ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERPRETATION PRACTICE THROUGH GROUP PRESENTATION

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Abstract: *Translation can be considered the fifth special skill - an advanced skill together with four skills. Thus, improving and practicing this skill plays a crucial part in teaching translation and interpretation majors. Up to now, not many studies have been carried out on enhancing interpretation practice through making group presentations. This article, as a result of research conducted during 8 weeks in the 2nd term (2023-2024), shows learners' improvement in vocabulary and expression, together with equivalence and using body language in interpretation practice. The method mainly relies on qualitative methods, including the teacher's classroom observation, note-taking, and learners' surveys. The findings are expected to enrich teaching methodology for those who are in charge of interpretation courses in training English majors at universities.*

Keywords: *enhance, effectiveness, practice, interpretation, group presentation.*

I. Introduction

While a translation course requires learners to focus much on reading and writing skills, an interpretation course demands to concentrate heavily on listening and speaking skills. Regarding interpretation, time pressure to express the speaker's speech in a foreign language precisely and immediately is the primary requirement. In fact, there are many in-class activities, such as role-playing (speaker, interpreter, assessor, audience), individual working, pair working, and group working, enabling students to improve their interpretation skills. This article reveals the findings of research on improving interpretation practice in class through group presentations for final-year English major students specializing in translation and interpretation at the University of Economics and Technology for Industries (UNETI). The research heavily relies on qualitative methods, in which teacher observation, note-taking, and survey on learners' opinions, as well as test results, are conducted during the course in the 2nd semester (2023-2024). The effectiveness of group presentations

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can be seen in students' progress in linguistic and interpreting criteria.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Definition and characteristics of interpretation

The Cambridge Dictionary defines interpretation *as 'changing what someone is saying into another language'* (dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/English/interpreting). Pochhacker (2007) identifies *"interpreting is form of translating in which first and final rendition in another language of an utterance in a source language"*. Similarly, Christoffels and Groot (2005) state, *"interpreting is a complex task where the interpreter is routinely involved in comprehending, bringing, and producing style at the same time"*. In the definition, the scholars indicate special features of interpretation, such as speaking mode (saying, utterance) of what they hear and time pressure (at the same time or nearly at the same time as the speaker). They also mention the process and procedure, including understanding, processing, and producing the style simultaneously during the speaker's speech. Based on these characteristics, a very close relationship exists between speaking and interpretation. According to Ur (2000), speaking is the most essential in teaching and learning a language among the four skills. Surely, interpretation must cover many factors, and speaking plays the most important part.

2.2. Definition and characteristics of presentation

According to the Oxford Dictionary, presentation is defined as '*The giving of something to someone, especially as part of a formal ceremony'* and in the kind of a noun: '*A speech or talk in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience'.* Thus, presentation can be understood as the ability to deliver information confidently and persuasively to engage and influence the audience. In a presentation, information is conveyed from speakers to audience and it is typically introduction, demonstrations, a speech or a lecture with the aim to inform, inspire, persuade, build goodwill, motivate, or present a new idea or a product/service. At universities, presentation is widely applied, especially in language classes. Barbara Gross (1993), in *'Tools for Teaching'* stresses that presentation enables learners to study more and memorize longer than other teaching tools. Moreover, applying in-class presentation, as concluded by Apple & Kikuchi (2007), creates opportunities for learners to use the foreign language in the most natural way.

2.3. Criteria to assess interpretation

As discussed above, speaking plays an essential role in transferring the speaker's speech from one language to another. So, referring to the criteria to evaluate interpretation cannot help mentioning criteria to assess speaking. In Hieke's opinion (1985), the four criteria of speaking evaluation include the *ability to use vocabulary, the ability to pronounce, grammar accuracy, fluency, and coherence*. In detail, he suggests that the ability to use vocabulary is resorted to the appropriate words with the closest meaning to the speaker's intention. At the same time, pronunciation covers pronouncing vowels and consonants correctly, as well as sentence stress and intonation. The criterion of grammar accuracy is assessed via sentence structures and flexibility of using both simple and complex sentences.

In contrast, fluency is the ability to speak English easily at the average speed of native speakers. Together, fluency and coherent expression are other important factors in demonstrating a student's speaking level. A good speaker needs to have clear ideas and know how to link those ideas together. To ensure that, students need to clearly understand connecting words and know how to use them fluently in the communication process. When learners are able to express themselves coherently, their speaking level will increase significantly.

