

Challenges in Simultaneous Interpreting of Political Speeches from English into Arabic: A Mixed-Methods Study among Third- and Fourth-Year Translation Students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University

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تحديات الترجمة الفورية للخطاب السياسي من الإنجليزية إلى العربية: دراسة منهجية مختلطة لطلاب الترجمة بجامعة عمر المختار

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Abstract:

This study investigates the challenges that undergraduate translation students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University encounter during the simultaneous interpreting of political speeches from English into Arabic. It also compares the performance of third-year and fourth-year students during a real-time interpreting task. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach involving 30 students (17 third-year and 13 fourth-year students) and combined quantitative error analysis with qualitative examination of interpreting difficulties. Each student listened individually, on their own, through their own speaker to a recorded political speech by former British Prime Minister Theresa May and interpreted it orally into Arabic. Their interpretations were audiorecorded and analyzed using Daniel Gile's Effort Model. The quantitative analysis focused on the frequency of interpreting errors, while the qualitative analysis examined common difficulties such as omissions, literal translation, hesitation, and prolonged pauses. The findings showed that socio-political metaphors and culture-specific expressions were the most challenging parts of the speech. Although both groups experienced interpreting difficulties, fourth-year students generally performed better than third-year students, producing fewer errors and showing greater ability to cope with the cognitive demands of simultaneous interpreting. However, some expressions, particularly culture-bound metaphors, remained difficult for students at both academic levels. The study concludes that academic progression has a positive effect on interpreting performance, but additional practical training is still needed. It recommends introducing specialized interpreting practice, increasing students' exposure to authentic political speeches, and strengthening training in strategies that help manage cognitive load during simultaneous interpreting.

Keywords: Simultaneous Interpreting, Political Discourse, Translation Students, Gile's Effort Model, Cognitive Load.

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب مرحلة البكالوريوس بقسم الترجمة بجامعة عمر المختار عند الترجمة الفورية للخطابات السياسية من اللغة الإنجليزية إلى اللغة العربية. كما تعقد الدراسة مقارنة بين أداء طلاب

السنة الثالثة وطلاب السنة الرابعة أثناء تنفيذ مهمة ترجمة فورية في الوقت الحقيقي. اعتمد البحث المنهج المختلط، واشتملت العينة على (30) طالباً وطالبة (منهم 17 من طلاب السنة الثالثة و13 من طلاب السنة الرابعة)، حيث جمعت الدراسة بين التحليل الكمي للأخطاء والفحص النوعي لصعوبات الترجمة الفورية. وفي إطار التجربة، استمع كل طالب بشكل فردي بمفرده بواسطة مكبر صوت خاص به إلى خطاب سياسي مسجل لرئيسة الوزراء البريطانية السابقة تيريزا ماي، وقام الطلاب بترجمته شفهاً إلى اللغة العربية بصورة فورية. وقد جرى تسجيل مخرجاتهم الترجمة صوتياً ثم تحليلها في ضوء "نموذج الجهد" لدانيال جيل. ركز التحليل الكمي على رصد وتحديد تكرارات ونسب أخطاء الترجمة، في حين تناول التحليل النوعي أكثر الصعوبات شيوعاً مثل: الحذف، والترجمة الحرفية، والتردد، وطول فترات التوقف. وأظهرت النتائج أن الاستعارات السياسية والاجتماعية والتعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة شكلت الأجزاء الأكثر صعوبة في الخطاب. ورغم أن كلتا المجموعتين واجهتا صعوبات في الترجمة، إلا أن طلاب السنة الرابعة حققوا أداءً أفضل بصورة عامة من طلاب السنة الثالثة؛ حيث سجلوا نسباً أقل من الأخطاء، وأظهروا قدرة أكبر على التعامل مع المتطلبات المعرفية والذهنية للترجمة الفورية. ومع ذلك، ظلت بعض التعبيرات — ولا سيما الاستعارات ذات الطابع الثقافي، تمثل تحدياً ملموساً للطلاب في كلا المستويين الأكاديميين. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن التدرج الأكاديمي يسهم إيجابياً في تحسين أداء الترجمة الفورية، إلا أن برامج إعداد المترجمين ما زالت بحاجة إلى مزيد من التدريب العملي. وتوصي الدراسة بإدراج ممارسات عملية متخصصة في الترجمة الفورية، وزيادة تعريض الطلاب للخطابات السياسية الأصلية، إلى جانب تكثيف التدريب على الاستراتيجيات المعرفية التي تساعد على إدارة العبء الذهني والضغط المعرفي المصاحب لعملية الترجمة الفورية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة الفورية، الخطاب السياسي، طلاب الترجمة، نموذج الجهد لدانيال جيل، العبء المعرفي.

