

**DEVELOPMENT OF A FORMATIVE  
ASSESSMENT REGIME FOR CHINESE-ENGLISH  
INTERPRETER TRAINING AND ITS EFFECTS  
ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, MOTIVATION,  
AND COLLABORATION**

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AND COLLABORATION**

by

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“We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.”

— John F. Kennedy

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“Si monumentum requiris, circumspice (if you seek [his] monument, look around).”

— epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BTI	Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpreting
CATTI	China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters
CSE	China's Standards of English Language Ability
CSEIS	Interpreting Scale in CSE
ILMQ	Interpreting Learning Motivation Questionnaire
MTI	Master of Arts in Translation and Interpreting
SIAT	Summative Interpreting Ability Test
TAEGSC	Translation Ability Evaluation Grade Standard of China
XYAFU	Xinyang Agriculture and Forestry University, China

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**PEMBANGUNAN SISTEM PENILAIAN FORMATIF UNTUK LATIHAN  
JURUBAHASA BAHASA CINA-INGGERIS DAN KESANNYA TERHADAP  
PENCAPAIAN AKADEMIK, MOTIVASI, DAN KERJASAMA**

**ABSTRAK**

Dalam program latihan jurubahasa China, usaha untuk membangunkan dan menggubal rejim penilaian formatif secara sistematik jarang didokumenkan dalam badan biasiswa yang masih ada. Untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang kebolegunaan dan kesan rejim penilaian formatif, kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan berbilang fasa untuk meneroka pembangunan, pelaksanaan dan pembelajaran rejim penilaian formatif dalam program latihan jurubahasa di Xinyang Pertanian dan Perhutanan Universiti, institusi pengajian tinggi yang bertumpu dan mewakili di China. Pengkaji telah mengambil 129 pelajar penterjemah tahun kedua, 7 pensyarah, dan 10 pakar sebagai peserta dalam kajian ini. Secara metodologi, reka bentuk eksperimen tertanam telah dipatuhi dalam kajian untuk memasukkan secara komprehensif fasa pra-intervensi, intervensi dan pasca intervensi dalam rangka kerja penyelidikan yang bersatu. Bagi fasa pra, dan pasca intervensi, kajian menggunakan temu bual mendalam dan perbincangan kumpulan fokus untuk mendapatkan pandangan dan pemahaman pelatih dan jurulatih, dan kaedah Delphi untuk penilaian penilaian pakar. Bagi fasa intervensi, pendekatan kuasi eksperimen kaedah campuran telah dipilih untuk mengkaji kesan rejim penilaian formatif yang dibangunkan ke atas pencapaian akademik, motivasi dan kerjasama dalam latihan jurubahasa, yang diukur melalui ujian pencapaian mentafsir sumatif (SIAT), dan soal selidik motivasi pembelajaran jurubahasa (ILMQ), dan pemerhatian naturalistik terhadap perbualan bilik darjah masing-masing. Dapatan kajian mendedahkan bahawa

rejim penilaian formatif yang dibangunkan meningkatkan pencapaian akademik pelajar dalam pengukuran kemahiran mentafsir dan kecekapan bahasa tetapi bukan pengetahuan ensiklopedia; meningkatkan motivasi intrinsik pelatih; dan menghasilkan corak kerjasama bilik darjah yang lebih dialogik, kolaboratif dan membina. Tambahan pula, fasa pembangunan dan reflektif mendedahkan bahawa walaupun kata sepakat telah dicapai dalam membangunkan rejim penilaian formatif, perbezaan yang nyata kekal dalam persepsi dan pemahaman penilaian antara pihak berkepentingan yang berbeza yang terlibat dalam proses latihan. Kajian ini mempunyai implikasi untuk penyelidikan dalam bidang penilaian bilik darjah untuk latihan jurubahasa dan pelaksanaan rejim penilaian formatif yang serupa dalam tetapan latihan tulen. Had dan hala tuju penyelidikan masa hadapan juga dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

