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TRANSLATIONAL CHALLENGES IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract. Simultaneous interpreting, as a demanding discipline, requires advanced language competencies in both working languages, strong cognitive abilities, and a solid understanding of interpreting techniques. As a complex skill that requires thorough study, it is essential to shed light on its fundamental characteristics through a descriptive method. This paper aims to present the challenges and issues that may arise during the process of simultaneous interpreting. The primary focus of this work is an analysis of an interpreter's performance while rendering a speech from English to Serbian at a United Nations conference. This research paper examines the challenges observed during the simultaneous (conference) interpretation provided on the national broadcasting service, with a focus on interpreting techniques, cognitive processing, and errors that impact message fidelity. Through a translational analysis based on a product-oriented view of quality, the study identifies errors in simultaneous interpreting and distinguishes them from interpreting techniques. The analysis focuses on the linguistic accuracy and completeness of the interpreted output. Linguistic accuracy refers to the correct and faithful rendering of both grammatical structures and semantic content, ensuring that the meaning and form of the source message are preserved. Completeness, in this context, is defined as the accurate transfer of the entire message, including key ideas, speaker intentions, and discourse structure. Delivery-related features such as intonation, voice quality, and prosody fall outside the scope of this study. The descriptive analysis of the interpreted segments of the speech reveals that most problems stem from cognitive skill deficits, indicating that the interpreter's insufficiently developed memory processes impeded delivery at a high level of accuracy.

Introduction

Translation, as a broad communicative activity, encompasses both written and oral forms, depending on the context and purpose of the message being conveyed. Consequently, the terms *translation* and *interpretation* are often conflated across different languages. As Gile (2018) observes, *translation* and *translating* are frequently used as broad terms including both written and oral language transfer, while *interpretation* and *interpreting* more specifically refer to the real-time rendering of spoken or signed language. This paper adopts this distinction consistently. Furthermore, interpretation comprises several modes, most notably simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. The present study concentrates exclusively on the mode of simultaneous interpreting.

Simultaneous interpreting is a form of interpretation wherein the interpreter concurrently translates the speaker's words in real time (Russell, 2005, p. 136). This method of language translation emerged following the conclusion of the Second World War (Gile, 2018, p. 532). The necessity for time-efficient translation that facilitated seamless verbal interaction among participants arose during events such as war crimes trials, plenary sessions, and international organization conferences. Following some earlier successful trials, simultaneous interpreting proved to be the most effective mode for such events (Russo, 2010, p. 333). Simultaneous interpreting is highly demanding in nature.

Qualified simultaneous interpreters undergo independent preparation prior to the act of interpretation, as the thematic content they translate varies significantly. Specifically, interpreters prepare for each event by familiarizing themselves with the relevant discourse and lexical units pertinent to the specific topic. Modern technologies provide simultaneous interpreters with specialized equipment designed for this type of interpreting. Nonetheless, as Gile (2018) points out, simultaneous interpreting can be conducted either with or without the use of electronic equipment, such as microphones, amplifiers, headphones, and interpreting booths. When performed without a booth, it is typically done as whispered interpreting (*chuchotage*), where the interpreter whispers into the ear of the listener. Typically, simultaneous interpreting is performed by teams of at

least two interpreters, who alternate every thirty minutes, as continuous pressure is deemed excessive for a single interpreter (Gile, 2018, p. 532).

Simultaneous interpreting is extensively applied across various business domains. As the global economy developed and strengthened, the demand for simultaneous interpreters in seminars, conferences, business meetings, and trips increased. This paper examines the challenges and errors encountered during the simultaneous interpreting of the speech delivered in English by the President of the Republic of Serbia at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP26), held in Glasgow, Scotland, on November 2, 2021.

Our study employs a descriptive method to clarify the fundamental principles and characteristics of simultaneous interpreting. Furthermore, through the application of translational analysis, we compare the original speech with its translation into Serbian, thereby validating the theoretical concepts discussed in the following section. Linguistic aspects such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are taken into consideration to evaluate the interpreting outcome, rather than paralinguistic features like intonation or delivery style. These linguistic aspects are analyzed in terms of linguistic errors, focusing on how structural, semantic, and pragmatic inaccuracies affect the quality of interpretation. While models addressing broader quality dimensions include prosodic and discourse features, this study adopts a product-oriented approach (Pöchhacker, 2010, p. 167) limited to observable lexical and semantic deviations. In addition, the study also identifies errors related to precision in transferring meaning during interpretation. These errors² are categorized into distinct types: omissions, additions, generalizations, and substitutions. This comprehensive evaluation is crucial due to the nature of the event, which demanded a high level of accuracy and contextual understanding. The inclusion of these elements ensured a thorough and nuanced analysis, highlighting the importance of precise interpreting in diplomatic encounters and forums.

Theoretical Framework

Interpreting, as a specialized field within the broader domain of translation studies and applied linguistics, carries a distinct set of professional responsibilities, cognitive demands, and practical challenges. Simultaneous interpreting, in particular, is characterized by the requirement to comprehend, retain, process, and reformulate spoken language in real time. Unlike consecutive interpreting or written translation, the simultaneous mode involves overlapping processes that must occur without pause or delay. This complexity highlights the need to

² The terms may refer to either interpreting strategies or errors. When such shifts do not affect the speaker's intended meaning, they are considered techniques; when they alter or distort the message, they are classified as errors.

explore cognitive models and error typologies to better understand the interpreting process and its potential for breakdown.

