

Difficulties of Simultaneous Interpreting from Translation Students' Perspective

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Abstract—The present study is a survey that explores the difficulties of simultaneous interpreting (SI) for translation students. The survey addressed senior translation students in the Kurdistan Region, asking them about the troubles of SI from English into Kurdish or Arabic in the classrooms. Relying on the available models in interpreting studies, this study aims to assess difficulties in SI from the linguistic, cultural, cognitive, interactional, and translational aspects. For this purpose, a questionnaire has been designed and distributed among translation students, covering the issues relevant to the cited dimensions. Sixty respondents participated in the survey, whose responses were statistically analyzed and discussed. The results reveal that cognitive issues such as comprehending fast speaking, concentration, memorization, controlling stress, encyclopedic knowledge, and strategic thinking make the highest degree of difficulty (22%) for students. In sum, working on all aspects of SI should be emphasized by interpreting teachers in the classroom to pave the way for developing students' skills and abilities in these respects.

Keywords—Interpreting studies, Levels of difficulty, Linguistic issues, Simultaneous interpreting, Translation students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although translation and interpreting enable communication across languages, the two professions require different skills and training. While the same language is used in speaking and writing, the skills and steps needed for their translation are different. Interpreting entails immediate decision-making, no time for second-guessing or word-switching, and quick oral reproduction of the message in TL. In interpreting, the interpreter exclusively tries to communicate the message to the TL audience. Unlike the translator, he does not focus on the stylistic and aesthetic aspects of the SL speech due to the time limit, the spontaneous nature of interpreting, and the instant context in which the translator and other parties interact. Because of the significant differences between translation and interpreting, Seleskovitch views interpreting as “not the oral translation of words rather the interpreter uncovers a meaning and makes it explicit for others” (1978, p. 9).

As interpreting studies is a young discipline, there has not been enough research to investigate the interpreting process (cognitive studies), functions (sociocultural studies), and products (lingua-textual studies) in comparison to translation studies which has addressed different issues related to translation over the past half a century. The lack of

interpreting studies in the Kurdistan Region is more felt even though interpreting between Kurdish and other languages is very frequent due to the Region's geopolitical situation.

In Kurdistan, translation and interpreting are generally viewed as dexterity which translators usually acquire through experience and practice in the market. Translator education at the undergraduate level is provided only in a few universities. Moreover, postgraduate study programs (MA and Ph.D.) in translation and interpreting are not available, and research on interpreting (if any) is usually conducted or supervised by experts of other majors such as language teaching, linguistics, and comparative studies.

The current study explores the difficulties of simultaneous interpreting (SI) from the translation students' perspective in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In doing so, the present research is a survey examining senior translation students' view of the difficulty of the issues they face in SI from English into Kurdish and Arabic. For this purpose, a questionnaire is distributed among them to collect data on how they deal with different linguistic, cognitive, interactional, translational, and cultural aspects of SI.

The survey's results will guide translation teachers and syllabus designers to find out which issues relevant to SI are of a high level of difficulty for translation students and

which SI skills and abilities need to be overemphasized and practiced in the study program. This leads teachers to provide appropriate strategies and materials to improve students' interpreting competence and skills. The paper also assists interpreting trainees and practicing interpreters gain insights into the challenges of SI so that they can work on those difficulties to overcome them.

II. INTERPRETING: MODES, TYPES, AND MODALITIES

Interpreting is an auditory perception of the SL message, a quick discarding of words, keeping ideas relevant to the SL message, and the reproduction of the TL message (Seleskovitch, 1978, p. 14). According to Bowen and Bowen, interpreting is processed in three stages: (a) immediate realization of SL discourse; (b) apprehending the SL discourse; and (c) finding appropriate TL constructions adaptable to the SL message (1984, p. 1). According to the meaning-based model of interpreting (Russell, 2002), interpreters go through the following steps: assessing the contextual factors (i.e., participants, their social status and relations), comprehending the SL message (relying on their syntactic, semantic, cultural and contextual knowledge), assessing the contextual and linguistic schemas, formulating an equivalent, and producing the TL interpretation. Accordingly, interpreting consists of intensive listening to the SL speaker, understanding his message, and the quick reproduction of the message in the TL.