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**ABSTRACT**

In China's interpreter training programs, efforts to systematically develop and enact a formative assessment regime has been rarely documented in the extant body of scholarship. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the applicability and impact of formative assessment regime, the present study adopted a multi-phase approach to explore the development, implementation, and learned lessons of a formative assessment regime in an interpreter training program at Xinyang Agriculture and Forestry University, a focal and representative institution of higher education in China. The researcher recruited 129 second-year interpreter learners, 7 lecturers, and 10 experts as participants in the study. Methodologically, an embedded experimental design was adhered to in the study to comprehensively include the pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention phases within a unified research framework. For the pre-, and post-intervention phases, the research used in-depth interview and focus group discussions to obtain viewpoints and understandings of trainees and trainers, and Delphi method for evaluative judgement of the experts. For the intervention phase, mixed-method quasi experimental approach was chosen to examine the effects of the developed formative assessment regime on the academic achievement, motivation, and collaboration in interpreter training, which were measured through a summative interpreting achievement test (SIAT), an interpreter learning motivation questionnaire (ILMQ), and naturalistic observation of classroom conversations respectively. The findings of the study revealed that the developed formative assessment regime

enhanced students' academic achievement in the measurement of interpreting skills and language competence but not encyclopedic knowledge; improved trainees' intrinsic motivation; and resulted in a more dialogic, collaborative, and constructive classroom collaboration pattern. Furthermore, the developmental and reflective phases revealed that although the consensus was reached in developing the formative assessment regime, visible disparities remained in the perceptions and understandings of assessment between different stakeholders involved in the training processes. The study had implications for research in the field of classroom assessment for interpreter training and the implementation of similar formative assessment regimes in authentic training settings. The limitations and future research directions are also discussed in the study.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the background information for the present study. The chapter begins with an introduction of the background of the study to elaborate on the research context. In the second section, the statement of the problems of the study is presented. In the following two sections, the research objectives and questions are manifested. In the following section, the theoretical and practical significance of the study are discussed. In the subsequent section, the limitations facing the study are demonstrated. Additionally, the key terms and concepts are operationalized. The chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter and an overview of the thesis.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The development of the interpreter training educational program in China originated from the need of diplomatic activities (Chen et al., 2019; Sawyer, 2008). In less than 50 years, significant progress has been made in China's interpreter education at the tertiary level. Furthermore, the boost in China's economy and national strength has impelled the continuous advancement of the language service industry (Hu, 2019). In turn, the growing demand for talented interpreters further promotes the expansion of interpreting education in China (Mu, 2021a).

From the interpreter training classes set up with the assistance of the United Nations in 1979 (Chen et al., 2019) to its flourishing growth in recent years (Liao & Fu, 2018), training programs aiming at fostering competent interpreters have been actively established in many institutions of higher education in China. Currently, the training of professional interpreters at undergraduate level is carried out through the nationally

accredited Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpreting (BTI) degree programs, in which a structured disciplinary structure for interpreting education has taken shape (Zhong, 2020).

The primary purpose of BTI programs is to meet the demand for interpreters with qualified bilingual competence and a strong command of interpreting skills (Zhong, 2020). In accordance with the National Standards of BTI Education Quality (2018), the foci of BTI education are language mastery, cross-cultural communication competence, and interpreting skills. The competence structure is in tandem with the expertise requirements in language service industry (Zhang, 2017), the domain-specific requirements for high quality interpreters regulated in the guidelines of the national professional certificate (Ko, 2020), and the need for a shift towards “competence-centered” model of interpreting education (Wang, 2017c).

The National Standards of BTI Education Quality (2018) and the Undergraduate Teaching Requirements for Translation Majors in Colleges and Universities (2012) explicitly recognize assessment as a core component in the curriculum of interpreter training (Zhong, 2011). Two types of tests or assessments are frequently referred to: (1) national level selection and ranking test for professional interpreters; (2) classroom-based assessment for interpreter training (Han, 2022). As the scope of the present study focuses on the latter type, the accredited professional interpreter assessments are excluded in subsequent sections. At present, classroom-based assessment of interpreting is mainly implemented through summative assessment, especially as term-end examination (Liang, 2017). Contrarily, formative assessment, a continuous and iterative assessment to evaluate students’ progress (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Han & Fan, 2020), is rarely adopted and insufficiently investigated in interpreter education (Han, 2022).



The study takes place in Xinyang Agriculture and Forestry University (XYAFU), a public university in central China. Interpreter training, part of the undergraduate BTI training program, was first approved and established in XYAFU since September 2018. At present (February 2023), a total of 459 undergraduate students are learning as BTI candidates at the School of Foreign Languages, XYAFU.

