



A Survey on Translation Learning Motivation of Senior Undergraduate Students: A Questionnaire Study

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Abstract. This study investigated the translation learning motivation of 50 college students in a foreign language school by combining the existing pedagogical theories. The purpose of the study is to investigate the perception of senior student's motivation in relation to translation learning. The research is mainly carried out in the form of questionnaire survey, and the conclusions are drawn through quantitative analysis. As can be seen from the surveyed questions, there are individual differences in identifying the underlying reasons for motivation, suggesting that there are strong personal preferences in translation teaching/learning.

Keywords: Translation Learning Motivation; Senior Undergraduate Students; pedagogy

1 Introduction

It has been well recognized that motivation plays an essential role in learning. The purpose of the study is to investigate the perception of senior student's motivation in relation to translation learning. With the establishment of the undergraduate major in translation and the continuous development of translation teaching, more and more students from different majors have started to devote themselves to the study of translation. It is worth noting that students' personal interests have an extensive impact on learning translation. According to social psychological theory on language learning (Gardner, 1985) [1], motivation substantially affects learning outcomes. In the process of language learning, in addition to the acquisition process of the language itself, the learners' psychological motivation has also received extensive attention. For example, different translation content affects students' motivation, and the aim of improving Chinese and English affects the motivation of translation. Meanwhile, the goal of passing the translation course exam and career prospects are also important factors influencing learning motivation. Therefore, different perception of translation learning motivations in relation to translation are explored and researched in this study. In this context, the research materials were collected through questionnaires, and a total of fifty questionnaires were collected.

2 Literature review

This chapter will review the literature from three related fields to establish the theoretical framework of this paper. These three aspects are: the concept of learning motivation in pedagogy, the characteristics of translation teaching and learning, and the research on learning motivation in translation learning in the existing literature.

2.1 Motivation Research in Pedagogy

Deci & Ryan (1985) divide motivation into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation [2]. Intrinsic motivation refers to the learner's inherent interest in learning, while extrinsic motivation refers to the learner's learning for external interests. There are many definitions of learning motivation in the literature. Motivation explains "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 7) [3]. As Dörnyei (2005) rightly put, "It affects learners' learning performance [4], decides how much effort they would like to devote to learning task". For example, when students practice translation after class and encounter texts they are not interested in, it is strenuous for some students to complete the translation of the entire content of the text. And Yanguas (2010) pointed out that motivation is a logical starting point for studying the learning process for two reasons [5]. 1: Motivation is the precondition for the occurrence and development of any learning process, and effective learning cannot occur without learning motivation; 2. Motivation is the intersection of learning and teaching. Motivation affects learning while learning also affects motivation. Therefore, through the study of learners' learning motivation, we can improve learners' effectiveness by having a restricted view on teachers. Since there are few in-depth studies on translation teaching, linking translation to learning motivation in pedagogy can aid us better study translation teaching and translation learning. On top of these, the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1986), a well-known main theory of learning motivation in pedagogy, believes that self-efficacy refers to a person's subjective judgment on whether he can successfully carry out an act of achievement. For example, whether a student can become a professional translator and find a satisfactory job and the difficulty of the professional course examination may affect the motivation to study. The achievement goal theory of Dweck (1980) and others believes that students' academic goal orientation can be divided into two categories: Learning goals (also known as mastery goals) and performance goals. For example, students' personal goals for improving their Chinese and English proficiency, interest in film and poetry topics, idol effect and career aspirations for translation may all enhance their motivation for learning.

2.2 Translation teaching

Xu Jun (2010) proposed that the conceptual change of translation teaching is a transition from "teaching translation" to "translation teaching". In the initial foreign language teaching, translation is only a focus of teaching, the purpose is to improve stu-

dents' foreign language ability. After entering the in-depth study of the translation profession in the later period, translation was taught as a profession. In order to improve the quality of translation teaching, scholars have discussed from various angles, thus providing reference for translation teaching guidance. For example, Kiraly (2003) proposed a "situation-construction" translation teaching model, which allows students to solve practical problems in real situations, so as to construct experience, acquire knowledge, and expand cognitive structures. Li Ning (2010) started from the theory of constructivism, and proposed to combine the arousing of translation awareness, the training of translation process and the transformation of translation ability, and the implementation of supporting teaching methods and evaluation methods to form an overall construction model of translation teaching. Qian Chunhua (2011) analyzed the production of central flow in experiential translation teaching and its mechanism of action on learners' translation ability, and through empirical research showed that learners generate flow experience through situational experience, teaching participation, and learning-use interaction, which The experience improves their cognitive ability, language ability and communication ability to varying degrees.

