

Challenges and Skills in Online Simultaneous Interpreting: A Case Study from Algeria

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ABSTRACT: *As multilingual communication becomes more demanding in the 21st century, remote technologies and devices have become a part of interpreting and other multilingual tasks. As a result, in addition to the complexity of the interpreting mission, remote interpreters face additional obstacles and have to improve an additional range of skills in order to perform their tasks. This article aims at discussing the nature of simultaneous online interpreting as a subset of remote interpreting, and attempts to illustrate a non-exhaustive series of hurdles faced by the author through multiple experiments involving multilingual market research focus group discussion sessions in three Algerian cities from December 2020 to March 2023. The experiments revealed that the level of complexity varies depending on the type of remote setting, with online interpreters' assignments requiring more attention and effort. To succeed, these interpreters need to draw on both hard and soft skills.*

KEYWORDS: Online Interpreting, Remote Interpreting, Interpreters' Skills, Focus Group Discussion, Multilingual Communication

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1. Introduction

Multilingual communication is known to be paramount amongst multinational entities requiring the dedication of translators and interpreters who perform their assignments in multiple fields such as energy, marketing, and arts. The progress made in communication and telecommunication has reshaped the nature of various disciplines, especially during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, as performers and operators had to solve business issues remotely. As a result of these evolutions, the interpreters' work conditions have been significantly affected and require a deeper understanding of their performance, given the importance of their contribution in multilingual communication.

In addition to the evolving professional environments in various fields, the use of information and communication tools is paramount in order to guarantee the feasibility of specific tasks. More recently, the field of interpreting has also witnessed noteworthy changes in terms of techniques, tools and even in terms of peoples' perceptions on the interpreters' assignments in as "one of the main technological revolutions that has affected interpreting practice is the boom of the World Wide Web" (Winteringham, 2010, p. 90). In fact, conferencing platforms have become widespread alternatives to many stakeholders wishing to achieve business goals or to guarantee communication remotely given the advantages and the opportunities that have proved useful since their emergence. Remote interpreting (hereafter RI) actually illustrates this evolution as "distance or remote interpreting is increasingly becoming widespread as a consequence of the evolution of teleconferencing technologies, which link communicative partners at two or more locations, creating new opportunities for real-time interaction without the need for physical copresence" (Braun, 2006, p. 1).

Concretely, the interpreter's mission consists in transferring semantic and semiotic elements orally from the source language to the target language. In addition, the role of simultaneous interpreters is bound to professional requirements such as faithfulness, on-time delivery, quality and professional standards inherent to interpreting, not only regarded as a task but also as a set of constraints and challenges, all of which make the remote interpreter's mission even more complex.

Given the status of remote interpreting and the necessity to further explore its use in the Algerian context, this paper aims at unravelling the obstacles faced in online simultaneous interpreting (henceforth OSI) as a subset of remote interpreting, and the required skills to overcome the hurdles and difficulties faced by interpreters in remote pattern, as it answers questions such as: (1) what are the major settings in remote interpreting? (2) what are the major challenges faced in online simultaneous interpreting? (3) what are the major required skills in online simultaneous interpreting?

To that end, the present article explores the discipline by highlighting the importance of former studies, and by discussing insights collected during a series of assignments that the author has been asked to perform as an online interpreter from March 2020 to May 2023 in order to illustrate situational features. In view of the multilingual landscape in in Algeria and the increasing demand on remote interpreting, it also aims at providing remote interpreters operating in Algeria with field-driven observations that might be useful to meet the future economic requirements.

1. An Overview on Online Simultaneous Interpreting:

RI refers to the transfer of audio materials from a source language (henceforward SL) to a target language (henceforth TL) using a telecommunication device such as phones “the oldest form of distance interpreting is telephone interpreting (TI), which was introduced in 1973 in Australia to help immigrants arriving to the country” (Kelly, 2008, p 5). The acronym RI means “the use of communication technology for gaining access to an interpreter who is in another room, building, city or country and who is linked to the primary participants by telephone or videoconference” (Braun, 2015, p. 346). That being said, OSI may be defined as subset of remote interpreting, considering it relies mainly on the use of videoconferencing platforms.