In the study on developing a scale for assessing undergraduate students' consecutive interpreting conducted on Korean students, Lee, S. B. (2015) reviewed 42 criteria to evaluate interpreter performance under three categories: *'content', 'form', and 'delivery'* and shortlisted into 22 criteria, in which seven criteria for content, seven for form, and eight for delivery. In addition, a questionnaire survey was conducted on 31 interpreter trainers to identify the appropriateness of weighting for each category. He concludes that the *content category should be assigned an effective weight of 2, while the other categories need not be weighted* (i.e., weighting value: 1). At UNETI, the criteria of evaluating consecutive interpretation are based on *linguistic* weighted 3 points (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure) and *interpreting criteria* weighted 7 points (equivalence, naturalness, speed and response, non-verbal communication, and completeness).

III. Methods

The present study resorts the mixed method, in which qualitative methods include the teacher's classroom observation, note taking, feedback, and the survey on learners' opinion. The quantitative techniques come from giving marks and statistics from the student survey. Before conducting the study, the teacher evaluates via a pre-test in consecutive interpretation and the post-test at the end of the course. The same test was applied for students as the pre-test and post-test, which was the video of CNN news on 07 Feb 2024, '*California agrees on $2B settlement for students hurt by Covid shutdown*' on youtube.com CNN 10. The video includes talks and short interviews, while the news on VTV1 on the same date - 07 Feb 2024 was chosen as the Vietnamese-English one. The time span between the pre-test and post-test was eight weeks.

The group presentation assignment is given at the beginning of the course '*Advanced Translation and Interpretation in Use*' so that they can prepare well. Each group consists of 2-4 students formed on their own choice. The topics for presentation are suitable with those demonstrated in the course book currently used, including 12 topics: *Agriculture, Education, Gender equality, Health care, Festival, Economy, Environment, Hi-technology, Transport, Sports, Employment, and Cultures*. The topic chosen by the teacher is assigned only a week for preparation before the presentation so that the preparation time is equal among groups. After the presentation, each group had to collect words/phrases related to the topic into a glossary and share them with other groups.

The presentation must be on PowerPoint slides and delivered for approximately 30 minutes. The aim is to practice English - Vietnamese and Vietnamese - English consecutive interpretation. The requirements include

choosing a speech (video preferentially) of the given topic (5-7- 7-minute length) on the B2-C1 level and performing interpretation. The speeches with video selected for the presentation are guaranteed the naturalness of the original language. That means the English-Vietnamese interpretation must be spoken by English native speakers and the other Vietnamese - English performed by Vietnamese native ones. Each group member must speak out in the presentation. Students have to interpret every small paragraph of 3-4 sentences/ a pause. At the end of the presentation, a game or quiz on the topic summary should be done as an advantage and a plus for the group. The research lasted 8 weeks, from early February to late March 2024, in four classes DHNNA14A1- A4HN, with a total of 179 students on the B2-C1 level.

The teacher-researcher notes her observations on each group and member. At the end of each group, the teacher gives feedback, and the classmate's comments and marks are given. The teacher's notes follow the two criteria of evaluation at UNETI: linguistic criteria (3 points) and interpretation criteria (7 points), shown in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for assessing an interpreting test at UNETI

Competence	Detailed criterion	Score
Language competence	Pronunciation, voice, and tone	1
	Vocabulary, grammar, expressions	2
Interpreting competence	Equivalence	4
	Purely Vietnamese or English style (naturalness)	1
	Pace of delivery	0.5
	Interpretation strategies and body language	1
	Completeness	0.5
Total		10

(Source: Faculty of Foreign Languages, UNETI)

In this study, 'interpretation strategies' and 'completeness' are excluded because all of the students have fulfilled their task, and 'interpretation strategies' are embedded in 'equivalence'. Also, a survey of nine multiple-choice questions about fluency, speed, coherence, response, ability to use long sentences, and non-verbal communication was conducted. The questions are designed on Google Forms and delivered at the end of the course, after the group presentations, and after the post-test.