2.3 Translation learning motivation

Shan Yiming (2018) pointed out that motivation is regarded as the most important factor in language learning, which is related to the completion of learning goals, the level of effort in learning, and the effectiveness of learning. Motivation determines the level of individual engagement of learners' motivation (Oxford & Shearin 1994:12). From 1959 to the early 1970s, social psychologists Gardner and Lambert put forward two major language learning tendencies or motivation types, "integrative" and "instrumental" (Gardner & Lambert 1972). Integrative motivation refers to the interest and desire to contact, communicate and even integrate into the target language group. Instrumental motivation refers to the pursuit of the actual value and advantages of the language learned to bring practical help. For example, passing professional exams, facilitating future job hunting, etc. Some students are always full of enthusiasm for learning when they are just starting to translate. With in-depth study of translation and dabbling in different translation topics, their learning enthusiasm and learning motivation may alter. In addition, the enthusiasm and motivation of students to learn translation will also change over time. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) pointed out that motivation is not static, it changes with the change of the learner's thinking and the change of the learning environment. This study aims to investigate the motivation of senior students to learn translation. Since motivation is a pedagogical concept, the definition of motivation in pedagogy must be used as a benchmark to better integrate with translation.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research question

What are the main characteristics of student' s motivation for studying translation?

3.2 Methodological choice

In order to carry out the research, questionnaire study was chosen considering the following grounds. First and foremost, questionnaire survey can reach a large number of respondents in a short time. After being designed, the questionnaire was uploaded to the platform to make a web link or QR code for easy forwarding, therefore participants of different grades can be invited to submit their answers. Compared with other survey methods such as face-to-face interviews, questionnaires save time and money and it is able to reach more participants. Secondly, through questionnaire, the data can be collected and analyzed in a more straightforward way. Most of the questions in the distributed questionnaire are objective questions, so the recovered data is relatively intuitive and straight-forward. Last but not least, privacy of participants can be protected to a certain extent by means of questionnaires. Meanwhile, the interference of some external factors on the participants' answering the questionnaire can be excluded, which ensures the objectivity of the questionnaire to a certain extent. The disadvantage of questionnaires, however, is their lack of flexibility. Most of the questionnaire surveys are pre-designed by the questionnaire designer, so that the respondents are more limited in answering, and may miss some more detailed and in-depth information. Considering the above factors, it was decided that questionnaire would be a more feasible and cost-effective method for data collection in this small-scale exploratory study.

3.3 Methods for data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was designed and based on the translation learning motivation of the senior undergraduates. The learning motivation mainly includes the direct interest in learning, the improvement of their own language ability, the passing of the test and the improvement of the score, and the yearning for future career development. The items were designed according to these five motivations. After the questionnaire was designed, it was first checked for any typos in the copy, and then see which copy could be made more concise and which copy could be deleted. Secondly, the questionnaire was put into preview mode and was previewed on a computer or mobile phone. Apart from that, a few more models were supposed to be test to see if there was any problem with the link opening. After the questionnaire was distributed, the QR code and link, generated by the app to the target group was sent to students. Data was analyzed using inductive methods. After collecting fifty questionnaires, the relationship between motivation to learn translation and personal interest was obtained through the results of the questionnaire. The data was presented in different tables according to different categories, such as motivation and learning purpose, motivation

and personal interests, etc. Therefore, data of the same category could be presented visually.

4 Result and discussion

4.1 Basic information of participants

There were 50 participants who returned the questionnaire, among them, the majority of them were female students and only 9 were male, accounting for 18% of the total participants. One phenomenon may be that women are more interested in translation studies.

