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INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF SPEAKER-RELATED FACTORS ON CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETERS' PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study theoretically and practically considers the speaker-related factors affecting consecutive interpreters' performance. These factors exemplify some of the variables that interpreters almost always have to deal with. Interpreters may have control over some of them, however, some remain beyond their control. This means that the speaker shoulders some of the responsibility for the interpreters' performance. These factors are obtained via administering a questionnaire to consecutive interpreters in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The questionnaire has led to the identification of a set of factors. The interpreters surveyed are novices, with less than five years of experience, and experienced interpreters, with more than five years of experience. These interpreters also vary in terms of the nature of employment, i.e., freelance and staff interpreters. Speaker-related factors, which fall into 13 sub-factors, represent the focus of the present study. The study is expected to aid consecutive interpreters and interpreting students to familiarize themselves with these factors, better understand their influence on their performance, and duly alleviate their impact. The conclusions drawn upon show that interpreters are not affected by the speaker-related factors in the same way. Moreover, interpreters who have less than five years of experience reflected almost the same reaction to almost all the factors as those with more than five years of experience. Freelance interpreters were more affected by almost half of the factors which shows that the nature of employment can be a determining factor in lessening the effect of some factors on their performance.

KEYWORDS: Consecutive Interpreting, Speaker-Related Factors, Consecutive Interpreter,Consecutive Interpreters' Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a difficult task to unravel the bulk of factors that influence interpreters' performance since some of them are already referred to by researchers and some are recurrent with new or different terms used to describe them.

Kellet-Bidoli (2000) initially identifies more than four hundred factors identified by researchers with some of them differently worded but similar in meaning. She states that after conducting a thorough survey of these factors, two sets of data originated from the literature, namely factors affecting the interpreter before and/or during the act of interpreting (the input), which ultimately influence the quality of interpretation, and the aspects of interpretation (the output) that are amenable to critical assessment and evaluation (pp. 120-121).

It is worthwhile that the factors are meant for both consecutive interpreting (CI) and simultaneous interpreting (SI). Kellet-Bidoli (2000) categorizes the input factors into 12 groups, viz. environmental, experience-related, inter-personal/social, linguistic, non-verbal, physical and mental, prosodic, situational, task-related, technical, textual, and time factors; and the output into eight categories, namely experience-related factors, linguistic, non-verbal, para-linguistic, prosodic, physical and mental factors, technical, and time factors. The same author claims that some difficulty is encountered in classifying some terms since some of them could come under more than one factor. Finally, she admits that her classification of the factors in question is subjective and that it is only a tentative classification liable to researchers' further suggestions and comments.

Based on Kellet-Bidoli's (2000) argument, the current research tackles the speaker-related factors as one of the various categories already identified by the researchers in the field (cf. Vuorikoski, 2004; Kalina, 2005; Gile, 2009; Issa, 2016).

2. PROBLEM BACKGROUND

The sources of interpreting difficulties are varied. However, the speaker-related factors, i.e., the way the speaker's speech is constructed and delivered, the audibility and rate of delivery, speech density side by side with personal features such as speech monotony, errors, hesitations, linguistic vagueness or ambiguity, non-native accents, etc. exemplify some of the variables that interpreters almost always have to deal with. These factors are major determinants of the difficulty of interpreting, and, as such, considerably impact interpreters' performance. In spite of the fact that interpreters, as outlined by Bowen and Bowen (2008), may have control over some of them, some factors lie beyond their control (p. 104). Therefore, the speaker, too, as Kalina (2005) stresses, shoulders some of the responsibility for the interpreters' performance in the same way as others who act within the speech situations do (pp. 772-773).

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The current research sets out the problem that the performance of consecutive interpreters (CIs) comes under the effect of discrepant factors that noticeably affect it. Hence, the current research aims at identifying the differences between the effect of the speaker-related factors on CIs' performance. To bring about this aim, it is hypothesized that speaker-related factors differently affect CIs' performance. To support the preceding aim and the hypothesis, the following research question will be investigated: Are there differences between the speaker-related factors in terms of their effect on CIs' performance, has been posed?

This research is limited to the effect of speaker-related factors on CIs' performance. It is worthwhile that this set of factors has been set after merging the factors that come under different headings namely prosodic, interpersonal/social, technical, task-related and time factors since, as stated earlier, the classification of factors is influenced by subjective considerations.

It is expected that this research will be of some value to interpreting students, university professors, professional interpreters and more importantly users of CIs.

4. SPEAKER-RELATED FACTORS

In the following sections, light will be shed on a set of speaker related-factors.

4.1. SPEAKING WITH AN ACCENT THAT IS NOT UNDERSTANDABLE

English is undoubtedly the most widely used lingua franca nowadays, with people from all over the world, native or not, using it as a means of intercultural communication. Crystal (2003, p. 69) estimated that non-native speakers of English outnumbered native speakers by a ratio of 3 to 1 at that time. Therefore, the interpreter, as a cross-cultural medium, is almost sure that they will work with a variety of English accents. In reality, accent, defined by Issa (2016, p. 43) as a "deviation from the general norm of pronunciation of a language that is reminiscent of another language, i.e., the speaker's mother tongue", is recognized by interpreters as a recurrent and serious problem (see also Lin, Chang & Kuo, 2013, p. 30).

Interference of the speaker's native language with his/her utterance in a learned language could present the interpreter with yet another challenge. According to Gile (2001), speakers' non-standard accents and pronunciation are considered one of the greatest difficulties interpreters are likely to face (see also Albl-Mikasa, 2012, pp. 76-77). For Kurz (1996), "the more the speaker's pronunciation deviates from what the interpreter is used to, the more difficult the task of comprehension for the interpreter in the processing phase. In the worst scenario, communication may be constrained or impeded from the start" (p. 183). Consequently, the interpreter's familiarity with different accents, particularly non-native, unfamiliar accents, is crucial. To effectively perform their tasks, interpreters need especially to be familiar with the various accents of the source language.

