As if you were writing an article....
- Tom: Exactly.
- Int: People of my generation correct typographical errors all the time. If we mistype anything and it was already sent out, we apologize for the mistake.
- Tom: Me, too. And my friends always say it doesn't matter.
- Int: So long as you get your points across,....
- Tom: Yes.
- Int: [To be a good translator,] you need to have a certain kind of insistence [on word choices].
- Tom: (Nodding.) Yes.

Int: I think both your Chinese teachers in senior and junior highs have a certain influence on you.

Tom: Yes. Especially the Chinese teacher in my high school years, she rather hates simplified Chinese characters.

## II. Bob's Narratives

### 1. He Was a Design Major in Senior High School Days

Int: Were you transferred from another university or department?

Bob: I wasn't in the applied foreign language program in my senior high school days. I was in the advertisement design program.

Int: So, why are you here in this department?

Bob: I started learning English as a primary school boy. I have studied English in the cram school all the way through the graduation of junior high. When I took the Joint College Entrance Examination, my mom insisted that my elder sister fill out the card of priorities for me. I told my elder sister that I never enjoy drawing pictures, and I do not want to enter any of its relative fields.

Int: Did she do it on purpose?

Bob: I don't know.

Int: Or was it just your destiny?

Bob: She crossed a wrong code and I got into the advertisement design program of a vocational senior high.

Int: Oh! My!

Bob: For this, I made phone calls and asked for a copy of the card of priorities. I did not believe how this could take place. I wanted to know what really had happened. When I received it, I saw that the wrong code was crossed. My elder sister was speechless. So was I. Then I attended that program.

Int: Ah, huh-huh. You should have transferred to another department when you were a freshman. Why did you go on studying all the way to your junior year?<sup>6</sup>

Bob: No, it was when I was a senior high freshman. Then I drew pictures everyday with my classmates. I did not do well in drawing pictures, but I did well in computer graphics. Then in my senior high sophomore year, the time came for mock tests for Joint College Entrance Examination. My teacher asked me what I would like to study in college? I talked it over with my family. My mom asked me which subjects I was interested in? I said I was interested only in mathematics and English. My mom said, "Why don't you go on to a department of applied foreign languages in college?" Then I said, "O.K." That's why I am here.

Int: So you took a different set of examination from the one design majors did. And then?

Bob: In the beginning, it was a pity: in the mock test I scored around 300 to 400 or more. But I made a gradual progress over time. It took me one year to study on my own without going to a cram school. Everybody else went to a cram school, studying, studying, and studying. My mom said, "It is not that I do not want you

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<sup>6</sup> At that time, the interviewer was still at sea about Bob's case.

to go to a cram school. Nor is it that I have no money for you to do so. It is just that I hope you give it a try to study on your own. You can make it." Then from a schoolmate I learned how to prepare for the examination by myself. She also changed her major from art design to English just as I did. Then I know what to read. Then I bought some of the books she recommended, and I also read some relative materials online. During that time, I went directly to study after dinner from 7:00p.m. till 1:00 or 2:00a.m. Every night I studied hard. And that last throughout a whole year. When the Joint College Entrance Examination was approaching, the scores I got in the mock test were very close to my first choice, National Formosa University. It's not far from my home. My home is in Chiayi. My mom said, "It is close. If you try hard enough, you may get into National Formosa University." The threshold for entering National Formosa University was then 560 points. I got 550 in the mock test, very close to it. On the first day of the Joint College Entrance Examination, I found that I know the answers to nearly all the examination questions. In the past I hardly calculated how many points I got right after a test. But that day I checked all my answers right after the Joint College Entrance Examination.

Int: You were sure you would make it.

Bob: Yes, yes, yes. After taking the first day's exam, my mom asked me, "Will it affect your exam tomorrow? Why don't you just wait until tomorrow?" I said, "But I'm confident." I knew I did quite well.

Int: You knew you would make it.

Bob: It turned out that I got very high scores. I thought I would have to study even harder the next day, for the next day I would take the exam in math. And the next day when the examination was over, I calculated my total scores, they added up to at least 570 points.

Int: You made it.