There are three modes of interpreting: sight translation, consecutive interpreting (CI), and SI. In sight translation, the translator reads the written ST out loud in the TL. Involving reading and speaking skills in two different languages, sight translation entails a move from the written ST to the oral TT. However, in CI, the interpreter starts interpreting when the SL speaker pauses for a moment. Sitting or standing beside the SL speaker, the interpreter listens and takes notes as the speaker is delivering his speech, and he renders the entire message into the TL when the speaker stops speaking for few seconds. In long-CI, the speaker continues speaking for more extensive speech segments, and the consecutive interpreter has to take notes to record ideas and details. However, in short-CI, as the speech segments are short and the speaker pauses every sentence or two, the interpreter does not need to take notes.

On the other hand, in SI, the interpreter renders the message in the TL as quickly as he can formulate it while the SL speaker continuously speaks. The interpreter speaks into a microphone while sitting in a sound-proof booth and sees and hears the SL speaker through earphones. In other words, the simultaneous interpreter listens to the speaker through headphones and simultaneously interprets his words into the TL via a microphone, and the audiences hear the interpretation through the headphones they put on.

Depending on the contextual situation and requirements, either CI or SI is appropriate. Community interpreting occurs in healthcare centers, hospitals, local authorities, and education and welfare services. It is a dialogue-like

interaction in which the interpreter interprets between the working languages. In these contexts, CI is more appropriate, and factors such as speech's emotional contents, hostile surroundings, stresses, the power relationships among participants, and the interpreter's degree of responsibility affect language and communication.

In multilingual communication, CI is not instrumental because the SL message should be rendered into the TLs one after the other. This mode would be time-consuming and lead to distractions and confusion among recipients. Instead, it is more viable to use SI in conferences, press conferences, and meetings to avoid inconvenient situations. Nowadays, SI is an inevitable component of the procedures in international institutions such as the EU and UN that favor interpreting several foreign languages in the interpreter's mother tongue. In these situations, the audio equipment is essential for doing SI, without which SI is undoable.

Furthermore, interpreting modality denotes how interpreting is delivered to audiences. In general, there are three modalities: (a) On-site interpreting, the most common modality which requires all parties (i.e., the interpreter, SL speaker, and TL audiences) to be physically present in the place; (b) telephone interpreting or over-the-phone interpreting, in which the interpreting is carried out through telephonic contact, and the interpreter is added to a conference call when no on-site interpreter is readily available at the location of interpreting; and (c) video interpreting, that is remote interpreting, and the interpreter sees and hears the speaker and audiences through a video camera and audio feed. In sum, which mode of interpreting is used in each modality depends on the availability of the interpreter and the context of interpreting.

A. Difficulties of SI

The exclusive features of interpreting, in contrast to translation make interpreting more challenging for translation students. While translation is the textual replacement of ST with TT through which the translator has access to enough time and aids (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, grammars, and online resources) to produce a faithful, accurate, and editable translation, interpreting occurs in real-time with the physical, televised, or telephonic presence of the involving parties (i.e., SL speaker, interpreter, and audience). Miremedi presented the differences between translation and interpreting (2008, pp. 181-185) as follows:

1. In translation, the author, translator, and recipients of TT enjoy different temporal and spatial contexts. However, in interpreting, they share a communication context in which they are in contact. Fulfilling what they are expected to do, interpreters are under linguistic, sociological, psychological, and cognitive pressures to handle the communication situation successfully.
2. The translator encodes the original message in the TL in written form, while the interpreter does it orally. It allows translators to draft, review, and revise the TT before publication. However, this is not possible for interpreters, and they should immediately deliver the oral version

to the audience. Moreover, to improve the translation quality, translators usually have enough time to use some translation aids such as dictionaries, glossaries, and corpora, but interpreters face a strict time limit (a few seconds) to communicate the message to the audiences.

3. The communication in translation is lingual-textual and paratextual, but verbal communication in interpreting is enriched by the parties' gestures, facial expressions, intonation, and other forms of body language. Therefore, interpreters concentrate on both linguistic and non-linguistic expressions to reproduce what is being intended by the SL speaker.

Because of these features of interpreting, translation students usually get into trouble when interpreting. The challenges become more critical when they undertake SI. According to Russell, simultaneous interpreters make more mistakes than consecutive interpreters (2005, pp. 153-155). It is because "in CI, the rendering of the speech is carried out by the interpreter with some time lags right after the speaker stops speaking" (Miremedi, 2008, p. 189), and the interpreter has enough time and concentration to listen and take notes. However, in SI, the rendering of the speaker's words is done at the same time (ibid, p. 201). The simultaneous interpreter listens to the SL speaker, thinks, and analyzes the SL speech, and interprets the SL message into TL as the SL speaker is unceasingly speaking. Conducting this multifaceted task within the strict linguistic, cognitive, sociologic, and cultural situation to interact with other parties makes SI a real challenge for translation students.

