

# Comparing Self-assessment and Teacher's Assessment in Interpreter Training

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*Despite the importance of assessment in learning, students are often left out of the assessment process. Self-assessment may be the starting point for students to get involved in the assessment process. This study examined the characteristics of both student and teacher assessments of students' interpretation performances. The study population consisted of teachers and students of a Korean-English program at a two-year graduate school of translation and interpretation. The study asked two questions: (1) Are interpreting students able to produce self-assessments that are similar in grade and content to teachers' assessments? (2) What are the characteristics of student self-assessments when compared to teacher assessments? The study found that although the students' self-assigned grades were similar to those of the teachers, the student self-assessments were not similar in content to the teacher assessments. The study also found that student self-assessments had distinct characteristics which could be complementary to teachers' assessments.*

**Keywords: self-assessment, grade, content, assessment criteria, product vs. process-oriented assessment**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

In interpreter and translator training, assessment, in written and oral form, is initially used for selection purposes. Schools and programs use assessments to screen applicants that they feel are good candidates for interpreter training

and to see whether they have the necessary preparation to begin such training. During the training program itself, assessment is most often used to diagnose a student's ability, check progress, evaluate, and compare his or her interpretation performances for the purposes of course examinations and exit mechanisms.

Considering the importance of assessment in interpreter and translator training, the amount of research and attention given to it is surprisingly scarce. Hatim and Mason (1997: 197) state that "the assessment of translator performance is an activity which, despite being widespread, is under-researched and under-discussed."

The situation is more serious when it comes to studies conducted on the topic of self-assessment. The reasons for the scarcity of research and limited attention may be due to a couple of factors. First, students themselves may feel that assessment is the responsibility of teachers and not students. Another reason may be that teachers and administrators are not yet ready to trust students when it comes to assessment. Students may be viewed as having less-than-sufficient capability for assessment in comparison to teachers.

Self-assessment is not only important during interpreter training, but even more so after students graduate and become professional interpreters. Because interpreters are often freelancers, they are left on their own to evaluate the quality of their performances and find ways to improve them. Quite often, the only feedback interpreters receive is from their clients when in the form of complaints about the quality of their work. Therefore it is important for students to master the techniques of self-assessment during the training phase, which will help them to monitor and improve their level of performance even after graduation.

Studies in the field of foreign language acquisition that focused on the issue of students' ability to assess themselves report differing results. Some studies have met with positive results and revealed high correlations between self-assessments and external ratings (Dickenson 1987; Oskarson 1989; Shrauger and Osberg 1981; Raasch 1979; von Elek 1982). Other studies have reported opposite results where students did not have the knowledge or experience to perform assessments (Al-Hamly and Coombe 2005; Blue 1994; Pierce et al. 1993).

The study of self-assessment on its own is important, but it is all the more necessary and important to look at it in comparison to teacher assessment. There are several reasons for this. First, the importance of teacher assessment cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers have traditionally been in charge of

the assessment function, and will continue to be the primary assessor in the learning environment. Second, teachers are the ones who admitted the students into a program through the admissions process and will continue to assess the students through graduation. But most importantly, teachers have the expertise and the knowledge which is the foundation for assessing student performance. Therefore, the present study examines self-assessment not as a separate entity but in conjunction with teacher assessment.

