HOW TO MANAGE THE SHIFT FROM FACE-TO-FACE TO DISTANCE ASSESSMENT IN THE SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION

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Abstract: The COVID-19 crisis has made a growing number of institutions and universities in Vietnam move to distance learning. Consequently, teachers meet the difficulties in finding the methods for subject evaluation. The subject of Interpretation is not an exception. Interpretation teachers are obliged to design suitable assessment methods for their English teaching programs. The study carried out at Foreign Language Department of Haiphong University (HPU) found that after the workshops, the interpretation teachers' efficiency of the assessment process was enhanced thanks to the awareness of challenges and the importance of updating distance assessment criteria. In order to give support for those who find it challenging to make assessment for this subject, the writer will discuss the challenges of distance assessment in interpretation for both students and teachers in the first part of the report. The purpose of the study is to find out the solutions after the challenges are exposed. Hence, suggestions on designing distance assessment such as setting up the rubrics or blended methods are mentioned. In order to conduct the research, quantitative and qualitative are applied to exploit the information and data for the final result.

Keywords: Online assessment, interpretation, challenges, suggestions

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1. Introduction

Assessment is regarded as the essential element for successful learning and plays a significant role in education. (Gikandi et al., 2011). Teachers and students can get feedback from assessments, and the outcomes can be used as guides for improvement. (Bloom, 1968). Due to COVID-19, the educational system has seen a significant shift from a physical to an online format. The epidemic brought on by the coronavirus has afflicted millions of students worldwide. For the protection of the students, teachers, and other staff members, COVID-19 has compelled educational institutions to shift all methods from physical to online platforms. The quick acceptance of online education over physical education on campuses has had a significant impact on the procedures of assessing pupils and their evaluation methodologies. Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in January 2020, Foreign Language Department of Haiphong University had implemented an online mode of teaching and learning. Thus, online assessment became inevitable. This choice is also preferred by teachers and majored students in the subject of interpretation.

2. Literature review

2.1. Assessment

Apparently, assessment is the process of learning about what pupils already know as a result of their educational experiences. The outcomes are often used to pinpoint areas that want development and make sure the course material satisfies student learning requirements.

Assessment is essential to the teaching and learning process because it is the only way to determine whether students have met their learning objectives. Before useful assessment methods can be implemented, educators must determine the purpose of assessment, the criteria being measured, and the intended outcomes because "the purpose of assessment is to monitor student learning, improve

academic programs, and enhance teaching and learning" (Gaytan, 2004, p. 25).

The experiences that students have in a course are greatly influenced by assessments. The main objective of assessments is for students to show that they have mastered the course learning objectives in order to get formative feedback, a grade, or a pass (Boud, 2007). They are much more than that, though. Assessments are frequently the primary motivator for pupils and determine when and how they study (Boud, 2013).

2.2. Online assessment

In completely online credit courses, we define online assessments as any tool used to assess student performance, offer feedback, or further the learning of the students. These tests may be entirely online (like online examinations) or may only need to be submitted online (such as essays). Assessments can be summative, which is aimed to compare pupils to a standard or set of criteria, or formative, which is intended to track students' development in a low-stakes setting (Dixon & Worrell, 2016).

2.3. Online assessment tools

The evaluation of the students' abilities and competencies is, in fact, one of the most crucial parts of online learning. The old, paper-and-pencil manner of evaluation was previously used, but the present scenario requires an online form of assessment because the new technology has rendered them obsolete by assisting teachers using the online assessments. In fact, 80% of US schools have either invested in or are planning to invest in new technology for online learning. Additionally, 98% of colleges have switched totally to online instruction after 2020. Online tests are without a doubt more efficient than traditional test-taking techniques and can easily take their place. Today, they are very well-liked in recruiting, education, and marketing. Online assessments have a lot to offer, but choosing the

best assessment tool for you might be challenging due to the competitive online assessment industry. Any method of giving students feedback, evaluating their accomplishments, and guiding their learning process in an online setting is referred to as online assessment. Examples of these types of assessment include e-tests, quizzes, assignments, projects, presentations, portfolios, and discussion forums, etc. The use of each type depends on various factors naming the aims and objectives of the subject matter or the situation of learners and teachers.

2.4. Challenges of online interpretation assessment

Higher education institutions have experienced a variety of difficulties in their teaching-learning processes as a result of the historic COVID-19 event. A lack of preparation combined with the inherent issues of remote assessment has made it particularly difficult for higher education institutions to perform evaluations remotely during COVID-19. This sudden crisis also creates difficulties for online assessment. Many universities did not anticipate this transformation from a face-to-face to an online setting, therefore faculty members and students were not equipped or prepared to handle this significant change. Prior studies on the integration of online evaluation into language teaching and learning have revealed a variety of drawbacks (Daniels et al, 2021; Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Gillett-Swan, 2017; and Fageeh, 2015). In the relevant literature, there were numerous difficulties with online assessment, including poor technical infrastructure development, poor internet connectivity, difficulty using online tools, issues with student engagement, unreliable online assessment systems, and an increase in cheating and plagiarism, etc…

2.5. Opportunities of online interpretation assessment

Some recent studies in various countries showed how online assessments become an opportunity, namely innovation in a research and technology field and also the socio-economic interventions

through social support for students. Moreover, it gives the opportunity to develop the assessment itself by focusing on a compassionate collegiate model of practice. Hereinafter are some practical benefits of this kind of assessment, according to Marianna Sigala, 2005.

