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Interpreted Speech Delivery Training Model: A Case Study of Utilizing a Translation Company's WeChat Channel

Yan Lin[1, a]

[1]College of Languages and Cultures, Ningde Normal University, Ningde 352100, China

[a]shirley20211935@sina.com

Abstract

Based on the reflection on the students' interpreting performance, classroom teaching efficiency, the cooperation with a leading translation company YGym, and the responsibility of training interpreters, this study conducted a case study on training third-year undergraduate students in interpreted speech delivery. Under the guidance of Activity Theory, the teacher developed a training model "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver" using YGym's WeChat channel. 70 students from two classes were divided into a control group and an experimental group. They took a pre-test in week 2 to assess their interpreted speech delivery. From week 3 to week 16, students in the experimental group participated in activities followed by this model with self-reflection. In week 17, all students took the post-test. A comparison of students' scores revealed that the training model "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver", integrated with YGym's WeChat channel, significantly improved the students' interpreted speech delivery. Additionally, this study explores an efficient way to establish effective cooperation with a translation company, fostering a significant partnership between the university and the industry. It not only promotes in-depth cooperation for future programs focused on training student interpreters and providing them with job opportunities, but also offers ways for teachers and translation companies to work together in training interpreting learners using social media platforms like WeChat channels.

Keywords

Interpreted speech delivery, cooperation, WeChat channel, translation company.

1. Introduction

In recent years in China, the Fujian Provincial Department of Education, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Fujian Provincial Association of Foreign Languages and Fujian University Foreign Language Teaching Research Association have collaborated to organize the English Interpretation Contest for College Students' Foreign Language Proficiency, highlighting the great emphasis placed on students' English interpretation skills. The contest also underscores the importance of selecting outstanding student interpreters with high-level interpreted speech delivery and strong international communication skills, aiming to identify qualified and competent interpreters for society and the nation.

In November 2024, 74 student contestants from 29 universities in Fujian Province participated in the English interpretation contest in Fuzhou. However, only four students passed and qualified to represent Fujian in the final English interpretation contest in Beijing. After the contest, the judges' comments were released. Their feedback highlighted that most student contestants were unable to deliver their interpreted speech in sight interpretation and consecutive interpretation completely, accurately, and fluently. The judges also pointed out weaknesses in the student interpreters' performance and reflected on interpretation course teaching and its training methods. Based on the contestants' interpreting performance and the

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importance of interpreted speech delivery, teachers are encouraged to innovate their teaching methods and training approaches for interpretation courses.

In a regular interpretation teaching class, the training model for interpreting students is primarily classroom-based and structured around theoretical instruction and guided practice. Teachers rely on textbooks, recorded speeches, and pre-designed scenarios to deliver interpreting theories, principles, and techniques, such as consecutive and simultaneous interpreting methods. Students are trained to master core skills such as listening, note-taking, comprehension, memorization, and interpreted speech delivery. They also practice recalling information from lecture recordings. In traditional controlled classroom settings, teaching and learning follow a fixed schedule. With limited time for classroom-based teaching, teachers struggle to demonstrate their full energy and adequately prepare diverse resources to make the training engaging and effective. For students, there is insufficient time to practice with various resources in class, and they lack opportunities to explore different approaches to learning interpretation.

With increasing communication between China and the rest of the world, the demand for translators and interpreters is growing. To meet this need, universities and colleges across the country offer various training programs for interpreting students [1]. Cooperating with a translation company is one way to implement a training program for interpreting students. In China, translation companies are key partners in university-industry cooperation. They can offer students interpretation internship projects and opportunities to engage in real-world interpretation tasks based on their business and services. Additionally, translation companies can provide experts, learning resources, and training tools to support students' professional development. In the era of big data, it's easier to obtain a large amount of learning resources from the internet. Through online cooperation with the translation company, time and distance are no longer barriers to implementing training. To access online resources, both teachers and students have smartphones to make connection with the translation company and receive the resources directly.