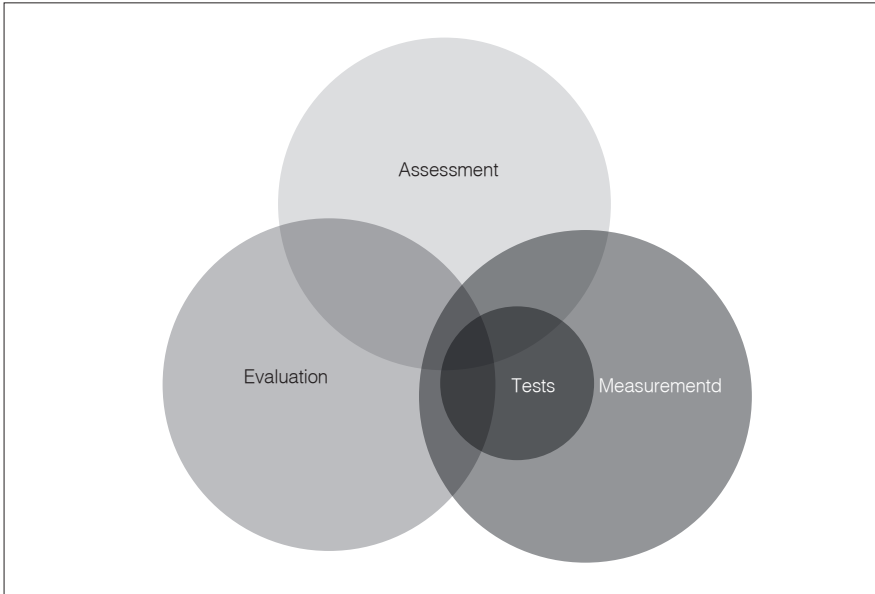
## ***1.2. The concept of assessment***

Many terms are used along with the term “assessment” which means different things to different people. The terms “measurement,” “test,” and “evaluation” are often used synonymously (Bachman 1990: 18). Bachman (1990) differentiates among “measurement,” “test” and “evaluation” in the following manner. “Measurement” is defined as the process of quantifying the characteristics of persons according to explicit procedures and rules. A “test” is a measurement instrument designed to elicit a specific “sample” of an individual’s behavior and quantifies characteristics of an individual according to explicit procedures (Bachman 1990: 20). “Evaluation” is defined as a systematic gathering of information for the purpose of making decisions (Weiss 1972). Here, the concept of “making decisions” is an important one since that differentiates the concept of “evaluation” from that of “assessment.”

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998: 319) define and differentiate the two terms, assessment and evaluation, by looking at their scope of activities. They state that “evaluation” is a necessary cluster of activities in which curriculum developers and implementers gather data to arrive at judgments. The judgments are either about individuals’ experiencing the curriculum, which is usually considered “assessment,” or curricular programs in general, which are considered “evaluation.” In other words, “evaluation,” for Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) means making decisions about the curriculum whereas “assessment” is meant for those of the individual learners.

The definition of assessment used in the present study incorporates elements of the terms “test” and “measurement.” Specifically, it signifies the measurement of a specific sample. It incorporates measurement, that is, quantification, because my definition of assessment includes the assigning of grades/scores to students’ interpreting outcome. The definition of assessment used in this paper

Figure 1. Relationship of measurement, test, evaluation and assessment (adapted from Bachman 1990)



also incorporates elements of “evaluation” because the result of the assessment can be used to make a judgment, that is, the passing or failing a course. Lastly, the definition of assessment used in this paper involves making decisions about student learning as an individual. Therefore, the term “assessment” in this study is an integration and a partial superset of the terms “test,” “measurement,” and “evaluation.” Thus, in this study, “assessment” is defined as a set of processes by which we make decisions on student learning as a result of instruction.

I have made an adaptation of Bachman’s model of the relationship between measurement, test, and evaluation to describe my definition of “assessment” (see Figure 1 above). The figure signifies the relationship of assessment to the other three concepts; it illustrates that assessment involves certain aspects of “measurement,” “test,” and “evaluation.”

### ***1.3. Self-assessment***

LeBlanc and Painchaud (1985: 227) define self-assessment as procedures by which the learners themselves evaluate their skills and knowledge. Harris and

Bell (1994) regard self-assessment as a self-directed and determined learner setting his/her own assessment criteria, judging his/her learning processes (or product) against these criteria, and making decisions based on these judgments.

A few studies have been conducted in the area of language learning that report that self-assessment is not very effective in encouraging student learning. Research has shown that students often do not have the tools to cope with self-assessment (LeBlanc and Painchaud 1976). An important aspect pointing to the challenges associated with self-assessment is the students' ability to assess themselves. Fellenz (1976) points out that adult self-directed learners are not produced by simply telling them to be responsible for their own learning. Lewkowicz and Moon (1985) go a step further in the context of English enhancement and say that it is wrong to place the responsibility on the students to assess their own competence in English.

On the other hand, there are studies that report positive aspects of self-assessment. Oskarsson (1989) found that learner autonomy, the development of study skills, the concept of life-long learning, and increased motivation were some of the benefits of self-assessment. Alderson and Banerjee (2001) found that self-assessment increased a student's confidence in his or her own judgment. Bachman and Palmer (1989) also reported that self-ratings could be reliable, valid measures of communicative language abilities; this contrasts with the findings of Davidson and Henning's(1985) study. Davidson and Henning (1985: 176) concluded that, based on their self-rating instrument, students showed a tendency to exaggerate their personal ability.

LeBlanc and Painchaud (1985) conducted research in Canada asking such questions as whether students have the ability to evaluate their own performance and whether students can be satisfactorily placed by self-assessment results alone. The study concludes that under the condition of the experiment, self-assessment should be considered a valuable tool as a placement instrument. In their discussion of the study, the authors list several advantages of self-assessment: (1) Data gathering becomes much simpler since it is the student who is responsible for providing the assessment data; (2) Self-assessment eliminates the need for students to cheat; and (3) learning becomes more student-centered since students become responsible for their own placement.

### ***1.4 Self-assessment in translation and interpretation studies***

Lee-Jahnke (2001) recognized the value of self-evaluation as a method that focuses on the student in addition to one that focuses on the process of translation. In Lee-Jahnke's self-evaluation, the evaluation is done not only by the student alone, but also with the teacher and the other peers progressing through a series of steps. This is an important departure from the traditional approach to evaluation where the teacher was always the initiator of assessment. This view of assessment is well aligned with the aim of this study's purpose, which is to engage students in the assessment process.