Table 1. Gender distribution of the participants (Table credit: original)

	Number	Percentage
Male	9	18%
Female	39	78%
N/A	2	4%
Total	50	100%

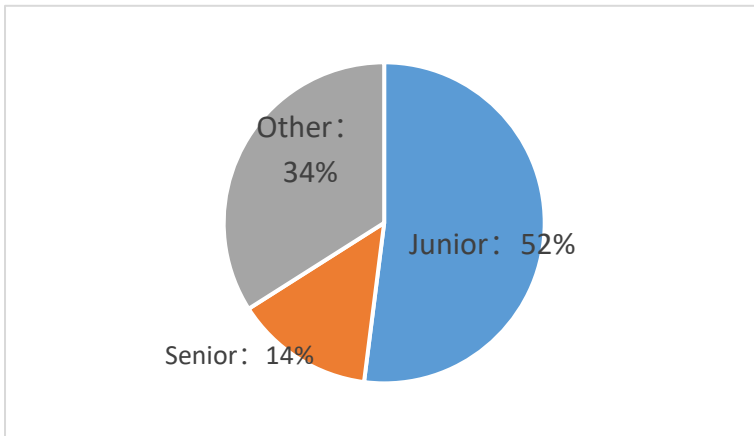


Fig. 1. Grade distribution of the participants

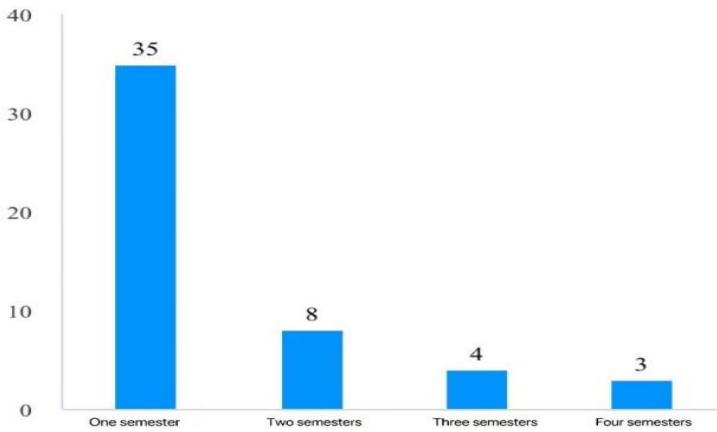
(Picture source: Self-painted)

It can be seen from figure 1 that the highest percentage of students are junior, reaching about half of the total. It was followed by another two groups, namely, senior students and other students, contributing to 14% and 34% respectively. This can mainly attributed to the fact that most Chinese undergraduates commence to take translation courses in their junior year.

Table 2. Subjects distribution of the participants (Table credit: original)

	Number	Percentage
Language major (English or other language)	28	56%
Translation major	0	0%
Other majors	22	44%
Total	50	

As can be seen from the graph that a large quantity of participants majored in language (English or other language) with totally 56% whereas participants in other majors also accounted for virtually 45%. On the contrary, none of the participants majored in translation.

**Fig. 2.** Study time of participants

(Picture source: Self-painted)

Up to 35 students studied for one semester, significantly higher than the proportion of students studying for two semesters (around 16%). By comparison, only a fraction of students studied for three semesters and four semesters. (four students and three students respectively)

4.2 Participants' different learning motivations

a: strongly agree

b: agree

c: neither agree nor disagree

d: disagree

e: strongly disagree

Q5: One of your motivations for learning translation comes from personal interest.

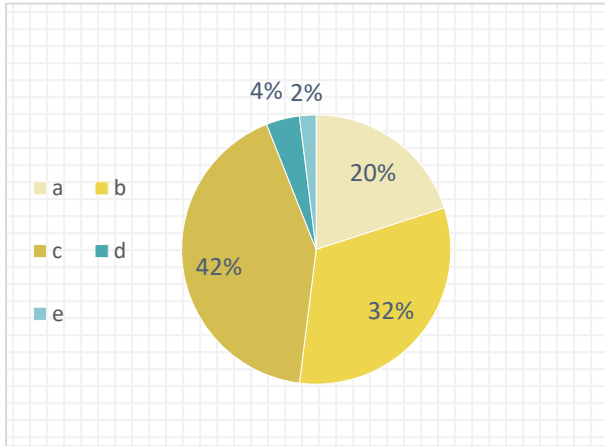


Fig. 3. Participants' recognition of personal interests and motivation related to learning

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 3, there are 26 students who think that one of the motivations for translation learning comes from personal interests, and only 3 students express their disapproval. It can be seen that personal interest is one of the sources of motivation for students to learn translation.