Firstly, one of the primary advantages of online assessment is that the students can receive virtually instant feedback. Next, the traditional exam system needs to bear the cost of printing exam papers,and an arrangement of the exam center, so the authorities can save the cost of organizing. Additionally, Assessment is able to take place anytime and anywhere. It is obvious that an applicant can complete the Online Assessment at any time from anywhere. Last but not least, this kind of evaluationof several teststo be completed by the candidate.

3. Research questions

The main questions of this research are:

• *What are the current challenges of distance assessment in interpretation for both teachers and students in Haiphong university?*

• *What are some suggestions on designing online assessment in interpretation?*

4. Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative data were helpful to address the aims of the research including the exploitation of challenges online assessment and finding the possible suggestion on designing this kind of assessment.

First, quantifiable data are gathered by asking 120 English major students and three interpreters to complete an online survey. The questionnaire contains 4 sections namely (1) Types of online assessment method used for interpretation; (2) Evaluation of the

overall effectiveness of online assessment from students'/teacher's perspectives; (3) Problems encountered using online interpretation assessments; (4) Effectiveness of combined assessment tools of teachers from students' perspectives.

Second, through individual interviews, qualitative data is gathered to show students' recommendations and opinions on online assessment. The questions for the interviews were developed using the data gathered from the questionnaire as a guide.

These mixed methods help to exploit the situation and challenges of interpretation assessment. Thus, after collecting quantitative data for over 2 weeks, I invited 5 students and 3 teachers to participate in short interviews about their experiences of assessing and being assessed.

5. Research Participants

Students

Table 1: Students information

Gender	Female	102	85%
	Male	18	15%
Age	18-21	120	100%
	More than 22	0	0%
Years of interpreting study	0-1 year	54	45%
	1-2 years	42	35%
	2-3 years	24	20%

As shown in Table 1, female students as participants hold a large number of 85%. In terms of age, all students are quite young ranging from 18 to 21 years old while the years of interpreting years vary. Almost half of the respondents (45%) appeared new to the subject of interpretation when 35% of the total respondents have less than 2 years of studying. The small number of 20% is reserved for higher level students within 2-3 years.

Teachers

Table 2: Teachers information

Gender	Female	3	100%
	Male	0	0%
Age	30-35	1	33%
	More than 35	2	67%
Years of interpreting teaching	0-5 year	1	33%
	5-10 years	2	67%

Table 2 reveals that all teachers taking part in the research are female ones with higher years of teaching experiences (5-10 years) and 33% of them are the newly-employed teachers who are under 5 years at work. In summary, teachers at Hai Phong University are rather fully-experienced in teaching the subject of interpretation.

6. Findings & Discussion

6.1. Data Findings

6.1.1. Kinds of methods used in interpretation assessment

Table 3: Kinds of methods used in interpretation assessment

Methods	Teachers attempted
Online test and examination	83%
Online presentation	48%
Projects and role play	13%

Table 3 showed the types of methods which were used by teachers during the course of interpreting. The ones which were used the most frequently were reserved for online tests and examinations at a fixed time (83%), followed by students doing an online presentation (48%). Moreover, projects and role play were utilized but not too much compared to the previous ones (13%).

6.1.2. Challenges students faced during the assessment process

Table 4: Challenges that students encountered during COVID-19

Challenges	Students attempted
Quality of audio sounds	68%
Errors in transmission	54.7%
Outside effects	26%

Table 4 shows that a total of 120 students who had taken online assessment during COVID-19 pandemic affirmed the obstacles or challenges of this kind of testing. According to the survey, the most challenging obstacle was the quality of the audio sounds (68%). There were 54.7% who agreed that they were affected by errors in transmission while 26% thought outside effects had a negative impact on student's results. Generally, students were unsatisfied with this kind of assessment and agreed that it was affected by many things when compared with traditional examination.

6.1.3. Combination of various methods in assessment process

The question "Have you ever combined different assessment tools for the subject of interpretation?" was raised in the interview and answered by all 03 interpreting teachers in Foreign Language Department. Their answers gained as follows:

"It is tricky for me to apply the mixture of different assessment tools for this subject since as you know, the limitation of time and the requirements of the subject, that is to say we have to submit the scores of students to the Boards of testing instantly and immediately."

"We follow the traditional ways of testing interpretation in which an individual student is required to listen to the tape via loudspeaker, note- take and interpret whatever he/she has listened into the target language because we think that it is the

most effective and convenient method to give the evaluation as soon as possible."