Lee-Jahnke's discussion on assessment focuses not only on the result, that is, the translation product itself, but on the process of translation including efforts to identify the sources of students' difficulties and problem areas. Directing attention to the process in addition to the product has been echoed by other scholars. Scholars have argued for the need to use a process-oriented approach in translator training (Gile 1994, 1995). Fox (2000) argues that there is a need to make a departure from the traditional approach of prescriptive and product-oriented pedagogy.

Gile (1994, 1995) has been a strong advocate of the process-oriented approach to teaching. He argues that the traditional approach of product-oriented teaching makes students uncomfortable, which is a hindrance to the learning experience. Gile (1994) compares the traditional training approach based on translation assignments, which are corrected or approved publicly in class, with the process-oriented approach of students presenting their own solutions. In this process-oriented system, the trainees are considered as students of translation methods rather than producers of finished products (Gile 1994). Gile lists the advantages of process-related teaching as being psychologically more comfortable than product-related teaching, being possible to focus on the deeper level of the final product, and being a process that allows teachers to look into the cause of problems.

Russo (1995) discusses self-evaluation in simultaneous interpreting training as a tool to promote awareness of students' learning. A total of 135 questionnaires were collected from first-year interpreting students asking about the difficulties they encountered in interpreting and their impressions. Using self-assessment as a learning tool, students became more aware of the various skills of interpreting such as paraphrasing, summarizing, control, memory,

attention, comprehension, and processing speed. But there was also mention of “emotional” concerns such as “sense of fatigue” and “agitation.”

The field of meta-cognition is specifically relevant to self-assessment and learner autonomy as it deals with learners’ monitoring their own progress in addition to setting their own goals and being aware of the goals that have not been met (Afflerbach and Meuwissen 2005). Because meta-cognition allows learners to monitor their own strategies and performance status, learners will be more likely to set goals that will be effective for their learning. Choi (2004) writes about self-evaluation and self-monitoring mechanisms through the approach of meta-cognitive evaluation. The premise is that if “students were taught to self-evaluate, they could build up confidence by realizing that they have the potential to perform better tomorrow than today. To do that requires a self-monitoring mechanism to go in parallel with the teacher’s monitoring process.”

The above aspects of self-assessment are all essential to students’ learning and allowed students to be more involved in their learning process. But if we are to involve students in the assessment process, we need to ask these critical questions: Are students able to assess themselves? To what degree can I, the teacher, trust the students to assess themselves and identify the strengths and weaknesses of their performances? Should I allow them to design their own practice goals based on the results of their self-assessment? Can I delegate some of my assessment responsibility to the student? If I were to share some of my assessment responsibility with students, which aspects should I choose and how should they be shared? These are the questions that need to be answered before student self-assessments can be used more actively in the learning process. This study is an attempt to answer some of these questions by comparing the features and characteristics of student self-assessments to those of their teachers.

## 2. The study

### 2.1. *Research questions*

This study examined the features and characteristics of student self-assessments in comparison to their teacher’s assessment. The goals of the present study were to examine the relationship between student self-assessments and

teachers' assessments and to identify specific characteristics of self-assessments using teacher assessments as a benchmark.

To achieve the above-mentioned research goals, the study asked two questions: (1) Are interpreting students able to produce self-assessments that are similar in grade and content to teachers' assessments? (2) What are the characteristics of student self-assessments as compared to those of their teachers?

## **2.2. Design**

The setting of the study was a two year degree program divided into four semesters. One semester consisted of 15 to 16 weeks of instruction. Consecutive interpretation courses were taught throughout the four semesters of the two year program. The courses used for data collection were consecutive second- and the third-semester interpretation classes.

The participants were 12 students and 2 teachers. These students were from the Korean/English program attending a graduate school of translation and interpretation. Two teachers from the Korean program participated in the study. The teachers were experienced teachers with over 6 years of teaching experience and over 10 years of experience as professional interpreters.

Each semester, two assessments were conducted in conjunction with mid-term and final exams; thus, over two semesters, four assessments were conducted per student. Therefore, there were a total of eight assessment reports for each student: four student self-assessments and four teacher assessments. With 12 students in the study, the total number of assessment reports was 96. The interpretations were recorded using Tascam dual audio cassette tapes.

The research design used to identify the characteristics of student and teacher assessments was mixed; it utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Most of the data collected for this study were qualitative, that is, written comments made by the teachers and the students. Qualitative analyses allowed the identification of the specific and individual characteristics of the teacher and student assessments that could not be identified using quantitative methods.