Q6: Your motivation for learning translation comes from your desire to improve your English.

Q7: Your motivation for learning translation comes from your desire to improve your Chinese.

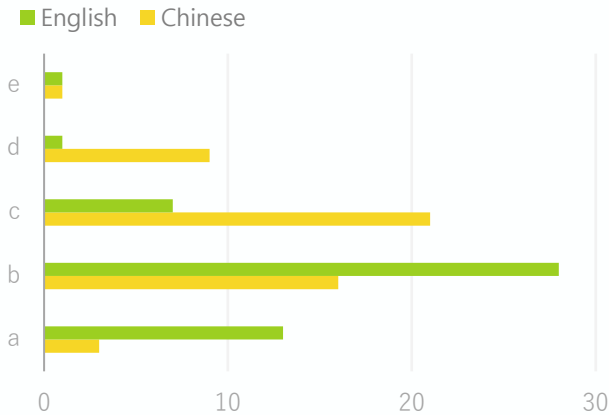


Fig. 4. Participants' desire to improve different languages

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 4, a total of 19 students believe that the motivation for learning translation comes from the desire to improve their Chinese level, while 41 students believe that the motivation for learning translation is the desire to improve their English level. It can be seen that students generally hope to improve their English proficiency in the process of translation. This may be caused by the language environment of the students. The native language of the participants is Chinese, so most of the participants hope to improve their second language acquisition in the process of translation learning.

Q8: Do you think that the motivation for learning translation comes from passing the exam in the professional course?

Q13: Do you think that translation test scores will affect the motivation to learn translation?

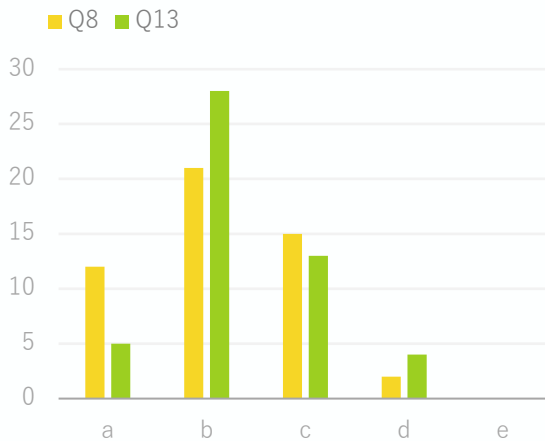


Fig. 5. Academic achievement and learning outcomes of participants

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 5, a total of 33 students believe that the motivation of learning translation comes from the hope of passing the exam of professional courses. Among them, 33 students thought that the score of translation test would affect their motivation to study translation. It can be seen that students hope to achieve excellent results while passing specialized courses. If students get higher grades, their enthusiasm for learning may be improved, and their motivation to learn translation may be stronger.

Q9: Your motivation for learning translation comes from your career aspirations.

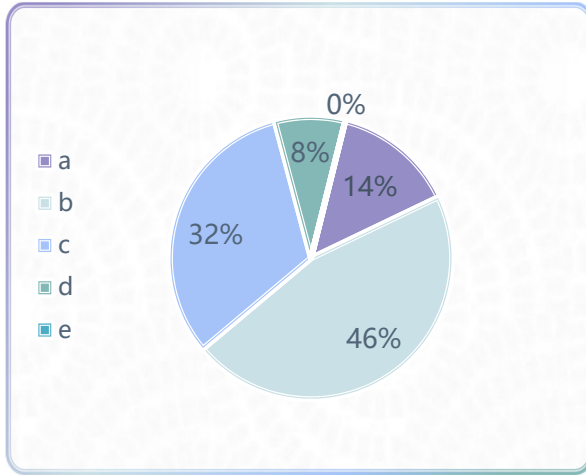


Fig. 6. Employment prospects and learning outcomes

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 6, 60% of the participants believe that the motivation for learning translation comes from professional aspiration. It can be seen that there are many motivations affecting translation learning, including students' future employment intentions. Some students study translation in order to become professional translators, and the yearning for a career will also promote students' motivation to learn translation.