Along with multiple language professions, interpreting has known significant changes since the 1970s including a wider range of sciences and disciplines such as computer sciences and ergonomics, in addition to telecommunication tools and platforms. The early studies defined the basics of RI and revealed considerable data on its nature and the interpreters’ work conditions in remote patterns; Mercer (2003) reminded that “the first major experiments were carried out in the 1970s: the Paris-Nairobi (“Symphonie Satellite”) experiment by UNESCO in 1976 and the New York-Buenos Aires experiment by the United Nations in 1978” (p. 1). From a financial perspective, Mercer (2003) noted that “while cost and effort necessary to ensure high-quality RI set-ups are certainly still not negligible, they are likely to decrease as equipment becomes less expensive and technical support staff become more experienced” (p. 2).

The necessity of RI became more obvious during the Covid-19 pandemic due to the restrictions and bans set in many countries. From a statistical perspective, the percentages, in descending order, reveal its importance as follows: healthcare (71.43%); social and administrative (64.29%); legal and judiciary (58.93%); police stations (53.57%); educational centres (37.50%); and others (21.43%)” (Pastor & Gaber, 2020, p. 66).

On the whole, OSI's main objective does not differ from traditional simultaneous interpreting; the interpreter’s mission is to guarantee the transfer of spoken materials from SL to TL. However, it’s crucial to highlight that OSI is also subject to a set of factors when performing a traditional interpreting such as the input quality, sound systems and the interpreters’ skills.

Previous research has accurately illustrated the different settings in which remote interpreting (RI) is carried out, specifying the working conditions associated with each setting and examining their impact on interpreting quality. From a comparative perspective, a number of studies have sought to identify situational challenges specific to various RI configurations, with particular attention to interpreters’ tasks and behaviours and to the key factors that influence their performance such as noise, listenability, stress, fatigue and the lack of contextual information.

2. An Overview on Focus Group Discussions

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research technique used to unravel participants’ views, opinions, and perceptions on a clearly defined topic, issue or product. It enables the investigator to generate relevant insights from the individual or group’s shared experiences during a dedicated session. As a form of qualitative inquiry, the FGD is widely known as a reliable data collection method designed to uncover participants’ ideas in a social setting, as they exchange perspectives with the moderator and with one another about a specific concept or predetermined subject matter. FGDs therefore help stakeholders in nurturing strong relations and in adapting contents or products to their clients’ needs, and better understand the cultural and linguistic characteristics of target communities, including in sectors such as the automotive industry. In comparison to individual qualitative interviews and regular meetings, Eeuwijk & Angehrn (2017) suggested the following FGD features:

- **Participants:** Multiple participants who share on (some) common characteristic (s) that is (are) meaningful from the research perspective;
- **Mode of Conduct:** Semi-structured; carefully planned and cautiously executed;
- **Scope of Insights:** Often a large spectrum of opinions, notions and/or experiences, added focus on social interaction between participants;
- **Level of Focus:** High level of focus on the given topic;
- **Degree of Participation:** When accurately and adequately moderated, all participants contribute equally to the discussion. (p. 3)

From linguistic and cultural perspectives, FGD can be a hard task in multicultural situations “besides the obvious difficulty in communicating in a foreign language, or via an interpreter, a researcher might also experience a frustration stemming from a poor understanding of norms, values, roles, communication patterns, public practices and power relations in the community” (Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017, p. 13). In this framework, interpreting might be of significant use in order to achieve cultural identification and adequate targeting since it allows the moderator and/or the participants to better understand each other under the aforementioned circumstances even though the task might seem intricate from a communicational perspective as the type of a FGD setting is not designed like a conference one.