In this case study, the leading translation company YGym was selected as the provider for implementing interpreted speech delivery training. Its WeChat channel *English Listening Training*, features videos focused on interpreted speech delivery in English, accompanied by bilingual subtitles in English and Chinese. According to the brief introduction on its WeChat channel, the platform aims to build a language service network by fostering cooperation between the translation company and universities, as well as jointly creating a new era of language services with teachers and students. The *Videos* section has nearly 500 videos, offering eleven categories: *Share China's Stories Effectively in English*, *Introduce China's 24 Solar Terms in English*, *Global Perspectives Story Series*, *English Learning Guidance*, *Showcase Chinese Tourist Attractions in English*, *Present China's Provinces and Cities in English*, *Tell Chinese Historical Myths and Legends in English*, *Present Notable Chinese Figures in English*, *Introduce China's Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Craftsmanship in English*, *Present Chinese Cultural, Entertainment, and Sports Personalities and Events in English*, and *Bilingual Trending Words*. These diverse video resources provide strong support for interpreted speech delivery training, offering teachers a wide selection of interpretation materials to effectively train students.

WeChat channel has become a significant player in the short video landscape. It allows users to share and discover short videos. Users can gain knowledge from the videos they watch. When a teacher pays more attention to the relevance and benefits of mobile social media, they are more likely to use it to design activities that motivate students [2]. Due to the services and advantages offered by the translation company, as well as its diverse video resources, teachers are willing to use the leading translation company's WeChat channel as a practical and effective training tool. This integration with interpretation course teaching enhances students' interpreted speech delivery.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Interpreter Training

Interpreter training prepares individuals to work as professional interpreters, enabling real-time communication between speakers of different languages. It also helps improve teaching methodologies, integrate technology, address industry-specific challenges, and enhance overall interpreter competency. Cai and Dong (2015) provided a research summary on the effectiveness of interpreter training for undergraduate interpreting students [3]. Additionally, Sandrelli and Jerez (2007) examined the role and impact of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) on interpreter training, comparing e-learning platforms with traditional training methods [4]. Their findings suggest that ICT and e-learning platforms could be explored further in other aspects of interpreter training. Furthermore, Dong, Li, and Zhao (2019) found that strategy training is effective for student interpreters in B-to-A consecutive interpreting tasks [5]. Leong Ko (2008) investigated the use of sound-only teleconferencing, telephone, and the Internet as mediums for training students in interpreting skills [6]. This research provides pedagogical insights for future efforts to teach interpreting through distance learning. It suggests that students can improve their interpreting skills regardless of location. Interpreter training can be conducted effectively without spatial or geographical limitations. This approach offers students more opportunities to engage in interpretation learning and practice, while also providing teachers with new media applications for innovative teaching methods. Considering the convenience for both teachers and students, the integration of distance learning with media has significant research potential and value for interpreter training. Orlando (2013) explored the use of digital pen technology to enhance consecutive interpreting skills and note-taking in interpreter training [7].

Regarding computer-assisted interpreter training, Sandrelli (2005) discussed the Black Box tool, which can be used to support interpretation teaching and learning while complementing existing methods in interpreter training [8]. Black Box provides recordings or speech transcripts to help save time and expand the range of available speeches, highlighting potential challenges for students, such as cultural references. This approach allows students to practice more efficiently and make better use of their time. Additionally, the study mentioned that the future development of interpreter training requires cooperation with universities and other industries. In this context, as interpreter training evolves and faces new challenges, innovation in training can be fostered through cooperation between university teachers and the interpreter training industries.

A key objective of interpreter training is to equip trainees with the skills to interpret spoken language accurately and fluently. Reima (2022) proposed a model for integrating text-to-speech (TTS) software into students' interpreter training and practice [9]. This study explored the use of TTS to develop students' listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, and orthography skills. Le and Tran (2022) employed the shadowing technique, utilizing spoken text features from Google Text-to-Speech, to train students' intonation in interpreted speech delivery [10]. Yenkimaleki and Heuven (2024) conducted a study on the effect of fluency training on interpreter trainees' speech fluency, comprehensibility, and accentedness [11]. These factors directly impact the quality and outcome of interpreted speech delivery and play a decisive role in the successful and smooth completion of an interpreting task. Therefore, awareness training on speech fluency in EFL settings should be included in interpreter training programs.