Q10: Your motivation to practice translation after class comes from your personal interest.

Q16: Your motivation to study translation changes mostly because of the change of personal interests.



Fig. 7. Recognition of after-school exercises related to personal interests

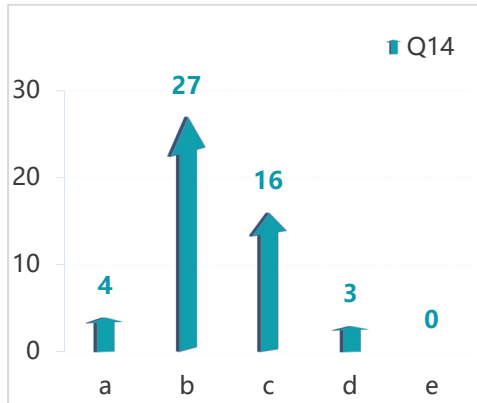


Fig. 8. Recognition of Learning Motivation Change related to Personal Interest

(Picture source: Self-painted)

7. Participants' recognition of personal interests related to active practice after class.

8. Participants' recognition that changes in motivation are related to changes in personal interests.

According to Figures 7 and 8, a total of 32 participants believe that the motivation to practice translation after class comes from personal interest. Among them, in order to complete the homework assigned by the teacher, etc., students may be motivated to practice translation after class, while most students' motivation is motivated by personal interests. At the same time, 31 students thought that the change of motivation of learning translation was mainly due to the change of personal interest. It can be seen that personal interest is an important factor influencing translation learning motivation.

Q11: In the process of learning translation, your areas of personal interest will affect your study of translation on different subjects.

Q12: It is difficult for you to insist on completing the translation of all the content when you encounter the translated text that you are not interested in.

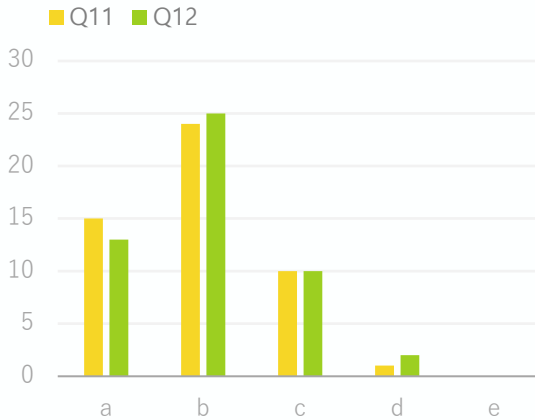


Fig. 9. Recognition of complete translation of subject matter related to personal interests

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 9, there is a positive correlation between the number of participants who believe that in the process of learning translation, the field of personal interest will affect the learning of translation of different themes and the number of participants who believe that it is difficult to insist on completing the translation of the whole content when they encounter a translation text they are not interested in. A total of 39 participants thought that the area of personal interest would affect the learning of translation on different subjects. A total of 38 participants thought that it would be difficult to insist on completing the translation of all the contents when encountering texts they were not interested in. First of all, different scholars are interested in and good at different subjects. For example, girls may be more interested in fashion and political texts while boys may be more interested in science and technology texts. When faced with texts they are not interested in, students' learning motivation may be weakened and it is difficult to insist on completing the translation of all contents.

Q14: Do you think the strength of translation learning motivation will affect the learning effect?

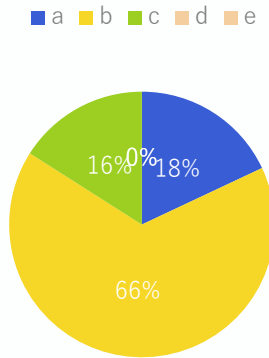


Fig. 10. Participants' recognition of learning effect was influenced by the intensity of learning motivation

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 10, a total of 42 participants believe that the strength of translation learning motivation will affect the learning effect. Among them, a total of 0 participants disagreed with this view. Thus, the motivation of translation learning is closely related to the final learning result. This can be reflected in things like learning efficiency and grades.

Q15: Your motivation for learning translation has changed over the past few years.

