Study on the Correlation Between the Scores of Oral English and Business English Interpreting Based on SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) Analysis

Xin Wei[1,*]

[1]Department of Foreign Languages, Guangzhou College of Technology and Business, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China
*Corresponding author. Email: 182527214@qq.com

ABSTRACT

This paper selects 42 junior students in the same class of business English major pursuing the four-year undergraduate program as the research subjects, and studies the correlation between the scores they achieved in the course of oral English and business English interpreting. This paper uses SPSS23.0 software to conduct an empirical research on the correlation. This paper finds that oral English scores significantly correlates with business English interpreting scores. To strengthen students' business English interpreting competence, it is necessary to pay attention to and focus on the cultivation and training of oral English competence.

Keywords: oral English, business English interpreting, language competence

I. INTRODUCTION

Among the factors that affect interpreting competence, what proportion does oral English competence account for? In this section the academic research results of predecessors' will be analyze from the perspective of the influencing factors of oral English to explore the relationship between oral English competence and interpreting competence. In foreign countries, the enrollment requirements of the European and American Interpreting Institutes are made quite clear that students need to obtain an adequate level of both foreign language and native language, and there should be no language competence problems (Gile, 1995). In China, Sun Xu (2010) conducted a research on probing into the relationship between language competence and interpreting competence in the information processing of consecutive interpreting. His research was mainly based on a comparative study between trained professional interpreters and untrained students majoring in Interpreting. The research employed Gile's "Effort Model", and it showed that language competence was not equal to interpreting competence. Yang Zhihong (2014) conducted a language competence test and an interpreting test, and found that the participants' English competence was related to their Chinese-English translation competence to a certain extent, and the differences were quite clear. Through the statistical analysis, he pointed out that in the early stage of translation training, students' language competence is closely related to their translation competence. In addition, more and more researchers or educators are devoted to studying the relationship between interpreting competence and language competence, and the construction of interpreting competence (Zhong Weihe, Zhao Junfeng, 2015; Liu Jianzhu, Mulei, Wang Weiwei, 2017). What's more, some interpreting educators have observed the challenges faced by students in classroom interpreting for many years, and found that insufficient language competence has become an obstacle to students' bilingual Interpreting (Shaw, Grbic & Franklin, 2002; Wu Zhiwei, 2017). Obviously, language competence is the basis of interpreting activities, but sometimes can also become an obstacle to interpreting, because insufficient language competence will hinder people's interpreting learning. On February 12, 2018, the Chinese National Language Council released the "China's Standards of English Language Ability (CSE)" based on the "Common European Framework of Reference" (CEFR). In addition to its accurate definition of the overall "language competence" for different levels of learners, the CSE has also formulated a "sub-competence construct table", which includes abilities in eight areas as follows: listening comprehension ability, reading comprehension ability, oral expression ability, written expression ability, organization ability, pragmatic ability, translation competence, and interpreting competence. In addition, based on the communicative language competence, the CSE has developed a comprehensive interpreting competence scale by combining the current English

teaching environment and teaching system and other factors (Liu Xiling, 2019). Therefore, the release of the CSE provides a theoretical basis for studying the relationship between oral English expression ability and interpreting competence. Language skills, especially the relationship between oral expression skills and interpretation skills, need to be further explored.

Based on the above researches, it can be found that there are not many empirical studies made on the relationship between language competence and interpreting competence. However, with the release of CSE, this topic has attracted attention to learners' English competence in academia. Chen Guangjiao's (2019) thesis was based on CSE self-assessment scale, and focused on the relationship between the oral English expression ability and interpreting competence of translation majors in Bachelor of Translation and Interpretation (BTI). In her research, the TEM4 (Test for English Major) test scores were used as the test of students' oral English ability. However, the measurement standards based on TEM4 are more biased towards the assessment of listening, reading, and writing abilities. Therefore, this paper, supplemented by empirical analysis, focuses on juniors majoring in business English pursuing the undergraduate program, and discusses the relationship between oral English scores and business English interpreting scores, is of innovative and objective characteristics.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Research subject

The subjects of this study are 42 junior students majoring in business English in the Foreign Language Department of Guangzhou College of Technology and Business. This paper will analyze the final scores of Business English Interpreting course of these 42 students in the second semester of junior in comparison with the final scores of Oral English course taken in their first year. According to the English professional talent training program formulated by Guangzhou College of Technology and Business, this course is a compulsory professional and technical course, with a total of 32 hours and 2 credits.