Second year and third year students in the BTI program are required to receive interpreter training. Four major courses are available, that is, Liaison Interpreting, Topic-based Interpreting, Consecutive Interpreting and Sight Interpreting (School of Foreign Languages, 2021). Students must take all four mandatory courses, one for each semester. All these interpreting courses are of 24-to-36 teaching hours each semester (Xinyang Agriculture and Forestry University, 2021). Students are instructed to conduct interpreting in different simulated settings. Extra-curriculum drills are also required to reinforce learning outcomes and competence building. In addition, four interpreting practicums are embedded in the curriculum to maximize the outcomes of interpreter training (School of Foreign Languages, 2021). These practicums, with specific focus and perspectives, can be flexibly arranged through the cooperation of the trainer and the trainees. The School of Foreign Languages is equipped with twelve interpreter training and digital language laboratories, fully available to trainees for the training and learning during the program (School of Foreign Languages, 2022).

Throughout the training of interpreters, a student-centered orientation is upheld (School of Foreign Languages, 2022). All training contents are designed to be “student-centered” and “outcome-based” to maximize learning outcomes and engage students (Gu & Chen, 2011; Shen & Song, 2018). The training set-up adheres to the principle of “task-driven” project design, with projects of incremental difficulties interwoven in the

curriculum (Zhou, 2021). All students are encouraged to work out a personalized training scheme under the guidance of trainers (School of Foreign Languages, 2021). Currently, only summative assessments in the form of semester-end examinations are adopted to assess students' competence (Xinyang Agriculture and Forestry University, 2021).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The problem to be addressed by this study is the absence of a formative assessment regime for interpreter training at undergraduate level. In many specific educational domains, the effect of formative assessment in enhancing learning and teaching has been abundantly justified (Andersson & Palm, 2017b; Chu et al., 2019; Granberg et al., 2021; Ozan & Kincal, 2018). Reversely, formative assessment for interpreter training is relatively insubstantially studied in the literature (Han, 2022). The problem would curb the development of Chinese interpreting education at institutions of higher education (Liang, 2017).

First, formative assessment for interpreter education remains a niche insufficiently investigated. Using “formative assessment AND interpreter training” as a search string, Web of Science returns 16 relevant publications. Similarly, Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) has merely 4 publications on formative assessment for interpreter education. Given the paucity of experiences in developing and implementing formative assessment for interpreter training, the knowledge of the mechanism, effect, and development of formative assessment leaves much space to be filled in the interpreter training context (Han, 2022).

Second, shortcomings in assessment design threaten the validity of existing formative assessments proposed in previous literature (Tsagari & Deemter, 2013).

Historically, a critical and cautious stance has been upheld by experts to distinct formative assessment from alternative classroom assessment based on assessment design (Black & Wiliam, 2004) and implementation specifications (Andrade, 2019). Against such criteria, some existing formative assessment for interpreter education could not be identified as formative assessment as they contradict defining features of formative assessment (Han, 2018b), for example, does not lead to educational adjustments (Andrade, 2019), and serves as a one-off activity instead of an iterative one (Cizek et al., 2019). Moreover, formative assessment practices have been primarily enacted as discrete assessment tasks (Barana et al., 2019). Assessment regime, as defined by Kofinas (2018) as an integrated framework of assessment tasks to facilitate teaching and learning on the basis of repeated development and amendments with educators and learners, is scantily enacted and urgently required for implementing formative assessment (Nurmikko-Fuller & Hart, 2020; Palmer & Holt, 2009). To address above issues, proper conceptualization and contextualization are imperative (Han, 2018b). The present study adheres to Black and Wiliam's (2009) conceptualization of formative assessment as a continuous evaluation to elicit, gather, and interpret pedagogical evidence for the decision-making of instructors and learners to enhance didactic and learning outcomes. Procedurally, to avoid potential conceptual and practical defects in assessment design, the development of the formative assessment regime in the study is subject to the decision-making by Delphi expert panel members.

Third, there exists a shortage of the empirical evidence to comprehensively justify the efficacy of formative assessment in interpreter education (Han, 2018b). Positive effects of formative assessment on students' learning achievement and motivation in other educational domains have been abundantly validated in previous literature (Bennett, 2011; Schildkamp et al., 2020). The foci of the effects of formative

assessment in interpreter training remain the improvement of “quality of interpreting product” and “interpreting process” (Han, 2018b, p. 92). Existing formative assessment resulted in contradictory effects on the motivational factors of trainees, that is, formative assessment tasks were believed to be either time-consuming and mentally taxing (Arumí Ribas, 2010; Lee, 2005) or augmentative (Wang, 2014) for learners. Consequently, the proven strength of formative assessment in enhancing motivation (Chelawat & Sant, 2022) and learning achievement (Hudesman et al., 2013) leaves space to be filled in the context of interpreter training (Han, 2022).