2.2. University-Industry Cooperation

University-industry cooperation has become a pivotal aspect of modern education and innovation ecosystems. The concept of university-industry cooperation refers to conducting educational training, research and development, and other activities collaboratively, within a

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system that allows all parties and society to benefit from available opportunities (knowledge, personnel, financial power, etc.) of universities [12]. University-Industry cooperation is not a new matter and has been studied for decades. But lots of things changes rapidly not only with the technological development but also region to region. Also, industry and university changes too; their needs, knowledge, market, competition conditions, teaching way and etc. [13]. At present, numerous studies on university-industry cooperation primarily focus on its role in fostering technological advancement, enhancing student employability, and facilitating knowledge transfer.

In detail, research on university-industry cooperation covers various aspects. Bercovitz and Feldman (2006) developed a broader understanding of university-industry relationships and their role in knowledge-based innovation systems [14]. Their study highlights that universities can enhance students' skills and employability, while industries can gain access to a skilled workforce through cooperation. Valentín (2000) argued that cooperation between universities and industries is a social responsibility, and universities should aim to train highly qualified students [15]. Rodriguez, Ciurana, and Elías (2005) highlighted the significant benefits of university-industry cooperation, particularly between manufacturing companies and engineering students [16]. Bektaş and Tayauova (2014) emphasized that university-industry cooperation plays a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency of higher education training [17]. While these findings may seem evident, the research underscores the importance of university-industry cooperation and its effectiveness in training higher education students.

In a traditional classroom-based setting, the university and teachers are responsible for training students. However, with university-industry cooperation, training methods can be innovatively enhanced through joint efforts. This collaborative approach differs from the traditional single-university model and leads to improved training efficiency. For students, receiving training from both the university and industry provides a richer learning experience and greater achievements.

Awasthy, Flint, Sankaranarayana, and Jones (2020) proposed a framework to enhance the effectiveness of university-industry cooperation [18]. Their study not only highlights the importance of this cooperation but also explores strategies to encourage and strengthen university-industry partnerships. Among various industries, cooperation with a translation company is primarily discussed in the contexts of authentic learning environments, project-based learning, and situated practice. Cao, Chen, and Liu (2024) examined how experienced students, teachers, and industry partners perceive and respond to university-industry collaborative translation projects [19]. Besides translation, interpretation is also an important component of a translation company’s services.

2.3. WeChat in Education

As a provider of mobile learning resources, WeChat has become a research hotspot [20]. Tang and Hew (2017) found from the literature that the use of WeChat in education has been continuously increasing, making WeChat a new focus of research. Liao, Li, Huang and Tang (2020) utilized WeChat to support classroom activities, enhancing students’ knowledge and learning achievements [21]. Their study suggests that teachers should effectively utilize mobile platforms to guide students and improve classroom participation in the era of “Internet Plus Education”. Fachang, Qingling, and Cuifang (2021) encouraged teachers to use WeChat and high-quality online educational resources to expand teaching content and implement a blended teaching model, primarily leveraging WeChat’s channel advantages to present rich teaching materials. Yi Meiyun (2024) explored the impact of WeChat Channels on primary school students' English reading ability [22], showing that English learning resources from WeChat Channels can support students' reading practice. Tao Chen (2024) evaluated the effectiveness of WeChat in music education in China [23], highlighting its advantages in learning, particularly

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in fostering music students' communication and cognitive skills. Tang and Chen (2024) utilized WeChat in junior middle school physical education and created the "one-to-one teaching mode, platform group mode, and program competition mode", which helped stimulate students' enthusiasm and active participation in learning. Similarly, Fachang, Qingling, and Cuifang (2021) explored a teaching model using WeChat in translation instruction, enhancing high school students' autonomy in translation practice, personalized learning, interest, and English proficiency [24].

Based on the aforementioned previous and recent studies, it is worthwhile to explore interpreted speech delivery training for interpreting students through the cooperation between the university and the leading translation company YGym. Taking the translation company's WeChat channel as a case study, this research not only further investigates cooperation model between the university and industry in a specific field but also serves as a pilot study on integrating the WeChat channel social media platform with classroom-based interpretation teaching and training. Moreover, this study introduces a training model "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver", to explore how to effectively utilize the resources of the WeChat channel and instruct the students participate in learning activities under the guidance of Activity Theory.

