

# Saudi Interpreters' Adaptive Cognitive Strategic Behaviors in Consecutive Interpretation

Ebtisam S. Aluthman<sup>1</sup> & Haifa M. Al-Buraidi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Applied Linguistics, College of Languages, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), P. O. Box 84428, Riyadh 11671, Saudi Arabia

<sup>2</sup> Department of Translation, College of Languages, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), P. O. Box 84428, Riyadh 11671, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Ebtisam Aluthman, Department of Applied Linguistics, College of Languages, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), Saudi Arabia. E-mail: esaluthman@pnu.edu.sa

Received: February 8, 2024

Accepted: May 23, 2024

Online Published: July 10, 2024

doi:10.5430/wjel.v14n6p125

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n6p125>

## Abstract

This study investigates the adaptive cognitive strategies used by Saudi interpreters in consecutive interpretation (CI) guided by Gile's (2009) Effort Models. Using a structured questionnaire, insights were gathered from 102 Saudi interpreters, divided into undergraduate students and professional interpreters with varying levels of experience. The research focuses on how interpreters manage the selection of interpretation strategies across four phases of CI: listening, note-taking, note-decoding, and reformulating. Notable findings include the contrast between experienced professionals, who seldom rely on common sense, omitting, or paraphrasing, and trainees, who employ these strategies more frequently in response to unfamiliar topics. Professionals, regardless of experience, effectively use paraphrasing when faced with numerical complexities. When dealing with fast-speaking speakers, experienced professionals avoid omitting content, while trainees rely on this strategy. In conclusion, to manage concentration during long speeches, trainees prioritize attention to the source speech and use selective omission, while experienced professionals gravitate toward generalizing and summarizing approaches. This research highlights the influence of experience on strategy choice, aligning with Jääskeläinen's (1996) claim that experienced translators allocate more cognitive resources to production strategies than novices. A key recommendation of this study is the need for specialized training for novice interpreters, particularly in strategy development, to handle various CI process challenges. Training focused on enhancing note-taking skills is vital, especially for trainees, as clear and understandable notes are crucial for success in the note-decoding and reformulating stages of CI.

**Keywords:** consecutive interpretation, interpretation strategies, Gile's Effort Models, Saudi interpreters

## 1. Introduction

Consecutive interpreting (CI) denotes a specialized mode of verbal translation wherein the interpreter transmits the speaker's discourse during pauses or breaks in speech. Russell (2005, p. 136) defines CI as "the process of interpreting after the speaker has completed one or more ideas in the source language (SL) and pauses while the interpreter transmits that information" (2005, p. 136). Consequently, the interpreter assumes the role of an intermediary or facilitator between two parties lacking a common language. Moreover, it is imperative for the interpreter to possess an extensive comprehension of both languages. This includes not only linguistic proficiency but also a thoughtful grasp of cultural subtleties. The task of performing CI presents a challenge given the interpreter's limited time frame for rendering the message into another language, or opportunities for amendments, revisions, or anticipation of alternatives prior to delivering the final interpretation to the audience. Throughout this demanding process, interpreters inevitably encounter a multitude of challenges and obstacles. Undoubtedly, this work necessitates a proficient and highly skilled interpreter capable of proficiently addressing these issues to avoid any unfavorable impact on the quality of the target language (TL). Such competence is evidenced by the thoughtful selection of suitable strategies and tactics, as revealed by the existing body of empirical literature, thereby ensuring a smooth and precise interpretation.

Gile (1995) extensively explored the challenges encountered in the practice of interpreting and the corresponding strategies that can be employed to address these challenges. He presented his Effort Models, which describe the cognitive processes and conscious cognitive operations involved in the interpretation process. Within the framework of Gile's Effort Models (1995), interpretation strategies are viewed as deliberate and purposeful actions taken by interpreters to either prevent or resolve potential problems that may arise during interpretation. These strategies are different from spontaneous or unconscious reactions, emphasizing the proactive and planned nature of interpreter responses. Gile (2009, p. 201) further classifies these strategies into two categories: preparation strategies and tactics. Preparation strategies involve actions that are planned in advance, often with specific objectives in mind, to improve the interpreter's readiness for the task. On the other hand, tactics refer to real-time, on-the-spot strategies employed during the interpretation process to

address immediate challenges. Gile's (2009) approach to classification highlights the dynamic nature of interpreting, in which interpreters employ a combination of prepared strategies and on-the-spot tactics to address the complexities of language, context, and communication, thereby emphasizing the active role of interpreters in ensuring interlingual communication.

This research attempts to provide a comprehensive exploration of the on-the-spot strategies employed by Saudi interpreters when they encounter challenges during CI tasks. The primary objective of this study is to discern recurrent patterns in the strategies they employ, with a particular emphasis on problem solving. Specifically, this study aims to investigate the strategies inherent in the performance of CI by an academic institution undergraduate (novice) and professional interpreter. Grounded in Gile's (1995, 2009) cognitive Effort Models, the primary objective of the study is to systematically identify, analyze, and categorize the strategies utilized during CI tasks by two distinct proficiency groups: novice and professional Saudi interpreters. To achieve this goal, the researchers employed a questionnaire that is aligned with the theoretical framework of Gile's Effort Models and is designed to capture an understanding of the adaptive cognitive strategies employed by interpreters across different proficiency levels while performing CI tasks. By examining the strategic behaviors of professional interpreters, the study seeks to offer valuable insights that can be integrated into interpreter training programs, thereby better equipping novices to tackle the inherent complexities of the interpretation process. Moreover, the research highlights the importance of proficiently managing cognitive processes through the application of a diverse range of cognitive strategies during CI. The study hypothesizes that these strategies serve as a highly effective means of maintaining a seamless flow in the interpretation process.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 An Account of Translation/Interpretation Strategies

The investigation of strategies within the realms of translation and interpretation is of paramount significance due to the extensive body of research dedicated to this field. In this context, strategy is broadly construed as a purposeful action directed toward the resolution of specific problems encountered in the translation and interpretation processes. Despite numerous endeavors aimed at establishing a comprehensive conceptual framework for interpretation strategies by scholars such as Lürscher (1991), Zabalbeascoa (2000), Molina and Hurtado Albir (1999, 2002), Chesterman (2005), and Gil-Baradaji (2003, 2009, 2020), the precise definition of translation strategies varies significantly among researchers, resulting in notable disparities. In essence, various terms, such as tactic, technique, procedural plan, solution type, shift, change, operation, and operator, have been employed interchangeably to describe or convey a similar meaning and function of a strategy within the translation and interpretation context (Chesterman, 2005). This diversity not only relates to the definition of strategies, but also extends to the classification schemes applied in the field of translation. For instance, Chesterman's (1997) taxonomy primarily adopts a textual approach, emphasizing the communicative and contextual aspects of translation, while Lürscher's (1991) classification is grounded in a cognitive approach, investigating the underlying cognitive processes during translation and interpretation tasks.

As articulated by Gutiérrez (2013, p. 28), the "metacognitive approach" to translation does not limit its investigation to the text itself or its evident external behavior; rather, it delves deeper into understanding the underlying cognitive processes that enable the act of translation. This approach seeks to uncover and examine the cognitive mechanisms and mental operations that underlie the translation/interpretation process. It aims to explore the translator's thought processes, decision-making, and problem-solving strategies, shedding light on the intricate cognitive aspects of translation. Conversely, Chesterman's (1997) textual approach to translation views a text as an act of communication that is comprehended/produced within a specific situational and cultural context. From this perspective, translation is regarded as a complex effort wherein the translator must produce an equivalent target text that not only captures the linguistic elements of the source text, but also effectively conveys the intended meaning, tone, and nuances of the original text within the given cultural and situational context.

According to Zabalbeascoa's definition (2000, p. 120), a strategy within the context of translation is characterized as a specific pattern of behavior deliberately employed with the purpose of addressing a problem or achieving a particular goal. The principal objective of translation is to produce a target text that aligns with the linguistic norms and conventions of the TL. Consequently, Zabalbeascoa (2000) argued that a translation strategy is best conceptualized as any conscious actions or activities undertaken by a translator with the intent of enhancing their performance in a given translation task, with a particular emphasis on improving efficiency and effectiveness. Zabalbeascoa (2000, p. 120) introduced a useful distinction between *behavioral* strategies and *mental* acts in translation. Behavioral strategies include evident actions and activities that can be directly recognized by researchers or observers. These may include actions such as consulting a dictionary, making use of reference materials, or drafting a preliminary version of the translation. These actions are readily obvious in the translator's external behavior. On the other hand, mental acts include cognitive operations and thought processes that occur within the translator's mind. These mental activities are not directly observable, but can be inferred or identified indirectly through certain indicators or manifestations, such as hesitations or verbal mumbblings. These internal cognitive processes play a critical role in shaping the translator's decision making, problem solving, and overall approach to the translation task. By distinguishing between the behavioral and mental aspects of strategies, Zabalbeascoa (2000) provided a comprehensive framework for understanding how translators employ various conscious actions and cognitive operations to address the complexities of the translation process.

Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) offered a different perspective on translation strategies, defining them as procedures, whether conscious or unconscious, verbal or nonverbal, which are utilized by the translator to tackle problems that emerge during the translation process. In this view, translation strategies include a broad range of actions and processes that translators employ, regardless of whether these procedures are carried out with conscious awareness or occur on a more subconscious level. These strategies serve as tools for tackling

the challenges encountered while translating a text from one language to another. Similarly, Lörcher (1991, p. 76) highlighted the role of translation strategy in addressing translation problems and defined it as a “potentially conscious procedure employed to resolve a problem encountered while translating a segment from one language into another.”

Another comprehensive framework was provided by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002, p. 508), who divided translation strategies into two categories: strategies for comprehension and strategies for reformulation. By comprehension strategies, Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002, p. 508) refer to those strategies that are directed towards understanding the source text and involve activities such as identifying the main and secondary ideas within the text and establishing conceptual relationships between different elements. On the other hand, reformulation strategies are those related to the act of rephrasing or transforming the content of the source text during the translation process. They include strategies, such as paraphrasing and retranslating, used to convey the meaning effectively in the TL. Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) claimed that strategies are integral components of the problem-solving process itself, employed by translators to tackle challenges as they emerge. Techniques, on the other hand, are tools that influence the final result of the translation, affecting the quality of the target text. Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) emphasized the notion that strategies guide the translator’s decision-making process, while techniques shape the ultimate result of the translation.

Likewise, Chesterman (1997) classifies translation strategies into two categories: comprehension and production. Comprehension strategies are concerned with the analysis and understanding of the source text, assisting the translator in comprehending its nuances and intended meaning. Production strategies, on the other hand, are concerned with the translator’s capability to draw upon their linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge to produce an accurate target text. Chesterman (1997) emphasized the significance of production strategies, as they play a critical role in attaining the translator’s ultimate goal of producing a high-quality translation. It is worth noting that Chesterman’s preference for production strategies differs from the findings of Jääskeläinen (1996), who conducted a study showing that experienced translators are capable of allocating more cognitive processing capacity towards production strategies compared to novice translators. This difference highlights the complications of translation strategies and the potential variation in their application among translators of different skill levels, further emphasizing the multifaceted nature of translation as a cognitive task.

Similarly, Kohn and Kalina (1996) asserted that interpreting is a multilayered process that demands adaptive strategic control to ensure the production of an appropriate and accurate target discourse. They also described interpreting as a form of strategic discourse processing, wherein the interpreter’s main goal is to transfer the mental world model from a source discourse to a target discourse platform, bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps between the two. Kalina (2005) extended this perspective by highlighting the critical significance of the interpreter’s ability to select appropriate interpretation within an adaptive strategic behavior. She argued that the interpreter’s ability to make informed and strategic choices of these strategies greatly impacts the quality of interpretation. This emphasizes the hypothesis that interpreters must possess a repertoire of strategies and the capacity to choose among them to adapt to varying challenges.

## *2.2 Typologies of Interpreting Strategies*

Many prominent scholars have contributed to the classification and examination of interpreting strategies, shedding light on their diverse natures and applications. One prominent classification of interpreting strategies was provided by Pöchhacker (2004), who distinguished between two main categories of interpreting strategies: process-oriented and product-oriented. Process-oriented strategies refer to those approaches that assist interpreters in tackling challenging input that may impose a high cognitive load. Interpreters use process-oriented strategies to navigate complex and demanding language and content while ensuring accurate interpretation. In contrast to process-oriented strategies, product-oriented strategies focus on effective communication with target-language audiences. These strategies are aimed at delivering the interpretation in a manner that ensures comprehension and engagement by the audience.

Riccardi (2005, p. 760) proposed two other categories to classify interpreting strategies: knowledge-based and skill-based. Knowledge-based strategies are those related to the interpreter’s accumulated knowledge and experience, involving the application of stored patterns of automatic responses triggered by the recognition of familiar linguistic or situational elements within the communicative context. In contrast, skill-based strategies are more dynamic and adapt to the specific demands of the interpreting task, often employed when no automatic response is readily applicable or when cognitive overload is encountered. Furthermore, Riccardi (2005) hypothesized that interpreting strategies can be comprehensively listed in a manner that transcends specific language combinations. This general list of interpreting strategies includes a range of techniques and approaches applicable across various language pairs, with considerations for addressing differences in lexical and syntactic structures between source and TL. Given the complicated nature of the interpreting process and the recurrent challenges related to comprehension and production, Kader and Seubert (2015, as cited in Li, 2015, p. 3) advocated for the thorough incorporation of interpreting strategies into training programs to equip interpreters with the essential tools to effectively navigate and overcome these difficulties.

Gile (2009) introduced a key distinction between interpreting strategies and tactics. He argues that interpreting strategies are preparatory actions taken by interpreters with medium-term or long-term objectives in mind; they are part of a strategic approach that aims to achieve specific desired effects in the interpretation process. On the other hand, interpreting tactics refers to real-time decisions made by the interpreter to address immediate or quasi-immediate challenges. These tactics are essential for handling unanticipated difficulties and ensuring continuity of interpretation. From a cognitive perspective, Gile (2009) highlighted the significance of preparation strategies to enhance the interpreter’s processing capacity. Gile (2009) stated that even professional interpreters, despite their extensive experience, may encounter challenges related to limitations in their processing capacity and knowledge during interpretation. Given the dynamic and

often unpredictable nature of interpreting, interpreters must employ various tactics to cope with recurring difficulties that may hinder comprehension and production.

Gile (2009) further classified these tactics into three main categories:

- *Comprehension tactics*: These tactics are designed to help interpreters address rising or potential comprehension problems that may increase their processing capacity requirements. Examples include delaying responses briefly to process information, relying on context to reconstruct unclear segments, and seeking assistance from colleagues in the booth.
- *Preventive tactics*: Interpreters resort to preventive tactics when they anticipate or encounter challenges that surpass their available processing capacity. These tactics include note-taking, segmentation of complex content, unloading short-term memory, and reordering words to enhance comprehension and recall.
- *Reformulation tactics*: Reformulation tactics are employed to ensure clarity and accuracy in interpretation. They encompass actions such as replacing a segment with a more general term, providing explanations or paraphrasing, and transcoding to bridge language and cultural gaps.

### 2.3 Empirical Research on Interpreting Strategies

Numerous empirical studies have examined the use of interpreting strategies among interpreters at various levels of expertise. Abu  (2008) conducted a comprehensive study that investigated the challenges faced by interpreters with differing levels of expertise during CI. Abu  categorized the strategies employed by interpreters into two main groups: the reception phase and the production phase. Reception phase strategies refer to those used to cope with challenges encountered when initially receiving and understanding the source speech. Production phase strategies come into play during the subsequent phase, when interpreters are tasked with delivering the interpretation. One important finding from Abu 's study is that problems identified in the reception phase can sometimes transfer to the production phase, highlighting the evolving and dynamic nature of interpreting strategies as interpreters develop their strategic competence. This study underscores the importance of adapting and applying different strategies throughout the interpreting process.

In the context of English-Arabic interpretation, Al-Khanji et al. (2000) conducts a study that identifies five compensation strategies employed by interpreters to address problems during interpretation tasks. Al-Khanji et al.'s findings demonstrate the resourcefulness of interpreters in adapting their strategies to overcome difficulties encountered during interpretation. These strategies serve as tools for interpreters to ensure effective communication in challenging situations. These compensation strategies include skipping, approximation, filtering, comprehension omissions, and substitutions.