The quantitative analysis method used was descriptive statistics and statistical correlation. Analyses of numerical data grades were done using descriptive statistical analysis of correlation using Spearman's *rho*. Spearman's correlation is a non-parametric measure that assesses how well a monotonic function

describes the relationship between two variables without making any other assumptions about the particular nature of the relationship between the two variables. Because non-parametric methods make fewer assumptions, these methods are more robust and simple to use. Due to its robustness and simplicity, Spearman's *rho* is viewed by some statisticians as leaving less room for improper use and misunderstanding (Wasserman 2007). In the current study, the two variables would be the grades assigned by the students and teachers on the same interpreting performances. The p-value of 0.01 was used with the consideration that the purpose of the study was to put forth a model based on the result.

### **2.3. Materials**

The speech texts used for interpretation were approximately five minutes in length and similar to the discourse the participants had been exposed to in class. During the two semesters, the teachers used texts of a general nature (primarily economic and political speeches relating to Korea and the larger world). The content of the speeches did not include any specific terminology or require background knowledge.

The researcher tried to maintain consistency of data by requesting the two groups, teachers and students, to use the same assessment form as the template for assessment reports (see Appendix). The form requested all participants to respond to the same specific set of questions, thus allowing the researcher to control the type of data collected. The three major assessment categories of *meaning*, *language*, and *delivery* were those that were generally used at the school for semester exams and exit exams. Criteria were provided to help students with a meta-language when attempting to describe their performances.

Questions one through four were informational questions asking the name of the teacher/student, assessment date, and the general topic of the speech interpreted. Question five asked the teachers and students to assess the students' interpretation performances by describing the strengths and weaknesses of each performance, possible sources of difficulties, and any other pertinent comments. Question six asked the teachers and the students to assign a grade for the specific interpretation performance being assessed.

## 2.4. Data

Four types of data were extracted from student self-assessments and teacher assessments:

- (1) grade;
- (2) content of written comments;
- (3) use of assessment criteria terms; and
- (4) product vs. process-related comment.

Grades were chosen specifically to identify the relationship between teachers' grades and students' self-assigned grades. Grade comparison allows us to review whether students were able to assign grades that were similar to the teacher's grades.

The second type of data was the content of assessment; this refers to the actual comments written by teachers and students to assess the interpreting performances. The content included aspects of performance that have to do with the product of performance such as "speed" and "meaning error" or aspects that deal with the process of interpreting such as "I could not remember what I had written on my notes." The content data of assessments was qualitative because it consisted of words, phrases, and sentences.

The third type of data analyzed was the assessment criteria used. Assessment criteria refer to words or phrases used by the students and teachers to describe interpreting performances. The analyses were done by counting the frequency of occurrences of the descriptive phrases used by the assessment criteria.

The frequency of words and phrases of the assessment criteria used by the teachers and students in their assessments were counted and then ranked by order.

The fourth type of data analyzed was process versus product-related comments. Product-related comments refer to comments that have to do with the final outcome of the interpretation, such as "meaning error," "speed," and "good delivery." Process-related comments refer to comments that have to do with the process of interpretation such as "I wasn't able to take notes because the speed was too fast." Self-assessment is known to have certain process-related characteristics such as identifying the process leading to strengths and weaknesses and causes of students' problem areas (Lee 2003). The purpose of analyzing this data was to examine if the students' self-assessments had more

process-oriented comments than the teacher assessments.

There were a total of 96 assessment reports that were used for analyses: 8 assessments per student multiplied by 12 students. The eight assessments for each student consisted of four self-assessments and four teacher assessments.

## **2.5. Analyses and results**

### **2.5.1. Grade**

For grade analyses, the students' self-assigned grades were compared to the teacher's grades to examine whether there was a correlation between the two sets of grades. The term grade refers to the letter grade (A, A-, B+, et cetera) assigned to interpreting performances. There were a total of 48 sets of grades assigned by the teachers and students. To calculate the correlation, letter grades were converted into number grades according to the conversion table used by the university records office. The correlation was calculated using Spearman's *rho* because an examination of the distributions for the two sets of scores revealed that they were abnormally distributed.

***Finding 1. The statistical correlation between the grades assigned by the teachers and those assigned by the students were found to be moderately significant.***

Using the SPSS version 10 for Windows, Spearman's *rho* value was 0.584 ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $N = 48$ , two-tailed test). Though statistically significant, the correlation of 0.584 indicates a moderate relationship between the students' self-assigned grades and the teacher's grades.

### **2.5.2. Content (written comments)**

In order to analyze the qualitative aspects of the assessments, that is, the written comments, key words were extracted from the comments and compared. The framework used for extracting keywords was the meta-language for assessment used by the school. Keywords include meaning error, omissions, message, comprehension, redundancy, addition, analysis, coverage, literal translation, accuracy, logic, coverage, coherence, cohesion, grammar, word

choice, sentence structure, expression, word activation, register, speed, filler pronunciation, pause, smooth delivery, word repetition, voice, wordiness, volume, accent, note-taking, memory, nervousness, tension, confidence, frustration, anxiety, and psychological factors. Using the keywords extracted from the comments written by the teachers and the students, further analysis was conducted to see how much of an overlap there was between the teacher's and the students' comments.