3. Research Design

3.1. Participants

In this case study, the research subjects are third-year undergraduate students at Ningde Normal University (NNU) in China. They majored in English education from two classes with a number of 72 students, and 36 students respectively in each class. Chinese is their native language, and English is their first foreign language, which has been learned for more than ten years since primary education. Before their third year of undergraduate study, they completed courses on English knowledge and basic skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing during the first two years of the foundation stage. Regarding their English level and language proficiency, most of them passed TEM-4 (Test for English Majors Band 4) in their sophomore year. This test, administered annually to all English majors by the official National Advisory Commission on Foreign Language Teaching in Higher Education in China, serves as both an assessment and proof of English proficiency for English major students. Therefore, the students of NNU can move on to take the interpretation course in the fifth semester of their third year, with two periods each week, and 32 periods of 16 weeks' learning in total exclude the holiday. It's their first time of interpretation learning for their major education.

In traditional interpretation teaching of NNU, students are instructed by the teacher in the classroom with theory-based and skill practicing style of learning. After NNU established a university-industry cooperation with the leading translation company YGym to enhance the interpretation course development, the students being trained are the first participants to receive the interpretation training based on a cooperative relationship. These first trial participants of NNU get the opportunity to engage in the training and experience the feasibility and effectiveness of the innovative training mode integrated with the utilization of the video resources of YGym's WeChat channel. They are also the trainees have a voice to demonstrate and evaluate the outcome of the cooperation and training.

3.2. Guidance of Activity Theory

Activity Theory provides a different lens for analyzing learning processes and outcomes for the purpose of designing instruction [25]. It focuses on the idea that learning and outcomes occur through purposeful activity. It can offer a perspective for examining how people learn and what

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they achieve through learning. It can also guide the design of instructional methods, education resources, and classroom environment that align with learners' goals.

In this case study of interpreted speech delivery training by utilizing the translation company's WeChat channel as a form in the process of university-industry cooperation, NNU and YGym represent each side of the cooperation. The teacher and the third-year undergraduate students are from NNU. YGym provides WeChat channel *English Listening Training*. Activity Theory suggests embedding trainees in the activity systems. Under the guidance of Activity Theory, NNU teacher plays the role of instructor, designing the activities for students' learning and outcomes, so as to achieve the teaching aims. NNU third-year undergraduate students are participants engaged in activities during the learning process. They are trained in different activities, which are instructed by the teacher using YGym WeChat channel's short videos. With the cooperation between NNU and YGym, students' learning and outcomes from activities become more purposeful and targeted. They not only reflect the teacher' instruction in teaching activities but also enhance the effective application of YGym's WeChat channel resources in students' learning activities. NNU teacher's instruction and the support of YGym's WeChat channel are two essential guarantees for students to enrich their learning activities and produce anticipated learning outcomes. The efforts of both sides during the cooperation in training students' interpreted speech delivery reflect Activity Theory's principle that conscious learning originates from activity.

Activity Theory emphasizes the importance of reflection as a cornerstone, encouraging participants to actively engage in self-assessment. In this case study, when students participating in learning and training activities, they possess subjective initiative and are responsible for their own learning and outcomes. Therefore, except the pre-test and post-test arranged by the teacher for evaluation and comparison, students also develop an awareness of their own performance of interpreted speech delivery—that is, they engage in self-reflection and self-assessment. The extent of students' reflection and self-assessment has a certain impact on their learning outcomes. The teacher's instruction in training activities and the support from cooperative industry YGym significantly influence students' learning efficiency and outcomes. However, students' self-reflection and self-assessment not only affect their attitudes toward training but also lead to adjustments in their learning behaviors, potentially even motivating them to commit to and invest more effort in their training. In Activity Theory, reflection serves as a crucial turning point toward learning objectives. The frequency and depth of reflection influence both the learning process and outcomes. When reflection is thorough, learning methods and efficiency improve, leading to successful, meaningful, and valuable learning outcomes.

3.3. Training Activities

Guided by Activity Theory, this study conducts interactions among the teacher, students, and the WeChat channel, helping students enhance their interpreted speech delivery with the model of "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver", that is to search for background knowledge, listen frequently, repeat the main idea, and deliver the interpretation. Under Activity Theory, it views learning as an activity system composed of tools, rules, community, and objectives. In this case study, students from the experimental group are instructed by the teacher to participate in activities where they are trained in interpreted speech delivery using YGym's WeChat channel, following the model of "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver".