Introduction :

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) is considered one of the most demanding forms of translation because it requires interpreters to listen to the source message, analyze meaning, retain information, and produce the target message almost simultaneously. Unlike written translation, simultaneous interpreting provides limited opportunities for revision or correction, making it a highly complex activity that requires advanced linguistic competence, background knowledge, concentration, and rapid decision-making skills.

Political speeches represent a particularly challenging genre for student interpreters because they frequently include persuasive language, political terminology, rhetorical devices, historical references, and culture-specific expressions (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997). Interpreters are required not only to understand the linguistic content of the speech but also to recognize its political intentions and cultural implications. Failure to interpret these elements appropriately may result in omissions, literal translations, hesitation, or inaccurate reformulation of meaning.

Daniel Gile's Effort Model provides an important theoretical framework for understanding the cognitive challenges involved in simultaneous interpreting (Gile, 1995, 2009). According to this model, interpreters must coordinate several cognitive efforts simultaneously, including listening and analysis, memory, speech production, and coordination. When the processing demands of the task exceed the interpreter's available cognitive capacity, interpreting performance may be negatively affected, leading to different types of errors (Seeber, 2011; Shlesinger, 2000).

In the context of translation education in Libya, undergraduate students receive considerable training in written translation; however, practical opportunities for simultaneous interpreting remain relatively limited. Consequently, many students encounter difficulties when required to interpret authentic speeches under real-time conditions. These difficulties become more noticeable when speeches contain unfamiliar political concepts, specialized terminology, and culture-bound expressions that require immediate comprehension and appropriate reformulation.

Although previous research has examined simultaneous interpreting from cognitive and linguistic perspectives (Moser-Mercer, 1997; Pöchhacker, 2016; Setton, 1999), limited attention has been given to the performance of Libyan undergraduate translation students during authentic political interpreting tasks. In particular, there is insufficient empirical research comparing the interpreting performance of students at different academic levels within the same educational setting (Kalina, 2000; Tiselius, 2013). Therefore, this study investigates the challenges encountered by third-year and fourth-year translation students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University while simultaneously interpreting a recorded political speech from English into Arabic. It also compares the performance of the two groups by examining the frequency and types of interpreting errors. The study aims to provide insights that may contribute to improving interpreter training practices and developing translation curricula in Libyan universities (Jones, 2002; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989).

Statement of the Problem:

Simultaneous interpreting is one of the most challenging skills that translation students are expected to develop because it requires the simultaneous management of comprehension, memory, and speech production (Gile, 2009; Riccardi, 2005). These challenges become more complex when students

interpret political speeches that contain specialized terminology, cultural references, historical information, and metaphorical expressions (Fairclough, 1995). Within the Translation Division at Omar Al-Mukhtar University, students receive training in various translation skills; however, opportunities for systematic practice in simultaneous interpreting remain limited. As a result, students may experience difficulties when interpreting authentic political speeches under real-time conditions. Such difficulties may appear in the form of omissions, hesitation, literal translation, inaccurate terminology choices, and incomplete rendering of meaning.

Although interpreting competence is expected to develop with increased academic experience and training (Kalina, 2000; Tiselius, 2013), differences between students at different academic levels within the Libyan higher education context require further empirical investigation. It remains unclear to what extent fourth-year students outperform third-year students when managing the cognitive load of authentic political interpreting tasks (Seeber, 2011). Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the main linguistic, cultural, and cognitive challenges faced by third-year and fourth-year translation students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University, and to compare their performance using authentic, real-time interpreting data.

Research Questions

This paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main linguistic, cultural, and cognitive challenges encountered by third-year and fourth-year translation students during the simultaneous interpreting of political speeches from English into Arabic?
2. What are the most frequent types of interpreting errors produced by students during the interpreting task?
3. Are there differences in interpreting performance between third-year and fourth-year translation students in terms of error frequency and types?
4. How can Daniel Gile's Effort Model explain the interpreting difficulties experienced by the students?
5. What training practices may help students improve their simultaneous interpreting performance?

Research Hypothesis:

It is hypothesized that fourth-year translation students will perform significantly better than third-year students in simultaneous interpreting of political speeches from English into Arabic, producing fewer interpreting errors due to their greater academic experience and training.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because it provides empirical evidence about the challenges experienced by Libyan undergraduate translation students during simultaneous interpreting of authentic political speeches. Unlike studies that focus mainly on theoretical aspects of interpreting, this research examines students' actual performance during a real-time interpreting task.