3. Context of the Present Study

The present study encompasses multiple OSI assignments conducted from March 2020 to May 2023 and analyses a non-exhaustive range of challenges and required skills in interpreting during market research focus group discussions. The aforementioned meetings usually involve a meeting leader and one participant or a group of six to eight participants, and typically last two hours in order to discuss their behaviours and their perceptions on selected products as consumers; “focus groups bring together several participants to discuss a topic of mutual interest to themselves and the researcher” (Morgan & Spanish, 1982, p. 253). The participants are also selected according to predetermined criteria such as age, gender, marital situation and profession. All along the sessions, we could observe the main features of OSI not only from a practical perspective, but also from a behavioural one as interpreters might play various additional roles and have to demonstrate an additional set of skills. In addition, it has also been noticed that the interpreters’ assignment might vary according to situational settings that can be summarized as follows:

- a) **Isolation from source and target environments:** in this setting, the Interpreters performs their task from a separate location and are connected to the source meeting using the videoconferencing platform in order to access the conversation. Another connected device is used to render the dialogues and the debates to the client. In some cases, the interpreter might have to reverse their language pair if required. Amato, Spinolo & González Rodríguez (2018) used the following figure to illustrate this type of isolation:

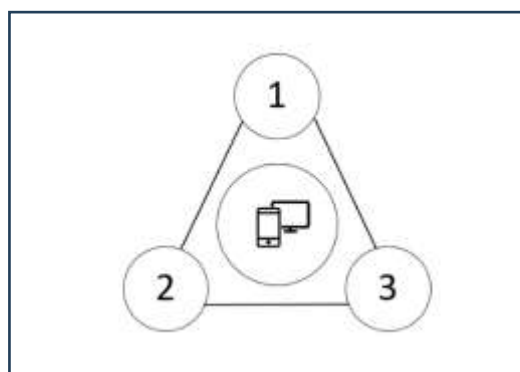
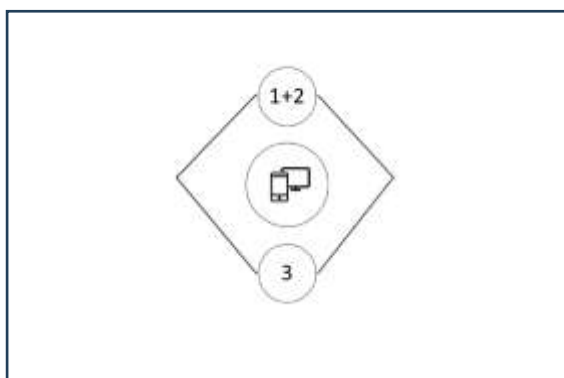


Figure 1. Constellation 1. All primary participants and the interpreter are located in different places (Amato, Spinolo & González Rodríguez, 2018, p. 13).

Isolation from the source environment: In this setting, the interpreter receives the input via a videoconferencing platform while delivering the output in copresence with the client. In some cases, the interpreters do not have access to a visual on the meeting and receives only audio inputs. They might also be required to interact with the target audience if there is a confusion or a misunderstanding.

b) Isolation from the target audience: In this setting, the interpreter is seated in the meeting, or in close proximity, while rendering the output to the target audience using a videoconference platform. This setting can generate a substantial level of distortions and a relatively degraded output quality, due to the concurrent capture of the participants' interactions and the interpreters' rendering. The following figure suggested in Amato, Spinolo & González Rodríguez, (2018), illustrates both cases:



c) Figure 2: Constellation 2 and 3: The interpreter is located with one of the primary participants or the primary participants are co-located Amato, Spinolo & González Rodríguez, (2018)

4. Challenges

The remote nature of OSI significantly affects the interpreter's performance since it is subject to technical issues, internet flow, devices' quality and lack of context above all. In fact, the features of OSI stressed in the present study and the difficulties that interpreters face in such settings make their assignments very challenging. Former studies in RI stressed the complex tasks performed by remote interpreters, and the

mental load they endure in the process resulting in a considerable degradation of the output quality: “It seems that the lack of proximity to clients and staff produces a feeling of alienation that ultimately results in lack of motivation and hence produces a decrease in interpreting quality” (Moser-Mercer, 2003, p. 07). Consequently, not only online interpreters have to carry a considerable workload inherent to interpreting, but also a mental load due to the absence or the lack of contextual information. The collected data and the observations made downstream suggest a non-exhaustive series of challenges that were observed during the FGDs sessions. In the present study, they are summarized as follows:

4.1 Faithfulness and Time Constraints

From an operational perspective, simultaneous interpreting can be regarded a time-bound performance subject to fundamental constraints given that the interpreter’s act is determined by the pace of the original speaker’s discourse, and his ability to sustain rendering the TL input at an acceptable speed. This intricate position underscores the necessity to improve his core skills and calls on a suitable behaviour as: “the interpreter who is in the middle of an ongoing communicative act does not have the time for long analyses and processes. This, in turn, presupposes a great amount of flexibility, fluency and originality concerning the mental processing of information involved in interpreting” (Ildikó, 2019, p. 143).

