

A 3-YEAR ACTION RESEARCH IN A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY: STUDENTS AS CO-GENERATORS OF CLASS CONTENT

UMA PESQUISA-AÇÃO DE 3 ANOS EM UMA UNIVERSIDADE VIETNAMITA: ALUNOS COMO COGERADORES DE CONTEÚDO DAS AULAS

UNA INVESTIGACIÓN ACCIÓN DE 3 AÑOS EN UNA UNIVERSIDAD VIETNAMITA: LOS ESTUDIANTES COMO CO-GENERADORES DEL CONTENIDO DE CLASE

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ABSTRACT: In the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution with unlimited technological advancement and innovation, how can educators innovate their teaching and facilitate their students in their learning process, so that students can accumulate required skills and achieve the set learning outcomes of each course they take? In order to find out the answer, the authors have revised some literature concerning BYOD trend, active learning strategies, flipped classroom and learner-generated content as the theoretical base for their study. Action research has been conducted at a Vietnamese university with the participation of English-majored students in Theory of English Translation and Interpreting classes from 3 different intakes. The findings include students' positive perception towards the content-generation practices. Some achievements and challenges in the teaching and learning process have also been reported. This paper also recommends further studies so that the practice could be utilized to the best outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *BYOD. Learner-generated content. Active learning. Student presentation. Review.*

RESUMO: *No contexto da 4ª Revolução Industrial, com avanço tecnológico e inovação ilimitados, como os educadores podem inovar seu ensino e facilitar seus alunos em seu processo de aprendizagem, para que os alunos possam acumular as habilidades necessárias e alcançar os resultados de aprendizagem definidos de cada curso que fazem? Para encontrar a resposta, os autores revisaram alguma literatura sobre a tendência BYOD, estratégias de aprendizagem ativa, sala de aula invertida e conteúdo gerado pelo aluno como base teórica para seu estudo. Uma pesquisa-ação foi realizada em uma universidade vietnamita com a participação de alunos formados em inglês nas aulas de Teoria da Tradução e Interpretação do Inglês de 3 diferentes entradas. Os resultados incluem a percepção positiva dos alunos em relação às práticas de geração de conteúdo. Algumas*

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conquistas e desafios no processo de ensino e aprendizagem também foram relatados. Este artigo também recomenda mais estudos para que a prática possa ser utilizada para os melhores resultados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *BYOD. Conteúdo gerado pelo aluno. Aprendizado ativo. Apresentação do aluno. Revisão.*

RESUMEN: *En el contexto de la Cuarta Revolución Industrial con un avance tecnológico e innovación ilimitados, ¿cómo pueden los educadores innovar su enseñanza y facilitar a sus estudiantes su proceso de aprendizaje, para que los estudiantes puedan acumular las habilidades requeridas y lograr los resultados de aprendizaje establecidos en cada curso que toman? Para encontrar la respuesta, los autores han revisado cierta literatura sobre la tendencia BYOD, las estrategias de aprendizaje activo, el aula invertida y el contenido generado por el alumno como base teórica para su estudio. Se llevó a cabo una investigación de acción en una universidad vietnamita con la participación de estudiantes con especialización en inglés en clases de Teoría de la traducción e interpretación en inglés de 3 tomas diferentes. Los hallazgos incluyen la percepción positiva de los estudiantes hacia las prácticas de generación de contenidos. También se reportan algunos logros y desafíos en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Este documento también recomienda más estudios para que la práctica pueda utilizarse con los mejores resultados.*

PALABRAS-CLAVE: *BYOD. Contenido generado por el alumno. Aprendizaje activo. Presentación del alumno. Revisión.*

Introduction

“50% of all employees will need reskilling by 2025, as adoption of technology increases according the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report” (WHITING, 2020). Whiting also points out that 85 million jobs may be taken over by machines while 97 million new ones will be created. Gray (2016)'s skills list remains critical thinking and complex problem solving. However, the most noticeable skill goes to newly-emerging active learning and learning strategies, which ranks 2nd in the top 10 skills of 2025. Future workers need to aware that they may encounter stages of reskilling and upskilling in their work. So are teachers and educators, whose jobs are to prepare the most suitable workforce with the highest qualities possibly and hopefully.