Cognitive Demands and Working Memory

The field of interpreting, like other professional domains, presents its own set of responsibilities and unique characteristics. One of the most significant challenges faced by professionals engaged in simultaneous interpreting is the management of memory and information processing. This challenge is closely related to the concept of *working memory capacity*, which refers to an individual's ability to retain and manipulate information in the brain while concurrently processing additional stimuli (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974). In practice, this means that an interpreter must not only listen attentively to a speech but also translate it into another language in real time. Consequently, the processes of memory retention and information processing represent some of the most demanding aspects of the profession.

Having mentioned the crucial role of working memory, it is essential to reference Gile's Effort Models, which provides a foundational framework for understanding the cognitive load involved in simultaneous interpreting. According to Gile (2009), the interpreting process consists of four concurrent efforts: the Listening and Analysis Effort, the Production Effort, the Short-Term Memory Effort, and the Coordination Effort. Each of these demands a portion of the interpreter's limited cognitive resources, and when these efforts exceed the interpreter's capacity, performance quality may suffer. The model highlights how managing these overlapping cognitive tasks is critical to interpreter success and explains why omissions, delays, or inaccuracies often occur under pressure. Gile's framework not only supports the discussion of memory challenges but also underpins the justification for focusing this analysis on linguistic errors, as these are often direct indicators of cognitive overload during simultaneous interpretation.³

Linguistic and Auditory Challenges in Interpreting

Simultaneous interpreters operate under intense time pressure while processing complex and unpredictable input. In addition to cognitive demands, they must also manage many linguistic and auditory challenges that can significantly impact comprehension and output quality. These often include difficulties associated with specialized terminology, unfamiliar accents, proper names, and numerical information. Each of these elements poses unique processing problems that might lead to errors or affect the fluency and accuracy of the interpretation.

³ For a detailed explanation of Gile's four efforts in simultaneous interpreting, see *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training* (Gile, 2009, pp. 157–174).

In the context of professional conferences, interpreters encounter difficulties due to the necessity of becoming familiar with specialized terminology prior to the event. While the syntax of specialized conference languages is not inherently complex, the primary challenge for interpreters lies in the specialized lexicon employed (Gile, 2018, p. 535). In their work, simultaneous interpreters encounter a diverse range of speakers across various events. For instance, when interpreting from English into Serbian, interpreters may face challenges related to understanding the speaker's accent. Given that English functions as a *lingua franca*, it is characterized by a multitude of regional pronunciations. According to Gile (2009, p. 193), strong accents, incorrect grammar, and unusual linguistic or reasoning styles increase the processing demands within the component of the model, as they require greater cognitive resources for accurate decoding and comprehension. Unfamiliar accents necessitate that interpreters engage in heightened listening and attentiveness to accurately discern and interpret the speaker's message, ensuring it is logically integrated and reproduced in the target language (Gile, 2009, p. 83). Additionally, speakers often incorporate proper names and numerical data into their speeches, which can further complicate the interpreting process.

The translation of proper names presents particular challenges, notably with respect to transcription, which can be complex even in written translation due to the need to understand the phonetic systems of both the source and target languages. Proper names are frequently phonetically unfamiliar to interpreters, exacerbating the difficulty of accurate rendition (Hanaoka, 2002, p. 28). Consequently, interpreters often attempt to approximate the phonetic sound of the name in the target language in the absence of orthographic cues, which can lead to mispronunciations (Quini, 1993). Conversely, while translating numerical data is generally more straightforward, interpreting numerical figures frequently leads to many errors, as documented and analyzed in several studies (Desmet et al., 2018, pp. 14–15). Consecutive interpreters may use notes to manage such large numbers, but this approach requires additional effort in terms of listening and memorization (Setton, 1999). Simultaneous interpreters may also note down the numbers while listening to the speaker.

Types of Interpreting Errors

Errors in simultaneous interpreting are multifaceted and arise from various sources. A notable number of errors come from inadequate equipment, which may impede the fluent and articulate transmission of the speaker's thoughts, compelling interpreters to employ diverse interpreting strategies to mitigate these limitations. Furthermore, the interpreter's own role is crucial, encompassing factors such as experience, proficiency in the working languages, and cognitive abilities. Without these attributes, achieving flawless interpreting becomes highly challenging. Error

analysis in this context involves a comparative translational examination of the original speech and its interpreting, focusing on aspects such as accuracy, completeness, coherence, and the use of linguistic units. This process not only identifies deviations but also assesses their impact on the overall fidelity and effectiveness of the interpreting. Moreover, systematic error analysis helps to refine interpreting practices and improve the quality of training of future interpreters. Error analysis is integral to the advancement of simultaneous interpreting quality, as it provides insight into common areas where interpreters tend to make mistakes, allowing targeted focus on these aspects during interpreter training. Errors may arise from cognitive overload, linguistic complexities, or cultural differences, each of which can hinder the interpreter's ability to maintain fidelity to the source message. Cognitive overload, in particular, has been extensively studied within Daniel Gile's Effort Models (Gile, 1995), which explain how the simultaneous demands of listening, processing, and speaking can exceed an interpreter's mental capacity. Linguistic challenges, such as grammatical and lexical differences between languages, have also been shown to contribute to interpreting errors (Tahir & Pinilih, 2023, p. 33). Moreover, cultural differences affect interpretation of meaning and pragmatics, leading to potential misinterpretations if not adequately managed (Ibrahim & Habeeb, 2023, pp. 94–97). Through systematic error analysis, interpreters acquire valuable insights into their performance, enhance their ability to navigate complex linguistic structures, and devise strategies to mitigate the recurrence of mistakes.