Bob: Then I started to relax and have a good time, waiting for the result. I got 590 points in total, because there were still scores for my compositions. I was even offered a scholarship. Therefore, I entered this university with a score much higher than the threshold, which equaled 556. My mom asked me if I wanted to attend National Yunlin University of Science and Technology. But their minimum was 597. Also, with my score I could still go on to National First Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology or National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences. But I decided to attend National Formosa University as was planned. And my mom kept her promise and bought me a car.

Int: Wow! Huh-huh-huh.

Bob: For it is not far from my home, I can drive home.

Int: Everyday?

Bob: No, on weekends and holidays. Ever since I went on to college, my family members have tended to trust me. For example, I just have to tell them where I was going, my mom will say, "O.K. O.K. Go anywhere you want to."

Int: She trusts you.

## 2. A Bad Boy in Junior High School Days

Bob: But I used to be a bad boy. People who know me well are all aware of that. All my friends know that when I was in junior high school, I was bad. I was in low-grade class in the ability grouping system. I skipped classes. After I listened to teachers' lecturing for 5 minutes, I started to fall asleep. In the classroom, I talked with my classmates and left the classroom once I got bored.

Int: Ho-ho-ho.

Bob: To a degree that my parents had to apologize to the principal of the junior high. I fought with guys. My parents had to go to the Office of Students' Affairs to clean up the mess for me.

Int: Somebody hit you? Or...?

Bob: I hit others and got into troubles. It was a mess.

Int: Huh-huh-huh.

Bob: I smoke cigarettes at that time. I quit it after my mom, crying, begged me to behave myself and study harder. She only asked me to finish my junior high school education.

Int: Huh-huh-huh. Poor thing!

Bob: Later I just became good. I was frustrated in the First Basic Competency Test (BCT). The perfect score was more than 300 points, while I got only 147.

Int: Less than a half.

Bob: Less than a half. My mom said, "Study on your own, and take the second BCT." Then I studied hard and took the second test. The second time I got more than 200 points. I thought, "Great, I finally could...." My life is indeed a bumpy journey. Then I have got a national high school to attend. Actually I wanted to take the applied foreign languages program.

Int: But a wrong code was crossed.

Bob: My elder sister crossed advertisement design program for me. I have a serious weakness for design majors. A designer should not have color blindness (color amblyopia) or color weakness (partial tritanopia), but I have color weakness. My roommates laughed at me when I mixed yellow slippers with green ones in the toilet.... I had a hard time receiving training in advertisement design. Every day we paint still life. My classmates were having a good time.

Int: They are good at it.

Bob: They were happy doing it, but I just sat there with my drawing paper empty. Then my teacher came and saw nothing was there on the paper. He knew how I got there, so he started to teach me how to paint still life. In spite of his explanations, I did not make much progress. Teachers let me pass, for they knew what had happened to me. Then I got 590 in the Joint College Entrance Examination. I came the second in my senior vocational high. In my senior high,....

Int: You became a legendary figure.

Bob: That same year my schoolmate who scored on top in the senior high got 597 points in the Joint College Entrance Examination.

Int: Was she admitted to National Yunlin University of Science and Technology?

Bob: Yes, she was. And my schoolmates in the applied foreign language program said how come this person in the advertisement design program did better than the rest of us. And their home room teacher told them, "See, you have been struggling for all these three years. He spent only one year studying English and now he outdid you, you see. What have you been doing?" Indeed some of them went on to better universities than I did, such as National First Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology.

Int: You got enough points for entering that university, too. But you just didn't go on to college there.

Bob: I didn't go there. Some said I was a fool. But I thought, since I am a higher-achiever, it will be easier for me to study here. And it won't cost me that much. I don't have to worry that I might not be able to keep up with others, either. My mom also said, "You want to study in the department of applied foreign languages? Why don't you just go on to Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages?" Their English is quite good, but it costs a lot more money to study there.

Int: It is a private one, so it costs more. They do excel in language learning, though.

Bob: Indeed.

Int: Their graduates are competent to work as professional translators.

Bob: My friends in the Department of French said their oral training is very good.

Int: Yes, even their French majors' English is better than that of the average college students. How can it not be? They spent 19 hours weekly speaking English.