The integration of workplace skills is not a new idea in language teaching. The point is how to integrate those significant skills into the teaching of subject content amidst the support of available apps and devices. Relevant studies in the field of language teaching could be found like BOYD trend, blended learning and the integration of 21st century skills.



The industries 4.0 obviously does not let educational sector behind. With great technological advancement, Nunan (2017) quoted Wragg (1984) that:

In the new millennium, technology and multimedia resources will enable individuals to discover things independently, the focus of education must shift from knowledge transmission to the fostering of a spirit of inquiry and independence, people will have to learn how to work collaboratively in teams; there will be new demands for personal creativity, imagination and inventive thinking.

Students are also required to have digital literacy, which is defined by Cornell University, the USA, as “the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet”. Therefore, the idea of having students practice with the Internet via their devices is implied in the action research called “Students as co-generators of content”. It has been conducted in three Theory of Translation and Interpreting classes, organized once per academic year. The purpose of this study is to find out how students perceived about the new practice in general and whether it has any impact on their skills. The research aims to find out answers for three questions:

- Is working on the project beneficial to students’ learning?
- Is working on the project improve students’ skills?
- How can the practice be more beneficial and effective?

Following hereinunder is the review of related literature, the description of methodology and discussion of the findings. The paper ends with the conclusion with recommendations.

Literature Review

Bring your own device (BYOD)

BYOD is a policy that allows students to use their own devices, usually their smart devices like phones or tablets or laptop to access subject content. BYOD is called a trend for the fact that more and more educational in situations turn green light to it, which solves the financial problems. One of the problems is definitely the budget for equipment installation adequately for students, then the cost for maintenance. Students gain benefits from BYOD in the way that their technological skill is better, and they can avoid the lack of equipment during “rush hour” prior to exams or deadlines. BYOD also gives students the feeling of ownership during the learning process and project work. Above all, the most important





benefit is flexible time, which means students can study at their own pace whenever and wherever they want (AL-OKAILY, 2013; RUSSEL, 2018). In fact, BYOD should have its position as language teaching and learning is not only CALL (computer-assisted language learning) but also MALL (mobile-assisted language learning).

Learner-generated content (LGC)

Learners or students create the content as required and contribute to class activities, which is defined as “bring your own content” in this paper.

This practice has actually earned interest from international researchers. Following are some recent studies with the participation of language learners.

Lambert, Philp and Nakamura (2016) have conducted an experiment with a class of 35 students. The study concluded that those tasks operating on learner-generated, compared to opposed to teacher-generated content (TGC) had positive effects on behavioral engagement (effort and persistence in task completion), cognitive engagement (attention to elaborating and clarifying content) and social engagement (participants’ affiliation in the discourse) in L2 use during task performance. The post-performance questionnaire also supported the results for performance. Learner-generated content condition received more affective engagement in the performance of the tasks than the teachers.’

LGC does have positive impacts on language learners. 2 Japanese learners of English and 2 Japanese learners of Chinese in Lambert and Zhang (2019) perceived that all four learners were more socially and emotionally engaged in LGC tasks than in TGC tasks. They were also more fluent and accurate with less complex speech.

40 intermediate Turkish learners of English studied various topics in phonetics and phonology by creating learning materials in teams. The data imply that learner-generated materials seem to be a good option for learners to get involved in research in a flipped class. The participants showed positive attitude towards the newly-introduced class model (BAKLA, 2018).

The content in the LGC is also extended to test. The experiment with Sixty-eight Iranian university students, whose English level is intermediate, concluded that student-generated Grammar test activity is superior in the way that the experimental group outperformed the control ones. This could possibly result from exposure to test construction throughout the treatment period Baleghizadeh and Zarghami (2014).