In a nutshell, the responses showed that the teachers rarely combined the various kinds of assessment in this subject. They mostly followed the traditional form in which the students took part in online tests or examinations. The process was thatthe teacher would open the tape twice and students would take notes for one minute and pose the answers in the target language.

6.2. Discussion

This mixed method involved 120 students and 3 interpretation teachers in Hai Phong University with various backgrounds. They enthusiastically fulfilled the questionnaires and finished the interviews. The aims of the author are to exploit the current challenges of distance assessment in interpretation for both teachers and students in Hai Phong university and then suggest ways to design a probable form to evaluate the subject of interpretation.

6.2.1. Research question 1

First and foremost, it was implied through quantitative data that students and teachers were familiar with the online tests and examinations within the limited time. Besides, online presentation and projects and role play were employed but they seemed not to be frequently used. Therefore, the challenge was that the diversity of testing forms was not varied and teachers and students had few chances to update the new technology in testing and evaluating.

In addition, both instructors and learners encountered difficulties when taking part in the testing process. Typically, quality of audio sounds held the first position in the scale of problems faced by the participants whereas errors in transmission and outside effects were recognized as other additional components contributing to the challenges of the assessing process.

6.2.2. Research question 2

The qualitative data showed that lecturers in Hai Phong University were consistent with the traditional way of testing online applied for the subject of interpretation. In the era of advanced technology, the author thinks teachers should apply the diversified assessment tools thanks to their benefits, according to Marianna Sigala, 2005 stated in the Literature review. Beside the online tests, they are able to manage the evaluation by combining various kinds of methods. It allows students to have more opportunities to either keep up with different types of up -to-date forms or express their creativity. The following recommendations are the author's personal suggestions on both how to manage the assessments in accordance with traditional form thanks to rubrics and using blended assessment tools for online evaluation.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Rubrics for online assessment

Rubrics are "scoring sheets" for learning tasks. When designing a rubric, ideally, the criteria for evaluation need to be aligned with the learning objectives of the task.

Different styles of rubrics are better fits for different task-types and for fulfilling the different teaching aims of a rubric. There are four different styles with varying levels of complexity: single point rubric, Specific task rubrics, general rubrics, holistic rubrics and analytic rubrics (Arter, J. A., & Chappuis, J., 2007).

Hereinafter is a good example of Holistic rubrics in which 4 criteria including Interpretation quality, Fluency, intonation, voice control, Pronunciation and Grammatical correctness. Each skill is ranked in accordance with performance levels namely Excellent, Good, Below Average and Poor. The writer assumes this one is a suitable form of assessment for the subject of interpretation.

Table 5: Scoring Rubric for Interpreting Tests with Marks Allocated to Each Performance Level

Skills	Performance Levels				
	Excellent	**Very Good**	**Good**	**Below Average**	**Poor**
1. Interpretation quality	13-15	11-12	8-10	5-7	1-4
2. Fluency intonation voice control	5	4	3	2	1
3. Pronuciation	5	5	3	2	1
4. Grammatical correctness	5	5	3	2	1

7.2. Using blended assessment tools for online assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and it is described as a process of gathering, describing, or quantifying information about student performance. Also, it plays a significant role in learning whatever the environment, traditional or online and general principles are similar in both environments (Rovai, 2000). In fact, student assessments are more important in the online environment since students cannot be observed and interacted like in a traditional face-to-face environment (Rovai, 2000). Moreover, compared to traditional one, research on student assessment in online environments has not been extensive and we need more research to provide guidelines and specific procedures for online instructors (Ross & Ross, 2005). For these reasons, this study examined how to make online interpretation assessments effectively.

The author suggests that interpreting teachers should combine various kinds of assessment including both for regular and final tests. For the former one, peer or self-assessment are highly recommended. Students are provided with assessment templates or samples to follow the instructions. For the latter kind, big projects or online interpretation for films for short stories are suggested. Students are able to do projects as directed by their teacher such as playing roles in prompter

tests, making their own videos in which they participated as the part of interpreters, etc…

8. Conclusion

Each evaluation method has advantages and disadvantages that must be considered when planning and implementing it in the courses. Teachers must undertake multiple assessment models that are appropriate for and promote online learning as part of the online learning process used in all educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online interpreting learning utilized a number of assessment methodologies, including the development of rubrics and self-evaluations. To effectively complete the learning exercise, the instructors faced new hurdles as a result of the online evaluation they completed during the COVID-19 epidemic. Furthermore, due to a number of difficulties and difficulties faced, teachers had a tough time conducting efficient online evaluations. As a result, educators should be able to adapt their traditional teaching methods to online learning. Students should adjust their learning strategies constantly to keep up with the learning materials provided by the teachers via internet communication technology. According to this study, instructors should receive adequate training in online assessment and information technology so they can carry out assessments correctly and meet the predefined assessment goals and assessment objectives. Implementing these recommendations would enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of assessment tools in the online learning environment. It is also recommended that additional academics carry out more thorough study on the implementation of online assessment and the difficulties faced by the teachers.

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