In most cases, the use of the same keywords meant that the students and the teacher were in agreement using those specific keywords; this led us to conclude that there was a similarity between the student and teacher assessments. However, there were a few cases where this principle did not apply. In other words, the student and the teacher would use the same keyword but actually provide the exact opposite assessment of the student's performance. For example, for the exact same performance, the teacher commented that the student's performance was "too wordy" whereas the student commented that she was successful in dividing the sentences, making her delivery "less wordy." Although the same keyword, "wordy" was used, this was not counted as an overlap of comments.

***Finding 2. Students did not make self-assessments that were similar in content to teacher assessments.***

The content of the teacher and the student assessments was compared by calculating the overlap of keywords and expressions used in the assessments. The result showed that the average percentage of overlap for the 12 students was 31.2%, meaning that the students and teachers were more often talking about different aspects of student performances than about similar aspects. The figures varied for individual students ranging from a high of 50% to a low of 11%. The clear trend is that the students did not mention the things that the teacher found important; in fact, the students often made comments that were the exact opposite of what the teachers wrote. Table 1 presents a case where the teacher thought that the student's short sentences were too wordy. In the self-assessment, the student thought that she had done well in dividing the sentences into shorter meaning units and even said that her ability to do so was one of "my strongest points."

Table 1. Comments that are opposite in content

Teacher	Student
<p>However, in an attempt to break down long sentences into short meaningful units, his sentences became wordy on occasions. There were a couple of minor meaning errors.</p>	<p>I have successfully and properly divided sentences using various connectives so that the sentences do not sound wordy. This area was also one of my strongest points.</p>

In Table 2, the teacher points to comprehension as the student's biggest problem area. However, the student mentions speed, grammar, backtracking, and note-taking as the problem areas in her performance, so there is no overlap between the two assessments.

Table 2. Comprehension vs. speed, grammar and other factors

Teacher	Student
<p>Need to improve comprehension skills</p>	<p>Overall speed was too slow. Did not write the exact verb in note-taking which slowed the speed further and caused many instances of backtracking. I need to practice note-taking especially verb tenses. Need to practice less backtracking.</p>

Another student fails to mention the important aspects of her performance that were mentioned by the teacher as shown in Table 3. The teacher mentions comprehension, accuracy, and active listening as the salient problems, whereas the student remarks on the delivery aspect of her performance, such as fillers and backtracking, and does not mention anything about the comprehension-related aspects of her performance.

The results of the content analyses show that the students did not make self-assessments that were similar to teacher's assessments. Often, students were looking at different aspects of their performances than the teacher and, in fact, were often mentioning the exact opposite of what the teacher was saying.

Table 3. Comprehension vs. fillers and backtracking

Teacher	Student
Her comprehension is not stable. Need to add active listening exercise for better comprehension and accuracy	I used some fillers, especially when I could not come up with appropriate words. Also, I backtracked several times. It was mainly because I found some important information later when I already almost finished the sentence. The sentence that lists agendas of the WTO meeting has a problem of subject-verb arrangement, because I forgot what I said as a subject after interpreting all the lists.

**2.5.3. Assessment criteria terms**

Another type of qualitative data analyzed was the ranking of the performance criteria used. The point of the analysis was to determine which criteria terms were most often mentioned by the two groups and to compare the results between the teachers and the students.

The assessment criteria terms used by the teachers and the students were categorized into the three major areas of *meaning*, *language*, and *delivery*, used by the school. The comments in the “Others” category were note-taking, memory, nervousness, backtracking, voice number, tension, confidence, frustration, anxiety, and psychological factors (Table 4).

Table 4. Major category of assessment criteria terms

Major category	Others category
Meaning, language, and delivery	Note-taking, memory, nervousness, tension, confidence, frustration, anxiety, and psychological factors

***Finding 3. Students regarded note-taking, memory, and psychological factors as more important criteria of assessment than did teachers.***

In total, there was a list of 48 different assessment criteria terms used by the students and the teachers. Among them, the teachers used 33 assessment criteria terms and the students used 42 criteria terms to describe interpreting performances. Although many of them overlapped, some criteria terms were used only by the students, including “anxiety” and “stammering.”

The analyses revealed that teachers’ comments were balanced among the three major categories of *meaning* (31%), *language* (34%), and *delivery* (32%). The “others” category accounted for only 3% of the total comments. However, the analyses of student keywords showed a balanced distribution among the four major assessment categories, *meaning*, *language*, *delivery*, and *others*. For students, the comments in the “others” category accounted for 20% of the total comments, as compared to 3% for teachers.