The findings may help translation instructors and curriculum designers identify the areas in which students experience the greatest difficulties, particularly in relation to cognitive load, political terminology, cultural expressions, and interpreting strategies (Riccardi, 2005; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989). Furthermore, the study may contribute to improving interpreter-training practices by encouraging the use of authentic political materials, classroom interpreting activities, and strategies for managing cognitive demands during simultaneous interpreting (Jones, 2002; Seeber, 2011). The study also provides a foundation for future research on simultaneous interpreting in Libyan universities and similar educational contexts where practical interpreter training opportunities remain limited.

Limitations of the Study

This research was limited to a sample of 30 undergraduate translation students from Omar Al-Mukhtar University. The findings may therefore not be generalizable to all translation students in Libya. In addition, the interpreting task was conducted in a regular classroom rather than a professional interpreting laboratory due to the lack of specialized facilities.

Literature Review Simultaneous Interpreting and Its Cognitive Demands:

Simultaneous interpreting is widely regarded as one of the most cognitively demanding activities in translation studies because it requires interpreters to perform multiple mental operations within a highly restricted period of time (Moser-Mercer, 1997; Pöchhacker, 2016). Unlike written translation, where translators can revise, consult references, and modify their output, simultaneous interpreters must process the source message and produce the target-language version almost concurrently. Previous research in interpreting studies has emphasized that successful simultaneous interpreting depends on the interaction of several abilities, including bilingual competence, attention management, working memory, and rapid decision-making (Shlesinger, 2000; Tiselius, 2013). The interpreter is required to continuously coordinate comprehension and production processes while maintaining accuracy, fluency, and coherence.

For student interpreters, these cognitive requirements represent significant challenges, particularly when dealing with unfamiliar terminology, complex syntactic structures, or information-dense discourse (Kalina, 2000). Limited practical experience may increase cognitive pressure and negatively affect performance, resulting in problems such as omissions, hesitation, inappropriate lexical choices, and incomplete message transfer.

The cognitive complexity of simultaneous interpreting has been explained through several theoretical approaches, among which Gile's Effort Model remains one of the most influential frameworks (Gile, 1995, 2009; Setton, 1999). The model provides an explanation of how limited cognitive resources are distributed during interpreting and why performance difficulties may occur when processing demands exceed available capacity. In the context of the present study, this perspective is particularly relevant because political speeches combine linguistic complexity with conceptual and cultural challenges. Therefore, examining students' interpreting errors through a cognitive perspective may provide a clearer understanding of the difficulties encountered by undergraduate interpreters (Seeber, 2011).

Political Discourse as a Challenge for Student Interpreters:

Political discourse represents one of the most challenging types of discourse for interpreters because it combines linguistic complexity with ideological, cultural, and rhetorical dimensions (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997). Political speeches are not limited to the transmission of information; they are also used to persuade audiences, construct identities, justify decisions, and communicate particular political positions. One of the main difficulties associated with interpreting political discourse is the frequent use of specialized terminology, institutional references, historical events, and metaphorical expressions. Such elements require interpreters to possess not only advanced linguistic competence but also sufficient background knowledge of political contexts. Without this knowledge, interpreters may understand the literal meaning of an expression while failing to convey its intended political significance.

Culture-specific expressions represent another major challenge in political interpreting. These expressions are often closely connected to the social and historical context of the source language community and may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Consequently, student interpreters may resort to literal translation, which can result in inaccurate or unnatural interpretations. In addition, political speeches frequently contain persuasive and rhetorical devices, including metaphors and symbolic language. These devices require interpreters to move beyond word-level processing and identify the intended meaning within the wider political context. Failure to achieve this may affect the accuracy and effectiveness of the interpreted message. The political speech selected for the present study (May, 2019) reflects these challenges, as it includes references to British political issues, institutional terms, and culture-bound expressions related to events such as Brexit and domestic political debates. Therefore, analyzing students' performance while interpreting such material provides valuable insight into the linguistic and cultural difficulties faced by undergraduate interpreters.

Gile's Effort Model and Interpreting Difficulties:

Among the theoretical frameworks developed to explain the cognitive processes involved in interpreting, Daniel Gile's Effort Model is considered one of the most influential models in interpreting studies (Gile, 1995, 2009; Pöhhacker, 2016). The model provides an explanation of why interpreters may experience performance difficulties even when they possess sufficient linguistic knowledge. According to Gile (1995, 2009), simultaneous interpreting requires the coordination of several limited cognitive efforts, including the Listening and Analysis Effort, Memory Effort, Production Effort, and Coordination Effort. The Listening and Analysis Effort involves receiving and understanding the incoming message, while the Memory Effort refers to retaining information until it can be accurately reproduced. The Production Effort concerns the formulation of the target-language message, whereas the Coordination Effort involves managing all interpreting processes simultaneously.

