

The Power of Inclusion: How One Student Sparked a Global Shift in School Communication



Challenge: Fostering Multilingual Engagement in a Diverse Community

The United Nations International School (UNIS) Hanoi is one of the most diverse schools in Asia, with over 1,100 students and 300 staff representing more than 65 nationalities. This global mix is a defining strength of the school. It creates a vibrant learning environment where global citizenship isn't just taught but lived every day.

To ensure this rich diversity translates into full community engagement, the school recognized the complex challenge of language. While English is the language of instruction, it is not the first language for some in the school community, including parents. For family members who don't speak English fluently, or who struggle with the pace and complexity of spoken presentations, language can present a barrier to full participation. This impacts spaces where connection and communication are most vital, including school events and parent-teacher meetings.

The limitations of language became deeply personal during one student's Personal Project presentation. Dat Nguyen had spent weeks preparing a talk he was proud of, and during the event, the audience laughed at just the right moment, a sign that their story had connected. But afterward, his grandmother asked what made everyone laugh because she couldn't understand what he had said.

Nguyen's joy gave way to sadness, not because his message had fallen flat, but because someone he cared about couldn't fully be part of it. "It felt like I was sharing something important with everyone, except the person I really wanted to hear it. That moment made me wish we had a way for all families to feel included, even if they didn't speak English," Nguyen shared.



Solution: Real-Time Translation That Welcomes Every Family into School Life

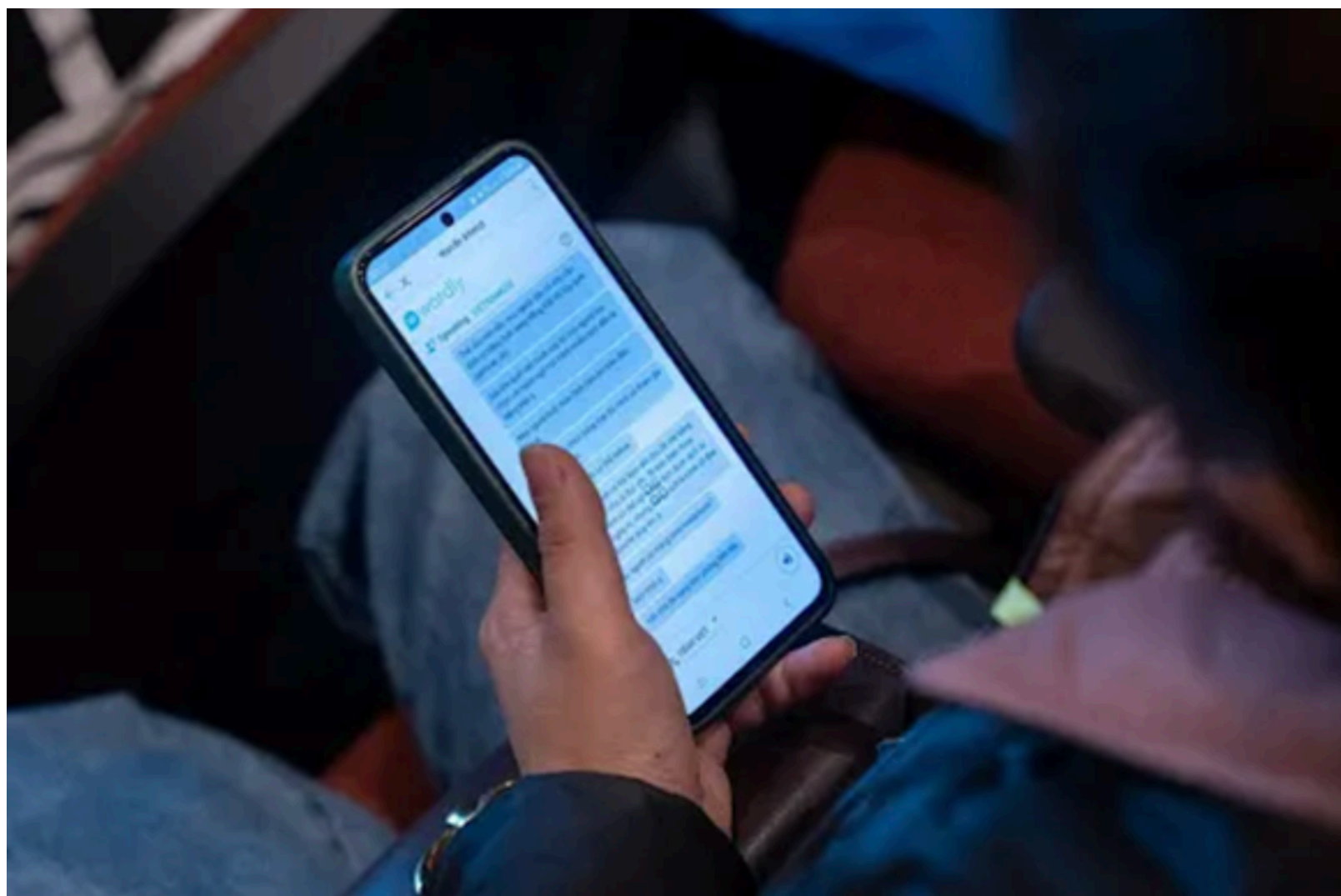
That small but powerful experience sparked something bigger. What started as one student's wish for their family became a movement toward inclusion for the entire school.