The effect accent has on the interpreter changes with the change of directionality. The interpreter who works from A into B is probably equipped to do their job better. Understanding a B language, according to McAllister (2000), is apparently more difficult when it is characterized by an unfamiliar accent than understanding one's A language even in the same situation (p. 60), and it is well known that interpreters provide a better performance when the accented source language is their A language (Mazzetti, 1999, p. 144). It is therefore possible that the difficulties related to the speaker's non-native accent could be more

easily overcome when the interpreter works from A into B.

4.2. USING SEVERAL LOCAL DIALECTS IN THE SAME ENCOUNTER

Many scholars have provided definitions of dialect. Crystal (2008, p. 142), for instance, defines dialect as "a regionally or socially distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words or grammatical structures. Spoken dialects are usually also associated with distinctive pronunciation, or accent" (see also Muhammad-Amin, 2008, p. 18; Siregar, 2017, p. 28). Crystal (2008) also states that any language spoken by a large number of people will develop dialects, particularly when groups of people are separated from each other by geographical barriers, or when divisions of social class exist. He emphasizes that one dialect may be chosen to be written down as the official or standard language (p. 142).

Every language has different dialects and Kurdish is no exception. Currently Kurmanji and Sorani, as Ameen (2013) points out, are the two main dialects of modern Kurdish. Kurdish dialects are spoken by millions of Kurds worldwide. The majority of Kurds in six countries, namely Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Syria and Iraq speak Kurmanji with an estimation of 15 to 17 million speakers. This area is known as Kurdistana Bakor (North Kurdistan). The majority of the Iraqi Kurds speak Sorani. The number is between four to six million speakers. The area where this dialect is used is named Kurdistana Bashor (South Kurdistan) (pp. 37-38).

Although closely related, Kurmanji and Sorani are not mutually intelligible and differ in basic structure level, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions (Thackston, 2006, p. vii). Kurmanji, also called "Behdini" in Iraq, subsumes the dialects of the northern group. It is spoken by the majority of the Kurds in Syria, Turkey as well as the Kurds in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It is also spoken by some Iranian and Iraqi Kurds (Blau 1989 cited in Kreyenbroek & Marzolph, 2010, p. 2).

When the speech is masked by unfamiliar dialects, differences in interpreters' performance become evident. McAllister (2000) states that deviations from phonetic details stored in long-term memory could significantly impair the capacity to decode an incoming speech signal (p. 60). Consequently, unfamiliarity with different dialects is likely to affect the interpreters' performance and pose constant challenge to them. Also, familiarity with various local dialects in Kurdistan is essential for interpreters. For example, if a speaker from Sinjar speaks in their own dialect, the interpreters, especially from Erbil or Sulaymaniyah, will barely understand anything, which adds to the difficulty of the interpreters' task.

To conclude, the interpreter should familiarize themselves with the various dialects of their active languages and especially local dialects to perform their task successfully.

4.3. SPEAKING FAST

The interpreter cannot control the rate with which the speaker produces his/her utterances. One of the challenges and key input variables interpreters face is speech rate since it requires the interpreter to be constantly on guard and mentally alert. In interpreting, speech rate is also denoted as input rate, presentation rate or input speed (Pöchhacker, 2015, p. 398) (see also Horváth, 2012, p. 68; Kendall, 2013, p. 27). Speech rate can negatively influence the interpreter's performance as it increases the cognitive load and information processing. In such cases, the interpreter has to drop redundant and repeated expressions and focus on the gist of the message. However, the rate of the speaker's speech varies according to whether the speaker is reading from a prepared text or is speaking ad-lib. The challenge becomes even greater when the speaker reads fast from a written text. Fast input rates make the task of the interpreter more difficult, if not impossible, particularly when they read from a text than when speaking spontaneously. Nervousness may prompt some speakers to speak fast which is inimical to understanding by the audience and the interpreter. Baigorri-Jalón (2014, p. 175) points out that speaking fast makes understanding difficult. This, however, does not mean that slow speakers pose no challenge for the interpreter since, as Gerver (1976, p. 172) states, slow input may impede processing as fast input does.

Input rate is particularly difficult when technical subjects are discussed with the interpreter may be trying hard to understand the process being described with the aim of giving an acceptable interpretation. In such circumstances, the speaker, while discussing technical subjects, has to bear in mind that what seems simple to him may not be simple to the interpreter (Phelan, 2001, p. 19).

Studies have suggested different input rates in interpreting. The majority of the studies (Seleskovitch, 1965; Gerver, 1975; Li, 2010) agree that an average acceptable input rate is

between 100 and 120 words a minute, and a high input rate is between 150-200 (Setton, 1999, p. 30). However, Gile (2009, p. 111) seems to disagree with Setton (1999) and suggests that generally the input rate in interpreting is between 100 and 200 wpm.

Regardless of the knowledge interpreters have about the topic, they may face difficulty when the input rate is beyond a certain optimal limit. The interpreter's brain can function better if the speaker speaks at an appropriate rate. According to studies, as Grever (1969) notes, input rate and interpreter's performance are directly correlated since the accuracy of the interpreter's rendition is reduced as the speech input rate increases (p. 64).

To overcome the obstacle of fast input rate under which the interpreter's performance suffers and to cope with information overload, studies have introduced some strategies the interpreter can use. Jones (2002), for instance, suggested "generalization" which means that a "number of specific items mentioned can be expressed in one generic term." (p. 101). According to Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002), the interpreter can use code-switching strategy by shifting the style from standard Arabic to informal colloquial to cope with fast input rates (p. 617). Moreover, Li (2010, p. 22-23) proposed a number of strategies such as asking speakers to slow down, whether before and/or during the meeting; summarizing; speeding up and stopping interpreting. However, such strategies, as Gerver (1969) reveals, may partially or temporarily work and may culminate in bad quality since interpreters cannot divide their attention equally between competing cognitive processes (p. 65). Nonetheless, these strategies are considered the best solutions in such difficult situations where even the most experienced interpreters will be struggling.

