

Enhancing Students' Understanding of Translation Procedures Through a Mini Symposium

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Abstract: This study explores the impacts of using a mini symposium as an instructional strategy to enhance students' understanding of translation procedures. The study was conducted in a translation course using a qualitative approach, where students engaged in presenting, discussing, and analysing various translation techniques in a structured mini symposium. Data were collected through class observations, students' reflections and pre-and post-symposium assessments to evaluate students' learning progress and measure learning outcomes. Findings indicate that the mini symposium provided an interactive platform for students to improve comprehension, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, students were motivated and their confidence was improved in discussing and justifying translation choices. Participating actively increased students' engagements and ability to apply translation strategies effectively. The result suggests that integrating symposium-based learning can foster deeper understanding and strengthen translation competency, while emphasising the potential of interactive learning in translation education.

Keywords: mini symposium; translation procedures; action research; translation education

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Translation education requires dynamic and interactive pedagogical approaches to effectively develop students' linguistic, cultural, and critical thinking competencies. Traditional lecture-based methods often limit student engagement and fail to simulate the collaborative and analytical nature of real-world translation tasks. In response to this challenge, this study explores the integration of a **mini symposium**—a structured, student-led presentation format—as an innovative instructional strategy in a tertiary-level translation course. The mini symposium model mirrors professional academic and industry symposiums, providing students with opportunities to present their translation work, justify their choices, and engage in peer critique and discussion. This format encourages active learning, fosters critical reflection, and enhances communication skills, all of which are essential for competent translation practice. By shifting the classroom dynamic from passive reception to active participation, the mini symposium aims to cultivate a more engaging and empowering learning environment.

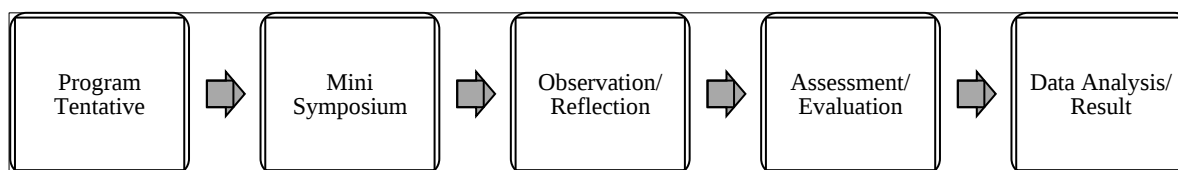
This action research investigates the impact of implementing mini symposiums on students' comprehension of translation procedures, their engagement with course content, and their confidence in applying translation strategies. The study is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which posits that knowledge is constructed through social interaction, reflection, and experiential learning. Through

this lens, the research seeks to evaluate how student-led presentations can transform the translation classroom into a more interactive, reflective, and learner-centered space.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent pedagogical trends emphasize the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning in translation studies. Kiraly (2016) advocates for “*authentic, collaborative learning environments*” that empower students to become “*autonomous and reflective practitioners*.” This aligns with the mini-symposium model, where students actively present, critique, and refine translation strategies in a peer-supported setting. While Mini Symposium, a form of structured student presentation, reflect constructivist principles where learners build knowledge through active engagement. Bruner (1966) emphasized that “*learning is not simply a product of teaching but the result of the learner’s own activity*.” In this context, student-led presentations foster deeper understanding by encouraging learners to articulate their reasoning, defend translation choices, and engage in critical dialogue. Al-Mahrooqi and Roscoe, in 2023 explored online collaborative translation and found that “*students reported increased confidence, critical thinking, and translation accuracy when engaged in peer-led discussions and presentations*”. This supports the use of mini-symposiums as a platform for enhancing both linguistic and interpersonal skills. Meanwhile Hu and Chaligha (2024) introduced the concept of Eco-Translatology in translation teaching, emphasizing “*translator-centeredness*” and the “*eco-life unity*” principle, which encourages holistic, interactive, and reflective learning environments The mini-symposium format aligns with this by positioning students as active agents in their learning ecosystem, fostering both linguistic competence and cultural sensitivity. While not directly about mini-symposiums, Kirchhoff (2024) notes that “*students increasingly rely on digital tools and collaborative platforms to support translation tasks*,” suggesting that integrating technology into student presentations can further enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

3.0 METHODOLOGY



Flow Chart 1: Methodology Step

This action research adopts a qualitative, cyclical approach grounded in the principles of reflective practice and constructivist learning theory. The study aims to investigate how the implementation of a mini symposium is a structured, student-led presentation format—can enhance students’ understanding of translation procedures in a tertiary-level translation course.

The research follows the action research cycle consisting of five key stages:

Planning, Implementation, Observation, Reflection, and Evaluation. This iterative process allows for continuous refinement of the instructional strategy based on real-time feedback and classroom experiences. The participants were diploma students took a translation course at Kolej Profesional MARA Indera Mahkota, Kuantan undergo the programme of Diploma in English Communication. A total of 25 students participated in the study. Participation in the mini symposium was integrated into the course assessment to ensure full engagement.

