

ENHANCING INTERPRETING COMPETENCE THROUGH PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS: STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON A GUEST LECTURE EXPERIENCE

Muhammad Kurniawan Rachman

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari, Indonesia

kurniawanrachman@iainkendari.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Interpreting competence requires not only linguistic mastery but also an understanding of professional practice. This study explored the educational value of a guest lecture delivered by a functional translator from Balai Bahasa Southeast Sulawesi in an Interpreting B course at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari. The study aimed to examine students' reflections on the contribution of the guest lecture to their understanding of the translation and interpreting profession. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire consisting of open-ended reflective questions completed by 23 students. The responses were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed three major themes. First, students appreciated the practical strategies shared by the guest lecturer for handling real-world interpreting challenges, including concentration management, preparation techniques, and communication strategies. Second, students recognised the importance of continuous learning, professional ethics, and cultural awareness as essential qualities for successful interpreters. Third, the lecture strengthened students' motivation to pursue careers in translation and interpreting while helping them develop realistic expectations regarding the profession's demands. The study suggests that guest lectures can bridge theoretical instruction and professional practice by providing authentic learning experiences that enhance students' understanding of interpreting competence and career development.

Keywords: guest lecture, interpreting, language learning, professional practice, student reflection

INTRODUCTION

The increasing interconnectedness of societies in the twenty-first century has intensified the need for effective cross-cultural and multilingual communication (Khasinah, 2024). As international mobility, diplomacy, education, and business activities continue to expand, interpreting has become an essential professional skill that enables communication among speakers of different languages (Aljarelah, 2024). Interpreting involves the immediate transfer of spoken messages from one language to another while preserving meaning, intention, and cultural nuances. Unlike written translation, interpreting requires real-time processing, making it one of the most cognitively demanding language activities (Gile, 2009).

Interpreting competence encompasses a combination of linguistic knowledge, cultural understanding, communication skills, memory capacity, concentration, and decision-making abilities (Özkaya Marangoz, 2023). Successful interpreters must process incoming information rapidly while simultaneously producing accurate and coherent output in another language (Fitria, 2024). Consequently, interpreter education programmes seek to develop not only language proficiency but also the professional competencies required in authentic interpreting situations.

Despite the importance of practical competence, interpreter training in higher education often relies heavily on classroom-based instruction (Hoinbala et al., 2025). Students typically engage in simulations, role plays, and interpreting exercises designed to replicate professional situations. While these activities

contribute significantly to skill development, they may not fully capture the complexities of authentic professional practice. Students frequently possess limited knowledge about the realities of working as interpreters, including workplace expectations, ethical responsibilities, preparation requirements, and career opportunities (Greere, 2024).

Experiential learning theory emphasises that meaningful learning occurs when learners connect theoretical knowledge with practical experience (Kolb, 2015). Within this framework, guest lectures delivered by professionals represent valuable opportunities to bridge academic learning and workplace realities. Professional practitioners can provide authentic insights into industry practices, share personal experiences, and offer practical advice that complements classroom instruction (Dewantara et al., 2025).

Previous studies have highlighted the educational benefits of guest speakers in higher education settings. Guest lecturers can increase student engagement, enhance motivation, and provide exposure to professional perspectives that are not always available through conventional teaching approaches (Gamage et al., 2022). In language education, interactions with professionals can help students understand how linguistic competencies are applied in real-world contexts and assist them in developing realistic career expectations (Bondarchuk et al., 2025).

For interpreting students, exposure to practising professionals may be particularly beneficial. Professional interpreters can illustrate how theoretical concepts are implemented in practice, discuss challenges encountered in the field, and demonstrate the importance of continuous professional development (Alisya & Rusdin, 2025). Such experiences may strengthen students' understanding of interpreting as both a skill and a profession.

To enrich students' learning experiences, the Interpreting B course at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari invited a functional translator from Balai Bahasa Southeast Sulawesi to deliver a guest lecture. The session focused on interpreting practice, professional ethics, career development, and strategies for addressing challenges encountered in translation and interpreting work. Following the lecture, students were invited to reflect on their learning experiences.

Although guest lectures are widely used in higher education, relatively few studies have explored how students perceive professional engagement activities in interpreter education. Most existing research focuses on interpreting pedagogy, assessment, and skill development, while less attention has been given to students' reflections on professional learning experiences (Leibovitch et al., 2025).