The model assumes that interpreters have limited cognitive resources (Seeber, 2011; Shlesinger, 2000). When the total processing demands required by the interpreting task exceed the interpreter's available capacity, performance problems are likely to occur. These problems may appear in the form of omissions, hesitation, pauses, inaccurate terminology choices, and incomplete transfer of meaning. Gile's Effort Model is particularly relevant to student interpreters because they are still developing the ability to allocate cognitive resources efficiently (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989; Tiselius, 2013). Unlike experienced interpreters, students may devote excessive attention to individual words or unfamiliar expressions, leaving insufficient cognitive capacity for memory management and speech production. Political speeches may increase this cognitive pressure because they often contain high information density, specialized terminology, and culture-specific references. When students encounter unfamiliar political concepts or metaphorical expressions, additional processing effort is required to understand and reformulate the message, which may negatively affect the continuity and accuracy of interpretation. Therefore, the present study adopts Gile's Effort Model as a theoretical framework for interpreting the difficulties observed among third-year and fourth-year translation students.

Common Errors in Student Simultaneous Interpreting

Research on student interpreters has identified several recurring difficulties that affect the quality of simultaneous interpreting performance (Jones, 2002; Kalina, 2000; Riccardi, 2005). These difficulties are not limited to linguistic problems; rather, they often reflect the complex interaction between cognitive processing, memory limitations, and the pressure of real-time communication (Moser-Mercer, 1997; Setton, 1999). One of the most frequently observed problems is omission. Omissions occur when interpreters fail to transfer parts of the source message into the target language. In simultaneous interpreting, omissions may result from limited working memory capacity, high information density, or the need to prioritize certain parts of the message when cognitive resources become insufficient (Shlesinger, 2000).

Another common difficulty is literal translation, particularly when students encounter metaphorical expressions or culture-specific references. Beginner and intermediate interpreters may focus on the surface meaning of individual words instead of interpreting the intended meaning within its wider context. This approach may lead to inaccurate or unnatural target-language output. Hesitation and prolonged pauses are also widely reported among student interpreters. These features often indicate difficulties in lexical retrieval, message comprehension, or decision-making under time pressure (Riccardi, 2005). While short pauses may represent normal processing behavior, frequent or extended pauses can interrupt the flow of interpretation and result in missing subsequent information. Terminology-related problems represent another important challenge, especially in specialized fields such as politics. Students may experience difficulty retrieving appropriate equivalents for institutional terms, political concepts, or unfamiliar expressions. As a result, they may use inaccurate terms, general expressions, or even retain source-language words in their interpretation. Incomplete or inaccurate rendering of meaning may occur when students successfully understand parts of the message but fail to reproduce the complete intended meaning. This problem is particularly common in speeches containing complex arguments, rhetorical structures, or culturally embedded references. The present study adopts these categories of interpreting difficulties as an analytical framework for examining students' performances.

Methodology Research Approach and Design

This Paper employed a mixed-methods research approach to investigate the challenges encountered by undergraduate translation students during simultaneous interpreting of political speeches from English into Arabic. The adoption of a mixed-methods design was considered appropriate because interpreting performance involves both measurable aspects and qualitative characteristics that cannot be fully understood through numerical data alone. The quantitative component of the study focused on identifying and calculating the frequency of interpreting errors produced by the students. This analysis provided measurable evidence regarding differences in performance between third-year and fourth-year students. The qualitative component examined the nature of students' interpreting difficulties through the analysis of problematic segments, including omissions, literal translations, hesitation, terminology problems, and inaccurate rendering of political and culture-specific expressions.

The study was guided by Daniel Gile's Effort Model (Gile, 1995, 2009), which provides a theoretical explanation of the cognitive demands involved in simultaneous interpreting. The model was used to interpret how the interaction between listening, memory, production, and coordination efforts may influence students' performance under real-time conditions. By combining quantitative error analysis with qualitative examination of interpreting difficulties, the research design provides a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by student interpreters within the selected educational context.

Participants

The students of this study were 30 undergraduates enrolled in the Translation Division, Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts, Omar Al-Mukhtar University, Al-Bayda, Libya. The sample consisted of two academic groups:

- 17 third-year translation students.
- 13 fourth-year translation students.

The students were selected because they represented two different stages of academic development within the translation programme. Comparing these two groups allowed the study to examine whether differences in academic experience were associated with variations in simultaneous interpreting performance. The study employed purposive sampling, as the students were selected based on their availability and their enrolment in the relevant academic levels. All students had received previous translation instruction as part of their undergraduate programme. Before data collection, students were informed about the purpose of the study and the procedure of the interpreting task. The collected recordings were used only for research purposes.