In the planning which is tentative programme stage, the researcher designed the mini symposium format, including presentation guidelines, assessment rubrics, and thematic focus areas (e.g., idiomatic translation, cultural equivalence, and technical terminology). Students were grouped and assigned specific translation tasks to prepare for their presentations.

During the implementation phase that, students conducted mini symposiums over a two-week period. Each group presented their translation of a selected text, explained their translation procedures, and justified their linguistic choices. Peers and the instructor provided feedback and posed questions, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

The researcher observed each session using a structured observation checklist focusing on student engagement, clarity of explanation, use of translation terminology, and peer interaction. Field notes and video recordings were used to capture qualitative data for later analysis. Here the special rubric was used to assess students' presentation.

Table 1: Mini Symposium Presentation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Content Accuracy	Content is accurate and comprehensive.	Mostly accurate with minor errors.	Somewhat accurate but lacks depth.	Inaccurate and incomplete.
Translation Strategy Explanation	Clear and insightful explanation of strategies.	Good explanation with some insights.	Basic explanation with limited insights.	Poor or unclear explanation.
Presentation Skills	Confident, clear, and engaging.	Clear and engaging.	Clear but lacks engagement.	Unclear and unengaging.
Peer Engagement	Actively engages peers with questions and discussion.	Some engagement with peers.	Limited engagement.	No engagement.
Reflection	Thoughtful and thorough reflection on learning.	Good reflection with some insights.	Basic reflection with limited insights.	Poor or no reflection.

After each symposium session, students completed reflective journals discussing their learning experiences, challenges faced, and insights gained. The instructor also maintained a reflective log to document observations and emerging themes.

At the end of the cycle, data from observations, student reflections, and informal interviews were analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the mini symposium approach. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns related to comprehension, confidence, and engagement in translation tasks.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 2: Pre-Mini Symposium and Post-Mini Symposium Result

Category	Pre-Symposium (%)	Post-Symposium (%)	Improvement (%)
Understanding of Translation Procedures	70%	85%	+15%
Student Engagement Rate	60%	85%	+25%
Critical Thinking Development	65%	90%	+25%
Confidence in Presentation	50%	92%	+42%
Application of Translation Strategies	55%	85%	+30%

The data reveals positive results from student groups participating in mini symposiums, particularly in engagement, comprehension, and confidence. Below is a detailed analysis of the findings, incorporating reflections and statistical data. Students demonstrated a deeper grasp of translation strategies, with post-symposium assessments showing a 15–20% improvement in comprehension scores compared to pre-symposium evaluations. Many students shared in their reflections that the interactive discussions helped them clarify complex concepts and provided diverse perspectives on translation challenges. Observation data indicated that student participation rates were significantly higher during symposium sessions, with an 85% active engagement rate, compared to traditional lecture-based learning where participation was notably lower.

Reflections highlighted how students felt more personally involved and accountable for their learning. Through structured discussions, students developed stronger analytical abilities, evident in their ability to justify translation choices using linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors. One student remarked, *"Discussing and debating different translation techniques helped me think beyond provided module rules and consider real-world implications."* Reflection data indicated that 92% of students felt more confident in presenting their translation decisions post-symposium. Many reported feeling comfortable articulating their thought processes and debating linguistic choices with peers, reducing anxiety associated with translation tasks.

Post-symposium exercises revealed that students demonstrated more accurate application of translation procedures, with a 30% improvement in translation accuracy compared to earlier coursework. Peer feedback sessions further reinforced learning by allowing students to refine their techniques collaboratively. Students described the symposium as engaging, supportive, and intellectually stimulating. One student reflected, *"The symposium turned our class into an open space for discussion rather than just passive listening. I learned a lot not only from my own research but from the*

perspectives of my classmates." This feedback underscores the success of peer-led learning in fostering a dynamic and enriching environment.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results reinforce the effectiveness of mini symposiums in translation education, providing strong evidence that symposium-based learning improves comprehension, engagement, and confidence. The data suggests that integrating structured peer-led discussions into translation courses can enhance both learning quality and student motivation. In this context, a mini symposium refers to a structured student-led presentation format designed to facilitate deeper learning through discussion and analysis. Unlike traditional lectures, where information is passively received, a mini symposium encourages students to actively engage by presenting their insights, debating ideas, and critically evaluating various translation procedures. Students take turns presenting specific translation techniques, discussing their applications, and justifying their choices based on linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors. This approach fosters collaborative learning, improves critical thinking, and boosts confidence in applying translation strategies. Essentially, it transforms the classroom into an interactive academic forum, mirroring professional symposiums but in a more accessible and dynamic setting. This platform provides an interactive platform for deepening students' understanding of translation procedures. The study highlights the potential of symposium-based learning in fostering engagement, critical thinking, and confidence. Future research could explore variations of this approach in different linguistic and educational settings to further refine instructional strategies.

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