This study therefore aims to explore students' perceptions of a guest lecture delivered by a professional practitioner and examine how the experience contributed to their understanding of interpreting competence and professional development. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What professional insights did students gain from the guest lecturer's experience?
2. How did students relate the lecture content to their current interpreting skill development?
3. How did the guest lecture influence students' perceptions of careers in translation and interpreting?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative descriptive research is appropriate for exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections while maintaining a close connection to the original data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The participants consisted of 23 undergraduate students enrolled in the Interpreting B course at the Faculty of Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari. All participants attended the guest lecture delivered by a functional translator from Balai Bahasa Southeast Sulawesi. The participants represented various age groups and career aspirations related to translation and interpreting. Demographic information was collected to provide contextual understanding of the participants involved in this study. As shown in Table 1 and Table 2, the participants ranged from 19 to 25 years old, with the majority being female students. Most participants also expressed a preference for pursuing careers as interpreters rather than translators, reflecting their interest in oral language mediation and multilingual communication.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants (N = 23)

Respondent Code	Gender	Age	Preferred Future Career
R1	Female	20	Interpreter
R2	Female	21	Interpreter
R3	Male	22	Interpreter
R4	Female	20	Interpreter
R5	Female	21	Interpreter
R6	Female	22	Interpreter
R7	Female	20	Interpreter
R8	Female	23	Interpreter
R9	Male	21	Interpreter
R10	Female	22	Interpreter
R11	Female	24	Interpreter
R12	Female	20	Interpreter
R13	Female	21	Interpreter
R14	Male	22	Interpreter
R15	Female	23	Interpreter
R16	Female	19	Translator
R17	Female	21	Translator
R18	Male	22	Translator
R19	Female	24	Translator
R20	Female	20	Translator
R21	Female	25	Translator
R22	Male	23	Interpreter
R23	Female	19	Interpreter

Source: Research Data (2026)

Table 2. Summary of Participant Characteristics (N = 23)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	18	78.3
	Male	5	21.7
Age	19 years	2	8.7
	20 years	5	21.7
	21 years	5	21.7
	22 years	5	21.7
	23 years	3	13.0
	24 years	2	8.7
	25 years	1	4.3
Career Preference	Interpreter	17	73.9
	Translator	6	26.1

Source: Research Data (2026)

The participants consisted of 23 undergraduate students enrolled in the Tadris Bahasa Inggris (TBI) programme at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari who attended the guest lecture as part of the Interpreting B course. As presented in Table 1 and Table 2, the participants ranged in age from 19 to 25 years old, with the majority being between 20 and 22 years old. Female students constituted the majority of participants (78.3%), while male students accounted for 21.7%. Regarding future career aspirations, 17 students (73.9%) expressed a preference for becoming interpreters, whereas 6 students (26.1%) preferred careers in translation. These demographic characteristics provide contextual information regarding the participants whose reflections formed the basis of this study.

The selection of participants was based on their direct involvement in the guest lecture activity and their enrollment in the Interpreting B course during the semester in which the study was conducted. Since the purpose of the research was to explore students' reflections and perceptions, participants were considered suitable because they had experienced the same learning event and were exposed to identical professional insights delivered by the guest speaker. This shared experience allowed the researcher to collect rich qualitative data regarding students' interpretations of the lecture and its perceived impact on their understanding of the interpreting profession. Furthermore, the diversity of participants in terms of age, gender, and career preferences provided a range of perspectives that contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the educational value of the guest lecture.

Data were collected using a Google Form questionnaire distributed immediately after the guest lecture. The questionnaire contained four open-ended questions designed to encourage students to reflect on the lecture experience. The questions focused on valuable insights gained, connections between the lecture and interpreting skill development, professional challenges discussed by the speaker, and changes in career perceptions.

The collected data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. First, the responses were read repeatedly to achieve familiarity with the data. Second, initial codes were generated manually by identifying recurring ideas and meaningful

statements. Third, similar codes were grouped into broader categories. Fourth, categories were reviewed and refined into themes. Fifth, the themes were defined and named. Finally, the findings were interpreted in relation to existing literature and the study objectives.

To enhance trustworthiness, coding was conducted manually and reviewed multiple times to ensure consistency in theme identification. Representative student statements were selected to illustrate each theme. In addition, attention was given to preserving the original meaning of participants' responses throughout the coding process. Similar responses were compared carefully to identify common patterns while still recognising unique perspectives expressed by individual students. This approach helped ensure that the resulting themes accurately reflected participants' experiences and perceptions of the guest lecture rather than the researcher's personal assumptions or interpretations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of 23 student reflections revealed three major themes regarding the educational impact of the guest lecture: (1) understanding practical strategies for real-world interpreting challenges, (2) recognising the importance of continuous learning and professional ethics, and (3) developing increased motivation and career awareness. These themes demonstrate how interaction with a professional practitioner enriched students' understanding of interpreting beyond the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom.