Pöchhacker (2004) is one of the interpreting scholars who reviewed different models in interpreting studies to explore the issues relevant to interpreting. According to him, these models include processing, interaction, socio-professional, and institutional. The processing models highlight the cognitive steps (e.g. understanding and memorization) in the interpreter's mind. For instance, according to Herbert, interpretation consists of three distinct parts: (a) Understanding; (b) conversion; and (c) delivery (1952, p. 9). Likewise, Seleskovitch's triangular model consists of receiving the SL verbal utterance, getting the sense through the deverbalization of ST, and reproducing the message in TL (1978).

Interaction models emphasize the communicative relationship between the interpreter and other parties involved in the process of interpreting (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 88). These models include (a) the interactive constellation models (Pöchhacker, 1992; Gile, 1995; Anderson, 2002) according to which the interpreter mediates between other parties in either one-to-one or one-to-many interactions; (b) communication models (Kirchhoff, 1976; Ingram, 1985; Kondo (1990) that concentrates on the consequence of acts of decoding the ST, transferring the message through a channel, encoding the TT, and delivering it to TL audiences; and (c) Text and discourse models (Stenzl, 1983; Kalina, 1998) according to which the actant-information interaction and text-processing are contextualized within the communicative situation.

Last but not least, socio-professional and institutional models address the recently emerging issues in interpreting (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 86). Dealing with the interpreter's professionalism (Tseng, 1992; Ozolins, 2000) and the institutional occupation (Agger-Gupta, 2001), these models introduce interpreting as a profession in society. They accentuate the interpreters' socio-economic condition, identity, social position, rights, responsibilities, etc.

In the current study, the concerns and focal points of the mentioned models and the characteristics of SI are considered to hold a holistic view of the potential difficulties translation students may experience in conducting SI. Relying on these models, SI possesses five aspects: linguistic, cognitive, interactional, translational, and cultural. The linguistic and cognitive aspects of interpreting are emphasized in the processing models; the interactional aspect is taken from the interaction models; the translational aspect refers to the interpreters' task within the institutional occupation which has been elaborated in the institutional models; the cultural aspect is highlighted in the socio-professional models. From these aspects, numerous issues may emerge and put translation students in trouble in the process of SI. In the following lines, these issues are presented:

1. *Linguistic issues*: Incorrect sentences, ambiguous expressions, vocabulary misuse, new words and concepts, synonyms and antonyms, syntactic complexity, and unclear pronunciation.
2. *Cognitive issues*: Stress and nervousness, encyclopedic knowledge, experience, self-confidence, concentration, memorization ability, and strategic thinking.
3. *Interactional issues*: Listening and comprehending, fast speaking, noises and distractions, intonation and sound quality, cooperation and interaction, time limits, and energy and endurance.
4. *Translational issues*: Effective communication, simplification and understandability, reformulation, translation techniques and strategies, knowledge about translation, accurate interpreting, and acceptable interpreting.
5. *Cultural issues*: Cultural gaps, culture-based terms and concepts, jokes and puns, false friends and cognates, homonyms, embarrassing expressions and taboos, and re-contextualizing.

Distinguishing between difficulties and problems, Nord believes that difficulties are those subjective obstacles that specific trainees (e.g., senior translation students) encounter, but problems are those objective obstacles that always matter although they may not be an issue anymore (1991, p. 167). In other words, as these issues can cause SI to be problematic for students, they are classified as the difficulties of SI from students' perspective.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study set five aspects of SI to which some issues are attributed. These aspects include linguistic, cognitive, interactional, translational, and cultural. These aspects were construed into 35 challenging items which translation

students usually encounter in interpreting. This study assesses the difficulty level of each one of these issues by conducting a survey.