Fourth, the interplay between sociocultural factors in learning and formative assessment practices has been undervalued in interpreter training. The effects of formative assessment practices on the social-emotional development of learners have been justified through the lens of Vygotsky’s (1978a) “zone of proximal development” theory (Yorke, 2003). Therefore, teachers and students in formative assessment are required to actively collaborate for maximum performance (Hansen, 2020). Contrary to the advocated strength of formative assessment in promoting academic collaboration (Crossouard, 2009) and self-regulated or co-regulated learning (Granberg et al., 2021; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006), lecturer-learner and peer collaborations have been largely underplayed in applying formative assessment to interpreter training (Arumí Ribas, 2010; Lim, 2013). As a result, formative assessment for interpreter training is blemished with a relatively rigid design that constrains student’s involvement and collaboration (Han, 2018b). The present study is grounded on sociocultural theory of cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978a) and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985) theories to investigate the effects of a formative assessment regime on the outcomes of interpreter training.

The absence of an effective formative assessment regime for Chinese interpreter training programs affects trainers and trainees. For trainers, the void of such formative assessment regime diminishes the opportunity for evidence-based instructional adjustment (Wang, 2017b) and continuous evaluation of students' interpreting competence (Han & Fan, 2020). Similarly, the unavailability of effective formative assessment regime curtails learners' prospects for the identification of learning objectives (Li, 2018) and the improvement in learning outcomes (Riley-Tillman et al., 2009).

In a nutshell, formative assessment for interpreter training is under-researched, and existing literature suffer from the lack of quality assessment design, empirical evidence of its effects, and insufficient attention to the role of learners in the assessment. The problem of the absence of a proper formative assessment regime for interpreter trainees in the Chinese context needs to be addressed imperatively (Wang, 2017b; Zhang, 2020). Consequently, the present study aims to develop a formative assessment regime and examine its effects on their academic achievement, motivation, and collaboration of trainees. Moreover, the study aims at employing a rigorous and empirical approach to (1) develop a formative assessment regime for interpreter training based on the collective intelligence and consensus of stakeholders and professionals; and (2) empirically validate the effects of the newly developed formative assessment regime in an authentic interpreter training setting.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

To attain the aim of developing, enacting, and validating the formative assessment regime, the study is to be conducted in three stages: the development, implementation, and reflection stage. Specifically, the aim was achieved through the

following specific objectives belong to their respective phases.

Phase 1: The Development Stage:

**RO1:** To explore interpreter trainees' needs of a formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the BTI program at XYAFU.

**RO2:** To explore trainers' experiences in enacting formative assessment practices in the BTI program at XYAFU.

**RO3:** To explore the experts' view on the proposed formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the BTI program at XYAFU.

Phase 2: The Implementation Stage:

**RO4:** To examine the effects of the formative assessment regime on interpreter trainees' academic achievement in the BTI program at XYAFU.

**RO5:** To examine the effects of the formative assessment regime on interpreter trainees' motivation in the BTI program at XYAFU.

**RO6:** To examine the effects of the formative assessment regime on interpreter trainees' collaboration in the BTI program at XYAFU.

Phase 3: The Reflection Stage

**RO7:** To explore the trainees' and trainers' reflections on the formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the BTI program at XYAFU.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

To achieve the research objectives, the study inquired into the effect of the formative assessment regime for interpreter training on the academic achievement, motivation, and collaboration among trainee students in the interpreting training

program at XYAFU. In tandem with the research objectives, the following research questions in the three stages were answered.

Phase 1: The Development Stage:

**RQ1:** What are the interpreter trainees' needs of a formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the BTI program at XYAFU?

**RQ2:** What are the trainers' experiences in enacting formative assessment practices in the BTI program at XYAFU?

**RQ3:** What are the experts' views on the proposed formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the BTI program at XYAFU?

Phase 2: The Implementation Stage:

**RQ4:** How does the formative assessment regime for interpreter training affect interpreter trainees' academic achievement in the BTI program at XYAFU?

**RQ5:** How does the formative assessment regime for interpreter training affect interpreter trainees' motivation in the BTI program at XYAFU?

**RQ6:** How does the formative assessment regime for interpreter training affect interpreter trainees' collaboration in the BTI program at XYAFU?

Phase 3: The Reflection Stage

**RQ7:** How do the trainees and trainers reflect on the formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the BTI program at XYAFU?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The present research would contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the

development, mechanism, and effects of a formative assessment regime in an interpreter training context, in addition to the practical experiences and empirical evidence to support the adoption and implementation of formative assessment practices in interpreter training programs in China.