Practical Strategies for Real-World Interpreting Challenges

The first theme highlights students' appreciation of the practical insights shared by the guest lecturer regarding the realities of professional interpreting. Many students reported that the session broadened their understanding of interpreting by emphasising that the profession involves much more than transferring words between languages.

One participant reflected that interpreting requires preserving meaning and cultural nuances rather than merely translating linguistic forms:

R1 Indonesian: "Penerjemahan tidak sekadar mengalihkan bahasa, melainkan menjaga makna, konteks, dan nuansa budaya."

English: "Translation is not merely transferring language but preserving meaning, context, and cultural nuances."

Similarly, another participant emphasised the multidimensional nature of interpreting:

R2 Indonesian: "Profesi interpreter bukan hanya soal bahasa, melainkan tentang tanggung jawab, etika, kecepatan berpikir, dan kemampuan memahami budaya."

English: "The interpreter profession is not only about language but also about responsibility, ethics, quick thinking, and the ability to understand culture."

These reflections suggest that students developed a more comprehensive understanding of interpreting competence. Rather than viewing interpreting as a simple language activity, they began to recognise the importance of contextual understanding, intercultural communication, and professional responsibility. This finding supports Gile's (2009) argument that interpreting requires the simultaneous management of several cognitive efforts, including listening, memory, analysis, and speech production.

Students also highlighted the cognitive demands involved in interpreting tasks. Many participants acknowledged the importance of rapid information processing and broad knowledge in ensuring successful communication. As one student noted:

R8 Indonesian: "Seorang interpreter harus bisa berpikir dengan cepat dan mempunyai pengetahuan yang luas."

English: "An interpreter must be able to think quickly and possess broad knowledge."

Another participant similarly stated:

R5 Indonesian: Menjadi seorang interpreter tidak hanya tentang kemampuan berbahasa

yang baik, tetapi juga membutuhkan fokus yang tinggi dan kemampuan untuk merespons dengan cepat saat menerjemahkan suatu ujaran atau pesan

English: “Being an interpreter is not only about being fluent in a language but also having to be focused and responsive in translating a sentence.”

These comments indicate that the guest lecture helped students understand the complexity of real-world interpreting situations, where concentration, flexibility, and responsiveness are essential. Exposure to authentic professional experiences enabled students to connect classroom exercises with the realities of professional practice (Hwang et al., 2022). Such findings support experiential learning theory, which emphasises the importance of connecting academic learning with practical experience (Kolb, 2015).

The findings further indicate that exposure to professional practitioners can help students bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and workplace realities. In many interpreter training programmes, students often develop their understanding of interpreting through simulated classroom activities, recorded speeches, and instructor-led exercises. While these pedagogical approaches are important for building foundational skills, they may not fully capture the unpredictable nature of authentic interpreting assignments (Setiawan & Budiastuti, 2025). Through the guest lecture, students were introduced to the practical complexities that professional interpreters encounter in real communication settings, including time pressure, speaker variability, unfamiliar topics, and cultural considerations. Such exposure allows learners to contextualise classroom knowledge within professional environments and develop a more realistic understanding of occupational expectations (Khamdamovna, 2025).

An important aspect emerging from student reflections is the recognition of decision-making as a central component of interpreting performance. Professional interpreters frequently operate under conditions that require immediate responses while simultaneously listening, processing information, retaining meaning, and delivering messages accurately (Pöchhacker, 2016). The students’ emphasis on quick thinking and concentration suggests an emerging awareness

of the cognitive dimensions of interpreting work. This awareness is particularly significant because novice learners often associate interpreting success primarily with language proficiency (Choi, 2008). The guest lecture appears to have broadened this perception by demonstrating that effective interpreting requires the integration of multiple cognitive and communicative skills rather than merely linguistic competence.

The findings also suggest that students gained a greater appreciation of the role of background knowledge in interpreting performance. Several reflections highlighted the importance of possessing broad knowledge beyond language itself. This observation aligns with existing scholarship emphasising that interpreters must continuously expand their knowledge across the diverse subject areas in which they seek expertise. Interpreters frequently encounter specialised terminology and unfamiliar concepts, making subject-matter knowledge an essential component of professional competence (Albl-Mikasa, 2013). By discussing real professional experiences, the guest lecturer provided concrete examples of how preparation and general knowledge contribute to successful communication outcomes.

Another notable aspect concerns students’ developing awareness of intercultural communication. The participants repeatedly mentioned cultural understanding as an important characteristic of professional interpreters. This finding reflects an increasingly sophisticated understanding of interpreting as a form of intercultural mediation rather than a purely linguistic activity. Contemporary interpreting studies emphasize that communication breakdowns may arise not only from language differences but also from cultural assumptions, communication styles, and differing social norms (Zhu, 2014). Consequently, interpreters must possess sensitivity toward cultural contexts and be capable of facilitating mutual understanding between individuals from diverse backgrounds.