The school's spoken English course is offered in the first and second semesters of the freshman year, and the total duration is one academic year. In the higher education stage, many colleges and universities do not offer oral English as a separate course, and therefore fail to effectively assess students' oral English ability (Jin Yan, Jiewei 2017). Therefore, the target school's curriculum is reasonable and scientific, and students could obtain familiarity with oral English courses, and acquire basically stable oral skills and oral strategies after undergoing a systematic learning in the first year of freshman year, and by self-study in their sophomore year and the first semester of the third year, as well as

oral English learning that runs through other courses. Based on the students' oral English abilities acquired, this research has certain objectivity and reliability to test the correlation between students' oral English scores and Business English interpreting competence.

B. Research questions

The purpose of this paper is to explore the correlation between students' oral English competence and interpreting competence. We should not only study the overall correlation between oral English competence and interpreting competence, but also the correlation between impromptu Q&A part in oral examination and interpreting competence. This research will be refined into two research questions: First, is there a correlation between oral English competence and interpreting competence and how does it work? The second question is on whether there is a correlation between the oral English level reflected in the impromptu Q&A part and the interpretation competence and how does it work? The reason why discussion will be made on the correlation between interpretation results and impromptu Q&A part is that in both simultaneous interpretation and consecutive interpretation, interpreters are required to make full use of their language advantages and professional knowledge to quickly process the information they heard and express them accurately without error in the shortest possible time. (Du Yunhui, 1997). Therefore, it is necessary to study whether the impromptu Q&A part is related to the interpreting competence by examining the response power and processing ability of the students in the oral examination.

C. Research methods

The first step is to check and sort out the oral English scores and business English interpreting scores of the 42 students. In the second step, SPSS23.0 software to be employed in doing the Pearson correlation analysis. Finally, based on the existing data, analysis is to be made and corresponding conclusions are to be drawn. In order to ensure the reliability of the research results, the spoken English of the 42 students will be graded by the same teacher who taught them, and the business English interpretation will be graded by the same teacher who taught the course. In this way, it can effectively avoid the influence of different teachers' assessment standards on the same course.

In the past 30 years, mainly due to our country's accumulated rich data and experience in oral English teaching and testing, many textbooks and tests have been developed. For example, Speaking Tests for College English Test Band 4, Band 6, and Speaking Test for Band 4 for English Majors, Band 8 are currently the most commonly used test methods in my country (Jin Yan, Jiewei 2017). Therefore, many college teachers tend to adopt similar test methods in designing the final exams for oral English course. The

following table shows the oral test taken out in CET6 published by China Education Examination website ("Table I").[1]

TABLE I.   CET 6 ORAL TEST COMPONENTS

Steps	Contents	Process	Time limit
Part 1	Self-introduction, Q&A	The examinee will introduce themselves first, and then will be allowed 2 minutes to answer the examiner's questions.	Self-introduction: 20 seconds for each candidate; Answer questions: 30 seconds for each candidate.
Part 2	Statement and discussion	After one minute of preparation, the candidates will make a personal statement according to the hints; The two candidates will make a discussion on the designated topics. It lasts bout 8 minutes.	Personal statement: 1 minute and 30 seconds for each candidate; Discussion in a group of two: 3 minutes.
Part 3	Q&A	The candidate is allowed one minute to answer one question from the examiner.	

According to the school's class assignments, one period lasts for 90 minutes without breaks. Taking into account the number of examinees, the length of the class, and the efficiency of the exam, the teacher who taught the course divided the students into two batches, with 22 students in the first batch and 20 students in the second batch. So each student is allowed 4 minutes for the exam. The teacher has set up the following examination process:

TABLE II.   MODIFIED ORAL EXAM COMPONENTS

Steps	Contents	Scores	Exam Process	Time Limit
Part 1	Discussion	50	The group of two students should pick up one topic from the list of 5 topics, and make a discussion on the chosen topic as prepared.	Two people discussion: 4 minutes for two people.
Part 2	Impromptu Q&A	50	The students should answer two questions raised by the teacher.	Q&A: 2 minutes for each person.

The final exam for oral English has a total score of 100. The exam is set to two parts of discussion and Q&A (see "Table II"). Its purpose is to test the coherence, accuracy, and richness of students' oral expression, which is in line with the interpreting quality evaluation standard (Sun Xu, 2010). He pointed out in his thesis that quality assessment can reflect students' interpreting competence more comprehensively through comprehensive considerations of information fidelity, language accuracy, and target language fluency. According to the IELTS scoring standard[2], the teacher conducts the oral exam and makes assessment from four aspects: fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation.