The results show that both the teachers and students view the three major categories of assessment criteria used by the school for formative and summative assessments as equally important. The teachers, who are familiar with the existing assessment criteria, produced assessment comments that fit neatly into the three major categories. However, for students, factors outside the realm of the existing three major assessment categories were equally important. Figures 2 and 3 reflect these patterns.

There were salient differences between the teachers’ and students’ assessment criteria terms. Some features of assessments that were mentioned by the students were not mentioned at all or mentioned only rarely by teachers. These features were note-taking (27 times), memory (15 times), and psychological

Figure 2. Proportion of assessment criteria category: Teacher

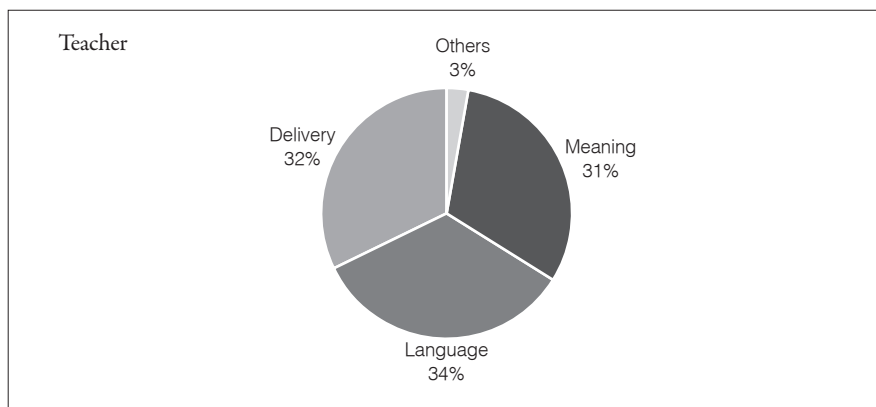
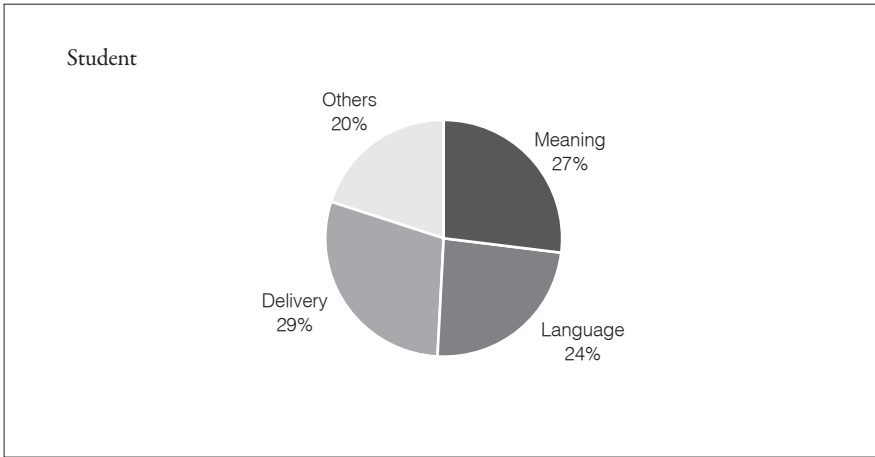


Figure 3. Proportion of assessment criteria category: Student



factors which were expressed in terms such as nervousness (9 times), tension (5 times), confidence (2 times), frustration (2 times), anxiety (2 times), and psychological factors (1 time). Interestingly, teachers did not mention note-taking or memory at all, and neither referred to factors related to psychological factors except for nervousness (1 time).

### ***Note-taking***

Note-taking was a performance aspect that accounted for the biggest discrepancy between teachers and students. Students expressed considerable concern and interest in note-taking and mentioned it often in their self-assessments. Note-taking ranked fourth among the assessment criteria terms mentioned by the students; it followed grammar (35 times), meaning error (31), and speed (29). In contrast, note-taking did not rank among the 22 assessment criteria terms mentioned by the teachers.

Students not only mentioned note-taking often, they suggested that note-taking was the biggest problem area they experienced in interpretation performances, as shown in Excerpt 1 below.

Excerpt 1.

“I got lost while taking notes and got mixed up. Also, some sentences of the original text did not deliver a clear message, so there were some problems in

processing the meaning of such sentences.”

In Excerpt 2 below, a student also comments on the problem of writing down too much information due to a lack of analysis.

Excerpt 2.

“I tried to write down as much information as possible, and it prevented me from analyzing while taking notes.”

### ***Memory***

Memory is another criterion students often mentioned and identified as a problem. Students mentioned “memory” 15 times in their assessments whereas there was no mention of memory by teachers. Students commented frequently on their short memory span and expressed frustration over their lack of ability to remember the message.

Excerpt 3.