Before the training activities under the "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver" model began, students in both the control and experimental groups took a pre-test in the second week. The teacher played a video from YGym's WeChat channel, students were required to record their interpreted speech delivery using smart phones, then uploaded it to the class group chat.

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Students' performance of interpreted speech delivery was evaluated by the teacher with a score, considering the pace, fluency and accuracy.

Starting from the third week, 36 students from the experimental group participated in activities under the teacher's instructions, following the "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver" training model and Activity Theory, while the control group continued with the traditional interpretation course. In the experimental group, students were required to search for background knowledge of the selected topic. For example, before displaying the video on the topic "Congratulations on the successful inscription of Chinese Spring Festival as an intangible cultural heritage", Students searched for background knowledge to learn about China's application for "Spring Festival – Social Practices of the Chinese People in Celebrating the Traditional New Year" to be inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Through this process, they gained a deeper understanding of the topic, such as when the Spring Festival was recognized as a United Nations holiday, how many people around the world celebrate it in various forms, and what its cultural influence is. Meanwhile, students also had the opportunity to accumulate important expressions for text interpreting. Next, students participated in a listening activity. The teacher shared a video from YGym's WeChat channel in the class group chat over the weekend. Students practiced listening multiple times to understand the content with both English and Chinese subtitles in the video. By listening frequently, they not only became more familiar with the text but also memorized key vocabulary. The third activity was repetition. The teacher played the same video assigned the previous week. Students repeated the content with their recording in class. For this video, students had been already required to search for background knowledge and listen frequently to improve their familiarity with the accent, pace, and expressions. As students listened, they were required to repeat what they heard, conveying the main idea both in English and Chinese. After the teacher played the same video a second time in class, students were asked to immediately deliver their interpretation and upload it. The last activity of interpreted speech deliver training was completed.

From the 3rd week to the 16th week, students in the experimental group conducted activities with the training model "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver". According to Activity Theory, the teacher required them to engage in self-reflection and self-assessment each week, evaluating and summarizing their participation in the four steps of activities in this training model. They were also asked to share their insights and experiences in the class WeChat group. This exchange activity did not count toward students' final additional scores. Its purpose was to help students gain progress and confidence through reflective discussions while allowing the teacher to receive feedback on their training participation, providing encouragement and recognition.

After the 16-week course periods were completed, students in both the experimental and control groups took their final tests in week 17. The time, content, and assessment criteria were the same. Students' overall performance was evaluated based on three key standards for the quality of interpreted speech delivery: pace, fluency and accuracy. For the final test, the teacher played two audios—one in English and one in Chinese—neither of which had been used in class before. After listening to each audio twice, students began their interpreted speech delivery, performing English-to-Chinese and Chinese-to-English interpretation. Meanwhile, their interpretations were recorded. And the recording in the final test was served as the post-test. The teacher reviewed the recorded interpretations and graded them based on pace, fluency, and accuracy.

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4. Results and Discussion

By comparing the interpreting performance scores, final average scores, and teacher evaluation feedback of students in the control group (Group 1) and experimental group (Group 2) in the pre-test and post-test, see Table 1 and Table 2, it can be observed that there are significant differences. In both the pre-test and post-test, pace, fluency and accuracy were used as criteria for evaluating interpreting performance. The reasons are as follows: to ensure clear interpretation, an appropriate speed is required, neither too fast nor too slow; to avoid excessive pauses, hesitations or disruptions, the speech flows are considered; to deliver the speaker's intent, meaning and details, accuracy is very important. Therefore, a balance of pace, fluency and accuracy indicates an effective interpretation, which reflects overall interpreting performance. When taking the pre-test, the two group students' scores in pace, fluency, and accuracy ranged between 60 and 70, with the same average score 65. As a result, their interpreting performance was relatively weak. The pre-test was conducted in the early phase of the interpreting course, when students had not yet familiarized themselves with or mastered interpreting skills in either the experimental or control group. Therefore, they had no experience with interpretation. However, as third-year students, they had already achieved a certain level of English proficiency, so their interpreting performance was not too poor. The final average pre-test scores of both the control and experimental groups were still above 60.