Bob: They listen and speak and then listen and speak all along. Though it costs them a lot, they are surrounded by such outstanding English learners.

Int: You are not in need of money. Why did you not go on to Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages?

Bob: I come from a single-parent family.

....

### **3. Bob Ran away from the Primary School**

Bob: As a child, I lived in Chiayi County. We moved to Chiayi City later on. When my family moved to Chiayi, I had difficulties adapting myself into the new environment. I resisted going to the elementary school. So I began to skip classes when I just started my schoolboy days. In the middle of the class, I would say to my classmates, "I want to pee." Then I went climbing over the fence of the primary school and walked straight home.

Int: Oh, no. Did you?

Bob: Then I knocked the door of my house and rang the door bells. Then my mom answered the door. She said, "You're home again." I told her, "I don't want to go to school. I don't like it. It's boring." I watched TV at home. It was my Dad that brought me back on track. One day he warned me that, "You have come home from school for a week. If you dare to come home once again tomorrow, I will beat you up." But I wouldn't listen to him, I just went straight home again the next day after the first period was over. My dad was waiting for me at home with



a stick in his hand. He gave me a discipline. The worst part of it is not that. My mom sent me back to school. It was hot at the time, and I wore short sleeved shirts. There were blacks and blues all over my body. My teacher saw that I was injured, took me to the nurse in school and had my wounds treated. I was much impressed. Even the primary school principal found that out and came to comfort me. He wanted to know whether I was O.K. and he wondered why my Dad had beaten me so badly. My neighbors also saw my injuries. They asked me questions, too: "What happened a few days ago? Why were you beaten up?" I said with a smile, "Nothing. I was not good."

Int: Huh-huh.

Bob: And I behaved myself for a time after that.

Int: After being beaten up, you changed.

Bob: Yes.

#### 4. How Bob Got Phrases Needed in Translations

Int: May I have one more question? In your earlier education, you didn't go to school regularly. Then how did you get enough phrases for doing translations?

Bob: How did I get the phrases? Aww! Yeah. I did outside readings.

Int: Of what kind?

Bob: Novels. And....

Int: By whom?

Bob: I read those by Fujii Itsuki.

Int: A Japanese?

Bob: A Japanese.

Int: But these books were translations.

Bob: Yes. For a time, I read his books.

Int: Can you give me the names of those books?

Bob: Er.... They made up a set.

Int: Which Series?

Bob: Sort of bibliotherapeutic series.

Int: When did you read them?

Bob: In my senior high school days. My teacher in high school encouraged us to read books.

Int: Which teacher? Chinese teacher or home room teacher?

Bob: Chinese teacher. Ah, I read *Harry Potter* for a time.

Int: These are all translations; they are not supposed to be helpful.

Bob: Most of the books that I read were translations. I did not read many books in Chinese. In fact, I don't really like to read.

Int: So you hardly read creative literary works of art in Chinese. Most of the books you read are translations.

Bob: Hardly any.

Int: Oh.

Bob: Yes, it's weird. I was not a school frequenter. Where did I pick up those phrases?

Int: There are ways you agglomerate vocabulary.