IV. Findings and discussion

4.1. Group observation, note-taking, feedback from the teacher

Language criteria:

The students showed their creativity and intelligence in their presentations, which surprised the teacher. The speeches with video mainly come from very updated and reliable sources like CNN or BBC in English and VTV1 in Vietnamese. Especially, the unfamiliar and challenging topics of agriculture, environment, health-care, or gender equality,… students prepare very well, not only presenting their interpretation skill, but also providing knowledge for audience. For example, on the topic of agriculture, students wisely choose the top ten outstanding events of 2023 shown on VTV1 end-of-year news, in which Vietnamese agriculture is so bright with many achievements in the global economic recession after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The students' pronunciation and intonation generally prove quite good with

correct word stress and sentence stress. However, some members make errors when pronouncing difficult words/phrases, such as *patient, capacity, distribution, equality, patriotism, tax incentive, deforestation, environmentally friendly, categorization, racial discrimination, etc.,* or some students use a flat intonation and monotonous voice. Raising up and falling down intonation was sometimes misplaced. The vocabulary is mainly academic, with a neutral tone and formal style. There were still some errors in verb use which is often confusing, such as *'go' and 'come', 'lend' and 'borrow', 'make' and 'do', 'bring' and 'take'*, or some common collocations spoken by Vietnamese politicians such as *'an sinh xã hội và phúc lợi xã hội', (social security and social welfare) 'làm đủ ăn', (income and expense balance), 'cung đủ cầu' (supplies meet demands),*...In terms of verb tenses, learners tended to use past simple instead of present perfect to interpret the word *'đã'* embedded in Vietnamese sentences though the action has lasted to the present. Sometimes, they made mistakes with the prepositions *'since'* and *'from'* and used both *'although'* and *'but'*, both *'because'* and *'so'* in a sentence due to negative transference. The mistakes in the linguistic aspect were reported right after a presentation by the teacher so that the group itself and the following groups could avoid them. One remarkable thing was that the later groups learned from the previous ones' errors and adjusted promptly.

Interpretation criteria:

In general, students usually performed English - Vietnamese interpretation more fluently than Vietnamese - English one. The learners felt more confident and easier to utter longer sentences in Vietnamese than in English. However, some specialized terms also generated challenges for students, like *'market segmentation,' 'global*

recession,' economic crisis,' 'sexual harassment behavior,' embarrassment, greenhouse emission,' 'increasingly aging population,' 'being redundant,' over-workload...It took them time to find out the equivalence in Vietnamese (*phân đoạn/phân khúc thị trường, suy thoái toàn cầu, khủng hoảng kinh tế, hành vi quấy rối tình dục, khí thải nhà kính, già hóa dân số nhanh, bị mất việc, quá tải việc làm...*). Some students saw difficulty and hesitation in interpreting English nouns formed from verbs into Vietnamese by choosing the wrong word of category, e.g. economic *recovery* (*sự* phục hồi kinh tế), the *strungle* for women's equality (*cuộc* đấu tranh giành quyền bình đẳng của phụ nữ), conservatively traditional *thinking* (*lối* suy nghĩ truyền thống bảo thủ), the authorities' problem-*solving* (*cách* giải quyết vấn đề của các nhà cầm quyền)... Sometimes, the phenomenon of linguistic redundances was heard by students when they interpreted English complex sentences with relative pronouns into Vietnamese (*The superpower nations who take control over the world trade balance*...) or transferred passive voice in English into active voice in Vietnamese (*It was believed that*...). These expressions, more or less, affected the naturalness of their interpretation.

Most of the students had quite good preparation and good memory, so they delivered the presentation at a moderate pace; just a few of them spoke quite fast. Usually, when interpreting figures and proper names, the students tended to slow down their speech or short pauses in their expression. In terms of interpretation strategies, there was not much specialty apart from literal and semantic strategies. However, body language used by the learners needed to be mentioned when the early groups faced their smartphones, not looking at the audience. Another remark lay in their facial expression and eye

contact from some students who wore an unemotional face with their eyes staying in one place, not moving around the audience. Their hand gesture, sometimes seeming to be too idle, has nowhere to put, while it is very effective to use the hand gesture for presentation.

4.2. Impacts of group presentation on learners' consecutive interpretation

Language competence:

In general, there has been an improvement in the language competence of the students, the poor level decreased while the good and fair level increased, particularly in pronunciation and vocabulary as well as expressions (See Table 2).