Li's (2014) research investigates the translation strategies employed by successful Chinese interpretation learners specializing in CI. Through in-depth interviews with three of her classmates, all of whom were pursuing their master's degrees, Li aimed to qualitatively explore the strategies utilized by these accomplished learners to achieve accurate interpretation results. The study offers valuable insights into the approaches and techniques adopted by successful interpreters during their training. The findings from Li's study reveal several key strategies employed by the participants to achieve successful interpretation outcomes. Successful learners demonstrated a logical analysis strategy, which involved a comprehensive understanding of the source text, including its structure and underlying logic. Participants recognized the importance of using a knowledge accumulation strategy as part of their preparation for interpretation. They employed various methods to accumulate relevant knowledge, such as consulting books, journals, the internet, and television. Moreover, they prioritized the use of summarization and note-taking strategies in managing the interpretation of complex discourse.

Related to the scope of the present study, Ribas (2012) provided initial- and post-questionnaires to 15 participants of different proficiency levels of translation, novice undergraduate and advanced postgraduate, in Spain. In addition to questionnaires, he utilized speech recordings of authentic consecutive interpretation. Ribas (2012) investigates the problems encountered by each group in the CI processes, the strategies they applied, and the differences between them. The results of Ribas's study show that the kinds of problems encountered by each group differed by training level. Significantly, the novice students encountered problems more often and tended to use strategies more frequently than the advanced students. He argued that the advanced students had likely reported using fewer strategies either because they had mastered the strategy, and so they were not aware of using them, or because they no longer faced as many problems. He noted that the advanced students drew on a wider range of strategies. The novice students were found to have resorted to adding the wrong information, which they thought to be true even if the information was not mentioned by the speaker, just to avoid leaving a gap in their interpretation. Both groups agreed on using the same strategies with regard to the nature of each problem and phase. Both advanced and novice students appeared to use omitting, common sense, summarizing, paraphrasing, generalizing, and resorting to memory.

Kuswoyo and Audina's (2020) research took the unique approach of analyzing a video recording from YouTube featuring an Indonesian interpreter engaged in consecutive English-Indonesian (En-Indo) interpretation during a trial court proceeding. The study conducted a qualitative analysis to uncover and categorize the strategies employed by the interpreter. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the interpreter's approach and the nature of her strategies, which are instructive for interpreters and researchers in the field. The strategies used by the interpreter were classified into two main categories: (1) reduction strategies that involve simplifying or condensing the interpretation in various ways to streamline the communication process, such as skipping, employing incomplete sentences, and filtering strategies, and (2) achievement strategies that aim to enhance the interpretation by expanding or elaborating on certain aspects of the source text.

There is a notable gap in the literature concerning the specific application and investigation of interpreting strategies among Saudi interpreters. This gap is of significance given the potential cultural and linguistic nuances that may influence the strategies employed by interpreters in the Saudi context. The present study aims to address this gap in the literature by focusing on the adaptive strategic behavior of Saudi interpreters. It seeks to explore what interpretation strategies Saudi interpreters employ during CI tasks. This study was part of a larger research project, “Problems and Strategies Observed among Saudi Interpreters’ Performance in Consecutive Interpreting Process,” conducted at the College of Languages at an academic institution, Saudi Arabia on 2023. The present study aims to investigate (1) the interpreting strategies adopted by Saudi professional interpreters and CI trainees during the CI process, and (2) the distinctions and commonalities between the two study groups concerning the strategies they employ during the CI process.

### 3. Methods

To comprehensively address the research questions posed in this study, numerical analysis was conducted using the results of a structured questionnaire. Noteworthy contributions to the framework of this questionnaire were derived from Gile’s influential Effort Models (2009) and Ribas’s study (2012), which specifically addresses challenges and strategies in CI. The study sample consisted of 102 participants who responded to the questionnaire. They were divided into two clear-cut categories, with the variable of experience being the main means of classification. The first group included 51 undergraduate beginner students who were studying at an academic institution during the 2021-2022 academic year. These students actively participated in a six-week CI course. The second group comprised 51 Saudi professional interpreters practicing as freelance or in-house translators in different sectors. Given the significance of the experience variable in shaping the adaptive strategic behavior of the interpreters (Jääskeläinen, 1996), this group was further divided according to the number of years of experience. Among the professionals, 31 had over three years of practical experience, while the remaining 20 possessed at least one year of experience in the field of interpretation.

Drawing upon Gile’s Effort Models (2009, pp. 175-176) and the four distinct phases in consecutive interpreting: listening and understanding, note-taking, note-decoding, and expressing and reformulating, the participants were asked to identify the strategies they employ to mitigate the problems encountered in each phase. The problems studied are consistent with those identified in the related literature. The data analysis process was structured in alignment with Gile’s (2009) Effort Models, ensuring a systematic and organized examination of the data and maintaining consistency with the questionnaire’s design. The questionnaire’s reliability was confirmed through a process involving psychometric testing and statistical analysis. The process involved using both the Cronbach’s alpha statistical test and a pilot study with a small number of participants. Cronbach’s alpha test is broadly documented as a statistical method for evaluating the internal consistency of a questionnaire; it measures how well all the items in the questionnaire measure the same fundamental concept. A higher Cronbach’s alpha value, typically above 0.70, indicates a stronger level of internal consistency. In the present study, all the items in the questionnaire met this criterion, demonstrating good internal consistency. Moreover, a pilot test of the questionnaire was administered with a smaller group of participants to identify any potential issues with item wording, response choices, or instructions that could influence respondents’ understandings of the questionnaire’s questions and, consequently, its reliability.

### 4. Results

The analysis process adhered closely to the questionnaire’s structure, with each phase of the interpreting process considered separately.

#### 4.1 Listening Phase

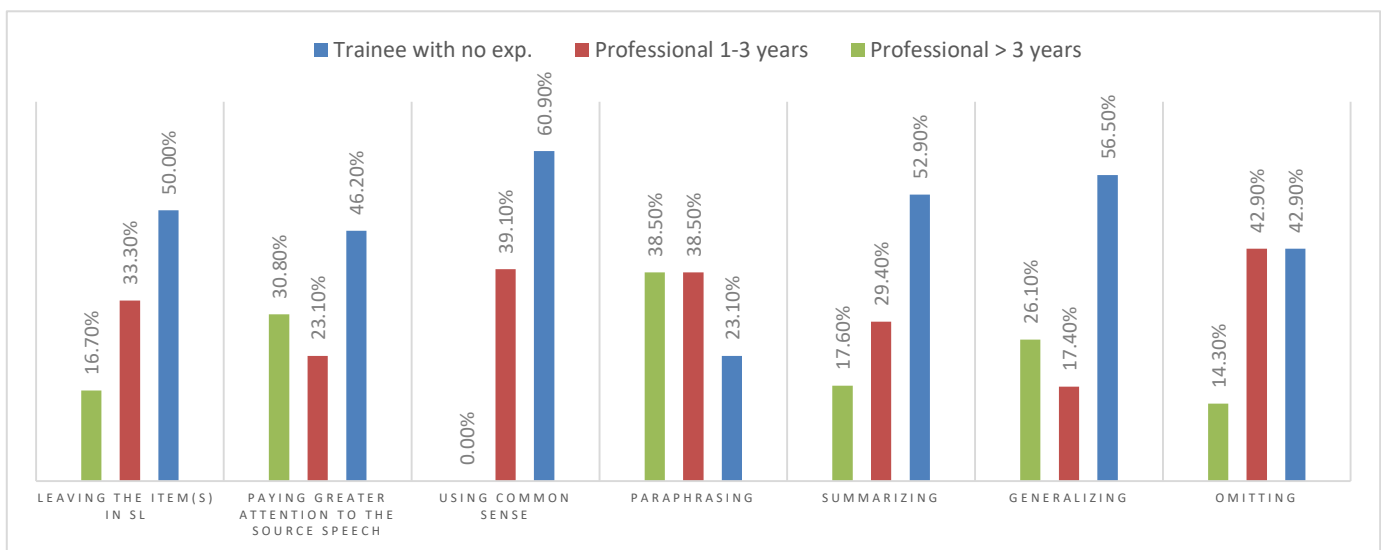


Figure 1. Strategies for coping with unfamiliar topics

Figure 1 reveals key insights into the strategies employed by the three groups of interpreters (trainees with no experience- professional with 1-3 years of experience- professional with more than 3 years of experience) when confronted with unfamiliar topics in CI. Notably, interpreters with over three years of experience stand out, as they reported rarely relying on common sense in such situations, with a negligible percentage reporting its use. Conversely, both trainees and professionals with less than three years of experience reported a significantly higher reliance on common sense. This suggests that greater experience may lead interpreters to rely less on common sense, possibly due to increased confidence and familiarity with diverse subject matter.