Despite the hurdles and the difficulties inherent to remote settings, remote interpreters pursue the same goal as onsite interpreters: To deliver a faithful rendering of the source material and to ensure a clear and intelligible output in TL. Technically, an online simultaneous interpreter must sustain a continuous stream in TL for as long as the source input is active. This requirement persists even when the input is disrupted by interruptions, noise, interferences and cuts. As a result, the overall quality may be significantly affected by unpredictable or uncontrollable reasons. These factors contribute in producing a volatile work environment and may affect remote interpreters’ performance and their service reliability.

4.2 Additional Roles

In a traditional simultaneous setting such as conference interpreting, it is well known that interpreters must not take additional roles but the one they are assigned to, which is to remain neutral, objective and to deliver faithfully the entire content in the TL. Although the complexity of their assignments might vary from a situation to another, they usually have a prior perception of their tasks and can focus entirely on the reliability of their mission. Usually, when the involved parties intend to ask questions or ask for clarity, they ask other attending participants directly and expect interpreters to deliver their messages in TL. That is to say no additional intervention is required from interpreters as long as they perform their multilingual or bilingual duties.

In contrast, interpreting remotely during focus group sessions is subject to unpredictable hurdles since it often requires interpreters to intervene by asking questions directly to the meeting leader or addressing the client. Ildikó (2019) stressed that “they are not the leaders even though it is possible that the participants ask them their opinion on a certain issue that has emerged from a discussion or conference. In certain situations, interpreters might react to these solicitations” (p. 38). This may occur when the target audience cannot reach the meeting leader directly, or wants to clarify what has been said about a specific question or an opinion during the meeting. In that case, the interpreter becomes the mediator between the meeting leader and the target audience.

Consequently, they are also forced to reverse their language combination. In that specific situation, the accuracy of the questions and the answers from both sides rely entirely on the interpreter’s ability to take action as a stakeholder or as a bilingual facilitator. Technically, they are supposed to switch on and off microphones while interpreting from SL to TL and vice versa, then ensuring that every detail has been clarified. Once, the meeting resumes its normal course, the interpreter returns to performing their original task.

4.3 Stress and Fatigue

It is commonly agreed that the interpreters' tasks are relatively difficult depending on the nature of the topic, the settings in which they perform their assignments, the accents of the speakers amongst others. Moreover, interpreting requires a constant concentration and self-confidence to face unpredictable situations that might occur in the process. Consequently, simultaneous interpreters usually experience environmental stress, psychological stress and physiological stress when performing their assignments, as former studies collected interpreter's perceptions on their own tasks and noted that it is often regarded as very stressful or similar to a stressful job (Kurz, 2003, p. 55).

Remote interpreting poses an additional set of constraints given the type of patterns and the effects of the aforementioned obstacles; OSI is extremely stressing. Amato, Spinolo & González Rodríguez (2018) claimed that "in videoconference interpreters only have a partial view of the participants or the setting, and this generates fatigue as the interaction goes on" (p. 7). In comparison with translation patterns, Moser (2003) highlighted that "repeated psychological self-assessment by interpreters during the experiment indicated that they found working under remote conditions more stressful" (p. 11). Additionally, Kurz (2003) highlighted that remote interpreting requires a significant cost of stress as "Interpreters participating in a UN remote interpreting experiment in 1999 emphasized that they were able to maintain performance at acceptable levels only at a higher psychological cost" (p. 58).