Table 2. Improvement of students in language competence (3 levels)

Item	Pre-test			Post-test		
	G	F	A	G	F	A
Pronun.	83	61	35	91	71	17
Diff.				+8 (4.5%)	+10 (5.6%)	-18 (10.1 %)
Voice & tone	64	72	43	73	77	29
Diff.				+9 (5%)	+5 (2.8%)	-14 (7.8%)
Vocab. & expr.	102	56	21	133	34	12
Diff.				+31 (17.3%)	-22 (12.3%)	-9 (5%)
Gram. accuracy	123	37	19	129	39	11
Diff.				+6 (3.4%)	+2 (1.1%)	-8 (4.5%)

(Pronun.: pronunciation; G: good (8.0-10.0); F: fair (6.0-7.9); A: average (4.0-5.9); diff: difference; +: increase; -: decrease; vocab.: vocabulary; expr.: expression; gram.: grammar)

The upgrade of vocabulary witnessed the highest rate of improvement, with 17.5% for the good level, followed by intonation enhancement at 5% and pronunciation at 4.5%. The lowest rate of rise belonged to the criterion of grammar accuracy, with only 3.4%. This shows that the effectiveness of group presentation affects pronunciation and vocabulary more than grammar, probably due to the close relation between presentation and speaking skills, where the audience tends to be more tolerant of grammatical mistakes. All of the criteria on average level went down, in which the rate of poor pronunciation saw the strongest fall with 10.1%. Clearly, students were more aware of phonetics while practicing interpretation via group presentation.

Interpreting competence:

Table 3. Improvement of students in interpreting competence (3 levels)

Item/level	Pre-test			Post-test		
	G	F	A	G	F	A
Equivalence	131	27	21	153	20	6
Diff.				+22 (12.3%)	-7 (3.9%)	-15 (8.4%)
Naturalness	133	31	15	145	26	8
Diff.				+12 (6.7%)	-5 (2.8%)	-7 (3.9%)
Pace of delivery	155	15	9	172	7	0
Diff.				+17 (9.5%)	-8 (4.5%)	-9 (5%)
Body language	109	18	52	137	20	22
Diff.				+28 (15.6%)	+2 (1.1%)	-30 (16.7%)

(G: good (8.0-10.0); F: fair (6.0-7.9); A: average (4.0-5.9); diff: difference; +: increase; -: decrease)

Regarding interpretation competence, there was a downtrend in the criteria on both fair and poor levels, in which the criterion of body language showed the most remarkable improvement, with 16.7% of the students escaping from poor performance in their body language. At the same time, a good level of non-verbal communication also witnessed a considerable rise of 15.6%. Standing in second place was the progress in interpretation equivalence, with 12.3% up on a good level. That meant on fair and average level there was the same rate of decrease. In short, it can be seen that group presentation proved a positive effect on improving interpretation skill, in both language and interpretation competence. Of the assessment criteria, body language and interpretation equivalence saw the most significant improvement, while vocabulary and pronunciation demonstrated the strongest enhancement.

4.3. Survey on learners' opinions

The findings from the survey on learners' opinions reveal a positive change in most aspects, though some students perceived nothing for change.
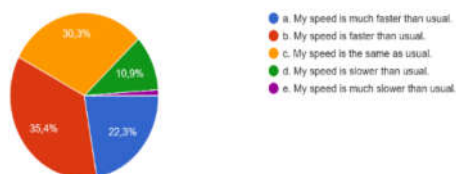
Figure 1. The impact on students' speech

Figure 2. The impact on students' fluency in English

This result is totally suitable with their score on the post-test, where there were still students on poor and average levels. Results of the survey on learners' opinion showed that more than half of them (57.7%) confirmed via in-class presentation their speed was faster than usual, while a third (30.3%) said nothing changed in their speaking pace (See Figure 1). This can be explained by the fact that, for some students in the classes, their normal speech is already quite fast. Meanwhile, up to 71.4% stated that their fluency is better than usual thanks to group presentation. Only 16.6% thought there was no change (See Figure 2).
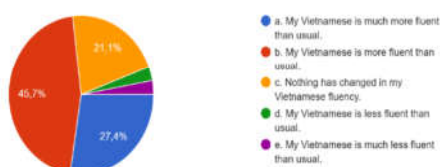
Figure 3. The impact on students' fluency in Vietnamese
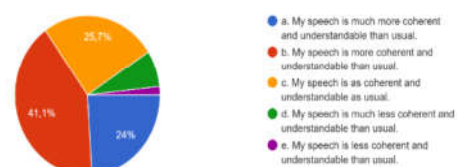