Experienced professionals also reported avoiding the omitting strategy when faced with unfamiliar topics, while both trainees and less experienced professionals indicated more willingness to employ this approach, with percentages exceeding 40%. This suggests that less experienced interpreters are more open to omitting challenging content when necessary, while experienced professionals strive to interpret everything, even in unfamiliar contexts.

Furthermore, both groups of professionals, regardless of experience, reported utilizing the paraphrasing strategy at roughly equal percentages (near 40.0%). Paraphrasing can be a valuable tool for conveying messages effectively when dealing with unfamiliar terminology or concepts. In contrast, trainees reported using paraphrasing less frequently. Trainees indicated that they tend to employ generalizing and summarizing strategies more often than professionals when handling unfamiliar topics, simplifying complex content for a smoother interpretation. Professionals, however, may have developed alternative strategies to tackle such situations.



Figure 2. Strategies for coping with numbers challenge

Figure 2 reveals that the two groups of professional interpreters reported seldom employing the omitting strategy, indicating their confidence in handling numeric content without omitting it or leaving it in the source language. Both groups of experienced professionals also indicated an equal reliance on the paraphrasing strategy to make numeric content more understandable, highlighting its value in their skill sets. In contrast, trainees reported using the omitting strategy more frequently when faced with numeric challenges, distinguishing their approach from that of experienced professionals

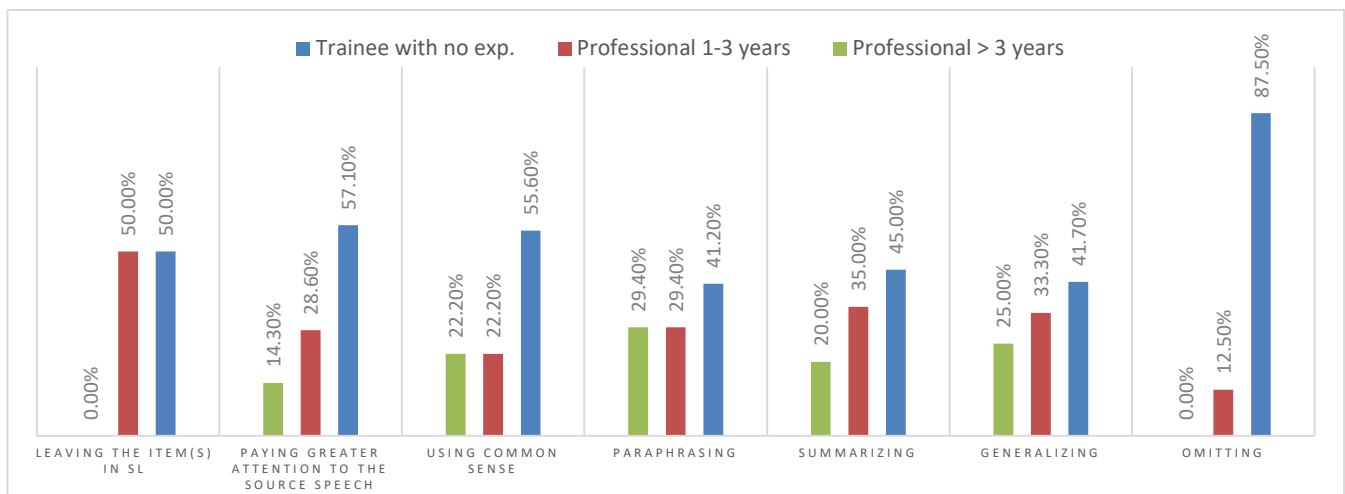


Figure 3. Strategies for coping with fast speakers

Figure 3 reveals how interpreters, both professionals and trainees, reported handling fast speakers during interpretation. Experienced professionals, regardless of their years of experience, responded that they rarely employ the omitting strategy, indicating their ability to manage rapid speech through developed techniques. In contrast, trainees, and professionals with less than three years of experience, reported using this strategy equally, implying that experienced professionals aim to interpret all content, even in challenging situations. Paraphrasing was selected as a widely used strategy by both professional groups (29.4%), while trainees emphasized it even more (41.2%), showing their recognition of its importance in such scenarios. Trainees predominantly reported resorting to the omitting strategy, indicating their difficulty in keeping pace with fast speech and their tendency to omit content when necessary.

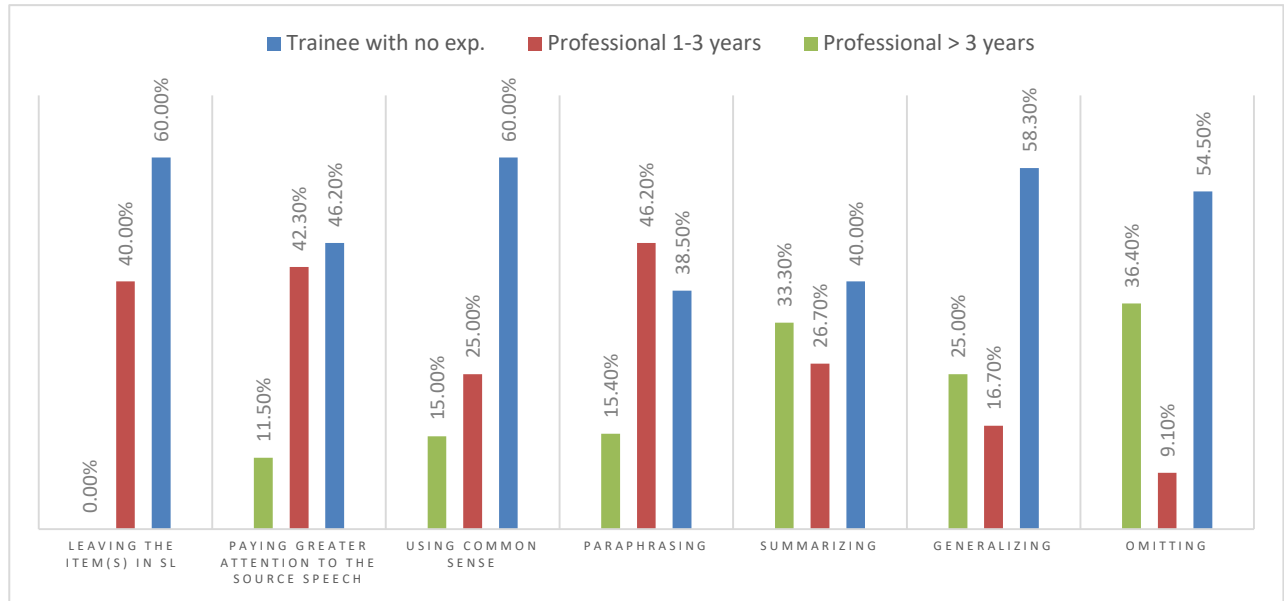


Figure 4. Strategies for coping with a lack of concentration

Figure 4 depicts the strategies both professionals and trainees reported using to cope with concentration and attention issues during CI. Experienced professionals with over three years of experience, notably, said they never leave items in the SL when concentration wavers, implying their adeptness at maintaining focus and preserving the integrity of the source speech. They also rarely pay deliberate attention to the source speech, possibly owing to their extensive experience in managing concentration naturally. Moreover, these experienced professionals seldom use common sense or paraphrasing as strategies in such situations, potentially indicating their confidence in their interpreting skills. Instead, they often employ omitting and summarizing strategies at a rate close to 35%.