For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed and distributed among the 4th stage translation students in the Kurdistan Region. The questionnaire included 35 questions. Each question covered one of the SI issues and asked students its difficulty level. In this survey, the notion of difficulty was defined at three levels: Easily manageable (a range of difficulty from 1.00 to 1.49), Difficult but manageable (from 1.50 to 2.49), and unmanageable (from 2.50 to 3.00). Sixty students responded to the questionnaire, and each student selected the difficulty level for each item from his own experience and perspective. As a quantitative study, in the next part, students' responses will be statistically analyzed, the results will be presented in a chart, and the difficulty levels of the issues for translation students will be discussed.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Senior translation students pass a four-semester interpreting course through the past 2 years of their undergraduate studies. In the third stage, they have a CI course in which they develop the skills of intensive listening, note-taking, shadowing, rehearsing, and memorizing. They also practice interpreting different speeches to improve their interpreting competence. This course prepares them to take a higher level of interpreting. In the fourth stage, students learn and practice SI. As mentioned in the previous part, SI is different from CI

in many ways. It makes SI challenging for the learners in the classroom. These challenges are generally rooted in SI's linguistic, cognitive, interactional, translational, and cultural aspects.

The present survey, collecting data by distributing a questionnaire among translation students in the Kurdistan Region, yielded interesting results on the difficulty level of 35 SI-relevant issues from students' perspective. Through the questionnaire, students were asked how they weigh these issues as they experience them in doing SI in the classroom. After analyzing the collected data, the following results are achieved about the issues' difficulty levels from students' viewpoint, which are presented in the following bar graph (Fig. 1).

Students' responses revealed that they experienced all SI difficulties. The difficulty levels of the SI issues for them are generally between 1.50 and 2.00. However, some are more difficult (over 2.00) than others. As mentioned in the previous part, every seven issues belong to one of the mentioned SI aspects. Comparing the issues' difficulty levels tell us which SI aspect primarily challenges students in the process of SI in the classroom.

In the current survey, interpreting the expressions with "unclear pronunciation" and speaking rapidly (or fast speaking) and their lack of the needed "experience" are the most challenging issues for students. The difficulty level attributed to these issues is 2.13. It means that most learners found these issues difficult but manageable. Pronunciation and speaking rate are related to speaking quality, playing a significant role in comprehending the speaker's message. In

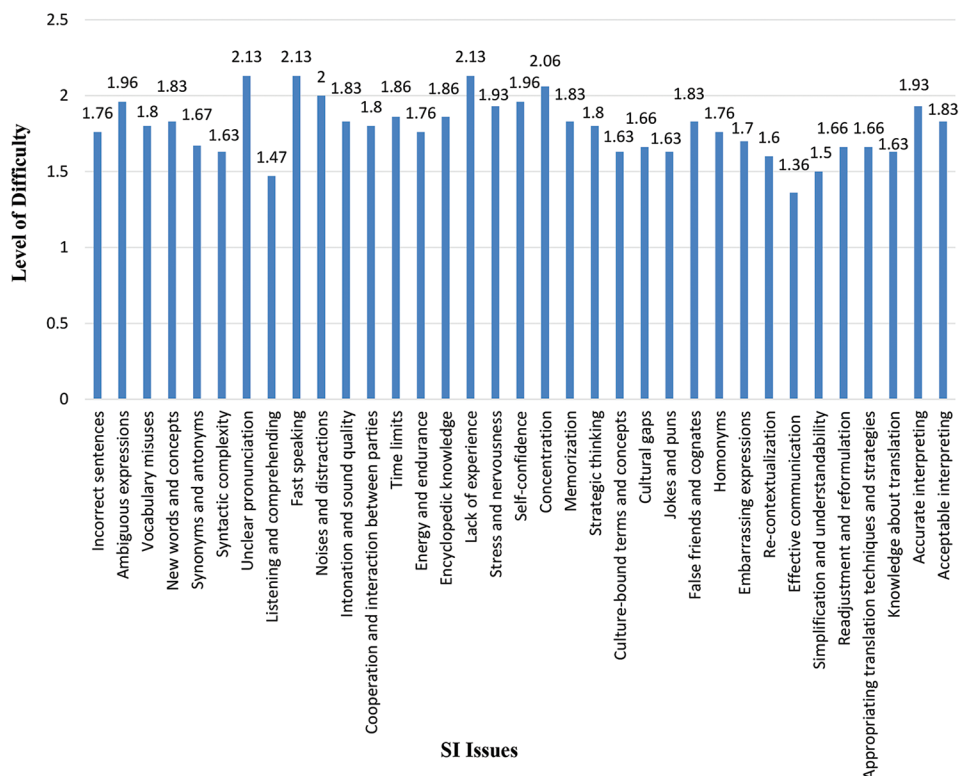


Fig. 1: Levels of Difficulties of SI Issues.

other words, as students do not have any control over the SL speakers' language, they need to catch up with the speaker's speaking rate, style, and dialect.