Flipped class

In traditional classes, learners attend lectures, then do practice activities or homework to acquire knowledge. In the contrary, flipped class requires learners to work with lessons in advance by reading provided materials, summarizing materials, learning with videos or PowerPoint slides and other Internet-based materials. Traditional lectures have now turned into homework which learners must study before class time. Class time is spent on practice, assessment, review and/or discussions with the instruction of lecturers, who play the role of the facilitator.

46 studies collected and summarized by Means *et al.* (2010) indicate that flipped class model offers deep learning, meaningful learning and develop critical thinking and other high order thinking skills. This is also advocated by See and Conry (2014), confirming that the model can fit both inside and outside classroom level of Bloom's Taxonomy. It is significantly noted in their study that a successful flipped classroom requires planning and responsibility.

As reported by Sams and Bergman (2013), flipped classes should be suitable for theory classes and project-based learning. Some principles that teachers can relate to while designing for the flipped classroom are as follows:

- Providing an opportunity for students to gain preliminary information before the class activity,
- Encouraging students to read recommended lectures and be prepared before the class activity,
- Organizing methods of assessment,
- Linking in-class activities with out-of-class activities,
- Supplying clearly stated and well-organized guidance,
- Providing sufficient time for the completion of assignments,
- Providing immediate feedback on individual or group works (KIM *et al.*, 2014).

Enfield (2013) explained that flipped classroom approach allows students to learn anytime and anywhere, and also to move at their own pace with provided instruction. According to Hung (2015), students' participation, satisfaction, and performance showed a positive change after taking part in this pedagogical approach. He examined the possible impacts of flipping the classroom on English language learners' academic performance, learning attitudes, and participation levels. Three different formats of flipped teaching were

applied and it was found that the structured and semi-structured flipped lessons became more effective than the non-flipped lessons.

In fact, not only students gain from this class approach. Teachers do, namely teaching strategies, the sort of resources, experience reflective discussions, and share their instructional practices (KONG, 2014; MCLAUGHLIN; RHONEY, 2015).

Active learning strategies

Active learning, as defined by Prince (2004), requires students to do meaningful learning activities and to be aware of what they are doing. The central points of active learning are students' activity and engagement in the learning process. In active learning setting, students are accountable for their own achievements. They are assigned to work in a pair or a group. Teachers provide activity structures that encourage productive learning behaviors. Teachers create carefully designed activities that require students to talk, write, and express their thinking. Students go beyond listening, copying of notes and execution of prescribed procedures.

The literature has proved a number of benefits of active learning Freeman *et al.*, (2014) analyzed 225 studies in different STEM courses that compare traditional lecture to active learning. The meta-analysis reported that students' average exam scores were around 6% higher in active learning classes. Meanwhile, the risk of failing among students in traditional classes was found to be 1.5 times higher, comparing to classes with significant active learning.

In active learning language classes, students have the opportunity to share ideas, learn how others think and react to problems. Besides, active learning classes create a positive attitude towards the process of learning and make reserved students participate (GRAMA 2014).

O'Neal and Pinder-Grover, (n.d.) have listed some techniques for active learning, namely Self-Assessment, Cooperative Groups in Class (Informal Groups, Triad Groups, etc.), Interactive Lecture, Active Review Sessions (Games or Simulations), and Jigsaw Discussion. The last activity is described in details as follows:

Jigsaw Discussion: In this technique, a general topic is divided into smaller, interrelated pieces (e.g., a puzzle is divided into pieces). Each member of a team is assigned to read and become an expert on a different topic. After each person has become an expert on their piece of the puzzle, they teach the other team members about that puzzle piece. Finally, after each person has

finished teaching, the puzzle has been reassembled, and everyone on the team knows something important about every piece of the puzzle.

Methodology

Research method

The action research will be the main method used for the study because of its following characteristics:

- Bring about changes and improvements in practice;
- Be small-scaled, contextualized and local;
- Be participatory;
- Be a normal part of teaching.

(BURNS, 2010).