Research Material:

The research material consisted of a recorded political speech delivered by Theresa May (May, 2019), the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, during her resignation announcement in May 2019. The speech was selected because political speeches represent a complex genre of discourse that requires interpreters to manage linguistic, cultural, and cognitive challenges simultaneously (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997). The selected speech contains a range of features commonly associated with political discourse, including specialized political terminology, institutional references, persuasive language, historical references, and culture-specific expressions. It also includes references to British political issues, particularly Brexit, which require background knowledge for accurate interpretation. The speech was presented to students in its original English form. Students were required to interpret the speech orally into Arabic while listening to the recorded audio simultaneously. Their performances were recorded and later analyzed according to the error categories established for the study.

Data Collection Procedure:

The data collection was conducted in a classroom at the Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts, Omar Al-Mukhtar University. Due to the absence of a specialized simultaneous interpreting laboratory equipped with interpreting booths and individual headsets, the recorded speech was played through individual speakers. Each student listened individually, on their own, through their own speaker. All students listened to the same audio input and were asked to interpret the speech orally from English into Arabic simultaneously. Students' interpreting performances were audio-recorded for later analysis. Although this setup did not provide the same technical conditions available in professional interpreting laboratories, it reflected the actual learning environment of the students and allowed the researcher to investigate students' performance under realistic educational conditions.

Data Analysis:

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative procedures in accordance with the mixed-methods design of the study. For the quantitative analysis, the recorded interpreting performances were examined to identify and classify the major types of interpreting errors produced by the students. The analysis focused on the following categories: Omissions, Literal translation, Incorrect terminology choices, Hesitation, Prolonged pauses, and Incomplete or inaccurate rendering of meaning. Each identified error was counted, and the frequency of occurrence was calculated for both third-year and fourth-year students. Percentages were then used to compare the distribution of interpreting difficulties between the two groups.

For the qualitative analysis, selected examples from students' interpretations were examined in order to explore the nature of the difficulties behind the identified errors. Particular attention was given to problematic segments involving political metaphors, culture-specific expressions, specialized terminology, and references requiring background knowledge. The interpretation of these difficulties was guided by Daniel Gile's Effort Model (Gile, 1995, 2009), particularly the interaction between listening and analysis, memory, speech production, and coordination efforts. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, all audio recordings were reviewed twice by the researcher. A predefined error-classification framework was applied consistently throughout the analysis.

Results and Findings General Performance of the Students:

The analysis of the recorded interpreting performances revealed that students experienced different levels of difficulty while interpreting the selected political speech from English into Arabic. The identified difficulties included omissions, hesitation, prolonged pauses, inaccurate terminology choices, literal translation, and incomplete rendering of meaning. These problems appeared in both groups; however, differences were observed in the frequency and distribution of errors between third-year and fourth-year students. Third-year students produced a higher number of interpreting difficulties across most error categories, whereas fourth-year students demonstrated lower frequencies of several error types.

Quantitative Analysis of Interpreting Errors:

The quantitative analysis focused on identifying and measuring the frequency of major interpreting errors produced by the students during the simultaneous interpreting task. The identified errors were categorized according to the predefined error classification framework adopted in this study.

Table (1): Frequency and Percentage of Interpreting Errors Between Groups

Error Category	Third-Year Students (n=17)	Percentage	Fourth-Year Students (n=13)	Percentage
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Hesitation and stress-related problems	14	82.3%	7	53.8%
Forgetting information	13	76.4%	5	38.5%
Omissions	13	76.4%	6	46.1%
Literal translation	12	70.5%	5	38.5%
Incorrect terminology choices	11	64.7%	4	30.7%
Prolonged pauses	10	58.8%	4	30.7%
Incomplete rendering of meaning	9	52.9%	3	23.0%

Interpretation of Table 1:

Table 1 presents the frequency of interpreting errors identified among third-year and fourth-year students. The results indicate that both groups experienced difficulties during the simultaneous interpreting task; however, the frequency of errors was generally higher among third-year students. Hesitation and stress-related problems represented the most frequent difficulty among third-year students, occurring among 82.3% of students. Forgetting information and omissions were also among the most common problems, affecting 76.4% of the third-year group.

In comparison, fourth-year students demonstrated lower frequencies across all error categories. Hesitation remained the most frequent difficulty among this group (53.8%), followed by omissions (46.1%) and forgetting information (38.5%). The results show that fourth-year students experienced fewer interpreting problems than third-year students. However, the occurrence of errors among fourth-year students indicates that simultaneous interpreting remains a challenging task even for advanced learners. Although descriptive statistics revealed noticeable differences between the two groups, the present study relied primarily on frequency counts and percentages because of the relatively small sample size. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to employ inferential statistical tests, such as the Chi-square test or Fisher's Exact Test, to determine whether these differences are statistically significant.