From an educational perspective, the guest lecture also contributed to situated learning. According to situated learning theory, knowledge acquisition becomes more meaningful when learners engage with authentic practices and communities of professionals (Mzangwa, 2024). The guest lecturer functioned as a representative of the professional interpreting community,

providing students with direct access to industry experiences that are typically unavailable through textbooks. Through this interaction, students were able to observe how theoretical concepts introduced in class are applied in real-world situations. Such experiences may strengthen students' ability to transfer classroom learning to future professional contexts.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate the value of practitioner narratives in enriching interpreter education. Stories and experiences shared by professionals often contain tacit knowledge that is difficult to convey through conventional instruction (Henttonen et al., 2016). Tacit knowledge includes practical judgement, adaptive strategies, and coping mechanisms developed through sustained professional experience. The reflections suggest that students benefited not only from factual information about interpreting but also from the practical wisdom embedded within the guest lecturer's experiences. As a result, learners gained a deeper understanding of professional realities that extended beyond technical skills alone.

Collectively, these observations reinforce the argument that interpreter education should incorporate meaningful engagement with professional practitioners whenever possible. Such engagement can enhance students' understanding of workplace expectations, improve their awareness of professional competencies, and create stronger connections between academic learning and future career development (van Houten, 2023). The positive responses observed in this study indicate that guest lectures represent a valuable pedagogical strategy for supporting the holistic development of aspiring interpreters.

Continuous Learning, Ethics, and Professional Development

The second theme concerns students' growing awareness of the importance of continuous learning and professional ethics. Participants consistently reported that the guest lecturer emphasised lifelong learning as a key characteristic of successful interpreters.

Several students acknowledged that interpreting competence cannot be achieved

instantly but requires continuous effort and practice. One participant explained:

R9 Indonesian: "Menjadi seorang interpreter membutuhkan banyak waktu dan usaha untuk belajar agar dapat memahami dan menyampaikan pesan secara efektif."

English: "Becoming an interpreter requires a significant amount of time and effort to learn in order to understand and communicate messages effectively."

Another student shared a similar perspective:

R15 Indonesian: "Menjadi seorang translator atau interpreter itu tidak mudah serta membutuhkan banyak waktu dan latihan, dan kita harus berlatih setiap hari."

English: "Becoming a translator/interpreter is not easy and requires a lot of time and practice and you have to practice every day."

These reflections demonstrate students' recognition that interpreting competence develops gradually through sustained learning and experience. The findings align with professional interpreting literature, which emphasises continuous professional development as an essential component of interpreter competence (Pöhhacker, 2016).

In addition to technical competence, students frequently mentioned professional ethics and responsibility. The guest lecturer's experiences appeared to increase students' awareness that interpreters carry significant responsibilities when facilitating communication between speakers.

One participant reflected:

R14 Indonesian: Kunci untuk menjadi seorang interpreter yang sukses tidak hanya terletak pada kemampuan berbahasa, tetapi juga pada kesiapan mental, profesionalisme, dan pemahaman lintas budaya.

English: "The key to a successful interpreter is not only language skills, but also mental readiness, professionalism, and cross-cultural understanding."

Similarly, another participant highlighted the importance of cultural competence and accuracy:

R12 Indonesian: Seorang interpreter tidak hanya menerjemahkan bahasa, tetapi juga menjembatani perbedaan budaya, menjaga keakuratan pesan, serta harus siap bekerja dengan tingkat konsentrasi yang tinggi.

English: “Interpreters are not just translating language, but also bridging cultures, maintaining the accuracy of the message, and must be ready with high concentration.”

These reflections suggest that students began to understand interpreting as a professional practice that requires ethical awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and accountability. Rather than perceiving interpreters as language converters, students increasingly viewed them as cultural mediators responsible for ensuring accurate and meaningful communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Such perspectives are consistent with contemporary interpretations of interpreter roles in multilingual communication settings (Pöchhacker, 2016).

Beyond the acquisition of technical skills, the findings reveal an important shift in students’ perceptions regarding professional growth and lifelong learning. Prior to exposure to professional practitioners, students may perceive interpreting competence as an outcome primarily determined by language ability. However, the reflections collected in this study suggest that participants increasingly viewed competence as a dynamic process requiring continuous development. This perspective is particularly important in contemporary professional environments where interpreters must adapt to evolving technologies, communication practices, and specialised knowledge domains (Özkaya Marangoz, 2023).