Thus, remote interpreters might find it difficult to keep focused on their missions and to remain calm when some hurdles prevent them from performing their task properly. As for stress and emotions, interpreters have to demonstrate a high level of self-control and self-confidence to avoid losses or confusions punctually or continuously while interpreting.

4.4 The Variety of Dialects in Algeria

Added to Standard Arabic, it is noteworthy that various dialects constitute the Algerian linguistic landscape and offer an interesting corpus from many perspectives due to the various ethnic and linguistic influences including Arabic, Berber, French, Spanish and English more recently. This dialectal characteristic has been methodically described in previous studies and is still subject to multiple investigation. Taleb-Ibrahimi (1998) noted that "Algerian speakers live and evolve in a multilingual society where common spoken and written languages, for instance Arabic dialects, Berber, standard Arabic and French are in constant competition" (p. 22) [Our translation].

Based on the definitions and the clarifications that we obtained, it is possible deduce that FDG sessions in Algeria constitute an interesting linguistic sample of that variety since they usually gather wide categories of consumers including those who do not use standard Arabic as their mother tongue, they rather use their dialects or local patois. This reality makes the online interpreter's mission even more intricate because they must have a prior mastery of those dialects, tones and accents in addition to polysemy issues when they are compared with other dialects.

5. Required Skills in online Interpreting:

Interpreting is undeniably a demanding task in traditional settings as interpreters have to respond to complex requirements that involve language mastery, experience, constant practice and devotion. "Perhaps the most salient characteristic of simultaneous interpreting is that interpreters must do simultaneously what ordinary language users typically do serially, that is, comprehend and produce language at the same time" (Christoffels, De Groot & Kroll, 2006, p. 325).

As for RI, former studies stressed the necessity of improving additional skills for better performances and less setbacks as "interpreters need to develop additional sets of skills, including advanced

digital competencies and the flexibility to adapt their interpreting strategies and procedures to the more demanding working conditions of RI, in order to minimise physical and mental stress” (UNCHR, 2022, p. 219). In the present study, the practice-driven observations during the focus group meetings and the notes taken downstream have revealed a non-exhaustive set of required skills that are summarized as follows:

5.1 Language Competences

Languages are the core of translating and interpreting activities as both disciplines aim at facilitating multilingual communication from SL to TL. In fact, interpreters have to constantly improve their language competence covering vocabulary, grammar and syntax, style, register, tone, collocations and idioms, cultural awareness, fluency, clarity and pronunciation as “language mastery has historically and empirically proven a necessary foundation for successful interpreting” (Loiseau, 2021, p. 3).

OSI requires as much language skills as traditional simultaneous interpreting in the sense that interpreters have to rely on their cognitive and intellectual backgrounds to perform their task. It is also as demanding as the processes of information storage, memory and decision-making as “Linguistic-cognitive control frameworks suggest that, with higher proficiency and more frequent use, a given language is likely processed more quickly, and that the need for controlled processing decreases” (Abutalebi & Green, 2007, p. 7).

Given the variety of dialects in Algeria and the complexity of RI during focus groups sessions, online interpreters have to master languages and dialects in SL and TL and constantly improve their skills within the framework of their language combination. However, it is highly important to note that online interpreters may reverse their language pair during the same operation in order to re-establish contact, or to clarify an ambiguity. That is why remote interpreters have to improve their flexibility and reactivity in terms of language switching in various registers. Thus, they play another role in guaranteeing the continuity and the intelligibility of remote communications by performing a series on additional tasks on their devices such as switching on and off their microphones or dialling one of the stakeholders directly.

5.2 ICTs Mastery

Given its role in enabling communication between peoples from different horizons, interpreting is regarded as one of the oldest professions and also as discipline that witnessed gradual changes, especially in terms of soundproofing, booth design and console technology. Multiple developments in communication and telecommunication have relatively affected the discipline with regard to communicational possibilities and business opportunities; technological progress significantly changed various disciplines including those of language industry leading to the use and the spread and the user of Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) and Computer-Assisted Interpreting (CAI) in order to ensure multilingual communication. As a result, additional prerequisites must be filled in order to fit current demands.