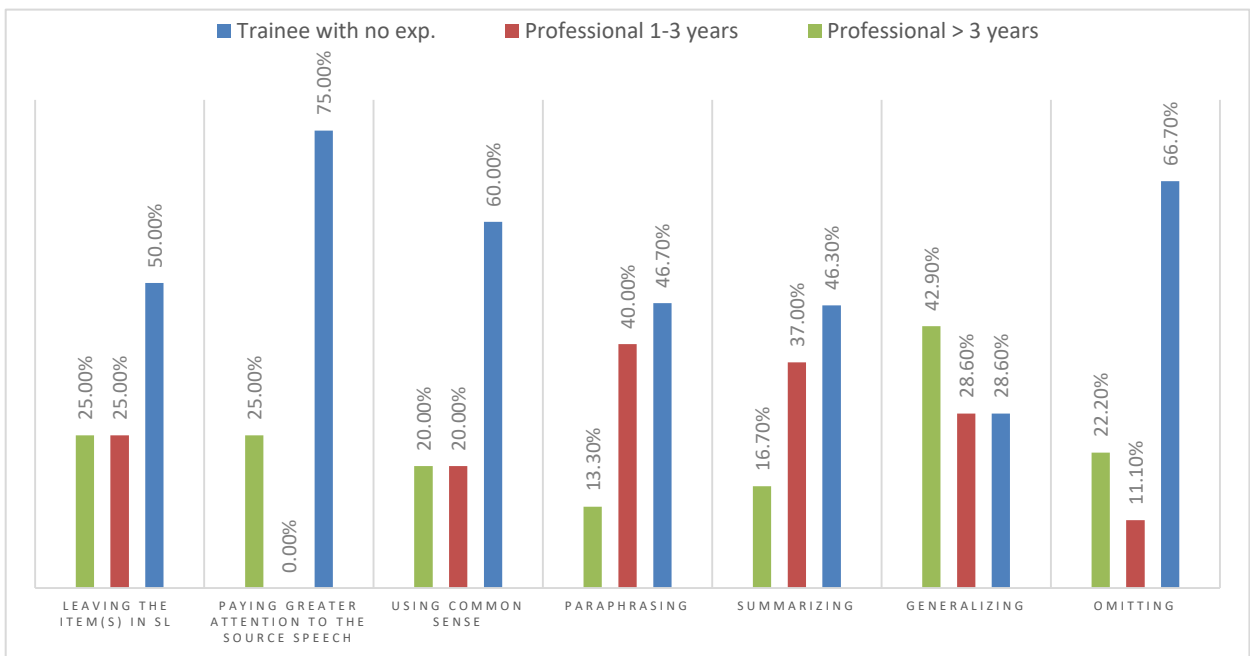


Figure 5. Strategies for dealing with lengthy speeches

Trainees indicated that they focus on paying greater attention to the source speech, indicating their effort to capture and understand as much content as possible. Omitting was reported as a prominent strategy among trainees in dealing with lengthy speeches, suggesting that they face challenges in maintaining concentration throughout extended discourse and their choice to strategically omit content. Professionals with less than three years of experience, interestingly, said they do not pay extra attention to the source speech during long speeches. Instead, they rely on paraphrasing and summarizing strategies, implying that they condense and simplify content to manage the length effectively. In contrast, experienced professionals reported predominantly using the generalizing strategy when dealing with long speeches, possibly by identifying overarching themes or key points within the discourse for a more streamlined interpretation. Paraphrasing was the least utilized strategy selected among experienced professionals, suggesting that they prioritize other methods for handling lengthy speeches.

4.2 Note-taking Phase

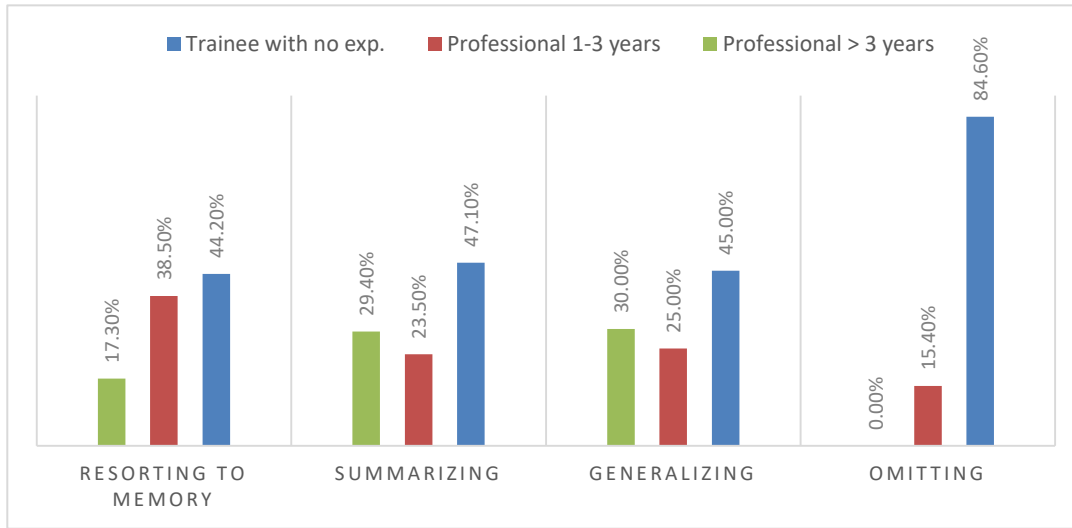


Figure 6. Strategies for coping with numbers in the note-taking phase

Professionals with over three years of experience indicate that they rarely use the omitting strategy, indicating their proficiency in dealing with numbers through alternative approaches. Conversely, trainees said they tend to omit numbers when faced with numerical challenges, possibly due to their limited experience or need for further training. Interpreters with less than three years of experience indicate that they sometimes rely on memory to retain numerical information rather than transcribing it. These findings highlight the potential benefits of targeted training and guidance, especially for early-career interpreters, to enhance their effectiveness in managing numerical data during note-taking.

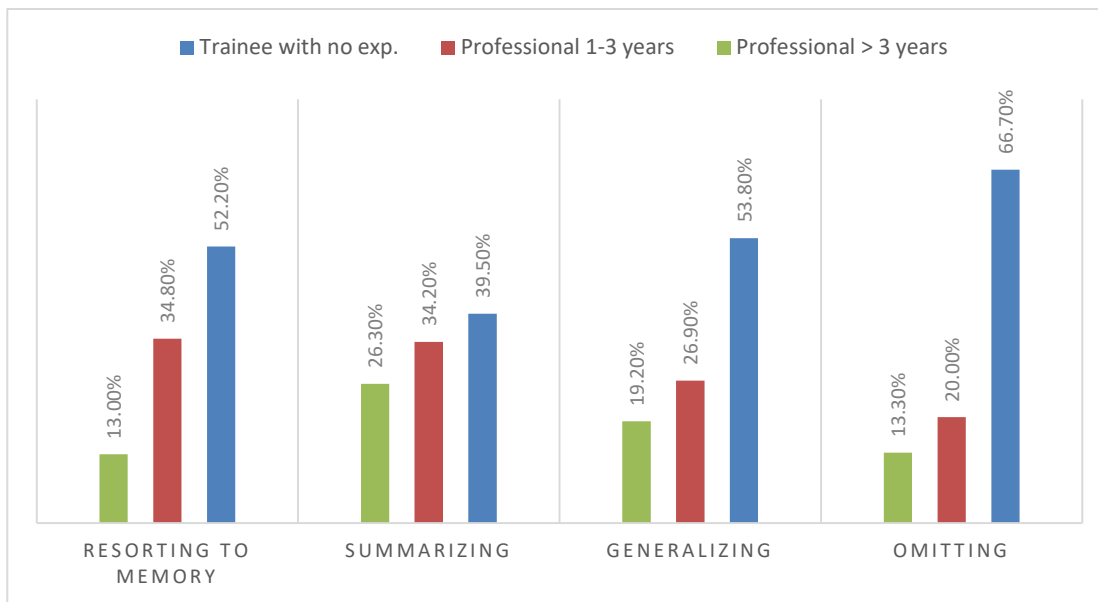


Figure 7. Strategies for coping with fast speakers in the note-taking phase



Professionals, regardless of their experience level, reported seldom omitting information when dealing with a fast speaker, indicating their ability to handle rapid speech through alternative means. In contrast, trainees indicate that they rely on the omitting strategy, suggesting that they find it difficult to keep up with a speaker’s pace, leading them to omit information to manage the workload. Additionally, trainees, and less experienced professionals said they tend to rely on memory as a strategy in dealing with fast speech, potentially indicating their attempt to remember information rather than transcribe it fully. Conversely, experienced professionals rarely reported resorting to memory in such situations. These findings underscore the need for trainees and less experienced interpreters to develop effective strategies for managing fast speech during note-taking.