The emphasis on continuous learning identified in student reflections aligns with current trends in professional education (Sharma, 2022). As English students, they need to develop professional competence to compete with graduates from the same institution and in the wider global market. Consequently, interpreters must maintain a commitment to professional development in order to adapt successfully to changing workplace demands (Özkaya Marangoz,

2023). The guest lecture appears to have encouraged students to adopt this growth-oriented mindset at an early stage of their professional journey.

Students also demonstrated increasing awareness of the relationship between ethics and professional ability. Ethical behaviour is essential in interpreting practice because interpreters often facilitate communication in situations involving sensitive information, high-level decision-making, and diverse cultural backgrounds. Accuracy, confidentiality, impartiality, and professionalism are therefore essential principles that guide interpreter conduct (Sophie, 2025). The reflections suggest that students began to understand that professional success depends not only on technical competence but also on ethical responsibility. This understanding is particularly valuable because ethical awareness can influence professional behaviour long before students enter the workforce.

Another important finding concerns the development of professional identity. Professional identity refers to how individuals perceive themselves in relation to a particular occupation and its associated values, responsibilities, and expectations. Exposure to experienced practitioners can play a significant role in shaping this identity formation process (Manning et al., 2023). Through observing the guest lecturer’s experiences and perspectives, students were able to envision what it means to function as a professional interpreter. Such exposure may contribute to stronger commitment, clearer career goals, and greater confidence in pursuing their future professions.

The guest lecture also appears to have encouraged reflective learning among participants. Reflection is widely recognised as an important component of professional education because it enables learners to evaluate experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and establish future learning goals (Gudeta, 2022). The open-ended responses demonstrate that students actively reflected on their current competencies and future development needs. Several participants acknowledged limitations in their abilities while simultaneously expressing motivation to improve. This combination of self-awareness and aspiration represents a positive outcome because reflective learners are generally

more capable of directing their own professional growth.

Additionally, the findings suggest that students developed a more balanced understanding of success within the interpreting profession. Rather than viewing success only in terms of linguistic accuracy, participants increasingly associated professional achievement with broader qualities such as resilience, adaptability, intercultural competence, and ethical conduct. This broader perspective is consistent with competency-based approaches to interpreter education, which emphasise the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional values (Ismatullayeva, 2024).

The role of role models should also be considered when interpreting these findings. Educational research consistently highlights the positive influence of professional role models on student motivation and career development. By interacting with a practitioner who has successfully solved professional challenges, students gain access to realistic examples of career progression and achievement. Such interactions can enhance self-efficacy by demonstrating that professional goals are attainable through dedication, practice, and continuous learning (Bandura, 2023). The reflections suggest that the guest lecturer served as an effective role model who inspired students while simultaneously presenting an honest portrayal of the profession's challenges.

Taken together, these findings illustrate that guest lectures can contribute to multiple dimensions of student development beyond technical knowledge acquisition. They can foster ethical awareness, strengthen professional identity, encourage reflective learning, and cultivate lifelong learning attitudes. These outcomes are particularly valuable in interpreter education, where professional competence extends beyond linguistic expertise and encompasses a broad range of cognitive, interpersonal, and ethical competencies.

Increased Motivation and Career Awareness

The third theme concerns the influence of the guest lecture on students' career perceptions and motivation. Many participants reported that the

session increased their interest in pursuing careers related to translation and interpreting.

One participant expressed a stronger sense of motivation following the lecture:

R19 Indonesian: “Saya merasa lebih termotivasi dan optimis untuk menekuni karier di bidang ini.”

English: “I feel more motivated and optimistic about pursuing a career in this field.”

Likewise, another participant commented:

R2 Indonesian: “Saya semakin termotivasi untuk menekuni bidang interpreting karena melihat betapa menantang sekaligus menariknya profesi ini.”

English: “I am increasingly motivated to pursue interpreting because I see how challenging yet interesting the profession is.”

These responses indicate that the guest lecture successfully inspired students by exposing them to authentic professional experiences. Meeting a practitioner enabled students to envision potential career pathways and better understand how interpreting skills can be applied in professional settings.

At the same time, students developed more realistic expectations regarding the profession. While many participants expressed increased interest in interpreting careers, they also recognised the challenges involved. One student stated:

R10 Indonesian: “Saya mulai tertarik untuk menjadi seorang interpreter. Tetapi masih belum yakin karena kurangnya kemampuan saya saat ini.”

English: “I have started to become interested in being an interpreter. However, I am still not confident because of my current limitations.”

Another participant acknowledged the complexity of the profession:

R13 Indonesian: “Ternyata menjadi interpreter itu sulit.”

English: “It turns out that being an interpreter is difficult.”