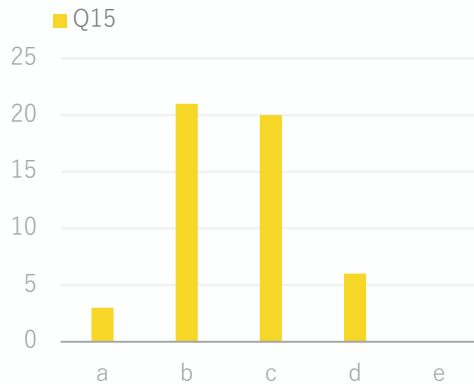


Fig. 11. Changes in participants' learning motivation

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 11, a total of 24 participants believe that their motivation to learn translation has changed in the past period of time. Twenty participants remained neutral. Thus, it can be seen that in the process of learning translation, the motivation

of learning translation is not invariable. It may change due to the change of personal interests or external environment.

Q17: Please rate your current motivation for translation learning.



Fig. 12. Participants' current level of motivation to learn

(Picture source: Self-painted)

According to Figure 12, there are 36 participants whose motivation value of translation learning is greater than or equal to 5 (full score of 10). It can be seen that more than half of the participants are still highly motivated in translation learning.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the research findings:

The present study employs a questionnaire survey method to solicit the subject' s perceptions and beliefs regarding their motivation for learning translation. It is evident that multiple factors would influence such motivation, ranging from pedagogical aspects (such as teaching methods) to social aspects (career-driven). Individual variations in identifying the underlying reasons for motivation can be seen throughout the survey questions, indicating a strong tendency of personal preference in translation teaching/learning.

5.2 Limitations and directions for future study

When it comes to the shortcomings in this study, the number of returned questionnaires is limited, so there is a certain limit to the in-depth understanding of the re-

search. Apart from that, there is a gap in the gender distribution of the questionnaires. Last but not least, since the object of this study is limited to a few universities in Guangdong, homogeneous distribution of participant's location will affect the representativeness. Based on these deficiencies, it can provide guidance and reference for future research. Regarding the number of questionnaires, the coverage should continue to be expanded to improve the recovery rate of the questionnaires. In addition, students from colleges and universities across the country should be asked to help forward the links of the questionnaires so that the questionnaires are distributed as evenly as possible and reduce geographical limitations. This survey focuses on the different motivations of students for learning translation. On this basis, the different influences of different learning translation motivations on learning effects can be further studied in the future.

A Questionnaire on the Study Motivation of English Majors in Translation Learning

(The original questionnaire is in Chinese)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand the motivation of students to learn translation. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary, there is no right or wrong answer, and your answers will be kept completely confidential. There are a total of 17 questions in the questionnaire, which will take you five minutes. Thank you for your cooperation and support. If interested, please leave your email at the end of the questionnaire and we will share the final research report with you.

Your gender: male/female/other/unwilling to disclose

Your grade: Junior/Senior/Other

How long have you been taking translation courses? 1/2/3/4 semester

1. One of your motivations for learning translation comes from personal interest.
 - a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
2. Your motivation for learning translation comes from your desire to improve your Chinese.
 - a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
3. Your motivation for learning translation comes from your desire to improve your English.
 - a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
4. Your motivation for learning translation comes from the desire to pass the professional course exam.
 - a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
5. Your motivation for learning translation comes from occupational planning.
 - a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree

6. Your motivation to practice translation after class comes from personal interest.
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
7. In the process of learning translation, your personal area of interest will affect your study of translation of different subjects.
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
8. When you encounter translated texts that you are not interested in, it is difficult for you to insist on completing the translation of the entire content.
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
9. Do you think that translation test scores affect the motivation to learn translation?
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
10. Do you think that the motivation of translation learning will directly affect the learning effect?
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
11. Your motivation for learning to translate has changed over the past period of time.
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
12. Changes in your motivation to learn translation are mostly due to changes in personal interests.
a. strongly agree, b. agree, c. neither agree nor disagree, d. disagree, e. strongly disagree
13. Please rate your current translation learning motivation (0 is the lowest score, 10 is the highest score)
14. What other motivations do you think influence your study of translation?
Thank you for your participation! For final report please leave your email address:

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