4.4. SPEAKING WITH A LOW VOICE

Incidentally, every day we encounter circumstances in which we are unable to hear what has been uttered, whether because the speaker is far away, or a car is passing by, etc. This kind of issue arises in interpretation too frequently; the acoustics could be bad, the equipment could be poor, or a microphone may be improperly plugged in or the speaker may speak with a low voice. Poor sound quality undoubtedly impairs the interpreter's ability to accurately understand speakers' statements. This is still, as Seleskovitch (2010) emphasizes, another issue the interpreters should seek to resolve while trying to retain the coherence of the message, even in the case when they are unsure that they have heard the entire speech segment correctly (p. 25).

In similar situations, the interpreter must not feel embarrassed to address the speaker and asks them to speak up since it is, after all, in their best interest to get heard. If the interpreter is seated in the corner, facing outwards, they will find that they hear the speaker better and there may be no need to ask the speaker to raise their voice.

4.5. SPEAKING FOR LONG PERIOD, HENCE MINIMIZING THE INTERPRETER'S CHANCE TO INTERPRET

In CI, it is the speaker who decides the length of segments in each turn with the interpreter being unable to control it. It often becomes a source of fatigue for the interpreter when the speaker speaks for long before giving the interpreter the opportunity to translate. Therefore, it is always important, as Becker (1975) puts it, that the interpreter agrees with the speaker prior to the encounter on how long the speaker will speak so that the interpreter does not get a 20-minute or three-word speech which are, in both cases, difficult to translate (Becker ,1975 cited in Gillies, 2019, p. 222). Furthermore, the interpreter can exert some control on the length of the source message through the employment of visual contact with the speaker. In such a case, the CIs can signal the end of the speaker's turn and the beginning of their rendition (Dawud, 2017, p. 25).

Long speeches may impact the processing capacity of the interpreter. In this regard, Benacherine (2022) points out that the interpreters' inability to cope with long segments as they suffer saturation of the available capacity which may lead to mismatch between the ST and TT and the interpreter may omit some parts of the speaker's utterances. It is believed that relatively slow delivery of speeches reduces cognitive burden on listening and production, hence enhancing the interpreter's ability to retain significant portions of speech in short-term memory before integrating them into target speech phrases. The length of the speech segments may vary depending on the significance of the topic of discussion. Benacherine (2022) refers to a press conference at the White House between president Obama and the Emir of Kuwait. Obama gave a speech which varied in length; some segments were long and others were short, whereas the Emir of Kuwait used short sentences. Both speakers segmented their speech to a large extent and the interpreter was able to

take notes, re-express and eventually provide interpretation (pp. 10-13).

4.6. PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Interpreting entails noticeable exposure in case of the interpreter's failure to give an accurate interpretation. Feedback from the speakers is almost always there, and interpreters, according to Diriker (2011), are given words of praise when 'complete fidelity' is realized or criticized when this goal is lacking (p. 34). Since the interpreter is physically present with the speakers, the latter have the opportunity to immediately express their feedbacks and opinions verbally or non-verbally, which may have an effect on the interpreter's behavior (Horvath, 2012, p. 51). However, the speaker's assessment in CI may not be thorough since the speaker usually takes no notes contrary to the interpreter who does. Similarly, multilingual speakers who are unaware of the interpreters' problems, may misjudge the quality of interpretation since they concentrate on individual words not sense.

Horvath (2012, pp. 52-54) states that when a problem happens, the speaker may correct the interpreter so that it does not happen again. This mostly occurs in interactive sessions, which indicate the extent to which the interpreter has been successful. There are cases when one of the speakers is mistaken in their feedback or judgment. The interpreter is advised to handle the issue professionally, neither taking the offence nor contradicting the speaker.

When the speakers challenge the interpreter's version, they could be sincere, but sometimes the speakers use it in bad faith. They may, as Setton and Dawrant (2016a) say, use it as a negotiation leverage or to retract what they have stated earlier. The interpreter has to apologize for the justified correction, but if correction is unjustified, it is imperative that the interpreters hold their ground particularly if one of the parties does not understand the languages of communication (p. 383).

Sometimes speakers are happy to have a scapegoat, i.e., the interpreter who is seen as the bone of contention when moods are frayed (P. Schmidt 1958, 46 cited in Baigorri-Jalón, 2014: 128). In some other situations, monitoring the performance of the interpreter becomes a requirement when the interpreter lacks training and accreditation, and it becomes a must when the interpreter's professional performance declines. Obviously, the interpreters cannot escape speaker's correction or feedback, which they sometimes unwillingly accept.

4.7. NOT HANDING OVER TO THE INTERPRETER IN ADVANCE THE PREPARED SPEECHES, MANUSCRIPTS OR PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Documentation is key to a successful interpreting task. It covers anything the interpreters can use to be well-prepared and do their job professionally (Altman, 1984, p. 82). It includes special glossaries of terminology, background information on the institutions participating in the event, summary or full copies of the materials to be presented, briefing sessions, etc. (Schweda-Nicholson 1989, p. 163). However, the types of materials and documents an interpreter might receive hinges on the type of the assignment. For delegation visits, the interpreter might only get the schedule of the day's visits and a scant pamphlet outlining each location to be visited. For a deposition, the interpreter may have access to a large amount of written documentation. As for a press conference, the interpreter may be presented with the report itself (Gillies, 2019, p. 211). For a given subject, according to Pöchhacker (2015), interpreters do not need exhaustive documentation, but simply comparison between the relevant information and what they already know so as to bridge the gaps (p. 416).

When the interpreters read the conference materials in advance, they become knowledgeable about the theme, the speakers, the subjects discussed and the related terminology. As such, the potential mistakes of interpreters can be avoided if the organizers or speakers follow the established practice in interpreting which is providing the interpreters with sufficient background materials to be well prepared in advance.