On the other hand, there are some issues that students handled efficiently. Students gave a difficulty level of 1.36 to "effective communication" in SI as they can successfully communicate with the parties (i.e., SL speaker and TL audiences). Likewise, students viewed "listening and comprehending" as an easy task with a difficulty level of 1.47. It means that they easily understand what they listen to in the process of SI.

Between the issues with the highest and lowest difficulty levels, there are numerous cases whose difficulty levels range from 1.50 to 2.06. They are rounded as level 2. It means that students viewed them as difficult but manageable in the process of SI. However, the cases with the same range of difficulty were not weighed the same by students. For instance, "concentration" and "noises and distractions" with respective difficulty levels of 2.06 and 2.00 remind us of the importance of a tranquil atmosphere for SI, and students without it may fail in the task. Interpreting what the speaker has just said, listening to the subsequent phrases, and analyzing them to simultaneously deliver the message in the TL require high concentration and an environment free from noise and distraction. That is why, even in professional interpreting, at least two interpreters work inside the booth, and each interpreter interprets for not more than twenty minutes, depending on the task's difficulty. In the following lines, other difficulties students emphasized in SI are mentioned.

1. *Ambiguous expressions* (1.96): Interpreting statements with more than one meaning or no obvious meaning;
2. *Self-confidence* (1.96): Interpreting with feeling trust in one's abilities and skills;
3. *Stress and nervousness* (1.93): Experiencing mental strains in the process of interpreting;
4. *Accurate interpreting* (1.93): Reproducing the original speech tone and style in the TL and sharing with the TL audience the original message with a comparable level of fluency and accuracy;
5. *Time limits* (1.86): Keeping with the pace of the original speaking and heeding the strict time limit of hearing, analysis, and reproduction;
6. *Encyclopedic knowledge* (1.86): Being knowledgeable about the subject matters and the fields' terminology to be interpreted;
7. *New words and concepts* (1.83): Specialized interpreting (e.g., legal and business) with a high number of terms and concepts;
8. *Intonation and sound quality* (1.83): The SL speaker's low speech quality due to technical issues or his unusual vocalization;
9. *Memorization* (1.83): Simultaneous handling of the multiple tasks of SI by relying on short-term memory efforts;
10. *False friends and cognates* (1.83): Confusing similar words in the SL and TL as words of the same meaning and origin;
11. *Acceptable interpreting* (1.83): Offering a satisfactory interpretation to the TL audiences, which meets their needs and expectations;

12. *Vocabulary misuses* (1.80): Realizing that the SL speaker uses some bizarre jargon and expressions which are against the socio-linguistic rules;
13. *Cooperation and interaction* (1.80): Getting involved reciprocally with the SL speaker and TL audiences;
14. *Strategic thinking* (1.80): Intentional and rational analysis of the influential factors (people, situation, agenda, instruments, and subject matter) in SI;
15. *Incorrect sentences* (1.76): Extracting meaning from incorrect sentences and correcting them in the TL;
16. *Energy and endurance* (1.76): Saving poise, energy, and endurance in the process of SI;
17. *Homonyms* (1.76): Distinguishing similarly pronounced words with different meanings;
18. *Embarrassing expressions* (1.70): Dealing with taboos and swear words and adopting appropriate techniques to render them in the TL;
19. *Synonyms and antonyms* (1.67): Finding equivalents for the words of similar and opposite meanings;
20. *Cultural gaps* (1.66): Overcoming the cultural differences between the SL and TL speech segments and providing the TL audiences with needed information to fill in the gaps;
21. *Readjustment and reformulation* (1.66): Changing the ST's lexico-grammatical structure according to TL conventions and communicating the speaker's message to TL audiences;
22. *Appropriating translation techniques and strategies* (1.66): Applying proper translation procedures to communicate the SL speaker's message to TL audiences in a proper way;
23. *Syntactic complexity* (1.63): Analyzing complex and long sentences and getting ideas to interpret;
24. *Culture-bound terms and concepts* (1.63): Acquiring cultural awareness to render cultural elements and introducing new ideas and facts to the TL audience;
25. *Jokes and puns* (1.63): Keeping the humorous aspect of jokes and puns in TL, which entails more than literal rendering of the intended joke or pun;
26. *Knowledge about translation* (1.63): Applying theories to overcome obstacles and problems;
27. *Re-contextualization* (1.60): Analyzing the SL context and reproducing the message in TL lingua-cultural context;
28. *Simplification and understandability* (1.50): Using simplified expressions in the TL and making it understandable for the TL audiences.