The action research follows the 4-phase loop: planning – acting – observing – reflecting as reviewed by Burns (2005). Once the teacher-researchers had identified the objectives of the research and reviewed related literature, a research plan have been developed so students would participate in a small project. The reasons for this practice are that in a real workplace, students who experienced PBL have better knowledge and skills like decision-making, problem solving, collaborating, communicating and teamwork. PBL is proven by Levine (2004) to be beneficial for language learners, too. It offers opportunity for an integration of language skills (STOLLER, 2006). With the view to motivation, a project is a real work experience which is meaningful, more interesting and motivational, therefore promote learning (BROPHY, 2004). During the process, students can strengthen their communication, negotiation and cooperation skills – i.e., promote social learning (Bell, 2010). According to Dornyei (2001), potential benefits of PBL practice includes enhancing motivation, strengthening bond among members, increasing success of target language, reducing stress, making effort work. The implementation of the action research also takes Kim *et al.* (2014)'s design into consideration.

Each year with each class, the project is to be implemented during 15 weeks in accordance with the schedule of the subject Theory of Translation and Interpreting. The timeline of the project could be summarized in table 1:

Table 1 – Schedule of the action research

Week	Tasks
1	Introduction and instruction of the project
2-3	Instruction (cont) and feedback (if required)
4-11	Student presentations
15	Survey (during the last lesson)

Source: Prepared by the authors

Participants

The study was conducted at Hanoi University of Industry, Vietnam. Students are 3rd-year English-majored students in The Theory of Translation and Interpreting classes. Students are assigned into groups of 3-4. Each group will pick up a number for the order of presentation, the content of which runs accordingly with the timeline of the subject.

Year 1: a class of 30 students

Year 2: a class of 25 students (23 students responded the survey)

Year 3: 2 classes of 47 students in total (46 students responded the survey)

Data collection tools

Year 0: final results of 2 classes of 56 students

Year 1: final results, compared with Year 0 results using T-test

Year 2: final results, compared with Year 0 results, using T-test; and questionnaire

Year 3: same questionnaire with Year 2

Most of the questions are referred to studies by Sang and Nguyen (2015), Meyer (2015). 5 Likert scale is applied in the questionnaire as in table 2:

Table 2 – Likert scale in the questionnaire

Learning process	Scale	Skills
Strongly Agree	5	Excellent
Agree	4	Good
Neutral	3	Satisfactory
Disagree	2	Fair
Strongly Disagree	1	Poor

Source: Prepared by the authors

The questionnaire is divided into 4 parts. Part 1 asks students how they perceive the effectiveness of the project work for themselves. Part 2 is about their century skills. Part 3 consists of two questions asking what changes students suggest from the teachers and the



students themselves. Part 4 are demographic questions, about their gender, and role in the group.

Students received the link to submit their answers in the last class. Some absent students failed to make feedback of the course.

Research procedure

Every week, students have a 90-minute class. In the first week, the teacher introduced the module and clarified item in the announced syllabus, including learning outcomes, assessment forms, time allocation. Teacher will then let students to choose group of 3-4 on their own, let them pick up number. Week 2 and 3, the teacher presented “model” lessons, gave students translation exercises, let students complete the text related to the presented content by filling the gaps.

The Jigsaw Discussion activity was applied with the puzzle consists of 8 pieces, equaling the number of groups in the action research. One group is an expert of the assigned part of the course.

From week 4, each group was required to make presentation which consisted of 2 parts. The first part, review of the previous lesson consists of 6 theory questions and 4 practice sentences (translation or interpreting). Part 2, introduction and explanation of a new lesson which requires the provision of at least an example to explain each item in the lesson. The students are provided with slides, which the teacher used in Year 0 containing old examples, then they are required to present the assigned content and illustrate it with their own examples. In other words, the content of both the entire review and the new lesson was contributed by the students themselves. This turns students into co-generators of class content.