Documentation provision is important since it enables the interpreters to have an insight into the topics to be dealt with, terminology used, interactants in the conference, etc. and hence facilitates the task of the interpreter and enhances their performance (al-Zahran, 2007, p. 60). One of the difficulties interpreters face is the unavailability of documentation during their assignments. In this regard, Altman (1984) states that interpreters are informed on enormous occasions that "documentation will be provided", but she questions the truthfulness of this statement (p. 82). Interpreters need as much information as they can get in advance, yet they face difficulties to get the documents they require most. In a survey by Cooper et al. (1982, p. 99) of conference interpreters, failing to provide

documentation occurred 70–80% of the time according to more than 50% of the respondents. Mikkelson (1999) debunks the idea that documentation is always provided to the interpreter and depicts it as a myth (p. 2). Apparently, one of the reasons is that people who are not in the interpreting profession, including organizers, probably do not seem to have an understanding of the interpreting process. Therefore, organizers, speakers, etc. should be well acquainted with the interpreting process.

4.8. PRESENTING DENSE INFORMATION

Information density is a crucial factor in interpreting, and most likely the frequent cause of interpreting problems. It is sometimes referred to as 'semantic density' or 'propositional density' (Pöchhacker, 2015, p. 191). Kalina (2005) considers information density as one of the in-process factors that affect the performance of the interpreter and can be detrimental to the quality of interpreting (p. 773).

When information density is combined with fast speech rate, the interpreter's job becomes more difficult. If the speech contains odd information that is unfamiliar, technical or context-free such as proper names, titles, numbers, lists or technical terms, it has to be heard reliably, then reproduced mechanically and quickly (Setton and Dawrant, 2016b, p. 323). However, some speakers may speak rapidly but provide speeches of low density. A speech or a speech segment, according to Gile (2009) can be highly dense in terms of information content even if the speech is produced slowly. An example is numerations which are dense because no words or word groups which are of low information density are interposed between them (p. 193). Thus, it becomes difficult to recover their information content when there is any momentary lapse of attention during listening.

Numbers, for example, pose problems of incompleteness and inaccuracy to interpreters since they lack redundancy like proper names and acronyms, and, therefore, require much attention to store them in the memory and to render them accurately (Cheung, 2009, p. 61). These items require the interpreter to devote much of the available processing capacity to ensure an accurate rendition since performance decrement, according to Treisman (1965, p. 376), occurs as a result of increase in the information load and low redundancy in the speeches.

Prepared speeches are also more densely formulated than ad-libbed speeches since the former are devoid of filled or unfilled hesitations typical of the impromptu speeches. Nonetheless, the interpreters' response to information density is partly dependent on the level of their familiarity with the topic (Alexieva, 1999, p. 53).

The issue of information density has been studied in terms of lexical density, word frequency, non-redundant elements such as proper names and numbers, non-standard and culture-bound usage and informational complexity of a text (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 131). Dillinger (1994) found out that information density has a negative effect on accuracy of interpreting. At the level of text type, Dillinger (1994) found out that both professional and untrained subjects showed better performance on the narrative text than on the passage describing a procedure (p. 171f). The linguistic complexity (semantic and syntactic difficulty) of the source speech, as outlined by Tommola and Helevä (1998, p. 179), may have a detrimental effect on the quality of the interpreter's performance in that it may reduce the accuracy of the output.

4.9. MISUSING THE MICROPHONE

Even the most experienced interpreters will feel some tension at the beginning of any conference because they are well aware that there will be unknown elements they will have to deal with. One of these elements is having a speaker who does not talk into the microphone (Riccardi et al., 1998, p. 97). Sometimes the speaker is seated away from the microphones, whereas others almost skew the microphone by talking so closely into it which hurts the ear. According to Cooper et al. (1982), this is why some interpreters complain about having hearing impairment after serving several years in interpreting. They state that one of the areas in which speakers may be inconsiderate to the interpreter is the misuse of the microphones (pp. 98-99).

Speakers who speak at different volumes and are at different distance intervals from the microphones might cause exhaustion for the interpreters. The microphone seems to exacerbate the problem of accents as well. Therefore, the CIs have to make sure that they can hear the speaker clearly as the interpreters' task, according to Ghaza'ee and Ali (2019, p. 277), may become more difficult due to the speaker's poor microphone discipline.

Undoubtedly, when the sound quality the interpreters receive is bad, their performance will be poor because poor sound quality makes understanding the transmitted sound difficult, if not impossible. If the interpreter does not understand, the result will definitely be a bad-

quality product. Therefore, the interpreter should be able to hear easily and clearly without making much effort. The reason is that, as al-Zahran (2007) explains, the interpreter's attention is already divided between many complex processes, and poor sound quality will add to the conscious effort the interpreter makes. This will prompt the interpreter to concentrate on words rather than analyze the speech for sense, hence producing a literal translation (p. 62). Poor sound quality interferes with the interpreter's ability to produce an accurate interpretation of the speaker's utterances.

4.10. LACKING SPEAKING COMPETENCIES

The interpreting process entails perception, comprehension, remembering re-verbalization. Comprehension is a crucial and effective component in this equation. Nonetheless, the interpreter may encounter comprehension difficulties during the interpreting process. In this regard, Gile (2009) asserts that while features of language and culture are recurrent sources of difficulties, the speaker factor, i.e., a particular speaker's speech structure and delivery, is a considerably stronger determinant of the difficulty of interpreting. If a speech is delivered in a didactic, logically linear, coherent manner and the speaker has a clear voice and pronunciation, it will be easier to interpret (p. 200). However, not all speakers at international conferences are good communicators by their very nature, and many are now required, or choose, to use a language other than their mother tongue, usually English, in order to communicate.

Interpreters often have to cope with speakers who mumble, stammer, backtrack, repeat excessively, self-correct or digress or have other kinds of confused, garbled or mispronounced speech, sometimes even in native speakers. Any of these factors can place a significant additional burden on interpreters in terms of the required increased focus, inference, memory, and even guesswork on the comprehension side and significant reconstruction and repackaging efforts on the production side, to provide a consistent and usable product without putting words into the speaker's mouth to an audience that may be unaware of the problem (Setton and Dawrrant, 2016b, pp. 329-330).