UNIS Hanoi partnered with Wordly, the pioneer in real-time AI translation and captioning, to create an inclusive communication experience for families of all the school's students, regardless of language background.

With Wordly, the school was able to:

- Offer live translation in Vietnamese plus dozens of other languages to allow every parent to participate in school activities in their preferred language alongside their student.
- Eliminate the need for cost-prohibitive and logistically challenging interpreters or pre-scripted translations to institute a scalable, cost-effective and "always available" language access solution.
- Allow parents to access translation directly from their smartphones or laptops, with no downloads required.
- Provide captions in addition to audio for broader access, along with transcripts for post event follow-up.

Because Wordly doesn't require presenters to slow down or alter their speech, it seamlessly fits into the flow of school events. Whether it was orientation sessions, parent coffees, or student exhibitions, families could now follow along in real time and engage with confidence.



Results: More than 90% of Parents Felt More Connected

Offering real-time translation with Wordly not only made parent experiences more enjoyable but also strengthened connection and trust within a diverse community. Parents who may have previously been hesitant to speak up or ask questions now began engaging more confidently.

“The introduction of AI translation has transformed how we communicate with our diverse school community,” said Aisling O’Brien, Director of Advancement at UNIS Hanoi, who spearheaded the initiative. “In the first year alone, more than 40 events - including orientation, community meetings, workshops, and parent coffees - successfully employed Wordly, enabling over 1,700 individual participants to access school events in their preferred language.”

Events that had once felt inaccessible suddenly became welcoming and inclusive. One parent workshop that typically drew 15 attendees grew to over 150. A training session for families topped 200 participants. Parents began attending orientation sessions, coffee mornings, and student showcases in greater numbers, not out of obligation, but out of excitement.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

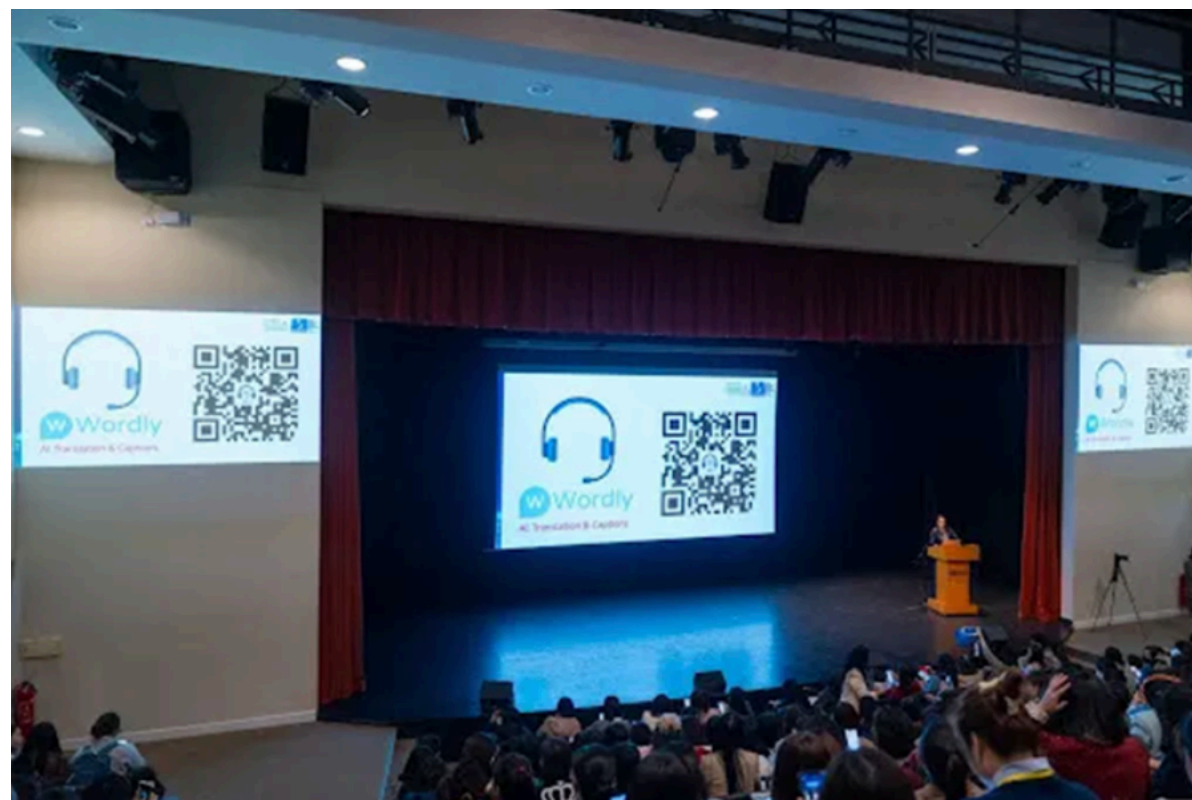
- 75% of parents said the tool was “very clear and easy to use”.
- More than 90% said it helped them feel more included and connected.