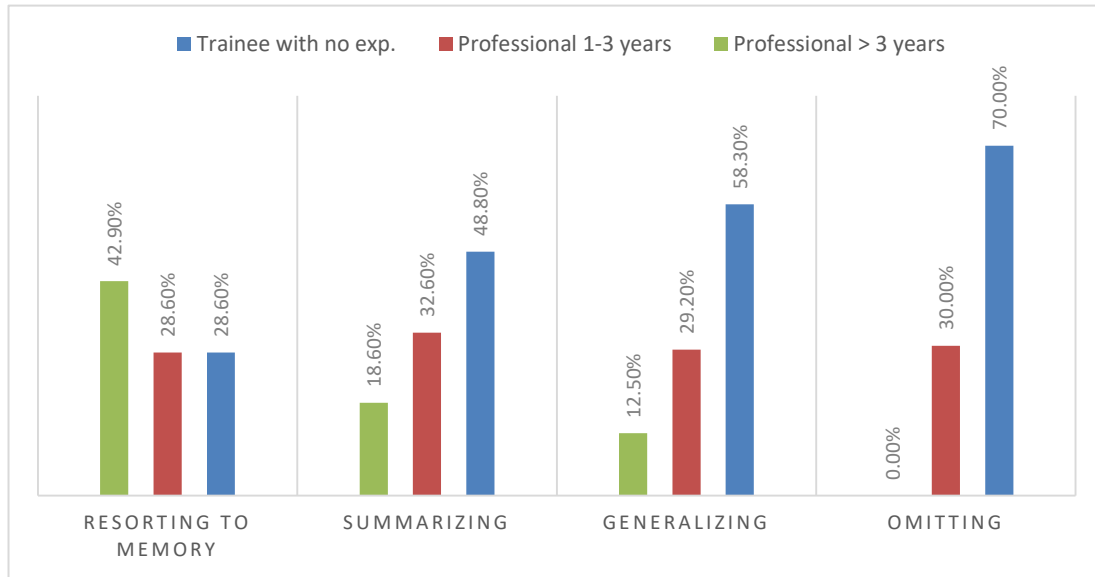


Figure 8. Strategies for dealing with information-dense content

Professionals with over three years of experience report not relying on the omitting strategy when coping with information-dense content, suggesting that they have developed other effective strategies. Trainees and professionals with less than three years of experience, however, say that they tend to use the omission strategy quite frequently when facing issues related to information density during note-taking, suggesting that they may find it challenging to transcribe all the information mentioned and instead omit certain details. Nearly half of professionals with over three years of experience and an equal percentage of trainees and less experienced professionals indicate that they resort to their memory when handling information-dense content, suggesting that they might try to retain the information mentally instead of transcribing it.

4.3 Note-decoding Phase

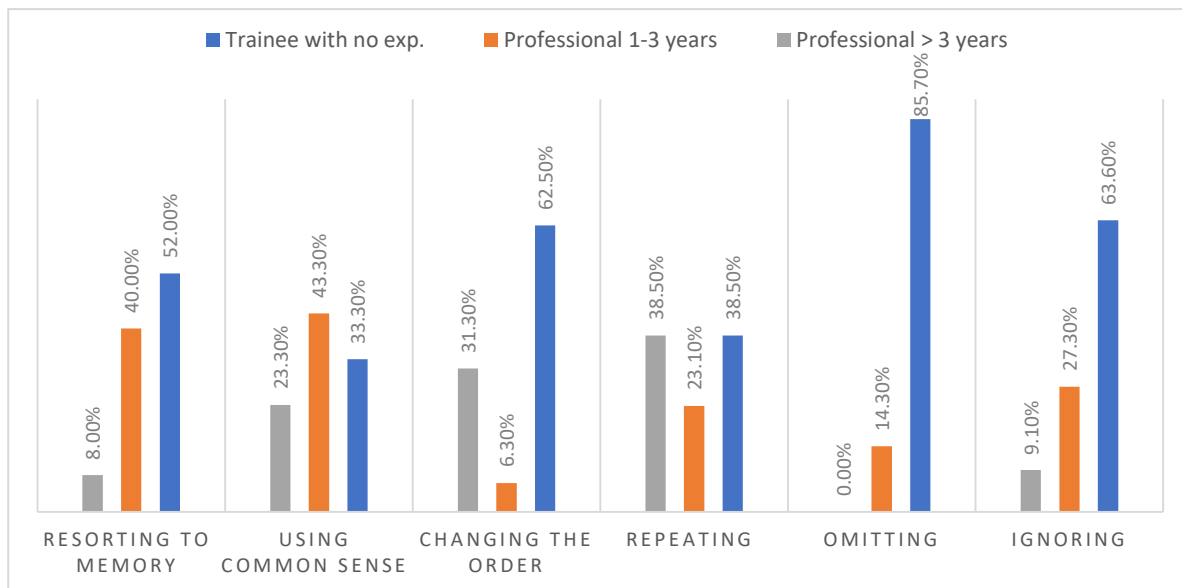


Figure 9. Strategies for coping with unclear notes

Professionals with more than three years of experience report rarely using ignoring (9.10%) and resorting to memory strategies (8.0%), suggesting that they had developed effective note-taking skills and memory recall techniques over their years of experience. Professionals with extensive experience said they never resort to the omission strategy when confronted with unclear notes; this could indicate their confidence in deciphering their own notes due to their proficiency in the field. Trainees, on the other hand, indicate that they tend to rely heavily on omitting information when faced with unclear notes during the note-decoding phase. This strategy appeared to be their primary approach to handling challenges related to note comprehensibility. Professionals with less than three years of experience said they tend to resort to their memory and use their common sense when encountering unclear notes, potentially compensating for their relatively limited experience.

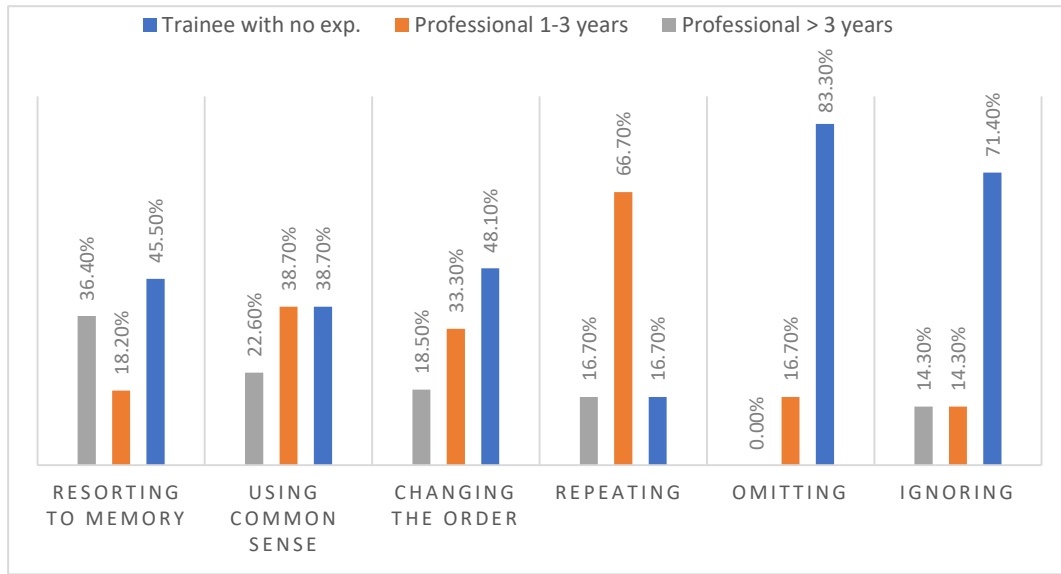


Figure 10. Strategies for dealing with a lack of connectors

Professionals with more than three years of experience report never omitting information to cope with a lack of connectors. Only a low percentage of professionals with less than three years of experience (16.7%) said that they omit information when confronted with this challenge. This indicates that professionals have developed other effective strategies for dealing with less coherent notes. Both groups of professionals report rarely ignoring information when they experience a lack of connectors, at an equal percentage of (14.3%). Instead, experienced professionals said that they tend to rely on their memory to bridge the gaps between ideas. This suggests that their years of experience have equipped them with effective memory recall techniques. Notably, less experienced professionals report using the repeating strategy more frequently (66.7%) in this context compared to the other groups. Trainees say that they predominantly employ omitting (83.3%) and ignoring (71.4%) as their primary strategies in response to such challenges. These strategies may help them manage the complexity of interpreting tasks at this stage.