Certain scholars categorize errors in interpreting precision into a few distinct types: omission, addition, generalization, and substitution (Riccardi, 1999; Falbo, 2002; Pio, 2003). An omission is considered an error when a critical portion of the text or speech is left out, thereby compromising the completeness of the conveyed message (Riccardi, 1999). However, if the context allows for the omission of non-essential elements without affecting overall comprehension, it may be viewed as a strategic approach to linguistic economy rather than a true error. Conversely, addition and generalization become problematic when they introduce information that is unjustified or incongruent with the speaker's intended meaning, thus resulting in inaccuracies. Substitution involves altering the ideas presented in the source text when rendering them into the target language (Falbo, 2002). Such modifications can lead to contradictions, ambiguities, and misinterpretations relative to the original message (Pio, 2003).

In error analysis, maintaining coherence is crucial to ensuring that interpreting preserves the meaningfulness and logical flow from beginning to end. An interpreter, as a linguistic expert, must be attentive to the morphological and syntactic units of the working languages. One prevalent issue in written translation is temporal alignment, particularly in languages like Serbian, where the absence of backshifting in indirect speech can be inadequately addressed. Such errors may also arise in simultaneous interpreting due to time constraints and automatic interpreting processes. Consequently, enhancing linguistic competence

is essential for interpreters to mitigate these issues. Moreover, regarding the integrity of interpreting, several scholars assert that interpreters have the responsibility to faithfully convey the speaker's message in its entirety to preserve translation completeness. While Gile (1999) emphasizes that all omissions during interpreting are to be treated as errors, he also acknowledges that due to cognitive pressure and its implications, the output of simultaneous interpreting cannot generally be expected to match the level of fidelity and consistent linguistic quality typically associated with written translation (Gile, 2018, p. 564). Therefore, a rigorous approach to maintaining coherence and accuracy is fundamental for ensuring that the interpreted message aligns closely with the speaker's original intent. This emphasis on linguistic precision not only upholds the integrity of interpreting but also enhances its overall effectiveness and reliability.

Speaker Delivery and Its Impact on Interpretation

The nature of errors in the original speech can significantly influence the outcome of the interpretation. The delivery of the original speech, including factors such as speech rate, word count, and complexity, inevitably impacts the quality and accuracy of the interpretation (Fernández, 2016, p. 5). Frequently, original speeches are prepared in advance, with the speaker subsequently reading from a script. However, this preparation does not always account for the challenges faced by interpreters. The speed at which the speech is delivered, the density of information, and the use of complex or technical language can pose considerable difficulties for interpreters (Plevoets & Defrancq, 2016, pp. 204–206). Additionally, speakers may deviate from the written script, adding spontaneous remarks or changing the tone of their speech. These unscripted elements introduce a further layer of difficulty for interpreters, as they must quickly adjust to shifts in content or emotional tone while maintaining accuracy and fluency in the target language. The rapid pace of such alterations can force the interpreter to process information at an accelerated rate, increasing the cognitive load and potentially affecting the quality of the translation (Es-sousy et al., 2023, pp. 114–126). Moreover, speakers often fail to consider that their words are being interpreted in real time (Fortuna, 2025, p. 1274), which can result in rushed delivery or the omission of certain segments. This can require the interpreter to compensate for missing information and to quickly adapt to changes in the speaker's tone or message. The need for interpreters to manage these challenges requires not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to navigate the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of live translation. The interplay between the speaker's delivery and the interpreter's capacity to convey the message accurately highlights the delicate balance that must be maintained for effective simultaneous interpreting.

Quality in Interpreting

The notion of quality in interpreting is a central yet complex construct, often shaped by the type of interpreting, the context of the interaction, and the expectations of both users and interpreters themselves. Indeed, quality is a multidimensional concept, influenced by various actors (interpreters, users, employers, and trainers), each of whom may emphasize different aspects, depending on the communicative setting and goals (Moser-Mercer, 1996, p. 46; Garzone, 2003, p. 23). Moreover, the diverse criteria used to assess interpreting quality reflect the multifaceted nature of the interpreter's role, encompassing cognitive processing of the source text, the production of a target text tailored to specific communicative goals, and, more broadly, the interpreter's function as a facilitator of communicative interaction (Pöchhacker, 2002, p. 97).

In assessing quality in interpreting, numerous criteria and methodologies have been proposed, with recent approaches increasingly incorporating pragmatic and nonverbal aspects (e.g., Collados-Aís & García Becerra, 2015, pp. 371–372). This paper narrows its focus to the verbal dimension of interpreting quality, excluding non-verbal parameters such as intonation, body language, or accent. While fluency, often treated as a non-verbal feature, is widely recognized as a key indicator of interpreting competence (Collados-Aís & García Becerra, 2015, pp. 371–372), our study does not provide an in-depth analysis of it. Fluency errors are typically analyzed through features such as speech rate, pauses, and hesitations. Although fluency interacts with other parameters, like cohesion and prosody, it falls outside the scope of the study, along with other paralinguistic features. Instead, this paper centers on the verbal accuracy of interpretation, particularly examining linguistic elements such as segmental cohesion, grammatical correctness, the use of specialized terminology, and the identification of interpreting errors, including omissions, generalizations, additions, and substitutions.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive methodological framework to present and analyze key theoretical features pertinent to simultaneous interpreting. This approach facilitates an exploration of core aspects such as cognitive processing demands, interpreting strategies, interpreting challenges, and error classification, specifically, criteria by which certain phenomena may be categorized as either errors or techniques. Central to this methodological orientation is Gile's Effort Model, which serves as the principal theoretical lens for examining the cognitive load and mental operations intrinsic to simultaneous interpreting. Furthermore, the comparative method plays a pivotal role in evaluating the accuracy of simultaneous interpreting by comparing it directly to the original speech, which forms

the core of our case study. By examining elements such as working memory and specialized terminology that directly influence interpreting quality, we identify and categorize errors that impacted the accuracy and coherence of the simultaneous interpreting under scrutiny.