First, the primary significance of the present study is that it would provide an important pedagogical innovation to address the current difficulties to properly assess undergraduate students' developmental features of interpreting competence (Li & Mu, 2021) and promote students' academic achievement, motivation and collaboration in interpreter training (Liu & Yu, 2019). In China, the importance of assessment in interpreting teaching is emphasized as a constituent of the curriculum for three primary functions—feedback of (learning) information, grading and selection of talented interpreters (Zhou & He, 2013). In the present study, the development of the formative assessment regime would be based on and closely related to the curriculum of interpreter training programs. The development and implementation of the formative assessment regime of interpreting in authentic educational settings would provide new insights to address challenges observed by previous research (Xu & Mu, 2020). The formative assessment regime for interpreter training provides a useful tool for trainers, students, and decision-makers of BTI programs (Zhang, 2020).

Second, the present study has theoretical and conceptual significances. Specifically, the research would bring about in-depth and comprehensive understanding regarding the development and implementation of formative assessment practices in an interpreter education context. According to the claims from precedent research, formative assessment oriented for interpreter education is not clearly conceptualized with diversified understanding about its features, designs and mechanism in previous



literature (Han, 2018b). In the present study, the development of the formative assessment regime would draw experience from several models justified by research and empirical evidence from documented cases. By developing a formative assessment regime for interpreter training to enhance the students' academic achievement, motivation, and collaboration, the study would provoke an expansion in the current understanding of formative assessment (Wang, 2014). As a result, our knowledge about the design and implementation of formative assessment to assist learning in an interpreting program would also be broadened (Cao & Chen, 2013).

Third, the development and implementation of the formative assessment regime would be of practical significance for undergraduate interpreter training in China. The interpreter training program at XYAFU, representative of many similar undergraduate interpreter educational programs across China, would be able to adapt its curriculum design and pedagogical methods in accordance with the requirement of the formative assessment regime to increase its ability to cultivate competent interpreters (Cui, 2020). Findings from the present study have the potential to usher in positive changes in XYAFU and other Chinese institutions of tertiary education, especially the need for a change in curriculum design towards "competence-based" and "student-centered" education (Gu & Chen, 2011). In accordance with the national standards of undergraduate education, the purpose of undergraduate interpreting education is to cultivate competent talents with comprehensive knowledge and abilities (Li & Mu, 2021). However, the fulfillment of the shift is unsatisfactory in institutions of higher education, where administrators and teachers still follow traditional lecturer-centered pedagogy and textbook-centered curriculum design (Mu, 2021b). The present study would reveal the impact of formative assessment on student's competence and motivation. Similar educational settings of interpreter training would benefit from the

insights of this study.

Fourth, the research is significant for its novelty and originality. The present study is a preliminary effort in China to connect the state-of-the-art research findings in interpreting assessment and undergraduate BTI education by conducting empirical research to examine motivational and academic achievements of trainee students (Lim, 2020). For underlying problems existing in Chinese interpreting education, the absence of clear definition and description of interpreting competence and interpreting quality (Xu & Mu, 2020), the proposal and development of the formative assessment regime for interpreter training in the present study would have conceptual and pragmatic contribution to expand our understandings on the existing knowledge gaps (Zhong, 2020).

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

In the present study, a formative assessment regime for interpreter training is developed and implemented. To examine its effects on interpreter training, a quasi-experimental design is followed to measure the differences of academic achievement, motivation, and collaboration of second-year interpreter trainees at XYAFU between the experimental group and the control group. However, the study faces several limitations.

First, the study is limited by its research context and site. The study takes place in an undergraduate higher education institution in China. Given the number of institutions providing BTI programs and numbers of students receiving interpreting education at undergraduate level, each BTI program may vary from another to a certain extent. This may result in incompatibility of findings or results if they are to be applied to other BTI programs. To control such potential bias, the researcher invites

stakeholders and professional interpreting educators to take part in the research as members of expert panels. Additionally, as all accredited interpreter training programs in China are designed in accordance with the national standards, the case of XYAFU would be generalized for insights into educational assessment in the Chinese interpreter training context.

Second, the study is limited by its duration. The duration of 13 weeks of the quasi-experiment is insufficient, compared with the relatively slow and long process of interpreting learning. To remedy the possible threat to the significance of the study, the research tries to attain invariance in the instructional design, pedagogical arrangement and learning environments in the experimental and control groups. Additionally, off-class self-training is also required to reinforce the effects of formative assessment on their learning outcomes.