More interestingly, no unmanageable case (with an average difficulty level of 2.5 and above) was detected in the survey. To put it another way, although students found 33 difficult cases, they realized that they can overcome them in the process of SI. At the same time, all of them caught students' attention, making SI a hard task that they do not succeed without training and practice.

Furthermore, through grouping the related issues of each SI aspect and calculating the ratio of each aspect's difficulty to the total difficulty of SI (100%), it is realized that all of them have a considerable share in posing challenges for the senior translation students in SI (Fig. 2). This concordance also exists with the difficulty level 2 students gave to most SI issues.

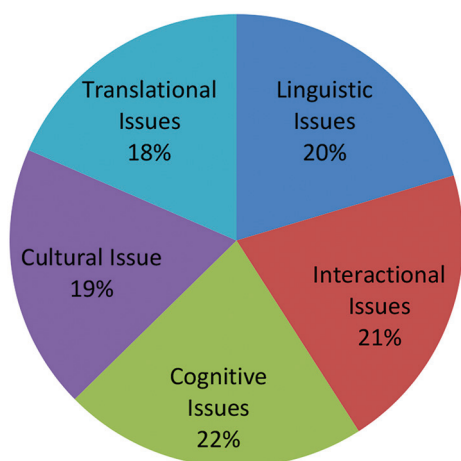


Fig. 2: Percentages of difficulties of SI aspects.

According to Fig. 2, the cognitive aspect of SI, which includes stress and nervousness, encyclopedic knowledge, experience, self-confidence, concentration, memorization, and strategic thinking, forms 22% of the total difficulty of SI for students. It emphasizes the importance of developing students' cognitive abilities on the quality of their SI as everything passes through their minds before being communicated to the TL audiences. If the interpreter has trouble, for example, in memorizing ideas, concentrating on the task, or raising the subject's awareness, his performance becomes weak and unsatisfactory. This left mediocrity is demolished if the interpreter becomes anxious and he lacks self-confidence. Students must work on the cognitive aspect of SI. At the same time, interpreting teachers should design a SI course that aims to develop students' cognitive abilities so that they can mentally process more information in the course of SI.

Another critical aspect of SI is the interactional aspect, dealing with listening and understanding, fast speaking, noises and distractions, intonation and sound quality, cooperation and interaction, energy and endurance, and time limit. Interaction can be regarded as the dynamo of the SI task, due to which all other cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and translational aspects are congregated and turned into performance in real-time. It is the core aspect of SI because, unlike translators who exclusively interact with the ST and translation aids, interpreters have to cooperate with the surrounding (internal and external) factors in the process of SI. In the undergraduate translation programs in the Kurdistan Region, very few courses are devoted to interpreting (Aminzadeh, 2021). As a result, students have little chance to overcome interpreting interactional issues. They only can practice it with the available instrument in the classroom or the sound laboratory. Therefore, they always perceive issues like listening in noisy situations, managing time limits, saving energy and concentration, and interacting with the speaker and audience as real challenges.

The other two aspects (i.e., cultural and linguistic), respectively, form 19% and 20% of the difficulty of SI for students. Having linguacultural knowledge of both

the SL and TL is an equally essential factor for the qualification of both interpreters and translators. Because of this importance, translation students acquire a relatively acceptable acquaintance with the source and target languages and cultures at the undergraduate level. It is a development from intralingual knowledge (i.e., knowledge about source and target languages and cultures) to interlingual knowledge (i.e., knowledge about their similarities and differences). In this process, students first learn the SL and TL; then, they do contrastive analysis between the language pair at lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discursive levels to master their differences and similarities.

Last but not least, the translational aspect of SI, which concerns effective communication, simplification and understandability, reformulation, appropriate translation techniques and strategies, knowledge about translation, and accurate and acceptable interpreting, has taken 18% of the total difficulty of SI from students' viewpoint. Despite its centrality in the process of SI, the translational aspect took the minimum percentage of SI difficulty in the survey. This aspect is primarily related to the knowledge of how to move from SL to TL, from the thinking phase to the speaking phase, from decoding the SL speech to encoding the TL speech, and from the speaker to the audience. Any deficiency in this regard leads to miscommunication between the parties.

