Other Voices: Perceptions of Learners on their Semi-Natural Interpretation

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Currently, interpreter training programs have mushroomed all over China. Consequently, relevant pedagogical issues and evaluation measures have attract substantial attention in the literature.

Ever since the 1980s, language classrooms have seen a growing degree of student-centeredness replacing the traditional teacher-dominated scenario (Nunan, 1988). Similarly, in the field of interpreter training, a learner-centered "constructivist model" (Kiraly, 2000) is called for and an approach of "Whole-Person Translator Education" (Tan, 2008) is recommended specifically for university degree programs. Under this backdrop, exploration into learners' perspectives becomes necessary for any design or investigation of programs of interpreter training. Nevertheless, investigation into learners' perceptions on their interpretation output have long been discarded in the literature, although such studies can be very constructive as they can serve for a norm-setting purpose of not only syllabus design but also performance assessment. Thus the current study aimed at filling such a gap.

Based on Loescher (1992), this study put forward the notion of "Semi-natural Interpretation" and investigated the nature of it from learners' perspective. Learners' problem perceptions were analyzed in relation to relevant learner variables based on empirical data gathered from an interpreter training program in China. Results of the study indicated that learners' understanding of their Semi-Natural Interpretation should serve as the basis for curriculum design. Implications of the results to current MTI programs in China will also be discussed. It is thus hoped that further studies can be conducted so as to build a competence model of interpreting acquisition based on learner variables, which can not only serve as an orientation for interpreter training but may also be applied to classroom assessment.