The analysis encompasses linguistic factors, such as lexical and grammatical complexity (measured by the use of low-frequency vocabulary, nominalizations, and complex sentence structures), and extralinguistic factors, including memory processes and the interpreter's familiarity with cultural elements relevant to the speech and the event, as inferred from their handling of culturally specific references and allusions in the interpreted output. All of these factors influenced the final outcome of the interpreting. The case study provides a comprehensive assessment of error types, interpreting techniques, and the practical challenges encountered in simultaneous interpreting. The insights derived from this research aim to highlight recurring challenges in simultaneous interpreting and provide a practical reference for both current and future interpreters, supporting them in anticipating and effectively managing similar issues in real-time interpreting contexts.

The Speech and Interpreting Context

For the needs of this paper, we compared the speech⁴ delivered in English by the President of the Republic of Serbia at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow with its interpretation⁵ into Serbian. The analyzed extract, which lasted approximately 4 minutes and 7 seconds, comprised a significant portion of the overall address and was read from a pre-prepared script. Within this timeframe, the speaker uttered 654 words, yielding a speech rate of approximately 159 words per minute. It is considered a moderate to fast pace for public speaking (Seeber, 2015, p. 85). However, with dense technical content, such a speech rate still requires sustained concentration from the interpreter.

This specific speech was chosen for the case study because it exemplifies how cognitive factors, particularly memory load and information processing, directly impact the accuracy and quality of simultaneous interpreting. The address contains specialized terminology related to climate policy and diplomacy, offering insight

⁴ The transcript of the speech was obtained from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (<http://www.beijing.mfa.gov.rs/importanttext.php?sub-action=showfull&id=1635864411&ucat=19,90&template=Headlines&>) and was verified against the delivered speech to ensure accuracy. The original speech is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW4sXEbcAB0>

⁵ The complete video recording of the simultaneous interpreting was accessed and transcribed from YouTube on February 10, 2023, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-GWWhrKMjef0>

into how interpreters manage domain-specific language under time constraints. It provides a suitable context for analyzing error patterns and interpreting techniques, especially in sections that challenge short-term memory and semantic precision. The analyzed speech extract exhibits several linguistic and structural features that significantly influence interpreting. From a lexical perspective, it incorporates specialized terminology related to climate policy, finance, and energy production (e.g., greenhouse, gas emissions, circular economy, biodiversity, GDP). Additionally, the speaker's shift from a formal, scripted delivery to a more spontaneous and confrontational tone when posing direct questions introduces further interpretative complexity, requiring flexibility in maintaining coherence and capturing nuanced shifts in rhetorical intent (e.g., "And as you can see, dear friends, my people made a terrific speech for me, but I am going to add a few more words and a few more questions for those that are coming from big powers and that haven't answered yet on several questions: number one is: how are we going to finance all these activities?"). Structurally, the speech integrates both pre-prepared content and extemporaneous remarks, with the speaker explicitly acknowledging deviations from the scripted text in order to pose spontaneous questions. This shift introduces a degree of unpredictability, which impacts the overall fluency and coherence of the discourse. Furthermore, the frequent use of rhetorical questions directed at global powers adds a layer of interpretive complexity, compelling interpreters to carefully navigate the dynamic shifts in tone, emphasis, and intent. These shifts require a heightened level of flexibility to maintain consistency in the interpreting output while ensuring the speaker's rhetorical strategy and persuasive force are accurately conveyed.

Additionally, the emotional and persuasive aspects of the speech could have added certain struggles. At one moment, the speaker calls for global unity and responsibility, using references such as a quote from Shakespeare: "The great William Shakespeare wrote that the Earth has music for those who listen—perhaps it is the right time to listen and hear the cry of Mother Earth because if we lose this race against time, our children will inherit an irreparably polluted Planet," to put an emotional and poetic touch on the message. These elements necessitate that interpreters not only preserve the speaker's persuasive intent but also effectively convey the emotional weight of the message, ensuring that its impact is not diminished in interpreting. In conclusion, the speech is more challenging in terms of lexis than grammar. The grammar structure features a mix of simple and complex constructions, including subordinate clauses, conditional phrases, and rhetorical question. However, these elements should not pose a significant challenge for an interpreter.