Read-aloud speeches are not an exception. Speakers occasionally lack the ability, desire, and skill to communicate. Some interpreters gripe about speakers who do not bother to read the report that their staff has prepared in advance. They, therefore, read "unintelligibly" (Cooper et al., 1982, p. 99).

To conclude, speakers themselves may distort their messages; hence interpreters are not to blame for the speaker's incompetency as good translation, according to Gaiba (1998), "depends on the speaker as much as on the interpreter" (p. 105).

5. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative method as it utilizes a 13-item questionnaire (**Appendix I: Part 2)** to examine the scale and the frequency of each item.

The sample of the present study comprises 69 CIs working in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The CIs were divided into two groups based on the nature of employment, freelance and staff interpreters, and also according to their years of experience into novices, with less than five years of experience, and experienced interpreters, with more than five years of experience (**Appendix I: Part 1)**.

To realize the aims of the research apropos identifying the speaker-related factors affecting CIs' performance, a 13-item online questionnaire, the main and only research tool, was designed.

With regard to the content of the questionnaire, the researcher presented the items designed to a panel of jurors with the aim of guaranteeing the validity of the items. On this basis, the researcher presented the draft version of the questionnaire to a panel of 6 jurors specialized in translation and applied linguistics. The jurors were asked to provide their judgement on both the face as well as the content validity of the questionnaire by adding, deleting or modifying the items included in the questionnaire.

Several modifications have been made to the questionnaire based on the comments of the jury members who have found that all the items are valid. They stated that the scale standard was acceptable and comprehensive, suitable for the sample the study investigates, and measures what it seeks to measure.

The questionnaire developed for the current study is highly structured given that it contains a 5-point scale. It is a closed questionnaire as the

respondents are requested to limit their selection to one point in the rating.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was utilized for the analysis, categorization and quantification of the data of the questionnaire. Finally, conclusions were drawn.

6. THE SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

In the following sections the CIs' background information is presented and their responses to the questions of the survey are analysed.

Table (1) shows the percentage of the CIs' years of experience. The interpreters totalled 69 in number. 56 interpreters, which make up 81.2% of the overall number of the respondents, have more than five years of experience, whereas 13 interpreters, that is 18.8% of the respondents, have less than five years of experience.

Table (1): Years of Experience of the Selected Sample

Classes	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	13	18.8%
More than 5 years	56	81.2%
Total	69	100.0 %

Table (2) shows the rate of the CIs' nature of employment. 40 interpreters, which make up 58.0% of the overall number of the respondents, are freelance interpreters, whereas 29 interpreters, that is 42.0% of the respondents, are staff interpreters.

Table (2): Nature of Employment the Selected Sample

Classes	Frequency	Percent
Freelance	40	58.0%
Staff	29	42.0%
Total	69	100.0%

7. DATA ANALYSIS

To better understand the sample's responses to the items of the administered a questionnaire, i.e., the speaker-related factors that affect their performance, Table (3) demonstrates the responses of the selected sample in terms of frequencies, percentages, weighted arithmetic means, etc.:

Table (3): Speaker-related Factors

Item	Percentage %					Means	Ranking		
	VLaE	LaE	ME	LoE.	VLoE		Ascending order	T Test	P-Value*
1	11.6	20.3	20.3	39.1	8.7	2.87	8	19.239	0.000*
2	5.8	8.7	21.7	42.1	21.7	2.35	12	16.004	0.000*
3	10.2	29.0	34.8	21.7	4.3	3.19	5	23.753	0.000*
4	8.7	26.1	34.8	23.2	7.2	3.06	6	23.270	0.000*
5	21.7	37.7	27.5	11.6	1.5	3.67	1	30.608	0.000*
6	7.2	20.3	24.6	21.7	26.2	2.61	11	17.798	0.000*
7	8.7	11.6	15.9	29.0	34.8	2.30	13	14.744	0.000*
8	17.4	27.5	31.9	14.5	8.7	3.30	3	25.641	0.000*
9	10.2	27.5	43.5	15.9	2.9	3.26	4	24.955	0.000*
10	11.6	21.7	23.3	27.5	15.9	2.86	9	18.984	0.000*
11	15.9	20.3	23.3	27.5	13.0	2.99	7	20.080	0.000*
12	17.4	24.6	34.8	18.8	4.4	3.32	2	28.528	0.000*
13	8.7	17.4	23.2	36.2	14.5	2.70	10	18.771	0.000*

***** Significant at level of (0.05)

Table (3) shows that 59.4% of the respondents agree to a very large extent and to a large extent on the content of item (5) which states that ***(the speaker speaks for long times before giving the interpreter the chance to interpret***), and hence has the highest level of agreement. 13.1% of the respondents disagreed to a very low extent and to a low extent on the content of item (5). This result is confirmed by the Weighted Mean of 3.67 which is greater than the average mean of the other items of the questionnaire. This result indicates that item (5) represents one of the factors that affect the performance of the CIs. On the other hand, item (7) which states that (***the speaker corrects the interpreter when s/he thinks that the interpreter has made a mistake***) has the lowest level of agreement which is 20.3% and a level of disagreement of 63.8%. This was confirmed by the Weighted Mean of 2.30 which is the lowest compared to the other 12 items. This result indicates that item (7) represents one of the factors that does not affect the performance of the CIs.

In terms of the ranking of significance of the items of the questionnaire, a (t) test was applied. Based on the (t) test, item (5) was found to be the most affecting factor and received an average rating of 30.608. Item (12) ranked second with 28.528. It was followed by item (8) with an average rating of 25.641. Items (9) and (3) received ratings of 24.955 and 30.608, respectively. Item (4) is given an average rating of 23.270. The items (11, 1, 10, 13, 6, and 2) received ratings of 20.080, 19.239, 18.984, 18.771, 17.798, and 16.004 respectively. Item (7), with an average rating of 14.744, ranked lowest.