The final exam for business English interpreting has a total score of 100. The question types are based on the form of the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI). The interpreting part of CATTI test is scheduled for 30 minutes for each level candidates. The test takes place in the speech room. Candidates are told to wear headphones to listen to the test questions. Candidates are required to complete the bi-directional interpretation between English and Chinese, and record the content of their Interpreting (Niu Ning, 2011). The question types are divided into Chinese-English dialogue consecutive interpretation and it occupies 50 points; the source of the Chinese-English dialogue materials is an excerpt taken from the

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[1]   http://cet.neea.edu.cn/html1/folder/16113/1587-1.htm

[2]   IELTS   scoring   standard: http://www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

business English interpretation textbook (Zhu Peifen, 2018) and centers on "business schedule", the duration is 4 minutes, and the average speaking speed is 100 words per minute, the length of each segment of the audio edited by software and is made 15 seconds, and the interpreting time for students is reserved at 2-2.5 times the playback time of the source language. Therefore, the Chinese-English dialogue including the interpreting time is made 10 minutes in total. Interpreting of Chinese and English paragraphs occupies 25 points. The source of the Chinese paragraph corpus is an excerpt centering on "globalization" taken from the business English interpretation textbook (same as above). The duration is 3 minutes and 20 seconds, and the average speech speed is 100 words per minute. The editing is done in the same way, so the Chinese paragraph contains 8 minutes including interpreting time. The English paragraph interpreting occupies 25 points, English paragraph corpus source is an excerpt from VOA news on "smartphone", and lasts for 3 minutes, the average speech is 110 words per minute, the same method is adopted to edit the audio, so the Chinese paragraphs including interpreting is made 9 minutes. The segmentation of the sentences or clauses is based on the principle of ensuring semantic integrity. The total audio duration of the test is 27 minutes, which is close to the duration of the CATTI interpreting test. According to the regulations publicized on the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) website, the most ideal speech speed for a spokesperson in

source language should be between 100 words and 120 words per minute. When the spokesperson's information is compact and without repetition, even the speech speed per 120 minutes is judged to be very fast, and when the speaking rate reaches 140 words per minute, no matter what type of speech it is, it's judged to be too fast (Tang Qi, 2015). The speech speed for a spokesperson in the material selected for the final exam is appropriate, which eliminates the interpreting barriers might caused by excessive speech speed for students. There is no reference to the CATTI test scoring standard for interpreting scoring. Zhao Hulin and Mulei (2016) pointed out that there were neither scoring criteria on the proportion of language form, content, etc., nor the deduction criteria for misinterpretation and omissions in the "Interpretation Practice" test. Therefore, the teacher of this course has formulated a deduction system based on the three dimensions of information fidelity, language accuracy, and fluency of the target language, so as to calculate the students' interpreting scores.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

A. Research question one

By using SPSS23.0 software, the correlation between the oral English scores and the business English interpretation scores was analyzed, and the Mean value (average), SD value (standard deviation), correlation coefficient, Sig. value were obtained, see "Table III" and "Table IV":

TABLE III.   MEAN VALUE AND SD VALUE OF THE TEST STUDENTS' ORAL ENGLISH SCORES AND BUSINESS ENGLISH INTERPRETING SCORES

	N	Mean	SD
Oral English Scores	42	75.07	8.620
Business English Interpreting Scores	42	78.05	6.604

TABLE IV.   CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF TEST STUDENTS' ENGLISH ORAL SCORES AND BUSINESS ENGLISH INTERPRETING SCORES

		Oral English Scores	Business English Interpreting Scores
Oral English Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	.500**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.001
	N	42	42
Business English Interpreting Scores	Pearson Correlation	.500**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.001	
	N	42	42

a. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in "Table III" and "Table IV" (r=0.500, sig=0.01) show that the scores of oral English and business English interpreting are in significant positive correlation. It can be seen from the table that the learning of spoken English is extremely important to improve the level of interpretation.

B. Research question two

According to the requirements of the second research question, we use SPSS23.0 software to

calculate the scores and check whether the scores of the second part in oral English test are in relevant to interpretation scores, see "Table V":

TABLE V.   CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE TEST STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING PART II IMPROMPTU Q&A SCORES AND BUSINESS ENGLISH INTERPRETING SCORES

		Q & A part scores in oral English test	Business English Interpreting Scores
Q & A part scores in oral English test	Pearson Correlation	1	.675**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	42	42
Business English Interpreting Scores	Pearson Correlation	.675**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	42	42

a.   **At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation is significant.