Extralinguistic factors play a significant role in the quality and accuracy of simultaneous interpreting, influencing the final product in various ways. These factors include the identity and expertise of the interpreter, their proficiency in the working languages, familiarity with the subject matter, and the environmental

conditions under which the interpretation takes place (Horváth, 2012, pp. 47–48; Seeber, 2015, pp. 88–91). In this case, however, details about the interpreter remain unknown, as the broadcasting station failed to give the interpreter credit for the interpretation provided.⁶ Studies have shown that the interpreter's experience significantly influences the quality and efficiency of simultaneous interpreting, with seasoned interpreters demonstrating fewer errors, faster response times, and reduced cognitive effort⁷ (Mankauskienė, 2018, p. 7). While the interpreting was broadcast live on television, it is unclear whether the interpreter was physically present at the event, performing from an interpretation booth, or situated elsewhere and interpreting a live feed. Additionally, although the topic of the conference was predetermined, allowing for prior preparation, it is uncertain whether the interpreter was adequately informed about the specialized terminology pertinent to the subject matter. Such contextual and environmental variables undoubtedly impact the quality and accuracy of interpreting, emphasizing the need for thorough preparation and awareness of the conditions under which it is conducted.

Translational (Comparative) Analysis

To ensure transparency and clarity in the analysis, the English transcript of the original speech is presented alongside its simultaneous interpretation into Serbian. Additionally, a backtranslation of the interpretation into English is provided to enable English-speaking readers to understand and evaluate how the message was conveyed in the target language. This procedure ensures a more comprehensive assessment of the accuracy, completeness, and potential misinterpretations in the rendition. A four-minute excerpt of the speech was selected and divided into five sequential segments, each followed by a detailed analysis and discussion. The segments are presented in order, with each one continuing from the previous to preserve the coherence of the original speech.

In the interpretation transcript, relevant information is included within parentheses. Missing interpretation is marked as "...", while inaccurate rendition is underlined. Missing interpretations, understood as omissions that affect the meaning, are treated as distinct errors and therefore marked separately. In contrast, for the purpose of this analysis, an incorrect interpretation encompasses all forms of inaccuracies, including but not limited to improper use of terminology,

⁶ Practices regarding interpreter crediting differ internationally, with interpreters frequently remaining unacknowledged in media settings. This lack of visibility can affect the perceived role and legitimacy of interpreters. For a recent analysis of interpreter visibility and its communicative implications, see Li et al. (2023).

⁷ Cognitive effort in simultaneous interpreting refers to the mental processing load required to listen, understand, reformulate, and produce speech in real time. It is typically measured through indicators such as unfilled pauses, filled pauses, language errors, repetition, repairs, and other observable disfluencies (Mankauskienė, 2018, p. 4).

grammatical errors, misinterpretation of the intended message, substitutions, generalizations, and additions. Significant pauses are also noted, with their durations indicated in seconds (e.g., 0.3). This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive and precise analysis.

Segment 1

Transcript of the original speech:

We all agree that we must make investment into climate and environment. We all, likewise agree, that future generations must be educated in order not to repeat the mistakes we made, by hurting the only planet that makes life possible. I am very honored that the Republic of Serbia is co-chairing this year's Conference as a Non-EU representative of the Eastern Europe Group.

Transcript of the speech interpretation:

“...” Svi smo se složili da buduće generacije ne treba da ponavljaju greške koje su ponavljali naši preci i da našoj jedinoj planeti kojoj imamo. Moram da pohvalim da smo mi jedini od retkih predstavnika istočne evropske grupe.

Backtranslation of the interpretation:

We have all agreed that future generations should not repeat the mistakes that our ancestors repeated and that to our only planet we have. I must praise that we are the only one of the few representatives of the Eastern European Group.

The analysis of the provided interpreting reveals several notable issues that impact both the accuracy and completeness of the conveyed message. Firstly, the interpreter failed to render the sentence “We all agree that we must make investment into climate and environment.” The reason for this omission remains unclear, but it is evident that this sentence plays a crucial role in the overall context as it serves as an introduction to the speech and topic. Given its significance, the omission is considered an error in the interpreting process. The subsequent problems included another omission, with the phrase “future generations must be educated” left out. Additionally, the continuation—“by hurting the only planet that makes life possible”—was inadequately interpreted, resulting in a gradual loss of meaning and coherence. The interpreter further employed generalization in the sentence “I am very honored that the Republic of Serbia is co-chairing this year's Conference as a Non-EU representative of the Eastern Europe Group,” with the verb “moram” (EN: must) in Serbian introduced without justification. Moreover, the word “honored” was interpreted as “praise” (SR: pohvaliti), which is both semantically and pragmatically inadequate. However, the pragmatic strategy of the implicature was effectively employed, with “Republic of Serbia” replaced by “we” (SR: mi), which contributed to a more acceptable rendering in this case.

Significant omissions were also observed, such as the absence of “co-chairing” and of the noun phrase “a Non-EU representative.” These omissions, along with other inconsistencies noted throughout the interpreting, suggest that the level of fidelity between the English original and the Serbian interpretation is relatively low. As a result, the interpreter’s performance did not fully convey the intended message, leading to an incomplete and imprecise interpreting of the original speech.

Segment 2

Transcript of the original speech:

In concrete terms, we see the special contribution of our expert team in finalizing negotiations on the implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which refers to the establishment of the global market and non-market mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to remaining provisions referring to advanced transparency framework and common timeframes for Nationally Determined Contributions, which are the key provisions of the Agreement that have not yet been covered by the decision that is to be adopted by the Conference, i.e. all member states.

Transcript of the speech interpretation:

(0.5) “...” Takođe, mi smo i potpisnici Pariskog sporazuma (0.4) “...” kako bi smanjili efekat gasova staklene bašte (0.6) što je ključni deo sporazuma koje još uvek neke zemlje nisu ostvarile i čekamo da budu usvojene od svih država članica.