Interestingly, these challenges did not appear to discourage students. Instead, many participants perceived them as opportunities for personal growth and professional development. As reflected by another participant:

R22 Indonesian: Sekarang saya melihat bahwa interpretasi dan penerjemahan bukan hanya tentang kemampuan bahasa. Keduanya juga membutuhkan kemampuan beradaptasi, profesionalisme, dan kemauan untuk terus belajar, sehingga profesi ini terasa menantang tetapi juga sangat memuaskan.

English: “I now see interpreting and translation as not only about language but also about adaptability, professionalism, and lifelong learning, which makes the career more challenging yet rewarding.”

These findings support previous research suggesting that exposure to professional practitioners can enhance student motivation, career awareness, and professional identity formation (Mukhalalati et al., 2024). Through reflection on authentic professional experiences, students were able to connect academic learning with future aspirations and develop a more realistic understanding of the competencies required in the language services industry.

The increase in student motivation identified in this study may also be understood through the perspective of career development theory. Exposure to successful professionals often helps learners clarify their career interests and evaluate the compatibility between their personal goals and occupational expectations (Mutanga et al., 2023). Prior to the guest lecture, some students may have possessed only limited knowledge regarding the realities of interpreting careers. The session provided concrete examples of professional pathways, enabling students to make more informed judgments about their future aspirations. This process of career exploration is particularly relevant for university students who are considering their future careers.

Interestingly, motivation in this study did not emerge solely from positive descriptions of the profession. Instead, many students reported increased motivation despite becoming more aware of the difficulties associated with interpreting work. This finding suggests that authentic portrayals of professional challenges may be more effective than idealized representations in fostering sustainable motivation. When students understand both the rewards and demands of a profession, they are better positioned to develop realistic expectations and long-term commitment. Such realism can contribute to stronger persistence when encountering future learning difficulties.

The findings also indicate that students valued the opportunity to engage with an individual who actively works in the language services industry. Direct interaction with practitioners can reduce the perceived distance between academic study and professional employment (Gauld & Andersen, 2023). Rather than viewing interpreting as an abstract academic subject, students begin to recognise it as a real career option with practical applications. This transformation in perspective may increase the perceived relevance of classroom activities and encourage greater engagement with course content.

Another important implication concerns self-efficacy. Although several participants acknowledged weaknesses in their current abilities, many simultaneously expressed confidence that improvement was achievable through practice and dedication. Such responses suggest that the guest lecture fostered a growth-oriented perspective in which competence is viewed as developable rather than fixed. Educational research has consistently demonstrated that students who possess stronger self-efficacy are more likely to invest effort, persist through challenges, and achieve higher levels of performance (Liu et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the reflections demonstrate that career awareness and motivation are closely interconnected. Students who gained clearer understanding of professional expectations also appeared more motivated to pursue relevant skill development. Awareness of industry requirements may encourage learners to engage more seriously with interpreting exercises, language learning activities, and professional preparation

opportunities (Pym, 2024). Consequently, guest lectures can function not only as informational events but also as catalysts for increased academic engagement.

The findings additionally support broader discussions regarding employability in higher education. Universities increasingly emphasize the importance of preparing graduates for professional environments through authentic learning experiences. Practitioner involvement represents one strategy for enhancing employability by exposing students to workplace realities, industry expectations, and professional networks (Alhazmi et al., 2024). The positive outcomes observed in this study suggest that guest lectures can contribute meaningfully to this objective by helping students align academic learning with future career aspirations.

Overall, the motivational impact of the guest lecture extends beyond temporary enthusiasm. The reflections indicate the emergence of deeper career awareness, stronger professional commitment, and greater appreciation of the competencies required for success. These outcomes suggest that sustained collaboration between academic institutions and language professionals may provide substantial benefits for interpreter education programmes seeking to prepare students for increasingly complex multilingual communication environments.

Overall, the guest lecture served as an effective bridge between classroom instruction and professional practice. The experience enabled students to gain practical insights, develop a stronger appreciation of professional ethics, and envision potential career pathways in translation and interpreting. The findings demonstrate the value of practitioner involvement in interpreter education and highlight the potential of guest lectures as experiential learning opportunities that complement traditional classroom teaching.

CONCLUSION

This study explored students' reflections on a guest lecture delivered by a professional translator and interpreter from Balai Bahasa Southeast Sulawesi in an undergraduate Interpreting B course. The findings revealed that the experience contributed significantly to students' understanding of the interpreting profession.