All their preparation must be sent a week prior to presentation day to teachers for their feedback, and adjustment would be made (if any). Teacher saw how well the gap-fill sentences had been paraphrased and if the translation or the interpreting part was suitable with the assigned content. Students mostly used authentic materials for translation and they were the one to translate first. For the Interpreting exercise (group 5-8), they could record Vietnamese news with their own voice, but many chose to use authentic audio/videos they had found from trustable sources on the Internet. For part 2 in student’s work, the teacher checked if the examples were new and suitable.



Students must bring their laptop for presentation and printed a package of their review quiz for the teacher, as well as their presentation slides and the marking sheet. Hopefully, students understand better of what they are required and how they are marked.

For other students who did not present, they did the review exercises provided by the presenters. During the provision of the new lesson, they contributed by giving translation/interpretation of the examples. They had the right to ask the presenters to clarify any point in the lesson.

The different practices lie in table 3.

Table 3 – Main practices through the years

Year 0 (2017)	The year before the action research, all the lessons had been prepared and presented by the teachers.
Year 1 (2018)	Review questions are all gap-fill (as it is in the formal tests) Presentation
Year 2 (2019)	Review questions can be in various types (gap-fill, true/false, matching ...) Presentation
Year 3 (2020)	Review questions can be in various types (gap-fill, true/false, matching ...) Presentation ends with quiz, summarizing the presented content

Source: Prepared by the authors

Results and discussion

Year 1 finished with little preparation, so the teacher simply compared the average results of the class and the average of her previous intake classes. The data was analyzed with t-test tool in Excel worksheet, with set $\alpha = 0.1$ (as the number of participants is smaller than 100). The finding in tables 4 and 5 is promising with P is smaller than α (at 0.08 and 0.05) and is up to what the authors expected. It reads that there is significance when new practice is implemented.

Table 4 – Summary of T-test comparing Year 1 and Year 0

T-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances (Year 1 and Year 0)

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	58.14286	61.43333
Observations	56	30
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.08303	

Source: Prepared by the authors

Table 5 – Summary of T-test comparing Year 2 and Year 0

T-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances (Year 2 and Year 0)

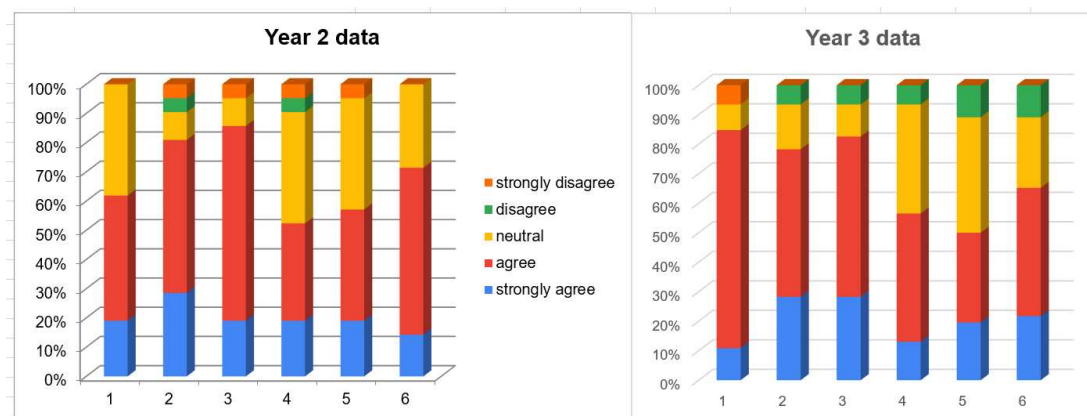
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	58.14285714	61.8
Observations	56	25
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.050383168	

Source: Prepared by the authors

These two tables read that there is significance when new practice is implemented.

Findings for Year 2 and Year 3 can be interpreted from the survey, asking students how they perceive. In general, students believed they learn better and enjoy learning more. More than half of the surveyed students believe that (1) they learn better, (2) they enjoy more (3) they find it more beneficial, (4) they feel self-confident, (5) they are relaxed and motivated to present, and (6) they can give more explanation or example when required by classmates or the teacher. 80 % of Year 3 students believed they learn better, which is really encouraging to the authors. In addition, with questions 2 to 6, there are no “strongly disagree” answers among students in Year 3. The charts similarly show the least agreement for confidence and motivation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – How Year 2 and Year 3 students perceive the effectiveness of the project



Source: Prepared by the authors

The project influences their skills, with the mean scores as summarized in table 6.