- Bob: Aww! Yeah. I went to a cram school. It must be the reason why. It was when I was a primary school boy.
- Int: When was that? In which subject?
- Bob: I studied in a cram school for nearly three years; I attended Chinese courses there.
- Int: So you went to cram school when classes were over? What kind of institution was that?
- Bob: It is.... It is named Stanford. They offer after-school tutoring in the industry of supplementary education.
- Int: You studied English and Chinese there?
- Bob: Yes, in the same cram school.
- Int: But you would not go to school. How come you were willing to go to the cram school?
- Bob: It was my mom who made me go there. She said, "Since you don't go to school, you must go to the cram school. At least learn something there."
- Int: How come you were willing to go to the cram school?
- Bob: My mom made me go there.
- Int: It was after you had been beaten up by your father?
- Bob: Yes, after that. My mom made me go there. Then I did.
- Int: Huh-huh-huh.
- Bob: My teacher and I came face to face with each other. When I was writing my homework, she would sit there to make sure I do it. When she taught me, I took notes.
- Int: Did she teach you how to write compositions?
- Bob: Yes. She also taught me during summer and winter vacations. She gave me a thick stack of examination questions and made me answer 2 sheets of them a day. After I finished doing them, she would correct them for me. Then she taught me something concerning composition writing.
- Int: Which version of examination questions? In which subjects? Chinese?
- Bob: Yes, in Chinese by Kang-hsuan.
- Int: So they were examination questions on Chinese textbooks.
- Bob: Yes.
- Int: Were they helpful?
- Bob: I also learn something other than schoolwork. Mm, it's strange. Aww! Yeah. I did many assessments. My parents bought a lot of such things.
- Int: At home?
- Bob: Yes. Before every monthly examination, my mom would tell me, "This week you are to complete answering this much of assessments. Next week that much."
- Int: Who was it that corrected your answers for you?
- Bob: My mom.
- Int: With the answers in the appendix?
- Bob: Yes. My mom corrected the answers for me. If she found mistakes, she would check if I made them right after her corrections. If I still had the wrong answers, she beat me up.

- Int: Huh-huh-huh.
- Bob: I can still remember this period. That was when I was still in the primary school.
- Int: Weren't you a bad boy in the primary school?
- Bob: After I had been beaten up by my father, I became good, for I was afraid that I might have been beaten up again. Every time the monthly examination was coming, my elder brother and I had to stay home and behaved ourselves, answering questions in the assessments. At one time, my elder brother found our mom wasn't in and suggested that we copied the answers in the appendix. But I don't think that makes any sense. So we were beaten up again and again for answering wrong. During that time we did get higher scores in the monthly examinations. It really worked. When I went on to junior high school, I became a bad boy again. My mom said, "Then you go on to study in the cram school."
- Int: Huh-huh-huh. It is your elixir.
- Bob: "Go to the cram school and study there," she said, "I'll pay for it."
- Int: How many subjects did you study there? What are they?
- Bob: Chinese, English, mathematics, and natural sciences.
- Int: You also studied Chinese in the cram school.
- Bob: Yes.
- Int: Tell me what the teachers there did.
- Bob: Teachers in cram school....
- Int: Chinese teachers.
- Bob: They scheduled the progress based on that of the school. The only difference was that they used assessments by another publisher. Though the textbooks remained the same, we had a different set of tests in the cram school. They corrected our answers and explained in greater detail. It was not so in school. School teachers just checked the answers for us and asked if anyone has questions. If no one answered, then it was over. We just handed in our examinations. Even though I studied in the cram school, I still made the same mistakes when I took the monthly examinations in school. I did not like natural sciences. I am interested in English and mathematics only. My Chinese is alright. But I didn't do well in natural sciences. I couldn't figure out what my teacher in natural sciences said....
- ....
- Int: How many students did the primary school Chinese teachers teach?
- Bob: There were 20 students in general. But there were only 10 students in the Chinese class, because many think we are native speakers.
- Int: But she offers one-on-one service.
- Bob: She usually taught us on the platform. After she finished teaching one lesson, she would give us an examination. Then she came down to us and saw how we were doing.
- Int: One after the other.
- Bob: Yes, one after the other. And she corrected our answers.
- Int: Did she explain one answer after another?
- Bob: Yes.
- Int: So patiently. Can you tell me her educational background?

Bob: She said she graduated from Tunghai University. The other was a graduate from Tamkang University. I found the latter to be the better, for I could understand her explanations.

....

Bob: The one from Tamkang University taught me from junior high school to senior high schools.

Int: What kind of outside readings did she want you to read?

Bob: Some martial art novels [or *Kung-fu* novels] by Yung Chin.

Int: Did you read them?

Bob: No, I didn't. She brought a lot with her and placed them in the classroom. She asked us to take them home. But nobody heeded it.

Int: Oh, what a shame. What a shame!

....

Int: What do you think about the Chinese teachers in the cram school and those in school? Which ones are more helpful?

Bob: Those in the cram school.

Int: Really?

Bob: I hardly paid attention to my schoolwork. It was boring.