From Week 2 to Week 17, there were 14 weeks of interpretation study. Both the control group and the experimental group showed improvements in their interpreting performance and post-test scores. Students of the two groups improved a lot in pace, fluency, and accuracy. In the control group, the three scores were above 70, with a final average score of 77, indicating a mid-level interpreting performance. Their fluency score reached 80, which is considered a good level. This suggests that students in the control group experienced fewer pauses or hesitations during the interpreted speech delivery. Therefore, the teacher's evaluation of the control group's interpreting performance and post-test score improved from weak in the pre-test to much better. In comparison, the experimental group performed even better, with scores in pace, fluency, and accuracy all exceeding 85. Their pace score reached 90, demonstrating excellent speech flow. The final average score was 88, close to an excellent rating, reflecting the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test, as well as the impact of the training. The teacher was very satisfied with the interpreting performance and final average score of the experimental group in the post-test, providing positive feedback.

The content of the post-test was not the material that students usually practiced and prepared. It was not simple and posed certain challenges, requiring students to have substantial interpreting experience and effectively master interpreting skills. The control group learned interpreting theories and skills through the traditional teaching approach used by the teacher, while the experimental group, under the teacher's instruction, engaged in targeted activities and self-reflection based on Activity Theory principles and the training model "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver" using YGym's WeChat channel.

According to the results of the three interpreting performance scores and the final average scores from the pre-test and post-test of both the control and experimental groups, it can be concluded that the experimental group performed better and showed more significant improvement in their interpreted speech delivery. As the experimental group participated in the "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver" training model, they enhanced their understanding of different fields and accumulated a wealth of terminology by searching for background knowledge on various topics. Through frequent listening practice each week, they improved their auditory sensitivity, adapted to different accents, and quickly focused on audio content to capture key information. Repetition training benefited them in terms of pace, fluency, and response in interpreted speech delivery. Furthermore, delivery practice helped them develop

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the habit and proficiency of interpreting immediately after listening. The activities in the training model effectively encouraged students to progressively master interpreting skills through extensive practice in listening, speaking, and interpreting, enabling them to achieve high scores. They also mastered fluency techniques, subconsciously avoiding filler words and ineffective expressions, which reduced hesitation. Additionally, due to their accumulation of phrasing and expressions during training, along with their increased proficiency in switching between English and Chinese, their interpreting fluency and accuracy significantly improved, allowing them to perform well in interpreted speech delivery.

Table 1. Scores and evaluation in the pre-test

Group	Pace	Fluency	Accuracy	Final Average Score	Evaluation
1	65	66	65	65	weak
2	63	65	67	65	weak

Table 2. Scores and evaluation in the post-test

Group	Pace	Fluency	Accuracy	Final Average Score	Evaluation
1	75	80	75	77	better
2	90	88	86	88	good

5. Conclusion

WeChat channel resources are convenient and accessible, allowing for flexible and independent practice. This study utilizes the WeChat channel of the leading translation company YGym as a university-industry cooperation platform. It conducts a case study on training third-year undergraduate students at Ningde Normal University (NNU) in interpreted speech delivery. Guided by Activity Theory, the study implements the "Search + Listen + Repeat + Deliver" training model to explore its effectiveness in improving students' interpreted speech delivery ability through YGym's WeChat channel.

In the study, students were divided into a control group and an experimental group. By conducting pre-tests and post-tests, the students' interpreting performance was comprehensively evaluated based on pace, fluency, and accuracy. The experimental group showed significant improvement in their interpreting performance scores and final average score compared to the pre-test and control group, demonstrating the training model's effectiveness in fostering better listening, comprehension, and interpretation skills. This training model significantly enhances students' interpreted speech delivery. Additionally, the WeChat channel resources of the translation company YGym played a valuable supporting role in interpretation teaching.

This study fully leverages university-industry cooperation resources to promote the reform and innovation of interpretation course teaching and highlights the potential of digital platforms in facilitating skill development. It also supports the use of Activity Theory as a framework for structured interpreter training and places students at the center as active participants. This study can serve as a reference for other courses in implementing university-industry cooperation.

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