## **1.8 Definitions of Key Terms**

Operationalizing terms by turning abstract concepts into measurable observations is a necessary part of defining the scope of the study (Slife et al., 2016). The operational definitions of the key terms in this study are described below:

### **Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement refers to the outcomes and performances that could indicate the extent to which an individual has accomplished in a learning activity (Steinmayr et al., 2014). In the study, academic achievement means an overall representation of students' level of interpreting competence.

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration refers to the synergy among learners “sharing knowledge or skills” to achieve improved outcomes (Seel, 2012, p. 628). The value of formative assessment in bringing about educational adjustment (Sadler, 1998) and improving pedagogical quality (Black & Wiliam, 1998b) is based the claim that formative assessment is a “fundamentally collaborative act” (Yorke, 2003). In the present study, collaboration is operationalized as the lecturer-student and peer collaborative activities in interpreting classrooms.

## **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is a type of ongoing evaluation that is used to monitor a student’s learning progress throughout a course or unit of study (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Formative assessment is one of the three major types of assessments frequently used in education settings along with summative and ipsative assessment (Sawyer, 2004a). In the present study, formative assessment is enacted through the development and implementation of a formative assessment regime in the interpreter training program at XYAFU (see below).

## **Formative Assessment Regime**

Assessment regime is defined as a framework of specific assessment tasks applied to support learning and teaching (Ecclestone & Pryor, 2003). When applied for

a course or an educational program, Kofinas (2018) further articulates that the term “regime” represents a steady and verified status of the assessment regime reached through iterative tests and trails. In the study, the term formative assessment regime is used to refer to the framework of formative assessment tasks developed for the BTI training program at XYAFU. As a holistic entity, the formative assessment regime facilitates the development, operationalization and implementation of many aspects related to the enactment of formative assessment practices in the program (Nurmikko-Fuller & Hart, 2020), for example, specification of the assessment tasks, the internal alignment between assessment practices and pedagogical objectives, criteria to assessing student’ progress of interpreting competence.

### **Interpreting**

Interpreting is the “act of rendering something comprehensible” (Pöchhacker, 2019, p. 198). It could be defined as either signed language interpreting or spoken language interpreting according to the modality of the languages involved (Napier, 2015). For the present study, the term interpreting is confined to spoken language interpreting.

In the study, interpreting refers to the teaching, learning and practice of spoken language consecutive interpreting between Chinese and English. In accordance with the national standard for China’s translation and interpreter training programs, the core competence for undergraduate interpreter learners is the consecutive interpreting abilities. Consecutive Interpreting is “the process of interpreting after the speaker or signer has completed one or more ideas in the source language and pauses while the interpreter transmits that information” (Russell, 2005, p. 136). Teaching of consecutive

interpreting is an important step to further build trainees' competence and skills required by simultaneous interpreting (Ilg & Lambert, 1996). Additionally, the term "interpreter training" and "interpreting education" are interchangeably used in the present study to denote the training of interpreter in BTI programs in China.

### **Interpreting Competence**

Interpreting Competence is the "interlingual and intercultural mediation ability of instantaneously transferring utterances from a source language into a target language, using language proficiency, related world knowledge, and interpreting-specific strategies" (Wang et al., 2020, p. 4).

In the present study, interpreting competence refers to the ability of using interpreting skills and strategies to complete simulated interpreting tasks during training sessions. Pervasively in BTI curricular across China, consecutive interpreting competence is one of the core abilities required for graduates. Based on the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) training model, the interpreting competence is composed of three dimensions: (1) knowledge of language; (2) encyclopedic knowledge; and (3) interpreting skills (Wang, 2017a; Zhan, 2016, 2017). A rating rubric would be employed to facilitate the measurement of interpreting competence of trainee students.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is defined as a dynamic process that involves the interplay between an individual and their surroundings, characterized by the selection, initiation,

intensification, or continuation of purposeful actions aimed at achieving a goal (Svinicki & Vogler, 2012). In the literature, the term is frequently used interchangeably with similar terms such as “motivation for learning” (King & Bunce, 2020; Moyano et al., 2020) or “students’ motivation” (Maltais et al., 2021; Putra, 2021). In the study, motivation refers to learners’ purpose or desire to engage into the learning of interpreting, as demonstrated by the selection of a particular learning activity and their efforts in that specific activity (Koff & Mullis, 2011).