B. Discussion

The present study shows that senior translation students do not get used to interpreting quick speeches or different dialects. It is due to their lack of experience in authentic interpreting. It allows students to interpret real speeches of different habits and styles. Similarly, they fail in concentrating on the SI task because of the distracting factors surrounding them. Moreover, students' inefficiency in interpreting authentic situations gets worse when they are exposed to internal and external distractions. Therefore, it is difficult for students to understand and concentrate on what the SL speaker says when he speaks fast or talks about something new. As stated in the previous part, these problems are related to the cognitive aspect of SI which holds the highest percentage (22%) of the total difficulty of SI for students.

Accordingly, the current research carries some considerable implications for the difficulties of SI. It indicates that, in the SI courses, teachers mainly focus on linguistic, cultural, and translational issues. They train students to improve their abilities in these respects. However, the progress of students' cognitive ability is out of sight to the teachers. Three reasons are behind this. First, students' minds and thinking are out of access for the teachers to train and assess their progress, but the linguistic and cultural problems relevant to SI are observable to teachers and students to exercise. Second, the aforementioned cognitive issues are peculiar to SI, and they are not concerned with other translation-related courses of the undergraduate translation programs; whereas the linguistic, cultural, and theoretical aspects of translation are continuously addressed and exercised by the trainers and trainees throughout the study program. Last but not least, there are no efficient techniques and tools for improving

students' cognitive abilities such as memorization and concentration, self-confidence, and strategic thinking.

Moreover, students find it difficult to maintain effective interaction with the surrounding factors at the time of SI. In teaching SI to students, the teachers should train them to listen and understand speaking of different tones, rates, and styles, avoid distractions in the interpreting setting and manage the energy and time they have to communicate between parties. Nevertheless, the development of students' interactional abilities, like cognitive issues, is only practiced in the SI course. In other translation courses, the relationship between students and the surrounding factors and how they deal with these is different in terms of time, human factors, the context of the situation, and the task process. These are because of the differences between written translation and interpreting, which were discussed in subsection A. Therefore, students have less chance to develop the interactional skills needed for SI than those skills needed for written translation such as reading and comprehending the ST, dealing with linguistic and cultural problems, using the time offered for drafting and editing the TT, and meeting the requirements of the client's translation brief.

In contrast, students have fewer troubles when they deal with the linguistic, cultural, and translational issues of SI because they have encountered them in the previous courses such as CI, sight translation, and other translation subjects. In other words, as students work on the same problems in other translation courses to boost their translation competence, they get more capability to handle them. However, they still need the training to overcome these difficulties too. To put it another way, overemphasizing the cognitive aspect of SI does not necessarily mean underestimating the significance of cultural, linguistic, and translational factors in students' views. The difficulties in SI experienced by students are due to their lack of competence in the mentioned aspects. Nevertheless, all stages of SI (i.e., intensive listening to the SL message, understanding the ideas, and articulating in the TL) pass through students' minds which requires a high level of listening skills, memorization, concentration, self-confidence, encyclopedic knowledge, and strategic thinking.

In general, the development of students' linguacultural knowledge, interactions with the surrounding factors, cognitive abilities, and knowledge about translation is the way to assist students in overcoming the mentioned difficulties and improving their SI performance.

V. CONCLUSION

SI is the most challenging mode of interpreting that translation students learn in the final year of their undergraduate study. The factors that affect the difficulty of SI tasks are grounded in the cognitive, interactional, cultural, linguistic, and translational aspects. Each dimension includes some problematic items which challenge students to overcome them in the process of SI. In this study, after conducting a survey among the 4th stage translation students

in the Kurdistan Region and analyzing their responses to the relevant questionnaire, it has been revealed that they principally find it formidable to manage the cognitive part of SI.

The current study also recommends that translation teachers and trainers, syllabus designers, and pedagogists consider the importance of developing students' cognitive competence, along with other linguacultural and interactional skills, and offer appropriate methods, techniques, and tools for achieving this goal in the undergraduate study programs. It also suggests researchers carry out further research on various interpreting modes (SI, CI, and sight translation, to name a few.) to explore their process, products, or functions, to assist in the improvement of teaching interpreting, and to educate competent interpreters who could meet the needs and expectations of the community.

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