Int: How about the Chinese teachers in your senior high school?

Bob: Awful. Just awful.

Int: Is that all you can remember?

Bob: Very terrible.

Int: That's all?

Bob: I had to rewrite many, many times those words that I miswrote. Maybe it is the reason why my Chinese gets better.

Int: Yet you were much impressed in a negative way.

Bob: In a negative way. We were left standing as a punishment when we did not answer correctly.

....

### Discussions and Reflections

From the narratives of Tom and Bob, differences as well as similarities can be drawn. As for the differences, Tom and Bob stand on two extremes: Tom is a lover of literary works of art<sup>7</sup> and borrows course-related books from the library to study on his own. Though he skipped classes in the beginning of the semester, he went back on the right track because of the researcher teacher's warning. Yet Bob confessed that actually he does not like to read.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>So were 2 of his schoolmates: One high-achiever in a former study is also a lover of literary works of art (Wen & Tseng, 2007). Another high-achiever, who was asked by the researcher after mid-term examination what she had read, also said that she read many children's picture books in childhood.

<sup>8</sup>Fortunately, Bob, who was a runner away from school in his earlier school experiences, admitted that it was never boring in the researcher teacher's classes. Even after he has taken up a part-time job, he insists attending her classes, rejecting the demand by his boss to stay and work overtime.

In Tom's learning experiences, going to school and receiving instructions contribute to his present performance, for not only did his Chinese teachers make the lessons interesting to him but also the applied foreign language program in his senior high reinforced his background knowledge of vocabulary which is indispensable for doing translations. In contrast, Bob's earlier learning experiences hardly ever seemed interesting enough to keep him in school. He was a class skipper in both the primary school and junior high school. After being beaten up by his father, he went to school, but he did not like it any better. He would rather go to the cram school where he received better tutoring. His personal history of learning is a bumpy journey: He ran away from school in the very beginning; he was forced to go to school and the cram school; he was a bad boy again in the junior high; he failed the First Basic Competency Test but got higher scores in the second after working hard for it; however, he did not enter the applied foreign language program as Tom did in senior high schools; nevertheless, he went on to the Department of Applied Foreign Languages in National Formosa University after studying on his own when school is over for one year. For Bob, scarcely was learning delightful, nor was it ever easy. It includes several terrible memories, such as being beaten up by both parents, an awful senior high school Chinese teacher who punished him all the time for writing words incorrectly. In addition, he never enjoyed the boring school instructions. Eventually, Bob professed that the strict disciplines from parents and school teachers might be a significant factor to his successful translation learning results.

Bob's senior high school Chinese teachers shared some similarities with Tom's: They both paid much attention to students' handwriting; students were punished if they did not put down words in the correct way.<sup>9</sup> Tom and Bob both consider Chinese teachers in earlier education helpful to their present translation performance. Two of the teachers shared their own collections of books with their students and encouraged students to read outside readings: one in Tom's junior high; the other in Bob's cram school. This is part of the reason why Tom has the habit of "pleasure reading." Bob also did some pleasure reading by himself,<sup>10</sup> though he did not take seriously the cram school teacher's advice of bringing martial art novels (or *kung-fu* novels) home. Still both of them did some sort of pleasure reading in their leisure time despite the differences in their responses to their teachers' encouragements.

Their parents encouraged them to study hard and did not forbid them to read outside readings. That is quite contrary to the researcher's own personal experiences. She was persecuted by her mother, a senior high school Chinese teacher, when she read literary works of art or some books to encourage herself in the senior high school days. It can be that examinations today require learners to know more than just schoolwork: Such things as contemporary issues in the

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, the researcher teacher did the same in translation courses.

<sup>10</sup>What Bob read were mostly translations, which the researcher considered to be not so "pollution-free" as adapted versions for children.

daily news can be tested now in entrance examinations. For parents, only what is to be tested is to be studied by their children, just like what Tom Peters said, "What gets measured gets done."<sup>11</sup> For this sake, parents today are more open to books other than textbooks. It appears to be a positive change of mode of tests, students are to learn real-life stuff, authentic issues, and to know more than just what there is in the textbooks and how to take examinations, lest they should learn only to get high marks instead of learning to think on their own.