“First of all, it’s the memory span that matters most. Not second. My performance was even worse than that in the mid-term because I failed to decipher what I wrote down in my notes.”

Oftentimes, memory was mentioned together with note-taking; the two systems are intended to help students remember the speaker’s message. The coordination of the two seemed to pose particular difficulty to the students as shown in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4.

“I think I have a problem with note taking and memory. For some sentences, I sound like I’m summarizing the original sentence. It seems like I was trying to make something up using the words in my notes if I don’t remember what they are for.”

### ***Psychological factors***

In their self-assessments, students noted having difficulties with psychological

factors and expressed difficulties using terms such as nervousness (9), tension (5), confidence (2), frustration (2), anxiety (2), and psychological factors (1). Teachers did not comment similarly; perhaps they were not particularly cognizant of these aspects of interpreting performances.

A student expresses frustration over her inability to control stress in the booth (see Excerpt 5 below). It is apparent that nervousness and anxiety were preventing the student from listening and processing the message.

Excerpt 5.

“I was overwhelmed by an unusually tense atmosphere in the interpretation booth. My hands were trembling out of anxiety, so it was difficult to write down what I heard. I could not process meaning at a proper speed because I could not understand my notes. It is necessary to overcome and soothe such nervous feelings.”

Students also referred to psychological elements as the source of their failure to perform. Students listed the problematic features of their performances and indicated that the possible source of all those problems could be “nervousness.” A student also mentioned “lack of confidence” as the source of her fillers and pauses.

#### ***2.5.4. Product vs. process-related comments***

The data analyses were conducted to examine whether in their assessments teachers and students focused on interpreting aspects that were either product- or process-related. Product-related comments were those that have to do with the outcome of the interpretation itself, such as “occasional meaning error,” “slow pace,” and “fillers.” Process-related comments refer to those aspects that are related to the process of interpretation performances such as “did not write the exact verb in note-taking,” or “frequently, I fail to remember what I had not taken notes on.” After each comment was classified as a product- or process-related comment, the frequency of the two types of comments was counted.

#### ***Finding 4. There were more process-related comments in student assessments than in teacher assessments.***

Teachers made a total of 220 comments in their assessments. Among the

220 comments, 205 (93%) were product-related, specifically describing student performances, and 15 (7%) comments that were related to the process of the performance. Therefore, we could conclude that teacher comments were predominantly product-related. On the other hand, students made 336 comments, 63% of which were product-related and 37% process-related (Figures 4 and 5, and Tables 5 and 6).

The analyses reveal that teachers commented predominantly on the product of the interpretation performance. Perhaps because students were able to remember the process of their interpretation performances, they were able to make more comments related to the process of their interpretations.

In the comment shown in Table 5, the teacher writes one comment, “slow speed.” The student writes about “slow speed” as well, but further elaborates on the source of the problem. In other words, the student mentions the source of the problem as well as the process leading to the interpretation performance.

In the excerpt provided in Table 6, the teacher uses short words and phrases to point out the most important aspects of the student’s performance. The student tries to analyze the process and figure out why her performance was not satisfactory. She mentions vocabulary and background knowledge as the source of her problem.

Figure 4. Percentage of process vs. product-related comments by teachers

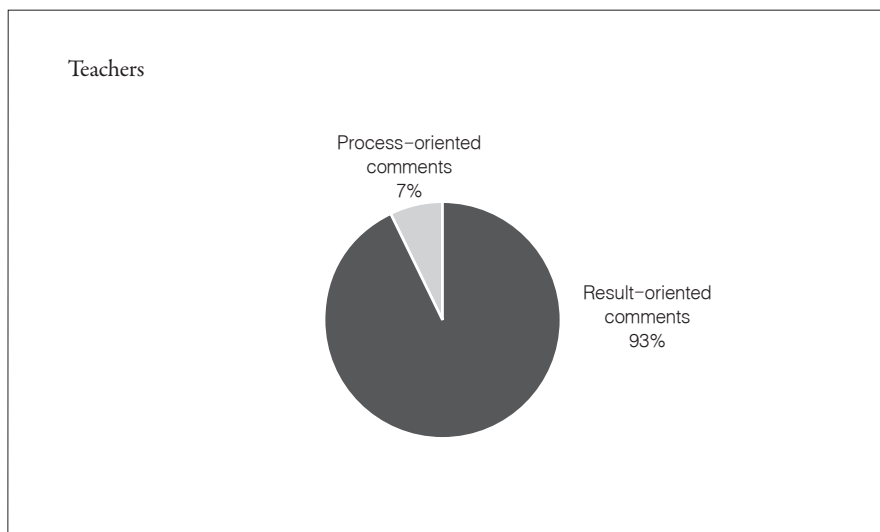
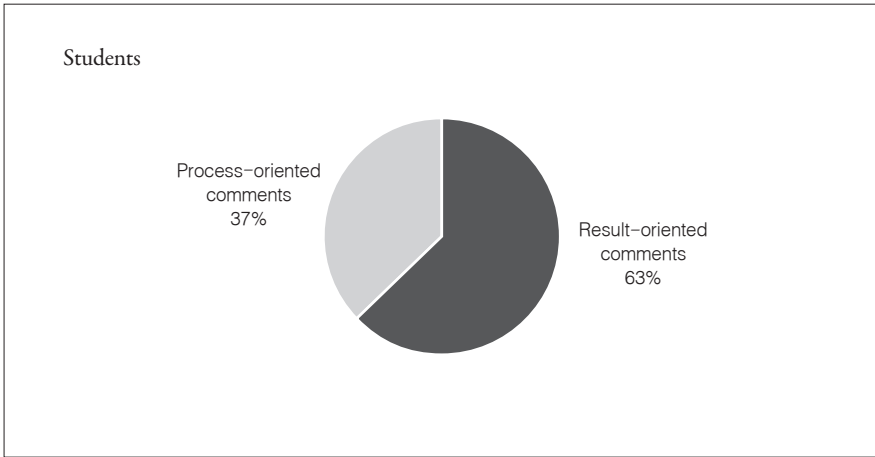