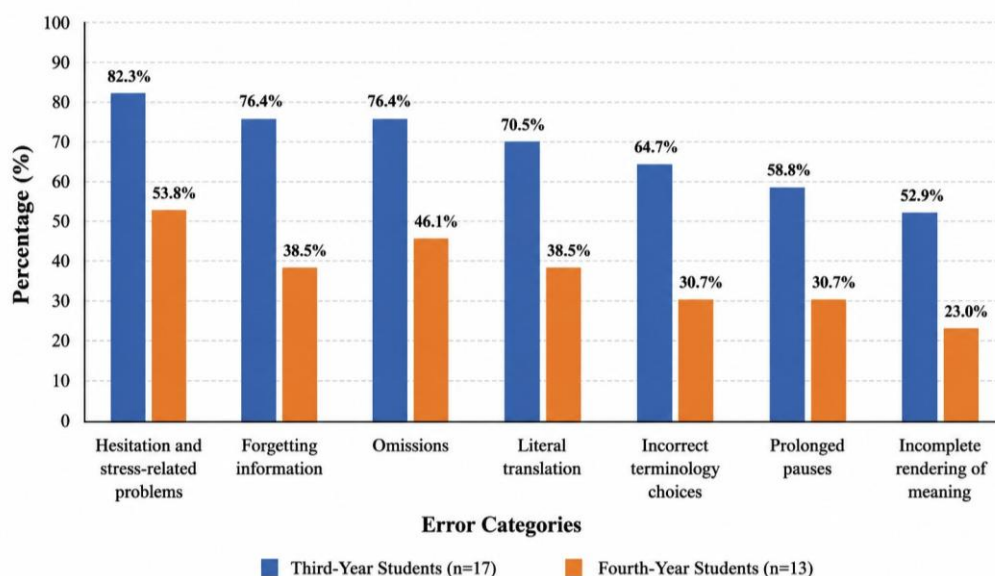


Figure (1): provides a visual representation confirming that third-year students recorded higher percentages across all error categories, whereas fourth-year students demonstrated lower frequencies of interpreting difficulties).

Qualitative Analysis of Interpreting Difficulties:

To gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive challenges experienced by the students, this section analyzes specific examples from the students' recorded interpretations. The analysis focuses on how the allocation of cognitive resources, as conceptualized in Gile's Effort

Model (Gile, 1995, 2009), influenced the students' performance when dealing with political metaphors and culture-bound expressions.

Example 1: Political Metaphor ("helping first-time buyers onto the housing ladder")

- **Source Text (ST):** "...and helping first-time buyers onto the housing ladder, so young people can enjoy the opportunities..."
- **Target Text (TT) - Third-Year Student (Typical Error):** "... ومساعدة المشترين لأول مرة على سلم السكن..." (Literal translation / Hesitation).
- **Target Text (TT) - Fourth-Year Student (Atypical/Better Rendering):** "... ومساعدة المشترين الجدد في ... الحصول على منازلهم الأولى" (Paraphrasing / Smooth delivery).
- **Analysis in Light of Gile's Model:** The expression "the housing ladder" is a socio-economic and political metaphor frequently used in British discourse to describe the sequential process of buying a small property and moving up to larger ones.
- **Third-Year Students:** Most third-year students suffered a breakdown in their Production Effort and Coordination Effort. Because they tried to process the idiom word-for-word, their Listening and Analysis Effort was saturated by the word "ladder" (سلم). This cognitive overload led to literal translation, which sounds unnatural in Arabic, and triggered noticeable hesitation.
- **Fourth-Year Students:** Advanced students managed their cognitive load more effectively (Seeber, 2011). They prioritized the Listening and Analysis Effort to grasp the global meaning rather than individual words, switching to a paraphrasing strategy that freed up their Production Effort, resulting in a functionally accurate Arabic rendering.

• **Example 2: Culture-Bound Expression / Socio-Political Term ("ending the postcode lottery")**

- **Source Text (ST):** "It's why I'm ending the postcode lottery for survivors of domestic abuse."
- **Target Text (TT) - Third-Year Student (Typical Error):** "... ولهذا أنا أنهى... يانصيب الرمز البريدي" (Incomplete / Prolonged pause) ... "للضحايا" (Omission / Literalism).
- **Target Text (TT) - Fourth-Year Student (Typical Error):** "... ولهذا أسعى لإنهاء التفاوت في تقديم الخدمات ... لضحايا العنف المنزلي" (Successful contextual reformulation).
- **Analysis in Light of Gile's Model:** The phrase "postcode lottery" refers to the institutional inequality where the quality of public services (like healthcare or abuse support) depends on the geographic area (postcode) where a person lives. This concept does not have a direct equivalent in Arabic.
- **Third-Year Students:** This segment caused a major cognitive friction. The Memory Effort failed as students tried to retain the unfamiliar concept while simultaneously searching their mental lexicon for a translation of "postcode" and "lottery". This resulted in an immediate overload of the Coordination Effort, forcing 58.8% of them into prolonged pauses or complete omission of the rest of the sentence.
- **Fourth-Year Students:** Although some fourth-year students hesitated, their superior training allowed them to abandon literal translation (Riccardi, 2005). They successfully deployed an "explicative interpretation" strategy, balancing their Production Effort by focusing on the underlying message (inequality of services *التفاوت في الخدمات*) rather than the surface words.