Backtranslation of the interpretation:

We are also signatories to the Paris Agreement in order to reduce the effect of greenhouse gases, which is a key part of the agreement that some countries have not yet implemented and we are waiting for it to be adopted by all member states.

The most serious issue in Segment 2 are the frequent omissions, which compromised the overall integrity of the interpreting. While certain phrases were rendered, the core meaning and central message were often left out. This failure to fully convey the content of the original speech highlights the interpreter’s inability to maintain the fidelity required for accurate interpreting. Additionally, noticeable pauses occurred at points where portions of the speech are missing, suggesting that these omissions resulted from underdeveloped cognitive processing. Such pauses not only disrupt the flow of the interpretation but also indicate that the interpreter may have struggled to process and deliver the information in real time. The omission of entire fragments of the original text further demonstrates the breakdown in effectively transmitting the original message. These deficiencies led to a direct distortion of the intended meaning, significantly compromising the accuracy and clarity of the interpretation. The failure to fully capture the

message of the speech illustrates the challenges faced in simultaneous interpreting, particularly when under pressure to perform.

Segment 3

Transcript of the original speech:

We, therefore, believe that this is an exceptional opportunity for Serbia to give its full contribution to the finalization of negotiations, which, we hope, will secure full implementation of the Paris Agreement. As a result of strong economic development, modelled for Serbia by 2050, the impact of the implementation of climate measures to employment will be optimal, through new jobs creation and creation of new industries which have not existed so far. One billion euro was raised at the first green bonds auction in Serbia, which clearly confirms the trust of international investors in our green agenda, but also to the economic and political stability of our country.

Transcript of the speech interpretation:

Mi i dalje čvrsto verujemo da je ovo sjajna prilika za Srbiju da da svoj pun doprinos finalizaciji dogovora za koji se nadamo da će biti unapređen u odnosu na Pariski dogovor, kao rezultat (0.3) do 2050. godine želimo i mi da prilagodimo kroz stvaranje novih industrija, novih poslova kako bi smanjili efekat staklene baste (0.8) “...” “...” naš zeleni plan je u velikoj meri povezan sa ekonomskom stabilnošću naše zemlje.

Backtranslation of the interpretation:

We still firmly believe that this is a great opportunity for Serbia to give its full contribution to the finalization of the agreement, which we hope will be improved compared to the Paris Agreement, as a result by 2050, we also want to adapt through the creation of new industries, new jobs in order to reduce the greenhouse effect. Our green plan is largely connected with the economic stability of our country.

The primary issue in Segment 3 is the omission of key portions from the original speech, which hindered the delivery of the core message. For example, the fragment “will secure full implementation of the Paris Agreement” was incorrectly rendered as “unapređen u odnosu na Pariski dogovor,” changing the meaning. The failure to accurately convey the key message while interpreting directly impacted on listeners’ understanding of the original speech. The degree of fidelity to the original message was compromised, as substantial portions of the speech were not transmitted, and misunderstandings of the content occurred. Gaps in meaning, coupled with the interpreter’s tendency to omit parts of the speech, led to a diminished clarity of the overall message. Furthermore, the interpreter’s performance was marked by prolonged pauses, some lasting up to 8 seconds, which is indicative of a lack of preparation or underdeveloped cognitive skills

in managing the real-time demands of simultaneous interpreting. These pauses likely reflect moments of hesitation, where the interpreter may have struggled to process and deliver the information effectively. Additionally, the interpreter made a grammatical error by failing to use the auxiliary verb according to Serbian language norms. In Serbian, verbs agree with the subject in both number and person. In this instance, the interpreter used “kako bi,” whereas for the plural first person subject (we) the correct form should have been “kako bismo.”

In this case, omissions and misinterpretations led to a breakdown in communication, directly affecting listeners’ comprehension of the speech. Such deficiencies highlight the challenges of maintaining fidelity to the original speech in simultaneous interpreting, especially when the interpreter faces pressure or lacks the necessary proficiency in handling complex content. The overall quality of the interpreting suffers due to these errors, which directly impede an accurate conveyance of the intended message.

Segment 4

Transcript of the original speech:

Incomes from green bonds issuance will be used for financing renewables, energy efficiency, sustainable water management, prevention of pollution and circular economy development and biodiversity preservation. And as you can see, dear friends, my people made a terrific speech for me, but I am going to add a few more words and a few more questions for those that are coming from big powers and that haven’t answered yet on several questions: Number one is: how are we going to finance all these activities? We’ve heard the story of trillions of dollars that are at our disposal. My question would be: what would be the interest rate, what would be the terms for taking these amounts of money, and actually how are we going to tackle that issue? How are we going to treat the nuclear power plants? Are we going to shut them all or are we going to build them more?

Transcript of the speech interpretation:

Takođe, izdaćemo i takozvane zelene obveznice koji će služiti da cirkuliše ekonomijom i očuvanjem iste “...” Dragi prijatelji, moj narode su napravili govor za mene ali ću dodati jos nekoliko reči i jos nekoliko pitanja koji dolaze od velikih sila na koju još uvek nažalost nisu odgovorena. Prvo pitanje: kako ćemo finansirati sve ove aktivnosti, čuli smo priče o trilionima dolara koji su na našem raspolaganju, koja će biti interesna stopa, kako ćemo moći da pristupimo tim fondovima, toj ogromnoj količini novca, i kako ćemo se boriti sa tim stvarima, kako ćemo tretirati nuklearne elektrane? Da li ćemo ih smanjiti ili povećati još više?