Three major themes emerged from the analysis. First, students gained valuable practical insights into real-world interpreting challenges, including the importance of concentration, rapid decision-making, contextual understanding, and cultural awareness. Second, students developed a stronger appreciation of continuous learning, professional ethics, and intercultural competence as essential components of professional interpreting. Third, the guest lecture strengthened students' motivation to pursue careers in translation and interpreting while simultaneously helping them develop realistic expectations regarding the profession's demands and responsibilities. The integration of participant reflections demonstrated that the guest lecture functioned as more than a supplementary classroom activity. It provided an authentic learning experience that connected theoretical instruction with professional realities, allowing students to better understand the competencies required in actual interpreting practice. The findings support the inclusion of practitioner-led activities in interpreter education as a means of strengthening students' professional awareness, career readiness, and motivation for lifelong learning.

Future studies may involve larger participant groups across multiple institutions and use mixed-method approaches to examine how professional engagement activities influence interpreting competence development over time. Such research could provide further evidence regarding the long-term educational impact of guest lectures and other experiential learning initiatives in translator and interpreter training programmes.

An additional implication of this study is the importance of creating more opportunities for meaningful interaction between students and language industry professionals throughout interpreter education programmes. While classroom instruction remains essential for developing theoretical knowledge and foundational interpreting skills, direct engagement with practitioners can provide perspectives that are often difficult to obtain through textbooks and classroom simulations alone. The guest lecture enabled students to gain insights into the realities of professional practice, including the challenges, responsibilities, and expectations associated with interpreting work. Such exposure may help learners make more informed decisions regarding

their future careers and encourage them to take greater responsibility for their own professional development. Furthermore, the positive responses observed in this study suggest that even a single practitioner-led session can generate valuable learning outcomes related to motivation, professional awareness, and reflective thinking. Therefore, higher education institutions may consider integrating guest lectures, professional workshops, industry partnerships, and similar

experiential learning activities more systematically within translation and interpreting curricula. By strengthening connections between academic learning and professional practice, interpreter education programmes can better prepare students to meet the evolving demands of multilingual and intercultural communication in an increasingly globalised world.

REFERENCES

- Albl-Mikasa, M. (2013). Developing and cultivating expert interpreter competence. *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, 18, 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.21256/zhaw-4081>
- Alhazmi, M., Alshammari, A., Alenezi, N., et al. (2024). *University-industry collaboration for academic success and employability: A connectivist perspective*. *Education Sciences*, 14(4), 387. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14040387>
- Alisya, H. N., & Rusdin, R. F. (2025). *Professional development in the field of interpreting* [Working paper]. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5773923>
- Aljarelah, A. K. (2024). Language and international communication: The impact of language on international understanding and diplomatic relations. *The American Journal of Social Science and Education Innovations*, 6(6), 144–175. <https://doi.org/10.37547/tajssei/Volume06Issue06-23>
- Bandura, A. (2023). Cultivate self-efficacy for personal and organizational effectiveness. In E. A. Locke & C. Pearce (Eds.), *Principles of organizational behavior* (pp. 113–135). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394320769.ch6>
- Bondarchuk, J., Dvorianchykova, S., Yuhan, N., & Holovenko, K. (2025). Strategic approaches: Practical applications of English communication skills in various real-life scenarios. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 7(3), e2025100. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2025100>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Choi, J. (2008). L2 proficiency as predictor of aptitude for interpreting: An empirical study. *Interpreting*, 10(1), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.10.1.02cho>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dewantara, M. H., Nimri, R., & Yang, E. (2025). Unlocking industry insights: Enhancing education through incorporating industry interviews in assessments. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 25(3), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2025.2529270>
- Fitria, T. N. (2024). The roles of translators and interpreters: Opportunities and challenges in translation and interpreting activity. *Jurnal Humaya: Jurnal Hukum, Humaniora, Masyarakat, dan Budaya*, 4(1), 13–31. <https://doi.org/10.33830/humaya.v4i1.7775>
- Gamage, K. A. A., Gamage, A., & Dehideniya, S. C. P. (2022). Online and hybrid teaching and learning: Enhance effective student engagement and experience. *Education*