• **Example 3: Dense Institutional / Ideological Metaphor ("a patriotic Conservative government on the common ground of British politics")**

- **Source Text (ST):** "This is what a decent, moderate, and patriotic Conservative government on the common ground of British politics can achieve..."
- **Target Text (TT) - Third-Year Student (Typical Error):** "هذا ما يمكن أن تحققه حكومة ... (Silence) ... المحافظين" (Extreme hesitation / Loss of meaning).
- **Target Text (TT) - Fourth-Year Student (Typical Error):** "... هذا ما تحققه حكومة محافظين" (Accurate / High cognitive coordination) معتدلة ووطنية تلتقي على القواسم المشتركة للسياسة البريطانية
- **Analysis in Light of Gile's Model:** This segment is heavily dense with modifiers (decent, moderate, patriotic Conservative) followed by a spatial political metaphor (on the common ground). According to Gile's Model, high information density severely tests the Memory Effort and Listening Effort concurrently.
- **Third-year students** completely lost track because their working memory could not store the consecutive adjectives while translating the subject.

Conversely, the **fourth-year students** showed a better ability to lag behind the speaker just enough (appropriate *décalage*) to synthesize the multi-adjective clause, transforming the physical metaphor "common ground" into a politically appropriate Arabic abstraction (القواسم المشتركة), proving their advanced capacity to manage the cognitive demands of real-time interpreting (Tiselius, 2013).

Comparison between Third-Year and Fourth-Year Students:

The comparison between third-year and fourth-year students revealed differences in their overall interpreting performance. Fourth-year students demonstrated better performance in terms of accuracy, continuity, and ability to manage the interpreting task under time pressure. Third-year students experienced more frequent difficulties, particularly hesitation, forgetting information, omissions, and literal translation. They were also more likely to lose parts of the message when dealing with complex political expressions. Although fourth-year students showed improvement across most categories, advanced students continued to experience difficulties when interpreting culture-specific expressions and metaphorical language. This finding indicates that academic progression contributes to improved interpreting performance; however, continuous practical training remains necessary for developing professional interpreting competence (Kalina, 2000; Tiselius, 2013).

Discussion of the Main Findings:

The findings of this study provide important insights into the challenges encountered by undergraduate translation students during simultaneous interpreting of political speeches from English into Arabic. The results revealed that both third-year and fourth-year students experienced different types of interpreting difficulties. Although difficulties were observed among both groups, the results demonstrated that fourth-year students generally performed better than third-year students. They produced fewer errors across most categories and showed greater ability to maintain the continuity of interpretation. This difference suggests that academic experience and additional exposure to translation-related activities may contribute to the gradual development of interpreting competence.

The improvement observed among fourth-year students can be explained through the development of cognitive management skills. As students gain more experience, they become more capable of allocating their attention between listening, memory, and speech production. This finding supports the view that interpreting competence develops gradually through continuous practice rather than through linguistic knowledge alone (Kalina, 2000; Tiselius, 2013). These findings are consistent with Gile (2009), who argues that interpreting performance improves as interpreters develop more efficient cognitive resource management strategies. They are also in agreement with Seeber (2011), who emphasizes that reducing cognitive load contributes to better interpreting performance.

Discussion of Interpreting Errors in Relation to Gile's Effort Model:

The findings of the present study can be explained through Daniel Gile's Effort Model, which describes simultaneous interpreting as a process that requires the coordination of several limited cognitive efforts, including listening and analysis, memory, speech production, and coordination (Gile, 1995, 2009). The high frequency of omissions and forgetting information among third-year students suggests that they experienced difficulties in managing the memory and coordination efforts required during simultaneous interpreting. When students attempted to listen to the incoming speech while producing the Arabic interpretation, their available cognitive resources may have become insufficient, resulting in the loss of parts of the message (Shlesinger, 2000).

Hesitation and prolonged pauses observed among students also reflect difficulties in coordinating different interpreting efforts simultaneously. Students often needed additional time to retrieve appropriate Arabic equivalents or understand complex political expressions, which affected the continuity of their interpretation (Riccardi, 2005). The lower frequency of errors among fourth-year students indicates that they may have developed more effective strategies for managing cognitive demands. However, the presence of difficulties among advanced students confirms that simultaneous interpreting remains a demanding activity that requires continuous practical training.