Figure 4. The impact on students' coherence

Similarly, their fluency in Vietnamese - their mother tongue, also improved, with 73.1 while 21.1% said they had no improvement in fluency in Vietnamese, a higher rate than their fluency in English (See Figure 3). This can be explained that when interpreting

from English into Vietnamese, students face difficulties in finding vocabulary to express the message given. Coherence and using cohesive devices are closely related, so 65.1% of students confirmed their speech was more coherent (See Figure 4).

Figure 5. The impact on students' response
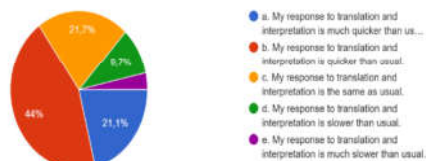

Figure 6. The impact on students' using long sentences

Quick response is one of the signals showing the confidence of speakers. More than half of students (65.1%) admitted that their reaction was quicker than usual, showing a good sign of improvement despite a moderate rate (See Figure 5). More than a fifth (21.7%) did not see the progress in their response, requiring more time to practice than eight weeks. A similar percentage (67.5%) showed the easier use of long sentences though 20% still saw much challenge in uttering long sentences (See Figure 6).

score on the post-test, where there was a remarkable improvement in students' using body language. In short, although there was a very small rate of students stayed unchangeable, most of them stated they made improvement in interpretation skill through in-class group presentation.

V. Conclusion

This article shows the research result of applying group presentations in advanced interpretation practice classes to final-year English major students at UNETI. The findings of this research reflect the effectiveness of making group presentations in interpreting lessons. The learners have made certa3in progress and improvement in their interpretation, demonstrated in their scores on the post-test, compared to the pre-test. In terms of language competence, the students showed their improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary as well as expression. Meanwhile, interpretation competence, equivalence, and the use of body language witnessed much enhancement. In students' opinion on the survey, they also confirmed the certain progress via group presentation.
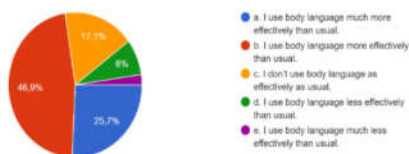

Figure 7. The impact on students' using body language

Up to 72.6% admitted that they made more effective use of body language thanks to in-class group presentations (See Figure 7), while only 17.1% denied this. This finding is completely relevant to their

Hopefully, this study will contribute to teaching interpretation in English majors and, along with other further research, will consolidate the benchmark to evaluate learners' interpretation competence.

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TĂNG CƯỜNG HIỆU QUẢ THỰC HÀNH PHIÊN DỊCH THÔNG QUA THUYẾT TRÌNH NHÓM

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Tóm tắt: *Dịch thuật có thể coi là kỹ năng đặc biệt thứ năm - một kỹ năng nâng cao sau bốn kỹ năng tổng quát. Vì vậy, việc nâng cao thực hành kỹ năng này đóng vai trò quan trọng trong giảng dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành biên phiên dịch. Cho đến nay, chưa có nhiều nghiên cứu được thực hiện về việc tăng cường hiệu quả thực hành phiên dịch thông qua các bài thuyết trình nhóm. Bài viết này là kết quả của nghiên cứu được thực hiện trong 8 tuần của học kỳ 2 năm học 2023-2024, cho thấy sự tiến bộ của người học ở kỹ năng phiên dịch về sử dụng từ vựng và diễn đạt trong năng lực ngôn ngữ, cùng với tương đương dịch thuật và sử dụng ngôn ngữ cơ thể trong phiên dịch. Phương pháp của nghiên cứu này chủ yếu dựa vào phương pháp định tính, bao gồm quan sát lớp học và ghi chép của giảng viên, điểm số và khảo sát người học. Kết quả nghiên cứu được kỳ vọng sẽ làm phong phú thêm phương pháp giảng dạy cho giảng viên dạy môn phiên dịch tại các trường đại học ở Việt Nam.*

Từ khóa: *tăng cường, tính hiệu quả, luyện tập, phiên dịch, thuyết trình nhóm.*

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