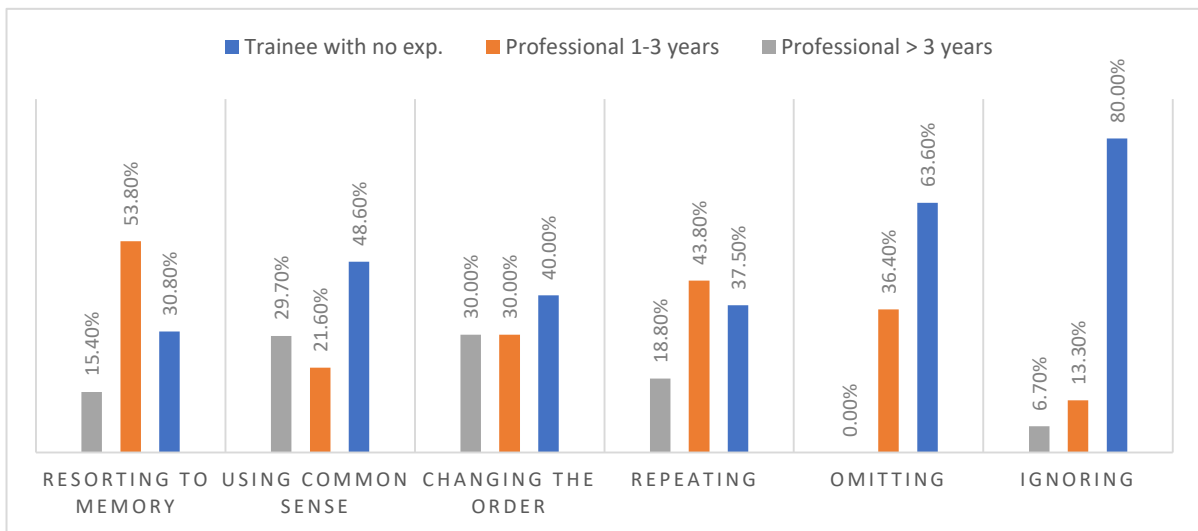


Figure 11. Strategies for coping with memory problems

When dealing with memory problems in the note-decoding phase, trainees report omitting (63.6%) and ignoring information (80.0%) as

significant strategies in their approach. Professionals with less than three years of experience also indicate that they use omitting (36.4%) but rarely resort to ignoring (13.3%) when faced with memory-related challenges while decoding their notes. They said that they tend to use repeating strategies and rely on their memory more frequently than employing other strategies. In contrast, experienced professionals report never using the omission strategy and rarely using the ignoring (of ignoring (6.7%) when dealing with memory problems in this phase. This suggests that professionals' experience contributes to developing effective strategies other than the omission of important information for coping with memory problems when decoding their notes.

4.4 Expressing and Reformulating Phase

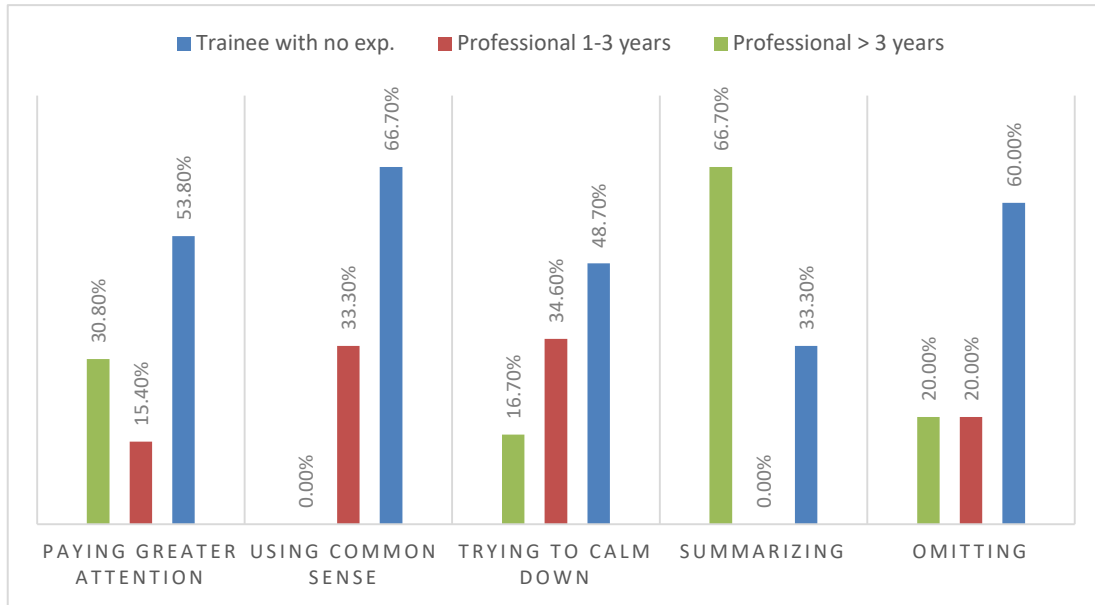


Figure 12. Strategies for coping with nervousness

A low percentage (20.0%) of professionals, regardless of their experience, report rarely omitting information due to nervousness. This indicates that their experience has equipped them with sufficient confidence while performing CI tasks. A low percentage of experienced professionals say that they try to calm down or resort to their common sense when they feel nervous, reflecting their high level of confidence and ability to cope in such situations. Trainees indicated that they primarily use common sense (66.7%) and omitting (60.0%). Professionals with less than three years of experience said that they never summarize when feeling nervous, with a low percentage of trainees saying they summarize. On the other hand, a significant percentage of professionals with more than three years of experience indicated that they summarize (66.7%), revealing their expertise in choosing the best strategy.



Figure 13. Strategies for understanding one's own notes

Both groups of professionals report less reliance on omitting information when they are unable to understand their own notes when

expressing the source speech into the TL. On the other hand, trainees indicate that they use the omitting strategy tremendously (66.7%), as well as the summarizing strategy (57.1%). This indicates that the professionals have developed their note-taking skills in a way that enables them to write down essential notes comprehensibly, leading to smooth reformulation and final production. Both groups of professionals, as well as trainees, said that they tend to resort to their common sense in expressing the final speech when their notes are unclear. Nearly half of less experienced professionals and trainees indicated that they try to calm down, in contrast to experienced professionals, who said that they rarely try to calm down, suggesting a high level of confidence, ability to write readable notes, or development of other effective strategies to overcome this issue.

## 5. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The current investigation contributes to our understanding of interpreters' performance, specifically within the realm of the management of cognitive processes. Based on Gile's (2009) Effort Models, the present study provides theoretical insights into the adaptive strategic behaviors reported by a sample of Saudi trainees and professionals in the field of CI. The strategies employed by the participants in the four distinct phases of the CI process identified in Gile's (2009) Effort Models—listening, note-taking, note-decoding, and reformulating—were reported using a questionnaire. The impact of experience, with professionals categorized based on their years of experience, has been explored to understand how expertise influences strategy selection. The results of the current study are in line with Jääskeläinen's (1996) claim that experienced translators are capable of allocating more cognitive processing capacity towards production strategies compared to novice translators. In addition, the results resonate with Al-Khanji et al.'s (2000) claim that interpreters are resourceful in the compensation strategies they employ to overcome problems while performing CI tasks. Below is a summary of the adaptive cognitive strategic behaviors identified among the participants of the present study.

In the listening phase, experienced professionals, particularly those with over three years of experience, report a decreased reliance on common sense when dealing with unfamiliar topics, while trainees and less-experienced professionals leaned more heavily on this strategy. This suggests that greater experience may lead to more confidence and the ability to handle diverse subject matter effectively. Professionals, irrespective of experience, report being less inclined to employ the omission strategy, emphasizing their commitment to interpreting all content, even in unfamiliar contexts. Paraphrasing was indicated as a commonly utilized strategy among all professional groups, with trainees using it less frequently. Trainees said they favored strategies for summarizing and generalizing indicating their preference for simplifying complex content.

In Li's (2014) study, the participants were found to prioritize the use of summarization and note-taking strategies in managing the interpretation of complex discourse. Considering the variable of experience, the two groups of participants in the present study displayed different patterns in the note-taking phase. Professionals with extensive experience reported rarely employing the omitting strategy when dealing with numerical challenges, whereas trainees tended to use it more frequently, highlighting the proficiency gap in handling numeric data. Professionals also display a consistent preference for the paraphrasing strategy to enhance the comprehensibility of numeric content. Trainees report that they occasionally rely on memory instead of transcribing numerical information, indicating a need for targeted training in this aspect. When dealing with a fast speaker, professionals, regardless of their experience level, said that they seldom employ the omitting strategy, underlining their capability to manage rapid speech through alternative means. In contrast, trainees demonstrated a heavy reliance on omitting, indicating their struggle to keep pace with fast speech and their tendency to omit content when necessary. Trainees and less experienced professionals also say that they turn to memory as a strategy, suggesting that they attempt to remember information rather than transcribe it fully, while experienced professionals rarely resort to memory in such situations.