In order to identify the individual differences between the respondents, the (Compare Means test) was applied by using (Independent Sample T Test) and (SPSS V.26). See Table (4).

Table (4): Differences According to Years of Experience

Item	t value	Classes	Means	P-Value	Results
1	0.079	<5 Years	2.85	0.938	No Difference
		>5 Years	2.88		
2	0.146	<5 Years	2.31	0.885	No Difference
		>5 Years	2.36		
3	0.133	<5 Years	3.15	0.589	No Difference
		>5 Years	3.20		
4	2.027	<5 Years	3.38	0.014*	There is Difference
		>5 Years	2.98		
5	0.683	<5 Years	3.77	0.410	No Difference
		>5 Years	3.64		
6	0.987	<5 Years	2.92	0.327	No Difference
		>5 Years	2.54		
7	0.719	<5 Years	2.54	0.475	No Difference
		>5 Years	2.25		
8	0.531	<5 Years	3.46	0.597	No Difference
		>5 Years	3.27		
9	0.126	<5 Years	3.23	0.900	No Difference
		>5 Years	3.27		
10	0.270	<5 Years	2.77	0.788	No Difference
		>5 Years	2.88		
11	1.952	<5 Years	2.62	0.025*	There is Difference
		>5 Years	3.07		
12	0.595	<5 Years	3.15	0.554	No Difference
		>5 Years	3.36		
13	0.270	<5 Years	2.62	0.788	No Difference
		>5 Years	2.71		
T Critical value at degree of freedom (67) = 1.668					
*Significant at level P-value ≤ 0.05					

Table (4) shows the following:

1. There are no significant differences between the respondents in terms of the years of experience for the items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13). This conclusion is based on the calculated (t) values of these items which are all less than the calculated value of the (t) test which is 1.668 at degree of freedom of 67. This is corroborated by the significant level of P-values of these items which are all higher than the default significant value of the study which is 0.05. This indicates that there are no differences between the respondents regardless of their years of experience with regard to the speaker-related factors pertinent to items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13).

2. There are differences between the respondents in terms of the years of experience for the items (4 and 11). This conclusion is based on the calculated (t) values of these items which are all higher than the calculated value of the (t) test which is 1.668 at the degree of freedom of 67. This is corroborated by the significant level of P-values of these items which are all less than the default significant value of the study which is 0.05. This indicates that different years of experience lead to differences between the respondents with regard to the speaker-related factors pertinent to items (4 and 11). In order to identify which one of the two categories generated the difference for the two items (4 and 11), the following explanation can be given:

a) With regard to item (4), which states that (***the speaker speaks with a low voice***) we find that the interpreters who have less than 5 years of experience are the ones who are affected by this factor. In other words, they face difficulty in interpreting because the speaker speaks with a low voice. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values where the calculated mean value for the category of interpreters who have less than 5 years of experience is 3.38 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of interpreters who have more than 5 years of experience which is 2.98. Therefore, interpreters who have more than 5 years of experience are not affected by this factor, but rather interpreters who have less than 5 years of experience.

b) As for item (11), which states that (***the speaker is interrupted by another person speaking at the same time***), it is clear that interpreters who have more than 5 years of experience are the ones who are affected by this factor. In other words, they face difficulty in interpreting because the speaker is interrupted by another person speaking at the same time. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values where the calculated mean value for the category of interpreters who have more than 5 years of experience is 3.07 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of interpreters who have less than 5 years of experience which is 2.62. Therefore, interpreters who have less than 5 years of experience are not affected by this factor, but rather interpreters who have more than 5 years of experience are affected by this factor represented by item (11).

In order to identify the individual differences between the respondents, the (Compare Means test) was utilized by using (Independent Sample T Test) and (SPSS V.26) as shown in Table (5).

Table (5): Differences According to Nature of Employment

Items	t value	Classes	Means	P-Value	Results
1	0.453	Freelance	2.93	0.652	No Difference
		Staff	2.79		
2	0.934	Freelance	2.43	0.496	No Difference
		Staff	2.24		
3	2.191	Freelance	3.38	0.038*	There is Difference
		Staff	2.93		
4	1.902	Freelance	3.20	0.044*	There is Difference
		Staff	2.86		
5	2.093	Freelance	3.88	0.026*	There is Difference
		Staff	3.38		
6	0.889	Freelance	2.73	0.337	No Difference

		Staff	2.45		
7	0.032	Freelance	2.30	0.974	No Difference
		Staff	2.31		
8	0.581	Freelance	3.38	0.563	No Difference
		Staff	3.21		
9	0.366	Freelance	3.23	0.715	No Difference
		Staff	3.31		
10	2.338	Freelance	3.13	0.016*	There is Difference
		Staff	2.48		
11	1.846	Freelance	3.18	0.048*	There is Difference
		Staff	2.72		
12	2.053	Freelance	3.53	0.028*	There is Difference
		Staff	3.03		
13	0.447	Freelance	2.75	0.656	No Difference
		Staff	2.62		
T Critical value at degree of freedom (67) = 1.668					
*Significant at level P-value ≤ 0.05					

Table (5) demonstrates the following:

1. There are no significant differences between the respondents in terms of the nature of employment for the items (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13). This conclusion is based on the calculated (t) values of these items which are all less than the calculated value of the (t) test which is 1.668 at 67 degrees of freedom. This is corroborated by the significant level of P-values of these items which are all higher than the default significant value of the study which is 0.05. This indicates that there are no differences between the respondents regardless of the nature of employment with regard to the speaker-related factors pertinent to items (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13).
2. There are differences between the respondents in terms of the nature of employment for the items (3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12). This conclusion is based on the calculated (t) values of these items which are all higher than the calculated value of the (t) test which is 1.668 at 67 degrees of freedom. This is corroborated by the significant level of P-values of these items which are all less than the default significant value of the study which is 0.05. This indicates that differences in the nature of employment lead to differences between the respondents with regard to the speaker-related factors pertinent to items (3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12). In order to identify which one of the two categories generated the difference for the above-mentioned six items, the following explanation can be given:

a) With regard to item (3), which states that (***the speaker speaks fast***), we find that freelance interpreters are the ones who are affected by this factor. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values where the calculated mean value for the freelance interpreters is 3.38 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of staff interpreters which is 2.93. Therefore, staff interpreters are not affected by this factor, but freelance interpreters are affected by it.