## **1.9 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is composed of six chapters, which are organized as follows: (1) Introductions, (2) Literature Review, (3) Methodologies, (4) Research Findings, (5) Discussion; and (6) Conclusion, implication, and Recommendation.

Chapter 1 introduces the general concepts of the study, for example, the background of the study and the statement of the problem. Subsequently, the chapter stipulates the research objectives and research questions. The significance and limitations of the present study are also presented. At the end of the chapter, key terminologies are operationally defined.

Chapter 2 presents the review of literature on the development of interpreter training, formative assessment, academic achievement, motivation, collaboration, and the application of formative assessment in previous literature. Relevant conceptualization and theories are also reviewed in the chapter to provide conceptual and theoretical support to the thesis. At the end of Chapter 2, the main hypotheses of the study are formulated.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study. Research design, methods,

variables, and the population and sample are presented. Additionally, the experimental intervention, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis are also discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 comprehensively presents the obtained findings of the present findings pertinent to the research objectives and research questions.

Chapter 5 interprets the results and findings of the study against the existing theoretical and empirical insights from the literature.

Finally, theoretical and pedagogical implications of the major findings, the conclusion of the study, and the recommendations for future research wrap up the whole thesis in Chapter 6.

### **1.10 Summary of Chapter One**

Chapter one describes several aspects of introduction and background information related to the present study. The context of the present study is an interpreter training program at an institution of higher education in China. The problem to be addressed by the present study is the absence of a formative assessment regime in Chinese undergraduate interpreting education. The research examines the effects of the formative assessment regime on the academic achievement, motivation, and collaboration of trainee students. The study aims at addressing the existing problems and issues in Chinese BTI interpreting education. However, the study is subject to several limitations, for example, the limitation in research sites, the confinement of research duration and limited number of research variables. The scope of the present study is delimited by operational definitions of key terminologies. Finally, the chapter concludes with the organization of the thesis.



In the following chapter, literature related to interpreter training, conceptualization of formative assessment and the enactment of formative assessment practices are reviewed in detail.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the review of literature pertinent to interpreter training and formative assessment, particularly formative assessment documented in prior works, and adopted in interpreter training. The literature review starts by discussing the history of interpreter training. In the subsequent subsections, the training models, measurement of competence and key factors of training outcomes are reviewed. In the following sections, the definition and strategies of formative assessment are reviewed. In the successive section, previous studies related to the models and effectiveness of formative assessment are reviewed, in addition to the review of formative assessment in interpreter training. The chapter continues with a discussion of the underpinning theories for the present study after which a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework of the present study are developed. Finally, research hypotheses are constructed based on the literature review and the conceptual framework.

#### **2.2 History of Interpreter Training**

Systematic understanding of the historical development of interpreting education forms a solid foundation for the development and implementation of a pedagogical innovation. Across the globe, institutional interpreter training took shape and grew in volume since the second world war (Sawyer, 2004b). Furthermore, the intradisciplinary specification of career profiles and competence led to the growing recognition of both the interpreter profession and interpreter training (Hertog, 2009; Sawyer, 2004a). Additionally, headways have been made in corresponding pedagogical instruments and pedagogical facilities such as curriculum models (Liu, 2020c), and

assessments policies (Chen & Han, 2021).

Contrarily, the development of interpreter training in China lagged and was initially impelled by urgent demand for interpreters after the restoration of its lawful seat in the UN. After decades of development, China's interpreter training flourished rapidly with its own characteristics (Wen et al., 2019). In the following section, the historical development, training models, curriculum design, and interpreting competence measurement are reviewed from a global and a China-specific perspectives.

Though its origin could be traced to the training of *giovani di lingua* (or *jeunes de langues*, which literally means “young lads speaking many languages” in English) for diplomatic affairs with the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople (Cáceres-Würsig, 2012), the large-scale development of interpreter training begins after the post-war resilience (Baker & Diriker, 2019). After decades of flourishing development, interpreter training has experienced paradigmatic changes in its contents and form, from a global perspective.

The complex nature of interpreter training unfolded and was gradually understood in recent years as a combination of both “preparatory” and “professional development” programs to train interpreters for a wide range of domains and settings (Sawyer & Roy, 2015, p. 124). The development of educational programs for interpreters has gone through a shift from the apprenticeship model in a professional workspace setting to the training in an independent unit in an educational institution (Orlando, 2019). In the contemporary era, most interpreter training program (or translation training programs inclusive of interpreter training courses) situate in either a separate department focusing on the training of translators/interpreters or subdivision of an academic unit of language studies, applied linguistics or intercultural

communication studies. The shift could be partially attributed to the expansion of “interpreting education” as a socialization process in which norms, ethics and code of conducts are pivotal in addition to domain-specific expertise (Sawyer & Roy, 2015). Additionally, the growing demand from an increasing number of industries and fields calls for competent practitioner with comprehensive knowledge and practical abilities which could hardly be attained by the apprenticeship model of interpreter training (Setton, 2010).