The results in "Table V" (r=0.675, Sig=0.000<0.01) show that the positive correlation between the oral English impromptu Q&A part scores and the student's business English interpreting scores is extremely significant. It can be seen that students' ability to strengthen the oral English improvised Q&A competence is important for improving business English interpreting competence.

IV. DISCUSSION

Through the above researches, we can draw the following conclusions. The oral English scores have a very significant correlation with the business English interpreting scores. Students with high oral English scores are inclined to obtain relatively high scores in the business English interpreting course exams. As can be seen from the results from the comparison table in the "Table VI", the students under No. 28 and No. 2 ranked first and second in oral English respectively, and ranked first and second respectively in the oral interpretation test as well. In the learning process, a good level of oral English is very important. In addition, it can be seen from appendix I that the oral English score of the student under No. 17 is at the upper-middle level in oral English test, but the score of interpreting is at the lower level, while the oral English score of student under No.19 is at the lower middle level, but the interpreting score is at the upper middle level. This shows that even if the students whose oral English competence is still weak after the first year of the freshman year, they can still catch up through their own efforts and proficient application of interpretation skills to improve their interpreting competence. On the contrary, in college, those students who won't spend time improving themselves, even if they have a solid foundation of oral English, it's possible that they will lag behind.

TABLE VI.   STUDENTS' SCORES STATISTICS

Students' No.	Business English Interpreting Scores	Oral English Scores	Impromptu Q&A Part
1	76	66	36
2	90	91	45
3	70	72	39
4	74	71	38
5	72	71	38
6	75	63	39
7	78	78	38
8	74	78	38
9	80	76	40
10	75	77	37
11	74	83	43
12	77	67	37
13	71	85	35
14	84	77	40
15	84	83	43
16	81	76	40
17	68	80	36
18	80	90	45

Students' No.	Business English Interpreting Scores	Oral English Scores	Impromptu Q&A Part
19	84	66	40
20	70	58	30
21	80	69	40
22	83	83	40
23	73	63	33
24	65	65	30
25	73	73	37
26	79	77	35
27	78	64	34
28	98	97	48
29	75	72	39
30	80	72	40
31	78	67	30
32	77	72	38
33	88	68	42
34	85	69	33
35	83	90	45
36	75	71	35
37	81	79	40
38	80	80	40
39	90	87	43
40	70	76	36
41	80	79	40
42	70	72	36

It can be seen from "Table V" that the scores of oral English impromptu Q&A part and Business English interpreting show extremely significant differences. This is because the oral impromptu question and answer part examines students' short-term response ability and language organization ability. It is a test of students' comprehensive quality and requires higher language skills. This is in line with the requirements of interpretation (Guan Yanjun, 2013). Interpretation requires interpreters to respond fast to utterances. A good interpreter is able to reorganize the spokesperson's discourse content in a short period of time, and can interpret the target language smoothly, coherently, and concisely even if he encounters a lengthy speech or a speech lacking coherence. Therefore, in the oral examination, if students can organize English in a short time, answer the questions raised by the teacher in a logical and focused manner, and get high scores, it means he possibly has owned a good foundation for the development of interpretation skills. From the above researches, a conclusion can be inferred that during the college studies, if students can actively set clear learning goals, stay persistent, and adopt good learning strategies, they can make great progress in learning.

V. CONCLUSION

From the two questions designed in this paper and the research results based on SPSS23.0, it can be concluded that both of the scores of spoken English, the scores of impromptu questions and answers part in spoken English exam show significant relevance to the scores of business English interpreting respectively. Students' oral English competence, improvisational question answering ability and interpreting competence are significantly correlated. Therefore, one the one hand, in addition to basic pronunciation and intonation training during oral teaching, teachers can design activities that require students to answer questions or make speeches improvisedly in English, in order to practice students' improvisational responsiveness, and help them lay a solid foundation for subsequent interpretation courses. At the same time, such practice can effectively improve students' language application competence. On the other hand, students should actively participate in classroom activities designed by teachers during classroom learning, and actively apply learning strategies after class to improve themselves. However, the improvement of interpreting competence is a complicated process, which also includes the

improvement of various abilities such as listening ability, note-taking ability, interpreting strategy application ability, etc. Therefore, it not only requires students to actively practice oral English, but also requires students to make efforts from all directions. As for how would other aspects affect the improvement of interpreting competence, as well as the proportion of them, further research is needed. Given the small sampling scope of this study, the obtained research results still have limitations, so sample size and sample range could be expanded in future researches. What's more, it is necessary to conduct detailed researches from a deeper level and a wider scope.

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