b) Concerning item (4), which states that (***the speaker speaks with a low voice***), obviously freelance interpreters are the ones affected by this factor. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values mentioned in the table, where the calculated mean value for the freelance interpreters is 3.20 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of staff interpreters which is 2.86. Therefore, it is freelance interpreters who are affected by this factor, not staff interpreters.

c) In connection with (5), which states that (***the speaker speaks for long times before giving the interpreter the chance to interpret***), we find that freelance interpreters are the ones who are affected by this factor. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values mentioned in the table, where we find that the calculated mean value for the freelance interpreters is 3.88 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of staff interpreters which is 3.38. Therefore, staff interpreters are not affected by this factor, unlike freelance interpreters who are affected by it.

d) With respect to item (10), which states that (***the speaker misuses the microphone, for example, the speaker holds the microphone too close or far from his/her mouth***), freelance interpreters are the ones who are affected by this factor. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values

mentioned in the table, where we find that the calculated mean value for the freelance interpreters is 3.13 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of staff interpreters which is 2.48. Therefore, freelance interpreters, contrary to staff interpreters, are the ones affected by this factor.

e) As regards item (11), which states that (***the speaker is interrupted by another person speaking at the same time***), freelance interpreters are the ones who are affected by this factor. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values where the calculated mean value for the freelance interpreters is 3.18 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of staff interpreters which is 2.72. Therefore, staff interpreters are not affected by this factor, but freelance interpreters are affected by this factor contained in item (11).

f) With reference to item (12), which states that (***the speaker lacks speaking competencies, for example, the speaker does not deliver a speech that is well-organized with clear main points***), it is evident that freelance interpreters are the ones who are affected by this factor. This conclusion is based on the calculated mean values where the calculated mean value for the freelance interpreters is 3.53 which is higher than the calculated mean value of the category of staff interpreters which is 3.03. Therefore, staff interpreters are not affected by this factor, but freelance interpreters.

8. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The analysis of the data shows there is a difference between the effect of individual factors on the performance of CIs which is in line with the argument that individual factors vary in terms of their effect on the performance of CIs. The speaker speaking for long times before giving the interpreter the chance to interpret ranked highest as the factor that has the most effect on the performance of CIs, while the speaker correcting the interpreter when s/he thinks that the interpreter has made a mistake ranked lowest.

No significant differences were found between the respondents in terms of the years of experience for seven factors. However, there were significant differences related to the speaker speaking with a low voice where the interpreters with less than five years of experience were significantly affected unlike those with who have more than five years of experience who were more affected by the speaker being interrupted by another person speaking at the same time.

With regard to the nature of employment, there were no significant differences between the freelance and staff interpreters for seven factors. Nonetheless, there were significant differences between the two groups related to the speaker speaking fast, the speaker speaking with a low voice, the speaker speaking for long times before giving the interpreter the chance to interpret, the speaker misusing the microphone, the speaker interrupted by another person speaking at the same time, and the speaker lacking speaking competencies. According to the analysis, the said factors affected the performance of freelance interpreters more than staff interpreters.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the current research, a number of conclusions can be derived:

1. On the basis of the analysis of the data, factors do not have the same effect on different interpreters.
2. Interpreters who have less than five years of experience reflect almost the same reaction to almost all the factors, except two factors, similar to those with more than five years of experience. They differ only in their response to two factors which shows that the experience variable is not a determining factor in increasing or decreasing the effect of the studied factors on the performance of CIs.
3. Freelance interpreters are more affected by almost half of the factors which shows that the nature of employment can be a determining factor in lessening the effect of some factors on their performance. This may be due to the fact that freelance interpreters may not have enough knowledge of the speaker and his/her speaking style and speaking habits.

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Appendix I: the questionnaire

Investigating the Effect of Speaker-Related Factors on Consecutive Interpreters' Performance

Part 1

Participant's details

Nature of Employment:

Freelance (Interpreter) Staff (Interpreter)

Years of Experience as a Consecutive Interpreter

Less than 5 Years More than 5 Years

Appendix I: the questionnaire

Part 2

Questionnaire

Please tick the options that apply to you.

	Items	Applies to me				
a-	**Speaker-related factors:** I face difficulties in interpreting because the speaker …….	**to a very large extent**	**to a large extent**	**to a medium extent**	**to a low extent**	**to a very low extent**
1	speaks with an accent that is not understandable.					
2	uses several local dialects in the same meeting.					
3	speaks fast.					
4	speaks with a low voice					
5	speaks for long times before giving the interpreter the chance to interpret.					
6	is impatient and interrupts the interpreter.					

7	corrects the interpreter when s/he thinks that the interpreter has made a mistake.
8	does not hand over prepared speeches, manuscripts or presentation material to the interpreter in advance.
9	provides too much information or data in his/her speech.
10	misuses the microphone, for example, the speaker holds the microphone too close or far from his/her mouth.
11	is interrupted by another person speaking at the same time.
12	lacks speaking competencies, for example, the speaker does not deliver a speech that is well-organized with clear main points.
13	speaks a broken foreign language and, when stuck for a word, s/he asks the interpreter for help.