Backtranslation of the interpretation:

Also, we will issue so-called green bonds that will serve to circulate the economy and preserve it. Dear friends, my people! They made a speech for me, but I will add a few more words and a few more questions that come from the great powers, which unfortunately have not been answered yet. The first question: how are we going to finance all these activities, we have heard stories about trillions of dollars at our disposal, what will be the interest rate, how will we be able to access those funds, that huge amount of money, and how will we fight these things, how will we treat nuclear power plants? Are we going to reduce them or increase them even more?

The interpreter's performance in this instance presents several significant issues that affected the overall quality and fidelity of the interpretation. At the outset, the interpreter employs generalization, which alters the intended meaning and undermines the clarity of the original message. For instance, in the fragment "izdaćemo i takozvane zelene obveznice koji će služiti da cirkuliše ekonomijom i očuvanjem iste," the omission and misinterpretation of crucial terms detracts from the original idea of financing sustainable initiatives through green bonds. The term "cirkuliše ekonomijom i očuvanjem iste" does not align with the meaning of the original sentence, which proposed that proceeds from green bonds would finance specific sustainability projects, such as renewable energy, pollution prevention, and biodiversity preservation. The failure to accurately interpret these aspects compromised the integrity of the speech.

Further issues arise from the grammatical structure in Serbian. The fragment "zelene obveznice koji će služiti" contains a grammatical error, with the word "obveznice" requiring the plural form of the relative pronoun—"koje," not "koji." Such errors are indicative of a lack of attention to the syntactic and grammatical rules of the target language, which can undermine the clarity of the interpretation. In the subsequent sentence, the interpreter rendered "my people made a terrific speech for me" as "moj narode," which is inaccurate. The original refers to the speaker's team having prepared the speech, not to the speaker addressing his people. The misinterpretation here is significant, as it changed the tone and meaning of the sentence, leading to a distorted message. This error reflects a lack of fluidity in processing the information, which can be attributed to underdeveloped cognitive skills or insufficient familiarity with the material. Moreover, the interpreter's failure to interpret "interest rate" correctly is problematic. In the context of the speech, instead of "interesna stopa," the more appropriate term would have been "kamatna stopa," which is the standard term for "interest rate" in Serbian. The incorrect choice of terminology, coupled with the generalization of certain concepts, detracted from the precision needed for an effective interpretation. Precision is paramount in interpreting, as the goal is to convey not just the content but also the nuances of the original message.

The most significant issue arose with the final sentence, “Are we going to shut them all or are we going to build them more?” In this instance, the interpreter failed to convey the full meaning of the original sentence. The intended question is whether all existing nuclear power plants should be closed or whether new ones should be built. In the interpretation, it was described vaguely as a debate about ‘reducing or increasing’ them, without explaining exactly what that meant. This misinterpretation significantly altered the speaker’s intent and undermined the clarity of the message.

The numerous grammatical errors, omissions, and misinterpretations in this example point to the broader issue of interpretation fidelity. In interpreting, fidelity does not simply mean word-for-word translation, but rather a faithful conveyance of the speaker’s meaning, tone, and intent. In this case, the interpreter’s performance shows a low level of fidelity, as significant portions of the speech were either misinterpreted or omitted altogether. Furthermore, these errors result in the loss of coherence and clarity for the listeners, which is crucial in simultaneous interpreting.

Segment 5

Transcript of the original speech:

Then, how are we going to build more renewables if we already started endorsing populist movements against wind parks, new hydropower plants, and are we going to put in jeopardy the level of our public debt to GDP ratio if we raise huge amounts of money? How are we going to treat natural gas, and how are we going to secure decent prices of natural gas and electricity power as well? And, I came here using an electric car from Edinburgh to Glasgow. But, how are we going to do mining and refining of lithium, nickel, cobalt and many other very important minerals? In the end, we all know what is our final aim, what is our final target. But, it’s not a fairytale—we’ll have to work a lot, we’ll have to be 100 per cent dedicated, and we’ll have to be more honest with each other. The health of people living in Serbia depends directly on the implementation of this Agenda, just like the health and life of each living being on Earth depends on arrangements that will be reached here and on national implementation of the respective arrangements. The great William Shakespeare wrote that the Earth has music for those who listen—perhaps it is the right time to listen and hear the cry of Mother Earth because if we lose this race against time, our children will inherit an irreparably polluted Planet. Thank you very much for listening to me.

Transcript of the speech interpretation:

Kako ćemo graditi izvore obnovljive energije ako su počeli da jačaju populistički pokreti protiv vetro parkova, “...” kako ćemo rešavati sistema javnog duga i bruto društvenog proizvoda, kako ćemo tretirati cene prirodnog gasa pogotovo jer se on nalazi u rukama moćnih sila. Došao sam ovde da koristim električno vozilo od Ediburga do Glazgova kako ćemo uspeti da nikl i kobalt i ostalo “...”, kasnije preradimo, što kasnije znamo da su ostaci od proizvodnje električnih automobila, i na kraju svi znamo šta su naši ciljevi; ali za neke je to velika bajka i moramo mnogo da radimo na tome i moramo da budemo iskreni jedni prema drugima. Više od polovine ljudi zavisi od primene ovih planova u Srbiji, “...”. Veliki Vilijam Šekspir je rekao da treba pisati stvari za one koji slušaju, mislim da je vreme da ljudi počnu da slušaju, ako izgubimo ovu bitku protiv/trku “...” neće ništa ostati, ništa za našu decu. Hvala vam puno na vašem vremenu, hvala vašoj Ekselenciji.