One parent shared, “For the first time, I’m hearing information I’ve never had access to before. I could understand, react, and be part of the moment, just like everyone else.”

By removing language as a barrier, Wordly helped UNIS Hanoi create something deeper: a sense of shared experience, belonging, and community.

“This work was about living our values of inclusion and access,” continued O’Brien. “We know that when families feel seen and heard, they engage more deeply. Wordly provided a way to turn a moment of separation into a lasting change for our whole community.”

When exploring AI translation options, UNIS Hanoi prioritized data privacy and compliance with international standards SOC 2, GDPR, and COPPA frameworks. Wordly met these requirements and provides a secure solution that aligns with the school’s commitment to protecting personal information.



Future: A Model for Other Schools in Bringing a Global Community Closer

UNIS Hanoi was the first school in Asia to roll out Wordly real-time AI translation on a large scale. Their success has been shared at major educational conferences, including the EARCOS Leadership Conference and ISS EDU Expo, inspiring other international schools to adopt similar solutions.

“We didn’t expect the ripple effect to be this strong,” reflected O’Brien. “But it’s clear that schools everywhere are grappling with the same challenges. Wordly gives them a practical, people-centered solution.”

Looking ahead, UNIS Hanoi is focused on:

- Expanding use of AI translation to more classrooms and events.
- Building custom translation glossaries for school-specific terminology.
- Training staff and students on best practices for multilingual inclusion.
- Refining real-time accuracy by encouraging feedback from families.

As one of the most diverse international schools in Asia, UNIS Hanoi is now a model for how technology can bring a global community closer together. “We want every family to feel they belong and can take part fully in school life,” said Dr. Elizabeth Gale, Head of School at UNIS Hanoi. “Making our communication more accessible is one important way we’re doing that.”

What began as one student's desire to include their grandmother has grown into a movement for language equity. This proves that when schools remove language barriers, the entire community benefits. "As the oldest, largest, most-diverse, non-profit international school in Vietnam, it's our responsibility to find ways for every family to access information and feel part of the community," said Dr. Gale. "This work is one example of how we're putting that commitment into practice."



About UNIS Hanoi

UNIS Hanoi is one of only two United Nations schools in the world, offering the full International Baccalaureate continuum to a diverse student body representing over 65 nationalities. A pioneer in international education in Vietnam, UNIS Hanoi combines academic excellence with a mission-driven ethos to inspire lifelong learners who will create a more peaceful and sustainable world.

About Wordly

Wordly is the pioneer and leader in AI translation, providing a high-quality, secure, easy-to-use, and affordable live AI translation and caption solution for communicating across multiple languages. Wordly translates dozens of languages in real-time, making in-person and virtual meetings and events more inclusive, accessible, and engaging. Its SaaS platform meets enterprise-grade security & privacy standards and eliminates the need for human interpreters or special equipment. Millions of users across thousands of organizations - including corporate, nonprofit, government, education, and religious sectors - trust Wordly for their multilingual communication needs.

For more information, visit www.wordly.ai.