Given the complexity and high demand for skills and proficiency of the practice of interpreting, systematic and effective training models were indispensable for the education of potential interpreters that can satisfy the demand from industries (Gile, 1995, 2009; Liu, 2020a). Regarding the nature of interpreter training, it should be noted that it encompassed both *education* and *pedagogy*, which denoted curriculum-based academic pursuit and expertise-oriented professional practices, respectively (Sawyer & Roy, 2015). However, due to the variance of educational systems and actual situations among different countries, diversified training models or frameworks existed in interpreter training programs provided by different institutions. The development of interpreter training model in Europe generally originated from the education of talents for conference interpreters (Liu, 2020a). According to survey by Niska (2005), more than 100 institutions of higher education offered interpreter training programs or courses (Niska, 2005), among which the following training models were widely applied: a). continental model; b). mixed model; c). “Y-Shaped” model; and d). École Supérieure d’Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT, Graduate School of Interpreters and Translators in Paris)-Associated training model (Liu, 2020a). For institutions implementing a specific training model, the choice of training model also characterized the program. For example, programs adopting the ESIT-Associated training model (EMCI) were

generally selective in admission and graduation (Gile, 2006), outweighed training of interpreting-specific skills over the acquisition of linguistics skills (Lederer, 2007), and hired trainers and lecturers with professional background instead of academic eminence (Gile, 2006). The training models developed in European training program were impactful and provided a solid foundation for newcomers in interpreter training programs from the rest of the world (Liu, 2020a).

Guided by the specific training model, curricula and syllabi were developed accordingly. In line with the abovementioned four training models, four types of curriculum setups were widely referred to in interpreter training programs across the globe (primarily in Europe). For example, the curriculum developed on the basis of the continental model of interpreter training was used for the training of novice interpreter at undergraduate level in Spain, Italy and several North European countries (Liu, 2020a). Common in these programs, the duration of the undergraduate level training lasted for four or five years. For admission, the entrance threshold in these programs were relatively low as prior knowledge in interpreting skills and mastery of foreign languages were not mandatorily demanded (Niska, 2005). Additionally, the training of translation and interpreting were not separated with the education of interpreting-related skills arranged at the concluding phase of the training program for no more than two years. Internally, four strands of interpreter training activities formed the pillar for the curriculum: a). utilizing resources and tools for teaching and learning interpreting related skills; b). focusing on building a solid knowledge basis for the further development of trainee students in the specialization of competence for future interpreters; c). cultivating the skills that could transferred for the improvement of skills for interpreting learners; and d). creating the habit for reflections regarding the professional practices in completing translating and interpreting tasks (Gonzalez-

Davies, 2004). According to Liu (2020a), the focus of such programs (i.e., a Spanish interpreter training curriculum as the case in her work) reflected a shift from elite education to mass education, in which all participants could enjoy the chance of receiving “fundamental and overall improvement” in knowledge and skills (p. 55).

Antithetical to the asserted position and indispensability of assessment in educational domains such as second language learning, L2 oral production (Fulcher, 2015), interpreting testing and assessment (ITA) remained insufficiently investigated and understood in spoken language interpreter training (Han, 2022). ITA could be classified by its aim into two major categories: a). certification to select professional practitioners and b). assessment for educational purposes (Chen & Han, 2021). In terms of the professional qualification certification tests, national level tests were available as a channel to select and rank professional interpreters. Major national accredited professional interpreter certification included National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) in Australia (Ko, 2020), the China Accreditation Tests for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI) (Zhao & Gu, 2016), the Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (FCICE) in USA (Wallace, 2015). Contrary to the flourishing of professional certification tests, the classroom assessment for interpreter training were scantily implemented and documented, especially evaluation of the competence of interpreter learners for educational purposes (Han, 2022).

In a nutshell, the development of interpreter training in program setups, training model development, curriculum and syllabus design and assessment offered directions for emerging countries to follow. In the subsequent subsection, the details of the development of interpreter training in the Chinese context and relevant literature would be reviewed to provide a glimpse of the status-quo of China’s interpreter training.