Backtranslation of the interpretation:

How will we build sources of renewable energy if populist movements against wind parks have started to strengthen, how will we solve the system of public debt and gross domestic product, how will we treat the prices of natural gas, especially since it is in the hands of powerful forces. I have come here to use an electric vehicle from Edinburgh to Glasgow, how will we manage to process nickel and cobalt and other things later, which we later know are the remains of the production of electric cars, and after all, we all know what our goals are; but for some it is a big fairy tale and we have to work a lot on it and we have to be honest with each other. More than half of the people in Serbia depend on the implementation of these plans. The great William Shakespeare said that you should write things for those who listen, I think it's time for people to start listening, if we lose this battle against/race there will be nothing left, nothing for our children. Thank you very much for your time, thank you Your Excellency.

The interpreter continues to exhibit a pattern of omissions, generalizations, and unnecessary additions that significantly distort the original message. For example, the sentence “And, I came here using an electric car from Edinburgh to Glasgow” is misinterpreted as “I have come here to use the electric car...” a rendering that misrepresents the original intent. In this instance, the interpreter failed to capture the present participle in English, which in the original sentence conveys an ongoing action. The use of “da koristim” in Serbian, which suggests a future intention, does not align with the intended meaning of the original speech, compromising the flow and accuracy of the interpretation. Furthermore, the interpretation of the Shakespearean quote “The Earth has music for those who listen” as “treba pisati stvari za one koji slušaju” failed to capture the poetic nature of the quote and distorted its intended message. The original quotation,

which conveys a deeper, reflective message about the environment, was reduced to a general statement that did not evoke the same depth or resonance, thereby diminishing its impact.

When reviewing Segment 5 in its entirety, it is evident that some sections were interpreted in a way that allowed listeners a basic understanding of the content. However, frequent omissions, incorrect interpretation, and misinterpretations ultimately raise the question of accuracy and fidelity of the interpretation. These deficiencies disrupt the integrity of the message and highlight the challenges faced by interpreters in maintaining clarity and precision when conveying complex or nuanced content. The result is a significant loss of meaning that detracts from the effectiveness of the original speech.

Conclusion

Simultaneous interpreting is a complex cognitive-linguistic task that requires mastery across multiple linguistic domains, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Beyond language proficiency, interpreters must possess well-developed cognitive skills to manage the rapid processing and delivery of information in real time. The present analysis reveals that typical challenges in simultaneous interpreting involve unwarranted insertions, overgeneralizations, linguistic inaccuracies, and omissions of critical content. These findings underscore the demanding nature of interpreting and the essential interplay between linguistic expertise and cognitive capacity to maintain precision and coherence.

The comparative examination of the interpreted speech demonstrated significant shortcomings in completeness, characterized by omitted fragments, overgeneralized renditions, incomplete utterances, and contextually inappropriate lexical choices, which collectively resulted in marked grammatical inconsistencies. The fidelity of the interpretation was similarly compromised, adversely affecting the accurate conveyance of meaning. Although the exact cause of these errors remains uncertain, it seems improbable that technical issues, such as disruptions in speech transmission, are to blame, especially considering the global nature of the conference. On the other hand, it is reasonable to question the interpreter's level of experience and proficiency.

By systematically identifying and analyzing these errors through descriptive methods, this study highlights the inherent limitations of interpretation. Notably, cognitive processes (especially memory) emerge as a critical determinant influencing the decline in meaning accuracy. Efficient memory function is thus fundamental to preserving the integrity of the original message during simultaneous interpreting.

This study provides a foundation for further research into the cognitive processes involved in simultaneous interpreting, particularly memory. Without

the efficient functioning of memory, the interpreter's ability to faithfully transfer meaning is severely hindered. Moreover, the insights gained offer practical implications for interpreter training, emphasizing targeted preparation strategies to enhance interpretive precision and semantic fidelity. This study offers important contributions to the field of interpreting by equipping both novice and experienced interpreters with a deeper understanding of the common challenges inherent in real-time interpretation, thereby improving their capacity to anticipate and address these issues effectively.

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Преводачки изазови у симултаном превођењу: студија случаја

Резиме

Симултано превођење као најизазовнији вид превођења захтева изузетно развијене језичке компетенције преводиоца како у изворном тако и у циљном језику, добре когнитивне способности, као и одлично познавање технике превођења. Будући да представља комплексну вештину која захтева темељно изучавање, потребно је расветлити њене основне карактеристике посредством дескриптивног метода. Стога овај рад за циљ има да представи основне карактеристике симултаног превођења, са посебним освртом на изазове и проблеме који могу настати током његове реализације. У фокусу овог рада је анализа преводачког подухвата преводиоца који је симултано преводио један говор са енглеског на српски језик на конференцији Уједињених нација. Истраживачки рад анализира изазове који су се јавили приликом усменог (конференцијског) тј. симултаног превођења, обрађујући посебну пажњу на технику превођења, когнитивне процесе и врсте грешака. На овај начин, компаративна анализа је утврдила шта се може сматрати грешкама у симултаном превођењу, а шта преводачком техником. Након урађене компаративне анализе превода говора, потврдили смо да највећи број грешака долази из домена когнитивних вештина, односно да преводац није успео да постигне висок ниво прецизности услед недовољне развијености процеса памћења.

Кључне речи: симултано превођење; технике превођења; когнитивне способности; анализа грешака; компаративна анализа; дескриптивна метода; процес памћења.



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