OSI illustrates those changes as interpreters do not perform their task in the traditional conditions but are rather subject to unpredicted circumstances such as lack of contextual information, lack of non-verbal elements and lack of on-time access to information. That being said, when performed in regular conditions, OSI also requires a mastery of appropriate ICTs given the complex patterns of multilingual remote communication that interpreters are in charge of. As claimed in UNHCR (2007) “the specific challenges of RI are linked to the limitations and constraints of technology-mediated communication” (p. 219). From a standard perspective, the work conditions experienced and the utilized tools and devices in our study do not correspond to the aforementioned standards. It is however relevant to remind the basic tools required for remote settings as follows:

- One (01) laptop or desk computer
- Two (02) phones: one for each online session
- Two (02) earphones: one for each device
- Various types of phones and computers' cables and adapters

In addition to the translation tools used by interpreters in traditional sessions, online interpreters must select their tools carefully and plan their use according to the requirements of a given assignment. Given the status of remote interpreters and the need for their interventions in the three aforementioned settings, a set of soft skills is also required to perform their task properly. Based on the experiments mentioned above, we stress the following skills:

5.3 Problem Solving

Problem solving is known as a key skill in intricate situations requiring relevant information and quick intervention from involved parties. In former research, it has also been defined as “an intellectual process of the brain, which explores the explanation to a specified problem or discovers a technique to comprehend the given goal” (Zhong *et al.*, 2010, p. 82). This paramount skill calls upon one’s prior knowledge and experience since it requires “the use of maximum cognitive functions like analytical thinking, generalization, and synthesis in problem solving, which involves features such as the scientific way, critical thinking, decision-making, and reflective thinking (Gursoy, 2006, p. 232). OSI poses a series of obstacles and hurdles as mentioned in present study thus making the ability to fix technical issues crucial for online interpreters; “beside solving technical issues that may impair communication, public service interpreters request specific training on language technologies applied to interpretation” (Gaber & Corpas Pastor, 2020, p. 74). As shown in the first part of the present paper, external factors affect the online interpreter’s performance negatively and the whole session may be stopped or paused because of technical issues that originate from one or many stakeholders. Consequently, online interpreters have to remain prepared for all eventualities since their input or output might be significantly affected by a low internet flux or noise or echoes that originate from the source or the target environment. Consequently, the online interpreting assignment might drastically differ from traditional interpreting in the sense that interpreters sometimes intervene as solutions holders if a problem cannot be fixed by the other parties.

5.4 Multitasking

Multitasking is known as an imperative human behaviour in current practices and performances given that “it allows people to handle dual tasks simultaneously or alternate multiple tasks switches” (Lipsmeyer, 2013, p. 1). On the basis of that definition and on former studies on interpreting, it is relevant to recall that simultaneous interpreting is by definition a multitask performance that involves specific cognitive and linguistic abilities. Thus, simultaneous interpreters have to demonstrate and control a series of tasks or performances inherent to that type of transfer from SL to TL as: “It presents a unique type of multitasking, encompassing speech comprehension and production, a switch of attention, self-correction, and many other concurrent activities” (Onyshchak *et al.*, 2021). Multitasking is thus a *sine qua non* condition for any simultaneous performance as code switching and decision making are substantial and necessary to all practitioners.

In addition to the multiple tasks inherent to simultaneous interpreting, an online interpreting process might carry a series of obstacles that require a different posture from the interpreters. In response to the obstacles and the challenges that online interpreters face, performing multiple tasks while interpreting is a key ability in OSI. Practically, the interpreter must stay focused on every detail mentioned in S.L and remain ready to trigger additional actions such as answering texts, or making sure of the output quality, listen and react to voice or text messages sent by the client.