In the note-decoding phase, professionals with more than three years of experience report rarely using the omitting strategy when faced with unclear notes, indicating their adeptness at maintaining focus and decoding their own notes. They also said that they rarely pay deliberate attention to the source speech, possibly due to their extensive experience in managing their concentration. Less experienced professionals said that they occasionally rely on memory and common sense. Trainees reported a reliance on omitting and ignoring information, suggesting that these strategies help them manage the complexity of interpreting tasks in this phase. To address memory problems during the note-decoding phase, trainees reported using the omitting and ignoring strategies, while professionals with less than three years of experience said that they use the omitting strategy but rarely resort to ignoring. These less experienced professionals indicated that they tend to use repeating strategies and memory recall more frequently, indicating their need to develop strategies to cope with memory-related challenges. Experienced professionals, however, say that they rarely use the omitting strategy and seldom employ the ignoring strategy.

In the expressing and reformulating phase, professionals, irrespective of experience, report that they rarely omit information when feeling nervous, showing their confidence in coping with anxiety. Trainees, on the other hand, indicate a preference for using the common sense and omitting strategies when nervous, reflecting a need for developing strategies to manage nervousness effectively. When interpreters are unable to understand their own notes, professionals, including those with less than three years of experience, showed less reliance on the omitting strategy compared to trainees, indicating their superior note-taking skills. Paraphrasing was reported as a frequently used strategy among all professional groups, highlighting its value in ensuring comprehensible notes. Professionals and trainees reported resorting to common sense when their notes were unclear, with experienced professionals showing higher confidence in handling this situation.

The findings of the study are in line with those of Ribas (2012), which show that novice students tend to use strategies more than advanced students. He argues that advanced students use fewer strategies either because they have mastered them, and so they are not aware of using them, or because they no longer face as many problems. The findings observed among the participants have several implications for the field

of CI within the Saudi context. Resonating with Kader and Seubert (2015, as cited in Li, 2015, p. 3) on the importance of integrating interpreting strategies within interpretation education, trainees, and less-experienced interpreters should receive targeted training and guidance to develop effective strategies for handling various challenges encountered in the CI process. This includes strategies for dealing with unfamiliar topics, fast speech, numerical content, and memory-related issues. Moreover, emphasizing the development of strong note-taking skills is crucial, especially for trainees. Improving the clarity and comprehensibility of notes can significantly impact the success of the note-decoding and reformulating phases. Mentoring programs could be beneficial, whereby experienced professionals guide and share their expertise with less experienced interpreters, helping them to effectively navigate the challenges of CI. In addition, strategies for managing nervousness should be integrated into interpreter training programs to insure that interpreters can maintain composure and accuracy in high-pressure situations.

#### **Acknowledgments**

The authors are grateful for the dedication and insights of all the participants in this study, whose contributions were vital to its success. We extend our thanks to each individual for their commitment and engagement throughout the research process.

#### **Authors contributions**

Dr. Ebtisam and Miss Hyfa were responsible for designing the study and revising its content. Miss Hyfa also took charge of collecting the data. Dr. Ebtisam was tasked with analyzing the data, drafting the manuscript, and performing further revisions. Both authors have reviewed and given their approval to the final version of the manuscript.

#### **Funding**

This work received no financial funding.

#### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

#### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

#### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

#### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned, externally double-blind peer reviewed.

#### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

#### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data is available.

#### **Open access**

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

#### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

#### **References**

- Abu n, M. (2008). *EL proceso de interpretacion consecutiva: Un estudio del binomio problema estrategia*. Granda: Editorial Comares.
- Adams, C., & Hewetson, Z. G. (2015). *Revisiting the ABCs of interpreting: The question of retour*. AIIC. Retrieved from <http://aiic.net/page/7342/revisiting-the-abcs-of-interpreting-the-question-of-retour/lang/>
- Al-Harshsh, A., Shehab, E., & Al-Rousan, R. (2020). Consecutive interpretation training: Challenges and solutions. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Translation Studies*, 5(1), 85-102.
- Al-Khanji, R. R., El-Shiyab, S., & Hussein, R. F. (2000). On the use of compensatory strategies in simultaneous interpretation. *Meta: Translators' Journal*, 45, 548-557. <https://doi.org/10.7202/001873AR>
- Chesterman, A. (1997). *Mems of translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.22>

- Chesterman, A. (2005). Problems with strategies. In K. Károly & A. Fóris (Eds.), *New trends in translation studies* (pp. 17-28). Budapest: Akademiai Kiado. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.17.1.12che>
- Gil-Baradaji, A. (2003). *Procedimientos, técnicas y estrategias: Operadores del proceso traductor* [Predoctoral research, University of Autònoma de Barcelona].
- Gil-Baradaji, A. (2009). Procedures, techniques, strategies: Translation process operators. *Perspectives*, 17(3), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09076760903249372>
- Gil-Baradaji, A. (2020). Strategies. In M. Baker, & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of translation studies* (3rd ed.) (pp. 540-545). London & New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315678627-115>
- Gile, D. (1995) Fidelity assessment in consecutive interpretation: An experiment. *Target*, 7(1), 151-164. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.7.1.12gil>
- Gile, D. (2009). *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1012757AR>
- Gutiérrez, E. (2013). *La traducción y la interpretación como herramientas para fomentar el aprendizaje en el aula de ELE: Principios básicos y propuestas didácticas*. Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Didáctica de Español como Lengua Extranjera del Instituto Cervantes de Budapest, pp. 445-450.
- Jääskeläinen, R. (1996). Hard work will bear beautiful fruit: A comparison of two think-aloud protocol studies. *Meta*, 41(1), 60-74. <https://doi.org/10.7202/003235ar>
- Jones, R. (1998). *Conference interpreting explained*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- Kader, S., & Seubert, S. (2015). Anticipation, segmentation... stalling? How to teach interpreting strategies. In D. Andres, & M. Behr (Eds.), *To know how to suggest... approaches to teaching conference interpreting* (pp. 125-144). Berlin: Frank & Timme.
- Kalina, S., (2005). Quality assurance for interpreting processes. *Meta*, 50, 768-784. <https://doi.org/10.7202/011017AR>
- Kohn, K., & Kalina, S. (1996). The strategic dimension of interpreting. *Meta*, 41, 118-138. <https://doi.org/10.7202/003333ar>
- Kuswoyo, H., & Audina, A. (2020). *Consecutive interpreting strategies on a court setting: A study of English into Indonesia interpretation*. Indonesia: Teknokrat University. <https://doi.org/10.33365/ts.v18i2.750>
- Li, S. (2014). A case study of interpretation learning strategies employed by successful interpretation learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(6), 1303-1311. <https://doi.org/10.4304/TPLS.4.6.1303-1311>
- Li, X. (2015). Putting interpreting strategies in their place: Justifications for teaching strategies in interpreter training. *Babel*, 61, 170-192. <https://doi.org/10.1075/BABEL.61.2.02LI>
- Lörscher, W. (1991). *Translation performance, translation process and translation strategies: A psychological investigation*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Molina, L., & Hurtado Albir, A. (2002). Translation techniques revisited. A dynamic and functional approach. *Meta*, 47(4), 498-512. <https://doi.org/10.7202/008033ar>
- Pöchhacker, F. (2016). *Introducing interpreting studies*. Routledge: London. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315649573>
- Ribas, M. A. (2012). Problems and strategies in consecutive interpreting: A pilot study at two different stages of interpreter training. *Meta*, 57(3), 812-835. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017092ar>
- Riccardi, A. (2005). On the evolution of interpreting strategies in simultaneous interpreting. *Meta*, 50, 753-767. <https://doi.org/10.7202/011016AR>
- Russell, D. (2005). Consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. In T. Janzen (Ed.), *Topics in sign language interpreting* (pp. 135-164). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publication Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.63.10rus>
- Russell, et al. (2010). Effective strategies for teaching consecutive interpreting. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 2, 111-119.
- Scott-Tennent, C., Davies, M. G., & Torras, F. R. (2000). *Translation strategies and translation solutions: Design of a teaching prototype and empirical study of its results*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.32.14sco>
- Zabalbeascoa, P. (2000). From Techniques to Types of Solutions. In A. Beeby, D. Ensinger, & M. Presas (Eds.), *Investigating translation: Selected papers from the 4<sup>th</sup> international congress on Translation* (pp. 117-127). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.32.15zab>