As can be seen, both students are grateful to teachers in the discipline Chinese of previous education. Their contributions were recognized and came to the fore after as many as 10 years. Although some strict demands might make negative impressions on learners, both Tom and Bob regard influences from Chinese teachers in previous education as one possible reason why they did better than their group members and classmates. Even the researcher's warning can also serve as a catalyst or incentive that spurred Tom to work harder.

In western educational theories, writers hardly agreed on the issue of corporal punishment (Lin, 2005). There is a saying, "Spare the rod, spoiled the child." Many parents today do not discipline their children, for many of these children are the only sons or only daughters in the family. But indulgence does not help children grow to be a responsible person. It is said in the Holy Bible, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). It is also said, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die" (Proverbs 23:13), for "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). At least, it works in Bob's case. Without his parents' disciplines and persuasions, he might have gone astray long ago. Bob took up his responsibility of studying on his own after the researcher had warned him. What if the researcher had never grown to be aware of his absence? He might have also stayed in bed sound asleep while he should have been in class. As educators, what we do is not just teaching, we are also teaching students to be a responsible person in the society. A timely advice can help change the course of a student's life. In Bob's case, he quit smoking, for his mother begged him to behave himself. If she had never asked, Bob might have never grown out of it. As translation teachers or educators, if we never maintained our standards or requirements, students are bewildered: They do not know where they are up to. And we will never know what can take place when we do ask.

## Conclusion

In this follow-up research, two extreme cases in the mother research were examined carefully. What is intriguing is that the one who seems most likely to succeed did fail at last; furthermore, the one who seems most likely to fail succeeded anyway. To know the reasons why, interviews were taken from both

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in "Head for the Edge: What Gets Tested Gets Taught" by Doug Johnson (2007), who offered an amusing reflection on this phenomenon. Obviously, it is not the westerner's privilege to do so.

extreme cases. It turned out that Tom succeeded as a result of his own make-up learning; Bob failed because he simply took another strategy of translating.

In the narrative inquiry, both interviewees' reviews on their previous education and its possible contributions to their present achievements were presented. Reading in Chinese, supportive parents and Chinese teachers in their earlier education were considered to be possible conducive factors to their learning results.

Bob, who was a bad boy in his primary school and junior high school days, was able to attend a national senior high school and then to go on to a national university of science and technology, for his loving parents have never ceased to be caring for him. He was forced by them to go to school and cram school where he has got most of the phrases he needs in doing translations from the Chinese teachers there. Though he admitted that he does not like reading that much, he did some pleasure reading of translations nevertheless. And that can also be a favorable factor to his translations, too. Without the supervision of his parents, Bob might not be able to become what he is today. Similarly, Tom's mother bought him outside readings, including Taiwanese folklores, and encourages him to do a lot of pleasure reading. As a lover of literary works of art, Tom is himself a reader. That can be part of the reason why he did translations better than his group members: he has acquired rich phrases in Chinese to employ in his translations. His previous education in the applied foreign English program in his senior high school days also has built him a solid knowledge background from which sufficiently abundant resources can be drawn to do translations. Tom skipped classes in the beginning of the semester to a degree that the researcher teacher had to warn him that he might have failed because of it. Amazingly, he turned himself into a self-learner, made up for the classes missed, and ended up a high-achiever in both the mid-term examination and the pre-test as well as post-test in the experiment of the mother research. In these two extreme cases, attention paid by seniors, including parents and teachers, plays an indispensably significant role in their turning points. If not for their close watch over these two learners, they might have gone astray and taken a wrong turn in their life.

It is revealed in both cases that, as teachers, we had better keep an open mind to students' learning results since we never know who will really make it at the end. It may not turn out as we expected; somehow the table might be turned any time without our foreknowledge. What can be done is to offer our advice and instructions, be mindful and keep watch in case any might fail. From Bob's case, it can be seen that remedial education offered by cram school sometimes makes up for what is initiated yet not completed by school education. For students who do not enjoy going to school, there might as well be a second chance, another choice, or just an alternative, where they can make it up for what cannot be picked up in their formal educational experiences.

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