All in all, the more interruptions and cuts, the harder multitasking is required. From a causal perspective, multitasking is required to meet the aforementioned challenges in remote patterns. On the other hand, online interpreters perform their main task and monitor their tools simultaneously. For instance, they have to select the appropriate digital resources, use online dictionaries and databases, switch on and off their microphones, check for updates if required, read new instructions on chat platforms, do punctual research seeking equivalents and still be able to deliver the output in TL. It is noted in UNCHR (2022) that:
Remote interpreters need a wide range of digital competencies to ensure a smooth workflow and, thereby, efficient communication. General digital skills, using a computer assisted technical tools ahead; to know what technology is required, the ability to create their own environment where they cannot be distracted. (p. 222)

5.5 Interpersonal Skills

As suggested in the present study, the interpreter's interactions with participants or stakeholders are not usually recommended in traditional simultaneous interpreting except in the framework of their assignments as they incarnate the communication channel between the source and target environments and/or locations. However, interpreters are usually considered trustworthy by their collaborators and their clients since they have to abide strict ethical guidelines. Due to those factors, interpreters usually perform their tasks not only as facilitators but as reliable individuals in a bilingual or multilingual pattern, as suggested in Angelelli (2003) that "interpreters perceived that they played a role in building trust, facilitating mutual respect, communication affect as well as message, explaining cultural gaps, controlling the communication flow and aligning with one of the parties in interaction" (p. 16). Consequently, their position requires a constant development of their interpersonal skills, especially in multi-cultural environments.

Based on the available literature and the experiences reported in the present study, OSI calls on interpreters' interpersonal skills during their performances. Mangham (1986) claimed that "a person's success depends on their ability to conduct oneself in the complexity of the organization as subtle, insightful and incisive performer" (p.7). In this study, it appeared that taking time to understand the clients' needs and abide the instructions under pressure is of a high importance. Thus, an online interpreter has to be willing to interact almost constantly with the client and the meeting leader whenever it is necessary, in order to effectively contribute to the success of the operation even if their presence becomes noticeable.

5.6 Leadership

OSI might require a different attitude from the interpreter in comparison with traditional interpreting as they are supposed to foresee all the difficulties that would impair their performances and prepare accordingly. Occasionally, an online interpreter may have to behave as a leader given the additional range of responsibilities and challenges that they might have to face all along the process. Leadership skills may sometimes be very helpful in OSI as they can be defined as "the tools, behaviours and capabilities that leaders have in promoting well-being of the employees and leading to up-graduation of the organizations" (Kapur, 2022, p. 1). In remote patterns, the interpreter can sometimes anticipate some problems or technical issues and be the first one who warns the client or the meeting leader about them. From the interpreter's perspective, demonstrating leadership doesn't aim at being more visible nor to disturb the sessions, nor to improve someone else's skills within the setting, it is necessary for the sake of their mission above all things; as long as they remain alert to contribute to fixing potential issues, communication remains stable and undistorted. As a result, their task involves less hurdles and their output quality can be assessed positively.

6. Conclusions

This study has sought to identify a tangible shift in the interpreting profession and has described the main complexities of online simultaneous interpreting. Given the importance of remote communication in corporate and institutional interactions, it also stresses that the discipline would be fertile area of research including working conditions, performance and interpreters' behaviours.

In addition to the demanding nature of simultaneous interpreting, this study has revealed more challenging items when it is performed remotely, especially the lack of contextual information and non-verbal elements as semantic parts of the intended messages in S.L, thus demanding more attention, efforts and effective use of skills by interpreters, depending on the impact of their isolation from the source environment or both.

From a performance-oriented perspective, online interpreting involves a set of challenges that redefine the traditional perceptions on the interpreters' missions, as their tasks do not entail decoding and encoding messages only, but requires tangible interactions with the source and the target environment. Consequently, remote interpreters have to mobilize a wider range of hard and soft skills in line with the requirements of each setting.

Consequently, a constant enhancement of interpreters' competence is required in both source and target language, in addition to a continuous refinement of their linguistic proficiency and interpreting techniques. Online simultaneous interpreters also have to anticipate potential obstacles that might undermine the efficiency and the reliability of their performance in view of a better preparation. As multilingual communication becomes more complex and demanding in the 21st century through the use of various platforms and devices, and by requiring constant upskilling from professionals in the translation and interpreting industry, this study also underscores the importance of remote interpreting practice sessions and the implementation of tailored training workshops in formal institutions and translation institutes. Such initiatives would be undoubtedly beneficial to future interpreters willing to perform in remote settings.

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