پوختە

ئەڤ ڤەکۆلینە ب شێوەیێ تیۆری و پراکتیکی لێکۆلینێ ل فاکتەرێن گرێدای ئاخفتنکەری ئەوێن کارتێکرنێ ل کارێ وەرگێڕێن ل دوبڤ ئێک دکەن. ئەڤ فاکتەرە هندەک ژ ئەوان بگوران ئەوێن ڕوی ب ڕوی وەرگێڕان دبن و هەردەم وەرگێڕ سەرەدەریێ ل گەل دکەن و دبیت وەرگێڕان کونترۆل ل سەر هندەک ژ ئەڤان فاکتەران هەبیت، بەلێ هندەک ژ ئەوان نە ل ژێر کونترۆلا ئەوانن. ئەڤ چەندە ڕامانا هندێ ددەت کو ئاخفتنکەر هندەکێ بەرپرسە ژ کارێ وەرگێڕی. ئەڤ فاکتەرە هاتینە وەرگرتن ژ وەرگێڕێن ل دوبڤ ئێک ل هەرێما کوردستانێ ب ڕێکا ب کارهینانا ڕاپرسییەکێ کو ب ڕێکا وێ هندەک فاکتەر هاتینە دەستنیشانکرن. و ئەو وەرگێڕێن ڕاپرسی ل سەر ئەوان هاتینە بەلاڤکرن وەرگێڕێن تازەپێکەهشتینە کو سەربورا ئەوان ژ پێنج سالان کێمترە، و وەرگێڕێن پێگەهشتی کو سەربورا ئەوان ژ پێنج سالان پترە. هەر وەسا جۆرێ کارێ ئەڤان وەرگێڕان یێ جیاوازە، چونکی هاتینە دابەشکرن بۆ وەرگێڕێن سەربەخۆ و وەرگێڕێن ستافێ کارێ. ئەڤ ڤەکۆلینە فۆکسی ددانیتە سەر فاکتەرێن گرێدای ب ئاخفتنکەریڤە کو ١٣ فاکتەرێن لاوەکی ب خۆڤە دگریت. دهێتە پێشبینیکرن کو ئەڤ ڤەکۆلینە دێ هاریکاریا وەرگێڕێن ل دوبڤ ئێک و هەر وەسا قوتابیێن وەرگێڕانێ کەتن ژبۆ ئاشنابوون ب ئەڤان فاکتەران و باشتر تێگەهشتنا کارتێکرنا ئەوان ل سەر کارێ ئەوان و ب ئەڤێ چەندێ کێمکرنا ئەڤێ کارتێکرنێ. ئەنجامێن ئەڤ ڤەکۆلینە گەهشتییێ ددەنە دیارکرن کو کارتێکرنا ئەڤان فاکتەران ل سەر کارێ وەرگێڕێن ل دوبڤ ئێک وەکی ئێک نینە. هەر وەسا وەرگێڕێن کو سەربورا ئەوان ژ پێنج سالان کێمتر کارڤەدانا ئەوان ل سەر هەمی فاکتەران هەتا ڕادەکی وەکی کارڤەدانا وەرگێڕێن سەربورا ئەوان ژ پێنج سالان پتر نینە. نیڤا فاکتەران کارتێکرن ل کارێ وەرگێڕێن ستافێ کارێ کر و ئەڤە ڕامانا ئەوێ چەندێیە کو جۆرێ کارێ وەرگێڕی دبێتن ببیت فاکتەرەکێ کاریگەر ژ بۆ کێمکرنا کاریگەریا هندەک ژ فاکتەران ل سەر کارێ ئەوان.

پەیڤێن کلیلی: وەرگێڕانا ل دوبڤ ئێک، فاکتەرێن گرێدای ب ئاخفتنکەری ڤە، وەرگێڕێ ل دوبڤ ئێک، کارێ وەرگێڕێن ل دوبڤ ئێک.

الخلاصة

تبحث هذه الدراسة نظريًا وعمليًا في العوامل المتعلقة بالمتحدث والتي تؤثر في أداء المترجمين التعاقبيين. وتمثل هذه العوامل بعض المتغيرات التي يواجهها المترجمون ويتعاملون معها بشكلٍ دائم. قد يكون للمترجمين القدرة على التحكم في بعض هذه العوامل، ومع ذلك قد يكون بعضها خارج نطاق سيطرتهم. وهذا يعني ان المتحدث يتحمل بعض المسؤولية عن اداء المترجم. ان هذه العوامل تم استحصالها من المترجمين التعاقبيين العاملين في اقليم كوردستان من خلال استخدام استبيان أدى إلى تحديد بعض العوامل. ان المترجمين الذين شملهم الاستبيان هم مترجمون مبتدئون تقل خبرتهم عن خمس سنوات ومترجمون ذوو خبرة تزيد عن عشر سنوات. وكذلك تتباين طبيعة عمل المترجمين حيث انهم ينقسمون الى مترجمين مستقلين ومترجمين يعملون بصفة دائمة لجهة معينة. وتركز الدراسة الحالية على العوامل المتعلقة بالمتحدث والتي تتضمن ١٣ عوامل فرعية. من المتوقع ان تسهم هذه الدراسة في تعريف المترجمين التعاقبيين وطلبة الترجمة بهذه العوامل وفهم تأثيرها على أدائهم، وبالتالي الحد منها. ويتبين من النتائج التي توصلت اليها الدراسة ان أداء المترجمين التعاقبيين لا يتأثر بالعوامل المتعلقة بالمتحدث بنفس المستوى. بالإضافة الى ذلك فإن المترجمين ممن كانت خبرتهم اقل من خمس سنوات كان لديهم نفس التفاعل إزاء جميع العوامل تقريبًا كما هو الحال مع المترجمين الذين تزيد سنوات خبرتهم عن خمس سنوات. وأثر نصف العوامل على أداء المترجمين المستقلين ، وهذا يعني ان طبيعة عمل المترجم قد يكون عاملًا مؤثرا في التخفيف من أثر بعض العوامل على ادائهم.

الكلمات الدالة: الترجمة التعاقبية، العوامل المتعلقة بالمتحدث، المترجم التعاقبي، أداء المترجمين التعاقبيين.