Discussion of Political and Culture-Specific Expressions:

One of the important findings of this study was that political metaphors and culture-specific expressions represented significant challenges for both groups. Although fourth-year students achieved better overall performance, they also experienced difficulties when interpreting expressions that required cultural and contextual knowledge. This finding demonstrates that successful political interpreting requires more than bilingual competence (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997). Interpreters need background knowledge of political systems, historical events, and social contexts in order to understand the intended meaning behind political expressions. The tendency of some students to produce literal translations indicates that they sometimes focused on the surface meaning of words rather than the communicative function of the expression. This problem was particularly noticeable when dealing with metaphors and culturally embedded references. Therefore, the findings highlight the importance of integrating political knowledge and discourse analysis into interpreter training programmes (Jones, 2002; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989).

Academic Level and Development of Interpreting Competence:

The comparison between third-year and fourth-year students indicates that academic level has a positive relationship with interpreting performance. Fourth-year students achieved better results,

showing fewer omissions, fewer hesitation problems, and improved ability to transfer meaning accurately. However, the findings also demonstrate that academic progression alone is not sufficient to develop professional interpreting competence (Kalina, 2000; Tiselius, 2013). Despite their higher academic level, fourth-year students continued to face challenges related to specialized terminology and culture-specific expressions. These results suggest that interpreter training should combine theoretical knowledge with regular practical exercises. Students need repeated exposure to authentic speeches and opportunities to practice interpreting under realistic time constraints.

Conclusion

This study investigated the challenges encountered by third-year and fourth-year translation students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University during simultaneous interpreting of political speeches from English into Arabic. The findings revealed that simultaneous interpreting represents a challenging task for undergraduate translation students due to its complex linguistic and cognitive requirements. Students experienced several difficulties, including omissions, forgetting information, hesitation, prolonged pauses, literal translation, inaccurate terminology choices, and problems with culture-specific expressions.

The comparison between the two groups showed that fourth-year students generally achieved better interpreting performance than third-year students. They demonstrated fewer errors and greater ability to manage the demands of real-time interpretation. This finding suggests that academic progression and increased exposure to translation activities contribute positively to the development of interpreting competence. However, the study also showed that advanced students continued to experience difficulties, particularly when interpreting political metaphors, specialized terminology, and culturally embedded expressions.

The findings of the study support the relevance of Gile's Effort Model in explaining students' interpreting difficulties. The occurrence of omissions, hesitation, and incomplete interpretations can be understood as a result of the competition among listening, memory, production, and coordination efforts during simultaneous interpreting. In conclusion, improving simultaneous interpreting skills among translation students requires a balance between theoretical instruction and practical training. Providing students with regular opportunities to interpret authentic political speeches and training them in strategies for managing cognitive load may contribute to better interpreting performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Increasing Practical Simultaneous Interpreting Training:** Translation programmes should provide students with more opportunities to practice simultaneous interpreting through regular classroom activities. Practical training should begin at earlier stages of study to allow students sufficient time to develop interpreting skills (Jones, 2002; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989).
2. **Establishing Specialized Interpreting Laboratories:** Universities should consider establishing interpreting laboratories equipped with professional facilities, including individual headsets, microphones, and interpreting booths. Such environments would provide students with more realistic training conditions similar to professional interpreting settings.
3. **Using Authentic Political and Media Materials:** Students should be exposed to authentic political speeches, interviews, and international events. Regular practice with real-world materials can improve students' ability to deal with different speaking styles, terminology, and discourse structures (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997).
4. **Teaching Interpreting Strategies Explicitly:** Interpreting courses should include systematic instruction in strategies such as anticipation, memory enhancement techniques, note-taking skills, and methods for managing unknown terminology during real-time interpretation (Riccardi, 2005; Seeber, 2011).
5. **Strengthening Political and Cultural Knowledge:** Students should develop broader background knowledge related to politics, international affairs, and cultural contexts. Such knowledge can help them interpret political expressions more accurately and avoid literal translation.
6. **Developing Terminology Management Skills:** Students should be encouraged to create and use specialized glossaries related to political, economic, and social topics. This practice may improve their ability to retrieve appropriate terminology quickly during interpreting tasks.
7. **Increasing Research on Interpreting Education in Libya:** Further studies are recommended to investigate simultaneous interpreting training in other Libyan universities using larger samples and different types of interpreting materials. Future research may also examine the effectiveness of specific training strategies in improving students' interpreting competence.

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Appendix:

- **Title of the Political Speech:** Theresa May's Resignation Speech as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- **Speaker:** Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.