Table 6 – How students perceive their skills development

	Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Com1	Com2	Com3	Cri-th1	Cri-th2	Cri-th3	Cri-th4	Cri-th5	Cre 1	Cre 2
Year 2 students	3.61	3.56	3.22	3.61	3.83	3.78	3.33	3.33	3.11	3.72	3.72	3.61	3.78
Year 3 students	3.41	3.83	3.37	3.72	3.63	3.63	3.43	3.28	3.48	3.50	3.61	3.41	3.50

Source: Prepared by the authors

As presented in table 6, all skills tend to develop above satisfactory level. Communication (labeled com1, com2, com3) show the best development for students in both groups. Similarly, they have also found they can demonstrate and improve their creativity (cre1, cre2). They can still improve the way they work with others (col1, col2, col3) and critical thinking (Cri-th1 – Cri-th5).

Some individual answers, especially those related to Critical thinking skills, with mean score lower than 3.41. However, if they are group together into one big skill, all the four skills namely Collaboration, Communication, Critical thinking, and Creativity are perceived to be good. Part 4 shows that students do assign different roles in the projects. Some students are to prepare the review, others are in charge of making slides or present. There are also students taking different roles in the projects.

During the semesters, the achievements were unexpectedly amazing to the teacher. The exercises are diverse which shows that students really invested their effort into the activity. Review questions are gap-fill but some appears as usual sentence while others could be diagrams. They can make it as T/F or matching questions. Most interestingly, they built in into games like Magical spin or Who is the millionaire? Some groups bring small gifts (mostly candies and snacks) to encourage interaction from their classmates. With the materials for translation/interpreting practice they have chosen, the majority are authentic. They are from trustable sources such as vnexpress.net, world economic forum.

The teachers, however, have observed some problems as pointed out by Grama (2014). Some students refused to work in group, a student shared that he carried the whole weight of the presentation. There were conflicts, and some students found excuses to miss the group “meeting” and only appeared on the presentation day. In addition, students had much time to prepare for their lessons but they failed to plan for their work.

For the teachers, it is not only focus work but “wait” work. They checked e-mail every single day to make sure she could reply promptly so that students can make necessary changes to the work. In a specific case, two days prior the deadline, she notified the due presenters the fact that they had not submitted their work but received no reply. Finally, they had to ‘take



over' the presentation. Luckily, only 1 group executed that right and offered the teacher the easiest marking: 0 for the whole group. It seemed to be tiring when teachers read "their own lesson" when some students failed to renew the examples.

It is interesting to receive student's suggestion for improvement of the course. They seemed to be aware of their time management and teamworking. The suggestion could be considered as example of student's problem solving and communication skills. They have noted the lack of mind-mapping activities among all groups' presentation and have recommended that for similar classes.

Conclusion and recommendation

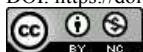
To prepare students for everchanging world of work, educators must be aware of required skills, which are categorized as problem solving, self-management, working with people, and technology use and development. With positive perception in the action research, the content-generation practices in Theory of Translation and Interpreting classes suggest better learning process and better skills (especially critical thinking and creativity, two in the top 10 skills for 2025). Unfortunately, the teacher did not survey the how students evaluate their own technology use.

It is recommended that the research be conducted as an experiment with one control group and/or with higher number of students. Then, the survey is revised to cover more items related to technology and other critical skills including time management. Because students work in group, it is better to let them evaluate others with a rubric for groupwork. Teachers may consider to provide or not to provide students with the guided slides. So that they can plan their own flow of the lessons and dig in the content in their own way.

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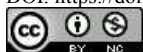
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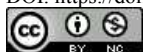
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