- Sciences, 12(10), 651.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci1210065>
- Gauld, R., & Andersen, M. L. (2023). *From near and far: On the role of distance in changing professional services. Research Policy*, 52(8), Article 104829. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2023.104829>
- Gile, D. (2009). Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training (2nd ed.). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.8>
- Greere, A. (2024). Ethical awareness and professional responsibility: Educating translators to tackle diversifying industry dilemmas. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 18(1), 77–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2023.2300251>
- Gudeta, D. (2022). *Professional development through reflective practice: The case of Addis Ababa secondary school EFL in-service teachers. Cogent Education*, 9(1), Article 2030076. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2030076>
- Henttonen, K., Kianto, A., & Ritala, P. (2016). Professional tacit knowledge sharing in practice: Agency, boundaries and commitment. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(3), 446–461. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-05-2015-0174>
- Hwang, G.-J., Chang, C.-C., & Chien, S.-Y. (2022). A motivational model-based virtual reality approach to prompting learners' sense of presence, learning achievements, and higher-order thinking in professional safety training. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 53(5), 1343–1360. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13196>
- Hoinbala, F. R., Nelloe, M. K., Jaga, M. R., Ortalisje, D. E., & Talan, Y. M. (2025). An investigation of tertiary level EFL teachers' language assessment literacy in Indonesia. *International Journal of Language Testing*, 15(2), 120–133. <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijlt.2025.505680.1417>
- Ismatullayeva, G. (2024). *Developing the professional skills of translators based on a competency-based approach. International Journal of Language and Education Research*, 6(2), 45–52.
- Khamdamovna, K. S. (2025). *Enhancing professional readiness in vocational education through an integrative approach aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ASEAN Journal for Science Education*, 4(2), 143–154. <https://www.ejournal.bumipublikasinusantara.id/index.php/ajsed/article/view/705>
- Khasinah, S. (2024). Strengthen the community by promoting multilingualism and cultural diversity. *Jurnal Kolaborasi Akademika*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.26811/v490yq53>
- Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (2nd ed.). Pearson.
- Leibovitch, Y. M., Beencke, A., Ellerton, P. J., McBrien, C., Robinson-Taylor, C.-L., & Brown, D. J. (2025). Teachers' (evolving) beliefs about critical thinking education during professional learning: A multi-case study. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 56, 101725. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2024.101725>
- Liu, Y., Zhang, X., Wang, J., et al. (2024). *The effect of professional identity on nursing academic achievement: The chain mediating effect of general self-efficacy and learning engagement. BMC Nursing*, 23, Article 189. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-024-01869-5>
- Manning, K. D., Ryan, S. D., Khan, M. A., et al. (2023). *The intersection of professional identity formation, bias, and marginalized identities. The American Journal of Medicine*, 136(11), 1155–1160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2023.07.018>
- Mukhalalati, B., Aly, A., Yakti, O., Elshami, S., Daud, A., Awaisu, A., Sethi, A., El-Awaisi, A., Stewart, D., Abu-Hijleh, M.

- F., & Austin, Z. (2024). Examining the perception of undergraduate health professional students of their learning environment, learning experience and professional identity development: A mixed-methods study. *BMC Medical Education*, 24(1), 886. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-05875-4>
- Mutanga, M. B., Piyose, P. X., & Ndovela, S. (2023). *Factors affecting career preferences and pathways: Insights from IT students*. *Journal of Information Systems and Informatics*, 5(3), 1111–1122. <https://doi.org/10.51519/journalisi.v5i3.556>
- Mzangwa, S. T. (2024). Strategies for effective application of situated learning in the teaching learning process. *Central Asian Journal of Literature, Philosophy and Culture*, 5(12), 1–8.
- Pöchhacker, F. (2016). *Introducing interpreting studies* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315649573>
- Pym, A. (2024). *Preparing students for the multilingual world: The case for integrating translation and interpreting into English language education curricula*. *Languages*, 9(8), 245. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9080245>
- Özkaya Marangoz, E. (2023). New approaches in interpreter training: Enhancing competence and adaptation. *International Journal of Language Academy*, 11(4), 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.29228/ijla.72053>
- Sawyer, D. B. (2004). *Fundamental aspects of interpreter education*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.47>
- Setiawan, A., & Budiastuti, R. E. (2025). *Promoting real-world interpreting skills through authentic assessment in tertiary education*. *English Focus: Journal of English Language Education*, 9(1), 48–61. <https://doi.org/10.24905/efj.v9i1.199>
- Sharma, S. (2022). *Continuous professional development of teachers: A policy perspective*. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Modern Science and Technology*, 1(3), 34–45. <https://doi.org/10.59828/ijrmst.v1i3.77>
- Setton, R., & Dawrant, A. (2016). *Conference interpreting: A complete course*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.120>
- Wadensjö, C. (1998). *Interpreting as interaction*. Longman.
- Sophie, E. R. (2025). *Code of ethics for interpreters: A comparative analysis of different professional standards*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390979809_Code_of_Ethics_for_Interpreters_A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Different_Professional_Standards
- van Houten, M. (2023). *Professional tacit knowledge sharing in practice: Agency, boundaries, and commitment*. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 35(9), 197–217. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-02-2023-002>
- Zhu, H. (2014). Intercultural or not? Beyond celebration of cultural differences in miscommunication analysis. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 14(1), 122–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2013.866121>