Figure 5. Percentage of process- vs. product-related comments by students



## 5. Conclusion

Table 5. Comment on the process

Teacher	Student
“Slow pace.”	“Overall speed was too slow. Did not write the exact verb in note-taking which slowed the speed further and caused much backtracking.”

Table 6. Comment on the process

Teacher	Student
“Meaning: Big chunks of meaning errors. Wrong tense Language: Awkward word choices, fillers”	“In certain parts, I was not good at saying the meaning within one sentence but divided two or more sentences so it sounded distracting and unclear. Because I did not know the exact meaning of several terms, such as the current rules and practices in world trade and the protection of intellectual property rights, I had to omit or misinterpret them.”

Two questions were posed in this study. The first question was whether interpreting students are able to produce self-assessments that are similar in grade and content to teacher assessments. The research found that the answers to this first question were somewhat contradictory. Based on the grade analysis, students were able to grade their own interpretation performances in a similar fashion to the teachers' grades. However, the study found that the students were not writing about the aspects of performances that the teachers found salient enough to comment on. Based on these findings, this study concludes that although students' self-assigned grades were similar to those of the teachers,' this fact alone is not sufficient to conclude that students have the ability to self-assign grades to their own performances.

The second research question was what are the characteristics of student self-assessments when compared to the assessments of their teachers. My research found that students regarded note-taking, memory, and psychological factors as important assessment criteria. Student assessments had more process-related comments than those of teachers.

The findings for the second question indicate that the self-assessments of students have features distinct from teacher assessments. Student self-assessments had more process-related comments than teacher assessments. These process-oriented features included note-taking and memory, which are central to the process of consecutive interpretation. Students also wrote about the psychological dimensions of interpreting such as nervousness and anxiety. These psychological aspects as well as other process-related comments were rarely mentioned in the teachers' assessments.

The findings of the study may have significant pedagogical implications. First, the study highlights the importance of the teacher's role in assessing the product, that is, the interpretation performance. The result suggests that teachers still may have to assume the sole responsibility of grading the product of the students' interpretations. Moreover, students need to understand how teachers are assessing the product of their performances.

Second, the students' self-assessments had their own distinct value and characteristics. Self-assessments had a wealth of process-related information and affective comments, which are valuable to student learning. Student self-assessments should allow the teachers to become more cognizant of these aspects of their students' performance.

Third, the distinct features of both teacher and student assessments underscore the importance of communication and collaboration between the two parties. Students need to understand the assessment perspectives of the teacher who will be grading the outcome of their interpretation performances. Teachers also need to understand the process and difficulties students may be facing during interpretations by utilizing student self-assessments. Student self-assessment would allow teachers to look at those experiences of the students. In fact, self-assessments could be viewed as a window through which teachers could look into the cognitive and affective processes of students. Communication and collaboration between the teachers and students are expected to positively impact the skill enhancement of interpreting students and also promote better understanding between teachers and students.

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## Appendix

### *Student Assessment Form*

1. Teacher name:
2. Student name:
3. Course name:
4. Date:
5. Topic of the interpreted speech:  
Assessment criteria:  
Meaning Accuracy, major meaning error, minor meaning error, omission, addition, overall coherence, etc.  
Language Grammar, expression, word choice, terminology, sentence structure, etc.  
Delivery Pace, voice, pronunciation, accent, volume, etc.
6. Performance Analysis: Using the above criteria as reference, please describe the strengths and weaknesses of your interpretation performance, possible sources of difficulties, and any other pertinent comments.
7. What grade would you assign to this particular interpretation performance?